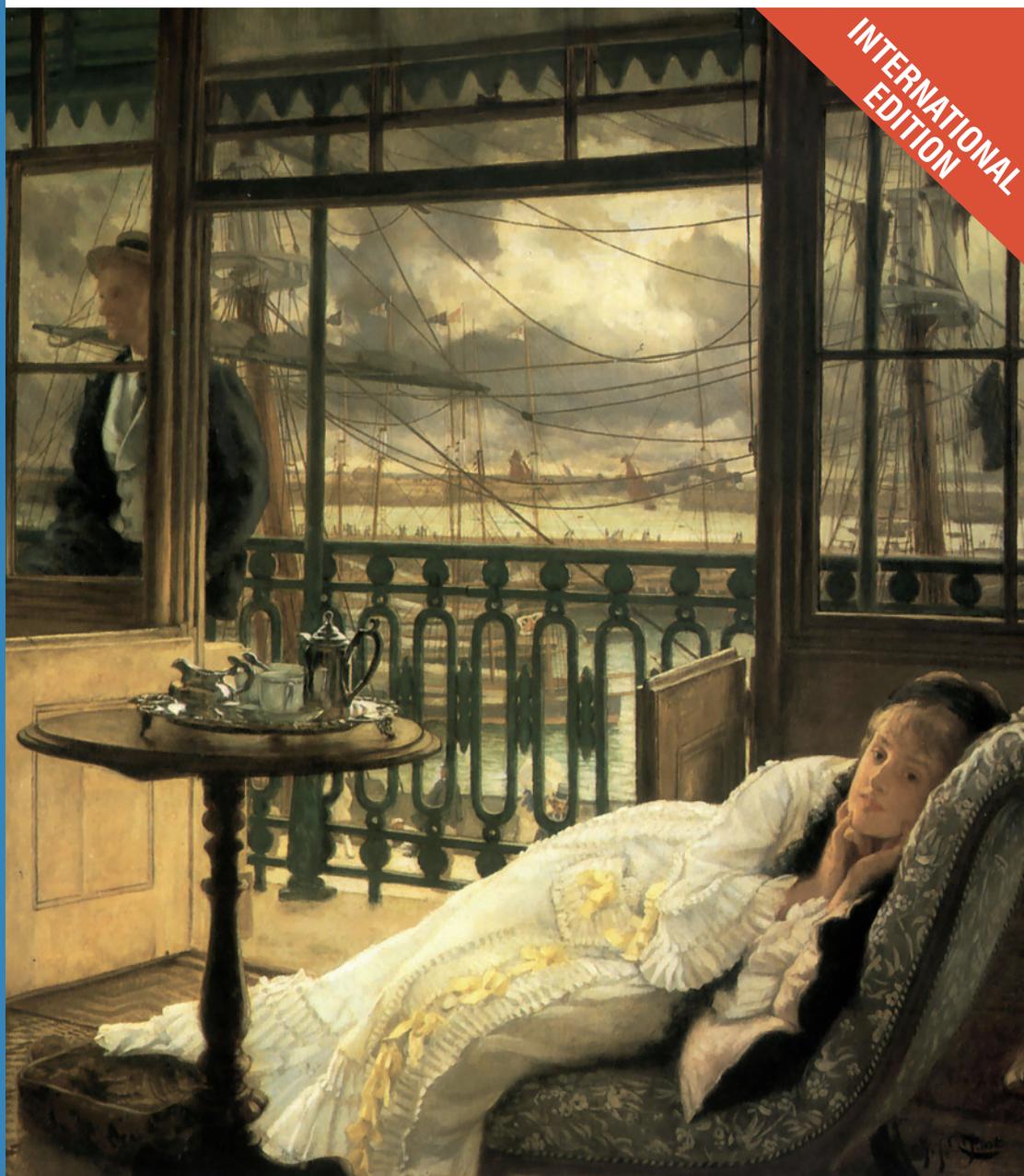


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INTERNATIONAL
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WHIT MASSIMO ALBERINI AND VINCENZO BUONASSISI.

