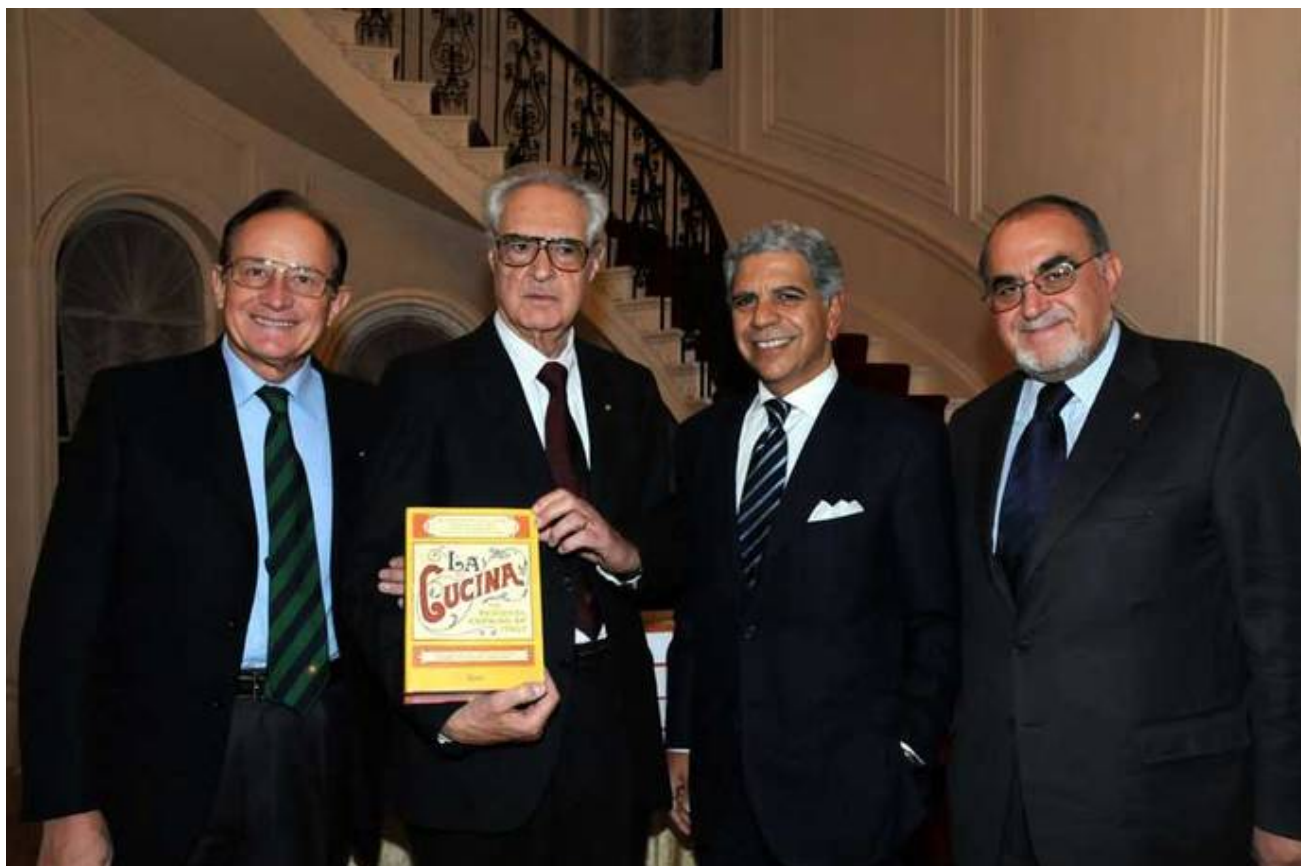




La Cucina: The Regional Cooking of Italy. 928 Pages of Authentic Tradition

Letizia Airos (November 19, 2009)



Accademia Italiana della Cucina's book "La Cucina: The Regional Cooking of Italy" was presented on November 12 at the Consulate General of Italy in New York. Published by Rizzoli, it collects in 928 pages more than 2000 authentic Italian traditional recipes

928 pages. It is a huge book, and we picked it up for the first time last Thursday. We are, however, certain that the weight it carries in the world of Italian cuisine is not only a physical one. It is truly an important book for both professionals and enthusiasts alike. Its dimensions are a bit like that of an old bible – but this bible should be kept near the stove.

