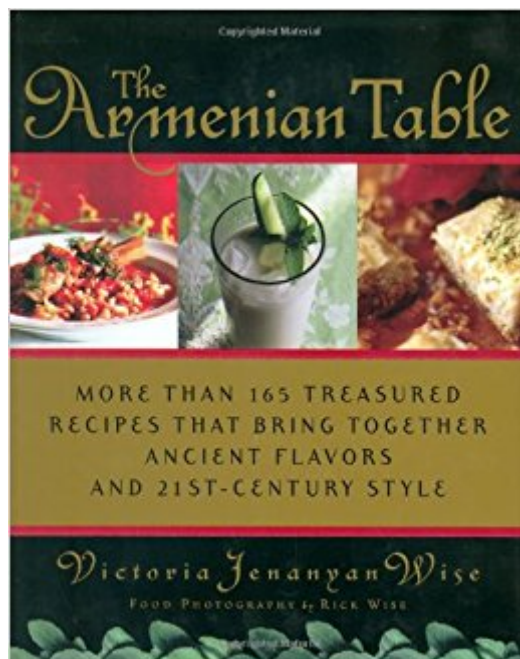




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# The Armenian Table: More Than 165 Treasured Recipes That Bring Together Ancient Flavors And 21st-Century Style



## Synopsis

A veteran cookbook author returns to her delicious culinary heritage in this savory and passionate recipe collection. Victoria Jenanyan Wise grew up with the flavors, scents, and seasonings of Armenian cooking--a cuisine that combines Mediterranean flavors with Persian and Russian accents. In her eleventh cookbook--and her first on Armenian food--Wise collects traditional favorites and inspired contemporary variations. Recipes include:-Lavosh, Armenian pizzas, and other savory breads-Shish kebab, moussaka, and other lamb dishes-Baked and roast chicken prepared with yogurt, dill, turmeric, pomegranate, and more-Grilled mackerel with lemon and dill; red snapper stew with tomato and artichokes-Stuffed vegetables (dolmas) and stuffed grape leaves -Baklava and other fillo-pastry sweets; lemon yogurt cake; almond and rice flour pudding with toasted almond slices, and more. This authentic and warm-hearted cookbook will be met by a ready audience of Armenian-Americans, as well as lovers of Greek, Turkish, Lebanese, and other Mediterranean and Middle Eastern cuisines.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A veteran cookbook author returns to her delicious culinary heritage in this savory and passionate recipe collection. Victoria Jenanyan Wise grew up with the flavors, scents, and seasonings of Armenian cooking--a cuisine that combines Mediterranean flavors with Persian and Russian accents. In her eleventh cookbook--and her first on Armenian food--Wise collects traditional favorites and inspired contemporary variations. Recipes include:-Lavosh, Armenian pizzas, and other savory breads-Shish kebab, moussaka, and other lamb dishes-Baked and roast chicken prepared with

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**Advance Praise for The Armenian Table**"The Armenian Table is Mediterranean "soul food" at its best. I am only sorry that I have missed out on the Jenanyan family parties, where I could have tasted most of these dishes prepared with their well-tuned palates and passion for quality and tradition. I will cook Victoria Jenanyan Wise's recipes for myself, and with pleasure."--Joyce Goldstein, author of *Saffron Shores: Jewish Cooking of the Southern Mediterranean* and *Solo Suppers* "Victoria Wise shares my conviction that family and culture are best preserved and respected through the foods we share. She commemorated my family's culinary history in *Annie & Margrit: Recipes and Stories from the Robert Mondavi Kitchen*. Now, we have the gift of learning about, and cooking, the foods handed down to her. I can't wait to try every dish in *The Armenian Table*."--Margrit Biever Mondavi

**Praise for the Cookbooks of Victoria Jenanyan Wise**

**American Charcuterie** "A book that reads as if it had been written by your most loving and food-wise neighbor."--*Gourmet Magazine* "There are very few good books about charcuterie and this one reflects all the right instincts of its author and a genuine love for food and eating."--Alice Waters, author of *Chez Panisse Fruit* and *Chez Panisse Cooking*

