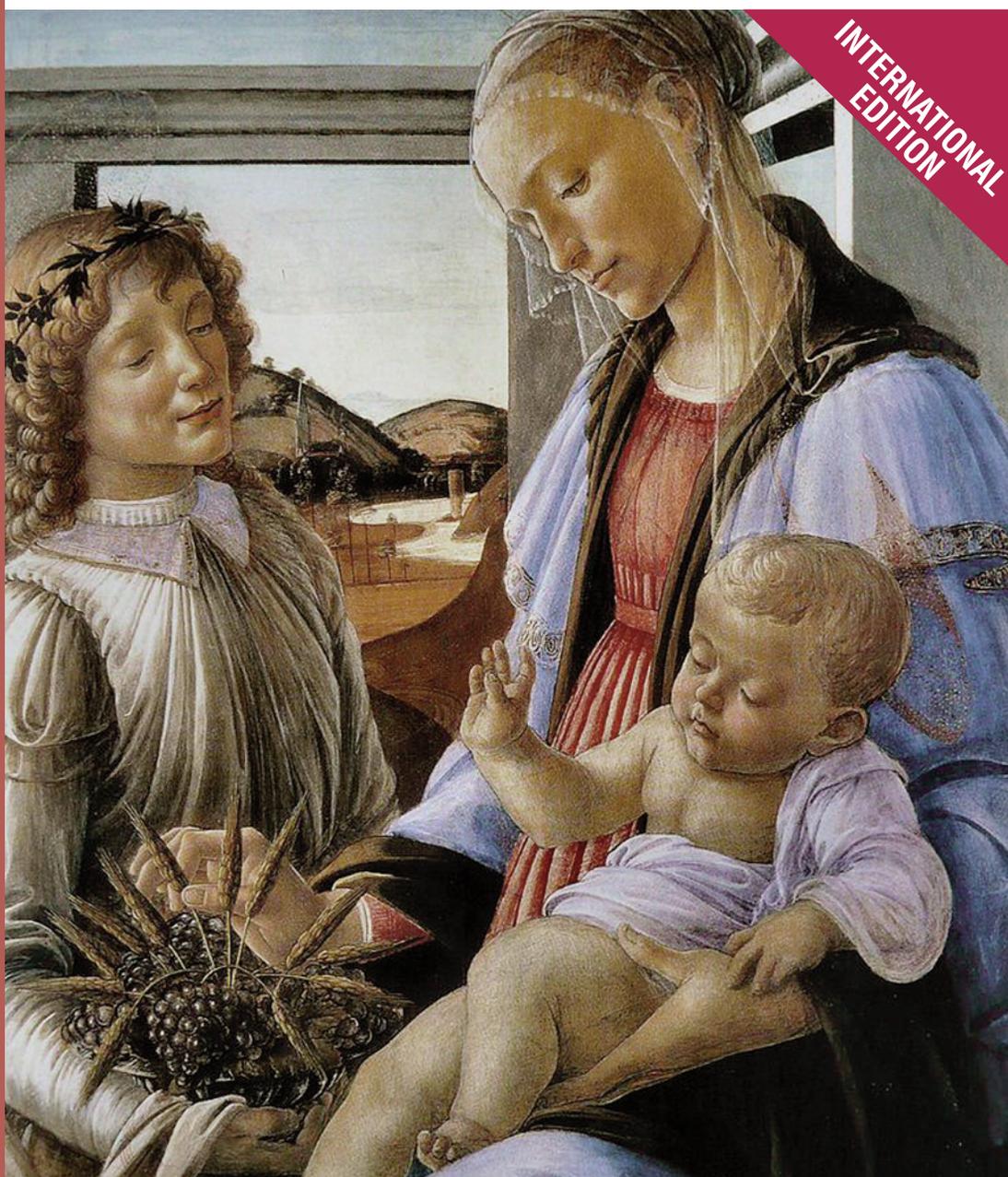


# CIVILTÀ DELLA TAVOLA

ACCADEMIA ITALIANA DELLA CUCINA



**ACCADEMIA ITALIANA DELLA CUCINA**

A CULTURAL INSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ITALY  
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## L'ACCADEMIA ITALIANA DELLA CUCINA

FOUNDED IN 1953 BY ORIO VERGANI  
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DINO VILLANI, EDOARDO VISCONTI DI MODRONE,  
WHIT MASSIMO ALBERINI AND VINCENZO BUONASSISI.

