



HIGHER EDUCATION

CREDIT YOURSELF

Make the most of summer with career-boosting courses

By ERIKA PRAFDER

WITH sizzling temperatures and blue skies upon us, it's time to hit the beach – and the books.

New York is one hot intellectual hub. Why not combine leisure pursuits with academic ones this summer? Flex your cerebral side at a class you've been curious about or expand your professional horizons and pursue a career course you're more passionate about. Read on for a sampling of the metro region's most tempting educational offerings.

■ If you're hungry for ideas on healthy meal planning, check out the menu of course options this summer at the **Natural Gourmet Institute** (NGI)

For home cooks,

recreational classes like "The Art of Baking and Decorating Vegan Gluten-Free and Soy-Free Cakes" and "Stress-Free Summer Party Food" may be appetizing, according to Merle Brown, vice president and director of admissions for the school. "How to Launch and Market a Food Product" will appeal to those interested in starting their own business, she adds.

NGI's "Annual Basic Cooking Technique Intensive" is a two-week immersion course covering knife skills, menu planning and discussion of basic, quality ingredients, according to Brown.

The Professional Chef's Training Program concentrates on the relationship between food and health, she says. "It's a diploma program. Some graduates go on to work as chefs, either privately or in

restaurants, while others pursue entrepreneurial things, like opening cafes and writing cookbooks. Still others cook for people with health issues, such as people dealing with cancer or heart disease, or those who want to improve their health," says Brown.

For details: natural-gourmetinstitute.com.