

# CIVILTÀ DELLA TAVOLA

ACCADEMIA ITALIANA DELLA CUCINA



**ACCADEMIA ITALIANA DELLA CUCINA**

ISTITUZIONE CULTURALE DELLA REPUBBLICA ITALIANA  
FONDATA NEL 1953 DA ORIO VERGANI

[www.accademia1953.it](http://www.accademia1953.it)

**INTERNATIONAL EDITION**

JUNE 2020 / N. 327

**EDITOR IN CHIEF**  
PAOLO PETRONI

**COPY EDITOR**  
SILVIA DE LORENZO

**LAYOUT**  
SIMONA MONGIU

**TRANSLATOR**  
ANTONIA FRASER FUJINAGA

**THIS ISSUE INCLUDES ARTICLES BY**  
PAOLO PETRONI,  
ANTONIO RAVIDÀ,  
GIORGIO MARIA ROSICA,  
ANDREA VITALE.

**PHOTO CREDITS**  
ADOBE STOCK.



**PUBLISHER**  
ACCADEMIA ITALIANA DELLA CUCINA  
VIA NAPO TORRIANI 31 - 20124 MILANO  
TEL. 02 66987018 - FAX 02 66987008  
PRESIDENTE@ACCADEMIA1953.IT  
SEGRETERIA@ACCADEMIA1953.IT  
REDAZIONE@ACCADEMIA1953.IT  
WWW.ACCADEMIA1953.IT



MONTHLY MAGAZINE  
REG. N. 4049 - 29-5-1956  
TRIBUNALE DI MILANO

**REGULATIONS REGARDING PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION**

The Italian Academy of Cuisine, in its capacity as data controller, hereby informs its members that their personal data are handled with respect for the principles of integrity, lawfulness and transparency as well as protection of privacy and members' rights, to implement the management of the member-association relationship as delineated by the Association's Statute and By-laws, and for any related purposes where applicable. The processing is carried out by authorised parties, in paper and computerised form, in compliance with the provisions of the aforementioned EU regulations and current national legislation. To view all the information provided under EU regulations, and in particular to learn what members' rights are, please visit the Association's website.



**L'ACCADEMIA ITALIANA DELLA CUCINA**  
È STATA FONDATA NEL 1953 DA ORIO VERGANI  
E DA LUIGI BERTETT, DINO BUZZATI TRAVERSO,  
CESARE CHIODI, GIANNINO CITTERIO, ERNESTO DONÀ  
DALLE ROSE, MICHELE GUIDO FRANCI, GIANNI MAZZOCCHI  
BASTONI, ARNOLDO MONDADORI, ATTILIO NAVA,  
ARTURO ORVIETO, SEVERINO PAGANI, ALDO PASSANTE,  
GIAN LUIGI PONTI, GIÒ PONTI, DINO VILLANI,  
EDOARDO VISCONTI DI MODRONE,  
CON MASSIMO ALBERINI E VINCENZO BUONASSISI.



**On the cover:** *Graphic elaboration of Mariette with Strawberries (1884) by Albert Anker, Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne, Switzerland*

**Focus of the President**

**3** Restaurants reboot with new strategies  
(Paolo Petroni)



**Current Events • Lifestyle • Society**

**3** Online shopping and supermarkets after the pandemic  
(Giorgio Maria Rosica)



**Cuisine • Products • Food Technology**

**5** The crunch in the *cannolo*  
(Antonio Ravidà)



**Health • Safety • Law**

**6** The resurgence of restaurants  
(Andrea Vitale)



# Restaurants reboot *with new strategies*

by Paolo Petroni

President of the Accademia

*Some open only for dinner  
or limit opening days;  
others prune menus;  
others offer simpler  
home-style meals.*

**T**he news reports daily on the problems, and sometimes ordeals, of many employee categories left without work, income, or above all, prospects in the short or medium term. All have equal dignity and should be supported, but clearly the silence which has enveloped the tourism and restaurant sectors has been truly deafening. The entire sphere of travel agencies, tour guides, hotels and restaurants, accounting for over 15% of Italy's GDP, shuttered for months and with dreary prospects, needs concrete help to survive. Not only urgent monetary aid, but also less bureaucracy and fewer absurd regulations which stifle this vital sector of our economy. While we await foreign tourism, crucial for Italy, **a timid resurgence of restaurants is taking form**, with attempts to combat falling revenues using several strategies. Some use **delivery or carry-out** (which will not be abandoned even after complete re-opening); some open only for dinner or limit

opening days; others prune menus or offer simpler home-style meals. Obviously the panorama is a leopard-skin patchwork, with darker patches in areas which remain threatened by the coronavirus and lighter patches where the contagion has disappeared or nearly so. In any case, **high-level restaurants**, the robust 'starred' establishments, are apparently **suffering the least**. Despite the masks and social distancing, Bottura, Cracco, Bartolini, Sadler, Guida from Seta in Milan, Oldani, Cerea et al are going strong, and **booking a table there is already well-nigh impossible**. Some have set fewer places, but only slightly; work lunches are down, but neighbourhood regulars have increased.