## CIVILTÀ DELLA TAVOLA

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS



### DEAR ACADEMICIANS...

2 Artisanal cuisine at 1111  
degrees Fahrenheit  
(Giovanni Ballarini)

### FOCUS

4 The exaggerated - and  
sometimes hilarious -  
language of restaurant  
guides  
(Paolo Petroni)

### CULTURE AND RESEARCH

6 A christmas treat  
from Caltagirone  
(Maurizio Pedi)

8 An excellent food that's not  
just for the new year  
(Ruggero Larco)

10 The king of cheeses  
(Eugenio Menozzi)

### "FRANCO MARENCHI" STUDY CENTER

5 A strong culture  
to face the future  
(Silvia De Lorenzo)



On the cover: graphic depiction of "The Madonna of the Eucharist" (1470-1472) by Sandro Botticelli, housed at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston.



# Artisanal cuisine at 1111 degrees Fahrenheit

*Open flame cooking, at a temperature of 1111 degrees Fahrenheit, has practically disappeared from our homes and restaurants.*

BY GIOVANNI BALLARINI  
*President of the Academy*

Dear Academicians, 1111 degrees Fahrenheit, or 600 degrees Celsius, is the temperature at which open flame grates become red hot and cook food, by means of their infrared radiation. This ancient discovery that took place around 800,000 years ago by the earliest hominids when they learned to dominate fire and use it to cook their food, probably meat, opened the way to human adventure. Willingly or not, cooking became deeply ingrained in human beings and every culture interprets it differently. Fire is an indispensable component of every cuisine and the hearth was present in every place where food was prepared from the humblest hut to the most grandiose kitchen of a sumptuous palace. Preparing and eating freshly cooked food became the norm, and eating “reheated leftovers” was considered

unacceptable. Unfortunately today we increasingly eat warmed up food, not just in our homes but also in restaurants owing to the availability and widespread use of industrially prepared and precooked foods that are reheated just before being brought to the table.

1111 degrees Fahrenheit is the temperature of the fire that is disappearing from modern cuisine, recalling Ray Bradbury’s famous 1953 novel *Fahrenheit 451* whose title refers to the temperature at which books burn. Both temperatures seem to reflect cultural revolutions.

As far as 1111 degrees Fahrenheit is concerned in France, the much vaunted country of gastronomy, out of 150,000 restaurants three-fourths use industrially produced foods in varying degrees of preparation, often including totally pre-cooked products that are heated up just before serving. Even those restaurants that promise “home made cuisine” make use of foods that they themselves have prepared in advance and quickly chilled by means of the increasingly popular method of “flash freezing”. This new master of modern cuisine rapidly cools cooked foods, bringing them to a temperature of 3 degrees at their core in just an hour and a half. They are then stored in freezers or refrigerators for future use. It is a new technology widely used in restaurant kitchens, and ice cream and pastry shops that is now becoming popular in home kitchens as well.

We do not know precisely the extent of “industrially prepared” restaurant cuisine in Italy, but all indications

point to its large diffusion, at least as much so as in France. On the Internet we can find a varied and detailed selection of industrially prepared food products that are intended for restaurant use. At the same time, it is easy to determine how many restaurants that seat 50 to 100 diners present a menu containing ten appetizers, and at least as many of each first courses and meat courses along with five desserts and several other offerings. Fifty or more dishes cannot be made from scratch by the two or three people working in the kitchen unless most of those dishes have been prepared in advance. And in those open kitchens that are increasingly popular in modern restaurants much of what we can observe is nothing more than an elegant but fast composition of dishes made with foods that magically appear from mysterious cabinets (refrigerators, freezers, flash freezers, microwave ovens etc.) that line the walls at the back of the kitchen.

