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Tastes and Temptations: Food and Art in Renaissance Italy

John Varriano

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Fruits and vegetables as erotic metaphors in still life paintings, the Florentine Baptistry replicated in sausage and cheese by Andrea del Sarto, a recipe for fish molded in the shape of a goat, the discovery of an Ovidian scene at the bottom of a soup bowl. A feast for the mind and eye, this beautifully illustrated, compellingly readable book is a rich exploration of the little examined interplay between art and cuisine during the Italian Renaissance. Exploring a dazzling array of art works, and drawing from period recipes and menus, John Varriano considers the many, often surprising, ways that cooks and artists converged and drew from each other's worlds. Among other topics, he considers the significance of culinary images in Renaissance art; traces parallels in the use of ingredients such as eggs and oil in kitchens and in studios; examines centerpieces by artists that were made of food; looks at the emergence of the celebrity cook and celebrity painter; and much more. Woven throughout with the flavors and colors of the era, this book of Renaissance temptations expands our understanding of the traditional boundaries of creative expression.

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