

**Bledar Kola, Ursula Heinzelmann****New Albanian Cuisine - Mediterranean, Modern, Mullixhiu**

With texts by Ursula Heinzelmann and photos by Manuel Krug

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Bledar Kola, the rising star on the international culinary stage, trained at prestigious restaurants such as *Noma*, *Pied à Terre* and *Le Gavroche*, member of the Slow Food Cooks' Alliance, and head chef of one of the trendiest restaurants in Europe, now presents his very first cook book!

(German title: Die neue albanische Küche)  
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**About**

**From cooking at *Noma* to revolutionising the Albanian cuisine: The traditional cuisine of Albania, shaped by the country's Ottoman past as well as by Italy and Greece, yet still distinct and authentic, reinterpreted here in 70 recipes by Bledar Kola and the team at his restaurant *Mullixhiu*.**

*Mullixhiu* (pronounced: Moulijou) means »miller« in Albanian, and in Bledar Kola's restaurant three mills are turning around the clock grinding up wheat, corn, barley and oat, the latter two of which have become rare in Albania. He generally only uses local products as he has been taught to do at the world-famous restaurant *Noma* in Copenhagen. »*Noma* has changed my life,« he says, »I understood that good food has to be simple.« So too in Albania, where he has returned to in order to reinvent Albanian cuisine at his own restaurant. Whether it's courgette salad with plums, a refreshing salad with a fruity note; »deconstructed« burek, in its simplicity quite a spectacular dish; dolma made from vine leaves, vegetarian finger food at its finest; lamb meat balls filled with cheese and braised on tomatoes, or »qumeshtor«, the Albanian version of cr me br l e, and much more: refined, simple, good.

»Here in Albania, giving strangers a place to sleep and sharing our food with them is customary. People should come to know us for our generous hospitality again.«  
*Bledar Kola*

**Praise**

»Finally a book to highlight the quality, the history, and the exciting future of an overlooked European nation and its food.« *Ren  Redzepi, Head chef and co-owner Noma (Copenhagen, DK)*

»The story of Bledar Kola is the perfect proof of the power of gastronomy. Food is the only key for preserving a terroir, enhancing its biodiversity, communicating its beauty and moving to a better, cleaner and fairer system. This book will make you aware



  Manuel Krug

Bledar Kola went to London at age 15 and made a living washing dishes at a Japanese restaurant. Then he trained as a chef and worked at restaurants such as the legendary *Noma* in Copenhagen and at *F viken* in J rpen/Sweden. In 2016, he opened his own restaurant, *Mullixhiu*, in Tirana/Albania, which by now attracts foodies from all around the world.



  Manuel Krug

Ursula Heinzelmann is a trained chef, *sommelière*, successful gastronome, journalist and writer with a special focus on culinary and wine-related subjects. She co-edited the *Oxford Companion to Cheese*, is a member of the Guild of Cheesemakers and co-organiser of several culinary festivals.

that a change toward a better future is possible and that the secret is hidden in having strong roots while being able to appreciate, learn from and be in connection with the rest of the world.« *Carlo Petrini, Founder and President of Slow Food*

»There is a culinary revolution happening in Albania and Bledar Kola has cooked himself to international fame.« *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*

»The consumption binge of in the capital of a post-communist country – and in the midst of it Bledar Kola with his little *Mullixhiu*, moving in exactly the opposite direction, back to the roots, to the grandmothers, and re-creating Albanian cuisine from there. That's so far ahead of everybody else, that's downright subversive – and not just thrilling, but really good too.« *Billy Wagner, Nobelhart & Schmutzig*

»This extraordinary book is not only about the inspiring marriage between tradition & innovation in the Albanian avantgarde cuisine, but about tracing a crucial pathway for the entire Balkans and for many worldwide emerging foodscapes. It is about humanity and caring and building bridges. Only Bledar's sensitivity could make this adventurous challenge possible.« *Professor Andrea Pieroni, Rector at the University of Gastronomic Sciences of Pollenzo (IT)*

»Albania may be one of the poorest countries in Europe but has been able to preserve a lot of culinary traditions despite or rather because of that. Unlike a few other Balkan countries, Albania has not yet been flooded by fast food chains. There is ›fast food,‹ but even that has a tradition here and is rooted in local customs. So it's not just the same stuff as everywhere else. And Bledar supports the local autochthone cuisine, which I think is great.« *Luka Lübke, Chef de partie at Chef Alliance, Managing Director at Centre Culinaire Bremen*

»Because Kola [...] is not just one of the trendiest chefs in Albania, he is also something like a record-keeper and guardian of the local culinary tradition. A tradition that was on the brink of fading into obscurity.« *Eva Biringer, ZEIT Magazin*

»Bledar Kola is one of the world's most important chefs.« *essen & trinken*

»And he realised something he had learnt as a child: ›If you have fewer ingredients, you need to be more imaginative. If you don't have money for food, you have to go with what nature has to offer. That's the philosophy of my cooking.‹ [...] It won't take long now, according to the chef, until people are going to understand one thing once more: that food and identity are inseparable. And why shouldn't he be right?« *Andrea Jeska, Süddeutsche Zeitung*

»A highly aesthetically illustrated volume that arouses curiosity for Albania.« *Julia Rothhaas, Süddeutsche Zeitung*

»*Mullixhiu* [is] the coolest restaurant of the Albanian capital city« *Francesca Masotti, Culture Trip*

»If you visit Tirana, this restaurant is a must« *Maurie O'Connor, Food Wine Travel Magazine*

»Now amateur chefs get the chance to try out the recipes Kola has recovered.«

Paula Lochte, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung*

»The book not only provides an insight into an Adriatic cuisine shaped by Ottoman, Greek and Italian influences – it also talks about an awakening country.« *taz. die tageszeitung*