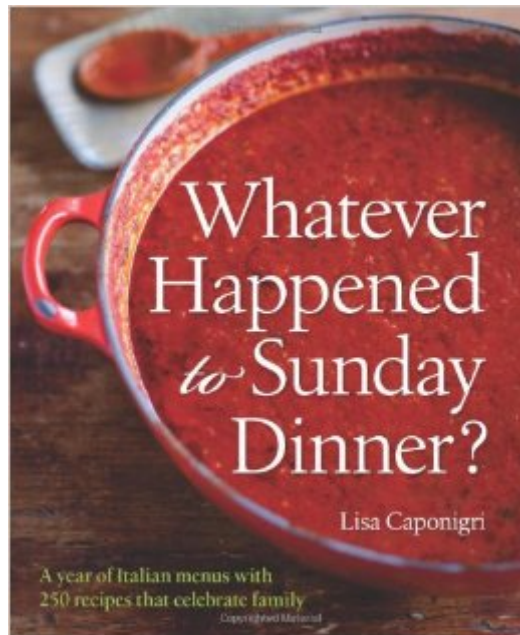


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Whatever Happened To Sunday Dinner?: A Year Of Italian Menus With 250 Recipes That Celebrate Family



Synopsis

The family that eats together stays together! That's what Lisa Caponigri believes, and she created *Whatever Happened to Sunday Dinner?* to give real families recipes they can easily cook and enjoy together. Caponigri has devised 52 delicious Italian menus--one for each Sunday of the year--that feature all the favorites, including classics like crostini, lasagne, polenta, stuffed peppers, veal piccata, risotto alla Milanese, and ricotta pie. There are also many surprises like Woodman's pasta and Italian french fries--and traditional, treasured dishes from her own family's kitchen, such as Nana's Strufoli and Grandma Caponigri's Ragu Sauce. Beautifully photographed by Guy Ambrosino, *Whatever Happened to Sunday Dinner?* showcases food styling by former Gourmet magazine editor Kate Winslow.

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Customer Reviews

My late husband's grandmother was known for her legendary Sunday dinners on Jamaica Way in Boston. She'd lay on a spread that would crush a lesser crew of an entire restaurant staff, everything from pasta to bracciolini, her speciality. And she'd do this every week. By the time I met her, she was nearly 100 years old and no longer able to do this, but I treasured the family stories about how she made her own sausages (it involved junkets all over Boston's North End to gather various cuts of pork, and the jar of bootleg Marsala wine, the secret ingredient, kept well-hidden under the sink.) If you didn't have an Italian grandmother, you probably, like me, would adore this book. And even though I don't cook for a crowd very often, I really coveted many of the recipes in

this book. And the menus? Perfect. Open a page, gather ingredients, you have an absolutely marvelous menu that you could serve to just about anyone on your guest list. Several of my personal favorites are in here--Pasta alla amatriciana, a bacon (pancetta or guanciale) flavored rough tomato sauce that is pretty much addictive. Also a lasagne with cheese and mushrooms, elegant, rich but not heavily overpowered with too many ingredients. And simple spaghetti al limone, spaghetti with lemon sauce, which is so easy and so good, you won't believe it. My favorite menu starts with a hearts of palm salad with balsamic vinegar. Hearts of palm are not well-known in the US but they are common in Brazil and they have a texture something like asparagus with a sweet-savory taste something like artichoke hearts. Then the menu continues with good old minestrone soup for the pasta course, chicken with oil and garlic and for the contorno (vegetable course), peas and prosciutto and ending almost ridiculously, but wonderfully with hazelnut truffle tart. The menus are incredibly well-designed, but beware, they are very festive, that is, serve this at Sunday midday and be worthless until 8 pm. The book is actually particularly good for the vegetable course, using chard stems, brussels sprouts, escarole, and artichokes. But there are also many of the current American favorites that are particular to some Italian communities (Chicken Vesuvio, for example) and those beloved vodka sauces, things that are in vogue now and things that are never out of fashion, such as Saltimbocca. I think this is one of the best Italian cookbooks I've seen in years, and I'm planning to give it out as gifts as well as keep one for myself for entertaining purposes. (Right. I've been known to eat pasta alla matriciana five days running.) And one gift will be to our pastor, who is Italian, and generally starts waxing lyrical, if off-topic, about ravioli and how good Italian food is, about three-quarters of the way through his sermons at 11:45 on Sunday and making everyone completely crazy. He gets the first copy. On a Sunday, of course. Before lunch. Hah!

