

Eating Rome: Living the Good Life in the Eternal City

Elizabeth Minchilli

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Elizabeth Minchilli has been eating her way through Rome since she was 12 years old. Eating Rome, based on her popular blog Elizabeth Minchilli in Rome, is her homage to the city that feeds her, literally and figuratively. Her story is a personal, quirky and deliciously entertaining look at some of the city's monuments to food culture. Join her as she takes you on a stroll through her favorite open air markets; stop by the best gelato shops; order plates full of carbonara and finish the day with a brilliant red Negroni. Coffee, pizza, artichokes and grappa are starting points for mouth-watering stories about this ancient city. Illustrated with Minchilli's beautiful full-color photos and enriched with her favorite recipes for Roman classics like vignarola, carciofi alla romana and carbonara, Eating Rome is the book that you want if you are planning your first trip to Rome or if you have been to Rome a dozen times. And even if you just want to spend a few hours armchair traveling, Elizabeth Minchilli is the person you want by your side.

Eating Rome: Living the Good Life in the Eternal City Details


Date : Published April 7th 2015 by St. Martin's Griffin

ISBN : 9781250047687

Author : Elizabeth Minchilli

Format : Paperback 256 pages

Genre : Travel, Cultural, Italy, Food and Drink, Food, Cookbooks, Cooking, Nonfiction

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From Reader Review Eating Rome: Living the Good Life in the Eternal City for online ebook

Julie says

I received a complimentary copy of this book through NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Elizabeth Minchilli's book is not as much a cook book as it is a lifestyle book. There are some recipes, but recipes are not the primary focus of the book. Eating Rome: Living the Good Life in the Eternal City is more about the Italian lifestyle at least as it involves food. The book is filled with beautiful photos as well as tidbits for travelers so they look a little less like tourists. However, I don't know how critical it is to know how and when to eat gelato.

In addition to helpful hints on eating cookies for breakfast and not touching the produce in a farmers' market, Ms. Minchilli offers up some colorful personal antidotes about her experiences in Rome as well as suggestions for restaurants and various menu items. Personally, I'm all for cookies for breakfast!

While the book was interesting and beautiful, it was not what I expected. I had hoped for a lot more recipes and not as many travel tips.

Heather says

An insider's guide to Rome that you won't want to miss! Whether you have visited Rome or want to - this is a perfect book about Italian culture and food. Love the restaurant recommendations and recipes. I can't wait to go back to Rome! But in the meantime- enjoy this book.

Linda Kissam says

Take a break from being a tourist. Put on your walking shoes and get ready to know and eat Rome like never before. This charming book is the perfect blend of cookbook, memoir, etiquette and guidebook. Elizabeth Minchilli's Eating Rome: Living the Good Life in the Eternal City is a uniquely authentic frolic through the world of Roman food, district by district. It's not just pointing out where to go, but also why Italians love the places mentioned.

Each chapter reads like its own story following a theme: shopping at local markets, ordering coffee, the tradition of cucina povera, the elusive Italian breakfast or the imposing Sunday dinner. Elizabeth's personal experience is the thread holding the stories together, but at the end of each chapter, salient tips are listed for those who would take to the Roman streets themselves, along with her favorite Roman addresses and, of course, recipes. That being said, this definitely isn't a cookbook in the traditional sense — some of the chapters only have one or two recipes, and many have none. But by the end of the book, it feels as though you've been to Rome, eaten Rome, lived like a Roman. And you have more than enough destinations for the next time you find yourself in the eternal city.

I thought it would be fun to invite review partner Adrienne Morrison to give her take on this blended cookbook as she has yet to travel Rome, while I have been there several times. Would it be meaningful or relevant to both of us, or just one of us? Read below and you be the judge.