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On the cover: detail of *A Passing Storm* (1876)
by James Tissot, Beaverbrook Art Gallery (New
Brunswick, Canada).

The Academy at the bookshop

The new Food Culture Library is now available to the public.

BY PAOLO PETRONI
President of the Academy

The Academy issued its first publication in 1961: the Restaurant Guide, an innovation conceived by Orio Vergani (who, alas, passed away in 1960 and was therefore unable to see it come to fruition) and released by the Milanese publisher Aldo Martello (long since closed and subsequently absorbed into the Giunti Group). This was a one-off: indeed, the guide was not published again for many years. Only in 1986 would the Academy resurface in bookshops through the publisher Idea Libri, followed by

Rizzoli in 1991 and finally Mondadori in 1998. Paper publications were discontinued in 2006.

In 2002 the Academy reached out to the public with its substantial all-Italian cookbook *The Cuisine of the "Bel Paese"* (*La Cucina del Bel Paese*), later translated into English, French and German. Since last year, again with the Bolis publishing house, the Academy has been represented in bookshops with the successful *Traditions of the Table* (*La tradizione a Tavola*). For several years, with the support of

its Regional Study Centres, the Academy has been publishing the interesting volumes of the series *Cultural Gastronomic Itineraries* (*Itinerari di Cultura Gastronomica*). To date, this consists of 11 titles distributed free of charge to Academicians during each year's Ecumenical Dinner. The first was *The Cuisine of Fish* and the latest, recently distributed, is *The Cuisine of Reuse*, which is garnering substantial praise due to its interesting contents. As a whole, this is a noteworthy corpus of information truly constituting a mainstay of our food culture. All this deserves greater dissemination. We have therefore arranged for our work to be appreciated even outside Academic circles, having agreed with Bolis publishers on a semi-annual schedule for publication of our texts. The original contents will be revised, updated, rendered more user-friendly, integrated and supplemented with elegant visual aids. The first volume to be published will be *Sauces, Gravies and Condiments*, which will be available in bookshops in time for Christmas shopping. This new work will be presented to the press in November during an event curated by our new public relations agency. The next title to be published will be the volume dedicated to fish (the first which we published 11 years ago), updated by its original curator, Corrado Piccinetti, and by the Regional Study Centres. Everything points to this being an important publishing project which will spread awareness of our Academy to an audience of enthusiasts, but it is also an incentive for us to keep improving, motivated by passion and proud to belong to this organisation.





Looking ahead, starting now

A kaleidoscope of ideas for increasing dissemination of the Academy’s culture.

BY SILVIA DE LORENZO

The hall of the Gualtiero Marchesi Foundation, which hosted this meeting for the second time, is crowded: almost the entire membership of the Franco Marengi Study Centre (FMSC) is present, and there is a palpable eagerness to start, to compare and exchange ideas. President Paolo Petroni introduces a new member, Modena Academician Mario Baraldi (formerly a professor of pharmacology and pharmacognosy at the University of Modena and a member of the Royal Academy of Sciences, Letters and Arts in Modena). Milano Brera Academician Aldo Tammaro, formerly a professor at the University of Pavia and Emeritus Chief of Geriatrics at the Pio Albergo Trivulzio in Milan, participates as a guest speaker by illustrating the new projects undertaken by the Academy during the year since the last meeting. In this regard, he presents *The Cuisine*



of Reuse, the new volume in the *Itineraries* series, and emphasises the success of the monthly newsletter which informs its audience of Academicians, institutions and opinion leaders about the Academy’s activities. This is yet another path by which the organisation broadcasts what it has accomplished around the world, thereby bolstering its public image.

The President of the FMSC, Alfredo Pelle, reprises the same topic by underscoring the Study Centre’s cultural role in generating new ideas for activities and projects as a team effort. And so the round table begins: lively, proactive, creative.

