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- STRUFFOLI NAPOLETANI

- NATALE IN CUCINA TRA TRADIZIONE
E CREATIVITÀ

- NORTHERN ROME PARKS BIKE TOUR

- STORIES BEHIND PAINTINGS

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IL MARE D'INVERNO

Da sola in riva al mare per ritrovare me stessa. Anche d'inverno il mare può essere il miglior posto sulla terra



di Enrica Romanazzo

Sostiene e promuove da anni le attività della FAO STAFF COOP. Nel contempo segue ed organizza eventi in difesa dell'ambiente e per la valorizzazione del territorio salentino



Dicembre è arrivato. Mi ritrovo nel pieno del triste e desolante inverno che estende il suo dominio su gran parte dell'anno e che cerco di esorcizzare rincorrendo ogni tenue raggio di sole tra le nuvole. Anche d'inverno indugiare in riva al mare significa stare nel miglior posto sulla terra, in cui recuperare benessere e ritrovare quel senso di infinito e di libertà che mi alleggerisce il cuore e mi rende radiosa anche se manca il sole.

Per questo quando la brutta stagione mi rattrista e mi sento inquieta vado a lavare i pensieri nel mare. Basta chiudere gli occhi e fermarsi ad ascoltare il suo silenzio: quando il rumore delle onde riesce a sovrastare quello dei pensieri capisci di essere nel posto giusto. Ogni onda del mare ha una luce differente, proprio come la bellezza delle tante piccole gioie della vita. Di fronte al

mare la felicità è un'idea semplice. Cosa c'è di più bello che inebriarsi dell'odore del mare, lasciarsi accarezzare dal sole e farsi baciare dal vento?

Il movimento del mare e la sua immensità hanno su di me un effetto ipnotico. Mi basta fissare l'infinito ed ascoltare la musica del mare per mandare il cervello in vacanza, per disconnetterlo dalla tensione quotidiana causata dalla sovrastimolazione di tante, troppe, inutili sollecitazioni. Ed in questo vacuum fluisce liberamente la creatività. E' proprio passeggiando in riva al mare che trovo ispirazione ed elaboro le idee più brillanti. Il mare è il posto che mi rende più felice. Perché riesce a placarmi e stimolarmi, a darmi energia rilassandomi allo stesso tempo.



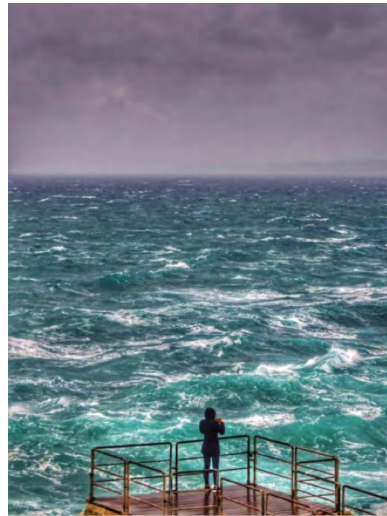


“Il mare è un trattato di pace tra la stella e la poesia” (Alain Bosquet)

Per me è sempre una grande emozione indugiare davanti alla distesa immensa d’acqua che si presenta ai miei occhi e che mi suscita ogni volta rinnovato stupore e meraviglia per lo sconosciuto che immagino al di là dell’orizzonte. La fantasia mi spinge oltre la linea che separa l’acqua dal cielo. L’idea di mondi e genti lontane mi affascina come il miracolo del creato che mi avvolge nel mistero della profondità degli abissi. Adoro il mare perché è profondo e trasparente come le anime pure.

Il mare è simbolo dell’inconscio per eccellenza con tutti i contenuti rappresentati dalle creature piccole e grandi che vivono nelle sue profondità.

E davanti allo spettacolo grandioso degli abissi che si fondono con i colori del cielo, riesco a dialogare con la mia anima e ritrovare la mia vera essenza. Lo specchio del mare mi rimanda l’immagine più vera di me. Quella di una donna che ha sempre gioito delle piccole cose, a cui basta poco per star bene, una che si emoziona davanti alla poesia del creato, una che ha bisogno di grandi spazi e di libertà per sentirsi viva.



