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magazine

GORGEOUS GARDA

Be the first to discover
Brescia's lakeside paradise

FAMILY FIRST!

Your *action-packed*
guide to unforgettable
child-friendly holidays

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FAMILY first

With the summer holidays rapidly approaching we present our definitive guide to the best active, child-friendly family breaks Italy has to offer. The summer starts here!

Junior masterchefs

Have your kids learn the secrets of great Italian cooking while you relax in serious style at Tuscany's famous Villa San Michele outside Florence

If your little angels aren't showing much interest in kitchen duties then sending them to a cookery school in the luxurious surroundings of Villa San Michele might just do the trick.

Originally a 15th-century Franciscan monastery, it is perched on the hilltop above Florence with sweeping views across the Arno Valley down to the city and is the perfect setting for educating youngsters about the merits of fine food. Run by executive chef Attilio Di Fabrizio, it is specifically tailored for children between the ages of eight and 14 and designed to teach the fundamental concepts of nutrition as well as sharpening the senses and arousing curiosity of different fresh foods and aromatic herbs.

The children receive two lessons including the 'circus of sweets' session where they are taught to cook two desserts, which will be the focal point of an afternoon tea with their parents. They will also get hands on experience and learn about the raw ingredients that grow in the villa's gardens. Each child taking part will receive a personalised chef's hat and apron, which might persuade them to try out their new-found culinary repertoire in your kitchen back home.

Parents, on the other hand, can spend their stay lazing by the pool, wandering around Florence and generally taking a break from entertaining the kids. The hotel boasts impeccable credentials as one of the most luxurious in Italy. Rest assured you will be waited on hand and foot and your every whim attended to with the utmost professionalism.



Details: The children's cookery school package includes four days and three nights half-board at the Villa San Michele for two parents and one child in a superior double room. The hotel's 45 rooms and suites are all traditional, peaceful and elegant.

Cost: Prices start at €2,786 (£1,908) for three-nights' half-board for two parents and one child in a superior room and includes one afternoon tea for all the family, the cookery lessons plus all materials and ingredients.

Contact: For booking and enquiries contact the Villa San Michele on 0207 9600500 or visit www.villasanmichele.com.

Opposite page: The Relais Il Cantico della Natura agriturismo in Umbria **Above:** Youngsters get stuck in at the Villa San Michele's famous cookery school