

Cook the Book: 'The Glorious Vegetables of Italy'

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What's the first thing you think of when you hear the words, "Italian food?" Some may jump immediately to red sauce classics like spaghetti and meatballs or lasagne bolognese. Me, on the other hand? I think of sautéed broccoli rabe with plenty of olive oil, red pepper flakes, and garlic. Perhaps marinated artichokes, grilled zucchini, or pasta tossed with fresh tomatoes, basil, and, yes, extra olive oil.

Vegetables are truly the heart and soul of Italian cuisine; in a country with a vibrant year-round growing season and a history of die-hard regional cooking, it only makes sense that the freshest vegetables of the week are highlighted at each and every table. *The Glorious Vegetables of Italy*, the third in a series of books by Italian home cooking maestro, **Domenica Marchetti**, embraces just this concept.

Marchetti takes us on a tour of just about any Italian vegetable you could find stateside, from artichokes and cardoons to tomatoes and winter squash, utilizing the produce in multitudinous ways. Her "vegetable essentials" chapter is a

wonderful primer on picking, storing, and simply preparing your farmer's market haul with Italian flair. The remainder of the book generally skews toward the complex, but there's nothing more difficult than making pizza dough or frying crepes. Marchetti offers recipes for every course, from appetizers to dessert to condiments, each highlighting a particular quality of vegetables. The book is not specifically vegetarian, and it does include a few meat-heavy mains, but most of the meat appears in nibbles or as a flavor enhancer in vegetable-centric dishes, so it's easy to sub out if needed.

Like the previously reviewed *Glorious Pasta of Italy*, this vegetable version is drop dead gorgeous. The photography, by San Francisco-based **Sang An**, is soft, rustic, and made me want to drop everything and get in the kitchen right. That. Instant. But unlike many glossy, well-shot cookbooks these days, the recipes inside are totally on point and the writing between them is warm, inviting, and informative.

This week, we'll explore a few of the glorious vegetable recipes this book has to offer. I begin with a simple crostini slathered with tomato marmalade and broiled with fontina cheese. Then we'll roast a bunch of carrots with balsamic and honey before smashing together a mixture of tender potatoes and green beans with a pan of crisped pancetta. Finally, we'll end the week with tender swiss chard, spinach, and ricotta nudi tossed in a simple tomato sauce.

Win 'The Glorious Vegetables of Italy'

Thanks to our friends at Chronicle Books, we have five (5) copies of *The Glorious Vegetables of Italy* to give away this week. All you need to do for a chance to win a copy is to **tell us about the most glorious Italian vegetable dish you've ever encountered** in the comments section below.