*“Uomo libero, sempre avrai caro il mare”
(Charles Baudelaire)*

PASQUALINA'S TABLE STRUFFOLI NAPOLETANI ... THE GLUTEN-FREE WAY

By *Culinary Genes, LLC*



by Pasqualina Raspaolo

She is the founder and owner of Culinary Genes, LLC. Pasqualina pursued her passion in nutrition, the culinary arts and genetics. She holds annual Tuscan Culinary Adventures and Catamaran Cruises to the beautiful islands of Southern Italy, where she shares her enthusiasm and love of food focusing on gluten-free alternatives. Pasqualina is passionate about people, and the triple L's - love, laughter, and living ... it's in her DNA!

Neapolitan desserts have always been popular and universally loved. They are considered real art and are an integral part of the history and tradition of the city. Each typical dessert brings back unforgettable childhood memories and emotions, especially at Christmas time when the sweet aroma of freshly baked desserts and pastries fills the air. There are many favorites, but *'struffoli'* are at the top of our list. It seems that the name *'struffolo'* derives from the verb "to rub," which is actually the gesture performed when the dough is rolled into a long tube, which is then cut into small pieces.



Struffoli (honey balls) are perhaps the most famous Neapolitan Christmas sweets that are never lacking in Southern Italy during the holidays and can be found in many homes and pastry shops, especially in the Campania region. I grew up eating these delicious little gems during Christmas and, the more honey they have the happier you are! *Struffoli* have ancient origins with each region and family having their own variation that has been handed down from generation to generation. Every family believes that their own *struffoli* recipe is the best one or the authentic one. Personally, I loved every single one I've tasted to date! It's those of tradition that have been handed down from a grandmother, a mother or an aunt who is a nun (I have one!). According to historians, the best dessert recipes have come to life from convents and



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monasteries. *Struffoli* were prepared in the convents of Naples by nuns of various orders and given as a gift at Christmas to noble families who had distinguished themselves for acts of charity.

Our historic family recipe is one that is close and dear to my heart, which we have converted into a gluten-free alternative. My mamma has an “ancient” agenda that she uses to sometimes jot down notes when wanting to experiment and make some modifications so that she could remember what she did to the original recipe. It’s not easy to read and somewhat difficult to understand but, I found her additions interesting, which made me want to experiment as well.

The final touch that makes *struffoli* so incredibly delicious is to cover them in hot honey and then decorated with ‘*i diavulilli*’ or, as my mamma calls them, ‘*riavulill*’ meaning little devils, an adorable name for colored sprinkles. They are truly addictive little jewels that are impossible to resist! We decided to try something different and decorate them with sanding sugar sprinkles. They were delectable!



In addition to using small round sprinkles, I have seen my family in Naples include the following to decorate this delectable dessert:

- Sliced almonds (add them when mixing *struffoli* and honey mixture in the pot)
- Candied cherries
- Orange Citron
- Small Italian Sugared Almonds - “*Confetti*”

Here is our gluten-free version of the recipe! We hope you enjoy them as much as we have!

Yields: 4 to 6 servings

Prep Time: 1 hour 10 min

Cooking Time: 2 to 3 minutes

INGREDIENTS:

For The Dough:

- 1 1/2 cups gluten-free all purpose baking flour
- 1/2 cup finely ground almond flour
- 1/2 teaspoon xanthin gum (omit if your gluten-free baking flour already contains xanthin)
- 2 eggs plus 1 yolk, room temperature
- 1 tablespoon caster superfine baker's sugar
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter, melted and cooled
- 2 tablespoons oat milk (can sub with whole milk or almond milk)
- 1 tablespoon anise liquor (can sub with Strega or rum)
- 1 envelope of Paneangeli Vanillina (can sub with 2 teaspoons of vanilla extract)
- Zest of 1/2 orange
- Zest of 1/2 lemon
- Pinch of sea salt



FOR FRYING:

Organic Sunflower or Cold-Pressed Canola Oil

For Honey Mixture:

1/2 cup honey (wildflower is best)

1 tablespoon sugar

Zest of 1/2 lemon



DIRECTIONS:

For The Dough:

1. In a mixing bowl, sift together the gluten-free flour, almond flour, xanthan gum and mix well. Create a well in the center and add the eggs, sugar, butter, milk, anise liquor, vanilla, zest of orange and lemon, and salt. Begin mixing with a fork then knead with hands for about 5 minutes, adding additional flour if needed, until you get a homogenous soft round dough. Cover the dough with a clean kitchen cloth and let dough rest for 30 to 45 minutes.
2. Place dough on a floured surface and using a rolling pin, roll out dough

to a disk about 1/4 inch thick. Using a knife, cut rolled out dough into long strips, about 1/4 inch wide, then roll each strip into a cylinder with the palm of your hands and cut into small dices (about 1/4 inch). Add flour to dices as you cut and gently mix them so that they don't stick together or to the surface.