The expansion of industrial cuisine and the industrialization of the restaurant industry finds its justification in two elements: on the one hand, the need to have a large and varied menu that often includes exotic or out of season foods; and on the other, the need to lower overhead costs by reducing the number of personnel in the kitchen.

In order to provide cuisine in which the food is prepared on the spot with the freshest possible ingredients a restaurant must limit the variety of dishes on the menu and have a larger

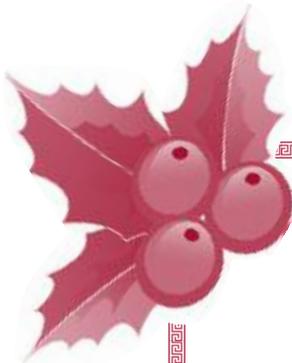


number of cooks, which leads to much higher prices. In elite restaurants that follow this model the menu must of necessity be relatively restricted (perhaps by offering a tasting menu) and above all there should be one cook for every three or four diners. More than the cost of food, the number of cooks is what raises the cost of a meal to 100 or even over 150 Euros per person. In France they refer to cuisine fait maison, or “home made food”. The same should be true in Italy, where the consumer should have the right to know whether the tiramisù or even the simplest sorbet was made by the chef himself or herself, or whether it is simply an industrial product just like any other that

can be found in thousands of restaurants or on the supermarket shelves. It is not so much a question of food safety or quality - which are both legitimate concerns - as one of commercial accuracy and the identity of an individual restaurant. Restaurants in Italy as well should move in the direction along the lines of those established for artisanal ice cream producers. For some time now, consumers have turned to “artisanal gelato” characterized by the use of fresh ingredients. Compared with “industrially produced ice cream”, artisanal gelato is usually very fresh and produced on site by the vendor. It has a lower fat content and less air. Italy

is the only country in the world where artisanal ice cream dominates over 50 percent of the market, thanks to its history, tradition, capillary distribution, professionalism and the Italian penchant for ambulatory ice cream consumption. Shouldn't the same be true for “artisanal restaurants”, where the food is home made and cooked over an open flame at 1111 degrees Fahrenheit? This is exactly what some restaurants are doing: offering excellent dishes from among a small number of “house specialties” that change from day to day depending on the season, offered at reasonable prices.

GIOVANNI BALLARINI



*President Giovanni Ballarini,  
the President's Council, the Headquarters in Milan  
and the Editorial Offices of this magazine  
would like to wish all Academicians in Italy and abroad*

***a Merry Christmas  
and Happy New Year.***

The Headquarters and Editorial Offices  
will be closed from December 24 - January 6.

# The exaggerated - and sometimes hilarious - language of restaurant guides

*Emphatic but outlandish adjectives are used to lend importance where there is none, and for showmanship.*

BY PAOLO PETRONI

*Secretary General of the Academy*

As we have pointed out before, autumn is the season of the restaurant guide. They all come out then, except Michelin, which correctly waits as long as possible to be true to its 2015 appellation. If it comes out in October it is obvious that the evaluations are those edited in 2013 through July 2014. Apart from the various criteria used by each guide, what is striking about the reviews published in both the guides and newspaper articles are the adjectives used to describe the restaurants and the dishes they serve. As long as we confine ourselves to simple trattorias and mid-level establishments, the adjectives are normal, measured and not fraught with emotion: portions are “generous”, risotto is “creamy” and “cooked to perfection”, the fish is fresh and flavorful, the cooking method brief and respectful of the ingredients’ integrity, the dessert is delicate and enjoyable, the wine cellar well stocked and well maintained. But when we move on to the celebrated, the empyrean, the star chef, the famous and much abused “cooked three ways” (in addition to the classic version with dove, we now have

