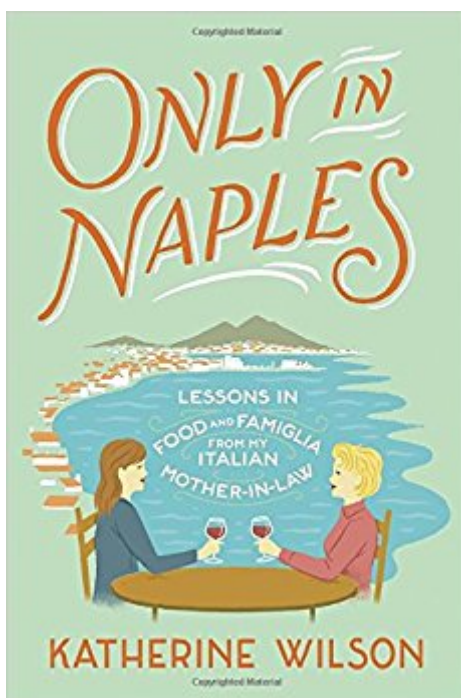


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# Only In Naples: Lessons In Food And Famiglia From My Italian Mother-in-Law



## Synopsis

Full of lighthearted humor, sumptuous food, the wisdom of an Italian mother-in-law, and all the atmosphere of Elena Ferrante's Neapolitan Novels, this warm and witty memoir follows American-born Katherine Wilson on her adventures abroad. Thanks to a surprising romance and a spirited woman who teaches her to laugh, to seize joy, and to love—a three-month rite of passage in Naples turns into a permanent embrace of this boisterous city on the Mediterranean. When I saw the sea at Gaeta, I knew that Naples was near and I was coming home. “There is a chaotic, vibrant energy about Naples that forces you to let go and give in,” writes Katherine, who arrives in the city to intern at the United States Consulate. One evening, she meets handsome, studious Salvatore and finds herself immediately enveloped by his elegant mother, Raffaella, and the rest of the Avallone family. From that moment, Katherine's education begins: Never eat the crust of a pizza first, always stand up and fight for yourself and your loved ones, and consider mealtimes sacred—food must be prepared fresh and consumed in compagnia. Immersed in Neapolitan culture, traditions, and cuisine, slowly and unexpectedly falling for Salvatore, and longing for Raffaella's company and guidance, Katherine discovers how to prepare meals that sing, from hearty, thick ragù to comforting rigatoni alla Genovese to pasta al forno, a casserole chock-full of bacon, béchamel, and no fewer than four kinds of cheeses. The secret to succulent, tender octopus? Beat it with a hammer. While Katherine is used to large American kitchens with islands and barstools, she understands the beauty of small, tight Italian ones, where it's easy to offer a taste from a wooden spoon. Through courtship, culture clashes, Sunday services, marriage, and motherhood (in Naples, a pregnancy craving must always be satisfied!), Katherine comes to appreciate carnale, the quintessentially Neapolitan sense of comfort and confidence in one's own skin. Raffaella and her famiglia are also experts at sdrammatizzare, knowing how to suck the tragedy from something and spit it out with a great big smile. Part travel tale, part love letter, *Only in Naples* is a sumptuous story that is a feast for the senses. Goethe said, “See Naples and die.” But Katherine Wilson saw Naples and started to live. Praise for *Only in Naples* “In a world filled with food memoirs, this one stands out. Katherine Wilson gives us more than the fabulous food of Naples. She offers us a passport to an exotic country we would never be able to enter on our own.” —Ruth Reichl, author of *My Kitchen Year* “Warmhearted . . . an exuberant account of love and great Italian food.” —Kirkus Reviews (starred review) “Sweet and humorous.” —Publishers Weekly “Wilson has written a glorious memoir celebrating the holy trinity of Italian life: love, food, and family. Her keen eye and

sense of humor take you through the winding streets of Naples at a clip, on a ride you hope will never end. **Adriana Trigiani**, author of *The Shoemaker's Wife* “How lucky we are to get these hilarious and wise perceptions filtered through a sincerely loving eye. **Julie Klam**, author of *Friendkeeping* “This thoroughly enjoyable love letter to Naples is a tribute to the author's irrepressible mother-in-law. **Luisa Weiss**, author of *My Berlin Kitchen* and founder of *The Wednesday Chef*

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

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manages to combine everything I love—food, family, and Italy—with heaping portions of heart and humor. How lucky we are to get these hilarious and wise perceptions filtered through a sincerely loving eye. You'll want to share this book with friends and family over a big bowl of rigatoni alla Genovese.

