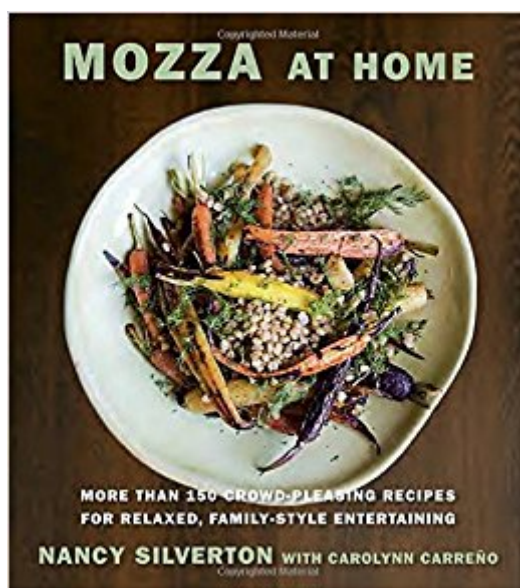


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Mozza At Home: More Than 150 Crowd-Pleasing Recipes For Relaxed, Family-Style Entertaining



Synopsis

As an award-winning chef and the owner of six busy restaurants across two continents, Nancy Silverton was so consumed by her life in the professional kitchen that for years she almost never cooked at home. With her intense focus on the business of cooking, Nancy had forgotten what made her love to cook in the first place: fabulous ingredients at the height of their season, simple food served family style, and friends and loved ones gathered around the dinner table. Then, on a restorative trip to Italy—with its ripe vegetables, magnificent landscapes, and long summer days—Nancy began to cook for friends and family again, and rediscovered the great pleasures (and great tastes!) of cooking and eating at home. Now, in *Mozza at Home*, Nancy shares her renewed passion and provides nineteen menus packed with easy-to-follow recipes that can be prepared in advance (with no fancy restaurant equipment needed!) and are perfect for entertaining. Organized by meal, each menu provides a main dish along with a complementary selection of appetizers and side dishes. Under Nancy's guidance you can mix and match all the options depending on the size of your gathering. Make a few sides for a small dinner party with friends, or make them all for a delicious family feast! And don't forget dessert—there's an entire chapter dedicated to end-of-meal treats such as Devil's Food Rings with Spiced White Mountain Frosting and Dario's Olive Oil Cake with Rosemary and Pine Nuts that can be prepared hours before serving so that the host gets to relax during the event too. Whether it's Marinated Olives and Fresh Pecorino and other appetizers that can be put out while you're assembling the rest of the meal . . . salads, such as Endive Salad with Date Anchovy Dressing, composed of sturdy lettuces that won't wilt . . . simple sides, such as Roasted Carrots and Chickpeas with Cumin Vinaigrette, that are just as delicious served at room temperature as they are warm . . . or show-stopping mains such as the Flattened Chicken Thighs with Charred Lemon Salsa Verde—there is something here for everyone and every occasion. With clever tips on how to organize your table and your time when serving many guests, *Mozza at Home* helps you throw the perfect dinner party—one that's positively stress-free and delicious!

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Nancy Silverton is the co-owner of Osteria Mozza, Pizzeria Mozza, Chi Spacca, and Mozza2Go, in Los Angeles, Singapore, and Newport Beach, California. She is the founder of the La Brea Bakery and is the only chef ever to be awarded both the Outstanding Chef and Outstanding Pastry Chef awards from the James Beard Foundation. Silverton is the author of nine cookbooks, including The Mozza Cookbook, A Twist of the Wrist, Nancy Silverton's Sandwich Book, Nancy Silverton's Pastries from the La Brea Bakery (recipient of a 2000 Food & Wine Best Cookbook Award), Nancy Silverton's Breads from the La Brea Bakery, and Desserts. Carolyn Carreño is a James Beard Award-winning journalist and the coauthor of many cookbooks, including Meat (with Pat LaFrieda), The Mozza Cookbook and A Twist of the Wrist (with Nancy Silverton), Eat Me (with Kenny Shopsin), Fresh Every Day and Sara Foster's Casual Cooking (with Sara Foster), and 100 Ways to Be Pasta (with Wanda and Giovanna Tornabene). Her book Bowls of Plenty is forthcoming. She lives in New York and San Diego.