The speeches represent the varied expertise of the Study Centre’s members: a kaleidoscope of ideas. This coalesces into the theme of developing relations between the Academy and universities, not only through conferences or seminar series, but also in terms of topics and supervision for students’ research theses. Andrea Vitale, a lecturer at the University of Milan, points out that cooperation between the FMSC and universities could constitute an obstacle to vacuous “anti-culture”, immediately suggesting that some trainees in his degree course could embark on internships with the Academy, aimed at refining their thesis topics. There is also



the suggestion of increasing dialogue with schools and hotel management colleges, where the Academy could serve as a reference point for the cultural training of chefs, educating them about the science of nutrition and the efficient use of local resources (Benelli, Pellegrini, Zocchi). Alfredo Pelle also proposes the development of a more direct rapport with large retailers and caterers, urging caution in undertakings which, however interesting, might cast the Academy as either favourable or contrary to companies or commercial organisations, a position which would be incompatible with its mission.

The Academy's interdisciplinary nature allows it and the Study Centre to interact with real players in the food world, but it is also capable of professionalism in varied fields. For instance, embodying the hope for pathways which might "constantly increase the Academy's public presence", the involvement of scholars (Muzzarelli) and journalists (Pellegrini) exemplifies the interest manifested by young researchers and food enthusiasts, who, upon hearing of the Academy's aims and objectives, display clear interest in learning more, eager to find a source of authoritative data.

In terms of health and nutrition, this alliance can halt the spread of shoddy

reporting, fads and extravagant claims containing more bombast than reliable information. Raw foodism, veganism, coeliac disease, but also healthy foods (Marchesi cites the Hippocratic maxim "Let food be thy medicine"), ingredient selection, calories, nutrition, and allergies, are topics amenable to scientific investigation (Baraldi, Padovani, Tamaro, Vincenzini). In this vein, Gigi Padovani revisits various timely topics: the relationship between local identity and multiculturalism; involvement with intercultural novelties; and cuisine not as show but as serious communication.

The numerous themes discussed include that of communication. Should we open a facebook page to interact more with the public (Padovani)? Spread awareness among young people, who might then write for the magazine (Muzzarelli)? Make the Academy's publications available online (Benelli)? Include scientific reports on food and health in the newsletter (Baraldi)?

Paolo Petroni thanks the members of the FMCS for their interesting discussions, which fully engage with the Academy's cultural objectives, and recalls the painstaking efforts to involve government bodies, leading to a dialogue with various ministries which now rely

on the Academy for gastronomic and cultural consultancy and regard it as a partner and source of authoritative information in several projects, such as the Foreign Ministry's initiative to protect and promote Italian cuisine abroad. This, Petroni stresses, is why the Academy must maintain a dialogue with all players in the food world, while always maintaining an equilibrium between its multifarious roles.

The President of the FMCS introduces the meeting's final topic: the selection of the theme for 2017, again provoking a flurry of suggestions. A list is drawn up in which everyone enumerates three preferences: the most popular will be proposed to the President's Council. Alfredo Pelle adjourns the meeting by thanking the participants for an interesting and fruitful dialogue of expertise and ideas, indispensable tools for establishing a solid and lasting image for the Academy throughout the world.

During the ensuing communal meal, Gualtiero Marchesi notes, among other things, the purity of the ingredients: "today's emphasis on creativity often causes a certain tendency to over-egg the pudding in pursuit of the spectacular, forgetting that respect for raw materials in their myriad forms is a principle of both health and aesthetics". Indeed, alongside the fresh pasta stuffed with ricotta and spinach and the threefold dessert (coffee pudding, chocolate Bavarois and crème brûlée), two delectable grilled steaks of umbrine fish are served "pure", unadorned by condiments, accompanied by courgette spaghetti.

The evening closes with an exchange of gifts between the President and Marchesi, who presents Paolo Petroni with his recent book, *Opere* (published by Cinquesensi), in which the master not only recounts his culinary and professional expertise, but also distils the essence of his life's experiences, embodying the principle of good food as an element and instrument of high culture.

SILVIA DE LORENZO



The Mozart of mushrooms

This is how truffles were defined by Rossini, the great musician and illustrious gourmet.

