



# Printing Press

**I**n the 1450s, when Gutenberg began printing the Bible (with a printing press that he had fashioned out of what was probably a wine or cheese press), he started a revolution in the way information and knowledge were disseminated and divulged. In many ways, the “information age” of our times had its beginnings with the German printer over 500 years ago. Although Gutenberg’s books were not cheap (nor were books to be a cheap commodity for the centuries that followed), he had unchained the text of the Bible from the cloistered libraries of medieval monasteries and abbeys.

The books of the monasteries and even those in the first modern library (the Medici Library in Florence at San Lorenzo, designed by Michelangelo) were very large tomes indeed, literally

chained to the pews where scholars would consult them.

It wasn’t until the foremost among the Venetian bookmen, grammarian and humanist Aldus Manutius, printed his famed octavo format books—small, pocket-sized books that one could carry on one’s body, the first portable secular books, including the traditional classics like Virgil and Horace and the new ones like Dante and Petrarch—that literature was freed from the dark and dusty university halls and the libraries of the nobility. Aldus’ ventures in vernacular texts (as opposed to Latin) legitimized the idea of books for everyday use: herein lies the modern-day concept of the book: something that we take with us wherever we go, something that serves a purely practical purpose.

## ITALY’S BASIC COOKBOOKS

- 1960** *La Grande Cucina* (The Great Cuisine of Italy) by Luigi Carnacina
- 1959** *Il Cucchiaino d’Argento* (The Silver Spoon)—to Italians what *The Joy of Cooking* is to Americans
- 1937** *Il Talismano della Felicità* (The Talisman of Happiness) by Ada Boni remains a favorite of newlyweds and home cooks
- 1891** *La Scienza in Cucina e l’Arte di Mangiare Bene* (Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well), the classic Italian cookbook by Pellegrino Artusi
- 1776** *Cuoco Piemontese Perfezionato a Parigi* (The Piedmontese Cook Perfected in Paris), the first Italian cookbook modeled after the French style
- 1773** *Cuoco Galante* (The Gallant Cook), by Vincenzo Corrado, the first cookbook writer to give recipes for many New World foods, including tomatoes
- 1662** *L’Arte di Ben Cucinare* (The Art of Cooking Well) by Bartolomeo Stefani
- 1596** *De Naturali Vinorum Historia* (On the Natural History of Wines) by Andrea Bacci
- 1593** *Il Trinciante* (The Carver) by Vincenzo Cervio
- 1570** *Dell’Arte del Cuoco* (On the Art of the Cook) by Bartolomeo Scappi
- 1549** *Libro di Banchetti, Composizioni di Vivande e Apparecchio Generale* (Book of Banquets, the Composition of Victuals, and General Table-Setting) by Cristoforo Messisbugo
- 1474** *De Honesta Voluptate* (On Right Pleasure and Good Health) by Bartolomeo Platina, called by many the “first printed cookery book,” published first in Rome and then Venice (and subsequently translated into French, English, and German)

2000  
1900  
1800  
1700  
1600  
1500  
1400



*The books of the monasteries and even those in the first modern library were very large tomes, literally chained to their pews to prevent theft by scholars*