octopus, Cornish hen, zucchini and even fennel in three forms), hyperbole and an elevated lexicon gain the upper hand. Suddenly diners find themselves “enthralled” by the “polyphony of flavors” that are presented with “sound after-tastes and counterpoints” and the “apparent dissonance” of the dishes set before them. The palate is “enraptured” and “inebriated” by a “polyhedral” cuisine prepared in a “glamorous kaleidoscope of tastes” that is always “elegant and persuasive” and sometimes even “ethereal” and that “is so light it floats”. When faced with the ubiquitous coffee “powders”, as well as those of octopus and capers, and “burnt” toast, onion ashes and smoked ravioli, we are struck by “unforgettable”, “intriguing”, “convincing” and even “provocative” memories. To summarize, terms like “impeccable cooking”, “faultless technique” and “triumph of taste” are used to inventively describe the best of our high level cuisine that is able to produce such delights as “incisive mullet” and “explosive rabbit” along with many other “iconic” dishes all in line with a “synthesis of taste”.

PS: The July Focus was devoted to a bitter birthday for our Margherita pizza, as evidenced by the ridiculous ways in which this dish is reproduced, both in terms of ingredients and techniques. A recent episode of the television show “Report” exposed all these issues and also emphasized the problem of the cleaning and maintenance of the ovens and the amount of benzopyrene contained in the burned portions of the crust. While some have criticized this story as overly critical, the fact is that after it appeared advertising for pizza (including that for frozen pizza) started to speak about flour, 24-hour rising, local Italian tomatoes and so on. Let us hope that these are all signs of a renaissance for our symbolic dish.

## THE ACADEMY’S SILVER PLATE



*Large, elegant and silver plated, with the Academy’s logo embossed on the front. This commemorative object is the recommend gift to be presented to those restaurants visited by the Delegations whose cuisine, service, and atmosphere are deemed particularly worthy. For further information and orders, Delegates should contact the Secretariat in Milan. ([segreteria@accademia1953.it](mailto:segreteria@accademia1953.it)).*



# A strong culture to face the future

*Participating in the meetings of the Study Center is also a way to perceive the joint work at the national level with a vision that expands beyond a single territory.*

BY SILVIA DE LORENZO



Loud applause welcomed the announcement by President Ballarini that the President's Council had nominated, for the position of Academy President, Paolo Petroni, the current President of the Study Center. Ballarini called it a wise and well thought out nomination that will allow the Academy to continue on its path of conviviality, friendship, knowledge and culture. This last word is stressed by the President as a sign of the mission that Academicians should pursue to delve even deeper into the content of meetings, articles, and contributions to publications by developing the basic concept of scientific responsibility. It is necessary to offer a solid base for whatever is written or spoken; if Orio Vergani wanted only men of culture among the Academy's founders, this was due to the fact that such men are capable of deepening their knowledge through books as well. In our times, our culture meets with

other ones, thus making it necessary to have solid bases in order to be able to absorb in constructive fashion, and without losing our identity, what comes from outside. It behooves the Academy, as a cultural institution, to develop and deepen scientific research in the various territories that makes it possible to better understand the present and the future scenarios.

The President of the Study Center dealt with the questions on the meeting's agenda starting with the new graphic features of the *Guide to the Good Traditional Table*. The restaurants that appear in the *Guide* have received a standard and stickers advising that the restaurant itself is a "Good Table". Paolo Petroni also announced the theme of the year 2015: "The Condiments: sauces and gravies that characterize the cuisine of the territory". The territorial directors will be in charge of coordinating the contributions of each region and mailing them to the staff before February 28. During this year as well, foreign Delegations will be entitled to send their contributions. The choice of the theme, Petroni pointed out, has strategic value in merging, within the itineraries, identity and cuisine and creating an ad hoc summary of the traditions of the individual regions. The Directors of the Regional Study Centers were called upon to intervene in the discussion and expressed their agreement concerning the choice of theme. At the same time, they pondered possible interpretations. Petroni made a special appeal to forsake clichés and to focus on evolving traditions and on the tastes (that must be maintained) of each territory. He finally wound up the discussion by speaking about the *Book of Recipes*.