BY DONATELLA CLINANTI
Asti Academician

While Victor Emmanuel II, as new king of Italy, roamed the countryside round Moncalvo alternating between hunting expeditions (for both game and women) and solemn binges revolving around white truffle, in Turin the director of the university's botanic gardens, Professor Giuseppe Gibelli, made a chance discovery. Intent on studying the roots of chestnut trees, afflicted at the time by the grave malady known as 'ink disease', in order to understand the disease's etiology, he noted that the root hairs appeared encapsulated by distinctive configurations of fungal hyphae. Continuing his investigation, he noticed that the same formations also appeared on the roots of uninfected chestnut trees. Expanding his research to beech, hazelnut, poplar, oak and conifer trees, he found the same structures, sometimes of a considerable size, with no sign of damage to the plants, which instead even seemed more luxuriant. This was, therefore, a symbiosis between these fungi and the trees above.

Since mushrooms were found both above and below ground, the latter were surely none other than truffles. This explains why only some trees harbour mushrooms, including truffles, which exist in symbiosis with them.

These findings finally disproved beliefs attributing a diabolical, malevolently obscure nature to truffles because of their ambiguous origin: indeed, Pliny the Elder had defined them as "among things that sprout but cannot be sown"; Plutarch had

hypothesised that they arose from a combination of heat, lightning and water, a view shared by Juvenal, who cited the myth whereby Jupiter created them by hurling a thunderbolt against the roots of an oak, a tree sacred to him.

Among the most common truffle varieties in Italy is *Tuber melanosporum*, also known as Norcia or Périgord truffle, which is plentiful in both Italy and France. In 1968, the *Times* reported that specimens had even been found in Botswana, specifically in the Kalahari desert. Others include *Tuber aestivum*, mostly found in woodlands and very similar to *T. Melanosporum* but less prized; *Tuber mesentericum*, the least appealing because of its rather bitter flesh and odd fragrance, which causes it to be often concealed among black truffles for sale; and then, of course, His Majesty, *Tuber magnatum (pico)*, better known as white, Alba or Monferrato truffle. Much has been said and written about it, but its fame is linked especially to the delectability of its flesh, its rarity and commensurately high price, and lastly, its fame as an aphrodisiac. The scientific term for its pulp is 'gleba', from the Latin 'clod (of earth)', but colloquially it is mostly known as 'flesh'. Consider how pregnant is this double description: from Mother Earth to flesh, even sometimes marbled in pink, as if it were a pulsing organism rather than a mere subterranean growth!

The truffle's rarity is caused by pollution and uncontrolled, indiscriminate harvesting resulting from a demand far outstripping supply, especially now that the truffle market is intercontinental.





To think that the Sumerians ate truffles mixed with grains in their soups! In his *De Re Coquinaria (On Cookery)*, Apicius recorded the first recipes which included it, declaring that Nero not only adored truffle and consumed inordinate quantities of it, but even defined it as “the food of the gods”.

During the reign of the Sun King, truffles were used only as stuffing! The eminent cook Vialardi presents the recipe for a sauce which requires only 400 grammes of white truffle! This proves its abundance even in the relatively recent past. As for its aphrodisiacal fame, it is referred to even in the Bible. Indeed, it is narrated in the book of Genesis that Jacob was frustrated by his failure to conceive children with his beloved wife Rachel, who in turn was envious because her husband was managing to procreate with his other wife, Leah, and through occasional ‘carnal knowledge’ of their handmaidens. Upon the advice of a nephew, Rachel obtained an abundance of ‘dudaim’, which were none other than truffles! Thus were Joseph and Benjamin born. Many centuries later, the Bolognese physician and alchemist Leonardo Fioravanti created a love potion using truffle extract.

Gioachino Rossini, the great musician and illustrious gourmet, defined the truffle as “the Mozart of mushrooms”!

For Alexandre Dumas Père, it was the “sancta sanctorum” of the table, and Lord Byron kept one on his writing desk in the belief that its aroma would stimulate his creativity.

Returning to the abundance of truffles during the Risorgimento, the period culminating in the Unification of Italy, we must note a favourite dish of the Count of Cavour, one of the architects of unification: a tartlet in which truffles were layered with sautéed porcini (boletus) mushrooms and fried eggs. A slightly modified version of this dish is available even today in some restaurants which specialise in truffles.

