

# MARIO BATALI

From *Del Posto* to *Molto Mario* to *Eataly*, Mario Batali has a constellation to rival Ursa Major. Plus Carmela Soprano loved his green beans! Here, the master chef whips up some savory answers

**What is your idea of perfect happiness?**

I am happiest when I am with my wife, Susi, and our two boys exploring and loving something for the first time.

**What is your greatest fear?**

Small caves.

**Which historical figure do you most identify with?**

Ken Kesey.

**Which living person do you most admire?**

Jim Harrison.

**What is the trait you most deplore in yourself?**

Urgency.

**What is the trait you most deplore in others?**

Greed.

**What is your greatest extravagance?**

Fancy hotel rooms.

**What is your favorite journey?**

To Venice with my family.

**What do you consider the most overrated virtue?**

Reverence.

**On what occasion do you lie?**

To lessen the hardness of the word “no.”

**Which living person do you most despise?**

Anonymous angry bloggers . . . all of them.

**What or who is the greatest love of your life?**

My wife and kids.

**When and where were you happiest?**

On the beach at our summer house with my family.

**Which talent would you most like to have?**

Banjo.

**What is your current state of mind?**

Delusional optimism.

**If you could change one thing about your family, what would it be?**

Our mortality.

**What do you consider your greatest achievement?**

Interpreting the wondrous food culture of Italy in a good way.

**If you were to die and come back as a person or thing, what do you think it would be?**

An eagle.

**If you could choose what to come back as, what would it be?**

An eagle.

**Where would you like to live?**

I live here.

**What is your favorite occupation?**

Cooking.

**What is your most marked characteristic?**

Happiness.

**What is the quality you most like in a man?**

Intelligence.

**What is the quality you most like in a woman?**

Intelligence.

**What do you most value in your friends?**

Wit.

**Who are your favorite writers?**

Jim Harrison, Bret Easton Ellis, Günter Grass, Patti Smith.

**Who is your favorite hero of fiction?**

Oskar Matzerath and Dalva.

**Who are your heroes in real life?**

The staff in all of my enterprises who work tirelessly and yet happily for the pleasure of others.

**What are your favorite names?**


Benno, Leo, and Susi.

**What is it that you most dislike?**

Lazy execution.

**How would you like to die?**

Instantly in my sleep at the age of 145.

**What is your motto?** 

“Choose joy.”