



JULY
2021

fao **Casa** gazette

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**- IN TIME OF GREAT HUNGER:
FAMINE IN IRELAND, 1845-52**

- GREEN WEEK IN VALPUSTERIA

- TRENTO ALTO ADIGE

- THE LATINS

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foto di copertina:
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No anonymous material will be accepted, and the Editor reserves the right to choose and/or reject material that is not in keeping with the ethics of the Organization. Send contributions electronically to the Editor at fao-staff-coop@fao.org or leave signed copies with the Coop office on the ground floor of building E.

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ORTITE ACUTA

Effetti avversi della Pandemia



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



Non ho voglia di uscire. Resto in casa perché qui il verde, l'aria e la luce sono i veri protagonisti del mio abitare. Qui posso assaporare la bellezza della semplicità di una vita scevra da inutili riti e faticose corse verso il niente, in cui serve poco per star bene... il mio orto è la mia vera ricchezza.

Qui coltivo, raccolgo e cucino il mio cibo che ha il sapore del fuoco lento come i ritmi delle giornate pigre trascorse in mezzo al verde. Dal mio orto attingo nutrimento per il corpo e per l'anima. Qui ascolto una sinfonia continua di uccelli, grilli, cicale, qualche volta accompagnata dal canto di un vicino che lavora la terra.

Non ho più voglia di uscire e stare in mezzo alla gente. Sono affetta da "ORTITE" perché preferisco confrontarmi con l'intelligenza vegetale. Perché le piante dell'orto vanno a caccia di luce, dialogano con il sole, lottano per lo spazio vitale, mentre gli uomini restano inermi di fronte al peggio, forse perché sfiniti dal tanto patire. Perché le piante sanno essere sensibili e generose, ci forniscono di medicinali, combustibili, ci donano tessuti, bacche, frutti, fiori e migliaia di profumi. Perché intavolano difficili trattative con microrganismi,



funghi, insetti, batteri, mentre gli uomini litigano tra loro ed invece di imparare a convivere con i virus, scappano dai loro simili alla disperata ricerca di un mondo asettico e sicuro, in un esercizio costante di distanziamento sociale che uccide la dedizione all'altro, quando gli affetti sono, viceversa, la migliore cura contro il male di vivere. Perché le piante distinguono le sostanze tossiche e neutralizzano i composti inquinanti.



Mentre l'uomo avvelena l'acqua che beve, la terra da cui si nutre e l'aria che respira.

Perché le piante captano i campi elettromagnetici e si evolvono senza sosta da tre migliaia di anni.

Mentre l'uomo si involge in un mondo in cui la bruttezza prende sempre più il sopravvento sull'autentica bellezza.

Qui spengo cellulare, computer, televisione per collegarmi alla vita reale, al cielo, al sole.



Preferisco starmene qui travolta dal gorgo del creato a vivere emozioni che si intrecciano, inestricabili come un profumato gelsomino rampicante.

Questo è il mio modo di combattere un sistema sempre più alienante: è la pacifica rivoluzione di chi ha "messo dei fiori nei nostri cannoni" per bombardare il perimetro della corte esterna alla casa di campagna.

Perché, come recita un antico proverbio cinese, "chi pianta un giardino semina la felicità". Perché curare l'anima è il fondamento per una vita sana.



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IN TIME OF GREAT HUNGER: FAMINE IN IRELAND, 1845-52



by **Fergus Mulligan**

Fergus Mulligan is a writer and publisher based in Dublin who has worked as a publishing consultant to FAO Head Office, Cairo and Bangkok for 25 years

In 1845 Ireland's population was close to 8 million, today there are 5 million people in the Republic of Ireland. What caused such a sharp drop? The answer is the horrific Famine of 1845-52, known in Irish as An Gorta Mór – the Great Hunger.

Ireland, a rich agricultural country, was then part of the United Kingdom and exported vast amounts of grain, milk, vegetables and meat. The majority of people were small tenant farmers living on tiny, rented plots of land. Their diet comprised principally one food item: the bountiful potato. With some milk and the very occasional piece of bacon it was perfectly healthy, providing carbohydrate, protein and minerals.

