Made in Italy

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Extract

I spent the first 28 years of my life in Italy, a thoroughbred Italian girl, raised in Milan by a northern Italian Papà and an Abruzzese Mamma. But it was only since moving to Australia in the mid-noughties that I began to truly appreciate my cultural heritage.

As a young woman, I had became so frustrated with all the paradoxes and strife that make Italy such a difficult country to live in (Berlusconi, to name but one!) that I couldn't see or appreciate the great beauty of my homeland. It was only when I became a citizen of another country that I reconciled with my own. Suddenly I found myself missing everything about Italy: my family, the melodic sound of the language, the mad excitement around the annual Sanremo music festival, the landscape and, most importantly, the food. It seems I had to flee Italy to learn to love it.

My craving for Italy and my heritage has became stronger still since the birth of my two boys. Although I am thrilled to raise them in such a great country as Australia, I also feel the need to imbue them with a sense of their Italian identity.

This is one of the main reasons I started my blog, Silvia's Cucina, in 2011. I wanted it to be a perpetual archive of family recipes and stories that would otherwise be lost. I was not prepared for the extraordinary support I would receive from the blogging community around the world, and the apparent need for readers to connect with authentic Italian cooking. The blog gave life to my first book of the same name, a collection of family recipes and stories intertwined with my new Australian life. I'm not a chef nor even a trained cook. I am simply Italian, and wish to offer an insight into authentic home cooking, which I hope will lead to a better understanding of what it is to be Italian. *Silvia's Cucina*, the book and the blog, allowed me to do that, but I soon found myself wanting to share more, to dig deeper into my Italian culinary inheritance.

The solution was pretty simple: I had to go back to the source!