

Pellegrino Artusi, the Inventor of Italian Cuisine



by Editorial staff

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Who was this man, and why is his manual of gastronomy, written in 1891, still a classic of Italian cuisine?

His name is well known in Italy, but few are really aware of his story and the book that made him immortal. “La Scienza in Cucina e l’Arte di Mangiar Bene” (*Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well*), a manuscript from 1891 that has also been translated into Dutch, Portuguese, Spanish, German, and French, made Pellegrino Artusi of Forlimpopoli famous worldwide. A writer as well as a food and literary critic, he probably thought he would go down in history for his work on the poet Ugo Foscolo, but he’s actually remembered for what’s called “the Gospel of Italian cooking.”

A unique treatise

His book, also known simply as “L’Artusi,” became a sort of watershed in the gastronomic culture of his era. He enhanced the national culinary tradition and did it with just the right dose of humor. Artusi, who paid for his book’s publication out of his own pocket because he couldn’t find a publisher willing to print it, collected recipes from all over Italy – some garnished with little personal comments, placing an appropriate emphasis on home cooking. This is why many people are grateful to him for imparting dignity to a huge mosaic of regional traditions that included fritters, fillings, stews, soups, sauces, roasts, boiled meats, ice creams and preserves. His book has sold more than a million copies and gone through a hundred editions.

Who was Pellegrino Artusi?

Pellegrino Artusi was born in Forlimpopoli on August 4, 1820, to Teresa and Agostino Giunchi. After studying at the Bertinoro Seminary, he began looking after his father’s affairs, but a turning point in his life was a raid by bandits on

January 25, 1851. Stefano Pelloni, aka “Il Passatore,” (the Ferryman) was a vicious brigand from Romagna who led his gang in an attack on Forlimpopoli. He robbed the richest families while they were at the theatre. That night, in addition to invading the auditorium, the outlaws gang-raped several women, including Pellegrino’s sister Gertrude, who was seriously traumatized and had to be admitted to a mental hospital. After this terrible event, the Artusi family left Romagna and moved to Florence, where they ran a booth selling silk. Pellegrino got a job in Livorno with a large business and later founded a bank in Florence that brought him wealth and respect. The writer stayed there until his death at the age of 91.



Pellegrino Artusi

Food and literature enthusiast

Since he enjoyed a dependable income and a life of ease, Artusi never turned away from his fondness for writing and cooking. In 1865, he moved to a new home and withdrew into private life, spending all his time on his cultural interests, first writing a biography of Ugo Foscolo and then *Observations as an Appendix on 30 Letters by Giusti*. These two books published at his own expense did not have the success of the later “Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well” in 1891. The first edition of “Science” sold thousands of copies and were reprinted many times, and Artusi published fifteen editions over twenty years. *Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well* was not just a blockbuster but a work that critics deemed to be very important due to the language model it used, which helped to spread standard Italian throughout the peninsula.

An unusual book

This volume, which is still kept in many households, collected 790 recipes explained in an educational way, accompanied by the author’s reflections and anecdotes, presented in a witty and mordant manner. One example is his famous sentence, “With this practical manual, all you need to know is how to hold a ladle.” His efforts brought cooking knowledge and the secrets of good food to everyone in Italy. This is why Pellegrino Artusi remains a revered name in the world of Italian cuisine.

The Following Article is from about Artusi's Will provided by:



These days at the Garum we are re-reading the volume of Pellegrino Artusi's autobiography, published in 1993 by Il Saggiatore and exemplified on an autographed manuscript, then in a private collection, consisting of 10 issues, as the essay informs us: 'each of 5 double computisteria sheets of 26.5 × 20.5 cm; the text runs on the right column of each facade with additions and inserts on the left. The text occupies 27 lines on each side. Progressive numbering of the issues tied with a red cord s from 1 to 10, for a total of 200 pages'. The very interesting volume is also embellished by the presence of the transcription of the Artusian testament, which we want to present to you in its entirety so that each of you can have some more data to judge the figure of Pellegrino Artusi,

I Pellegrino Artusi of the late Agostino landowner, a native of Forlimpopoli, domiciled in Florence, finding myself perfectly healthy in body and mind and wanting to dispose of my possessions for after my death, I made, wrote and signed this will in my own hand. holograph in the following way and form:

As a legate, I leave the following to my servants Marietta Sabatini of Massa and Cozzile and Francesco Ruffilli of Forlimpopoli for once only, on condition, however, that on the day of my death they are at my service, live with me and receive a monthly salary: at the Marietta Sabatini five thousand lire free from inheritance tax, the complete bed in her room, including my yellow silk blanket and, as a souvenir, my long gold watch chain: three thousand lire to Francesco Ruffilli equally free from inheritance tax and considered any, and, as a souvenir, my gold watch that is wound with the key.

