

ANNA BERGENSTRÖM FANNY BERGENSTRÖM

under the walnut tree

great recipes from our kitchen



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introduction

When we first started working on this book we had a completely different one in mind, but along the way our ideas took another path. Instead of the book we planned to write on entertaining, it turned into a book about a little bit of everything, with recipes based on some of our favourite ingredients. We named it *Under the Walnut Tree* simply because most of the book was created at our summer house in the countryside. There we have an old walnut tree right outside the kitchen door, and in the soft light that seeps through its branches we took photographs, exchanged thoughts and ideas, and shared inspiring meals with friends and family. In the nearby kitchen we tested recipes and photographed even more.

The title also reflects the fact that the book embraces such a wide variety of topics. We ended up with seventeen chapters, including tomatoes, herbs, chillies, citrus, cardamom, pears and chocolate... A beautiful ingredients with their own individual characters, scents and flavours – some quite robust and others with more delicate personalities. The walnut tree, and its delicious nuts, also inspired a whole chapter on nuts and seeds.

Since most of the ingredients can be used in so many different ways, you will find recipes for both savoury dishes, desserts and baked goods within the same chapter. You may also find a recipe from Provence on one page and something from India on the next, or a hint of Sweden alongside South American flavours; all reflecting our family's culinary influences and the way we like to cook. With Scandinavian cuisine as our backbone and a substantial culinary heritage from the south of France, we have always enjoyed cooking simple, honest food that crosses many culinary borders. In recent years we have also been greatly inspired by the Chilean part of our family, as well as by extensive travels both near and far.

It may all seem like a bit of an eclectic mix, but we hope that this book will provide ideas for both everyday cooking and special occasions, and that it will inspire and entice you to embark on a few new culinary adventures. Perhaps you will even rediscover flavours and aromas that may have fallen by the wayside. That, and a bit more, is what we hope you will find *Under the Walnut Tree*.

 *Quercia & Fanny*

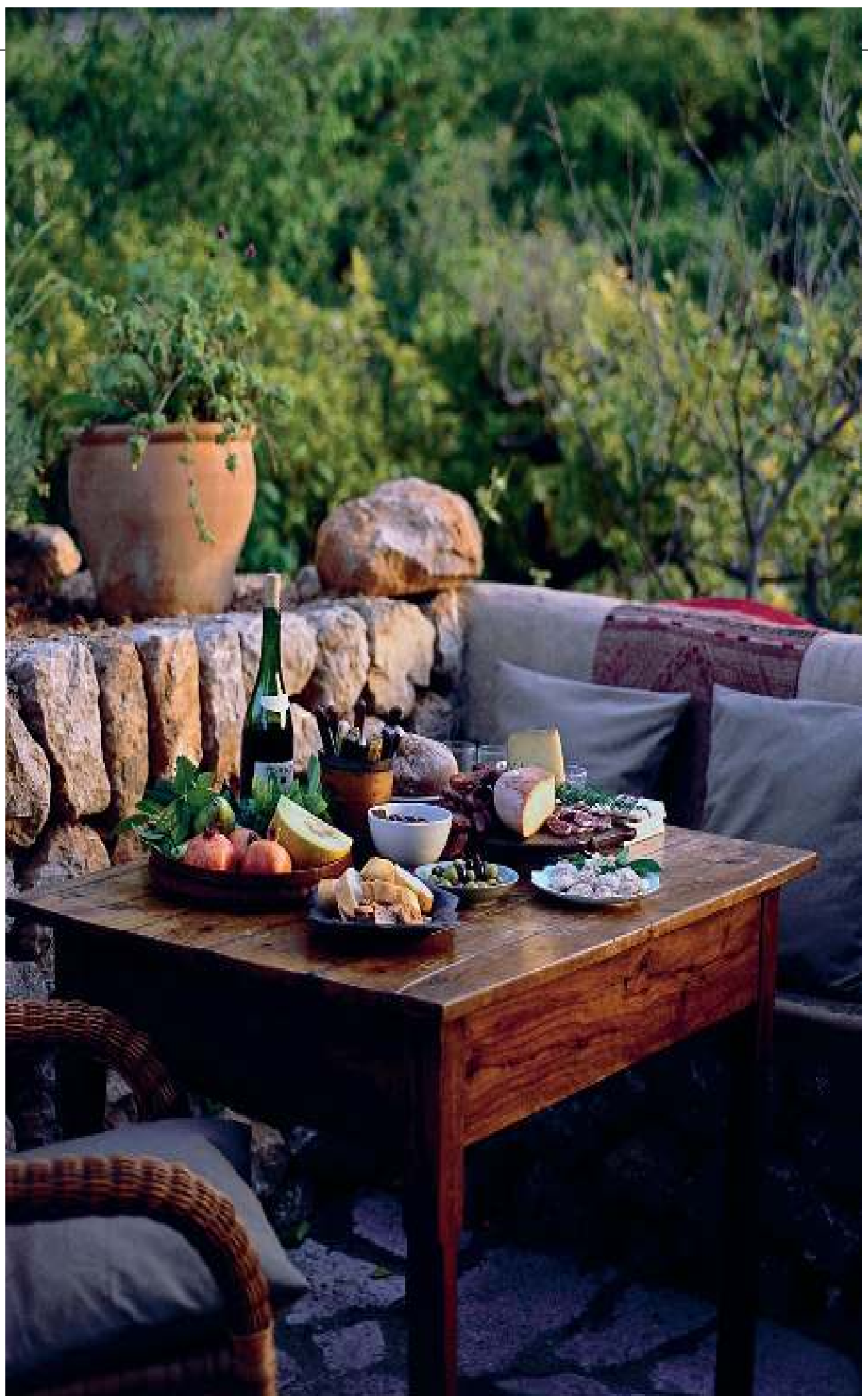
A few more thoughts...

