

# There Was a Time She Couldn't Cook...

By CRAIG CLAIBORNE

"When I came to this country," Marcella Hazan said, "one of my first acquaintances told me that the American bride's wedding vow was, 'I will take you for better or for worse but not for lunch.'" Mrs. Hazan—who was preparing a meal of artichokes Roman-style, an eminently delicious dish of tortelloni filled with chopped Swiss chard, and rollatine of veal for her husband one recent noon—laughed.

"My husband, Victor," she explained, "chose this apartment for one primary reason: He likes to dine Italian-style, which means coming home at midday, and his work is only five minutes away."

Mr. Hazan works with his father, the owner of the David Fur Couture at 50 West 57th Street.

Mrs. Hazan was born in Cesenatico, a small town on the Adriatic, and her husband was born in a small town seven miles distant. Mr. Hazan's parents came to New York during World War II when he was 11 years old, and he never lost the feeling of wanting to return. He did about 18 years ago, when he met and married his wife.

"I had never cooked a day in my life," said Mrs. Hazan, who now teaches cooking in Manhattan, adding, "until I married." Actually her scholastic training was in natural science and biology (she holds degrees in each), and she worked at the Guggenheim Institute for Research when she came to this country until the birth of her son, Giuliano.

Young Giuliano, a handsome lad of 12, is probably on the road to becoming as much of a fin bec as his father. Giuliano doesn't care much for the hot lunches provided by the school that he attends, and when he doesn't have to carry a violin case to school, he carries a lunch box filled with veal stew, ravioli, breast of chicken Siena-style and things like that. On violin days he's packed off to school with a sandwich of prosciutto or a fine mortadella or things like that.

## Too Busy to Entertain

The couple do not entertain often, the lady with the soft smile added, because they have other involvements. She studies Japanese flower arranging at the Ohara school and also has classes in ceramics. Mr. Hazan also takes classes in ceramics and studies the Japanese language.

Mrs. Hazan had no intention of starting classes in Italian cookery until she enrolled a year or so ago in Mrs. Grace Chu's Chinese cooking classes. She was encouraged by other students and her Italian classes, which are held every Tuesday and Friday morning in her home, start this week and the next. The cost of a six-lesson series is \$80 for a beginning course; \$90 for an advanced course. For further information about her classes, call 246-7614.

Mrs. Hazan has a broad background in Italian food, since her family, who were landowners, lived at various times in or near Milan, Verona, Bologna, Venice, Florence and Rome until her marriage.

Oddly, she adds, she has learned much about Italian influences here because of the southern origins (Naples and Sicily) of so many Italian citizens in New York. In fact, a discussion of the spelling of rúcola, that delectable and odd-tasting salad green, recently sent her to a dictionary. In New York it is generally spelled rúgola, which she surmises to be the southern pronunciation. Her dictionary points out that rúcola is the northern spelling of rúchétta, the actual name of the herb. The book adds that it is also sometimes spelled rúca.

Mr. Hazan hopes some day to return to Italy to pursue a curious project. On an experimental basis, he would like to grow Chinese vegetables on a family farm.

Here are a sampling of dishes from the Hazans' table.

### TORTELLONI DI BIETE

(Tortelloni with Swiss chard filling)  
2 bunches Swiss chard  
¾ cup finely chopped onion  
5 tablespoons sweet butter  
3 or 4 slices prosciutto, finely chopped  
7½ ounces ricotta  
1 egg yolk

¾ cup plus ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese

½ teaspoon nutmeg

Salt to taste

Pasta dough for ravioli made with two eggs and one and two-thirds cups flour

½ cup heavy cream.

1. Pick over the chard to obtain the tender leaves. Discard any tough stems. Cook the leaves in a little boiling salted water until tender. Drain, and when cool enough to handle, squeeze to remove excess liquid. Chop the leaves very fine.

2. Cook the onion in two tablespoons of butter until translucent. Add prosciutto and chopped chard. Cook two minutes longer, stirring. Add this to a mixing bowl.