Likewise as a legacy I leave full ownership and free enjoyment of my farm in Sant'Andrea in Rossano, located in the Community of Forlimpopoli, to the sons and daughters of my

late sister Angiola, former wife of the late Mr. Francesco Zattini in Brusaporci. of Forlimpopoli, for equal portions and with the right accrescendi between them.

Likewise as a legacy I leave to the children of the deceased my sister Antonia, former wife of the late Mr. Giuseppe Melandri of Lugo, both male and female for equal portions and with the right to increase between them, the property and the free enjoyment of half of my other Pieve Sestina farm located in the Cesena area. And as for the other half of said farm, I leave full ownership and free enjoyment to the sons and daughters of my late sister Pellegrina, former wife of the late Mr. Antonio Melandri of Lugo for equal portions and with the right accrescendi between them.

As a legacy I leave the sum of twenty-two thousand and four hundred lire that I keep in interest-bearing deposit at the Monte dei Paschi di Siena, for one time only, half of it to my sister Rosa wife to Mr. Paolo Seghieri of Pisa and the other half, that is eleven thousand and two hundred lire, I leave to my 3 grandchildren daughters of Mr. Giacomo Guidi of Pisa per equal portions and with the right accrescendi fta them. Likewise I leave all my bed and table linen, cloths, blankets, coltroni, mattresses with wool and horsehair, curtains, carpets and in general all objects of linen, hemp, cotton, wool, silk and any other similar material, excluding, however, the objects already prepared and with the exception of those fabrics that accompany and are part of the furniture, for three quarters to the aforementioned three nieces of mine from Pisa with the right accrescendi between them and the fourth part to my sister Rosa, the aforementioned wife of Signor Paolo Seghieri of Pisa. More I give and bind my granddaughter Teresa Guidi of Pisa, my ancient ivory crucifix and to my other niece Sister Giuseppina dell'Immacolata, now Caterina Zattini, my Madonna, of ancient painting, with frame and canopy, gilded.

To which effect I prescribe that the role of the girls having the desired requisites and who will therefore be able to contribute to the said skills, be annually formed by the parish priests of the city, then be submitted to the approval of the Municipal Council, which can make those additions and exclusions. who will consider it appropriate in order to better correspond to my concept and my desire to encourage good morals without bragging rights and to reward honesty; that therefore the drawing of lots for the dowries to be conferred is made every year for the feast of the Statute, that no girl can be conferred more than one dowry, that the dowry must be paid after the celebration of the legal, or civil, marriage, and that finally, if this was not celebrated before the girl to whom the dowry was granted,

For the same title of legate and for my memory a I leave the following movable objects to the infrascritti, namely: at the Municipality of Forlimpopoli all my books and manuscripts except the volumes of the manual La Scienza in cucina which are for

sale; hoping that this small gift is the foundation and principle of the formation of a public library: to Mr. Natale Aducci of Rimini domiciled in Forlì, my gold watch as a reference to the Pertele factory together with the gold and platinum chain to which a medallion made up of two ancient Roman gold coins with the effigy of Tiberius and Nero and also I leave to him my theater binoculars mounted in ivory: to my nephew Don Luigi Zattini archdeacon of the Chapter of Canons of Bertinoro, the oil painting with gilded frame representing the Madonna del Murillo.

Any remnant of my furniture and all household goods, except the objects and things of which I have especially disposed above. and with the exception of what I will arrange below, I want and order that they be, by my infrascritti executors, sold at public auction and that the proceeds be returned halfway to the Society for the Suppression of Begging in Florence and for the other half in a subsidy to the Infantile Kindergarten of Forlimpopoli. Finally, always by way of legate, I leave the sum of five hundred lire for one time only to Mrs. Maddalena Riguzzi, widow Giunchi di Forlimpopoli, now residing in Forlì, and in the case of her premature death to her daughter, Mrs. Emilia Giunchi. All my other movable, immovable, credits, rights, actions, reasons, cash, joys, it was first built and re-invested in the manner described above by my executors and then administered and increased by the Municipality of Forlimpopoli for all that time preceding the aforementioned delivery. And in the event that at the end of that time no Hospice of Mendicity still existed in Forlimpopoli, I intend and want that my legacy to serve precisely as the first assignment to begin the foundation of a Hospice that has as its purpose the hospitalization and assistance of beggars. males and females from Forlimpopoli and the neighboring countryside and unable to work.

