



# One Big Table

*Molly O'Neill*

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## **One Big Table** Molly O'Neill

From noted food writer Molly O'Neill comes a lavish portrait of our nation's contemporary culinary tradition with the best recipes from the greatest home cooks.

Ten years ago, former *New York Times* food columnist Molly O'Neill embarked on a transcontinental road trip to investigate reports that Americans had stopped cooking at home. As she traveled highways, dirt roads, bayous, and coastlines gathering stories and recipes, it was immediately apparent that dire predictions about the end of American cuisine were vastly overstated. From Park Avenue to trailer parks, from tidy suburbs to isolated outposts, home cooks were channeling their family histories as well as their tastes and personal ambitions into delicious meals. One decade and over 300,000 miles later, *One Big Table* is a celebration of these cooks, a mouthwatering portrait of the nation at the table.

Meticulously selected from more than 20,000 contributions, the cookbook's 600 recipes are a definitive portrait of what we eat and why. In this lavish volume—illustrated throughout with historic photographs, folk art, vintage advertisements, and family snapshots—O'Neill celebrates heirloom recipes like the Doughty family's old-fashioned black duck and dumplings that originated on a long-vanished island off Virginia's Eastern Shore, the Pueblo tamales that Norma Naranjo makes in her horno in New Mexico, as well as modern riffs such as a Boston teenager's recipe for asparagus soup scented with nigella seeds and truffle oil. Many recipes offer a bridge between first-generation immigrants and their progeny—the bucatini with dandelion greens and spring garlic that an Italian immigrant and his grandson forage for in the Vermont woods—while others are contemporary variations that embody each generation's restless obsession with distinguishing itself from its predecessors. O'Neill cooks with artists, writers, doctors, truck drivers, food bloggers, scallop divers, horse trainers, potluckers, and gourmet club members.

In a world where takeout is just a phone call away, *One Big Table* reminds us of the importance of remaining connected to the food we put on our tables. As this brilliantly edited collection shows on every page, the glories of a home-cooked meal prove how every generation has enriched and expanded our idea of American food. Every recipe in this book is a testament to the way our memories—historical, cultural, and personal—are bound up in our favorite and best family dishes.

As O'Neill writes, "Most Americans cook from the heart as well as from a distinctly American yearning, something I could feel but couldn't describe until thousands of miles of highway helped me identify it in myself: hometown appetite. This book is a journey through hundreds of 'hometowns' that fuel the American appetite, recipe by recipe, bite by bite."

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