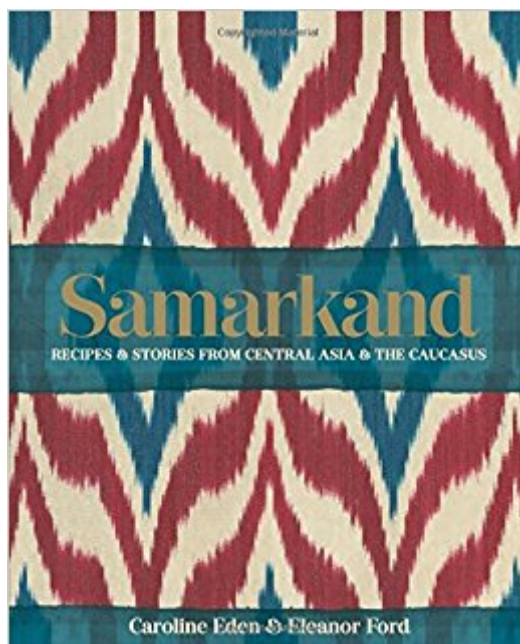


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# Samarkand: Recipes & Stories From Central Asia & The Caucasus



## Synopsis

Over hundreds of years, various ethnic groups have passed through this city, sharing and influencing each other's cuisine and leaving their culinary stamp. Samarkand is a love letter to Central Asia and the Caucasus, containing travel essays, beautiful photography and recipes that are little known in the West that have been expertly adapted for the home cook. There is an introduction to the region (explaining the ethnic groups – Uzbeks, Tajiks, Russian, Turkis, Koryo-Saram, Jewish, Caucasus, Afghan) with a useful pantry of essential ingredients, followed by an array of delicious dishes. These include Lamb Kebabs with Cinnamon, Cloves & Hot Hummus, Pumpkin Stuffed with Jeweled Rice, Pomegranate & Vodka Sorbet and the all-important breads of the region – non, flatbreads and pides.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 224 pages

Publisher: Kyle Books (June 7, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1909487422

ISBN-13: 978-1909487420

Product Dimensions: 8.3 x 0.9 x 10.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars 23 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #66,935 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #6 in Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Regional & International > European > Russian #20 in Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Regional & International > Middle Eastern #97 in Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Asian Cooking

## Customer Reviews

The book's artfully curated recipes complement each one another, and Eden's essays help bind the feasts, flavors, and colors even more closely. Though readers may never find themselves traversing the Silk Road, this is a terrific way to replicate a key part of that journey. (Publishers Weekly) "Samarkand: Recipes & Stories From Central Asia & the Caucasus" looks at the region through the cuisines of seven groups that left their mark on Samarkand: Tajiks, Russians, Turks, Jews, Koreans, Caucasians, and Uzbeks. Over several years of working on the project, travel writer Caroline Eden visited a dozen times and food writer Eleanor Ford spent time in the kitchens of home cooks and restaurants to create recipes highlighting flavors of the region. '

(Michael Florean The Boston Globe, June 28, 2016)"This vividly photographed cookbook examines the culinary influences of the historic trade route that brought fragrant Persian rice plov, Russian meat dishes and European herbs together in Central Asian cooking. The recipes here, a mix of traditional dishes and modern iterations, are surprisingly approachable. Most call for familiar ingredients used in pleasantly disorienting combinations: seared lamb chops paired with tangy sour cherries, young potatoes dusted with cinnamon and cardamom." (Georgia Freedman, The Wall Street Journal The Wall Street Journal, August 24, 2016)"As an armchair traveler, I was led by Caroline Eden's firsthand account of journeys to the Uzbek city of Samarkand and other exotic destinations, then lured into the kitchen by Eleanor Ford's fine recipes." (Florence Fabricant, The New York Times The New York Times, July 5, 2016)"Top of the reading pile right now..." (Heidi Swanson)A Semifinalist for the Piglet Cookbook Award (Food52)Winner of the "Food and Travel" award 2017 (The Guild of Food Writers)

Caroline Eden specializes in Central Asia and the Caucasus. She is a regular contributor to the travel, food and culture pages of The Guardian, Financial Times, Independent, and AsianArt newspaper as well as a weekly travel page for London's Metro. She has reported on key events in Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan for BBC Radio 4's From Our Own Correspondent. Eleanor Ford is a food journalist who focuses on making world cuisines accessible to the home cook. She has been a recipe developer and editor for the Good Food Channel and BBC Good Food Magazine. She has judged The Guild of FoodWriters' Awards, was local editor for Zagat's Hong Kong guide and has been a Time Out restaurant reviewer.

