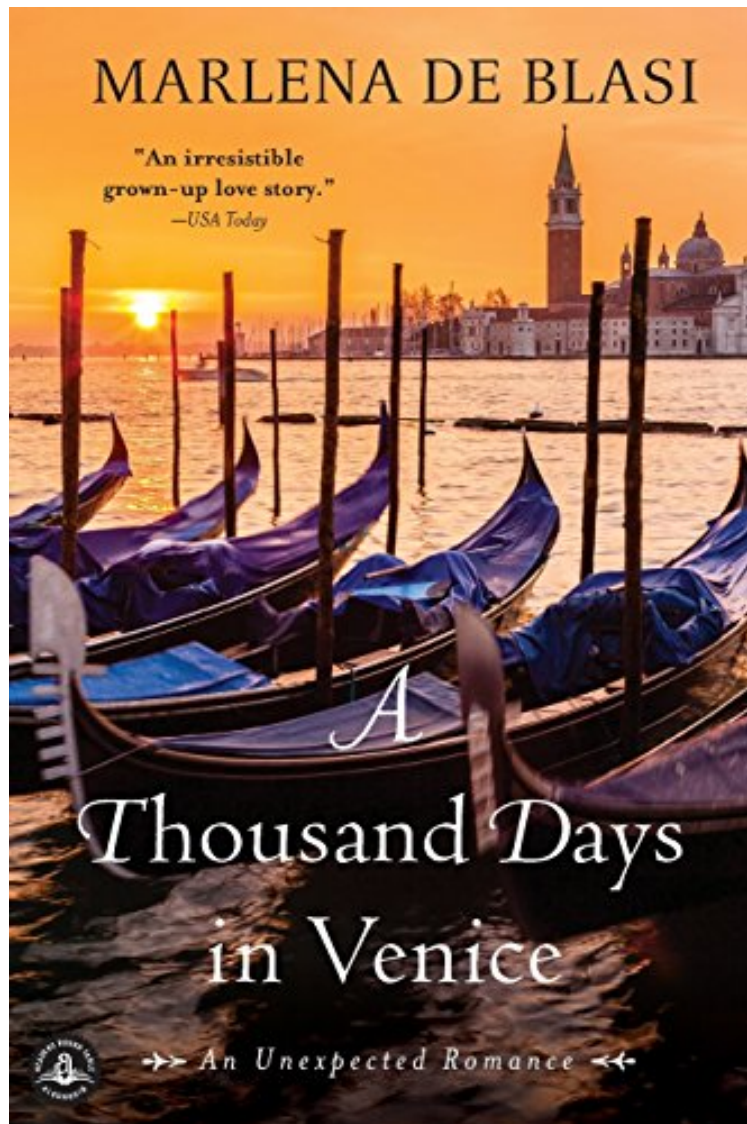


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A Thousand Days in Venice: An Unexpected Romance

Marlena de Blasi

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Marlena de Blasi : A Thousand Days in Venice: An Unexpected Romance before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Thousand Days in Venice: An Unexpected Romance:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A nice romantic story of a beautiful VeniceBy Donald SweetI am not usually fond of flowery wording, but this was enjoyable to read because I have owned a home in Italy and it deserves to have all the flowers there are. I enjoyed reading even the difficult times they had during their time together and I understood it from the American standpoint as well as the Italian. Yes, I would recommend it to be read by both men and women, especially for those who want to or have visited Italy.1 of 1 people found the following review

helpful. Worthwhile reading!By IvaAn account of the author's days as a resident in Venice. She gives up her house, business, and life in the United States to marry a Venetian whom she hardly knows (She refers to him as "the stranger" throughout the book). She does not know but a few words and phrases in Italian, and her husband doesn't know English. This and the cultural differences cause a few conflicts which they both have to iron out. The book was interesting and held my attention. The author does a very good job of describing the city and its islands, the many Venetians she comes to know and love, her impressions of Italian men, favorite restaurants and bars, food and drink, a little history and art, and she does it all with some humor thrown in. A must read before a sojourn in Venice. It is the first in a series. She has also written books on her experiences in Tuscany and Sicily.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Memories of a Fading JewelBy Trying to relaxBy the time I finished the book, I felt as if I'd read a series of letters from a friend, reminding me of the Venice I loved on two visits. I recalled the flirting I did, and wondered "what if?". I had walked the entire length of the city from Piazza San Marco to the railway station, and the author reminded me of many of those spots. Along with the author, I heard the water lapping as she walked along the canal, and smelled the fish frying from the osterie, and browsed through the goods at the markets by the Rialto. She wrote in prose poems, a valentine to a city of dreams. And her recipes made me hungry! I'm glad I already bought more of her books.