Introduction Owing four busy Mozza restaurants in Southern California and two in Singapore, it's surprisingly easy to forget how and why I started down the path that led me here so many years ago: because of the immense pleasure I get from cooking a meal and serving it to family and friends. For many years while running La Brea Bakery and the pastry kitchen at Campanile, my first restaurant, which I opened in 1989 with my then husband, I didn't cook at all other than foods, such as pasta with butter, for my kids' dinner. But that changed about fifteen years ago, when I started spending time in Italy. From the very first summer that I rented an apartment in a small medieval hill town on the Umbria-Tuscany border where I now own a home, my being situated in Umbria and the bounty of the area turned out to be the perfect storm that blew me back into the kitchen. With local ingredients including cherry tomatoes, red torpedo onions, and fragrant basil at the height of their season; regional specialties such as chickpeas, lentils, and sheep's milk

cheese; long summer days when it stays light until almost ten o'clock; and an endless cast of hungry friends who arrived weekly from Los Angeles and rented apartments and houses in the same town, I started cooking again—more than I ever had. And despite the fact that I had rented a house with a tiny kitchen stocked with aluminum pots and pans and one dull knife, I was reminded of how much I love preparing food for family and friends—old and new. My friend Suzanne Tracht, also a chef and restaurant owner, of the Los Angeles chophouse Jar, had rented an apartment right on the piazza, in the center of town. During the day, Suzanne and I and other friends would explore the surrounding areas, discovering cheese makers, farm stands, outdoor markets that popped up in different towns on different days, and little artisan shops that sold pastas, oils, vinegars, and other condiments. We were like kids in candy stores. We bought everything that delighted us, brought it home to our inadequate kitchens, and we cooked. And cooked and cooked. While we were preparing the food, the guys and the kids would set up a long table outside, essentially in the piazza (in fact, an indoor/outdoor restaurant now exists in the very space where we once put our table). Suzanne and I would put out platters of food as they were done, preparations that showcased all the wonderful ingredients we found locally: balsamic-glazed onions with fresh bay leaves, slow-roasted tomatoes on the vine, radicchio salad, hand-sliced local prosciutto, and grilled bread—simple, rustic foods that could be prepared ahead of time, so we could sit down and enjoy the meal with everyone else. Soon, we discovered we loved our own private restaurant—as much as going out, and we began to entertain in this way night after night and, after I bought a home in the town, year after year. Meanwhile, back in Los Angeles, I had a patio built, including an outdoor fireplace to cook in and a wisteria-covered pergola under which I put a long dining table. And I began to entertain not just in Italy in the summertime, but on a year-round basis. Over the last fifteen years, I have found myself saying countless times, “Let’s have it at my house.” I’ve hosted regular weeknight get-togethers with close friends, baby showers for Mozza staff members, birthday parties, charity events, and even a couple of weddings. This book is a collection of recipes that reflects the style I developed in cooking those meals. There are no intricately plated dishes here and nothing that needs to be served piping hot. Antipasti, whether Marinated Olives with Fresh Pecorino, Pickled Vegetables, or Pimento Cheese with Celery Sticks, can be put out while you’re assembling the rest of the meal. Salads, built of sturdy lettuces such as radicchio and other chicories, Little Gem, and hearts of romaine that don’t wilt quickly, are piled high in large, wide-mouthed bowls. The simple preparations of side dishes such as Slow-Roasted Roma Tomatoes with Garlic and Thyme, Corn on the Cob with Chile Butter, Roasted Carrots with Chick-peas and Cumin, and Roasted Asparagus with Herb Vinaigrette take advantage of the natural flavor of seasonal vegetables. And