FOR FRYING:

3. Heat about 1 to 1 1/2 inches of oil in a high-sided non-stick frying pan. Place a baking sheet lined with paper towels next to the pan. When oil is hot, add struffoli a little at a time with a spider strainer so that you don't burn yourself and cook on medium flame until golden brown (about 2 minutes), while continually stirring with a wooden spoon. Place them in the prepared baking sheet.

FOR HONEY MIXTURE:

4. Place honey, sugar, and lemon zest in a high-sided nonstick sauce pan and bring mixture to a boil over moderate heat. When a light foam begins to form, add struffoli and mix gently to evenly coat them. Turn heat off, continue to gently mix struffoli and honey and once well combined, place them in a serving platter of your choice or even in decorative baking cups.

5. Garnish with colored sprinkles (diavolilli) and/or any of the additions listed above.



Notes:

**You can bake the struffoli instead of frying. Preheat oven to 355 degrees F (180 degrees C) and arrange cut struffoli slightly spaced on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Let them rest for 10 minutes then bake for 10 to 12 minutes or until golden brown.*

A Side Note: Struffoli is one of those desserts that once you start eating, you can't seem to stop. Been there many times myself! So, try to consume these festive little wonders in moderation!

There is a Neapolitan saying that goes like this, "Mamma Mia, stanne troppi calurie so' pesante, fanno male? Si va buo', ma e' Natale!" - in other words - Mamma Mia, literally meaning "my mother!" is an exclamation expressing annoyance, fatigue, fear, excitement etc. so, "Mamma Mia, too many calories, they are heavy and are they bad? Yeah ok, but it's Christmas!"

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NORTHERN ROME PARKS BIKE TOUR



by Paolo Antonini

I was born in Rome and I am passionate about hiking, cyclo-hiking. I love traveling, especially by bike. I obtained the title of Mountain Bike Guide at the National Mountain Bike Academy. I am fascinated by letting people know about the beauty of cyclo-hiking, of slow-travel, combining the diffusion of eno-gastronomic aspects of the places I attend.

Some months ago I talked about biking in Rome, telling you the story of one of the most important urban bike tours around the city, departing from downtown.

Today our urban exploration goes on...

I am glad to show you another long bike tour that will allow you to visit a lot of green areas and very nice, popular and authentic city districts as Tufello, La Cinquina, Torraccia...

The first one we will cross is Tufello; the name comes from the tuffaceous rocks of the hills on which the quarter was founded. The architecture of Tufello is popular, but it is qualitatively better than other districts.



Crossing Tufello we can see a big graffiti portraying Gigi Proietti, one of the most popular Roman actors, who passed away few months ago.

Our tour goes on, reaching the wild Park of Sabine; in this area many ruins of Roman villas have emerged and an archeological area has been planned but it has not been built yet.

From Parco delle Sabine we arrive at Torraccia di San Basilio, an urban area that is part of the district of San Basilio. It is a residential area located in the suburbs, close to the Grande Raccordo Anulare (ring road), the motorway that surrounds

the city. In this area a strong movement of artistic inspiration was born. They decided to create the project: “The Art Mile”: A noise-reducing wall isolating the area from the Grande Raccordo Anulare, almost a mile long, completely filled with murals. This great project has also been included in the Italian Touring Club guide. Citizens of Torraccia made donations to purchase the materials to work for the project.



So now we can ride along a bike lane, enjoying such masterpieces of street art. As Francesco Galvani (President of The Association Arte e Città) said, the Art Mile is one of the greatest examples of street art in Europe and maybe one of the biggest in the world. The green area close to the Art Mile has been cleaned up by local citizens and it has now become a nice park.

The last part of the tour runs from Ponte Mammolo to Ponte Nomentano, crossing Parco dell’Aniene. I won’t say anything about this track, because it is another bike tour that many of you already know, and those who don’t, can ask me and follow my schedule, for sure I will organize it asap....!