Adrienne

EATING ROME is a fun and informative read, especially for those of us who have not yet visited or experienced living in Italy. A definite read-ahead before you travel, especially if love food and prefer a local rather than tourist experience. Elizabeth Minchille's view of the city and her friendly delivery lifted me out of my easy-chair as I imagined exploring Rome by her side, struggling to catch-up as she quickly moves through her favorite city chatting away about her memories, stop-ping for a morning espresso and pastry, then on to the fresh vegetable market, and back to her kitchen to make Minestrone (recipe on p. 20). "Of course you can play around with the ingredients. And feel free to throw in an old piece of Parmesan rind, which will add extra flavor." Who knew? But wait, what is Parmesan rind exactly - Do we have it in the States?

As she leads readers through Rome's streets (I imagine myself arm-in-arm with Elizabeth as she gently admonishes me for displaying my American ways and embarrassing her just a little). It's like having a BFF or big sister whispering in your ear how to act in public. "Today's Roman food lesson involves eating in the street. Don't do it." (p.23) "But as with everything Italian, every rule has its huge gaping exceptions (which is why you need this book to help navigate the sometimes treacherous food landscape). So, to repeat, never ever eat in the street. Unless, of course, it is" (p.25) Can you guess? No? Not sure? I know the answer because I have this way cool new best-friend-in-a-book who shares her personal stories and favorite places to eat plus her recipes.

Speaking of recipes, think I'll start out by making the Artichoke Lasagne (p. 62) since I like both but can't quite imagine them together. And when I'm feeling really brave, I plan on mastering Gabriele Bonci's pizza (p. 214) because, well, knowing how to make authentic pizza dough will be a feather in my cooking repertoire cap. Wish me luck in manipolazione — the handling of the dough.

Linda

Sure wish I had this book while I was there, especially beginning with trip two. I would have been familiar with some of the things she was talking about and places she takes the reader to, but now more open to suggestions and foodie adventures. My trip would have been less about trying to find my way around and more about really experiencing the food wine and culture of Rome like a native.

Eating Rome is one of the new hybrid cookbooks just now hitting the market. I find them fascinating and easy to read. They use personal experiences as the backbone of the book blending in practical recipes, tips and great pictures. This particular book is food-focused leading the way to a no-stone unturned foodie tour peppered with quirky advice. I would have paid any amount of money to have a guide that explains the proper way to order coffee at an Italian coffee bar, how to eat gelato like a Roman, how to love grappa or why there is no such thing as "one-stop-shopping" in Rome. These are the part of the simple indulgences that make a trip so fun.

I highly recommend this book as a birthday, holiday or bon voyage gift. Place in a basket with the ingredients for one of the decadent recipes and you've elevated your gift from "thanks" to "Ahh-mazing."

Martha says

Some people buy cookbooks intending to cook from the recipes; others buy cookbooks to read, regarding them as armchair travelogues with tasting notes. For me, books about food are among the most evocative writings about places and times, so I count myself firmly among the second group. It's a moot point these days whether books with recipes have any future in a world where almost anything you want to cook can be found at the click of a google. There are still exceptions. The wonderful collections of recipes by Sami Tamimi and Yotam Ottolenghi are books to read and use. Their extraordinary Jerusalem is both a usable collection of recipes and an extraordinary chronicle of a remarkable city.

Elizabeth Minchilli's *Eating Rome*, a delightful memoir of one American woman's Italianization aspires to this tradition. It's a tough act to follow, but Elizabeth manages to bring wit and passion to her stories of food-life in Italy.

When she was barely twelve years old, her suddenly peripatetic parents decided to move her and her two siblings to Rome. That experiment lasted two years, and left the author with an unquenchable passion for Italy. Later, university studies in Florence and marriage to Domenico from Puglia sealed her fate. Within the twenty-five food-centric chapters of *Eating Rome*, ranging from *How to Feed a Roman Dog* / *How to feed a Roman Baby*, through *How to Eat Gelato*, to *Learning to Love Grappa*, the reader gets a crash course on what Italian food is really all about, and in the process, is given a wry, loving portrait of life in modern day Italy.

Most of the chapters follow a similar pattern: an introductory section presenting the issues, followed by suggestions, where to buy ingredients, recommended cafés or restaurants and closes with two or three recipes. I've used Chapter 15, *To panino or not to panino?* That is the Roman question. As an example to stand for the rest, as it is typical.

