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# Please To The Table: The Russian Cookbook



## Synopsis

From the robust foods of the Baltic states to the delicately perfumed pilafs of Azerbaijan, from borscht and beef stroganoff to the grains and yogurts of Georgia, Anya von Bremzen and John Welchman take Westerners on a spectacular tour of the many and varied cuisines of the fifteen former Soviet republics. Anya von Bremzen, a native Muscovite, grew up on regional cooking and has traveled extensively throughout the former Soviet Union, visiting professional chefs, touring markets, and sampling and gathering dishes. Covering eleven time zones and hundreds of recipes, *Please to the Table* brings to light the astounding culinary diversity of this corner of the world-and the similarities between the cuisines, too. Here are Byelorussian Mushroom Croquettes, Armenian Stuffed Mussels, and dozens of other zakuski-the "little bites" that are the heart and soul of Russian meals. Soups from Armenian Lentil and Apricot Soup to Lithuanian Apple Soup with Apple Dumplings. Dozens of entrees including Uzbek Lamb Pilaf, Russian Salmon with Sorrel and Spinach, Azerbaijani Quail in Walnut and Pomegranate Sauce, Armenian Pumpkin Moussaka. And side dishes, salads, beverages, and desserts such as Russian Cranberry Mousse and an Almond and Pistachio Paklava. Plus vatrushki, pampushki, halushki, blinchiki, sirniki, and pirozhki. Winner of the 1990 James Beard Food and Beverage Book Award. Selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club's Homestyle Books and the Better Homes & Gardens Family Book Service. 58,000 copies in print.

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## Customer Reviews

Is there more to Russian cookery than beets, cabbage, and sour cream? *Please to the Table*, a comprehensive guide that takes readers and cooks from the Baltics to Uzbekistan, should absolutely bury that question. Russia alone is bigger than the U.S. and Canada combined; its

people claim more than 100 different nationalities and languages. Throw in the other 14 former Soviet republics, cook a feast, and you'll sample everything from Moldavian marinated peppers to cold yogurt and cucumber soup to Uzbek lamb stew to crawfish boiled in beer to open cheese tartlets, Russian tea, and, yes, beef stroganoff--nearly every major culinary style is represented here. Anya von Bremzen and John Welchman capture the soul of Mother Russia in 400 recipes joined together with a literate overview of each culinary piece in this magnificent jigsaw puzzle of a nation. The cook will be amply rewarded, and readers will travel far and wide through flavors and feasts only dimly imagined in the West.

Soviet cuisine has as many sides as the numerous nationalities and ethnic groups that comprise it in this fascinating compilation of regional recipes. The authors, a Soviet emigre pianist from Moscow and her British art historian husband, offer essays on the history of Russian, Baltic, Georgian, Central Asian, Ukrainian and Armenian foods, including the influences of climate, geography and conquest on the development of distinctive flavors. Classically Russian wild mushrooms and basic Ukrainian peasant borscht contrast with exotic Azerbaijani quail and pomegranate sauce and Uzbeki steamed lamb dumplings. Suggested menus also highlight the impact of other cultures on the vast U.S.S.R.: a Russian vodka party features French-inspired pate; an Armenian meze (appetizer) buffet with spiced feta and halvah is closer to the Middle East than the West; and a Passover dinner includes chicken pilaf with apples, raisins and quince, created by Jews of Bukhara, Uzbekistan, who now live in New York. Despite the chronic food shortages in Moscow that create a cuisine based more on processed food, vodka and frugality than on quality, the authors suggest that hospitality is the hallmark of the Soviet culinary scene. BOMC Home Style and Better Homes & Gardens Book Club selection. Copyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Every recipe I have made from this has been wonderful! And given the broad range of cultures represented in this single, stunning book, it is a great go-to for a variety of different cuisines. I have spent time in Russia and the Baltics, so a lot of the dishes from there bring me right back. The ones from the Caucasus and Central Asia just look so delicious and tasty! I haven't had time to tackle some of those. In recent years I have gotten away from buying cook books because I don't use them enough. They seem to have only one style of food. This one still hasn't even made it to my shelf because I keep using it because it is great for everyday cooking and weekend cooking when I have more time and fits so many different moods.

I'm having fun just reading this cookbook. The first recipe I tried came out well, and the others are making me hungry. Many of the recipes have more ingredients and stages of cooking than the typical American is accustomed to, so probably not suitable for every-day cooking. But well worth the effort for weekends or company. No softcover cookbook is worth the extravagant prices being asked by most of the used sellers today, at least not to me, but if you can find a copy under \$50, jump!

This cookbook was a gift for my father and mother. My dad has a very interesting love for food and for the Russian culture, so this book was perfect. My dad and mom have used it numerous times since they got it and they LOVE IT! They tried the Borsht recipe and have made it about 4 times since! They truly love this cookbook. It's a great gift for the Russian foodies in your life. :)

This is an amazing, huge cook book. It has recipes not only from Russia but from all over the Soviet Union; so there are a wide variety of regional cooking styles represented. All the recipes we have tried have been excellent. We particularly like the Moldavian potato and scallion salad. We have made it several times to take to parties and everyone likes it. The baked cabbage with feta is also Moldavian and to die for! We have not tried any of the meat recipes, but look forward to doing so. This book is an enjoyable travel guide in the sense of what one might expect to find in the markets and where a tourist could get a decent meal. For instance, museum cafeterias are mentioned as being available and pretty good. Informative personal stories accompany the recipes. The price of a new book is high but there are used ones available.

Some fantastic recipes in here - tried and tested - I've tried other versions of the same dishes, but the recipes in here are always a cut above. Great great recipe book (though not for those who are frightened by the lack of pictures).

Cookbook arrived promptly and in great shape, as promised! It was a gift for a friend, so I was very happy. (This is a great cookbook and I have given it to many friends who are interested in Russia!)

A WONDERFUL COMPILATION OF VARIOUS RUSSIAN RECIPES. MY FIRST COPY, PURCHASED YEARS AGO, WAS LOST TO WATER DAMAGE IN MY BASEMENT. I WAS THRILLED TO BE ABLE TO REPLACE IT.

Russian cuisine (including the delicacies mirroring the enormity of the Russian empire) is no longer terra incognita to the West thanks to the tremendous work by Anya von Bremzen. She does for cuisine what Nurejev did for ballet: introducing a number of fabulous Russian classics never before known outside Russia. One cannot have enough of von Bremzen's recipes in spite of book's daunting 659 pages. Not the least does she remind every European how much there is of Russia outside of Russia. Being Swedish, I have understood at long last what that Swedish fondness of fresh dill is all about: love from Russia! Spassiba, madame! Even if my background were not Swedish, von Bremzen's extraordinary collection is grand reading. It ought to be constantly reprinted and found in a great deal of languages. Do treasure every chance to get it.

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