



## European Festival Food

*Elisabeth Luard*

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Since the earliest times the people of Europe have gathered together, either as families or as whole communities, to celebrate their traditional festivals - their high days and holidays, their harvests, their births, weddings and funerals. At Christmas and New Year and Easter, and at the pagan festivals that preceded them, people ate the dishes sanctified by custom for those occasions. The best local produce was served at these feasts but often with the extra savor of the unfamiliar: exotic spices in cold northern countries, fish from icy Atlantic waters in the sunny south.

Ritual and ceremony, some of it very ancient, accompanied the food. From all over Europe from Scotland to the Mediterranean, from Hungary to Cornwall, Elisabeth Luard has collected descriptions of these traditional feasts and festivals, many of which she has experienced first hand, and hundreds of recipes for the dishes appropriate to them. As well as being a unique and wonderfully readable cookery book, European Festival Food is written with the scrupulous attention to detail and authenticity that is the hallmark of Elisabeth Luard's cookery writing, the recipes are peppered with hundreds of fascinating anecdotes and little known facts about local history and folklore.

Starting with December the book is organized according to the months of the year and so it importantly also reminds us of the cycle of seasonality that is now once again regarded as the natural and much more enjoyable way to shop and eat. Elisabeth Luard is an award-winning food-writer and a winner of the much coveted Glenfiddich Trophy. In the judges' estimation, 'in addition to scooping the much coveted Glenfiddich Trophy, Elisabeth Luard was named best Cookery Writer for her recipes in *The Oldie*. Elisabeth's seemingly effortless style of writing, self-drawn illustrations and understanding of the way in which ordinary people's cooking reflects their history, culture and everyday life, makes her one of the most individual and distinctive food writers of all time.' In the 90s she covered regional cooking in Britain for *Country Living* and was the food-columnist of *The Scotsman* and *The Telegraph*. She is the food columnist for *The Oldie* and a contributing editor to *Waitrose Food Illustrated* as well as many national newspapers.

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