



Cooking by Hand

Paul Bertolli , Gail Skoff , Judy Dater

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One of the most respected chefs in the country, Paul Bertolli earns glowing praise for the food at California's renowned Oliveto restaurant. Now he shares his most personal thoughts about cooking in his long-awaited book, **Cooking by Hand**. In this groundbreaking collection of essays and recipes, Bertolli evocatively explores the philosophy behind the food that Molly O'Neill of the *New York Times* described as "deceptively simple, [with] favors clean, deep, and layered more profusely than a mille-feuille."

From "Twelve Ways of Looking at Tomatoes" to Italian salumi in "The Whole Hog," Bertolli explores his favorite foods with the vividness of a natural writer and the instincts of a superlative chef. Scattered throughout are more than 140 recipes remarkable for their clarity, simplicity, and seductive appeal, from Salad of Bitter Greens, Walnuts, Tesa, and Parmigiano and Chilled Shellfish with Salsa Verde to Short Ribs Agrodolce and Tagliolini Pasta with Crab. Unforgettable desserts, such as Semifreddo of Peaches and Mascarpone and Hazelnut Meringata with Chocolate and Espresso Sauce, round out a collection that's destined to become required reading for any food lover.

Rich with the remarkable food memories that inspire him, from the taste of ripe Santa Rosa plums and the aroma of dried porcini mushrooms in his mother's ragu to eating grilled bistecca alla Fiorentina on a foggy late autumn day in Chianti, **Cooking by Hand** will ignite a passion within you to become more creatively involved in the food you cook.

Cooking by Hand Details

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Author : Paul Bertolli , Gail Skoff , Judy Dater

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Matt says

For a very formative period of my career I cooked for an (unnamed here) madman who had been Bertolli's sous-chef. One of the first things he had me do--after instructing me to forget all the crap I thought I knew about food and cooking--was read this book.

I wish I could thank him for that.

"Cooking by Hand" is really a fantastic cookbook. It may be the best-written cookbook (and one of the best written BOOKS) I've ever read. Bertolli's food has so much more soul than most of his contemporaries that it's astounding. The man just plain "gets it".

If you want to truly learn to cook rustic Italian fare this book can teach you everything you'll need to know about making your own pasta, hearty braises, how to handle seasonal vegetables, make that elusive liquid gold "sugo" and generally impress the crap out of you.

Bridget says

one of my favorite cookbooks. it's probably more writing about food than it is recipes, but it's really awesome for anyone interested in traditional italian cooking. it's worth it for the pasta section alone.

note to my vegan friends: as you're the only ones who i think look at my reviews i thought i'd mention that this book has some interesting stuff for you but the majority of it isn't vegan friendly.

Jackie says

Desert island. I will never outgrow this book.

Gabe says

Probably one of my favorite books on the culinary arts. Beautifully written and great philosophy-of-cooking kind of stuff. Inspirational and educational at the same time.

Mihai says

Great cookbook - not as focused on cooking by hand as the title would suggest. A wealth of italian recipes - from the most simple dishes with a couple of ingredients to complete menus and wine pairings.

Marjorie Elwood says

By far the largest portion of this book is a compendium of recipes for fairly esoteric foods, such as balsamic

vinegar and an assortment of divine cured meats. Had the author left it at that, I would have given this a 4-star rating. But he concluded with a "conversation with a glass of wine", in which the wine, the radicchio, and various other foodstuffs chat with the author. A mite too precious for me.

Peter says

This is a beautiful book by a master of the craft. Bertolli has been an unsung chef in the US because he has been busy cooking and writing evidently. He is really the chef that put Chez Panisse on the map, co-authoring the Menus cookbook with Alice Waters. This book is full of dense and technical information, as well as heartfelt and goofy writing. A great book for people who care about food and what it can mean.

erik says

Paul Bertolli is awesome, and this book is full of scattered gems, but it's organized in such a schizophrenic manner that it's hard to get anything out of it without effort. You can't really use it as a reference book; you have to read it from cover to cover, and then pray you can retain some of his ideas.

That said, it still gets 4 stars because of its sections on pasta (the gnocchi!) and on curing and sausage making. Those sections alone would be worth the cover price.

Dave says

In addition to Ruhlman's Ratio, this is a book that will always have the status "currently reading." Every time I read a section, I learn something new. I recently spent some time in the pasta chapter. I was surprised that a book with this title mentioned nothing about rolling pasta by hand, all that's discussed are machine methods, but it is still a tome of knowledge.

The brief discussion of flour is concentrated with good facts about the various grains from the hardest durum wheat to the relatively soft Italian farro and how their composition manifests in the derived pasta. While I won't use machines to make pasta (too much cleanup and time to use), I will use this information to hunt down some specialty flours and create some interesting new (new to me and my family) pastas.

It's my third loan from the library. Maybe I should just break down and buy it...