main dishes are kept simple, either marinated and grilled, as is the case with Grilled Lamb Shoulder Chops with Mint Yogurt Sauce and Sicilian Swordfish Spiedini, or as with Dave's Oven-Roasted Grouper with Spicy Tomato Marmalade and Tahini, and are cooked in the oven and served in the pans in which they were cooked. I'm not saying these are thirty-minute meals, because they're not. Home cooking is often slow cooking. There is no shortcut to braising an oxtail, but it can be done in advance, and the oven does all the work for you while you're making side dishes or taking a shower. Eggplant Lasagne, made with store-bought noodles, can be assembled hours ahead and put in the oven just in time for dinner. And all of the desserts can be made many hours prior to serving time. Or maybe not at all. When I don't have time to prepare dessert, I pass ice cream bars around after dinner, or toss a selection of artisan candy bars into the center of the table. Friends break them up and share. It's like breaking bread—only sweeter. That, for me, is what entertaining is all about. The book is organized by meals; for each, I give one main dish and a selection of antipasti, side dishes, and salads to choose from to go with the main dish. Additionally, I give suggestions under the heading "Other Menu Options" for recipes that appear elsewhere in the book but would complement the meal. My idea in building the book this way isn't that you make everything listed (which would be impossible or at least insane in some instances), but that you use the items listed as a guideline for what to serve with this main dish. These are flavors and textures that go well together and that wouldn't offend me if I saw them all on one plate. I'm not a fan of potlucks for that very reason: people bring all kinds of things that don't necessarily go with one another but that end up touching each other on guests' plates. I do understand the appeal of the potluck in terms of easing the load for the host or hostess. If you have a friend or family member who enjoys cooking or baking and really wants to contribute, have them choose from the recipes listed under the main dish you're making. Desserts are in their own chapter. For each dessert I suggest what main dishes I would serve it with, and there are a few cases in which I am specific about which dessert I recommend, such as Mexican Wedding Cookies with Sal's Roasted Pork Shoulder. But with few exceptions, you could serve any dessert with any meal in the book. Because I really just love feeding crowds of people, working on the recipes in this book challenged me to think about how to optimize the guests' experience. When I started out, my one requirement was that every dish should hold up on a buffet, which meant it had to taste good at room temperature, wouldn't wilt after an hour, and also wouldn't look terrible as guests started digging in. But as I got into the process of producing the book, all the while hosting dinners and parties offering the foods that I was including here, I went a step further: I began to think of creative ways that I could make the buffet table work to my advantage. I started putting a block of

cheese and a grater alongside salads that called for grated cheese, such as the Whole Leaf Caesar Salad with Fried Parsley Leaves and Anchovy Croutons, so that guests could grate a fresh dusting of cheese on their own servings. Having the cheese and grater also makes it easy for me to freshen up the serving bowl with a snowdrift of cheese when I walk by. I knew I couldn't put an arugula salad on my buffet table, because arugula wilts if you look at it sideways. But when I found myself wanting arugula alongside Prosciutto Mozzarella Parcels, I found a way to do it: I put out a bowl of arugula, along with bottles of olive oil and balsamic vinegar, and bowls of lemon and sea salt for guests to make their own arugula salads on their plates. In many instances, such as with Flattened Chicken Thighs with Charred Lemon Salsa Verde or Blistered Green Beans with Yogurt Dressing, I spoon or drizzle just enough sauce on the dish so guests understand where it goes, and serve the rest on the side. The desserts are left unsliced, presented with a knife so guests can cut the size serving they want. And the frostings for Spiced Carrot Cake with Molasses Cream Cheese Frosting and Devil's Food Rings with Spiced White Mountain Frosting are served on the side. I think personalizing your food adds to your guests' experience, and that's what I am after when I entertain. I want to offer my friends and family not just great food, but a great experience. Because I can't have all of you to my house, I hope you'll enjoy the experience of cooking from this book—and, of course, I hope you'll enjoy the food.