Within this context, he announced that an agreement has been reached with the Bolis Publishing House for a new volume to be readied for the Expo, with a limited edition in English. One more announcement by Paolo Petroni, concerning new apps, met with a favorable response. The new apps for cell phones and tablets are being worked on; they will allow downloading of the restaurants of the *Guide* on line. More than 100,000 people use this service and the present app is just about obsolete. The new app will allow visitors to search by name, place, course, price range, and location. It will make it possible to insert a new name among the favorite restaurants and to enter comments on scoring (from 0 to 4 small temples), reception, cuisine quality, quality-price ratio, plus availability of space for up to 300 words. Comments will be reviewed by the Milan Secretariat and will be divided between those by Academicians (who will be able to access the site with a password) and those by external participants (who will have to register their names). As the meeting was ready to be adjourned, Corrado Piccinetti asked how the Academy will be represented at the Milan Expo. President Ballarini excluded the option of a direct presence while pointing out that the Academy makes its cultural patrimony available to agencies, institutions and various partners, besides granting its sponsorship to different regional initiatives. The dinner in the West Palace Milan Hotel was served under the coordination of chef Tombolini and featured a quality menu based on Lombardy's traditional dishes, among them *mondeghili* and *cassoeùla*.



# A Christmas treat from Caltagirone

*The entire family participated in the preparation of “cuddureddi”, delicate cookies covered with a lacy pastry.*

BY MAURIZIO PEDI

*Academician, Caltagirone Delegation*

I will forego providing a list of the typical sweet treats (*buccellato*, *torrone*, *nucatoli*, *mustazzola*, *cubaita*), including recipes, that are associated with Christmas in the central Sicilian area of the Calatino.

Since the first half of the last century this exclusively religious festival, through its evocation of the birth of the baby Jesus, has constituted a representation of the intangible values that Christians have symbolically brought to their cooking. The association of various foods with different

times of the year linked the peasant world with the liturgical calendar. It served as a means for people to better savor, with both their mouths and preparatory gestures, the intangible values of religious festivals. Thus such symbols constitute the characteristic element that links a place's gastronomy with the representation of the values associated with a specific festival.

*Cuddureddi* are very characteristic of Christmas in Caltagirone: they are elegant sweets that are visually appealing and delicious and come in various shapes (round, horseshoe shaped, or in the form of numbers, letters, flowers or branches). They are made with a thin latticed puff pastry dough on top that remains white even after baking and thicker dough on the bottom that browns a bit more. The latticed surface allows the aroma of the filling made with honey and cooked wine mixed with semolina and chopped toasted almonds flavored with cinnamon, clo-

ves and dried orange peel to waft out. The preparation of the *cuddureddi* was both complex and organized and all the members of the family were involved: the quantities of ingredients and time required to complete each step was the prerogative of the eldest women in the family. The young and more agile ones were also responsible for the preparation of the filling mixture. Working and kneading the pastry dough (made with semolina reground with water, suet, and a little sugar) was a job reserved for the young adults who were supposed to have more strength and vigor. The next day the same women continued to roll out the dough and began the basic assembly process with the prepared filling. The work was then handed off to the young people and adolescents to create the latticework on top of the pastry by the judicious use of “tweezers” (*pinzette*) to pluck out pieces of the dough. Sometimes this job was shared like a game among the younger children. It was the job of the youngest ones and the oldest women to decorate the *cuddureddi* with colored sugar and sprinkles “like devils”. The heaping trays were then sent to family or neighborhood ovens and when necessary, the baking was overseen by men.