A famous and still viable dish (apart from the cost) is the liver and mushroom dip which Cavour loved served over soft polenta and covered with a generous layer of grated truffle. And in Cavour’s home, even meat was accompanied by a substantial dose of truffle! Apparently he himself loved to prepare a rich roast flavoured with liver, herbs and Marsala wine; he also loved pigeon, which he braised (or caused others to braise) accompanied by their own innards and those of cockerels. Naturally, in both cases an abundant ‘snowfall’ of truffle completed the opus!

Charles Albert of Sardinia, a solitary, Spartan and ascetic monarch, did not deny himself truffles, which he paired

with a vegetarian dish: cardoons fried in butter and seasoned with anchovy sauce (*bagna cauda*), a dish frequently found in many restaurants throughout Piedmont, though certainly not with the doses used in former times: 4 anchovies, 200 grammes of oil, 100g of butter and 200g of white truffles, which were not added raw but simmered in the sauce. In brief, a *bagna cauda* for millionaires.

His less ascetic son, Victor Emmanuel II, was revived after his martial, hunting and romantic endeavours by his cook, Vialardi, by means of a ground meat soup enriched with Caesar’s mushrooms (*Amanita caesarea*) and a generous layer of grated truffle. He also loved roast turkey stuffed with truffle: using a small turkey weighing approximately 950g (2 pounds), the truffles were roasted with the bird, and then stuffed inside it mixed with pieces of lard.

Lastly we must recall the woman whose beauty and charm contributed in no small part to the unification of Italy, the countess of Castiglione, who loved to enrich her pheasant pâté with large pieces of white truffle when cooking for her lover, Napoleon III, invading the royal kitchens and provoking the wrath of not only the head chef but especially Eugenie, the emperor’s rightful bride.

Ancient cooking manuals always prescribed cooking for truffles, and only recently has the custom arisen of enjoying the precious fungi raw and grated into fine scales, ideally served in a manner reminiscent of rain.

The encounter with truffles begins with their stimulating, inebriating and sensual fragrance, which induces the ideal state of ecstasy for appreciating their flavour to the full. When one is inundated with such a fragrance upon entering a restaurant, it is like inhaling the perfume of our land, our forests and our vineyards. This aroma will blend with those of the delicacies that will accompany it, allowing us to rise above the crass realities of everyday life and immerse ourselves in dreamland if only for a while.

DONATELLA CLINANTI



Fruits of the peace tree

Attractive, healthy and flavoursome, persimmons may only be enjoyed seasonally.

BY NICOLA BARBERA
Milano Duomo Academician



The persimmon is an autumnal fruit which not only livens up the landscape and the table with its colour, but is also delicious and full of health benefits. The persimmon tree (*Diospyros kaki*, from the Greek “*diòs pyròs*”: fruit of the gods) was one of the first fruit trees to be cultivated (with a history of over 2000 years!); its origin is a matter of dispute between China and Japan. The first tree arrived in Italy in the 16th century and was planted in the Boboli garden in Florence; the earliest documented larger-scale cultivation of persimmons in Italy occurred in the Salerno area. Today they are grown most abundantly in Campania and Emilia Romagna. Persimmon fruits can be with or without seeds. These are protected by a characteristic fibrous membrane which infuses the pulp with a small amount of tannin; this produces an astringent quality in unripe fruits. To achieve the ideal degree of sweetness, persimmons must undergo a ripening

period after being picked; this is known as ‘bletting’, or ‘ammezzimento’ in Italian. Italian persimmon varieties include the ‘Loto di Romagna’, normally seedless. When mature, the pulp is ‘liquescant’, and turns from yellow to orange. This variety must be picked when it is yellow, without green striations. Its flavour is sweet because of its high sugar content. The ‘Caco vaniglia napoletano’ (Neapolitan vanilla persimmon), which has a somewhat flattened spherical shape, has a thin yellow-orange skin when harvested, which becomes a reddish orange when mature. The reddish-bronzed pulp is very juicy and sugary. The ‘Caco mela’ (apple persimmon) is a segmented fruit whose firm flesh can be bitten into like an apple. This variety is less sweet than the previous types. The ‘Kaki di Misilmeri’, from the area around Palermo, is recognised as a ‘Prodotto Agroalimentare Tradizionale’ (PAT - Traditional Agricultural Product). Its first tree was introduced in 1692 with

the creation of the botanic garden in Misilmeri. This persimmon is harvested while still green in October, and is allowed to ripen in covered crates until it is terracotta-coloured.