How to Pull It Off

I recently wrote a story for the Los Angeles Times revealing my biggest secret when it comes to entertaining: enlisting the help of your guests. When I have a party—whether it's a huge fund-raising event or a dozen friends on a weeknight—I can say without a doubt: I never do it alone. For one, I couldn't do it alone. The kind of food I cook involves some effort. There are vinaigrettes to whisk, vegetables to roast, salads to toss. Even the simplest appetizer, guacamole and chips, needs somebody to put those two things in bowls and carry them to the table. And that's just the food. Wine bottles need to be opened, bags of ice dumped into the beverage tub, the grill needs to be lit, the table needs to be set. Then there are the candles, the music, the sweeping of the patio . . . If I had to do it all myself, I probably wouldn't find myself saying, "Let's have it at my house," as often as I do. But the other, more important reason to enlist help is that it's so much more fun to prepare a meal with friends. In my mother's day, the hostess would never have asked her friends to pitch in. My mother, for instance, despite the fact that she worked as a television writer while raising two children, would have wanted to take care of every last detail. When guests arrived, it wasn't, "Here, put this on the table," as I am known to do. My mother (and probably every other woman of her generation) wanted her guests to be impressed, to wonder how she did it. And these were her friends! Thankfully, times have changed. There is no illusion or façade, at least not in my world.

My friends all know how much effort it takes to host a meal, large or small, and when weâ™re not hosting, we want to help the one who is. I do want to emphasize that Iâ™m a nice âœboss.â •

When my volunteer help comes, I always offer them a glass of wine, and our own little party starts while we pile side dishes onto platters and look for just the right serving utensils to go with them.

Cooking from This Book Each of these chapters is built around a main dish, with a list of side dishes and condiments to serve with it. In some chapters, the list includes more options than you may want to make. In addition to the items listed in the menus is a list of âœOther Menu Options.â • These are dishes that exist elsewhere in the book but that go well with the main dish in the chapter. Pick from these lists to create a menu that works for you, based on what you feel like cooking and what is in season. All of the recipes in this book make enough for six or more. I figure if you are cooking for others, the least number you could be is four. Youâ™re probably six, and if youâ™re anything like me, the minute you decide to have people over, you start thinking of who you want to invite, and youâ™re up to ten. The truth is that because these arenâ™t plated dinners, guests take what they want. So the serving size of any one dish depends on how many total dishes youâ™re serving. When I plan a menu, I always err on the side of more because I like to offer a variety. I also tend to get carried away creatively. Thankfully, Iâ™m a big fan of leftovers.

A Note on Olive Oil Youâ™ll notice I make three distinctions when I call for olive oil in the recipes in this book: olive oil, extra-virgin olive oil, and finishing-quality extra-virgin olive oil. Although this might seem like a lot of bottles of olive oil to buy or have on your counter, it might actually save you money because you wonâ™t be using your good olive oil where it doesnâ™t make a difference. When I call for âœolive oil,â • Iâ™m referring to any decent olive oil. I use this when the oil isnâ™t a component to a dish or a condimentâ”for instance, to sear or roast vegetables or meats. This olive oil doesnâ™t even need to be extra virgin. It just needs to not be rancid; over time, youâ™ll learn to recognize rancid oil by the smell. If you cook much at all, this oil wonâ™t go rancid because youâ™ll use it more than any other oil. I call for âœextra-virgin olive oilâ • when the oil is part of the finished product, such as a vinaigrette or salsa verde. For this, I use a slightly higher quality oil; I prefer those produced in Italy, Spain, or France. âœFinishing-quality extra-virgin olive oilâ • is my way of referring to the special, costlier bottles of olive oil that you see in specialty food stores. I reach for one of these when I am using the oil as a condiment, whether to drizzle over a vegetable dish or grilled meats, or as an unexpected complement for the Bittersweet Chocolate Tartufo with Olive Oil Croutons and Sea Salt.

A Note on Anchovies Alici di Cetara are a very special variety of anchovies from a seaside village called Cetara on Italyâ™s Amalfi Coast; they have all the deliciousness of the fish with none of the hard-to-take, overly fishy qualities often associated with

anchovies. Cetara anchovies are harvested from April to September and placed in large plastic drums, layered in salt, where they remain for twelve months. After that time, the anchovies are cleaned, dried, filleted by hand, and laid out on linen cloths to dry, a process that supposedly absorbs some of their briny flavor. The fish are packed standing up in either sunflower oil, olive oil, or a combination. I generally like salt-packed anchovies better than those packed in oil, but these are the exception. I use them anytime I am serving anchovies in their whole form (other than marinated white anchovies, which are a different thing altogether). You can find them at online outlets that specialize in Italian food exports.

