

MASTERING THE ART OF SOVIET COOKING: A MEMOIR OF FOOD AND LONGING

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Broadway Books. Paperback. Book Condition: New. Paperback. 368 pages. Dimensions: 7.9in. x 5.2in. x 0.8in. A James Beard Award-winning writer captures life under the Red socialist banner in this wildly inventive, tragicomic memoir of feasts, famines, and three generations. With startling beauty and sardonic wit, Anya von Bremzen tells an intimate yet epic story of life in that vanished empire known as the USSR—a place where every edible morsel was packed with emotional and political meaning. Born in 1963, in an era of bread shortages, Anya grew up in a communal Moscow apartment where eighteen families shared one kitchen. She sang to Lenin, black-marketeered Juicy Fruit gum at school, watched her father brew moonshine, and, like most Soviet citizens, longed for a taste of the mythical West. It was a life by turns absurd, drab, naively joyous, melancholy and ultimately intolerable to her anti-Soviet mother, Larisa. When Anya was ten, she and Larisa fled the political repression of Brezhnev-era Russia, arriving in Philadelphia with no winter coats and no right of return. Now Anya occupies two parallel food universes: one where she writes about four-star restaurants, the other where a taste of humble kolbasa transports her back to her scarlet-blazed socialist past. To bring that past to life, in its full flavor, both bitter and sweet, Anya and Larisa embark on a journey unlike any other: they decide to eat and cook their way through every decade of the Soviet experience, turning Larisa's kitchen into a time machine and an incubator of memories. Together, mother and daughter re-create meals both modest and sumptuous, featuring a decadent fish pie from the pages of Chekhov, chanakhi (Stalin's favorite Georgian stew), blini, and more. Through these meals, Anya tells the gripping story of three Soviet generations, masterfully capturing the strange mix of idealism, cynicism, longing, and terror that defined Soviet life....

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