Tour: around km 60

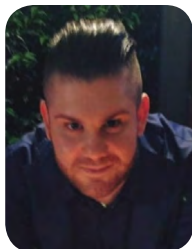
Gradient: 400 mt

Bikes suitable: hybrid bike, gravel bike, mountain bike, city bike



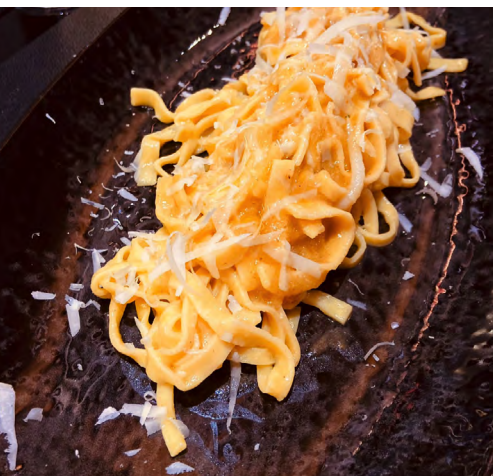
NATALE IN CUCINA TRA TRADIZIONE E CREATIVITÀ

I ristoratori dell'ARCS Roma raccontano i piatti storici delle festività, ma rivisti con rispetto e fantasia



di Matteo Spinelli

Giornalista pubblicitaria



Il Natale 2021 è ormai alle porte e, insieme all'aria festosa e di gioia, è pronto a portare con sé anche tutto il mondo culinario che in Italia, per antonomasia, circonda questi giorni di allegria passati in famiglia o con gli amici più stretti. Da nord a sud le tradizioni si tramandano, i piatti si differenziano, ma la regola d'oro è sempre e solo una: mangiare bene. Ma del resto in Italia, paese della buona cucina, non potrebbe che essere così!

Tra piatti della tradizione e innovazioni che li rivisitano con creatività, le pietanze del Natale sono uno dei trait d'union che lega le persone durante le

festività, raggruppandole intorno ad una tavola imbandita ad hoc. E l'importanza della convivialità enogastronomica è ben nota ai ristoratori facenti parte dell'ARCS Roma (Associazione Ristoranti Centro Storico), i cui associati mirano proprio a diffondere la cultura dell'ospitalità e dei buoni piatti genuini.

E saranno in tanti quelli che passeranno i giorni delle festività al ristorante, piuttosto che a casa. I ristoratori, dal canto loro, sono pronti ad accoglierli con specialità tipiche, piatti innovativi e cibi che esalteranno le primizie di stagione, sempre con un occhio alla tradizione e alla genuinità. Lo sa bene Clemente Quaglia, che nel suo ristorante Clotilde propone, nel periodo natalizio, un piatto che arriva direttamente dalla sua infanzia: fettuccine al sugo di cachi. «E' una ricetta – ha detto il ristoratore associato ARCS – che va a scavare nella tradizione della Ciociaria, la mia terra d'origine. Mia nonna, nel periodo invernale, sfruttava la bontà dei cachi per sostituirli al pomodoro. Noi, nel periodo invernale, lo inseriamo in carta ed anche a Natale ci sarà. Lo presentiamo ripercorrendo quella tradizione contadina,



facendo un soffritto con cipolla e sedano, andando poi a condire le fettuccine fatte in casa con abbondante parmigiano. Per me è un orgoglio» ha detto Quaglia, specificando come il piatto vada accompagnato da «un bel bicchiere di Cesanese del Piglio o con una Passerina del Frusinate».

Le tradizioni e le origini, del resto, a Natale non possono venire meno.

Tradizione anche per la Pasta e ceci con baccalà proposta dallo Chef Matteo Nava del Ristorante Ai Piani di Roma. Un piatto classico della tradizione invernale, ma «rivisto in un'ottica creativa e ricercata, non dando più un effetto brodoso, ma – spiega lo chef – emulsionando il tutto per avere un composto più fitto». Natale, però, è soprattutto pesce, quindi il ristorante associato ARCS propone anche una ricciola brasata. «Il pesce è sicuramente una delle prelibatezze del Natale, ecco perché lo proponiamo in una veste innovativa: cotto in un brodo che crea una consistenza da brasato di carne» ha detto Chef Nava.

Nel cuore di Testaccio, storico quartiere romano dall'anima popolare, lo Chef Umberto Daeder si lega alla classicità, con un tocco gourmet. A “La Fraschetta di Mastro Giorgio”, infatti, la specialità natalizia va ad affondare le radici nella più classica tradizione romana. «Per il Natale 2021 – ha detto Chef Daeder – presenteremo delle costine di agnello cotte a bassa temperatura e passate al forno in panure; il tutto accompagnato da una fonduta di pecorino romano e caponata». Gli ingredienti della classicità (pecorino e agnello) vanno a legare, così, con elementi di una cucina ricercata: «La cucina è sicuramente creatività e innovazione continua, ma attraverso un processo che guarda sempre alla tradizione» ha detto lo chef.