What Kind of Yogurt to Use I call for yogurt in several recipes in this book. In Los Angeles, we're lucky to have a specialty Greek grocery named Papa Cristo's, where we get fresh yogurt made that day. In these recipes, I specify the yogurt that I found was the closest in consistency to Papa Cristo's and also widely available, Straus Family Creamery Organic Greek Yogurt, which is thinner than other commercial Greek-style yogurts. If you can't find Straus (or a place like Papa Cristo's where you can buy homemade Greek yogurt), use regular whole-milk plain yogurt.

Washing Greens You may notice that in these recipes I don't ask you to wash and dry lettuce or other greens. The reason is that I assume home cooks wash and dry all vegetables and fruits before cooking them. When making salads, it's important that the vegetables be completely dry before you dress them; I do this by using a salad spinner, or draining the vegetables in a colander and then spreading them out on a dry dish towel or paper towels to drain. I am a fan of prewashed lettuce and other greens that are now widely available at farmers' markets.

Color Is Flavor! One of the things I'm known to say in the kitchen is "Color is flavor!" I say this when I want my cooks to achieve that beautiful, dark golden color that makes vegetables and meats look so appetizing. Whether it's Glazed Onions Agrodolce or the broccolini for Charred Broccolini with Salami and Burrata, the deep brown color, a result of direct, high-heat cooking, is part of both the visual appeal and the flavor of the finished dish. The challenge is to get that color without overcooking the vegetables or meat in the process. At Mozza, we are able to get that deep brown caramelization because our ovens are extremely powerful. At the Pizzeria specifically, to roast vegetables we use the pizza oven, which offers intense heat, and also a solid surface (as opposed to an oven rack) that conducts heat evenly. The pizza oven gave me the idea to try using the oven floor to imitate that solid surface, and it worked perfectly. Thus, throughout these recipes, you will see that I often call for you to put the baking sheet on the oven floor. In some ovens, the heating mechanism is on the oven floor, so you don't have the option of putting a baking sheet on it. In that case, I offer an alternative of putting a rack as close to the floor as possible, and putting a pizza stone on the rack, if you have one. To the same end, I often

call for large baking sheets throughout these recipes. By a large, I'm referring specifically to a half sheet pan (so named because it mimics the pan used to make a half sheet cake), which is 12 x 16 inches and fits in every home oven I've ever encountered. It's important when you're roasting vegetables that they are spread out in a single layer. If they're too close together or on top of one another, the water released from the vegetables during cooking will cause the vegetables to steam rather than roast. Half sheet pans aren't expensive. I suggest you invest in two or even four, and make sure they're industrial-quality, thicker baking sheets, which are available anywhere cooking supplies are sold. The thicker baking sheets conduct heat better than thinner baking sheets do, which means they provide a hotter, more even cooking surface, and they don't buckle in the oven the way thin baking sheets do. Once you invest in them, if you're not already in the habit of doing so, you'll be amazed at how often you reach for baking sheets when you cook—to put seared vegetables or meats on when you take them out of the pan; to bring foods outside to grill; to chill grains, pasta, and vegetables after they're boiled or blanched; to put pie and tart dishes on, making them easier to slide into the oven and to catch juices that bubble over the dish, and, of course, to roast vegetables.

Buffet versus Sit Down

The majority of the meals in this book were designed to be served buffet style, but if you are serving a party of ten or fewer, serve family style, if you prefer. I'm a big fan of the buffet, for a lot of reasons. As a hostess, I like the abundant look of a buffet and the "water cooler" aspect, meaning that the buffet table is a great place for guests to interact with one another. Serving this way also ensures that guests won't be seated next to the same person for two hours the way they would be at a sit-down dinner, so each guest will get a chance to meet or visit with more guests. As an eater, I like a buffet because I like to eat standing up; I'm definitely of the school that food eaten standing up doesn't have calories in it. Also, I'm a picker. I'd much prefer to go back to the buffet repeatedly, for a bit of this and a bit of that, rather than commit to a big plate of food, and then sit down and eat it all at once. That said, every once in a while I do like to serve a sit-down dinner. There's something nice about passing side dishes at the table, like a big family, and seeing the large serving platters of food that guests can dig in to for seconds and thirds throughout the meal.