But in the summer of 1845 the country woke up to a terrifying reality. A foul odour of rot and decay rose from fields everywhere. Blight, *phytophthora infestans*, had withered and destroyed the entire potato crop on which the people depended. With nothing to fall



back on, within weeks, famine, disease and starvation devastated the land, especially the west of Ireland. People sold the clothes off their back to buy food, they ate rats, dogs and even tree bark. The dead were so numerous they were left unburied, entire families dying one by one in their tiny rural cabin, many found with grass in their mouths, such was their desperate hunger.

No one knows exactly how many died, as recording the deaths of the destitute was not a priority but it's generally accepted at least 1 million people starved or died

from typhus, cholera, smallpox or dysentery. Another 2 million fled the blighted country to the United States, Canada, Britain and Australia. The Great Hunger is a scar on the national psyche that impacts to this day.

CAUSES OF THE FAMINE

Famine is totally avoidable, the main reason a food shortage turns into a famine is human action (or inaction). Nature may cause a crop to fail but it is the human response that determines whether that turns into a catastrophe. So why did this failure become the national disaster known as the Great Hunger?

The causes were multiple: blight; total reliance on one crop for food; overpopulation; the practice of subdividing already tiny landholdings to accommodate the next generation to the point that they became unviable; and a Malthusian approach by the government. Some landlords did their best to help their starving tenants but many seized the opportunity to drive impoverished tenants from their land, forcing them to emigrate. With nothing to eat or sell and unable to pay the landlord his rent, families were evicted from their wretched cabins by contingents of police and soldiers who pulled down the roof and walls. They took shelter in ditches, under hedges and trees but the winter of 1846-47 being exceptionally harsh, thousands more died from the effects of cold on top of constant hunger. The year is known ever since as Black '47.

THE WORKHOUSE: A GHASTLY ALTERNATIVE

Before the Famine, the government built 130 prison-like workhouses all over Ireland as an emergency relief provision. Each had a similar style and layout, surrounded by high walls and bleak in the extreme. On entering, wives and husbands, daughters and sons were all separated and rarely saw each other. The regime was harsh with hard physical work every day such as breaking stones or turning a treadmill, some of it pointless labour. Food was barely enough to sustain life, the inmates were dressed in rags and slept on slightly raised platforms, crammed together in vast airless dormitories. The only thing not in short supply was religion: readings from the Bible were constant throughout the day.



Rowan Gillespie's memorial depiction of skeletal emigrants, Customs House Quay, Dublin (foto Emiliano Pinnizzotto)

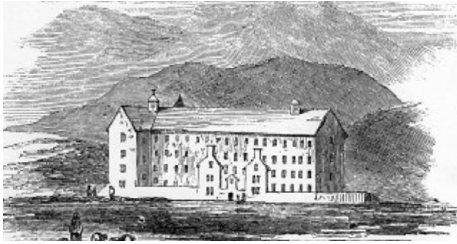
Only the truly desperate would consider entering the workhouse.

Bad as they were, when Famine struck, the workhouses were besieged by paupers begging for admission. They became hugely overcrowded and disease spread rapidly among the vast numbers squeezed within their walls. Just outside Mullingar, Co. Westmeath, is a stone gateway leading into a large field overgrown with scrub and bushes. It is the graveyard of 7,000 nameless souls who died in the nearby workhouse and were buried here in large pits. Walking around this tragic place the pervasive sadness is tangible.

There was another workhouse in Mohill, Co. Leitrim, where I was born, typical of many other workhouses during the Famine period. In 1847 an inspector described the chaos and squalor that reigned there:

“The building we found most dilapidated, and fast advancing to ruin. . . the yards undrained and filled by accumulations of filth; fever and dysentery prevailing throughout the house. . . the paupers defectively clothed. . . food given in a half-cooked state. . . uproar and confusion, the stronger securing an over quantity to the privation of the weaker.”

Just in front of this former workhouse is a large field which is another Famine graveyard.



