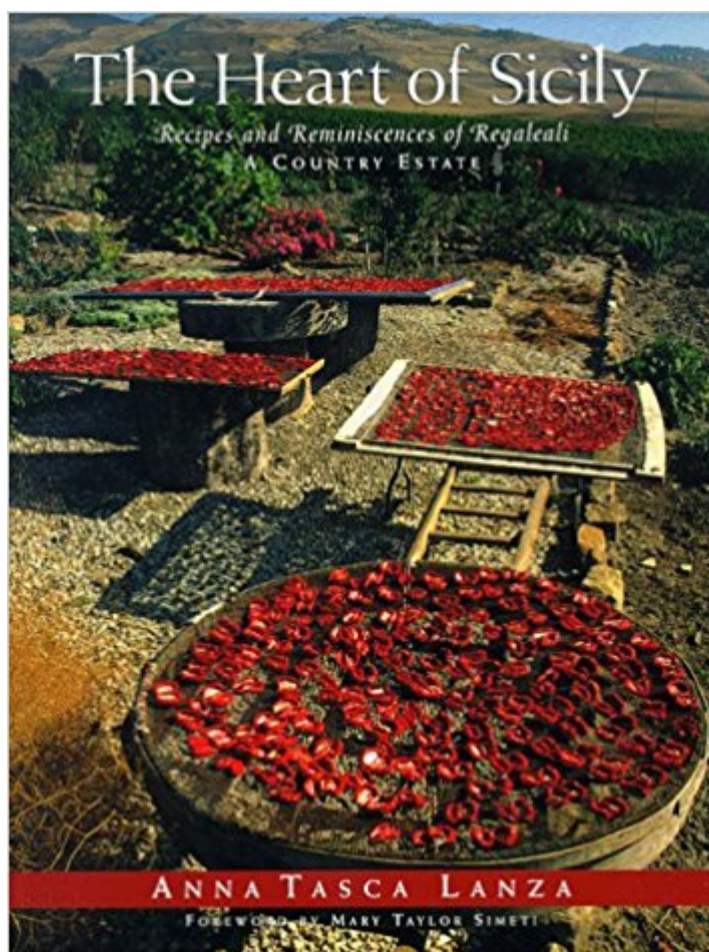


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The Heart Of Sicily: Recipes And Reminiscences Of Regaleali, A Country Estate



Synopsis

In a warm, witty text and more than 125 photographs, a Sicilian aristocrat shares her world with us, describing the land and depicting country life in an exquisite book destined to become a classic. Illustrated with extraordinary photographs by Franco Zecchin that capture the rigor and beauty of Sicily, this is an inspiring cookbook for anyone who loves food. Full-color photographs.

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Customer Reviews

Many cookbooks tempt, inform, and inspire. A few capture the essence of a place, but rarely does a cookbook communicate the very soul of a place. Anna Tasca Lanza's telling of life at Regaleali, the vast estate that has belonged to her family since 1830, is so vivid that you feel her sitting next to you, talking and turning the pages of *The Heart of Sicily* as if it were a photo album. Tasca Lanza provides enough information about Sicily's complex history and rich culture to help you understand the special nature of Regaleali and what her noble family--rich with barones, principessas, and contessas--has created. Under their stewardship, this working estate has become an international cooking school. It is also the place where Tasca Lanza pursues her passion for preserving the abundant culinary and cultural traditions of Sicily. You will appreciate the years Tasca Lanza took to make the intense flavors of Sicilian food come through using ingredients readily available in the United States. Many recipes are short and simple, relying on seasonal ingredients, as in *Pasta con le Zucchine Fritte* (Pasta with Fried Zucchini) and *Melanzane a Cotoletta* (Breaded Eggplant Cutlets). There are recipes for all of the major traditional Sicilian dishes, from *Caponata*, *Involtini di Pesce Spada* (Swordfish Rolls) and *Pasta con le Sarde* (Pasta with Fresh Sardines) to *Sfincione*

(Sicilian Pizza) and Cassata, marzipan-coated cheesecake decorated with candied fruit.

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This is a wonderful book and so glad to have been able to find it in hardback. The illustrations are beautiful and made me feel I was there.

OMG! I cannot say enough about this book. It seems unfair to just call it a cookbook, because dispersed amongst the wonderful recipes are Anna's stories, and snippets of Sicilian history. I am savoring it!

