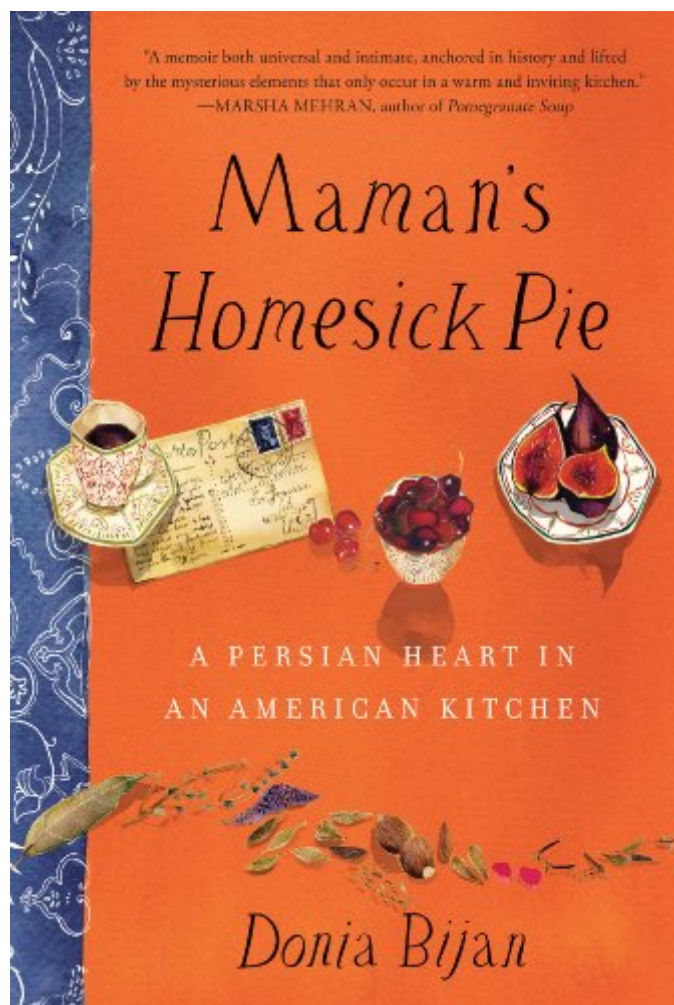


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# Maman's Homesick Pie: A Persian Heart In An American Kitchen



## Synopsis

For Donia Bijan's family, food has been the language they use to tell their stories and to communicate their love. In 1978, when the Islamic revolution in Iran threatened their safety, they fled to California's Bay Area, where the familiar flavors of Bijan's mother's cooking formed a bridge to the life they left behind. Now, through the prism of food, award-winning chef Donia Bijan unwinds her own story, finding that at the heart of it all is her mother, whose love and support enabled Bijan to realize her dreams. From the Persian world of her youth to the American life she embraced as a teenager to her years at Le Cordon Bleu in Paris (studying under the infamous Madame Brassart) to apprenticeships in France's three-star kitchens and finally back to San Francisco, where she opened her own celebrated bistro, Bijan evokes a vibrant kaleidoscope of cultures and cuisines. And she shares thirty inspired recipes from her childhood (Saffron Yogurt Rice with Chicken and Eggplant and Orange Cardamom Cookies), her French training (Ratatouille with Black Olives and Fried Bread and Purple Plum Skillet Tart), and her cooking career (Roast Duck Legs with Dates and Warm Lentil Salad and Rose Petal Ice Cream). An exhilarating, heartfelt memoir, *Maman's Homesick Pie* is also a reminder of the women who encourage us to shine.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is a memoir of a young woman who went on vacation with her family and never returned home. Donia Bijan's parents were successful medical professionals in Iran. Her father was a doctor who owned a hospital and her mother was a nurse and politician. They were on vacation in Spain when the regime of the Shah collapsed. To return would have risked death under the rule of the Ayatollah. The memoir begins after the very sudden accidental death of her mother in the United States with the author's memories triggered while clearing out her mother's possessions. Many of us have walked that path. The author is a professional chef and her mother was a talented home cook. She uses recipes to define home, memories, and cultures. She tells the story of her parents' exile and the difference in their experiences in the new country that took them in after their involuntary emigration. This is very current story in America and many other nations that serve as safe havens. As told, it is personal story though and not a political one. She also tells her experience as she trains to be a chef in the US and France. This memoir is very readable and I am happy to recommend it. There are many recipes included in the book and I expect that I may try some of them.

