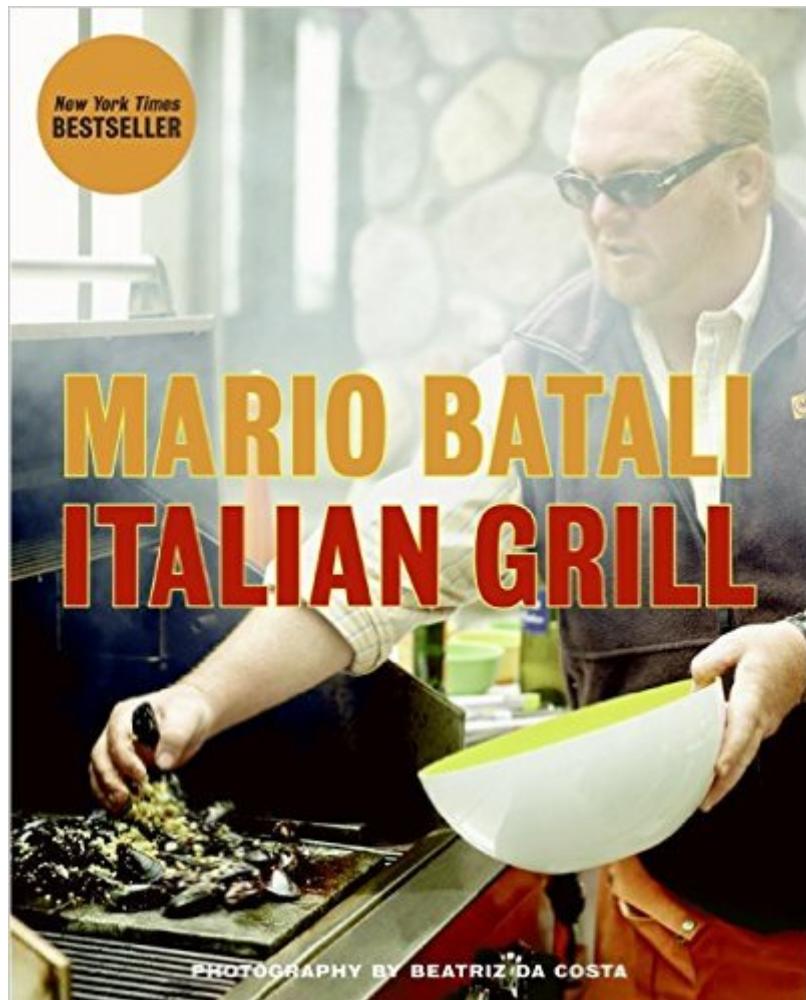


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Italian Grill



Synopsis

From Mario Batali, superstar chef and author of *Molto Italiano*, comes the ultimate handbook on Italian grilling, which will become an instant must-have cookbook for home grillers. Easy to use and filled with simple recipes, Mario Batali's new grilling handbook takes the mystery out of making tasty, simple, smoky Italian food. In addition to the eighty recipes and the sixty full-color photographs, *Italian Grill* includes helpful information on different heat-source options, grilling techniques, and essential equipment. As in *Molto Italiano*, Batali's distinctive voice provides a historical and cultural perspective as well. *Italian Grill* features appetizers; pizza and flatbreads; fish and shellfish; poultry; meat; and vegetables. The delicious recipes include Fennel with Sambuca and Grapefruit; Guinea Hen Breasts with Rosemary and Pesto; Baby Octopus with Gigante Beans and Olive-Orange Vinaigrette; and Rosticciana, Italian-Style Ribs.