The Backyard Peel 'n' Eat Shrimp Boil

is especially suited to a sit-down dinner. I put a giant bowl of shrimp on my outdoor table with dipping sauces alongside; guests sit around the table peeling and eating and making a fun, communal mess. The Braised Oxtails and the Saturday Night Chicken Thighs with Italian Sausage and Spicy Pickled Peppers are also conducive to serving family style. They both look so beautiful and dramatic, served in the dishes in which they were baked; it's nice to plunk the dishes down so guests can appreciate how pretty they are.

Presenting Food For me, part of creating a beautiful party is how I present the food. Whether it's a buffet or sit-down, I want my table to look rustic, abundant, and with a balance of shapes, colors, sizes, and textures both in terms of the food and what it's presented on. Nothing has to match, but everything has to go together. I might have a tiny dish of braised garlic cloves, presented like delicious little jewels in a bowl I found at an Italian flea market. I'll lay out a selection of sliced meats on a cutting board made for me by my dad. I put side dishes in one of the many serving bowls I've collected or that people have given me as gifts over the years. And I pile a salad in a wooden bowl with natural edges, carved by an artisan out of a single piece of wood and that, when it isn't holding lettuce leaves, sits in my living room as an art piece. In each of the recipes, I give suggestions for serving, including what type of vessel to present the food in. In general, when selecting a serving piece, choose a platter, cutting board, cake stand, or bowl that enhances the natural beauty of the food. Also, make sure the food looks abundant, which usually means, reach for something that is smaller than you think you will need. The one exception is salads, which are best in wide-mouthed bowls, so the leaves don't get crushed by their own weight. If you like to host dinners or parties, whether for forty people or just four (which I assume you do if you're holding this book), I suggest you embark on the rewarding and entertaining project of collecting platters, plates, baking dishes, cutting boards, and serving utensils. They don't have to be expensive. You can find these at flea markets, thrift stores, and made by artisans when you travel. If you're like me, you'll enjoy pulling out these finds when the need arises, and remembering where they came from. And you'll get pleasure seeing the fruits of your kitchen labors looking so pretty, as they will when presented on just the right thing.

Platters Living in California, I'm a fan of Heath, an iconic ceramics producer from Sausalito, in Northern California. Over the years, I've collected Heath serving platters and bowls in every size and shape imaginable. I've stuck to a color palette of earth tones, so there aren't any two items in my cupboards that won't look good together. When you buy items that you like, you'll find they all work together, because even if they seem random, they're bound by one thing: your taste.

Serving Utensils What can I say except that no matter how many serving utensils I have, I always need more. There is invariably that one dish or condiment or cheese that begs for a specific type of tongs or spoon or a tiny ladle or a forked spoon or . . . Again, buy them when you see them. Scour flea markets when you're abroad. Buy what you love. You'll be so pleased when you open the drawer and find just the utensil you need.

Baking Dishes Throughout these recipes you'll see many foods that I suggest you serve in the same dish they're baked in. I love this style of cooking and serving. I like the look of the layers and cooked-on bits encrusted along the sides of the pan, which are like evidence

of the long cooking it took to make it. I like the feeling of bringing this homemade creation to the table. And I also like the excuse to buy rustic cast-iron, enamel, or hand-forged copper pots when I find ones I love. In Italy they have a word for a baking dish that is pretty enough to be acceptable to take to the table: a *pirafola*. We all have our own standards as to what we'd be willing to present at our table and what we wouldn't, so go with what works for you. You could, of course, transfer the food to a serving platter, and in many recipes I've given you directions for both ways of presenting a dish, but for me, there's something wonderfully satisfying about going from start to finish in one pan. To me, transferring food to a clean platter is the equivalent of a woman who is all fixed up with plastic surgery compared with a beautifully aged woman whose beauty is enhanced by her gray hair, wrinkles, and other so-called imperfections.

Napkins These days I really don't see any reason to use paper napkins. Cloth napkins are so inexpensive. And it's really not that much work to use them. Unlike my mother, I do not iron my napkins. I wash, fold, and go. Come party time, there is invariably one friend who comes early to help but doesn't feel comfortable cooking, and I give him or her the task of rolling silverware in cloth napkins, often tying them with butcher's twine.