Whether you like to be drawn into a story by its personal nature or you like to find new recipes to try, *Homesick Pie* will be a great choice. I took this book on vacation to Hawaii and found myself carrying it to the beach and to the pool. Our local Food Literature Group (Slow Food South Bay chapter) chose it because several of us had already read or were reading it and liked it. I enjoyed it because it was about an interesting life unfolding and the spanning/reconciling of two cultures. Donia writes very vividly but in an easy to read style that flows descriptively from prose to recipe tips. Reading the book was a total pleasure...and tasting a few of the recipes brought the book and author to life for me. Thanks to Donia for sharing her personal and family story in such an authentic and heartfelt way.

I received my copy of Maman's *Homesick Pie* in the morning and could not put it down until I had finished every page. Even though it contains mouth watering recipes, it is far from being a cookbook. Warmly written from the heart, Ms. Bijan shares her memories of a child and her family, a family who later left and could not return to their beloved country, and then of a girl becoming a

woman working hard to realize her professional and personal dreams. The book is alive with the sights, smells, and emotions that she experienced. It was honest, real, and very well-written. I thoroughly enjoyed getting to know Ms. Bijan through her work and hope that she will share more of her life, her memories, and her recipes in a future book!

We recently held our annual potluck book club meeting and our selection of the month was Donia Bijan's, "Maman's Homesick Pie: A Persian Heart in an American Kitchen." The book was enjoyed thoroughly by all members of our group. We loved her beautifully written stories about her childhood, family, education and career. Her life is remarkable. Ms. Bijan is certainly a person who found her passion and committed to achieving her goals, despite the worry of disappointing her parents and the hardships she encountered along the way. She clearly had a very supportive, self-sacrificing mother, who Donia deeply loved. The impetus for the book stemmed from her mother's recipes, which were found by Donia, following her mother's death. The recipes, which were scattered through out the book, reminded Donia of different times of her life. Our book club members prepared various dishes for our evening meal. They were all delicious. I loved the spices and ingredients used, like sumac, pistachio nuts, pomegranate flavoring and plums. The true highlight of our evening was a visit from Donia. She is simply delightful. She is not only an excellent writer, but also a very eloquent speaker. We all are looking forward to her next book.

Everything to do with this books was perfect except for one small item, which I did not address to the seller. My brand new book had a black mark on all the pages as if it was 2nd hand or something of that nature. Otherwise, the story was sweet if little lacking in details. The recipes... I cannot simply wait to try. I do appreciate the stories with each recipe and how you can switch out fruit and suggestions as to what to serve with. Sorry to hear that the restaurant is no longer as it would have been great to visit.

After reading Maman's Homesick Pie for the second time..I needed to share Donia Bijan's beautiful memoir and purchased additional books for gifting! A Sweet and Delightful Read - and Re-Read... -a beautiful tribute to the Authors Mother - shared with my sisters & friends. A Lovely gift in many ways.

What a delightful book! Not only does it come straight from Donia's heart, but it also captures all our senses: emotions, taste buds, smell and even touch. It is another "Out of Africa", with Donia's mom

being the Africa from whom she had drawn her strength, her passion, her luminosity. She has managed to write a book that is not only beautiful but that seizes the journey that millions of now middle aged Iranian immigrants have travelled. We left our country of birth while still young enough to adapt well to life in the West and to remake our lives, but we were old enough to have absorbed the nuances and wonderful idiosyncrasies of Iranian culture that still after 30 years of exile permeate our senses. This book did more than reawaken my souvenirs; it made my 24 year old say that after reading it he now better understands his roots and particularly what his parents and grandparents had experienced. Thank you Donia for having shared this with us.

For some reason, I read the title to be a Parisian heart rather than Persian. I'm so glad I misread although I probably would have picked up this book anyway. This is great insight into a woman's journey and experience from Iran to the US. I loved the addition of the recipes as they give an added texture to the narrative. Highly recommended!

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