

The Babbo Cookbook

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Some of the most inspired (and acclaimed) Italian food in the country is served at Babbo Ristorante e Enoteca, Mario Batali's flagship restaurant in the heart of New York City's Greenwich Village. Diners in this converted town house have come to expect innovative flavors and artful presentations that make the most of seasonal, local, and artisanal ingredients—all with a sensibility that is distinctly Italian. Now home cooks can re-create these showstopping dishes, just as they are served at the restaurant, to win raves of their own.

The Babbo Cookbook is Mario's biggest yet, filled with 150 recipes that have redefined contemporary Italian cooking. Here for the first time he shares such signature dishes as Mint Love Letters with Spicy Lamb Sausage and Beef Cheek Ravioli, all showcasing his unparalleled ability to reinterpret the Italian culinary tradition in a completely original way. Recipes for dozens of Babbo's renowned antipasti, many based on fresh seasonal produce, are followed by an alluring collection of pastas; fish, fowl, and meat entrées; and a selection of Babbo's irresistible dessert offerings. From Grilled Pork Chops with Peaches and Balsamic Vinegar to Spicy Lamb Tartare with Mint Crostini and a Quail Egg and Wild Striped Bass with Charred Leeks and Squid Vinaigrette, The Babbo Cookbook is filled with vibrant, complex flavors that belie their straightforward preparations. Even classic recipes like Bollito Misto and Pappardelle Bolognese come alive again in bright new renditions that delight the palate.

Also included are notes on the unique touches that make a meal at Babbo such a singular dining experience, from suggestions on wine service to recipes for "predesserts" that smooth the transition from savory to sweet—all representing the distinctive brand of Italian hospitality that has become the Batali trademark.

The Babbo Cookbook is that rarity in the world of restaurant cookbooks: a collection of accessible, appetizing recipes that brings the spirit of a remarkable restaurant into the home kitchen without losing an iota of tantalizing flavor in the translation.

One of the most coveted reservations to have in New York City is at Babbo, Mario Batali's flagship restaurant in Greenwich Village. In The Babbo Cookbook, Batali (author of Mario Batali Simple Italian Food and Mario Batali Holiday Food) takes readers behind the scenes of his popular restaurant—from the kitchen to the front of house—sharing 150 recipes for his innovative Italian fare and offering tips on menu selection, service, and presentation. Along the way, Batali expertly captures the intimate buzz, the warm hospitality, and the generous attention to detail that makes Babbo a singular dining experience.

Before digging into any of the dozen-plus featured antipasti, Batali offers several specialty aperitivi, including the refreshing Blood Orange Bellini. Two of Babbo's signature dishes, Mint Love Letters with Spicy Lamb Sausage (little ravioli stuffed with a filling of sweet peas, mint, heavy cream, and Parmigiano-Reggiano) and Beef Cheek Ravioli (so good the book recommends doubling the filling and freezing a batch), are broken down and made more than accessible to the home cook. Other exceptional pasta options include Pumpkin Lune with Butter and Sage (finished with a dusting of Parmigiano-Reggiano and amaretti cookie crumbs) and Gnocchi with Oxtail Ragù (a reinterpretation of a Batali family classic, still served at Salumi, his father's must-visit Seattle shop). Chapters "Mare (From the Sea)" and "Terra e Bosco (From the Earth and Forest)" offer Crispy Black Bass with Endive Marmellata

and Saffron Vinaigrette ("'crispy' sells more food than a barrage of adjectives," Batali reveals) and a succulent Osso Buco with Toasted Pine Nut Gremolata. There's a wonderful section on pre-desserts and cheese, and in "Dolci" pastry chef Gina DePalma wraps things up with Maple and Mascarpone Cheesecake, Meyer Lemon Semifreddo, and a tempting cookie plate.

The Babbo Cookbook is a gorgeous affair--nearly every recipe is accompanied by a color photo of the finished dish. Batali is an intelligent and inspiring guide throughout the book, and Babbo co-owner Joseph Bastianich (who cowrote the terrific *Vino Italiano* with Babbo wine director David Lynch) provides detailed notes on their topnotch table and wine service. Some of the recipes may seem daunting to tentative home cooks (the recipe for Warm Testa with Waxy Potatoes opens with "Place the pig's head in a large pot with water"), but Batali recognizes that readers don't have the benefit of being backed by a kitchen staff and offers tips and modifications to turn out a version of the dish as close as possible to the real deal. Whether you choose to cook your way through one recipe at a time or attempt to turn out an entire tasting menu for a special occasion, Batali's Babbo Cookbook is a keeper--a book you'll turn to again and again. --Brad Thomas Parsons
"Every time I go to New York, I see Mario at the [Union Square] farmers' market. It is his attention to fresh, seasonal ingredients that makes these dishes so irresistible."
-Alice Waters

"Historically, when we adapt an ethnic cuisine to our own uses we start with the most ordinary and work our way up, frequently making a mess along the way. In our lifelong search for the genuine we need a guidebook to get close to the pinnacle and, in the case of Italian cuisine, it has been delivered in the shape of Mario Batali's Babbo Cookbook, which is a new standard of excellence. Babbo is my favorite American restaurant and this book allows me to bring its grace to my home kitchen."
-Jim Harrison

"Funny. Bold. Beautiful. Full of life and full of flavor. From the Blood Orange Bellini to the Mint Love Letters (irreverent ravioli) and Barbecued Skirt Steak with Endive, this book is pure Mario. Great food, great snapshots (they exude the restaurant hustle-bustle), and Joe's great wine notes take you right to the heart of the Babbo experience."
-Rick Bayless, chef, author, and host of Public Television's Mexico-One Plate at a Time

"Babbo is revelatory--the freshest ingredients, simply or elaborately prepared, combine into nothing short of a celebration. If food could rule the world, Mario Batali would be Emperor. In fact, he is. Or should be."

-Michael Stipe

Other Books

Ciao Italia in Tuscany, Famed for its bustling cities rich with art, history, and centuries-old traditions, as well as for its gently rolling landscapes filled with vineyards, cypress trees, and olive groves, Tuscany is one of the most popular regions in Italy. Mary Ann Esposito, host of the longest-running television cooking show, invites us to experience the tastes, smells, and traditions of this wonderful region, one delectable meal at a time. With eighty delicious recipes accompanied by anecdotes, travel essays, and cooking tips and techniques, this

collection shares and explores the essence of Tuscan cooking. Cucina povera, country-style cooking, is the backbone of the Tuscan culinary heritage, and you'll see it in practice on an agricultural estate just outside of Siena, at a palazzino in the heart of Florence, at a popular restaurant in an industrial city, in medieval villages, and in the charming cities and towns across the region. Simple, flavorful ingredients are transformed into authentic, mouth-watering dishes such as Scarola e Fagioli (Escarole and Beans), Pappa al Pomodoro (Tomato Bread Soup), Patate con Olio e Ramerino (Potatoes with Olive Oil and Rosemary), Bistecca alla Fiorentina (Grilled T-bone Steak), Gnocchi di Patate con Salsa di Pecorino e Panna (Potato Gnocchi with Pecorino Cream Sauce), Panforte, Ricciarelli di Siena (Siena-Style Almond Cookies), and much more. Complete with information on mail-order sources, Web sites, and Tuscan restaurants, this celebration of the region of Tuscany is a tribute to the people practicing and preserving its rich culinary traditions.

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