

FOOD & DRINK

## Swiss Guard's cookbook reveals Vatican culinary treats

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Swiss Guard and chef David Geisser, with his book, "Buon Appetito," at the Vatican. AP

- If an army travels on its stomach, what does the world's smallest army eat?

A chef who serves in the Swiss Guards, David Geisser, is shedding light on the culinary tastes of the pope's army with a new cookbook. "Buon Appetito" features recipes on the soldiers' current menu and dishes inspired by the tastes of popes.

A favorite meal for the 110 Swiss Guards is eggplant Parmesan: breaded, fried eggplant topped with tomato sauce and mozzarella, baked for 15 minutes.

"This recipe we eat a lot of times here," Geisser, 24, said in an interview inside the kitchen of the Swiss Guard canteen, where Polish nuns do most of the cooking.

A glance at the menu in the kitchen reveals Italian dishes such as risotto and tortellini alongside northern European stalwarts like sausage and sauerkraut.

In the book, the Pope Francis menu features Argentine specialties: empanadas, beef and dulce de leche (a caramel dessert topping made from condensed milk).

The menu for Bavarian-born Benedict XVI includes sausages and roast pork, while the John Paul II menu has pierogi (stuffed dumplings) and an apple tart.

# The News & Observer

Geisser has never cooked for Francis, but he gave him a copy of the cookbook. "He saw the photos and the book and he was really happy," Geisser said.

First released in German in October, the cookbook is being rolled out in several other languages.

The Swiss Guards, distinguished by their Renaissance-style blue and gold uniforms, plumed helmets and halberds, carry out ceremonial duties, assist at Vatican functions and protect the pope.



Swiss Guard David Geisser, who is also a chef, works at the Swiss Guards headquarters at the Vatican, where Polish nuns do most of the cooking. *AP*