Beginning with the vexed question of when do Italians eat panini, she explores the difficulty of persuading her Italian husband and daughters that 'sandwiches' can in fact be a real meal.

The next section, *Anatomy of a Roman Panino*, moves onto the construction, the bread, with explanations of the different regional types used; followed, of course with: the filling: mortadella or ... and finally after explaining the difference, several suggestions for enjoying old and new styles of panini. The concluding recipe section includes the Italian picnic and beach favourite, *panino di frittata*.

It's a format that works extremely well. We get a sauce pot full of useful and accurate information about eating in Italy in an amusing, pain-free manner. The photography throughout, which is Mrs Minchilli's own, is as delicious as the food she is describing.

My only real criticism is the America-centric-ness of it all. You do have European readers after all. I especially wish that metric measurements had also been more consistently provided alongside the American cup style. Nonetheless, for armchair travellers or anyone planning a trip to Rome in the near future, this will help you get through the long winter, or the weeks until your departure. 5 tasty *****

Caveat emptor: As a long time reader of Elizabeth's blog and follower of her Twitter and Instagram accounts, when the ARC for this became available on NetGalley, I jumped all over it. My expectations were more than met.

Rebecca Montemurro says

Read from front to back in preparation for our trip to Rome. Such a great read. Informative, lively, thorough, and makes you want to jump on a plane immediately! Can't wait to eat our way through Rome!

Michelle says

Don't read this book on an empty stomach! This book was a pure joy to read, from start to finish. Elizabeth Minchilli is so likable, and I loved reading about her experiences as an American expat living in Italy. I also learned a lot about Italian and Rome food culture - like not eating within ten feet of a historical monument in Rome! I went to Italy in 2006 and 2007, and reading this book made me nostalgic for all the wonderful food I ate, and seriously made me want to book a flight to Rome and eat at all the places she recommends in the book. The recipes at the end of each chapter seem great - I haven't tried them yet but they seem like something that even I could do - and I'm a wreck in the kitchen. I especially loved the chapters about eating the whole animal and Sunday lunch.

I received an ARC in exchange for an honest review.

Becky R. says

Great advice. I love the personal advice here & obvious love affair w/ Rome & its food. I can't wait to visit!

Deb (Readerbuzz) Nance says

Food...Rome...recipes...recommendations...rumination...what else would you want in a book that shares the best of eating in Rome?

Teresa says

3.5 stars

This is part memoir/lifestyle blog, part cookbook, and part travel guide. The lifestyle part is somewhat charming but I could not make it through it in large chunks. I guess, there was such a preoccupation with the "correct" and uniquely Roman thing to do and the rules to follow at all times that I simply could only take it in small chunks. Minchilli imparts a lot of information however, in a charming way. The photographs are unpretentious but well done. As a recipe book, the header notes are often very long meaning the title can be on a different page from even the ingredients. However, the verbosity in the header notes translates into thorough cooking instructions. As a travel guide, I've never been to Rome but I'll certainly look up some of Minchilli's recommendations when I do.

Alohatiki says

After reading this book, I'm ready to book a plane ticket back to Rome.

Ubiquitousbastard says

When I started reading this book, I really knew very little about present day Rome or Roman culture. Somehow, in the barely 200 pages, I feel like I learned quite a bit. Elizabeth Minchelli wrote a book that is part travel guide, part memoir and part recipe book and yet I don't feel like she wasted my time. The elements all blended together perfectly...like several of the recipes that I must now try. For the recipes, she does give you opportunities for substitution and experimentation, which I absolutely appreciate. She also gives cultural context and sometimes historical context, which makes the recipes seem even more intriguing. Then there are the very pretty photos throughout the book. Only the offal looked bad to me, but offal always looks...terrible.

I think my three complaints about this book are: the pushing of her app. I get it, you have an app you want to sell. I have a book I want to be reading about Rome. I also didn't like the few instances of repetition; I get that if it's read as a recipe book (not straight through like I read it) those instances aren't noticeable, but for me reading it to learn more about Rome and find some new recipes along the way, it was annoying. Third, she focuses far too much on cheesy things. I know, that shouldn't be a sin, but it makes me kind of doubt her taste since if its cheese and olive oil, she's down.

