



Lidia's Italian-American Kitchen

Lidia Matticchio Bastianich

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Lidia Bastianich, loved by millions of Americans for her good Italian cooking, gives us her most instructive and personal cookbook yet.

Focusing on the Italian-American kitchen—the cooking she encountered when she first came to America as a young adolescent—she pays homage to this “cuisine of adaptation born of necessity.” But she transforms it subtly with her light, discriminating touch, using the authentic ingredients, not accessible to the early immigrants, which are all so readily available today. The aromatic flavors of fine Italian olive oil, imported Parmigiano-Reggiano and Gorgonzola dolce latte, fresh basil, oregano, and rosemary, sun-sweetened San Marzano tomatoes, prosciutto, and pancetta permeate the dishes she makes in her Italian-American kitchen today. And they will transform for you this time-honored cuisine, as you cook with Lidia, learning from her the many secret, sensuous touches that make her food superlative.

You'll find recipes for Scampi alla Buonavia (the garlicky shrimp that became so popular when Lidia served the dish at her first restaurant, Buonavia), Clams Casino (with roasted peppers and good American bacon), Caesar Salad (shaved Parmigiano makes the difference), baked cannelloni (with roasted pork and mortadella), and lasagna (blanketed in her special Italian-American Meat Sauce).

But just as Lidia introduced new Italian regional dishes to her appreciative clientele in Queens in the seventies, so she dazzles us now with pasta dishes such as Bucatini with Chanterelles, Spring Peas, and Prosciutto, and Long Fusilli with Mussels, Saffron, and Zucchini. And she is a master at teaching us how to make our own ravioli, featherlight gnocchi, and genuine Neapolitan pizza.

The key to her delectable fish and meat cooking is the aromatic vegetables that so often form an integral part of the dish—sole with oregano, vidalias, and tomatoes; tenderloin with potatoes, peppers, and onions; sausages with bitter broccoli. Try her version of scallopine with sautéed lemon slices, garlic slivers, capers, and green olives—you'll be hooked.

Soups are Lidia's specialty, particularly hearty bean and pasta soups—meals in themselves. And you can top off a Lidia feast with traditional Italian-American favorites, such as a perfect Zabaglione or cannoli, or one of her own creations—Lemon Delight or Roasted Pears and Grapes.

Laced with stories about her experiences in America and her discoveries as a cook, this enchanting book is both a pleasure to read and a joy to cook from.

From the Hardcover edition.

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