By and large, soft persimmons are very sweet and energy-rich, and therefore particularly beneficial to children, athletes and the elderly. Their fruits are 80% water and 17% sugar as well as containing fibre, protein and minerals (especially potassium). Their orange pigment contains lycopene (as in the case of tomatoes), an antioxidant which may help to prevent several cardiovascular diseases, and retinol, which is beneficial to the retina. Persimmons also have laxative, diuretic and hepatoprotective properties. Recent studies in nutrigenomics (the effects of food on DNA) indicate that fisetin, a molecule found in persimmons, has anti-ageing effects tied to the so-called ‘longevity gene’. Persimmons must be eaten raw. Since they are particularly delicate, when ripe they can be kept in the fridge for two days at most.

The persimmon is also known as ‘the tree of the seven virtues’: the longevity of its tree, the shade offered by its branches, the absence of birds’ nests in the tree, the absence of termites in its wood, the hardness of its wood which is comparable to that of ebony, the kindling properties of its dry leaves, and the usefulness of its green leaves as fertiliser. Following the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, which ended the Second World War in August 1945, several persimmon trees survived there, and consequently the persimmon tree became known thereafter as ‘the tree of peace’.



Quinoa: myth and reality of a superfood

A rediscovered ingredient well worth discussing.

BY GIANCARLO BURRI
Accademico di Padova

With a starring role in today's trend of rediscovering ancient foods, in recent years quinoa has earned a place of honour at tables all round the world: once a marginal and forgotten food of the 'indios', it is now a refined ingredient found in the recipes and menus of gourmet restaurants and in the kitchens of ecologically and ethically committed consumers.

Nutritionally defined as a 'pseudo-cereal', quinoa (*Chenopodium quinoa*, Willd) is in fact an annual buckwheat-like plant of the family Chenopodiaceae (related, therefore, to chard

and spinach), with a stem 30cm to 3 metres long, bearing 'ears' at the apex, each containing a large number of edible seeds.

It is unclear when it began to be cultivated systematically, but it is believed that this occurred between 7000 and 5000 years ago and that, starting in the area of Lake Titicaca (between Bolivia and Peru), it spread all over the Andean region, thanks to its adaptability (indeed it can grow anywhere from sea level to 3500 metres above it). The Incas and the Mayas considered quinoa to be a sacred food, with supernatural properties, and its grains,





similar to those of millet, were a staple of their diet alongside potatoes and maize. Known in the Quechua language as 'chisiya mama' (mother of all seeds), quinoa was offered to the sun god, Inti, in a golden vase, and the spade used by priests for the first sowing of the year was also made of gold. It was precisely because of its status in religious ceremonies that the Spanish Conquistadores banned its use in the 16th century in a bid to eliminate rituals which they considered sacrilegious.

Nevertheless, peasant families in the most isolated regions secretly saved quinoa seeds and retained the tradition of its cultivation over time, allowing it to resist invaders and remain a staple food of the Andean peoples.

In recognition of the Andean indigenous peoples' achievement in retaining, safeguarding, protecting and conserving quinoa as a food for current and future generations, the UN declared 2013 to be the "International Year of Quinoa", celebrating a food which aids in the struggle against hunger, poverty and malnutrition.