Who Is Liz? Throughout this book, you'll hear me mention the name Liz a lot. Liz is Liz Hong, the executive chef of Osteria and Pizzeria Mozza. Liz started with us in 2008, working with me behind the Mozzarella Bar on toast duty (which, at Osteria Mozza, is not the small job you might think). From there, Liz was promoted to the salad station, and she worked her way through the various stations and up the ranks until she became the chef at the Pizzeria. When I started thinking of this book and who I wanted to help me create the recipes, Liz leaped to mind. Not only did I know she had the cooking knowledge and talent to do it, but more important, Liz loves a project. Evidently, the fifty or sixty hours a week she works as a chef aren't enough. Whenever I want to play with creating a dish, to hunt down an unusual or hard-to-find ingredient, or to make something outside the Mozza repertoire for a special event, Liz is the first to volunteer. And Liz turned out to be the perfect choice for this book. For a year and a half, she worked tirelessly, implementing my vision for a recipe and often injecting her own to make it better. In fact, we worked so well together and I came to trust her work ethic and her cooking sensibility to such a degree that, when, recently, my partners and I were faced with the near-impossible challenge of filling the shoes of Matt Molina, our founding executive chef, Liz, again, was the obvious choice for the job.

Talk about hard work paying off.

Roasted Carrot and Wheat Berry Salad with Dill **SERVES 6 TO 8**

2 tablespoons kosher salt
1 cup wheat berries (or farro, barley, rye berries, freekeh, or spelt), soaked overnight and drained
3 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
3 pounds slender carrots (3 to 4 bunches; weighed with tops)
10 to 12 medium or large garlic cloves,

peeled 10 fresh thyme sprigs ½ cup fresh dill sprigs, chopped, plus a few sprigs for garnish
Finishing-quality extra-virgin olive oil Maldon sea salt (or another flaky sea salt such as fleur de sel)

I'm always looking for that one ingredient that will turn a familiar vegetable into something special and a little unexpected. In the case of this carrot and wheat berry dish, fresh dill turned out to be just the thing. Where parsley is often added for color, and rosemary or thyme add nice background flavor to braised meats, dill, like cilantro and tarragon, is a dish-changing herb. In this mix of carrots and wheat berries, the dill complements the other flavors and turns the overall dish into something memorable. I call for wheat berries here, but you could use any chewy grain, such as farro, barley, rye berries, freekeh, or spelt. Use long, slender carrots, such as those you find at farmers' markets or those sold with the tops on at supermarkets. I spoon half of the grains onto the bottom of the platter and toss the other half with the carrots. It looks prettier this way, and I like the idea of people digging in for more.

Bring 1 quart water to a boil in a medium saucepan over high heat. Add 1 tablespoon of the kosher salt and the wheat berries and return the water to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer until the wheat berries are al dente, 30 to 50 minutes. (Cooking time varies greatly depending on the freshness of the grains.) Drain the wheat berries in a colander and transfer them to a small bowl. Drizzle with 2 teaspoons of the olive oil and toss gently to coat the grains. Set aside to cool to room temperature.

Adjust the oven racks so none is near the oven floor; you'll be putting the baking sheet directly on the oven floor. If you are using an electric oven or another oven where you can't put anything on the floor, adjust the oven racks so that one is closest to the floor and put a pizza stone on it, if you have one. Preheat the oven to 500° F.

Scrub the carrots and cut off the greens, leaving the last 3 to 4 inch of the stems attached. Cut the carrots in half lengthwise (quarter them if you're using larger carrots) and put them in a large bowl. Drizzle the carrots with the remaining 3 tablespoons oil, sprinkle with the remaining 1 tablespoon kosher salt, and toss to coat them. Lay the carrots, cut side down, on a baking sheet. Toss the garlic and thyme in the bowl you tossed the carrots in and coat them with the oil left in the bowl. Scatter the garlic cloves and thyme sprigs around the carrots, taking care that the garlic has as little contact with the tray as possible so it doesn't burn. Put the baking sheet on the floor of the oven or the lowest rack and roast the carrots and garlic until the carrots are fork-tender but not mushy, 10 to 15 minutes, shaking the baking sheet and rotating it front to back halfway through the cooking time so the carrots and garlic brown evenly. Remove the baking sheet from the oven and set it aside to cool to room temperature. (When cooking vegetables on the oven floor, a lot of steam is produced from the water released as a result of the vegetables cooking so quickly, so be careful of the steam that will arise when you open the oven door.)

