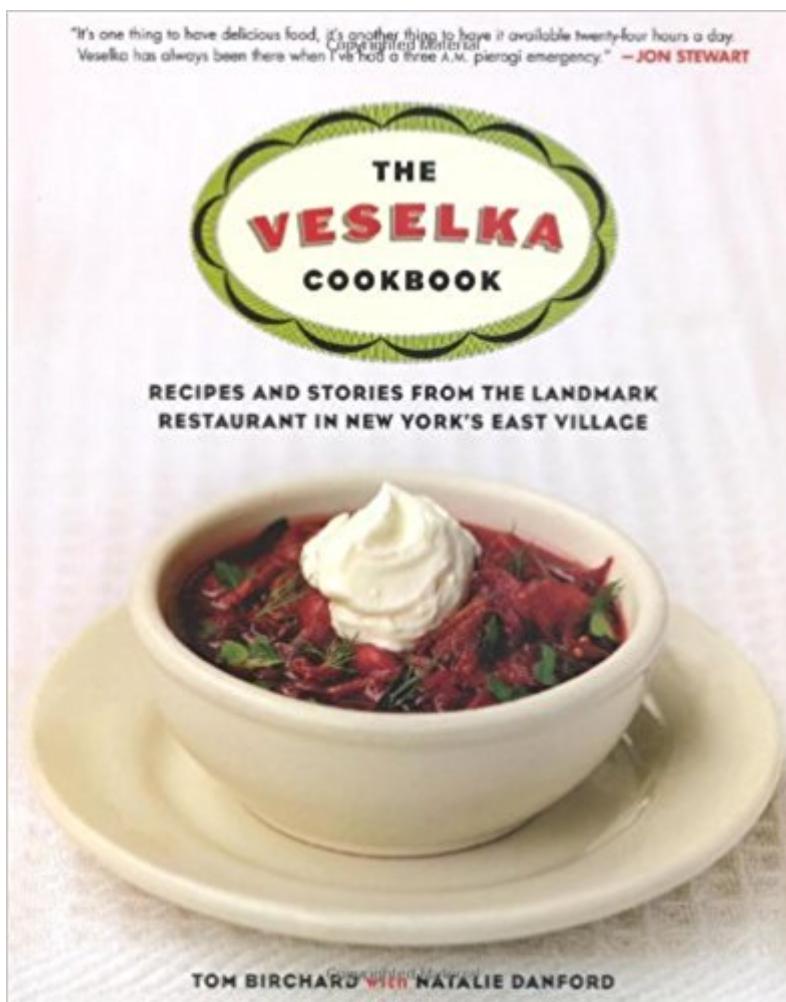


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# The Veselka Cookbook: Recipes And Stories From The Landmark Restaurant In New York's East Village



## **Synopsis**

For more than fifty years, customers have crowded into Veselka, a cozy Ukrainian coffee shop in New York City's East Village, to enjoy pierogi, borscht, goulash, and many other unpretentious favorites. Veselka (rainbow in Ukrainian) has grown from a simple newsstand serving soup and sandwiches into a twenty-four-hour gathering place, without ever leaving its original location on the corner of East Ninth Street and Second Avenue. Veselka is, quite simply, an institution. The Veselka Cookbook contains more than 150 recipes, covering everything from Ukrainian classics (potato pierogi, five kinds of borscht, grilled kielbasa, and poppy seed cake) to dozens of different sandwiches, to breakfast fare (including Veselka's renowned pancakes), to the many elements of a traditional Ukrainian Christmas Eve feast. Veselka owner Tom Birchard shares stories about Veselka's celebrity customers, the local artists who have adopted it as a second home, and the restaurant's other lesser-known, but no less important, longtime fans, and he offers a behind-the-scenes look at what it takes to serve five thousand gallons of borscht a year and to craft three thousand pierogi daily---all by hand. The Veselka Cookbook will delight anyone with an interest in Ukrainian culture, New York City's vibrant downtown, and the pleasures of simple, good food.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

What started as a modest candy shop/newsstand in 1954 grew into a humble lunch counter and is now a bustling 24-hour restaurant in New York's East Village. Ukrainian fare mixed with American favorites fill the pages of this gift-sized restaurant cookbook, interspersed with the history and

stories of the people behind the business as well as an introduction to and celebration of Ukrainian culture. Broken down by course (with additional chapters including Breakfast Anytime), recipes for popular dishes such as borscht, pierogi and banana chocolate chip cupcakes are accessibly written. Diner food, including tuna melts, hamburgers, buttermilk pancakes and apple pie, have more than their fair share of space, but are offset with Ukrainian gems such as kutya, a wheat berry dish; uzvar, dried fruit compote; and bigos, a pork stew with sauerkraut and onions. The spirit of community that grew from this beloved neighborhood spot (veselka means rainbow) informs the pages of this unique cookbook, which brings readers everywhere a little piece of a New York institution. (Nov.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

