

Chewing the Fat: An Oral History of Italian Foodways from Fascism to Dolce Vita



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(Brandt Koss III)*

CHEWING THE FAT: AN ORAL HISTORY OF ITALIAN FOODWAYS FROM FASCISM TO DOLCE VITA

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Medea, United States, 2015. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 229 x 152 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book ***** Print on Demand *****.Italy is experiencing a surge of gastronomic nostalgia, a yearning to recreate and relive the delectable rustic meals of yesteryear, of brimming chalices of wine and sauce-laden pasta. A return to the simple abundance of Italy's past! Ah, if only it were true. If there was a glorious yesteryear of Italian feasting, it was enjoyed only by society's elite. As for standard, rustic fare, such meals bore little resemblance to what is now considered—even in Italy—traditional Italian food. Determined to uncover the true roots of Italian cuisine and reveal its intriguing yet uncelebrated past, food historian Karima Moyer-Nocchi interviewed Italian ninetysomething women from various walks of life, from charcoal-makers to countesses. Her travels spanned from the far north to the deep south, as well as Italy's former landholdings. All of the interviewees had lived through the harrowing years called the Ventennio fascista, the twenty-year reign of fascism in Italy, and were eager to have their final say. What follows are eighteen remarkable oral narratives, each building upon the last to create a mosaic of Italian foodways, from the fascist era through to the post World War II boom, the Dolce Vita. Each woman contributes a recipe chosen specifically to reflect what food was like when she was growing up under Mussolini. The narratives are separated by astringent, yet entertaining essay briefs, illuminating various aspects of gastronomic history and daily life in fascist Italy. Engrossingly entertaining, *Chewing the Fat* gently debunks the myths of Italy's gastronomic nostalgia industry, revealing a culture of food that is surprisingly different from the image most people have of Italian cuisine. A remarkable insight into the realities of Italian food....

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