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Customer Reviews

After a week or so with Mario Batali's "Italian Grill", I can give you a good rule of thumb: Everything he says involving a piastra (or which might possibly involve a piastra) is dead on. Everything he says otherwise you should seriously question in regard to cooking times/temperatures. When Mario says to make the piastra HOT, he means it. When there are recipes like the thick onion slices with lemon thyme, that presumably could be cooked on the piastra even though it isn't mentioned in the recipe, they should be cooked hot hot HOT on the piastra. When you follow his prep and his timings on these recipes, you will find yourself in Italian grill nirvana. Every time. But when there are

rotisserie or grill recipes such as the 3-inch-thick ribeye, you should assume that Mario has tested on a grill that has the approximate power of an Easy Bake Oven, for those of you old enough to remember that toy. My grill is no great shakes -- a 2002 Weber Genesis. Most steakophiles would scoff at its meager grilling power; commercial steak grills are 1100-1300F; I'm lucky if I can get mine to 550F after a week of preheating. Yet Mario says to take a room-temp 3-inch-thick ribeye and cook it over a hot grill on the hottest part of the grill for 10-12 minutes before even turning it. Are you kidding me? I cooked mine for 4 minutes a side to develop a crispy crunchy crust, then put it vertically on its t-bone for the next 30 minutes on indirect medium to get it to 120F internal temp. Even with only 4 minutes per side on direct high heat, the outside was crunchy and barely edible. Same for the rotisserie duck I did today on indirect medium heat. Mario says 1.25 - 1.75 hours for a 4-4.5 lb. duck. My 5.25-lb.

Mario definitely is passionate about bringing Italian cuisine to our midst and he certainly has captivated much of us through his tv, cookbooks and restaurants. Here he piles on with grilling Italian. It is not what most of us Americans are into on the grill, with BBQ sauces and glazes, etc. Italians are more about clean, natural flavors with light marinades. Batali admits that this is not all pure Italian grill recipes, but authentic shaped and massaged through his culinary prism. I think the results are spectacular and luscious and fun and you might also. I came across this work watching the Borders kitchen interview with Andrea (Immer) Robinson, and they did three dishes which made me purchase this. I've tried them so far, and if they are promise of the rest of the collection, this is just outstanding resource for us grillers. Think of Radicchio in Pancetta with Pears and Balsamic. You'll understand Italian grilling by this one. Bitterness of radicchio sweetened by charring and fat of pancetta with sweetness of pears and balsamic. Exquisite beyond description and so easy to do! Have had off-and-on success with zucchini, so his Marinated Zucchini with Ricotta and Botarga is winner. Ricotta stacks with oil are surrounded by marinated, grilled zucchini slices which have been marinated in spicy EVOO. Grated bottarga (new ingredient for me, but found at my gourmet supply store) was exceptional, but knocked out with mint and serrano chilies. Last of the three is killer: Spicy Black-Pepper Coated Drumsticks. Two stage cooking is the trick with non-Italian buttermilk marinade spiced up with Tabasco chipotle hot sauce and fennel, served with "wowzer" dipping sauce of Gorgonzola with red wine vinegar and oil.

Mario Batali is one of my favorite American chefs for his often bold but always sensible and original way to introduce Italian cooking to the non-Italian public. In this book, Italian Grill, more so than in

others, he shows his competent perspective on Italian food, based on real understanding of its basic principles - simplicity of preparation enhancing the natural flavor of the food. Barbeques and outdoor grilling and are not as big in Italy as they are in other parts of the world, like in United States for example; but before pasta and tomato sauce became heralds of Italian cuisine, for centuries in Italy there was (and still is) a great tradition of grilling meat, poultry and vegetables, which much contributed to make Italian food so appreciated and famous around the world. In this regard, in the beginning, Batali gives a beautiful introduction to Italian grilling and its distinctive characteristics, such as no use of any thick sauce but just very light marinades, and how it "is all about nuance and minimal interference with the flavor of the primary ingredient." His Fiorentina steak recipe is a great example and true to tradition: no sauce or marinade, just a rub with fresh herbs, a drizzle of olive oil and a pinch of sea salt. The recipe is truly a flavorful and tasty "glory of Tuscan cooking", as he calls it, especially when choosing the best cuts of beef. The book goes over some always useful grilling basics, and a summary of Italian ingredients and techniques, and subdivides the rest of the book in six sections of grilled, fire and spit roasted delights, from antipasti to fish and poultry, to meat and vegetables.

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