

Sweet Sicily



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There's nothing subtle about Sicily. From the towering cake known as the Triumph of Gluttony to the pert cherry-topped pastries called Virgin's Breasts to puckery, palate-tingling ices made from the island's luscious lemons and tangerines, Sicily is known for its audacious -- and delicious -- desserts. Pastry chef and food stylist Victoria Granof has traveled throughout Sicily learning sweet secrets and local lore from the island's pastry chefs and home bakers, and the result is *Sweet Sicily*, a lushly photographed exploration of authentic Sicilian pastry-making. For more than two thousand years, Sicily has been coveted for its fertile land and unique location in the Mediterranean. The Greeks, Romans, Normans, Austrians, French, Bourbons, and Saracens have all landed on its shores, and in turn left their imprints on its food. Granof's magical tour takes us to Modica, where Franco and Pierpaolo Ruta of the Antica Dolceria Bonajuto create chocolate pastries using a five-hundred-year-old recipe that originated with the island's Bourbon conquerors, and to the Baroque town of Noto, where master pastry chef Corrado uses jasmine blossoms planted by Saracens more than a thousand years ago to flavor his jasmine gelato. Granof goes on a quest to find the most authentic ingredients and recipes, including delectable homemade ricotta made from the milk of sheep that graze on fragrant herbs and pistachios that grow in the shadow of Mount Etna, the island's still active volcano. In

Sicily, every holiday and festival has its proper sweet accompaniment: marzipan lambs at Easter, honeyed pastry fritters at Christmas, crunchy, clove-scented cookies called "bones of the dead" for All Soul's Day. Granof explores these customs and festivals, gathering heirloom recipes, along with local anecdotes and advice. In addition to sweets that are already familiar to Americans, such as cannoli, cassata, and lemon ice, she introduces us to dozens of delectable pastries, confections, and cookies that are destined to become favorites as well. With a guide to festivals and pastry shops throughout the island, and nearly one hundred recipes formulated for use in American kitchens, Sweet Sicily is an unforgettable exploration of the desserts of the world's most beguiling island.

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