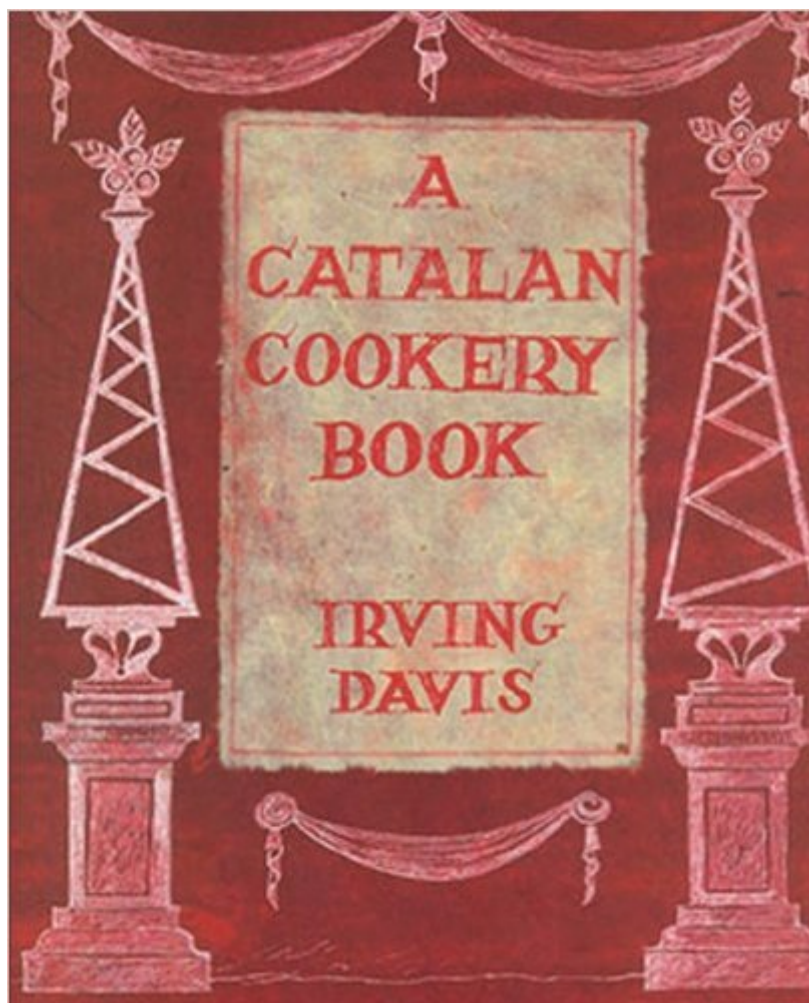


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A Catalan Cookery Book



Synopsis

Perhaps the most startling and unusual quality of Catalan cookery is the mixture of sweet ingredients with chicken, rabbit and sometimes other meat dishes; see the recipe for rabbit with prunes, rabbit with chocolate and snails, in the body of the book. Such dishes must surely be remnants of the days before the introduction of the tomato. It was the Spaniards who discovered the beneficial effects of chocolate in Mexico at the beginning of the 16th century and brought the cocoa bean to Europe. And it was they who likewise brought the tomato from Peru at the end of that century. The tomato of course, as in most Mediterranean countries, is all conquering and it is difficult to think how the southern Latins cooked before this all powerful vegetable invaded Europe. The basis of Italian cookery, as is well known, is the soffritto, that is onions, herbs simmered in oil with tomatoes -in Catalonia, with some variations, the sofregit. But this is usually associated with the picada, a mixture of pounded almonds, pine-kernels, garlic and parsley.

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