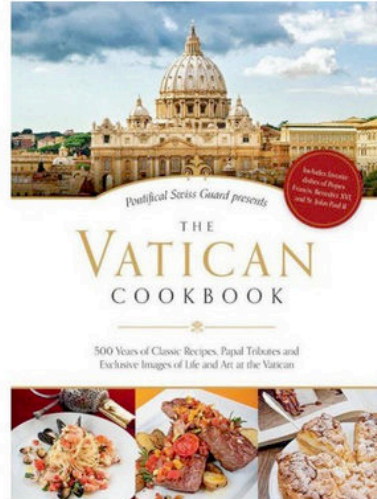


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FOOD

Cookbook of the week: ‘The Vatican Cookbook’



The Vatican Cookbook: Presented by the Pontifical Swiss Guard by Pontifical Swiss Guard (Sophia Institute Press)

By AMY SCATTERGOOD JUNE 16, 2016 | 10 AM

The papacy is one of those institutions that is endlessly fascinating — blame Rex Harrison and Charlton Heston, for those of a certain age, or maybe Dan Brown. Regardless of our religious backgrounds or belief systems, we tend to take note not only of what the pope says and does, but what he wears, what kind of -mobile he's driven around in — and what he eats. Thus “[The Vatican Cookbook](#),” published in April by the Sophia Institute in Nashua, N.H., which has the compelling subtitle of “500 Years of Classic Recipes, Papal Tributes and Exclusive Images of Life and Art at the Vatican.” But this is as much a practical cookbook as it is a coffee-table book for the devout. There are more than 80 recipes, including favorites of the current pope, as well as his two most recent predecessors. Thus, there are dishes from Argentina (Pope Francis), Bavaria (Pope Benedict XVI) and Poland (Pope John Paul II).

So: pierogi and dulce de leche, homey recipes for Christmas cookies and minestrone, and bistro favorites such as a Parisian beefsteak and chocolate amaretto cake. Threaded through these recipes are glossy photographs of patron saints, the Pietà, the pasta stations, and sections devoted to the recent popes and the Pontifical Swiss Guard, the uniformed men who pledge to serve and protect the pope and who “present” the cookbook (today, we're told, there are 110 of them). The book was written not by the Polish nuns who do the majority of cooking at the Vatican, but by David Geisser (a former chef who published two cookbooks before joining the guard), Erwin Niederberger and Daniel Anrig, all current or former members of the guard. There are a few “table prayers” here, but they're included at the end, after a section devoted to “basic recipes” that includes pasta dough, pizza dough, polenta — and truffle risotto. Because, in Vatican City, truffle risotto is a basic recipe. In other words, it's all kind of lovely, whether your devotion extends to God or to tiramisu, or maybe to both.