Remove and discard the thyme sprigs and transfer the carrots and garlic to a large bowl. Add the chopped dill and toss gently to distribute it evenly. Add half of the wheat berries and toss again gently to distribute them. To serve, spoon the remaining wheat berries onto the bottom of a large platter. Lift the carrots with the wheat berries out of the bowl and lay them on the platter on top of the bed of wheat berries. Scatter the dill sprigs on top of the salad, drizzle with finishing-quality olive oil, sprinkle with sea salt, and serve with a large serving spoon.

This book is not really about the recipes but learning all the techniques in a clear way so that you can use these skills in the kitchen. That said I love the recipes and it makes entertaining and feeding a crowd really easy - thanks Nancy and Carolyn for one of my favorite cookbooks.

Borderline pretentiousness is around every corner (check out the intro of the beet/radicchio salad if you want a good laugh) but you get the sense that Silverton is a great host and there are lots of good new twists. The title is weird. This isn't weeknight dinners at home. It's all about entertaining and how best to feed a crowd and I learned a lot. You may not want to do the literal menus she suggests but there are good and great recipes within each themed dinner. Elsewhere here the recipes are described as complicated. HUH? They are if anything over explained so that anyone can cook from the book. The recipes are not fussy or difficult. The name dropping and intros can be tedious, but get over it. I think the editor is more to blame than Silverton.

I have Mario Batalli cookbooks and was excited to get this. But it's for serious cooks...lots of prep and unique ingredients required. I got a lot of ideas and it's a good read, very interesting.

Poached tuna menu for Easter brunch was a huge hit. Everyone raved about the bagna cauda and insist on an annual tradition! Currently cooking up the Saturday Night Chicken Thighs with Italian Sausage and Spicy Pickled Peppers menu. Concerned the potato recipe might be off, but only time will tell. I suspect the quantity of potatoes should have been doubled. The book is inspiring and great for hosting on weekends!

Mozza is my favorite restaurant in LA. I have had and used the original Mozza cookbook for a long time and am equally enjoying Mozza at Home. Generally more casual recipes. Thank you Nancy Silverton!

I think this cookbook is great. I made the chicken dish with pickled peppers. Amazing. I would give it 5 stars.

This cookbook is outstanding. The recipes cover a wide range, from quite simple to fairly involved. Beautiful photos of the finished dishes. I've bookmarked many of the pages, because there are so many recipes I want to make. The ones I've tried so far have all been excellent. The Eggplant Lasagna was sublime. I've made Bechamel before, but I love the way this one was infused with the flavors of carefully sliced onion, arbol chile pod and bay leaf. One of the best lasagnas I've ever had. We also made the "Egg Pie" (quiche) with Goat Cheese, Leeks and Garlic Confit. Excellent crust, a really delicate custard texture and wonderful flavor from the melted leeks, garlic and scallions. We still had a bunch of fresh tomatoes from our garden, so we served it with the Tomato Salad with Sweet Onion Dressing which was also really delicious. The Chai Chocolate Chip cookies were also really good. A wonderful blend of spices and flavors, adding depth and interest to a classic. Edit: Tried a couple more recipes tonight. The Staff Meal Oven-Roasted Chicken Thighs were pretty simple to make, and they turned out fantastic! My wife and I normally aren't ones to eat the chicken skin, but this was so crispy and flavorful neither of us could resist. We served it with the Balsamic Glazed Mushrooms, which were absolutely delicious. Melted in your mouth with just a bit of sweetness, accented with shallot and tarragon. A wonderful, pretty easy dinner. My appreciation for this cookbook keeps growing with every recipe we try. I buy and use a lot of cookbooks, and have been VERY pleased with this one so far.

Recipes are easier than those in "Mozza", but still involve a reasonable amount of attention and involvement; these are not 30 minute, one pot meals. However, the recipes I have made have been wonderful and enjoyed by all.

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