Nowadays the symbolic value of the *cuddureddi* is missing when in order to have a typical holiday dessert on our tables we resort to professional bakeries and pastry shops to buy boxes of them with a variety of fillings. But even today a few families still get together to share in the renaissance of a festival in which the symbolic prepa-





ration of a traditional food that involves many different family members is often shared with friends. The preparation of *cuddureddi* requires that families spend days together, giving them the joyful opportunity to smooth over any differences or arguments from the preceding year. Buying *cuddureddi* in a store rather than making them at home with the family eliminates the most essential ingredient for which they were created: family togetherness at Christmas. Throughout time food has represented a central point in human anthropology that links rituals with a region's agricultural requirements, associating them in a sacred testimonial set forth by the saint with whom it is associated (cuccia made with chickpeas for the feast of Saint



Lucy on December 13, ricotta *cassatelle* in the shape of breasts and Saint Agatha's "*minuzzi*" in honor of her martyrdom). In the post-modern contemporary era the cyclical nature of time has become linear. Monotheistic religions have only partially managed to inculcate a

lineal culture of time by aligning our earthly lives on a course with the eternal life of the great beyond. Today two-thirds of the world's population lives in urban centers and the seasonal nature of their nutritional products has all but disappeared. Festivals and holidays no longer represent an excuse to eat well and banish hunger even if only for one day. In his attempt to embark on a new type of freedom and independence, postmodern man has launched a process of demystification, starting with its most sacred symbols. As urban people have moved away from the popular religiosity that was tied to the land they have also given up the rituals associated with it.

MAURIZIO PEDI

## GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE MAGAZINE

Contributions to the magazine by Academicians are not only welcome, they are indispensable. However Academicians need to keep in mind some essential guidelines, so that their effort and passion are rewarded by rapid and thorough publication.

- **Articles:** It is essential that articles be sent electronically, in Word format (not pdf) to the following email address: [redazione@accademia1953.it](mailto:redazione@accademia1953.it)
- **Article Length:** To avoid cuts that are irritating for both the writer and editor, articles should be between **3,500 and 7,000 characters** (including spaces). Your computer provides character counts.
- **"From the Delegations" Column:** For ease of reading, maximum length is limited to **2,500 characters including spaces**.

- **Convivial Dinner forms:** it is equally important that the "notes and comments" section of the rating sheets **respect the 800 character limit** (Maximum 1,000 characters) include spaces, in order to avoid cuts and errors. Rating sheets that arrive at Headquarters more than 30 days after the event will be discarded.

- Please do not send reports on convivial dinners held outside the territory of your Delegation, or on those held in the homes of Academicians or places other than restaurants and public settings, as they will not be published.

- By observing these simple guidelines Academicians can be reasonably assured of rapid and accurate publication, thereby avoiding painful cuts.

- Obviously, the Editors reserve the right to edit all articles and publish them according to available space.





# An excellent food that's not just for the new year

*Lentils, once consumed almost exclusively as a way to bring good fortune at the beginning of a new year, are a delicious and nutritional legume.*

BY RUGGERO LARCO  
*Delegate, Valdarno Fiorentino*

**E**ven today lentils are still predominantly eaten on New Years Day as a symbol of prosperity owing to their flat, round shape resembling coins. Throughout the rest of the year they are largely forgotten. But this food has ancient origins and nutritional benefits that make their frequent consumption advisable year round.