In order then to encourage the youth of my native city to the education of which at present the need is felt so much, I intend and want the Municipality of Forlimpopoli to institute with my inheritance a prize of ten thousand Italian lire once only in favor and in person. of the one who, being a native of Forlimpopoli and son of a father likewise born in Forlimpopoli, will be the first, within the term not longer than fifty years from the day of my death, to be for the duration of at least one year, or Minister of State in the Government of Italy, or Army General in the Italian Army.

And in the event that the said event desired by me in honor of my city and for the aforementioned purpose does not occur within the aforementioned term, as well as in the event that even before the expiry of said term, my present provision comes for a any reason to remain null and void, in such cases the sum of the Italian lire ten thousand that were to be used as a prize will remain in favor of the Forlimpopoli Hospice of Mendicity mentioned above.

I revoke any and all of my other wills or dispositions of last will that I may have made and I want this alone to be fully and completely executed, Finally I appoint and elect as executor of my will Mr. Giacomo Ceroni current Director of the Pious House of Livorno in Florence , that gentleman who on the day of my death will function as Mayor in the Municipality of Forlimpopoli, and Mr. Giovanni Bandini of Forlì, trusting in their honesty and goodness in my regard, I beg them to accept the assignment and to give themselves every concern because my present wishes receive full and exact execution to which effect I authorize them to take immediate possession of all my possessions as soon as my death has occurred. '..

I declare as the last that I intend to deprive any of my binders from the legacy or bequests that arise against my will or promote any dispute aimed at preventing the execution of my will in which case the legacy concerning him must be had and considered. as not written.

Finally, I demand, command and want my funeral transport to take place in a purely civil form and without even a flower. I made my present holographic will in Florence in my house in Piazza D'Azeglio, local number twenty-five this day, May 2, one thousand nine hundred and four.

Io Pellegrino Artusi of the late Agostino, own hand. Florence eighteenth March one thousand nine hundred and five.

Given the death in these past days of Mr. Cav. Giacomo Ceroni appointed my executor in my holographic will of May 2, nineteen four, I appoint in his stead, and under the same conditions, Mr. Cav. Clemente Giannelli of Premilcuore living in Florence in Via dei Rustici.

Pellegrino Artusi was Agostino. Forlì twenty-second July one thousand nine hundred and five.

I approve and confirm in all its parts and articles my last holographic will which is currently in Florence enclosed in an iron box, except for the following provision: In it, Mr. Giovanni Bandini of Forlì is named as one of my executors and as the the same has renounced to be my agent further on, I appoint my manager Antonio Bonavita of Forlì in his place as executor under the same conditions indicated in the said holographic will.

Pellegrino Artusi was Agostino. n. Florence eleven May one thousand nine hundred and seven.

In order to give my cook Francesco Ruffilli a greater proof of my satisfaction with the service provided to me, I want, in case he is still at my service on the day of my death, that he choose the kitchen utensils he likes best.

Pellegrino Artusi of the late Agostino.

Following the death of my sister Signora Rosa, you see. Seghieri di Pisa command and I want the legacy described in my holographic will in favor of the same consisting in the fourth part of the linen, fabrics, etc. etc. are left in the property of my three nieces, daughters of Signor Giacomo Guidi of Pisa.

Pellegrino Artusi of the late Agostino. In Florence sixteen January nineteen eight. Finding myself in good health and sane of mind, I arrange the following for after my death. As long as my copyrights on the Manual Science in the kitchen and the art of eating well will last after my death, I want to be given in equal portions to my cook Ruffilli Francesco and my waitress Maria Sabatini because they helped me to the success of that book. In the event that during the action of the law on copyright one of the two or both of the said beneficiaries of mine come to die, I want and wish that the said legacy passes to their legitimate heirs.

Pellegrino Artusi of the late Agostino own hand. I also order and want the legacy of five thousand lire in favor of Marietta Sabatini to be raised to eight thousand lire and the legacy of three thousand lire in favor of Francesco Ruffilli to be raised to five thousand lire both under the conditions expressed in my will. Pilgrim. Artusi was Agostino's own hand.