The book is entitled **La Cucina: The Regional Cooking of Italy**, published by [Rizzoli USA](#) [2] and presented to the press and American readers at the Italian Consulate in New York, thanks to the generous support of the [Italian Government Tourist Board](#) [3].



It is a complete work that includes the best recipes of Italian regional cuisine. Essential, clear, organized, and designed for one specific purpose: to allow readers to create the best regional Italian dishes flawlessly with all of the correct ingredients, colors, tastes, and smells.

The path that the reader takes through its pages is fascinating. It is enough to browse through it to understand. Glimpses of the *bel paese*, past and present, are brought to life. Two thousand recipes of typical regional Italian dishes are carefully cataloged and include the best of the work carried out by the Accademia Italiana della Cucina.

But what is the Accademia Italiana della Cucina? We are addressing the few of you who may not have heard of it. The following is how the publishing house Rizzoli described it when presenting the book: "Fifty years ago, a group of Italian scholars gathered to discuss a problem: how to preserve traditional Italian cooking. They formed the Accademia Italiana della Cucina to document classic recipes from every region. The academy's more than seven thousand associates spread out to villages everywhere, interviewing grandmothers and farmers at their stoves, transcribing their recipes – many of which had never been documented before."

These words are enough to bring to life a project that has embodied the best of the best in the areas of Italian culture, business, art, and communications.

It was 1953, in Milan, when the mission to preserve the culinary legacy of Italy began, using the very heritage and traditions that were specific to each region. This project grew year after year to where it is today.

Today the academy hosts a number of educational programs and awards prizes to leaders in the culinary industry. The academy also publishes a monthly magazine and a restaurant guide.

Giovanni Ballarini, president of the Accademia Italiana della Cucina and one of the authors of the book, tells us about this new milestone publication in English.

"This work represents the culmination of our project, with recipes that represent the heritage of our country. Each recipe is related to its region of origin and there are not only well-described ingredients but the preparation techniques that change according to the geographic area, as well."

It is certainly the most complete and authentic regional Italian cookbook ever published in the English language. "It was created with the same attention to detail that has characterized classic French cooking by Julia Child," said Paolo Petroni, Secretary General of the [Franco Marengi Research Center](#) [4] at the Accademia Italiana della Cucina

There is also a mention of the challenges of translating such a vast and complex culinary landscape into English. "It had to be comprehensible to all. Nothing could be assumed. With an easy to understand logic, it is clear even to those who are not familiar with Italian terms, methods, and measures," Petroni continued.

Needless to say given its intrinsic quality, the book was immediately received with great enthusiasm by chefs on both sides of the ocean, and in the United States by one of the most famous of all: Lidia Bastianich called it a "must-have reference book."

It should also be pointed out that "this work," as Giovanni Ballarini told us, "is geared to both the typical consumer as well as chefs of haute cuisine who will find it to be a useful tool and a secure base for the preparation of their recipes."

It was the start of the 1950s when the Accademia Italiana della Cucina was formed in Milan, in the restaurant of the Hotel Diana. Who knows if its founders were aware of the role that they would play in the next 50 years in the preservation of Italian culinary culture? Certainly they would never have imagined the world today and the inevitable effects of increasing globalization.



Today, now more than ever, it has become important for a work to help pass on as well as renew the most diverse culinary traditions of the world.

La Cucina: The Regional Cooking of Italy is a fundamental tool that we recommend to all those who not only want to know how to cook Italian well but also want to understand a historical and cultural heritage that also covers extraordinary but replicable recipes.

Related Links: <http://www.accademiaitalianacucina.it> [5]

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