“It’s one thing to have delicious food, it’s another thing to have it available twenty-four hours a day. Veselka has always been there when I’ve had a three a.m. pierogi emergency.”  
“Veselka excels at comfort food. . . . Even better are the Ukrainian specials. Whatever your mood, something on Veselka’s menu will appeal to you.”  
“Borscht, whether hot or cold, is hot these days, as a culinary glasnost. The best borscht happens to be found at an old standby, the twenty-four-hour Ukrainian cafe, [Veselka].”  
“Whenever the craving hits for hearty Eastern European fare, Veselka fits the bill with fluffy and light pierogi, stuffed cabbage, grilled Polish kielbasa, freshly made potato pancakes, and classic soups, such as a sublime borscht. Breakfast is special here. If all you want is a burger, don’t worry—it’s a classic, too.”  
Frommer’s

If you live in New York City, Veselka’s is probably your best friend already; and if you don’t, it’s worth a trip to New York. The Borscht is the best, as are the pierogis, the soups, and also the tastiest burger. All the best recipes are in the cookbook. The ingredients are accessible and the recipes easy to follow. And if you read the stories as you go along, it’s the next best thing to being there. If you love Ukrainian food, American food, and good food in general, treat yourself and buy this book. Then buy another copy to give to your best friend who also loves good food. Now I’m waiting for the sequel...

I have to admit I purchased the book based on wanting to relive my past more than as a cookbook. I should explain I guess.....I grew up on the upper eastside of Manhattan and from the time my best

friend and I were teens back in the late 1960's we would escape to the lower eastside to play in the "hippie" culture back then, often we stopped into Veselka for a bite on the way back uptown. I left the city for upstate NY in the 1970's and later to the deep south and didn't get to Veselka for many years, but fate would once again bring me to the restaurant. I found myself being a long distance commuter all throughout the 1990's-2002, living and working up in NYC and once again going to Veselka for late night meals when I would close up my job late. So many memories and so much great home style food, a disappearing commodity in the NYC chi chi restaurant scene back then. I often went with another great friend on those late nights and we would sit and remember our youth over great meals. In the past three years I lost both of these best friends of mine to cancer leaving me alone with the memories we had shared for so many years. When I saw the book come up on I clicked on the buy tab immediately not expecting anything more of it than as a way to keep so many memories of my life intact. I could scan it's pages and remember specific times spent in Veselka with my friends over the span of almost half a century. What I didn't expect was such a fine collection of recipes! This is a fantastic cookbook if what you are looking for is great homestyle cooking done right. Reading through the recipes I can remember the taste of all the great meals I have enjoyed in the place over the years and now I can create them at home too. I am now retired and living in the deep south so there aren't too many opportunities for an in house Veselka meal anymore, at least not the "in person" kind, but with this book in hand I do look forward to many of the same dishes created by my own hands. Thanks so much to the owner of Veselka for giving me the ability to enjoy my past memories and enjoy the food once again. March 7, 2012 I've now tried several of the recipes and they are true to what is served in the restaurant, they taste exactly as I remember them. I am even more happy that I bought the book and highly recommend it to anyone who loves comfort food.

Lovely book, easy to follow recipes, phenomenal restaurant. Highly recommended. Real food for real people.

The famous Borscht recipe was pretty easy, however time consuming. Perfect for a quiet Sunday at home in the kitchen. It was a real crowd pleaser. LOVE Veselka forever and always. 

The comfort foods of my childhood were pierogi, filled cabbage, kasha, varnishkas, and cabbage soup. My mother cooked without recipes and over the years some of my attempts to duplicate these

foods have been successful, some not. Then my sister told me about Veselka and its cookbook. This tome is my call home to check on a recipe. It brings back memories of parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and siblings gathered around long tables on Christmas or Easter, or around the kitchen table in my grandmother's kitchen. This food tastes like it does in my memory. A visit to Veselka is on the itinerary during a trip to New York City. This cookbook definitely needs to be in the kitchen of anyone interested in Eastern European cooking.

I was very pleased when I received this cookbook. Being of Ukrainian heritage it was nice to see Baba's recipes written down in English and with measurements so that I can make some of the foods I grew up enjoying.

I have not used this cookbook yet but there are several recipes I'm looking forward to trying. It is also easy to find the recipes on the Kindle and it is a very nice looking book.

I bought this as a birthday present for a fabulous cook with Ukrainian roots -- she loves it.

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