ENJOY THE SEASONS: Cooking with ingredients in season makes a great difference to a meal. Nothing can really compare to the freshness and taste of newly harvested fruits and vegetables, especially if they are organically grown. Of course — and in particular for those of us living up here in the north — it's also nice to savour ingredients from far-off lands on occasion, but choosing mainly sustainable products that just feels right. We try to choose organic dairy products, eggs, vegetables, fruit, free-range chicken and other meat from animals that have been raised with care. Using beautiful, seasonal ingredients inspires our cooking and gives a more rewarding overall experience.

FOR FLAVOURING: Nothing balances flavours like salt. We prefer mild sea salt flakes for seasoning, and use a fairly coarse, grey French salt, *sel gris*, for cooking. A couple of good olive oils are also a must; we keep a fine extra-virgin olive oil to drizzle over salads and greens, and a more robust, less expensive one for cooking and frying. A flavourful vinegar is equally important; day-to-day we mostly use red wine vinegar, but keep a sweet, aged balsamic vinegar, as well as a full-flavoured sherry vinegar for occasional use. Garlic, black pepper, thyme, rosemary, lemons and a jar of freshly made *ají* (a truly versatile chilli in oil, see [Ají verde – green chilli mix](#)) are also indispensable to our cooking.

WHAT EVERY KITCHEN NEEDS: A large chef's knife, a small paring knife and a serrated bread knife are essential to any kitchen. When properly cared for, quality knives last for years and years; just wash them by hand and sharpen them regularly. A sturdy mortar and pestle is a fantastic tool for grinding and pounding, which brings out flavours in a unique way. Hand-held stick blenders are superb for mixing soups, and a flat grater is unrivalled for grating citrus zest, ginger and cheeses. Lastly, a large roasting tin and a good-quality heavy-based casserole dish inspire effortless cooking with fabulous results. We often cook 'one-pot' dishes in the oven; it's such a simple way to get lovely dinners to practically make themselves. You will find several such recipes in this book.





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