Overall: I need to go to Rome now, because it sounds quirky and historic and just plain weird and that's amazing. I'm absolutely glad that I read (and won) this book.

I received a copy for free through Goodreads First Reads.

Ann Mah says

I am buying this for all my friends based on the meatball recipe alone.

Rebecca says

(3.5) Minchilli's parents moved the family from America to Rome on a whim when she was 12 years old. Over the years she kept going back to Italy: to Florence as a graduate student, and then to stay when she married Domenico. She has written a number of coffee table books about Italian art and architecture.

Here, through recipes and personal stories (many adapted from her blog), she shares her enthusiasm for Italian food and for Rome in particular. I loved the sections on rules for drinking espresso and eating gelato (I was reminded of my first experiences with both in Tuscany last April), and about the etiquette of eating outdoors. Apparently the only two things you may eat while walking are gelato and pizza bianco. Anything

else is considered uncouth; there's a law against eating within 10 meters of a historical site.

Minchilli finishes each chapter with a list of favorite eateries, so this is a practical guide anyone would benefit from taking along on a trip to Rome.

Related reading: *Gastronomy of Italy* by Anna del Conte.

Courtney says

Having spent two stints living in Rome, I was excited to read about the Eternal City's food and how our experiences compared.

Elizabeth Minchilli's *Eating Rome* does not disappoint. I found Minchilli's advice for navigating the Roman food world extremely accurate and her infusion of personal experiences charming. From the Italian take on breakfast to successfully ordering a gelato, how to shop the open markets to the best way to eat a Bianco pizza, Minchilli takes the reader on more than a culinary adventure.

Originally I thought *Eating Rome* would be a guide on what to eat: where to find best pizza, gelato or cappuccino. It has all that, but also so much more. Minchilli captures the allure and essence of Rome and its residents. It is the experience of navigating the open markets or trying to buy a cornetto. Plus there are the delicious recipes, which I can't wait to try.

J.H. Moncrieff says

I don't normally get really excited about a trip (other than the moment I book it) until I'm on the plane. Elizabeth Minchilli's book changed that - I'm now beyond excited for my spring vacation in Italy - and, most importantly - looking forward to exploring Rome and its food scene. Which is a revelation, since previously people had told me, "See the Colosseum, the Vatican, and get out."

Eating Rome is a wonderful book for anyone interested in Italy and Italian cuisine, but it really shines as a culinary guide for foodies. I know I will be writing down a lot of Minchilli's recommendations and trying to find them when I'm there. And I have a feeling I'll return home with my backpack stuffed to the brim with amazing food.

The author's anecdotes and observations are interesting and fun to read, and this is hands down one of the most enjoyable books I've read this year. I found it difficult to put down. Only two small annoyances kept me from giving this five stars.

One, Minchilli feels the need to stress her typically "Roman" behaviour, as well as her children's, in almost every chapter. There was an awful lot of, "Like any good Roman mother, I..." or "Like any Roman wife, I..." or "Like any Roman child, Sophie..." This got tiresome after a while, as if she were screaming, "I'm ROMAN! Really, I am! I belong here as much as anyone else!" You live in Rome; we get it.

The other repeated passage, which gave almost every chapter a slightly depressing feel, was Minchilli's need

to tell us how much better things were EVERYWHERE in Rome back in the '70s, as if saying "We had these wonderful outdoor markets everywhere, but now they're all gone. Too bad for you." She rectifies this at the end with a paragraph or two about how change in the city is a good thing, but this is overridden by her lamentations throughout the book for a Rome that no longer exists.

People who don't live in Rome wouldn't know the difference if she didn't insist upon pointing it out. We'd be delighted with her finds. We don't need to know that they all pale in comparison to a Rome that existed before we got there. A Rome we'll never get to see. (Tourists ruined it, she also reminds us repeatedly.)

I suspect a lot of the repetition comes from the fact that this book is comprised of posts pulled from the author's blog, but it did lessen my enjoyment of an otherwise perfect food memoir.
