



Only in Naples: Lessons in Food and Famiglia from My Italian Mother-in-Law

Katherine Wilson

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Full of lighthearted humor, sumptuous food, the wisdom of an Italian mother-in-law, and all the atmosphere of Elena Ferrante's Neapolitan Novels, this warm and witty memoir follows American-born Katherine Wilson on her adventures abroad. Thanks to a surprising romance—and a spirited woman who teaches her to laugh, to seize joy, and to love—a three-month rite of passage in Naples turns into a permanent embrace of this boisterous city on the Mediterranean.

When I saw the sea at Gaeta, I knew that Naples was near and I was coming home.

“There is a chaotic, vibrant energy about Naples that forces you to let go and give in,” writes Katherine, who arrives in the city to intern at the United States Consulate. One evening, she meets handsome, studious Salvatore and finds herself immediately enveloped by his elegant mother, Raffaella, and the rest of the Avallone family. From that moment, Katherine's education begins: Never eat the crust of a pizza first, always stand up and fight for yourself and your loved ones, and consider mealtimes sacred—food must be prepared fresh and consumed *in compagnia*.

Immersed in Neapolitan culture, traditions, and cuisine, slowly and unexpectedly falling for Salvatore, and longing for Raffaella's company and guidance, Katherine discovers how to prepare meals that sing, from hearty, thick *ragù* to comforting *rigatoni alla Genovese* to *pasta al forno*, a casserole chock-full of bacon, béchamel, and no fewer than four kinds of cheeses. The secret to succulent, tender octopus? Beat it with a hammer. While Katherine is used to large American kitchens with islands and barstools, she understands the beauty of small, tight Italian ones, where it's easy to offer a taste from a wooden spoon.

Through courtship, culture clashes, Sunday services, marriage, and motherhood (in Naples, a pregnancy craving must always be satisfied!), Katherine comes to appreciate *carnale*, the quintessentially Neapolitan sense of comfort and confidence in one's own skin. Raffaella and her *famiglia* are also experts at *sdrammattizzare*, knowing how to suck the tragedy from something and spit it out with a great big smile. Part travel tale, part love letter, *Only in Naples* is a sumptuous story that is a feast for the senses. Goethe said, “See Naples and die.” But Katherine Wilson saw Naples and started to live.

Advance praise for *Only in Naples*

“In a world filled with food memoirs, this one stands out. Katherine Wilson gives us more than the fabulous food of Naples. She offers us a passport to an exotic country we would never be able to enter on our own.”—**Ruth Reichl, author of *My Kitchen Year***

“Wilson has written a glorious memoir celebrating the holy trinity of Italian life: love, food, and family. Her keen eye and sense of humor take you through the winding streets of Naples at a clip, on a ride you hope will never end.”—**Adriana Trigiani, author of *The Shoemaker's Wife***

“How lucky we are to get these hilarious and wise perceptions filtered through a sincerely loving eye.”—**Julie Klam, author of *Friendkeeping***

“This thoroughly enjoyable love letter to Naples is a tribute to the author’s irreplaceable mother-in-law.”—**Luisa Weiss, author of *My Berlin Kitchen* and founder of The Wednesday Chef**

“Wilson’s easygoing writing perfectly suits this tale of an innocent abroad, an American girl who discovers herself in the midst of a foreign culture that becomes, in the end, her own.”—**Kate Christensen, author of *How to Cook a Moose***

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