



Never Trust a Thin Cook and Other Lessons from Italy's Culinary Capital

Eric Dregni Dregni

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I simply want to live in the place with the best food in the world. This dream led Eric Dregni to Italy, first to Milan and eventually to a small, fog-covered town to the north: Modena, the birthplace of balsamic vinegar, Ferrari, and Luciano Pavarotti. Never Trust a Thin Cook is a classic American abroad tale, brimming with adventures both expected and unexpected, awkward social moments, and most important, very good food.

Parmesan thieves. Tortellini based on the shape of Venus's navel. Infiltrating the secret world of the balsamic vinegar elite. Life in Modena is a long way from the *Leaning Tower of Pizza* (the south Minneapolis pizzeria where Eric and his girlfriend and fellow traveler Katy first met), and while some Italians are impressed that "Minnesota" sounds like "minestrone," they are soon learning what it means to live in a country where the word "safe" doesn't actually exist-only "less dangerous." Thankfully, another meal is always waiting, and Dregni revels in uncorking the secrets of Italian cuisine, such as how to guzzle espresso "corrected" with grappa and learning that mold really does make a good salami great.

What begins as a gastronomical quest soon becomes a revealing, authentic portrait of how Italians live and a hilarious demonstration of how American and Italian cultures differ. In *Never Trust a Thin Cook*, Eric Dregni dishes up the sometimes wild experiences of living abroad alongside the simple pleasures of Italian culture in perfect, complementary proportions.



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