—Julie Klam, author of *Friendkeeping*

“This thoroughly enjoyable love letter to Naples is a tribute to the author's irrepressible mother-in-law, a larger-than-life figure who teaches Wilson (and us) not just how to cook a true Neapolitan lasagna complete with tiny meatballs, but how to approach life itself with gusto and a healthy appetite. Read this and you'll find yourself pining for your very own sequined Italian mother-in-law.

—Luisa Weiss, author of *My Berlin Kitchen* and founder of *The Wednesday Chef*

“Only in Naples is a cozy, funny, heartfelt love letter to Katherine Wilson's adopted city and beloved family-by-marriage, especially her mother-in-law, the gorgeous, indomitable Raffaella, whose cooking fills these pages with luscious ricotta and chewy octopus alike. Wilson's easygoing writing perfectly suits this tale of an innocent abroad, an American girl who discovers herself in the midst of a foreign culture that becomes, in the end, her own.

—Kate Christensen, author of *How to Cook a Moose*

“A delightful, insightful tale of being romanced by a vibrant city, a strong-willed mother and a sweet man—all at once . . . Wilson's eye for detail and character bring the culture, the rhythm, and the food of Naples to life. Only in Naples is a must-read for anyone who loves Italian food—and isn't that everyone?”

—Kathleen Flinn, author of *The Sharper Your Knife, the Less You Cry*

Katherine Wilson was born and raised in Washington, D.C. She graduated Magna Cum Laude and Phi Beta Kappa from Princeton University, where she studied with Toni Morrison and Peter Sellars. She has lived in Italy for the past nineteen years, working in television, film, and theater. Most recently, she acted in Giuseppe Tornatore's *The Best Offer*, with Geoffrey Rush and Donald Sutherland. She lives in Rome with her husband and their two children.

I have to say at the outset that the author is someone I know -- she was my daughter's classmate in high school, but I didn't know her well, except through her amazing talent as a singer. It seems that her talents also include the ability to write a funny, sweet, reflective memoir about her introduction to and integration into life in Naples. I loved learning about how the author's mother-in-law balanced the life of her family by providing nourishment and nurturing at the table. There are wonderful recipes, but even more there are moments of such profound love. I can't think of anyone who would

not enjoy this book.

Very good book !! Written by an American woman who married an Italian & they live in Naples/Napoli. What I like BEST is her debunking the bad reviews of Naples & Southern Italy !! Naples is a wonderful area & is very underated !!

I loved this book. I read it from cover to cover in record time. Maybe because I have a strong connection to Italy and I could feel the tastes and smells, hear the intonations, and picture the hand gestures. But probably because it is so vividly written. It feels like I've watched a movie, and I find myself referring back to it all the time. I also think I understand some of my friends and family better now.... But Italian connection or not, it's a lot of fun, like a little vacation. Read it!

A laugh a second. Had to put the book down after reading each page to compose myself. Every description of Neapolitans fits all of my relatives so accurately.

Since my maternal side of the family is from Naples and my paternal side is from Calabria, this book was very relevant to me. The writing is humorous and evocative of family experiences. Even the included recipes are great! I will read this book again and pass it on to my daughter.

A sweet tribute and entertaining read, recounting the author's acceptance into a Neapolitan family, with all the quirks, flavors, and culture-shock lessons that go with it. It's a love story, not just of a couple and family, but of a city that she comes to adore with all its energy and warts. The loving acceptance of the famiglia is so typical of southern Italy, where "hospitality is sacred". Some of the story reminds me of my own Italian side of the family, stories told of how my grandmother brought my mother into the fold, taught her to cook the family recipe's, loved fiercely and unconditionally, and lit up a room with her smile and energy. Katherine Wilson's memoir is poignant and funny and very well written. It made me want to see the family photos, taste the melanzana, and buzz around Naples with her and her mother-in-law.

Love reading and hard to put down at night before bed. Great read, and love the Italian words in between the English words. Makes you want to visit Naples Italy or other parts of Italy they discuss.

I LOVE this book! Katherine Wilson's is as rich and full of surprises as the food she writes about.

There is a feel of "carnale" - or of the flesh - throughout the book, which, works as an antidote to our too often too mind-centric world. This book is full of the flavors of self-realization, wisdom, and laugh out loud (yes I did) humor. It is also deeply moving - I adored the very real "tasting of tears" (you'll have to read it to learn more) as well as the wise humor of "letting an octopus be left to cook in it's own juice". ( I will remember that one as I next try to push the river.) And better yet: "sfamarsi" to dehydrate oneself. The book keeps on giving and giving. Treat yourself to this read. You'll come away feeling truly nourished.

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