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Davis has lived in France for over thirteen years, including two years in Paris and more than eleven years in the village of Bar-sur-Loup. She holds degrees from Columbia University and Cambridge University in England. www.HILLARY-DAVIS.COM

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Cookbook



Jacket design by Sheryl Dickert; photographs © Steven Rothfeld.

"Bright colors, sun-splashed days, fun, sybaritic pleasures. Hillary Davis captures on the plate everything delightful we associate with Nice. What a joy to be able to bring the good life into your own kitchen."

—Frances Mayes, *Under the Tuscan Sun* and *The Tuscan Sun Cookbook*

"I am impressed! Hillary Davis has a unique perspective on cooking for which she makes a persuasive case in her new book. She believes that we learn how to cook not just from books but also from family, friends, restaurants, markets, and even from the dishes our food is served upon and the pots in which it's cooked."

—Paula Wolfert, *The Food of Morocco* and *Mediterranean Clay Pot Cooking*

"All of it will make you want to hop on an airplane and land in the center of the Niçoise countryside, at a table set for lunch!"

—Susan Herrmann Loomis, *On Rue Tatin* and *On Rue Tatin Cooking School*

"I think this book might just be the next best thing to living on the French Riviera! . . . It is a love story of food, tradition and culture."

—Monica Bhide, *Modern Spice: Inspired Indian Flavors for the Contemporary Kitchen*

"Hillary Davis has crafted a beautiful collection of classics from the lighter side of French cuisine."

—Kathleen Flinn, *The Sharper Your Knife, the Less You Cry* and *The Kitchen Counter Cooking School*

"I felt as if Hillary Davis was taking me on a grand tour, introducing me to the home cooks and restaurant chefs, food artisans and merchants. Her recipes are simple and appealing, evidence of her love for this very special place."

—Michele Scicolone, *The French Slow Cooker*, *The Mediterranean Slow Cooker*

"... Filled with palpable love for the region and the art of French cooking. Bravo!"

—Holly Herrick, *The French Cook—Sauces* and *Tart Love*

CUISINE NIÇOISE DAVIS



CUISINE NIÇOISE

sun-kissed cooking from the French Riviera

HILLARY DAVIS photographs by Steven Rothfeld

\$40.00 U.S.

Niçoise cooking—from the region of Nice and surrounding countryside—is vibrant and healthy, with an emphasis on vegetables and fish. It is honest, simple and frugal, based on what is available from the nearby land and the sea. It is designed with olive oil rather than butter and cream; is light rather than bathed in rich sauces. There is less beef and more lamb, pork, rabbit, wild game, duck and chicken. And it depends on fresh, locally sourced produce. You can't speak about cuisine Niçoise without mentioning the local farmer or fisherman.

Davis lived on the French Riviera/Côte d'Azur for more than eleven years, learning how to cook cuisine Niçoise from neighbors in her village, friends, cutting-edge chefs, and a host of characters she met. She brings the Niçoise culture and style of cooking to vivid life with her stories of learning how to forage, harvesting olives from the trees in her backyard, buying fresh every day from local farmers and open-air markets, and spending Sundays cooking and eating with friends. Her cast of characters include her cooking mentor, Madame up the hill; Dave, the wild Australian superyacht captain with a penchant for cooking; the village priest; Lady Sarah and her hens; and Pamela, with the ruby-studded stone house.

More than a cookbook, *Cuisine Niçoise* is a tale, a story, a dream. It is a delight for armchair travelers and cooks, as Davis engagingly describes the villages around her, her favorite markets, where to find locally made pottery, village festivals, museums, and a way of life that many would love to experience.

Exquisite photography from Steven Rothfeld, a world-class photographer, sensuously evokes the colors and aromas found in this sunny corner of France.



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SWEET SWISS CHARD TART

Tourte de Blettes Sucrée

Of all the foods typical to Nice, this sweet tart has to be one of the most iconic. If you walk in the open air market in Nice or in old town you are bound to find someone selling a freshly made sweet *tourte de blette*, a pie with a top and bottom crust filled with swiss chard, onions, rum soaked raisins, apple, pear, pine nuts, and often frosted with confectioners' sugar. Some recipes call for orange flower water. Some use blond raisins that have soaked in rum for half a day. One baker in old town makes his with crystallized melons and oranges. You are also bound to see it being sold in its salty form as well.

I like to incorporate some chopped crystalized fruit into mine. Depending upon the time of year it may be hard to find candied fruit in markets except around the holidays, although health food stores and gourmet shops usually have candied slices of papaya, pineapple, apple which you can chop up and add to this recipe. Serves 6

Piecrust (see page 127)

5 tablespoons raisins

2 ounces dark rum

2 pounds swiss chard

3 tablespoons dark brown sugar

1/2 cup finely chopped candied fruit

1/2 cup chopped walnuts

2 eggs, beaten

1 tablespoon olive oil

Dash of salt

Zest from 1/2 orange

1 apple, sliced into 1/4-inch pieces

1 pear, sliced into 1/4-inch pieces

1 tablespoon sugar

Heat oven to 375 degrees F.

Soak the raisins in rum for 30 minutes.

Remove stalks from the Swiss chard and wash the leaves. Dry on paper towels. Roll and slice the leaves into 1/4" strips. You should have about 4 tightly packed cups of chard leaves. (Use the stalks for a soup or salad.)

In a large bowl, put the rum and rum-soaked raisins, brown sugar, candied fruit, walnuts, eggs, olive oil, salt, orange zest, and mix well. Add the Sécources d'oranges confites, chocolat, bonbons de massepain roches châtaigne fraîche swiss chard and mix well.

Press one of the store bought pie crusts into the bottom of the spring form pan, pressing some up the sides. Top with the chard mixture and press down with a spatula.

Alternate slices of apple and pear in circles to cover the top of the Swiss chard mixture. Sprinkle 1 tablespoon sugar over the top of the fruit, then top with the second pie crust.

Sprinkle with sugar, prick several times with a fork, and bake for 35 minutes. Allow to cool before removing from the springform pan.



ELEMENTS OF A NIÇOISE SOUP

There are certain elements, when put together, that differentiate Niçoise soups.

Fragrance is one. For hot soups, the scent of fresh herbs should drift to your nose, so they are left raw and snipped over soup at the very last minute to allow the heat of the soup to release their aroma and encourage their fragrance to rise. *Pistou*, a raw blend of basil, garlic, and Parmesan, when swirled into hot soup, radiates a smell that excites your taste buds before you even raise a spoonful of the soup to your lips.

Texture is another important element. Before serving many soups, a piece of toast will be added in the bottom of the bowl for a substantive layer, while a final shower of grated cheese will melt, adding silkiness.

For chilled, puréed soups, the addition of one or two tablespoonfuls of olive oil while blending emulsifies the soup and gives it a luxurious smooth feel in the mouth. This is in contrast to the more traditional *velouté* soups, which require a roux or cream for their silkiness.

Niçoise soups are also a part of the Niçoise home cook's skills for making culinary curatives. Knowledgeable about the medicinal qualities of herbs native to the region, home cooks thoughtfully prepare healthful soups for their families. They speak of adding rosemary to the soup to destroy microorganisms, sage to help with digestion, and garlic to make the heart strong and clean the blood—bringing the natural herbal pharmacy existing around them into the home.

Because of the wealth of olives in the region, a judicious drizzle of exquisitely fragrant, best-quality extra virgin olive oil is a frequent and comforting flourish before serving a soup.

