

## Italian Canadiana

# Iannacito-Provenzano, Roberta, and Gabriele Scardellato, eds. Italian Foodways Worldwide: The Dispersal of Italian Cuisine(s)

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**Iannacito-Provenzano, Roberta, and Gabriele Scardellato, eds. *Italian Foodways Worldwide: The Dispersal of Italian Cuisine(s)*. Welland: Soleil Publishing, 2020. Pp. 271. ISBN 978-1-0990-1609-5 (softcover). \$30.**

*Italian Foodways Worldwide: The Dispersal of Italian Cuisine(s)* reworks a selection of scholarly articles first delivered at an academic conference of the same name, which was held at York University in Toronto, Ontario, on 19–22 October 2017. It approaches Italian cuisine through the lens of globalization, exploring the mass Italian emigration that took place in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as a catalyst for the global dispersal of Italian culinary traditions throughout the world. The essays in this collection are interested in the role that food plays in the construction of ethnic identity among diaspora communities, as well as the complications that arise around Italian culinary “authenticity” in the face of immigration to and emigration from Italy. Indeed, the potential plurality in the subtitle “The Dispersal of Italian Cuisine(s)” actively opens discussion on whether Italian cuisine can fairly be defined as such, given that Italian migration has resulted in cultural exchanges that have produced global variants that could be considered entirely new culinary traditions in their own right.

*Italian Foodways Worldwide* includes an introductory chapter from Iannacito-Provenzano and Scardellato, and twelve self-contained essays that have been organized into four parts. While the four parts of the collection are not given explicit titles, there are thematic resonances between essays that suggest a dispersal-like structure to the volume, perhaps mirroring Italian migration patterns, beginning in Europe and moving the reader across the Atlantic. In practice, the collection pays most attention to Italian diaspora communities in North America, which is understandable given that it is based on the proceedings of an academic conference held in Ontario, Canada, and would have attracted contributions from local scholars. Notably, essays from Abril Liberatori and Kiyoko Toratani do explore Italian cuisine in South American and East Asian contexts – welcome perspectives that provide excellent starting points for broadening the investigation into Italian cuisine globally.

Part 1 sets the table with three essays that consider historical notions of Italian culinary authenticity and the resulting foodways that begin to flow out of Europe as a result of Italian migration. In “Making Foods Italian in the Hispanic Atlantic,” Donna Gabaccia provides an excellent basis for this discussion by describing the Spanish influence on Italian food traditions through

trade and mass migration. In “The Mediterranean Diet: The Deconstruction of a Modern Mythology,” Karima Moyer-Nocchi too reminds us that “authenticity” is an elusive and problematic target, utilizing Barthes’s framework for modern mythologies to investigate how much of the UNESCO-certified Mediterranean Diet is rooted in a historical time and place, and how much of it is a cultural and commercial construction. Highlighting the power of cuisine to create a sense of place, Daniele De Feo’s “Olindo Guerrini: Aesthetics, History, and Italian Gastrosophy” explains how the seminal Italian gastrosopher’s project of legitimizing cuisine as art was also an exercise in nationalism. By installing the acts of cooking and consumption with national pride, Guerrini gave Italian immigrants a piece of home to carry with them.

Having shown Italian foodways to be both material and imaginary, part 2 discusses how Italian immigrants have used their culinary traditions to construct and affirm their ethnic identity while living in different parts of the world. In “Famine or Feast? Gender, Food, and Fascism in Transnational Contexts,” Franca Iacovetta compares the experiences of women on different sides of the Atlantic during the *decennio*, highlighting in particular how elaborate displays of food were used by the Italian Fascist regime as a marker of their success. In “Captive Cuisine – The Cultural Transfer of Italian POW Foodways in Britain in WW2,” David Bell and Theresa Moran describe how Italian prisoners of war successfully maintained their culinary traditions and helped to establish new Italian foodways in Britain following the war. Similarly, Liberatori’s “Campani Foodways: Control, Authority, and Consent” examines how migrants from the Campania region of Italy employed cuisine as a vehicle for cultural transmission when settling in Canada and Argentina.

Part 3 is unique in that it focuses on Italian immigration to Canada, tracing the successful establishment of pivotal Italian food businesses across three provinces. Gabriele Scardellato introduces the reader to “Charles Honoré (Carlo Onorato) Catelli: Pasta Maker and Man of Affairs,” founder of Catelli Pasta – one of the oldest Italian-Canadian food brands. Moving west, Maria Cioni’s “Introducing Calgary to Italy: The Impact of the First Italian Restaurant” details the immigration history of Genesio Cioni, proprietor of Gene’s Spaghetti House, whose restaurant played a major role in developing a taste for Italian cuisine among Calgarians. In “Changing Foodscapes by the Slice: Vesuvio Pizzeria and Spaghetti House,” Anne Urbancic investigates the long history and cultural impact of one of the most celebrated Italian-Canadian restaurants in Toronto, drawing on personal interviews and rare archival materials to illustrate how Vesuvio’s transformed the local pizza-making scene.

Lastly, part 4 explores how food symbolism (language, images, and even recipes) is employed by local food and entertainment industries to portray ethnic identity. Still lingering in Canada, Iannacito-Provenzano's essay "Mozzarellissima, Bocci Bits and Other 'Italian' Names for Food Products in Canada" offers a linguistic analysis of the creative jargon used by marketers to imbue Canadian cheese products with Italian authenticity. Similarly, in his second essay, "A Linguistic Analysis of Italian Restaurant Menus in the Tokyo Area," Toratani concludes that the language used in Japanese menus are not mere translations but provide insight into each chef's approach to adapting Italian dishes for Japanese customers. In "Gastronomically Correct: Food Orthodoxy and Ethnic Identity in Some North American Films," Carlo Coen closes the collection by explaining how the popular dish of spaghetti, which has undergone significant Americanization since crossing the Atlantic, remains one of the most powerful markers of Italian ethnicity in film and actually serves to legitimize Italian-American identity as valid and authentic in its own right.

*Italian Foodways Worldwide* is a wonderful addition to the growing field of Italian Food Studies that will resonate with food scholars and foodies alike, as well as with students in the domain of Italian Studies, history, politics, linguistics, the diaspora, and to an extent, marketing and sociology. Readers will find the volume comprehensive and rich with new findings and new perspectives on gastronomy, which offer important historical and cultural contexts on the global exportation of Italian culinary traditions and the development of Italian foodways across the world, and especially in Canada.

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