

# A VACATION FOR YOUR TASTE BUDS

Learn how to take your kitchen to Hawaii from **PAUL YOUNG**, a retired Parkland graphic-design professor and lifelong foodie

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**Y**earning for a tropical getaway but it's not in the cards right now?

You can bring that tropical feeling to your own home by making a Hawaiian meal that is sure to wow friends and family.

It's easier than you might imagine thanks to Paul Young, a self-taught cook who leads cooking classes at venues all around Champaign-Urbana. Earlier this summer, he taught a class at the Urbana Park District's Phillips Recreation Center on how to make a Hawaiian meal without spending your whole day in the kitchen, and he is going to share his knowledge with us here.

Paul, a retired graphic-design professor at Parkland College, has always had an interest in cooking. It began with his first full-time job as a line cook at Mahomet's Tree Top restaurant many years ago.

"I actually helped open that restaurant," he says, and the French-trained chef who oversaw it taught him "the nuts and bolts of how to run a kitchen. ... I manage my own home kitchen the same way."

He eventually earned his graphic-design degree at the University of Illinois, later moving to New York City and working at an advertising agency during the day and as a waiter in the dining room of the French Culinary Institute in the evenings. While he was there, he took advantage of the opportunity to sample cuisines from around the world.



**Paul Young prepares Huli Huli Chicken and Kalua Pork with Cabbage and Pineapple Rice during a recent cooking class he taught at the Phillips Recreation Center in Urbana.**

"It's one of the greatest food cities in the world," he says, but not just because of its many award-winning restaurants. Rather, he fell in love with all the small, family-owned ethnic eateries in the Brooklyn and Queens boroughs. It not only contributed to his interest in cooking, but also how he thought about travel.

"That tasting of international cuisine for very cheap and extremely tasty made me eventually evolve a personal philosophy: When I do travel, the destinations I choose to go to, the number-one priority is it has to have good food," he says.

He has since traveled to 25 countries, always making a point to be adventurous and try food he can't get in the U.S. This sense of adventure infuses his cooking, both at home and in class. When he teaches, he tries to offer authentic dishes from

parts of the world that aren't represented by the Champaign-Urbana restaurant scene.

Over the years, he has learned how to cook the dishes he likes to eat and figured out shortcuts that allow him to spend less time cooking without compromising flavor. And if it's so complicated that it can't be simplified, he says with a laugh, he'd rather go to a restaurant and let someone else cook for him.

When concocting recipes, Paul says he's not trying to create a new dish that no one has ever eaten. Rather, he's trying to create a simpler version of more complicated recipes that are part of a particular ethnic tradition.

"Every one of these recipes on my website are original, even though they're mash-ups," he says. "I used up to 10 different recipes from 10 different people who have different approaches. I try to glean the


wisdom of the best ones."

His visit to Hawaii helped him parse out the flavor profile that eventually made it into the recipes he used in his cooking class. Two flavor principles for Hawaiian food, which is heavily influenced by the Japanese, are sweet and sour, he says. Flavors often used in Hawaiian cooking include soy sauce, garlic, honey and citrus fruits, like lemon or lime.

To cut cooking time for Hawaiian recipes in particular, Paul suggests using ginger paste — "one of the greatest recent discoveries" — instead of the time-consuming chore of buying fresh ginger and peeling and grating it. Another secret to cutting the time without cutting the flavor is to use garlic powder instead of fresh crushed garlic.

"I swear by fresh garlic," he says, but it doesn't dissolve like the powder, so he uses powder when he doesn't want the fibrousness of fresh garlic.

Another secret he offers is to use liquid smoke when a recipe calls for something to be grilled, but that's not an option. Liquid smoke will give it that grilled flavor.

Even if a Hawaiian adventure isn't in your future, you can still enjoy a taste of the islands without the flight or copious amounts of time in the kitchen if you follow Paul's recipes. For even more recipes from Hawaii and other far-flung locales, as well as information on upcoming cooking classes, head to [cooking-with-paul.com](http://cooking-with-paul.com). 

## HULI HULI (PRONOUNCED HOO-LEE) CHICKEN

Servings: 4-6

### For chicken:

- 6 bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs
- 1 can (20 ounces) sliced pineapple in its own juice
- Coconut oil (for brushing grill grate)
- 12 green onions, cut into 2-inch pieces and split (green part only)

### For sauce:

- ½ cup pineapple juice
- ½ cup soy sauce
- ½ cup ketchup
- 2 limes, juiced
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon liquid smoke
- 2 teaspoons sesame oil
- ½ cup honey
- ⅓ cup (about 3 ounces) ginger paste
- 2 tablespoons garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes



- Trim extra skin and fat off chicken thighs; transfer chicken to gallon-size resealable plastic bag and set aside. Remove pineapple rings from can, transfer to a covered container and set aside in refrigerator.
- Combine all ingredients for the sauce (including leftover pineapple juice, if desired) in a bowl and mix well. Pour over chicken in a 1-gallon plastic bag, seal bag while pressing out excess air, then rub marinade over chicken; let rest in refrigerator overnight, turning chicken at least once. When ready to cook, remove it from marinade, then transfer marinade to a saucepan.
- Make a basting sauce by boiling marinade to reduce volume by about half.
- Grill pineapple slices on both sides until you see grill marks.
- To make chicken, oil grill with coconut oil on paper towel and cook over low heat until cooked through, turning frequently (about 30 minutes); baste generously with sauce when it is almost done.
- If using oven, bake at 375 degrees for 45-50 minutes, turning and basting at least once; broil during last few minutes for better browning.
- Serve on top of grilled pineapple slices; garnish with green onions if desired.

## AHI POKE (PRONOUNCED AH-HEE PO-KEE) (MARINATED TUNA BOWL)

Servings: 2

- ¾ pound cryo-frozen tuna, defrosted and cubed
- ¼ cup Garlic Ginger Sauce (see recipe at right)
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon chili garlic sauce or Sriracha
- ¼ cup red onion, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup green onions, finely diced
- Toasted sesame seeds (optional)
- Avocado slices for garnish (optional)

- Defrost tuna overnight in refrigerator; slice into bite-sized cubes.
- Combine all ingredients in a bowl. Mix well, cover and let rest in refrigerator for at least one hour.
- Sprinkle on sesame seeds and garnish with avocado slices, if desired.
- Serve with rice, if desired.



Paul Young demonstrates the preparation of Hawaiian dishes during his cooking class.

## GARLIC GINGER SAUCE

This employs the classic Chinese flavor principle of garlic, ginger and soy.

Makes about 3 cups.

- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 bulb (about 12 cloves) raw garlic, minced
- 2 cups soy sauce
- ⅔ cup (about 6 ounces) ginger paste
- 2 tablespoons toasted sesame oil

- Sauté garlic in olive oil briefly, about 2 minutes. Turn off heat, stir in all other ingredients. Stir well before using.
- Can be stored in refrigerator for weeks.