By the Neolithic era lentils already constituted a fundamental food source for our ancestors. But without resorting to undocumented sources we can consult biblical references [Genesis 25 (29)]: Esau ceded the right of primogeniture [to Jacob] Esau said to his twin brother: "Let me eat some of this red soup, as I am exhausted." And Jacob, having asked for and obtained the right of primogenitor, "gave Esau bread and a soup of lentils". They were

red lentils, obviously, like those found in an ancient Egyptian tomb dating back to the IV Dynasty: that of Cheops, builder of the Great Pyramid. Around 2600 B.C., lentil soup was a basic food source not only for the lower classes and the peasants, but also for the nobles and even the pharaohs. And it is just a short distance from Egypt across the Mediterranean Basin to Greece: *φακός*, *phakòs*, or lentil, while the plural form took on the meaning of "dish" or "lentil soup", which was cooked in the earthenware tub known as *κόγκος*, *cògkos* or *cònkos*, "conca" or "conchina" in Tuscan Italian.

There is another delightful anecdote regarding lentils: One day Diogenes [the philosopher who slept in a ceramic jar in the public square] was eating a plate of lentils. One of the emperor's ministers happened to pass by and





said to him: “Ah Diogenes, if you could only learn to be a little more submissive and to flatter the emperor more, you wouldn’t have to eat so many lentils!”. Diogenes stopped eating, looked up at the minister and responded: “My poor brother! If you could learn to eat more lentils perhaps you would not be so submissive and flattering to the emperor! For the Romans, and Apicius in particular, lentils were instead the *lens-lentis* or *lenticula*. In his *De re coquinaria*, Marcus Gavius devoted an entire chapter (Liber V,II) to this legume, but his recipes would be inedible for us today. There are references to lentils in the Koran as well (Sura II, 61): “...ripen for us the fruits of the earth, legumes, cucumbers, garlic, lentils and onions”. It is noteworthy that lentils were not considered alongside legumes, on a par with chickpeas and fava beans (at that time there were no green beans, only Vigna, from the Italian botanical name, which did not belong to the *phaseolus* group - that is those that were introduced to Europe after the discovery of the Americas). All this does not explain why in modern times lentils are not as appreciated as they once were. Nor does it explain why green beans, once they were introduced to Europe in massive quantities, supplanted our beloved old lentils. Apparently, as they say, habit makes the trend. This wonderful and delicious legume belongs to the *Leguminose* or *Papilionate* family; the plant grows to a height of 30-40 cm (12-16 inches) and has small flowers with a blue or whitish corolla that are grouped together in small bunches of two or three; it produces rhombic berries with flat, round seeds that are very invigorating; their color can vary from deep yellow to orange, while some species can have a greenish tint. Italy is a major producer of lentils, with most production centered in Castelluccio di Norcia (IGP and DOP lentils), Colfiorito, Santo Stefano di Sessanio, Ustica, Onano, Altamura, Villalba, Ventotene, Rascino, and Valle Agricola. Lentils are considered a complete food because



they are composed of carbohydrates (51%), protein (23%), fiber (14%), fat (1%), and water (11%). They are also very high in energy and nutrients: 100 grams of lentils contains about 291 calories. In addition, they are rich in iron, magnesium and potassium.

They also have moderate medicinal properties: their iron content helps combat anemia, their potassium fights physical and mental fatigue, and their carbohydrate and protein content ward off malnutrition.

RUGGERO LARCO

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# The king of cheeses

*The Parmesan cheese from Reggio deserves this title that is stamped on its form at the moment of its birth.*

BY EUGENIO MENOZZI

*Academician, Reggio Emilia Delegation*

**I**t is big blunder - often committed by experienced cooks and gourmets - to call the parmesan from Reggio “*parmigiano*” or worse still, “*grana*”. The latter is a cheese with a hard texture, the result of a double cooking process, first of the milk and afterward the curd. During its aging, thanks to the *proteolisis* (one of the fermentative phenomena that take place as well in the twenty-four months of aging) the spots, or the “*grana*”, are created to characterize the paste and to tickle the tooth and the tongue of the consumer. The best known “*grana*” are Reggio’s parmesan, the “*grana padano*” (grana of the Po river valley), the “*granone lodigiano*” (*grana* from Lodi) and the “*trentingrana*” (*grana* from the Trento region). All of these cheeses are derivatives of the same

process invented by the Benedictine monks in the granges of Reggio’s territory. They all are valuable cheeses with features and tastes that are sharply different. For example, the milk used for the production of Reggio’s parmesan comes exclusively from cows raised in the production area and fed exclusively with hay and green unfermented fodder. Only rennet and salt are added. Other anti-fermentative elements are prohibited although some processing manuals allow it. Why, then, do Boccaccio and other illustrious authors speak simply of “parmesan”? The fact is obvious and deserves a long examination but I will make the answer simple in order not to bore you.

