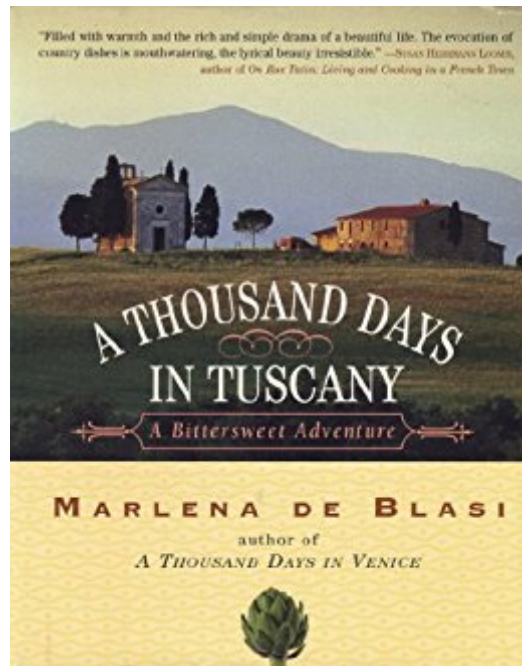




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A Thousand Days In Tuscany: A Bittersweet Adventure



Synopsis

American chef Marlena de Blasi and her Venetian husband, Fernando, married rather late in life. In search of the rhythms of country living, the couple moves to a barely renovated former stable in Tuscany with no phone, no central heating, and something resembling a playhouse kitchen. They dwell among two hundred villagers, ancient olive groves, and hot Etruscan springs. In this patch of earth where Tuscany, Umbria, and Lazio collide, there is much to feed de Blasi's two passions--food and love. We accompany the couple as they harvest grapes, gather chestnuts, forage for wild mushrooms, and climb trees in the cold of December to pick olives, one by one. Their routines are not that different from those of villagers centuries earlier. They are befriended by the mesmeric Barlozzo, a self-styled village chieftain. His fascinating stories lead de Blasi more deeply inside the soul of Tuscany. Together they visit sacred festivals and taste just-pressed olive oil, drizzled over roasted country bread, and squash blossoms, battered and deep-fried and sprayed with sea-salted water. In a cauldron set over a wood fire, they braise beans in red wine, and a stew of wild boar simmers overnight in the ashes of their hearth. Barlozzo shares his knowledge of Italian farming traditions, ancient health potions, and artisanal food makers, but he has secrets he doesn't share, and one of them concerns the beautiful Floriana, whose illness teaches Marlena that happiness is truly a choice. Like the pleasurable tastes and textures of a fine meal, *A Thousand Days in Tuscany* is as satisfying as it is enticing. The author's own recipes are included.

Book Information

File Size: 725 KB

Print Length: 337 pages

Publisher: Algonquin Books (November 1, 2004)

Publication Date: November 1, 2004

Sold by:Â Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B003I1WY1G

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #221,735 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #23 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Travel > Europe > Italy > Tuscany #35 in Books > Travel > Europe > Italy > Tuscany #73 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Regional & International > European > Italian

Customer Reviews

An American journalist and chef extraordinaire moves into a small Tuscan village with her Venetian banker husband after a few years of marriage. Both are seeking a romanticized bucolic past that the old village sage says no longer exists. Living in a rustic renovated stable, Chou and Fernando are captivated by the scents, sounds, and sights of Tuscany and quickly blend into life in their village. There they share recipes, cooking, feasting, foraging the hills and woods for wild delicacies, and build an outside oven to bake bread and fire-pit for roasting. Barlozzo, the enigmatic sage, takes them under his wing and relishes their apt attention as he relates village history and arranges their participation in local activities such as grape picking and stomping, finding wild mushrooms, harvesting olives, and festivals. The bittersweet part comes through Fernando's flair for Italian operatic drama, questioning their decision to leave Venice. Barlozzo has secrets that eat at his heart, finally revealed through the terminal illness of his long-time beloved who had married another. There is yearning for times past that can only be tasted briefly, yet the flavor of village life fills and satisfies them. Cooking and eating are the heart of Tuscany, and this book brings an intense, colorful experience with mouth-watering recipes. Delightful, reflective, philosophical, and charming story based on the authors' life.

Extremely tedious and boring. If she wants to write a cook book, then write one! Too many metaphors and disjointed descriptions. I managed to get about 1/4 of the way through and gave up. I had read "A Thousand Days in Venice" which was not fantastic but had enough to encourage me to read this one. Mistake!

I lived in Northern Italy (Bologna) for a number of years and spent a great deal of time in Tuscany towns so I was transported back to Italy and read the book very slowly -- a chapter or so at night before I went to sleep so that I would have lovely (refreshed by the book) memories to put me to sleep. I had also read A Thousand Days in Venice as well as I also spent a great deal of time in Venice while living in Italy. Thank you, Ms. deBlasi for reviving many lovely memories. When you have been able to make life long friends in Italy they remain just that - life long friends! Your

descriptions of living in Italy are just the best - both of the landscape and of the people. I hope you write more books based on your life in Italy.

This is a charming, insightful story of an American chef and her love for a Venetian banker, the Italian people, the Tuscan village of San Casciano del Bagni, and for preparing sumptuous Italian meals. The author's enthusiasm for all her new loves is contagious, and she easily draws in readers who wish to be transported into her realm of discovery and delight. There are familiar elements to this story of an American (or British writer) succumbing to the charms of Italy (or France), relocating, and then coping with the quirks and frustrations of settling into a new culture. But author Marlena de Blasi describes her transformation so well and she presents her new community with such passion, that readers are easily enchanted. Her focus on rustic Italian cooking, the feasts at which her new friends gathered, and the recipes is a special treat. Michael Helquist, MARIE EQUI: Radical Politics and Outlaw Passions

I enjoyed the descriptive writing which was almost too much for me, yet I was able to understand the way she draws us into her words. It was wonderful to read so much about Tuscany, a region so close to my heart. It was truly a bittersweet story, but peppered with hard truth among the flowers. Of course the food descriptions and recipes were divine, I am looking forward to trying some of them. I have now read three of the author's books and enjoyed them all.

I have read many accounts of people transplanting themselves into villages in Europe, adjusting to rural life, to the locals, the language, the customs. This is a favorite! De Blasi writes well with a unique "tournure de phrase." Her candor is endearing. Her descriptions of the villagers, the food, the customs stayed with me long after I finished the book. Now I look forward to reading *A Thousand Days in Venice* which precedes the Tuscany experience.

Perfect follow up to *1000 days in Venice* and thoroughly enjoying their adventure. She writes in a fashion that brings the reader into their lives. Love her work.

I have only recently discovered De Blasi, first in "*A Thousand Days in Venice*" and now I have just finished her "*A Thousand Days in Tuscany*" which both delights and inspires and creates an appealing urge to leave the world for a while and bask under the Tuscan sun. What I find most attractive about her books is her keen ability to maintain a nice balance between her

characterization, her travel commentary and the tease of her culinary arts. Her characters are warm and acceptable, her description of the Italian countryside is so beautifully described that I feel the urge to leave my recliner and hop on a plane and visit Tuscany, not as a tourist but as a participant. Her use of figurative language is alive and fresh in such a way that you not only read the experience but you feel it deeply. I want to see what she sees, feel what she feels, and experience what she experiences. How about "A Thousand Days in Rome"? Two thousand days? A lifetime? "A Love Affair with Verona"?

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