

BOOK REVIEW

C'ERA UNA VOLTA...A TAVOLA

“C’era una volta ... a tavola” is a newly published book (112 pages, 9 €, Lombardo Edizioni 2014,

<http://www.tipografialombardo.it/products/view/id/10/cera-una-volta-a-tavola/>

edited and co-authored by Lara Gitto, who dedicated the book to the memory of her grandma Angelina.

Traditional recipes and family memories have inspired this collection of short stories that has seen the participation of 24 contributors.

Starters, main courses, side dishes, desserts are described, together with the traditions and the feelings that accompanied their preparation.

About 20 recipes are proposed: the most of them dates back to the period immediately following the II World War and emphasize the need to contrast the food shortage, together with the creativity in using all the available ingredients (even vegetable peels) to avoid wastes.

The real protagonists of this “popular novel” are the grandparents and the other relatives, who have transmitted to their grandchildren the passion for cooking and good nutrition. The contributors remind their family tradition to meet up together every Sunday or on holidays, as Christmas or Easter: on those events, each family member tried to be helpful or used to cook

something for the meal. At the end, the greatest pleasure lay just in sharing the food, the nice company, the talks, the laughs.

Almost all the recipes of “C’era una volta ... a tavola” are typically from Sicily and celebrate the richness, tastes and flavours offered by this island. However, the common thread of the book are the feelings of familiarity, friendship and sharing: this explains the inclusion of three recipes from Brazil.

The last section of the book is dedicated to the value of food and tells about the story (real or fictitious, we do not know!) of a chef, who, having burnt the vegetables that were supposed to be the main ingredient for the side dish, cooked and served some prickly pear leaves. The chef did not reveal he had used prickly pear leaves to prepare the side dish and for sure, no one would have eaten the leaves if he/she had known in advance what they were. The story demonstrates how we should never say “I am not going to eat this, I do not like this food”, before tasting: the food represents a value and has to be appreciated in all its recipes.

“C’era una volta ... a tavola” is an enjoyable reading and the ideal gift for friends and relatives, that allows its readers to taste and appreciate the joy of families having lunch together and sharing so much love.

Pagano Dritto Irene