Beautiful book for cooks and even folks who just like to read about recipes. The narrative provides some context for how the recipes developed -- I'm so happy to have this book!

Regaleali is one of the most prestigious wine estates in Sicily and it is great to use their recipes. The book is full of interesting information about the island and its customs and some of the best recipes around. I use the caponata recipe and people say its the best they've ever had! Enjoy!

Great classic Sicilian cookbook!

Terrific book. Great pictures and stories. The real Sicily. Not just about cooking, but about life in Sicily. Loved it. Great read.

The book is picturesque, the recipes are okay, but for some the use of Bouillon cubes, margarine, powdered gelatin, cornstarch instead of flour for the pastries to produce a lighter effect, vegetable oil, and canned tuna, in some of the recipes will put you off. If you read in the ingredients glossary and notes in the front of the book, you will see the notation that broth may be substituted for bouillon. In most good cookbooks, the opposite notation is made. They provide the recipe for the broth, but note that you can substitute if pressed. There are lots of travelogue photos, and not so many of the finished dishes. There are 105 recipes in all, including little ones like how to make

mashed potatoes, and pizza topping variations, etc. There are around 24 photos of the dishes, including the jello molds and marmalade. There are a lot of photos (pages!) regarding cheese production but no corresponding recipe for making the cheese. What a tease! The one bread (dough) recipe is for semolina bread, and it is baked as soon as it is risen, about 45 minutes to 1 hour after mixing. Many prefer bread doughs which have matured to develop complexity and more taste. The pages of prose and photos on bread-making cover the bread made by Carmelo, the village baker, who kneads his dough for 30-35 minutes (I am thinking we at home would use a food processor!), and leaves it to rise on a cloth covered-blanket, covered by a double quilt, for at least 3 hours depending on the heat of the day, before baking on a wood fired oven. It seems kind of weird to use Carmelo's bread and doughs as the standard used in later recipes, not provide Carmelo's recipe, and give us an ersatz recipe named after Carmelo, when that recipe is most likely to be far far from the breads and doughs that Carmelo makes. I do appreciate the description of Carmelo's techniques, but the author should have provided his recipe too, IMO, especially when she tells us about using his dough for other recipes. Later in the book, there is a butter and olive oil pizza dough recipe which calls for hand-kneading around 13-19 minutes, rising for 45 minutes, before baking. Normally, one hour is the bare minimum to develop the flavor of pizza dough. These days, it is common to use doughs which have developed for much longer periods. The Jim Lahey and other artisan no-knead bread and pizza doughs which are wet mixed and left to sit to develop take a lot of the work out of breads and pizzas without sacrificing taste. The author of *Heart of Sicily* is providing what we would consider convenience pizza and bread. Maybe I am being picky, and I am certainly not saying that this is a bad book. What I am trying to convey, though, is that it is a certain type of book. If I could have previewed this book in a bookstore, there is no way that I would have bought it, on philosophical grounds. Do the recipes taste good, probably yes. Am I going to make the ones with canned tuna, gelatin, cornstarch, etc.? No, I am not. Will I consider substituting objectionable ingredients? Yes, I am willing to replace the margarine and hope that it does not change the recipe, as it could. As for the many recipes which call for bouillon, I am not sure what to do. Many bouillon cubes have MSG, an excito-toxin which makes food taste better by using this chemical means to dupe the body. So, it is potentially a big change to substitute broth, and there are no recipes for broth, or bouillon cube substitutes. After living with this book for a few weeks, and now revisiting it because prompted me to review or edit prior review, I find that I like the book better than the above might indicate. I am also interested in the photos of the tomatoes drying in the open. I am not sure how sanitary that open-drying is, but I am considering making screen-enclosed versions of the Sicilian drying screens which the book shows as elevated stiff metal screens with tomato halves

simply laid on them cut sides up. My father's home-made drying contraptions were screen boxes (no glass) with racks which allowed air to circulate all around the items, much like the Sicilian drying racks shown in this book. He is gone now, but this book makes me think that he had a workable, valid, system for warm weather drying, despite what the books say about elevating the temperature in the drying boxes by installing plates, and enclosing the sides, etc. I am most grateful!

The book is a gift ! I visited the cooking school in 2007.

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