**The Vegetarian Table: Mexico** "This is the best book I've read on vegetarian cooking. Victoria combines the big, bold flavors of Mexico with healthy, zesty food you'll want to eat every day."--Mark Miller, author of *Coyote Cafe* "Like the best haiku poetry, these recipes are startling in their simplicity and offer complex rewards."--Lorna Sass, author of *Pressure Perfect* and *Lorna Sass' Complete Vegetarian Kitchen*

**The Gardeners' Community Cookbook** "A knowing and generous cook, Victoria Wise brings together a vivacious community of food lovers who swap recipes, share their gardening secrets, tell stories, and reveal their passion for growing and cooking the best." --Marion Cunningham, author of *Lost Recipes* and *The Supper Book*

**The Pressure Cooker Gourmet** "This book and the pressure cooker will become "must haves" in the kitchen of any smart cook who wants gourmet meals in half the time."--Diane Phillips, author of *The Ultimate Rotisserie Cookbook* and *The Soup Mix Gourmet*

Ms. Victoria Jenanyan Wise, a highly experienced cookbook author from an Armenian family has

successfully blended traditional products of the Armenian terroir with modern California style and market to give us a taste of what Armenian cuisine tastes like in our American setting. As this objective is not the same as a faithful evocation of the native Armenian cuisine, it is important you do not buy this book with the intention of faithfully recreating your own Armenian culinary heritage. Ms. Wise is giving us her Armenian culinary heritage, not an anthropological document. She is delightfully successful in evoking the memory of Armenian cuisine with recreations of Armenian recipes, family interpretations of Armenian recipes, and her own deft experiments with Armenian methods and ingredients as interpreted by what is available in the California marketplace. Ms. Wise scores her first points with me by including a map of the historical Armenia and its surrounding lands which primarily includes Asia Minor (Turkey), the Caucasus, Syria, Iraq, and Iran. Armenia today is on the eastern edge of Turkey, with parts of ethnic Armenia being in Azerbaijan. One of the little mysteries of the book is how this terroir can be considered 'Mediterranean' since it is a good 500 miles from the Bosphorus, where the Black Sea empties into the Mediterranean. Although the author doesn't invoke this justification, she is in good company, as Paula Wolfert has included Georgia, which is north of Armenia and even further from the Mediterranean in a book of Eastern Mediterranean cuisines. Wise rationalizes the importance of Armenian cuisine by pointing out that the Armenian highlands are very fertile, a rich land for growing wheat, and possibly the historical origin of wheat culture. Armenia shares some major culinary elements with lands bordering the Mediterranean such as yogurt, wheat, lamb, and eggplant. On the other hand, olives and olive oil, the cornerstone of Mediterranean cuisine is less important than butter, especially clarified butter, in Armenian cooking. Since this is neither genuine Armenian nor purely Mediterranean, what is the attraction of this book. In a word, it is variety. If you are especially fond of the cornerstone Armenian ingredients (yogurt, lamb, eggplant, bulgar and legumes, and you are tired of your Italian, Greek, and Levantine sources, this is the book for you. The chapter subjects are a mix of the traditional and the quintessentially Armenian. These are: Yogurt - Ms. Wise gives us the whole picture, including a reliable recipe for making homemade yogurt, and yogurt substitutes for staples such as fresh cheese, cr me fraiche, and bechamel sauce. She also gives us the important caution that although you can start a yogurt culture from a commercial yogurt, the dry yogurt starter from a health foods store will give you better results. Take that Alton Brown. Armenian Mazas - The Armenian take on the Greek and Turkish Meze cuisine. The stars here are eggplant, chickpeas, tomatoes, onions, pickling cucumbers, and zucchini. One surprise is in the recipe for string cheese. Breads and Savory Pastries - The signature product here is 'Lavosh', the Armenian Cracker Bread which is dry like matzo, but leavened with yeast like pita, and baked with a covering