The attention paid to the dietary and nutritional potential of quinoa, and also to its economically interesting aspects (these plants can grow in both acidic and alkaline soil, and in both tropical damp climates and arid or semi-desert climates), is entirely justified, also due to the most recent research about the plant's bromatological characteristics. Firstly it is high in protein (from 12 to 18% depending on the variety, a concentration far higher than that found on average in traditional cereals). It contains all nine essential amino acids, especially lysine (which is fundamental in the production of disease-fighting antibodies, of growth hormones, and of enzymes, as well as the production of collagen, which is essential in the formation of connective tissue in bone, cartilage and skin). Another interesting property of quinoa protein is its absence of gluten, making it ideal for sufferers of coeliac disease or those who have a

gluten intolerance. Its lipid content is also notable in terms of quality and quantity (from 4.1 to 8.8%): the greater proportion of polyunsaturated fatty acids than saturated brings about a protective effect against arteriosclerosis. Carbohydrates, almost entirely in the form of starch, constitute about 60-70%.

Quinoa is also a good source of soluble fibre, which not only has a satiating effect but also plays an important role in regulating intestinal function. It contains various B vitamins in addition to vitamin C, and it is protective of tissues and the cardiovascular system thanks to its ability to thwart free radicals. It has high concentrations of calcium, iron, magnesium, copper and zinc, and it also contains antioxidant flavonoids including quercetin and kaempferol, which provide interesting benefits in preventing numerous pathologies such as cardiovascular and inflammatory ailments and even some forms of tumour growth. Furthermore, quinoa seeds contain saponins, a na-

tural defence (antinutrients) which renders quinoa distasteful to potential foragers and protects against various pathogens. Saponins, which are very bitter, can however be eliminated easily by washing before food preparation. No part of the quinoa goes to waste: its fresh leaves can be eaten similarly to spinach, to which they are similar in terms of properties and flavour; the stems can be used as livestock feed, while the seeds have decidedly appealing versatility in the kitchen, and are now being exploited by many eminent chefs. With a delicate flavour reminiscent of rice and hazelnut, quinoa is traditionally toasted or ground into flour, and is used for making porridge or to fortify wheat flour for the production of bread, cakes, pasta, noodles and biscuits. It can be eaten for breakfast, similarly to corn flakes, or boiled like rice to prepare soups, summer salads and more. Even various alcoholic beverages (e.g. chicha) and beer can be derived from quinoa.

GIANCARLO BURRI

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What is the origin of French cuisine?

The decisive influence is that of Caterina de' Medici, who arrived at the French court with a squadron of cooks and pastry chefs, an ice cream maker, several waiters, and crockery and tablecloths customary in Florence at the time.

BY ROBERTO VALDUCCI
Rimini Academician

Caterina de' Medici was born in Florence on 13 April 1519, to Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino, and the French princess Madeleine de la Tour d'Auvergne. She was the only direct and legitimate descendant of her great-grandfather Lorenzo il Magnifico. Having lost both parents when only a few days old, she passed her childhood between Rome and Florence under the tutelage of two popes: Leone X, her great-uncle, and her distant cousin Clement VII. Aged fourteen, she married Henry of Orleans, the second son of the French king who loved Italy and was a friend to Leonardo da Vinci. The castle where the great artist lived and died had been given him by the monarch himself. The marriage was a political one discussed at length between Rome and Paris, aimed at solidifying the al-

liance between the pope and the French king as well as wiping out the royal debts, accumulated through lengthy wars, with Caterina's dowry. The wedding celebrations were sumptuous, but the French aristocracy considered the marriage simply scandalous, because it sanctioned the union of a woman of little beauty and inferior rank with a scion of the Capetian dynasty. Caterina arrived at the French court with a squadron of cooks and pastry chefs, an ice cream maker, several waiters, and crockery and tablecloths customary in Florence at the time. Furthermore, every noble family in the sixteenth century had astrologers. She arrived in France with the two brothers Cosimo and Lorenzo Ruggeri, and for two years also hosted Nostradamus, who prophesied that her three sons would all become kings, as in fact happened. The Italian cooks brought their culinary refinements including the use - a novelty in France - of sauces, giblets, olive oil, crêpes (crêpe), spinach, beans, peas, artichokes, and a method of preparing fowl with oranges, known in Florence as "orange duck" (papero all'arancia). Even onion soup was brought to France by Caterina. The proof, as is the case with many other Italian delicacies, is a Florentine recipe from the thirteenth century. Sweet and savoury dishes were separated. In France, as in all of Europe, meat had previously been eaten accompanied by candied fruit. But above all, it was the pastry chefs who manifested their genius with jams and sweets which enchanted the courtiers and became seminal, as did the lore of the ice cream makers. The esteemed French cook Ray-