Che sia tradizionale, innovativa, gourmet o di tendenza, quindi, la cucina tipica natalizia soddisfa sempre tutti i palati, facendo stringere amici e parenti attorno ad una tavola imbandita che concilia gli affetti e la serenità d'animo.

STORIES BEHIND PAINTINGS



By Fahmi Bishay

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STORIES IN THE ART OF PAINTING

Each painting should have a story behind it. These stories, actual or imaginary, should be perceived in the mind of the artist before his or her first brush stroke. Each story should also have a thesis or a message, explicit or implicit, that the artist wishes to convey to his or her audience when they read the artwork. Once the artist feels that the main components of his or her story have been achieved, he or she should stop, even if the work isn't fully completed. Otherwise, the story and its message may be lost, and the painting could be overworked, and perhaps dull.

The structure of the story, which is created in the mind of the painter, would be reflected in the painting by using the available painting concepts such as composition, light, color, hue, perspective, texture, and more. The title of the painter's story could be presented in the title of the painting itself.

When the beholders read a painting, they may discover the artist's original story, or they may imagine a different story stimulated by the painting. The closer the perceived story by the audience is to the one originally created by the painter, the higher the degree of satisfaction of the artist. However, even when the beholders imagine a completely different story from that of the artist, the artwork could still be an excellent piece of work. And the difference between the imagined stories by the artist versus those by the audience could be due to the subjectivity (opposite of objectivity) aspect involved in the painting process. Subjectivity renders the art of painting, like other arts, highly enjoyable.

In this article, we present three stories behind three paintings by the Author. And we leave it to the readers to imagine their own stories, stimulated by the paintings, whether their stories are in line with the author's or not.

The Wanderer.
An oil painting by the Author.
(Oil on canvas 70 X 50 cm.)



FIRST STORY: THE WANDERER

This painting was inspired by a short story entitled: “The Wanderer”, by Kahlil Gibran¹. He wrote: “I met him at the crossroads, a man with but a cloak and a staff, and *a veil of pain upon his face*. And we greeted one another, and I said to him, ‘Come to my house and be my guest.’ And he came. My wife and my children met us at the threshold, and he smiled at them, and they loved his coming. Then we all sat together at the board and we were happy with the man for there was *a silence and a mystery* in him. And after supper we gathered to the fire and I asked him about his wanderings. He told us many a tale that night and also the next day, but what I now record was born out of the *bitterness of his days though he himself was kindly*, and these tales are of *the dust and patience of his road*. And when he left us after three days we did not feel that a guest has departed but rather that one of us was still out in the garden and had not yet come in.” (Bold and italics are mine.)

I imagined that Gibran’s wanderer was an old man, with a white beard, mustache, and hair. I was fascinated by his silence, mystery, bitterness, yet that he was kind. My painting tried to show these expressions on his face. The cup of coffee in his hand shows Gibran’s hospitality and the wanderer’s dignity. The wanderer carried all his belongings with him showing a man of the road and of limited means. I believe that Gibran’s objective of his story was to teach us to love and admire a poor stranger because he could be as wonderful as the wanderer.

I tried to show this in the painting by expressing the dignity and wisdom of the wanderer. The dark background reflects the other aspects of the wanderer’s life that remain unknown to us.

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¹ Kahlil Gibran. “The Wanderer”. First Published in 1932 by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., and later Reprinted by Cox and Wyman Ltd. In London in 1976. Page 3.

SECOND STORY: A BEAUTIFUL LOOK

This painting is a copy (by the Author) of Johannes Vermeer's famous painting entitled: "The Girl with a Pearl Earring". Vermeer is one of the most important Dutch masters of the art. He died young at the age of 43 years (1632-1675). He excelled in the lighting effects following Rembrandt's school. He also excelled in honoring what was regarded in his days as a second-class citizen. Therefore, it is believed that the model of this painting was a maid, and he took a liking to her.

Vermeer's story was perhaps telling us: "This is a painting of a maid honored by her pearl earring. Look how beautiful she is." And his message, most probably, was: "Beauty doesn't have boundaries between social classes." I like very much this imagined story of Vermeer.

