

Pizza: From Its Italian Origins to the Modern Table

Rosario Buonassisi

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Rosario Buonassisi : Pizza: From Its Italian Origins to the Modern Table before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Pizza: From Its Italian Origins to the Modern Table:

11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Would appeal to gourmandsBy G. R.I actually bought this book for its history of pizza rather than for the recipes it contains, so for me any good recipes would be a bonus rather than an absolute must. Nevertheless, I found this book to be somewhat disappointing, and would probably rate it only 3 stars if not for the fact that I recognize that this book does carry appeal for a certain type of audience.Here are a few of the things that disturbed me:1)It's translated from the original Italian. While it is one of the better translations I've read, the language still sounds a bit stiff and unnatural in some places. Admittedly, I am especially sensitive when it comes to translations, so not everyone might be bothered by this. All I can say is that I realized that it was a translation after reading just a little bit, and only afterwards confirmed it by checking the information page at the beginning of the book.2) Because it's a translation of a book originally published in Italy, the text reflects a very Italian point of view.

For example, Buonassisi attributes the global rise of popularity of pizza to Italians who immigrated to different countries after World War II, with nary a mention of the American super-chains that opened up pizza shops around the world. In general, he devotes almost no space to the history of pizza in the U.S., even though there is no doubt that it bears as much significance in the overall history of pizza as the history of pizza in Italy does. In the last chapter of the book, which discusses the future of pizza, his prejudice against the Americanization of pizza is especially obvious.³) The recipes all focus on one style of pizza, with no mention of other pizza types. There are 24 pizza recipes in this book - not very much considering the size of the book - which all come with full-page photos which I personally don't need, but which others may enjoy. My biggest complaint is that there is no mention of anything other than the traditional (i.e. Italian)-type pizza, such as calzones or deep-dish pizza. The author just ignores their existence. Regarding the recipes themselves, I can't comment either way, as I haven't tried any of them.⁴) The chapter about drinks that can accompany a pizza will only appeal to real gourmards who want to know exactly which wine to drink with each pizza. Personally, I found the author's assertion that carbonated drinks (i.e. soda) should never be drunk with pizza to be snobbish in the extreme!⁵) There is no bibliography. I was astonished by that, considering that the book contains a long chapter on the history of pizza going back thousands of years. To me, that is a major omission. Positive features of the book:¹) There are beautiful photos throughout the book - this is a great coffee-table book.²) The recipes seem to be quite simple to make.³) The history of pizza up until the 20th century is very interesting and informative. In short, this would make a good gift for a gourmand/chef, but not necessarily for others.¹⁰ of 11 people found the following review helpful. Do-It-Yourself Pizza By Bill Marsano American pizza is a culinary crime, but you don't have to go to Italy to get the real thing if you're willing to do a little work in your own kitchen. Rosario Buonassisi shows you how easy it is to make this simple but superb treat, and there's every reason to believe that once you taste the real thing you'll never go back to the pizza from take-out shops, which seldom tastes as good as the box it comes in. This book gives clear directions and is beautifully (and encouragingly) photographed. It's as good as Charles and Michele Scicolone's book "Pizza Any Way You Slice It (also available from), and it is similarly packed with recipes, tips and advice. There are a couple of differences worth noting. Buonassisi is a scholar (in archeology) and a writer on many other subjects, and he naturally takes something of a scholarly approach here, providing a wealth of detail on pizza's origins and development. Gastronomically he goes further, providing an excellent chapter on what to drink with pizza: You can easily do better than just beer or wine, and his advice will improve your meal. Finally, Buonassisi's recipe for basic dough uses bread flour only, rather than the Scicolones' blend of hard bread flour and soft cake flour). Having put both recipes to the test--with excellent results--I'd advise buying books and spending some adventurous hours in the kitchen. It's important to realize, by the way, that once you get the basics down, home-made pizza is a snap. The sauce and dough freeze beautifully, so you can easily make enough at one time to provide for maybe half a dozen home pizza nights--until your neighbors find out how good yours is.--Bill Marsano 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Includes over twenty recipes from all eras By Midwest Book Review Rosario Buonassisi's Pizza provides a brief history of pizza, from ancient to modern times, and includes over twenty recipes from all eras. Color photos of finished dishes and intriguing references to pizza dishes and history round out the presentation and make for a lively, colorful pizza guide.

