

The Basic Art of Italian Cooking

About the Author: MARIA LIBERATI

As a former international super model, Maria Liberati never dreamed that she would go from being a fashion diva to a domestic diva. Ironically, while jet setting off to modeling assignments around the world, Maria became closer to the simplicity of life and food in the country setting of her family's vineyard in the mountains of central Italy. There she began to experience the real tastes of food that she remembered from her childhood.

Maria's passion began when she was only four-years old and would accompany her 'nonno' (grandfather) on shopping trips to the Italian Market in Philadelphia to buy grapes to make wine and fresh ingredients for meals. At the market, he would teach Maria how to select the fruits and vegetables that 'nonna', her grandmother, would use for the traditional family Sunday dinner.

While at the family vineyard, Maria discovered that her great grandparents had owned an acclaimed bakery in the South of Italy and that her great aunt had cooked for several members of the Italian Royal Family. This sparked Maria's dormant interest in food and cooking. She began consulting with chefs who were family friends and spent hours translating and reworking some of the old recipes left by Great Aunt Angelina.

After meeting her fiancé in the town where her grandfather was born, Maria continued to study and work with chefs in trattorias and bed-and-breakfasts throughout Italy. While her boyfriend—a well-known architect in Italy—was busy with work, during her vacations Maria would busy herself with her new-found passion: food and cooking. She soon found herself developing cooking programs for English, German and Japanese tourists at various vineyards in Italy.

In working with students from so many different countries, Maria put to good use her degree in foreign language education which she received from Temple University in Philadelphia. With the success of the programs in Italy, she soon started to receive requests to put together cooking programs in the United States. She also began writing articles on food and restaurant review columns.

Maria's fervor and expertise have led many to look to her as an informative source on Italian cooking and Italian lifestyle. She is also a successful businesswoman and is vice president of the family-run Liberati Investment Corporation, where her brother John Liberati is president. The company was selected as one of Philadelphia's fastest growing companies for 2004–2005 by the Wharton School of Business.

In addition to *The Basic Art of Italian Cooking*, Maria is working on two more books on Italian food and culture. In addition to these projects, Maria is also busy developing a television show, creating a monthly lifestyle newsletter expanding her web site (www.marialiberati.com). Maria divides her time between offices and residences in Italy and the United States. In Italy, Maria continues to work on her villa, which much like many of her special dishes, is taking some time, but promises to be well worth the wait.