I also highly appreciate his outstanding artwork and his ability to express his great social value in art. The pearl earring expresses her precociousness and the beauty in her eyes.

To me, the brightest feature in the painting is the most beautiful look, and the eyes expressions of the girl that seems to have just turned as she looks back at us. That is why I labeled my painting: "A Beautiful Look, after Vermeer's "The Girl with a Pearl Earring".



A beautiful look. An oil painting by the Author after Vermeer's "The Girl with a Pearl Earring." (Oil on board 40 X30 cm.)

The lover of Jazz.
Part of an oil painting by the Author.
(The complete painting is oil on canvas 60 X40 cm.)

THIRD STORY: THE LOVER OF JAZZ

This is part of a painting (by the Author) of a musician, who loves jazz music, while he was playing the saxophone. I focus in this part of the painting on his face and on the expressions on it. To emphasize how much this musician loves jazz, I highlighted the strong movements in the muscles of his face that are stretched as he blows in his saxophone. To emphasize his love for jazz music, I also used the painting approach when painting becomes like sculpturing, stressing his dedication and commitment. Furthermore, I also used the chiaroscuro (light-dark) approach with strong dark colors next to very bright light colors to further highlight the expressions on the musician's face. With these highly emphasized expressions, the audience is invited to feel their presence in the music hall and to listen to the saxophone player. The message is that to excel in art we have to love it, and to perform it with full strength, commitment, and dedication as shown in the face of our musician.



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THE ART OF DOING GOOD THINGS



by Daniele Moroni

Commercial Director of Gourmet Food S.r.l.s. (Albano Laziale), lover of good food, great expert in the field, deep connoisseur of regional products with their gastronomic achievements. Founder of Gurmit Store, your trusted online food & wine store www.gurmit.it



Italy is a country rich in gastronomic excellences that bring high tricolor pride even beyond national borders. From north to south, passing through the center and the islands, each region holds an unparalleled culinary heritage, admired and envied in all continents. The Mediterranean Diet remains the most popular in the world and is based on ingredients that only Italy can boast, and it is no coincidence that it is in first place as regards food and wine tourism, a new way of traveling that perfectly combines the desire to visit and discover new places with the possibility of tasting characteristic flavors of a specific area.

In this article, we will discover the most appreciated and requested gastronomic excellences, not only in Italy, but also abroad:

- In the first place among the most popular Italian food and wine products we find Prosecco, which is now known and appreciated all over the world.
- Parmigiano Reggiano is one of the products of excellence in the gastronomic world, a cheese with a unique and unmistakable taste. To become Parmigiano Reggiano, the cheese must follow a rigorous protocol, which takes into account the production area, the type of milk used, the processing and the minimum maturation period.

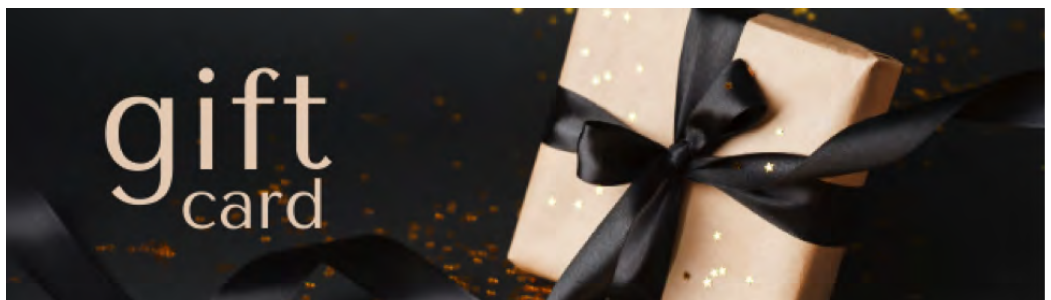




- Parma Ham is another masterpiece. Unmistakable for its delicate flavor, it is a real delicacy which characterizes appetizers and main courses.
- Soppresata, Calabria or Lucana, is one of the most popular cured meats for its unique characteristics and unmistakable taste.
- Mozzarella di Bufala Campana, produced with buffalo milk, is one of the foods most exported abroad, despite of being a fresh product.
- Extra Virgin Olive Oil, which finds a different expression in each region, thanks to the use of different olive cultivars, is one of the products which must never be missing on our tables.
- As for wines, even in this case Italy is not afraid of any competition. Chianti, Barbera, Barolo, Brunello, Amarone, Aglianico, Primitivo, Negramaro... A long and rich list of wines suitable for any occasion.