It is rare for me to read through a new cookbook and not find a recipe or two I want to try immediately. But in this case, I want to try them all, now - okay there are a few with a bit lower priority but ... at university, I knew a number of students of Central Asian languages and a couple of graduate students from the region. I trust that these recipes as reasonably authentic as they are similar to the dishes I was served as from the region. The only ingredient I see missing that was always spoken of nostalgically is melons ... I kept hearing of a hundred types of melons being available. I fear they don't even make an appearance in that variety even in the gorgeous photos spread throughout the book. The recipes all are built around ingredients that are available without prowling specialty and ethnic stores. Pomegranate molasses is a difficult as it comes ... and, yes, molasses in milk is fed to children around the world according to my experience tracking down pomegranate molasses. The directions are detailed and clear; they do not assume that you are

familiar with the final product. This makes it ideal for someone exploring the cuisine without any experience with it. The first recipe I looked for in the book was for the Georgian cheese bread - there is a Spinach Khachapuri along with a beautiful photo and an amusing comment about the Khachapuri economic index - the price of the ingredients is a local measure of inflation. And the Azerbaijan Butternut rice under a Shah's Crown which is a buttered saffron rice with chestnuts, raisins and apricots in a lavash crust is there. But the recipes which really caught my attention were not ones that I was familiar with or that were complex. They are simple family fare. Summer Borscht with Sour Cream and chive is a clear red broth flavored with tomatoes, celery, onion, garlic, bay, cloves and lemon juice. Green Olive and Walnut Salad is seasoned with cumin, chile, dill, thyme ... Walnut stuffed Eggplant Roles with pomegranate, cilantro, garlic, chile ... Candied Quinces with Chopped Nuts, cinnamon, lemon, almond, pistachios. To drink there is tarragon soda, several herbal teas and spiced teas. Or a more exotic rhubarb, apple and clove kompot drink. There are a number of kebab style meat recipes, a variety of pilau style recipes, hot pots, breads, noodles, dips ... all inviting, all achievable. They not only provide a cross-section of dining options but a cross-section of the variety of ethnicity in the region.

...and I've bought a lot of cookbooks. I salivated over the varied recipes. Widely varying, unique combinations of ingredients, and inspiring for those who like to try new things. The background stories, which I often don't read also held my interest. In fact, I read this book cover to cover. There is something for everyone in this book. This is the most satisfying cookbook purchase I've made in years.

What a great cookbook. So many things to try and everything comes out great. Prepared the chicken shish kabobs and they were amazing. My family couldn't believe how good they were. Can't wait to try more.

I have traveled extensively through the Caucasus. I collect cookbooks from this region, as long as they are in English. Most of them are extremely poor quality, rife with spelling and grammar errors, translation issues, poor instructions, items that cannot be obtainable in the west and nonsense ingredients such as "pink" (yes, I've seen this used several times, I have no idea what food "pink" is supposed to be, even through context). This cookbook is BY FAR the most authentic cookbook for this region's recipes that I have ever found in over a decade of searching. I have been looking for a cookbook of this caliber for this region, and I can hardly believe that I finally found it! Tasting the

result of every recipe is like being transported back to Tbilisi or Baku or Samarkand and every city and town in between. In the Republic of Georgia, they have a saying "why would you eat at a restaurant that serves foreign food when you can eat Georgian food?" And it's true, Georgian food is simply amazing; hence my search for this region's cookbook. The second recipe in the book- Walnut Stuffed Eggplant Rolls- reminded me of so many wonderful meals in Tbilisi where this dish was often served. It's an absolutely perfect recipe for the dish! This is now my 'go-to' book gift. I've purchased multiple copies and given them to people; all have been thrilled:-) Thank you for writing such an important and beautifully written cookbook.

Incredibly descriptive this book transports you to places most will never see. Brilliantly photographed, the narrative draws you in and makes you want to make every single recipes.

Great text and recipes. The only problem I have is with the quality of the paper it is printed on - it is very dull and the photos are washed out. I think the intent was to make it look antique, but for me, it is annoying feature.

I absolutely love every single recipe and all the stories!

Interesting cookbook about this region and its multi-ethnic cuisine. Beautiful pictures and great stories.

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