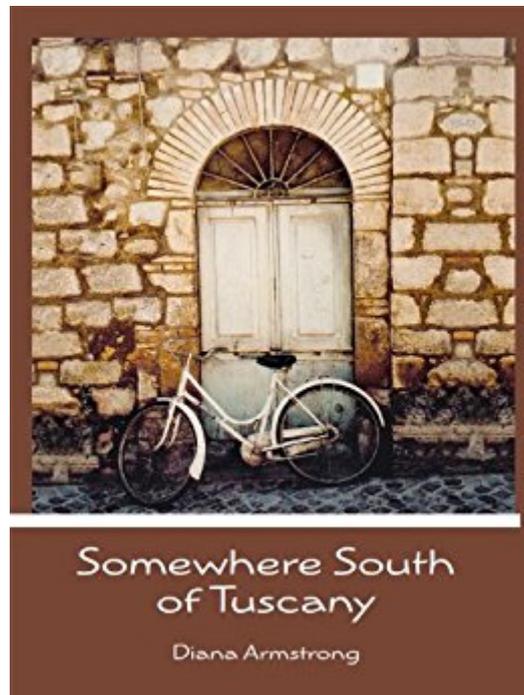


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Somewhere South Of Tuscany



Synopsis

Somewhere South of Tuscany is a feet-on-the-ground account of living and cooking in Italy, in the spectacular Italian countryside. After only one brief visit, Diana Armstrong, a cookbook author and food and travel writer, buys an ancient stone house right in the middle of the historic center of a village sandwiched between Tuscany and Umbria. Somewhere South of Tuscany is fun and witty! Of course, with Diana's culinary background, food is never very far from the surface. Diana, her husband and her family are as much concerned with their meals as they are with fixing their house. Restoring a 400 year old house in the backwoods of Italy makes for a fertile breeding ground for disasters, scrapes and a few discoveries too. (Everyone considering buying and renovating a home in Italy should ready her book!) Her culinary adventures in this Umbrian region are never very far from center stage. Diana, ever the passionate cook, provides deliciously simple recipes for all the food she mentions in the book. She gives every American cook the tools to transport themselves and their guests right into this green heart of rural Italy.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If you love Italy, this is not to be missed. I loved what some other reviewer disliked about this book;

it is chapter after chapter of the good life in Italy. There are things to learn, characters to meet, and food and wine to wish for. Thank goodness, she includes many, many recipes. I take cooking classes every chance I get when in Italy, and this is a class in itself! I just wish I were one of her many visiting friends! I am so sorry that I have finished this book.

I recently bought this book, one of many travel inspired books for my collection. I feel like I am there with Diana and her family, she writes clearly and succinctly and the story entwines her own unique travel story, with wonderful recipes, delightful characters she meets along the way, and you feel like you are there with her.

This book is much like many others in the vein of: "We bought a house in Italy/France/Spain ... " Not much new here, but I thoroughly enjoyed Diana's memoir. She could have been a little clearer on her to-and-fro journeys between Italy and America -- why? We know her husband still works in America for most of the book, but it is unclear why Diana flits around. Anyway, I loved the descriptions of the people and places, and was, as always, bedazzled by the way Mediterranean people live so comfortably and casually with their thousands-year-old history! Living in a country where antiquity is of recent date, this attitude fascinates me: oh, the church is a thousand years old ... so what? So this was highly enjoyable. I was not all that interested in the recipes at the end, foodie that I am -- I more enjoy descriptions of dinners and meals in books like these. Highly recommended for those who long to be able to live in another country, if only for holidays! Loved the humor.

Parts of this were well written and entertaining, especially for foodies, but other areas were exasperating. The opening chapter was appalling, so DO NOT judge the book by the first few pages, it gets MUCH better! I'm not even sure what she was trying for with that awful opening. She leaves you totally in the dark and does not explain a thing. Parts of the book continue to be very vague, it takes forever to figure out who her husband is for example, etc. It is a great read once you get into it and worth hanging in there! Her food descriptions are excellent and made me very hungry, her characters are entertaining, and while shipping a kitten by air from Italy left me horrified, I'm assuming because she mentioned it, that the kitten survived.

The personal account of their experiences buying a home in a foreign country spoke to my adventurous spirit. I loved her experiences with the locals. Very old world....and the food was so interesting. A must read for anyone that loves cooking and traveling.

Somewhere South of Tuscany: Five Years in a Four Cat Town by Diana Armstrong is a fun, engaging read about a couple's efforts to restore a house in rural central Italy and fit into village life after Armstrong and her husband buy an ancient property -- sight once seen. Armstrong does a wonderful job of painting the picture of Lubriano from the neighbors to the festivals, including La Infiorata when the village's only street is spectacularly covered in flowers. Her descriptions of the food she prepares are a particular highlight, and Armstrong even treats readers to an impressive collection of recipes (nearly 100 pages) at the end of the book. Although I would have liked Armstrong to delve a bit deeper into the emotions of adjusting to a new life in Italy, the lack of more introspection didn't take much away from my overall enjoyment of the book. It did start off a bit slowly for me, but about fifty pages in I was hooked and looking forward to my nightly visits with Armstrong in Lubriano. In fact, I was a bit sad for the tale to end, thus the four stars. I recommend this book to those who enjoy reading about daily Italian life, renovating a house in the Italian countryside, and/or cooking traditional Tuscan and Umbrian dishes, and also to anyone who simply likes getting wrapped up in Italian adventures.

I love to read the adventures of those (like myself) who have traveled in Italy. We see the same countryside, historical places and art and have our own perspective on how it affects our lives. The food is a no brainer. Makes me want to write my own memoirs.

Great read and a very good depiction of the people and the area.

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