



Crazy in the Kitchen: Food, Feuds, and Forgiveness in an Italian American Family

Louise DeSalvo

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Crazy in the Kitchen: Food, Feuds, and Forgiveness in an Italian American Family Louise DeSalvo

With this stunning memoir of growing up in Italian-American New Jersey, Louise DeSalvo proves that your family's past is baked right into the bread you eat.

In Louise DeSalvo's family, in 1950s New Jersey, the kitchen becomes the site for fierce generational battle. As Louise's step-grandmother stubbornly recreates the domestic habits of her Southern Italian peasant upbringing, she clashes painfully with Louise's convenience-food-loving mother, who is set on total Americanization. Louise, meanwhile, dreams of the day when in her own kitchen she'll produce perfect fresh pasta or pan-seared pork chops with fennel. But as Louise grows up to indulge in the kind of amazing food her impoverished ancestors could never have imagined and travels to Italy herself, her adult discoveries give her new insight into the tensions of her childhood. In unearthing the oppressive conditions that led Southern Italians to emigrate en masse to the United States, gaining a subtler understanding of the struggles between her parents and their parents, and starting a more happily food-obsessed family of her own, Louise DeSalvo arrives at a fuller and more compassionate picture of her own roots. And, in the process, she reveals that our image of the festive and bounteous Italian-American kitchen may exist in part to mask a sometimes painful history.

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