*Recovery is harder for small venues  
frequented by tourists*

Recovery has been harder for smaller venues once crowded with tourists, and for **pizza restaurants and pubs** with buffets. **Some will not reopen**, but, as we have already noted, there was a surplus of mediocre if not abysmal establishments. **The current norms**, with abundant hypocrisy, impose limitations which, from what we observe in restaurants, **appear widely flouted**. **Weddings and birthdays** are frequently celebrated, with hugs and smooches galore. On one restaurant table we found a form to fill, prepared by the unclearly defined 'manager', where one of the multiple-choice options was 'condominium co-residents'. It is well-known that laws can be creatively interpreted for friends. Yet we would love to find out, for clarity's sake, how many youngsters were infected along Milan's Navigli canals, on the seaside promenades in Naples, on Mondello beach in Sicily, in restaurants and bars, on beaches crawling with helicopters and quad bikes. As the Accademia dei Lincei rightly points out, **statistics alone reveal very little: to be understood, phenomena must also be described**. However, we should bide our time if, as we hope, the scourge is on its way out and **problems will resolve spontaneously**; we have little need of bright minds extruding platitudes of staggering banality, as long as they don't actively hinder improvements - which is by no means unlikely.

P.S. This issue of *Civiltà della Tavola* is the first and last lacking the section on Academic life. With the forthcoming **July issue**, our customary report will resume, detailing the first **convivial activities** undertaken by the Delegations in June.





# Online shopping and supermarkets *after the pandemic*

by **Giorgio Maria Rosica**

*Singapore-Malaysia-Indonesia Delegate*

*Significant changes  
in the food sector,  
including purchase  
modalities.*

**T**he supermarket as we know it was born in 1916 in Memphis, Tennessee, a brain-child of Clarence Saunders. Since then, little has changed, for reasons both endogenous to food commerce, and exogenous, such as the difficulty of shifting habits and the psychol-

ogy of 'going shopping'. I wonder if the pandemic will induce a new mode of 'supermarketing'.

For the purposes of this discussion, I shall examine the market in the USA, which is more structured and mature. **In Italy, Amazon, Crai, Conad, Coop, Carrefour, Esselunga and Auchan operate in different environments and contexts, but face the same challenges**, as do NTUC Fair Price, Cold Storage and Uber Supermarket in Singapore.

Online food-shopping start-ups attempted once before, in the late 1990s, to change food sale modalities. None survived the dot.com crash of 2001.

Shops, large supermarket chains and high-tech firms are trying again today. **In the USA, Amazon Fresh and Instacart**

**lead online food sales.** Instead, the main supermarket chains (Walmart, Kroger) offer e-commerce concentrating on store pickup rather than home delivery.

*Gone are the pleasure  
of browsing and the thrill  
of impulse purchases*

Shopping online is not as gratifying as entering a food shop catering to the pleasure of browsing and the thrill of impulse-buying. Nor does e-commerce exercise all our senses. **These shortcomings are viewed as the major obstacles to the large-scale success of online food shopping.** Financial considerations





and the cumbersome dynamics of supermarket supply chains do the rest. I wonder if online food shopping is only a **backup or temporary emergency solution**.

**The pros and cons.** After products are chosen, the online food outlet allows customers to permit **substitutions in case an item is sold out** or unavailable. This process varies depending on the service, with some platforms identifying specific alternatives while others suggest exchanges supposedly matching the customer's preferences. This causes complaints for minor or perverse mistakes and worries about allergies or intolerances.

**The cost of home delivery** or supermarket pickup, the problem of returns, **higher average transaction costs** and the necessity to be present for delivery are **other cons** reducing the convenience of online shopping.