3. Add the ricotta, egg yolk, two-thirds cups Parmesan cheese, nutmeg, and salt to taste to chard mixture.

4. Roll out the pasta dough made according to any recipe that calls for two eggs and 1½ cups flour. Use about one teaspoon of the chard mixture for stuffing and proceed to make small "pillows" as in making ravioli. Cook the tortelloni in boiling salted water to which a little olive oil has been added. Cook about two or three minutes and drain.

5. Add the remaining butter in a heavy skillet and about half the cream. Stir over moderate heat about half a minute. Remove from the heat. Add the drained tortelloni and toss while adding the remaining cream and cheese. Add salt to taste.

Yield: 80 to 90 tortelloni.

### SPAGHETTI ALL'ORTOLANA

(Spaghetti with eggplant)

1 medium-size eggplant

Salt

Olive or salad oil

1 teaspoon finely chopped garlic

1 tablespoon finely chopped parsley

1½ to 2 cups peeled, cored, chopped tomatoes

Hot pepper flakes to taste

1 pound spaghetti or spaghettini, cooked and drained.

1. Cut off the ends of the eggplant and discard. Cut the eggplant into quarter-inch rounds. Place in a mixing bowl and sprinkle with salt. Let stand about half an hour. Squeeze the eggplant slices to remove most of the moisture.

2. Add about a quarter inch of oil to a skillet and cook the slices on all sides until golden brown, adding more oil as necessary. Drain the slices on paper towels.

3. Heat four tablespoons of oil in a skillet, and add the garlic. Cook briefly, and add the parsley, tomatoes and hot pepper flakes. Simmer about 10 minutes, or until the oil separates from the tomatoes.

4. Meanwhile, cut the eggplant slices into thin strips. Add the strips to the sauce. Cook about three minutes. Serve with hot spaghetti or spaghettini.

Yield: Four to six servings.

### CHICKEN BREASTS SIENA-STYLE

2 whole chicken breasts, halved, skinned and boned (this will yield 4 pieces)

4 tablespoons butter

½ tablespoon salad oil

Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Juice of 1 lemon

2 tablespoons finely chopped parsley.

1. Place the breast halves on a flat surface and, using a sharp knife, slice them in half. This will make two "fillets" of each breast half.

2. Heat the butter and oil in a large skillet, and cook the fillets on both sides. Do not overcook. The entire cooking should involve only two or three minutes.

3. Transfer the chicken to a warm platter and sprinkle with salt and pepper.

4. Add lemon juice to the skillet and stir with a wooden spoon to dissolve the brown particles in the skillet. Add the parsley and return the chicken to the skillet. Turn the chicken in the sauce, and serve hot with the sauce poured over.

Yield: Four servings.

### ARTICHOKES ROMAN-STYLE

4 large artichokes with stems

½ lemon

3 tablespoons finely chopped parsley

1½ teaspoons finely chopped garlic

½ teaspoon dried mint

Salt to taste

½ cup olive oil

Water.

1. Do not cut off the stems of the artichokes.

2. Cut away all the hard outer leaves of the artichoke. Using a paring knife, neatly trim all over the outside of the artichoke including around the stem. Using a melon ball cutter or spoon, scoop out the center leaves and fuzzy central core. Rub cut surfaces of artichoke with lemon to prevent discoloration.

3. Combine the parsley, garlic, mint and salt and rub two-thirds of this mixture inside the artichoke bottoms.

4. Arrange the artichokes, stem up, in a heavy casserole with a tight-fitting lid. Sprinkle the remaining parsley mixture over all and add the oil. Add enough water to cover nearly one-third of the artichoke, not counting the stem.

5. Soak two sheets of paper toweling in water. They must be large enough to cover casserole. Cover the casserole with the lid on top of the towels and cook over medium heat about 30 minutes or until artichokes are tender when pierced with a fork. If there is liquid remaining in the pot, turn up the flame and let liquid evaporate. The oil, of course, will not evaporate. Serve the artichokes either lukewarm or at room temperature, never hot.

Yield: Four servings.



Victor Hazan likes to come home for lunch. Here his wife serves him antipasto and Roman-style artichokes.

The New York Times Studio (by Gene Mesgala)