To conclude, the time has come for “the pearls of our territory”, the segment of food and wine specialties not marketed through mass distribution channels, to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the web. Online sales are becoming a new channel for making local products, perhaps known during a trip, available to the national and international public.

So, get ready to “fill your cart” with the little luxuries of Italian Food and Wine, to enrich your table for the upcoming Christmas Holidays, and...enjoy your meal!



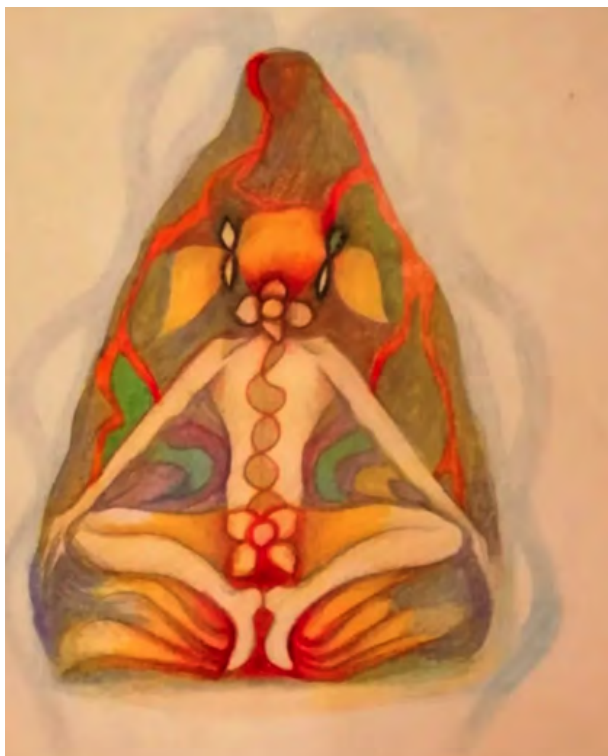
MULADHARA CHAKRA: RESTART FROM YOUR ROOTS



Text and drawing By Janine Claudia Nizza

Janine has been teaching Yoga Flow in Rome for almost two decades. Since 2019, she is ERYT 500 PLUS Yoga Alliance Italia "Vinyasa Yoga Flow Teacher Trainer". She has authored many yoga articles for the Fao Casa Gazette, Vivere Lo Yoga, Yoga Pills, Yoga Journal Italia and recently for Yoga Magazine Italia.

Imagine a tree upside down, the leaves and fruits are under the ground, the stem comes out and stretches towards the sky its roots. Muladhara is the first chakra and is located at the base of the cervix in women and in the perineum in men. Mula literally means "root", however in the tantric vision the rooting is rightly understood as fertilization of the earth with flowers, fruits and leaves down (at the base of the column), while the roots, free to nourish the tree by any means including light and spirit, are at the top, in the head.



In autumn we are recovering from very high temperatures where we lose the training to the "rhythm" of work and, along with sweat, even many essential minerals: we would like to be in shape to start the real "new year", but often happens exactly the opposite, we arrive exhausted at this appointment with the resumption of activities precisely because of the "slowdowns and lags" both physical and mental, that summer brings.

Regenerate in the first chakra can help everyone, adults and children, women and men: devote



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a little attention will have the beneficial effect on everyone from the “restorative” practice.

Let's try to reboot the starter of Muladhara to face commitments and projects with vitality and creative joy in every moment of our day and night activity.

Muladhara, the first chakra, is not only the place of instinct (natural relative of intuition that resides in the sixth chakra), but also the physical place from which we are born. We all came into the world from that path and every conscious cell of our being, knows it. Current morality, unconsciously, still considers that place sinful and dirty. But having led us into the world from the embryonic stage to the true birth (a more sacred event than this I know none) should place it first and receive respect for its “organic spirituality”. It seems a great paradox that the most earthly chakra is basic to guide us to the highest consciousness.



The sense of smell is the sense (tanmantra) associated with Muladhara where psychic odors manifest, the gyanendriya (sense organ) is the nose. Think about how much information smells and fragrances carry within us. Recognizing a particular smell can delight us, create memories, save our lives!

Yoga re-educates us to integrate and re-balance the energy centers of our bodies during practice, but also off the mat, with short, intense connections that serve as both an emotional and physical “release” and a rejuvenator.

