

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910151750303321
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Titolo	Onions and garlic : a global history // Martha Jay
Pubbl/distr/stampa	London : , : Reaktion Books, , 2016 London : , : Bloomsbury Publishing (UK), , 2023
ISBN	9781780236209 1780236204
Edizione	[1st ed.]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (143 pages) : illustrations (some color), photographs
Collana	; Edible
Disciplina	641.6525
Soggetti	Food - History Garlic Onions Food and society
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Introduction 1. The Ancient Allium 2. The Medieval Onion 3. Travel, Trade and Folklore 4. The Onion Improves 5. The Modern Allium Recipes References Bibliography Websites and Associations Photo Acknowledgments Index
Sommario/riassunto	Do you know your onions? From large, sweet onions to shallots, garlic, chives and leeks, the allium family contains some of the most popular vegetables in the world. Shy of the spotlight - except when repelling vampires, preserving mummies, curing heart disease or predicting the future - this lowly family of plants has been a friend to mankind from earliest times. Onions and Garlic follows the trail of these cherished plants through history and across the globe, tracing their story back to the earliest civilizations of the Fertile Crescent and the recipes of ancient Mesopotamia. Traders spread onion varieties through Central Asia and from there they moved across the world, as civilizations from the ancient Romans and Greeks to the Koreans and Japanese found this humble family of vegetables an indispensable part of their cuisines - and of their culture. The book reveals the close relationship between the allium and human worlds: the Welsh have proudly adopted the leek as their national symbol; in many societies, garlic has long been

identified as a magical herb with supernatural origins; while onions symbolized the simple peasant life to French painters of the nineteenth century. Celebrated, denigrated, avoided or sought-after, the story of the allium family is filled with fine cuisine and art, peasants and kings, colonization and conquest, magic and medicine. But most of all, it's the story of a very ordinary vegetable.
