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## Vatican Cookbook Offers Over 60 Recipes To Help You Eat Like A Pope

Empanadas, anyone?

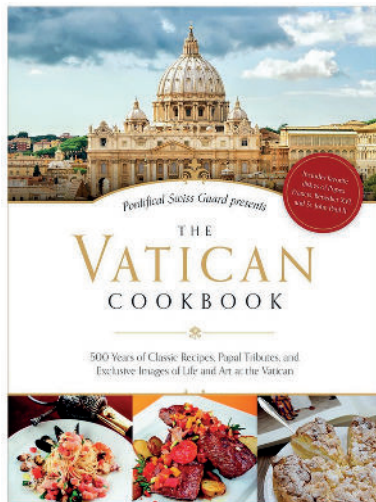
By Antonia Blumberg

Pope Francis once said he wished he could spend a day as an ordinary person and [go get a pizza](#) without being recognized. After reading the new [The Vatican Cookbook](#), though, you may wish you could spend a day as Pope Francis to enjoy the delicacies gracing his dinner table.

The cookbook is presented by the Pontifical Swiss Guard, Swiss soldiers who serve as guardians of the pope at the Vatican. The recipes and narratives were compiled primarily by David Geisser, a young chef and member of the Swiss Guard, along with other members of the troops. It offers a peek into Vatican life, through the decadent recipes that popes, cardinals, archbishops and Guard members have enjoyed for decades.

And “decadent” is not an overstatement. From gnocchi to cheese torte to braised pork roast, the cookbook is full of recipes to make the mouth water. And it’s not particularly vegetarian, low-carb or sugar-free friendly. Inhabitants of Vatican City enjoy rich meats, cheeses, liqueurs and pastries to their hearts’ content.

That said, the recipes are rustic and relatively simple to make. As NPR [noted](#), “This is not a papal feast but a glimpse into the mostly ordinary life at the Vatican.”



The book is divided into sections focusing on different people, places and occasions important to Vatican life. Each section includes a sampling of themed recipes and descriptions of life in the city.

Pope Francis, whose heritage is both Argentinian and Italian, enjoys dishes like “Argentine empanadas on pepper salad” and “colita de cuadril,” or tri-tip in English. For dessert, it’s dulce de leche, a sweet pudding, and alfajores, cookie sandwiches with dulce de leche filling.



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Recipes in *The Vatican Cookbook* are rustic, but decadent.

In the pages dedicated to Pope Francis, David Geisser, a Swiss Guard soldier and chef who co-authored the book, shared a touching story about the pontiff. During the 2014 World Cup, he writes, the Guardsmen were rooting for the Swiss team to win the match against Argentina. The Argentinian team won, however, and the following day Pope Francis asked Geisser if he was disappointed about the match. Geisser recalled in the cookbook:

*I had to admit I wanted the Swiss to win, but I saluted Argentina for the victory. Pope Francis smiled, stepped back into his home and re-emerged with a little pastry. He smiled as he handed me the sweet gift and said he hoped it would "make the day a little better." And it does, every time I think of my personal moment with Pope Francis.*

At the end of the book, the authors channel their efforts away from mouth-watering recipes toward a humanitarian cause. They invite readers to make a donation to Caritas International, a Catholic aid organization that runs an ongoing [campaign to end world hunger](#).

"More than 800 million are suffering from chronic hunger and malnutrition today," the authors write. "We have the food, the resources and the systems in place to feed the world. All we need is your help to provide food for all ... today, tomorrow and forever."