Fernando first sees Marlena across the Piazza San Marco and falls in love from afar. When he sees her again in a Venice caf a year later, he knows it is fate. He knows little English; she, a divorced American chef traveling through Italy, speaks only food-based Italian. Marlena thought she was done with romantic love, incapable of intimacy. Yet within months of their first meeting, she has quit her job, sold her house in St. Louis, kissed her two grown sons good-bye, and moved to Venice to marry the stranger, as she calls Fernando. This deliciously satisfying memoir is filled with the foods and flavors of Italy and peppered with culinary observations and recipes. But the main course here is an enchanting true story about a woman who falls in love with both a man and a city, and finally finds the home she didnt even know she was missing.

From Publishers WeeklyOn a visit to Venice, de Blasi meets a local bank manager who falls in love with her at first sight. After "the stranger" (as she coyly calls him throughout the book) pursues her back to her home in St. Louis, Mo., she agrees to return to Italy and marry him, leaving behind her grown children and her job as chef and partner in a cafe. Although the banker, Fernando, lives in a bunkerlike postwar condominium on the Lido rather than the Venetian palazzo of her dreams, and some of his European ideas about women clash with her American temperament, the relationship works. She survives his criticism of her housekeeping and his displeasure at her insistence on remaining a serious cook (in modern Italy "No one bakes bread or dolci or makes pasta at home," he tells her), and they marry. Then one day Fernando surprises her by announcing that he is quitting his job at the bank where he has worked for 26 years. They leave Venice, he espouses her interest in food and they now direct gastronomic tours of Tuscany and Umbria. De Blasi's breathless descriptions of her improbable love affair can be cloying, but she makes up for these excesses with her enchanting accounts of Venice, especially of the markets at the Rialto. She conjures up vivid images of produce "so sumptuously laid as to be awaiting Caravaggio" and picturesque scenes of the vendors, such as the egg lady who keeps her hens under her table, collects the eggs as soon as they are laid and wraps each one in newspaper, "twisting both ends so that the confection looks like a rustic prize for a child's party." In a final section entitled "Food for a Stranger," de Blasi (Regional Foods of Northern Italy) includes recipes for a few of the dishes with which she charmed the stranger. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.From Library JournalVenice is almost synonymous with romance, and in this charming account de Blasi spares no detail in telling us how she fell under its spell. A journalist, restaurant critic, and food consultant, de Blasi left her home, her grown children, and her job as a chef in St. Louis to marry Fernando, a Venetian she barely knew. In defiance of the cynics who think true love in middle age is crazy, her marriage flourished, as these two strangers made a life together. Food comforted the newlyweds when their conflicting cultures almost divided them, and in the end marital harmony reigns. Is this book a romance, a food guide, or an exhortation for us to come to Venice and experience the magic? Ultimately, it is all three, and there is even an appendix that includes recipes for dishes described in the text. Recommended for larger travel, biography, or cooking collections. Olga B. Wise, Compaq Computer Corp., Austin, TXCopyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.From BooklistA mature American woman traveling in Italy finds herself delicately but persistently pursued by a mysterious Venetian. Despite her initial reluctance, she eventually succumbs to his determination and agrees to meet him. When he follows her home to St. Louis, she takes him seriously, and she agrees to marry him. Thus chef and writer Marlena de Blasi recounts her fantasy-like romance. Returning to Venice for the marriage, she takes a leap of faith, dissolving her Missouri apartment and business. She carefully notes and lovingly describes all the Venetian neighborhoods and the many islands of the Venetian lagoon that figure in her maturing affair. Along the way she introduces a host of characters, such as the chain-smoking Italian consul who cautions her about marrying an Italian man. The author also reveals something of her first disastrous marriage and her now grown children. A handful of elegant, inspiring recipes for foods that have figured in the text round out the book. Venice-

lovers will connect with the passions depicted in this memoir. Mark Knoblauch Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved