

Giuliano Hazan's Thirty Minute Pasta

Giuliano Hazan

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Unassuming title, common-enough topic, and yet this remarkable project delivers so thoroughly we might momentarily forget Batali, Bastianich, Curti, and other legendary Italian authors. In *Thirty Minute Pasta*, Giuliano Hazan opens with one of cookbook-dom's finest noodle primers, offering historical context, regional variances, a calm debate on the merits of dried and fresh pasta, and why certain sauces deserve specific pasta shapes. His list of recommended pantry items encourages such zen-like simplicity; although one can't help but develop a bit of resentment toward the chef culprits who bring complexity to the task ahead. In the end, his overall pasta sensibility lends a deserved reverence to this stately, historic, incomparably delicious food.

Not to forget the "thirty minute" element—long, involved sauces and elaborate baked pasta dishes have their place, albeit limited. Pasta is foremost a comfort food and there's nothing comfortable about spending valuable time in a kitchen when you'd rather be napping, sipping, or concentrating on the leg of lamb. Hazan organizes his seventy-five or so recipes into chapters of "Pasta Soups," "Vegetarian Pastas," "Seafood Pastas," and "Meat Pastas." Fifteen-plus pasta shapes garner his attention. If you haven't yet discovered Hazan through his other fine books, make your way to this well-deserved bandwagon.

MATT SUTHERLAND (June 15, 2009)

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