The first forms of Reggio’s parmesan were born, as I said, in the Benedictine granges in the territory that lies north





of the Via Emilia, circumscribed by Cadé and Pieve Modolena (Reggio Emilia), which once belonged to the “diocese” of Parma (although this not the proper definition). The products were always identified with the area where they came from; thus, the cheese that was presented as a gift to the various personalities or listed in the inventories of the time was defined as “*parmigiano*”. Our friends from Bibbiano have to live with this fact in spite of their claim that they are the cradle of Reggio’s parmesan. The fact is that in 1200 that land was principally devoted to sheep grazing and second, the areas of Montecchio, Bibbiano and St. Polo were part of the “diocese” of Reggio Emilia. For the sum of those reasons, the cheese itself came to be called “*reggiano*”, that is from Reggio. At any rate, Reggio’s parmesan must be called by that name, as such is the origin that is stamped on the form at the moment of its birth. Recently, it was reported that an American businessman engineered the simultaneous opening of 600 forms of Reggio’s parmesan in a number of stores in the United States, Canada and Great Britain. This event was intended to show that the excellent quality of the “king of cheeses” is acknowledged more in foreign countries than in Italy.

The opening of a form is an operation that requires specific competence, calling for splitting it in two equal parts, from which must come the “*punte*” or points that constitute the distinctive sizing of Reggio’s parmesan with the optimal ratio of paste and rind, truly a rite for a few initiated persons. Using a special knife, one half of the “*scalzo*” or round siding is marked. The siding carries the nature of Reggio’s parmesan, the registration number of the cheese-making establishment, the month and year of production, and the brand burnt in by the Consortium of Protection, following the inspection of the form’s quality. And then the tear-shaped knives are inserted all over into the rind twisting them just enough to penetrate it. Such operation is repeated



at various points to cause the rind to break and to split into two equal parts. The form is laid down on the flat side (called the plate) that carries in its upper part casein labels detailing the month and day of production. The operation is repeated by noting the diameter of the plate on the correspondent section of the siding. By employing the knives the half is further broken up into two parts, and then on into many “points” weighting approximately three and a half pounds each. This sizing was due exclusively to the fact that the breaking into smaller “points” only by means of knives was a difficult job to accomplish with the risk of obtaining irregular cuts. In practice, all “points” came out identical and revealed the goodness and defects of the form. The three faces of the point did not come out flat and smooth but rather slightly irregular and wrinkled and fully revealing the “*grana*” of the cheese. At this stage, the skilled “*casaro*” (parmesan specialist) put his peculiar knife to good use by detaching a chip of “*grana*” and presenting it to

the customer to let him enjoy the fragrance and quality of the cheese. Nowadays, unfortunately, the opening of the form and the splitting into “points” is accomplished by a small machine, a practical but totally unromantic implement, that utilizes a simple steel thread that rotates over an axis and envelops the form on the working table. By turning a special crank the thread descends toward the table making a straight cut. By repeating the action many “points” are obtained, in many cases weighing less than the 3.5 pound standard. These are anonymous serial “points”, flat and with no personality, their faces flat and smooth, with the result that getting a chip out of them is no easy task. Let us give thanks to that businessman who made it possible for people in various countries to see the antique ritual of opening the form. And thanks as well go to all of those who, from now on, will correctly identify the “king of cheeses” by using its name: Parmigiano Reggiano (parmesan cheese from Reggio).

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