of sesame seeds. Pita and Armenian 'pizzas' are also present, along with several fillo based Greek / Turkish like savory packets. Salads - Old World style, but New World ingredients are emphasized here. Legumes and spinach are the stars here, along with the old war-horse Taboulleh. Kufta - One of the most distinctly Armenian dishes in the book. This is less a dish than a whole family of dishes, closely related to the Georgian dish, Kibbeh, described in Paula Wolfert's 'The Cooking of the Eastern Mediterranean'. Part of what makes Wolfert's book great while this volume is merely good is the fact that Wolfert gives detailed, diagrammed instructions on techniques for making Kibbeh while Wise simply gives us many different recipes and a small sidebar of tips. Both Kufta and Kibbeh are a style of cooking which puts all sorts of different ingredients, from meats to barley to bulgar to legumes into a stuffed or not stuffed 'meatball'. Lamb and other Meats - This is how to do Shish Kebab right, and other tales of lamb cookery. An interesting ethnic tidbit here is that while Armenians were Christian, Muslim lands surrounded them, so they had little interest in pork, even if they had no religious inhibitions against it. Poultry, Game, and Eggs - This is a chapter that will give relief to a tired inventory of poultry recipes. Fish and Seafood - Another Old World style blended with modern techniques and sensibilities. Focus is on fresh water fish and shellfish. Vegetables - Eggplant, Eggplant, and more Eggplant. I just wonder how okra got to Armenia from Africa. Pilafs - Bulgar, rice, lentils and nuts. Sweets - Baklava is the headliner, even though the author admits it is no more Armenian than Pizza. Filo dough, peaches, apricots, almonds, walnuts, and pistachios star here. Great source of nut nutrition here. Like many other ethnically oriented cookbooks by skilled culinary authors, this one offers new, nutritious, dishes to Armenians, foodies on the lookout for novelty and vegetarians on the lookout for novelty. This is a very good book that succeeds in its objective, but it is not a great book. The anecdotes of family history are pleasant, but do not have the evocative power of, for example, some of the stories told by Gennaro Contaldo in 'Passione'. On the other hand, 'Gourmet' magazine has declared Eastern Mediterranean cuisines as one of the next big things in eating. This book is as good a source as many. Highly recommended for those with an interest in this cuisine and in Eastern Mediterranean food in general. Relatively easy recipe methods. Very good price for the quality of the content.

My wife is from Ukraine but she likes Armenian food and I looked around on the web and found a few recipes from this cookbook so I decided to try to find it. I found it on , though you may find it hard to find because I do not believe it is published anymore.

This book provides wonderful Recipes and Stories that touch the heart. It's so pleasant to read

positive things about Armenia.

Similar to other Armenian cookbooks

Though this book made my friend cry with happiness, there was a burn mark in the inside cover. I didn't have time to send it back and wait for a new one so I made a joke about it.

My mother's father was Armenian, but very little of the Armenian cuisine or culture got passed down from him to her or to me. It wasn't until about ten years after his death that I started trying to reconnect with the food, music, and history of Armenia. This book was a present from my boyfriend, along with a dinner he prepared using the recipes in the book. I've made a number of the recipes in here at this point. They've turned out very well. Wise makes the instructions quite clear. Within and in between the recipes, she gives a glimpse of her family's relationship to their culinary heritage and traditions. It's insightful and entertaining. Thanks to this book, I've discovered bulgur, begun a love affair with plain yogurt, found out how versatile pomegranate molasses can be, learned the secret to great shish kebab (excellent meat and simple preparation), and I've started to feel like the traditions my grandfather's family brought with them from Gesaria/Kayseri aren't lost after all. Recommended recipes: Lamb and rice stuffed dolmas Salad with pomegranate vinaigrette Bulgur pilaf Tarkana Homemade madzoon (yogurt)

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