

■ BY MOTHER MARTHA

Sadly, the COVID virus is still blocking travel for pleasure from the United States to Italy (down 90% in 2020), but I recommend three new books in English about Italian cuisine to whet your appetite and help you plan your next trip. In the meantime console yourself by enjoying their recipes.

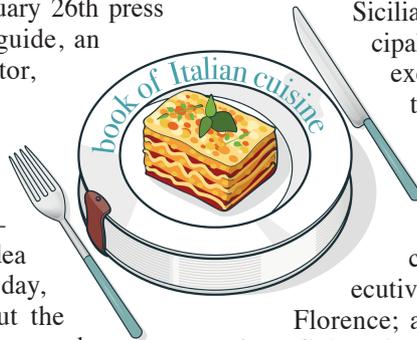
AWAR'S Roman Kitchen. The American Women's Association was founded in 1955 by Clare Boothe Luce, still the only woman to have served as US ambassador to Italy. "During the lockdown last spring, we needed an initiative to keep the nearly 200 members of AWAR involved and in touch..." wrote Maureen Fant (www.maureenfant.com) in her January 26th press release. An archeologist, tour operator and guide, an award-winning cookbook author and translator, Maureen headed the 256-page volume's team of eight authors, artists, and photographers who collected the recipes, memories, and artwork of more than 40 AWAR members. "Since we hadn't published a cookbook in 50+ years," Maureen explained, "my idea was a no-brainer. But there's more to it. Every day, we read stories and saw news reports about the courage and dedication of brave doctors, nurses and healthcare workers in Italy... We wanted to show our solidarity."

Thus **AWAR's Roman Kitchen** is technically not for sale, but available for a 20-euros donation as a spiral-bound paperback or e-book by clicking on www.awar.org/cookbook or awarcookbook@gmail.com. These proceeds will go Italy's National Department for Civil Protection for PPE (personal protection equipment) for frontline health workers.

Its recipes are divided like most cookbooks: starters, soups and pasta, main dishes, vegan and vegetables, breads, sauces, sweets, and drinks: *aperitivi*, wines and *digestivi*. About half are Italian, especially Roman, and the others are worldwide because, although almost all AWAR members are Americans, several were born in Asia or Central or South America. Most measurements are given in both metric and US units. The recipes are interspersed with how-to-prepare advice: best way to cook pasta or trim a Roman artichoke; the locations of Rome's several open-air markets; a list of ingredients perhaps unfamiliar to non-Italians like rabbit, capers, the many varieties of olives and vinegars; Italian table manners: don't serve yourself wine and always peel fruit; plus common linguistic misunderstandings.

Like **AWAR's Roman Kitchen**, **Dolce Firenze & Toscana: The Sweet Side of our Country** was written during the pan-

THREE NEW BOOKS
IN ENGLISH ABOUT
ITALIAN CUISINE



demic and by several authors. With only a few recipes at the end, this charming volume is more a sweets guide to Tuscany than a cookbook. Its text, both in English and Italian, is divided into chapters: *Signature Desserts*, *Select Desserts from Eateries and Inns*, *Delectable Bakeries*, *Gourmet Ice Cream*, *Bread and Baked Goods*, *Schools of Sweets*, *Wedding Day*, *Birthdays and Events*. Each entry is a short profile of the chef, baker, *gelataio*, or cooking school with a description of their specialties. Their locations cover all of Tuscany, but some of the protagonists aren't Tuscan-born, but Neapolitan, Bolognese, and Sicilian, as well as Austrian and American. Its principal author is Roman-born, Tuscany-adoptee PR executive and blogger Veronica Triolo; the contributors are Canadian naturalized-British James Bradburne, Director of Milan's Brera Art Museum and adjacent Braidense Library; Neapolitan Roberta Capua, former Miss Italia and now TV-Star; Luciano-born, Varese-bred Vito Mollica, the executive chef of *Il Palagio* at Hotel Four Seasons Florence; and journalist and gourmet Davide Paolini from Galeata in Emilia-Romagna.

Well-illustrated with photographs, the volume's common denominator is a love of Tuscany and of the splendid sweets to discover there; it's available on IBS, Amazon, and Feltrinelli for 18 euros.

Hot-off-the-press, *The New Cucina Italiana: What to Eat, What to Cook & Who to Know in Italian Cuisine Today* by Laura Lazzaroni was published on March 2, by Rizzoli New York. Price: \$40 US.

An award-winning journalist and author, Laura Lazzaroni was the first Editor-in-Chief of *Food and Wine Italia*. Previously the New York correspondent for the weekly magazine of *La Repubblica* newspaper, at the time features editor of *L'Uomo Vogue* in Milan, where she lives, she's the author of *Altri Grani Altri Pani* and coauthor with her mentor, the three-Michelin starred (the only one south of Rome) Abruzzese Niko Romito, of *10 Lezioni di Cucina*. She's also an accomplished bread consultant, specializing in heritage wheat.

The New Cucina Italiana is both a cookbook with recipes and a travel guide, available only in English for now and with its cooking measurements in ounces and pounds. Lazzaroni's aim, while not demeaning Italy's already well-known and multi-starred chefs, is to explain to Americans where they can find new young talent not yet known abroad. ○