mond Oliver has described these culinary innovations as “the revolution of 1533 which overthrew the contents of pots and pans”. Flammariion wrote: “we must acknowledge that the Italian cooks who arrived in France in the retinue of Caterina de’ Medici were the fountainhead of French cuisine because of the many elements and condiments, previously unknown to us, which they brought”. Caterina even succeeded in rendering the fork mandatory (since courtiers had previously eaten with their hands) by means of a decree issued by her son Henry III, who enjoined its use to permit “cleanliness in eating”. A contemporary source reports: “diners were revealed to be rather clumsy in manipulating the new utensil: indeed, when bringing the fork to their mouths, they stretched their necks and entire bodies towards their plates. It was truly amusing to see them eat with forks, because the less

dexterous among them dropped in their plates, on the table and on the floor whatever they did not succeed in conveying to their mouths”. It must also be recalled that, thanks to Caterina and her collaborators, the banquet no longer signified Rabelaisian gluttony, but had become a ceremony perfectly orchestrated by excellent “maîtres” (also trained according to the Italian custom). The culinary revolution at court spread like wildfire to the kitchens of the aristocracy throughout France. The French Revolution of the 18th century kept the guillotine busy for years: most of the aristocracy was wiped out, and so their cooks, now unemployed, resorted to opening inns and taverns, where they prepared the dishes which had once delighted their old masters. These evolved into the famous restaurants of the ‘Ville Lumière’, the City of Lights, where all the European aristocracy, particularly

the Russian nobility (who were Francophone), flocked to savour delectable preparations. French cuisine, then, owes a lot to Caterina, even though today there is a tendency to revise this assessment by attributing some of the merit to Maria de’ Medici, her distant descendant, a gourmet and queen of France like Caterina, but notably less enlightened. Maria had brought to France not only the usual cooks and pastry chefs, but also a baker. He was the creator of the so-called ‘pain à la reine’ or milk roll, prepared not with the customary sourdough yeast but with brewer’s yeast, an innovation appreciated by the aristocrats and the wealthy and even by French bakers themselves. We should therefore be grateful to Caterina de’ Medici, queen and lover of power, politics, culture, and also cooking, which she elevated to an art.

ROBERTO VALDUCCI

GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE MAGAZINE

Academicians’ contributions to the magazine are not only welcome, but essential. However Academicians should keep in mind some important guidelines so that their contributions, which are the fruit of their passion and dedication, are expeditiously published.

● **Articles:** it is essential that the **text of articles be sent via email**, in MS Word format (not pdf) to the following address: redazione@accademia1953.it

● **Article length:** it is important that articles are **between 3,500 and 7,000 characters** (including spaces); this is the best way to avoid cuts that are bothersome for both the editors and those submitting the texts. All computers should be able to provide character counts..

● Each issue of the magazine is printed one month ahead of the cover date so that it can be delivered to the Academicians by that date. Those submissions that are time sensitive should be sent in ample time.

● **“From the Delegations” Section:** In order to facilitate reading, please **limit articles to a maximum of 2,500 characters including spaces.**

● Please remember that in the “From the Delegations” section as well as elsewhere, **descriptions of meetings held outside the territory of the Delegation or in the homes of Academicians, unless they are associated with an important event, will not be published.** Also, **please do not include a list of dishes and wines.** Such listing should appear on the appropriate rating form regarding convivial meetings.

● **Rating forms for convivial meetings:** should be sent to the Secretariat (segreteria@accademia1953.it). It is also important to limit remarks in the “notes and comments” section of the form to **800 characters** (maximum 1,000) spaces included in order to avoid cuts. Rating forms that reach the Secretariat more than 30 days after the event will be discarded.

● We also request that you not submit reports on convivial meetings held **outside the territory of the Delegation**, or that take place in the **homes of Academicians**, or are otherwise not held in restaurants or public venues, as they will not be published.