---

### *Does online food shopping have a raison d'être and a future?*

---

**Food shops have changed before and can change again.** Restaurants designed only for carry-out or home delivery, known as 'ghost kitchens', are an example of novelty taking hold. Online food services, cheaper and better-known, are gaining ground because, besides being convenient, they reduce the risk of contagion for customers and staff. In recent months, online purchases have jumped from 3% to over 12% of overall food sales. **Supermarkets will not be obliterated by online shopping, but could evolve and assume new forms.** A couple of possible scenarios:

**Organic evolution.** The continuous in-

crease in online food shopping may **motivate shops in the sector to employ workers with greater abilities** to satisfy customers' needs, **favouring** the development of supermarkets focusing on **quality, freshness and farm-to-table produce**: in a sense, a resurgence of turn-of-the-century shops. Butchers, for instance, are already enjoying a 'second spring' in the USA.

Major operators, instead, may concentrate on long-life and basic products in the manner of Amazon Pantry. If such a subdivision were established, online sales of perishables and high-quality food would also reap advantages.

**A volatile alternative may be the most likely.** The large purveyors of e-commerce, such as Amazon, could increase their hold on the sector and launch large-scale solutions including '**dark stores**', analogous to 'ghost kitchens'. These wraithlike establishments would make it easier to fulfil online orders of their brand products. **Supermarkets** (e.g. Walmart, Kroger and Wegman's) **would in turn reorganise their sales area to favour online orders** over browsing, thereby consolidating their share of online food sales.

**Supermarkets** have historically pursued a policy of expansion through diversification. A large Wegman's is almost a city unto itself: it contains deli counters, bakeries, cafés, juice bars, sushi bars and chemist's shops, to name a few. While Amazon, Walmart Groceries and Instacart absorb an increasing share of weekly food shopping through online sales, these supermarkets, after creating their 'dark stores', would forcefully focus on offering new products and services, becoming **superstores**, in which the food sale area loses its primary status. The Superstore would be the de facto suc-

cessor of the shopping centre. Such developments could knock smaller and more specialised supermarkets out of the game, to be acquired by major brands and converted into 'dark stores' - so much for quality or farm-to-table produce: witness the recent purchase of Whole Foods by Amazon.

---

### *A shopping method which remains a preserve of the wealthy*

---

Despite its vast and swift growth, online food shopping remains a service for the wealthy. Without very large orders, **the costs of repeated small orders are not affordable to the less well-off**. Coupons and **many promotions are often inapplicable to online sales**.

What, then, can we reasonably expect **as a consequence of the pandemic?** Probably **even more efficient supermarkets with enhanced security** and more parking. For people to continue wanting to visit supermarkets, though they **may shop somewhat more frequently with smart phones rather than trolleys**. For delivery of basic foods to become commonplace.

Superstores, instead, will offer increasingly diversified services and shopping experiences, plus the option to enjoy hot food purchased in one of many kiosks. We will surely continue shopping as we have always done, even in Italy or Singapore, whether small shops gain a footing or large supermarket chains or superstores triumph. **Online shopping, however, will increasingly be incorporated into our habits.**

**Giorgio Maria Rosica**



# The crunch in the cannolo

by Antonio Ravidà

Honorary Delegate for Palermo Mondello

*Italian researchers present the 'Ruggero' cannolo, which stays crunchy for 12 hours.*

**T**he cannolo (plural: cannoli), a historic delicacy representing "made in Sicily" and one of the most celebrated ambassadors of Italian culinary excellence, has been the subject of hitherto unimaginable investigations and chemical experiments. **Their aim is to keep the shell crunchy:** it loses much of its charm if its ricotta cream filling makes it soggy.

While in **Palermo, Italy's National Research Council presented a cannolo with 12-hour crunch**, in **Catania** a solution was unveiled which **can maintain crunchiness even for 16 months** against the NRC's 12-hour version, named after the first king of Sicily, the Norman Roger II, who adored that sweet almost a thousand years ago.

Then again, cannoli even surface prominently in an enthusiastic text by Cicero, far predating the Norman era in Sicily. The unforgettable Pino Caruso drew applause with his eulogies of cannoli on television and in the Bagaglino cabaret, while mouth-watering praise came from the beloved gourmet character, Inspector Montalbano, created by Andrea Camilleri, himself a dedicated foodie from Porto Empedocle, a stone's throw from Agrigento.