Usually, in a book this size, I'll find 10-15 recipes that look interesting enough to make me want to spend the time to prepare them. THIS book, however, is filled with recipes I can't wait to try. I've already made 7, and they've all been winners. I'm single, so it's not like I'm cooking for a crowd every night. But I do enjoy entertaining, and my friends seem to enjoy being "guinea pigs" for my culinary experiments. I let 'em know when I get a new cookbook, and we plan 3-4 parties based on it. The book is organized into menus which can help with planning. But there's no law that says you can't "mix and match" recipes from multiple menus. Each menu includes an appetizer, a pasta dish, a main dish with at least one side, and a dessert. The desserts are worth noting: they're all consistently good, and most general Italian cookbooks won't give you 52 dessert recipes. A HUGE hit with my friends was the zuppa inglese -- trifle with lemon pudding and pound cake: rum-splashed

layers of cake, pudding, strawberry jam, and fresh strawberries, topped with whipped cream and a bit of lemon zest. I've done the pollo alla Vesuvio (chicken vesuvio) and manzo marinato (marinated flank steak) for company with excellent results. This is a seriously good Italian cookbook, well-organized, and full of mouth-watering recipes that your family and friends will love.

4.5 Stars. My husband and I lived in Italy early in our marriage and were lucky to be invited to a number of Italian family feasts. This cookbook draws from several regions in the country and stays true to the tradition, but with ingredients that are reasonably easy to get in a well-stocked US grocery store. The book is arranged in menus sized for 8-10 people- and I've cooked the first four for guests and our own family. Every recipe has been good, and at least one per menu has been spectacular. I've served 9-10 people each time including 2-3 teenaged boys, and so far we have had PLENTY of food, with a small amount left over for my lunch the next day. If you were serving people with normal appetites, I think the recipes would stretch to 12 people. My only suggestion for the author's next edition (and the reason I'd give it fewer than 5 stars) is to consider adding a 'game plan' for each menu with some steps to do ahead. I find myself studying the menus, looking for things to chop/measure/pre-cook so that the steps that must be done when guests arrive are as few and easy as possible. Getting 5 courses on the table in less than 3-4 hours is a challenge if I don't work ahead. Also, these are traditional recipes with full-fat ingredients and lots of delicious olive oil. If you are watching calories or fat grams, then you might want to modify some of the recipes. They would still be delicious, I'm sure.

Just got this book about an hour ago and am already planning tonight's dinner. Every recipe reminds me of back home in New York and the way mom used to cook. My only problem is trying to decide which recipe to make first. The recipes in this book are not fancy. It's good home cooking such as what you would find in any Italian neighborhood on a Sunday morning. This is home cooking if your Nona was from Brooklyn or Staten Island. I plan to buy a few more copies of this book to give as gifts to friends. Bon appetite

This is my first review ever on Amazon and I buy A LOT on Amazon. Words can not describe how much I love this cookbook. I am first generation American, my parents immigrated to the US in the 70's from Italy and every single recipe in this book brings back memories of my youth. I even gave a few recipes to my mother and the particular one she made reminded her of her grandmother. I used this cookbook so much it fell apart and I couldn't stand not having it that I LAMINATED each page and put it in a

binder that sits in my kitchen 24/7... I really hope she makes another cookbook!

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