



Carluccio's Complete A-Z of Italian Food

Antonio Carluccio, Priscilla Carluccio

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When London-based Italian chef, restaurateur and food expert Antonio Carluccio, founder of Carluccio's cafes, and his wife Priscilla decided to write a book about regional Italian cooking, they never imagined the end result would preserve the Italy's food culture within its pages. Yet this is exactly what Carluccio's Complete A-Z of Italian Food accomplishes.

"Producing this book has been a fascinating experience," Antonio writes. "This book is a personal view of real Italian food, where it comes from, and why it tastes the way it does." Carluccio's Complete A-Z of Italian Food includes more than 200 recipes and 300+ color photographs of landscapes, ingredients and people by renowned food photographer Andre Martin, as well as detailed watercolor illustrations by Fabrice Moireau.

Raised in Italy's northern Piedmont region but born in the South, Carluccio learned at a young age how local, fresh ingredients define dishes and impact flavors. Carluccio's Complete A-Z of Italian Food communicates the significance of the hallmark ingredients of Italy's 20 regions in 11 chapters: Fish & Shellfish, Eggs, Poultry & Game, Fresh & Cured meats, Vegetables and Legumes, Pasta, Rice & Grains, Fungi, Oils, Vinegars, Herbs, Spices & Flavorings, Dairy Products, Fruit & Nuts, Breads & Baking. Each chapter begins with an introduction to the ingredients' history, production, varieties and differences according to the region in which they originate.

Foodies will be intrigued by the book's namesake A-Z section, an encyclopedia of every Italian term relating to the chapter. The section on Oils, Vinegars, Herbs, Spices & Flavorings reveals that balsamic vinegar (Aceto Balsamico) was once used to cure illness. Fans of basil might be surprised to learn that this predominant flavor of Italian cooking is actually native to India.

Recipes come next and they range from traditional to innovative. For pasta lovers, Carluccio suggests Linguine con Aragosta (Linguini with Lobster), a posh dish popular in Italy's coastal regions. He also recommends Fiori di Zucchini Fritti (Deep-fried Zucchini Flowers), a curious dish that can be prepared successfully by either stuffing the flowers or dipping them in batter and frying them. Other recipes include Italian classic Fegato Alla Veneziana (Sauteed Liver with Onions) and country specialty Calzone con Cicoria E Carciofi (Calzone with Dandelions and Artichokes).

Finally an appendix of Italian wines and other drinks, relating to their use in cooking, completes the book. From wines like Barolo and Chianti, which are put through a series of safeguards to protect their reputations, to chocolate (the secret is high-quality cocoa beans), the fresh ingredients that make regional Italian cuisine popular worldwide are all recognized in this book.

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