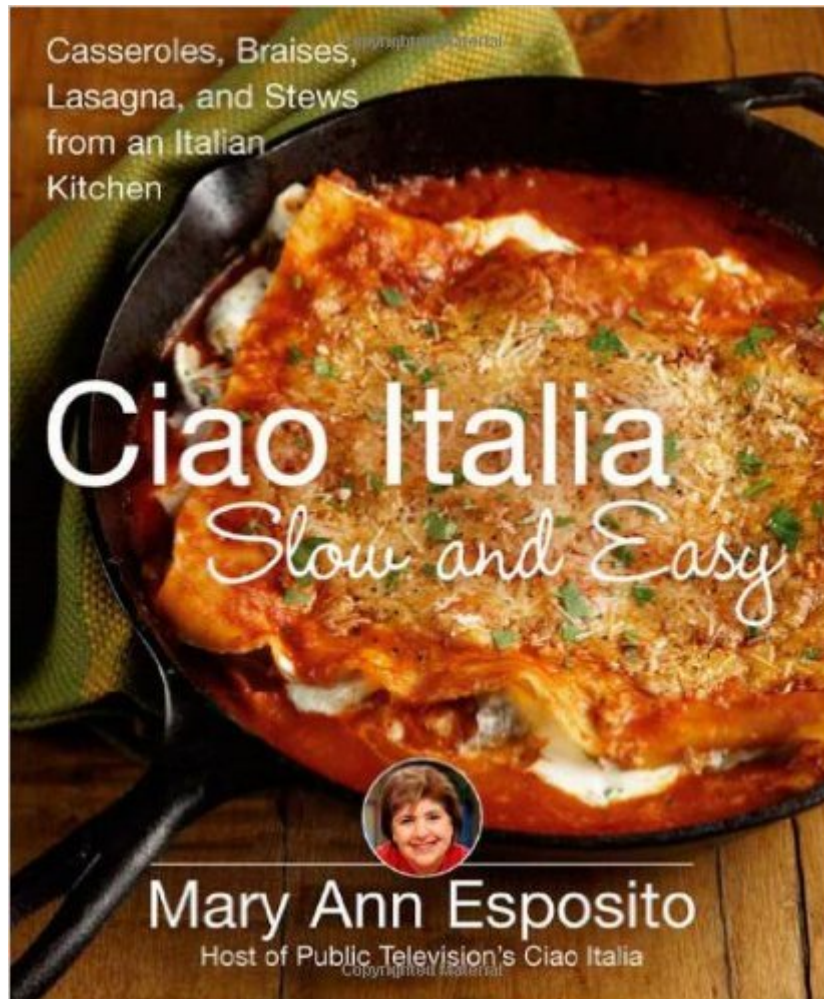


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# Ciao Italia Slow And Easy: Casseroles, Braises, Lasagne, And Stews From An Italian Kitchen



## Synopsis

What could be welcoming in your kitchen than a big warm pan full of lasagna, a pot of braised short ribs or a casserole dish holding fragrant mussels, tomatoes and herbs? When you think of comfort food, the first cuisines that comes to mind is Italian. and nobody knows that better than Mary Ann Esposito, host of the longest-running television cooking show in the U.S., *Ciao Italia*. In *Ciao Italia Slow and Easy*, Mary Ann tells us how to slow down, take it easy and fill the kitchen with Italian slow-cooked goodness. By braising, baking, roasting and simmering, she gives readers a treasure trove of wonderful dishes like stove top lasagna with artichokes-prosciutto-wrapped chicken baked in parchment-tomato braised short ribs with rigatoni-pasta shells stuffed with a ragu of pork and cream-one-skillet chicken supper with tomatoes and green beans-layered polenta pie with mushrooms and sausage-mussel, potato and tomato casserole. *Ciao Italia Slow and Easy* is filled with Mary Ann's sensible advice, knowledgeable asides about the history of Italian cuisine and, most of all, a sure sense of what tastes good.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I just returned from a vacation in Italy. This book so reminds me of my trip! I really like that Mary Ann uses simple, fresh, every day meats, vegetables, spices, and other ingredients in her recipes, just like most Italians I remember doing. I really wanted to replicate some of the recipes I tasted in Italy, but didn't want a cookbook that called for items that I can't find in my local grocery store. This book is perfect for me. Most of the recipes are suited perfectly to family style dining, but are tasty enough to serve company. The "do ahead" features of the recipes make the dishes suited perfectly for

today's life style. I know this cookbook is going to be one of my favorites.