Although it will always be identified with Italy, pizza is now eaten and enjoyed around the world. Pizza is a book for pizza lovers everywhere. It traces the history of this popular food, from its earliest form over 2000 years ago to the present. And, despite all the frozen, home delivered and microwave varieties available today, Buonassisi still argues for the simple integrity of the classic Italian style pizza. The roots of pizza go back before the Roman Empire when this nutritious 'one pan meal' was a favorite way to feed the legions who had neither knives, forks, plates or, in many cases, a table at which to sit down. A simple slice of dough covered with toppings provided the ideal meal to be eaten with the hands with a minimum of preparations or washing up. Pizza concentrates on the great pizza cooking regions of Italy - Naples, of course, but the regions of Liguria and Sicily, among many others, have made great contributions to the development of pizza. After this fascinating tour through gastronomic history, Buonassisi offers wonderful, authentic recipes that allow you to create one of these authentic pizzas for yourself. Along with the history and the local lore that surrounds each pizza in the area of its origin, Buonassisi also gives us some personal reminiscences about each pizza - how he discovered it and his impressions of the great regions of Italy. There is also a section on how to select the appropriate wines to accompany each variety and recipe. Chapters on the correct way to make your own pizza oven, predictions about the future of pizza, and even what beer and wine to drink with which pizzas, complete this fully illustrated history of Italian pizza-making and its spread around the world. Pizza is not to be missed by pizza lovers and anyone interested in food, wine and cooking.

From Booklist In America at least, where there's sausage, there must be pizza. As Rosario Buonassisi points out in *Pizza: From Its Italian Origins to the Modern Table*, sausage hasn't always been married with pizza. The earliest known pizza dates from about 200 B.C., where records indicate the existence of bread enriched with olive oil and spices and topped with lard. The advent of the tomato in the seventeenth century contributed the red color so prevalent

in today's product. Italian emigration in the nineteenth century spread these traditions abroad. As an Italian concerned for authenticity, Buonassisi doesn't find every variation on pizza to be either legitimate or worthwhile, and he spurns what most Americans call pizza. He also addresses the ideal drink to accompany pizza. Virtually any wine or beer goes well with pizza, depending on the toppings, but he adamantly opposes the American habit of carbonated cola drinks, finding them too strong, masking pizza's essential goodness. Mark Knoblauch Copyright copy; American Library Association. All rights reserved An ideal book for the die-hard pizza fans, this one keeps its sights firmly on pizza's original Italian traditions, and is well-seasoned with color photos. (Joan Brunskill Associated Press 2000-05-29) One of the great unheralded cookbooks of the last year ... This is the kind of book you keep wanting to quote to all of your friends. (Russ Parsons Los Angeles Times 2001-02-07) Placing pizza in a historical and cultural context insures greater appreciation and respect for the humble slice, as do the archival photos of artifacts, celebrities, ovens, kitchens and, most of all, the pies themselves in all their glorious textures and colors. One can almost smell the basil. (Publishers Weekly 2000-08-21) If you love pizza, run out for this book. You won't be disappointed. (Nick Malgieri Cookbook Digest 2001-06-01) Pizza is a delightfully entertaining and informative book. The photos, art and layout are stunning. (Adrian Marks January Magazine 2000-12-01) More than just a cookbook. It's an authoritative text on the history of pizza. (Phoenix Home and Garden 2001-01-01) Well organized, well-written, nicely illustrated guide to the culinary origins of North America's favorite fast food. (Kevin Connolly Toronto Eye Weekly 2000-12-21) For those who can accept a different perspective on this dish, the book has much to offer. A simple Seafodd Pizza is nothing more than anchovies and chopped tomatoes, yet it makes a delightful appetizer. (Winston-Salem Journal 2001-01-31) This is a book for the pizza lover, absolutely. Accept no substitutes. (Miriam Silver NYT Regional Newspapers 2002-01-30) About the Author Rosario Buonassisi is a professional chemist, who worked and traveled for thirty years and lived on four continents. He returned to Italy in 1980 and began a new career as a writer. He has written on many subjects: popular culture, sailing, computers, and especially, food and wine. He is also an expert in archeology and is the vice president of the Associazione Lombarda Archeologia. He teaches the history of food at the Universitagrave; della Terza Etagrave; in Milan.