Muladhara is also the seat of Annamaya Kosha, the body of nourishment connected with the absorption of food and the evacuation of feces and, in fact, its organ of action (karmendriya) is the anus.

Ashwini Mudra (seal/gesture) is the mudra that relates closely to Muladhara. Ashwa in Sanskrit means horse: the horse's anus moves constantly, it is part of the reflexes that nature has selected for him and that keep him tirelessly on his feet.

The Mulabandha hold becomes the way the yogi who practices Vinyasa activates to lighten the body by moving energy upwards and making the joints of the legs and arms more fluid and dynamic.

PRACTICE ASHWINI MUDRA AS A RESTORATIVE ACTIVITY

The Seal of the anal sphincter:

sit in the easy position ,Sukhasana or Padmasana, the spine well stretched, if you have a curved lower back, put just below the sacrum / coccyx, a small pillow or zafu to better relax the hips and keep the spine straight without tension. Inhale and hold the breath then contract and relax the anus 4 times for men and 5 times for women. Exhale and relax for a few seconds, repeat 10 cycles of Inhale/Hold Breath/Contractions. Then rest on the floor in Savasana for a few minutes inhaling and exhaling naturally through the nose, completely relaxing all the muscles of the body especially the pelvic muscles. The benefits of this practice are: directing Prana towards Sushumna Nadis, stimulating the digestive organs, relieving constipation, toning the pelvic muscles, improving sexual health, calming the mind, improving mood.



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ENERGY IMBALANCES IN MULADHARA CHAKRA

In Samkhya philosophy, the concept of Muladhara is known as “Mula Prakriti”, the transcendental basis of physical nature: the entire universe and all its components must have a basis from which to evolve and for which to return, after dissolution, to the original source. Muladhara, as the basis of mula prakriti, is responsible for everything that happens in the world in the name of “form”.

Often Muladhara imbalance creates lack of attention, frequent feelings of insecurity, difficulty in finding motivation in what you do. Typical are the constant fears, unexplained anxieties, fear of not succeeding and the tendency to be disconnected from reality. But even more serious are the physical symptoms, often worsened by a disproportionate use of coffee considering that the glands corresponding to the first chakra are the glands of adrenaline.

Here is a list of some easily recognizable factors: inflammation of the gums, problems with teeth, bones, joints, leg pain, vein pain.

When Muladhara is subdued, our immune system is also lowered, blood cell turnover slows down and we become fragile and weak.

REACTIVATE THE ENERGETIC FLOW IN THE ROOT CHAKRA

In Tantra, Muladhara is the seat of Kundalini Shakti, the base from which the possibility of higher realization arises. This great potential is said to lie asleep in the form of a coiled serpent. When it awakens it moves upward through Sushumna nadi, in the spinal cord, until it reaches Sahasrara, where the final experience of enlightenment occurs.

Here's another practice deeply connected to the breath:

Sit on your knees or cross-legged, following the advice showed earlier, to keep the spine erect from the lower back up and, simultaneously, keep the hips relaxed. We open the practice with a deep breathing where we slowly awaken the respiratory tree and the awareness in paying attention to inhalation and exhalation so that they become equal in depth and length: generally we will be able to balance the two functions after 30 breaths. Stretch your arms out, at shoulder height and with palms facing up, with each inhalation and exhalation, move only your hands up and down as if they were small “wings”. Repeat 20 times and then rest with your arms relaxed in your lap. If you still have time do another 20 repetitions, I assure you that you will feel less tied and a pleasant awakening spread throughout the body.

Be careful not to bend your elbows and keep your fingers well extended in both phases. You will notice that if you don't close your sphincter muscles, your shoulders and neck will ache, which is why it would be ideal to practice Ashwini Mudra first. Trying to relax the teeth and palate will help the energy flow from the bottom to the head, and at the end of the exercise you will stop grinding your teeth without the help of a splint!

Regenerating Muladhara will make us feel more motivated and clear in our daily lives. Mentally and physically we will regain vigor and self-confidence. The energy of the first chakra is inner peace, contentment, connection with nature.

Yoga helps us to get rid of fears, to unleash our potential starting from the Root.

It's nice to be able to enter in the autumn colors, with a smile and love for life. With a little effort you will form admirable roots that will make you flourish while all the yellow leaves will fall off ... and with them, the weight of dry branches too!

*Om shanthy Om Have a good practice.
Namastè.*

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