The NRC group is led by **Professor Mario Pagliaro**, born and raised in Palermo, who demonstrated the crunchiness-maintenance method of brushing the shell's interior surface with **a small amount of glycerine**. With Michele Rossi from the University of Milan, Pagliaro has published studies on glycerine chemistry, and one of the co-creators of the '**cannolo Ruggero**', the young Nino Scurria, spoke enthusiastically about it with the *Giornale di Sicilia* newspaper in a lovely article by Roberto Ginex.

---

*A chef from Catania has patented a 'supercannolo' which stays crunchy for 16 months*

---

The '**supercannolo**', designed to remain fresh during long journeys, was instead patented by a chef from Catania, **Andrea Finocchiaro**, who teaches in a Hotel Institute, and his associate **Vito Mazzarino**. In an exhaustive and well-sourced article by Maria Ausilia Boemi, Finocchiaro explained to the daily *La Sicilia* the simple process for **creating each cannolo in one minute and 40 seconds**: the ricotta is dehydrated while retaining its organoleptic properties and sublime deliciousness; it is then rehydrated with added sugar. The chef's top-secret dosages and his mastery are inseparable facets of the procedure.

This bears no relation, of course, to the new frontiers of molecular gastronomy, which subjects even traditional dishes to innovative processes (whose efficacy, however, often requires detailed verification).





# The resurgence of restaurants

by **Andrea Vitale**

*Honorary Academician for Milano Navigli*

*Businesses in the sector, and customers too, face radical changes in habits.*

Italy's Conference of Regions and Autonomous Provinces has issued "**Indicative guidelines for reopening commercial, productive and recreational businesses**" aiming to establish the scope and governing measures of commercial activity resumption, while safeguarding the health of customers and workers. In the restaurant context, it draws from the "Technical document on hypothetical reformulation of containment measures for contagion by SARS-CoV-2 in the restaurant sector" issued by INAIL, Italy's National

Institute for Insurance against Work-Related Injuries, in collaboration with the ISS, the Italian National Institute of Health. The document in essence delineates **two major intervention areas**: a confirmation that, in that sector too, **social distancing measures** are essential for containment of the virus, and the necessity to **overhaul restaurant layouts** and arrange new seating patterns. Existing norms, though replete with detailed regulations on hygiene and food handling (for instance HACCP) and health and safety at work,





*These measures have produced contrasting reactions among operators in the sector*

Such measures have immediately produced contrasting reactions among operators in the sector, split between those who **were happy about possibly reopening** even with unpredictable expenses and uncertain earning potential, and those who, instead, **consider the new norms unfeasible both operationally and economically**. These measures will clearly make us even more aware of the potent impact of the virus, not only on the restaurant world but also on our habits: eating out was a necessity for many, but was just as often an occasion for socialisation and sharing, now sorely tried by the new norms. We may therefore conclude that before being consigned to history, the pandemic will leave us with **very different restaurants** than those we knew and loved: where, before conviviality and flair will timidly re-emerge, we will all need time, patience and, above all, different expectations of the restaurant experience, which we all hope will return to how it was when we were blessedly ignorant of this terrible virus and its fearsome threat.

**Andrea Vitale**

which in themselves already bolster defences against the virus, are silent on distance between customers, their positioning within the venue, and their obligation to wear protective gear. To this end, INAIL specifies that interpersonal distance during meals - when masks cannot be worn - must be enough to **avoid virus transmission through droplets but also direct or indirect contact e.g. through glassware, cutlery and crockery**. It also stresses the need for **constant influx of external air** and better ventilation of interior spaces.

*Increased reliance on outdoor spaces will be helpful*

To face these necessities, more extensive use of outdoor spaces, and above all, modification of seating patterns will be paramount. Tables must be arranged so as to guarantee **at least a metre** between diners at different tables, and other containment and mitigation measures may be required (e.g. barriers). The same interpersonal distance must be guaranteed for **bar or counter seating**, and **buffets** or similar will remain forbidden, as will reusable items (e.g. water jugs) unless they are sanitised after each use.

To minimise contagion through surfaces, **traditional menus** will be replaced by those **written on blackboards etc.**, printed on single-use paper or **visible through apps** or websites, and **cash-free, or**

**better yet, contactless payment** must be encouraged.

The document also identifies the necessity for **service by turns or through booking** - preferably mandatory - to limit access to the venue and prevent congregations outside.

Customers must wear masks for all activities other than meal consumption, e.g. paying, changing location, or using the facilities; and hygiene products must be made available to customers at various points within the venue. Public-facing personnel must also wear masks. These, in essence, are the measures presented by INAIL, adapted by the Conference of Regions and Autonomous Provinces and adopted by the government.