This is not the first Mary Ann Esposito cookbook I've owned, so I might be a little biased, but this is a great collection for the holiday season. All kinds of slow cooked, authentic Italian classics. You can put these things together and then set it/forget it. Come back hours later and you got yourself a casserole or a lasagne. No fuss, no muss. And the best part is, at no point is there any suggestion to use Ritz crackers in any recipe, if you know what I mean. Go get this book. Seriously. Go get it.

A few months ago I discovered Mary Ann Esposito TV's show and have been hooked ever since. Great Italian meal items to cook or bake. I have been making homemade pasta for over forty years and discovered a tip I read about in one of her books. That made it worth the price, I like buying used books on . All of these books were hardcovers and all in excellent condition,

While this book is (as expected) heavy on pasta recipes, there was a surprising number of vegetable recipes as well, many of which included staples like zucchini and potatoes that I'm always searching for new ways to use when the end-of-summer bounty comes in from the garden. I was a little disappointed because I'd been expecting more braise recipes, while the book offered substantially more stews and casseroles. There were a lot of sausage recipes, which was fine with me but might not appeal to all readers. Less common ingredients like rabbit also made appearances. Most of the recipes were fairly simple, and the page layout was fine though not the best I've seen. I was rather disappointed that the only pictures were tucked on a few pages in the middle of the book. Many more of these recipes would have benefited from photos. Generally speaking it was a good cookbook and I pulled some promising recipes from it, but not enough that I would add it to my permanent collection.

MaryAnn Esposito's Ciao Italia Slow and Easy: Casseroles, Braises, Lasagne, and Stews from an Italian Kitchen has excellent, delicious recipes. It is not a "tomb". It is modest size but packed with great recipes. It shows how Italians use cheap cuts of meat and whatever grows out of the earth to create delicious and nutritious family dinners. It is how my grandmothers use to cook!

I am an avid lover of all things Italian, especially the cooking. I have watched author Mary Ann Esposito on Ciao Italia, her television program, and been snared by her tempting take on vegetables in particular. I purchased her "Slow and Easy" cookbook and was in general, very pleased indeed. If

there was any slight disappointment to speak of, it would only be her curious habit of pan frying in regular old vegetable oil instead of olive oil for all of its famous addition of fragrance & flavor. I know Italians from all parts of Italy & Sicily who concur that this is not the norm; vegetable oil is used for deep frying usually. Olive oil is plentiful and much less expensive in Italy so that is why it is most often used. (In addition to the sweet kiss of flavor it adds) I also learned a few wonderful tips from the author. My favorite has to be using old brown paper bags to drain fried foods as they do not absorb the excess oil then cling to the fried food like paper towels do. Try this tip; it really works! My favorite recipe has got to be the stuffed shells with cream ragu. Like we say here in New Orleans, "good enough to slap your Mama!" Just an expression, Grandma Tarantino! That recipe alone was well worth the cost of the entire cookbook, but there are so many more recipes to tempt & tantalize the tastebuds.

The premise of this cookbook is slow and easy. The one recipe that I was really looking forward to was true home-made Italian lasagna and the only recipe in this cookbook was for an artichoke lasagna (no meat) made with no-boil lasagne sheets either baked in the oven for 50 minutes or on the stovetop in a skillet for 25 minutes. There was quite an unusual Timballo recipe that used thin-sliced wheat bread and no eggs. I always thought Timballo was a dish made of pasta or rice bound with eggs and cheese with seasonings. This was not that type of dish. This version was not that bad but just not what you'd expect from a cookbook claiming to be from an Italian kitchen. There are 4-5 pictures, none particularly appetizing, the pages are an off-yellow color and the print seems like a dark red so some people might have trouble with reading it clearly. If you want a casserole cookbook take a look at *Bake until Bubbly: The Ultimate Casserole Cookbook* instead.

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