Clifden workhouse; Galway was particularly badly affected by the Famine



Easing the plight of the destitute

RELIEF: TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE

Relief measures were slow to take off and totally inadequate. British Prime Minister Robert Peel imported Indian corn from the United States but it was not nearly enough. Government policy was broadly to let events take their course, even to the extent of blaming the victims. Assistant Treasury Secretary Charles Trevelyan, although in charge of the minimal state relief, believed the Famine should be allowed to take its course as “a mechanism for reducing surplus population”. He went further with a mix of pietistic fatalism, saying the “judgement of God sent the calamity to teach the Irish a lesson, that calamity must not be too much mitigated. . . The real evil with which we have to contend is not the physical evil of the Famine, but the moral evil of the selfish, perverse and turbulent character of the people.” Hardly the ideal person to administer relief.



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Entrance to the graveyard for Famine victims who died in Mullingar workhouse. It is the burial place of 7,000 anonymous people. A memorial service is held here every year.



He did approve of public works such as building roads, funded locally using repayable state loans but they too were inadequate. Trevelyan's name is vilified to this day in the song "The Fields of Athenry" sung by Irish rugby and soccer supporters.

Through it all Irish landlords and Irish farmers continued to ship vast amounts of food out of Ireland, more than enough to feed the starving and often with a military escort to prevent the desperate raiding of the convoys. The starving may have barely merited a thought by government officials in Dublin Castle,

but there were genuine efforts to relieve their hunger. Outstanding among these were the Quakers, the Society of Friends, a religious group known for its pacifism, egalitarian religion, business acumen and active charitable relief work. William Bennett, a British Quaker, described a visit to a rural hovel in the west of Ireland that captures in a few lines the horror of famine.

"We entered a cabin. Stretched in one dark corner, scarcely visible from the smoke and the rags that covered them were three children huddled together, lying there because they were too weak to rise, pale and ghastly, their little limbs perfectly emaciated, eyes sunk, voice gone, and evidently in the last stage of actual starvation."

The Quakers moved swiftly and brought in relief from Britain and the United States, organising and funding campaigns all over the country: kitchens to provide nourishing soup to the starving, distribution of flour and corn and cash donations to those best placed to manage relief efforts. Their great work saved countless lives and is recalled with gratitude to this day. But even they realised they could not save the starving on their own and began to pressure the government to act.

The government finally did begin to act and set up its own soup kitchens, though they were not as efficient as those run by the Quakers. Help came from other quarters too, such as the Choctaw Native Americans who, hearing of the plight of the Irish far away, sent \$170, even though they too often faced starvation.

RETHINKING THE FAMINE TODAY

The Great Famine is still surrounded by "controversy, silence and shame" as the writers of the Great Atlas* put it. My father was born in 1900 and he recalled his grandfather telling him stories of the Famine. It is really quite close to us. For sure the stories of the 1 million women, men and children who died can never be fully told. But accepting that famine is always avoidable, whether in the Ireland of the 1840s or the developing world today, we can learn from the mistakes of the past to help prevent famine recurring anywhere. Never again.

To find out more:

National Famine Museum, Strokestown Park House, Co. Roscommon, Ireland

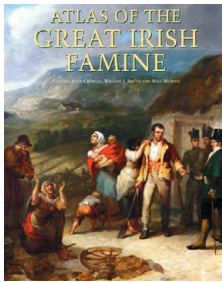
This wonderful museum is located in Strokestown House, a country mansion open to the public and set in beautiful grounds.

<https://www.strokestownpark.ie/famine/national-famine-museum/>



Located in a former bonded warehouse in Dublin's Docklands, EPIC, *the Museum of Irish Emigration* tells the story of the Irish diaspora in a fully interactive way and has won many awards; well worth a visit.

<https://epicchq.com/visit/>



*The best and most comprehensive book on the Famine is much more than an atlas, it has a vast amount of information on every aspect of the Famine and is beautifully produced.

John Crowley, William J. Smyth and Mike Murphy (Editors), *Atlas of the Great Irish Famine 1845-52*, Cork: Cork University Press, 2012, 712 pages



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Trentino Alto Adige is situated in the very north of Italy bordering Austria and Switzerland, and is best known for the beauty of its peaks.

Its territory stretches from the Adamello-Brenta range and the peaks of Ortles and Cevedale to the most striking mountains in Europe: the Dolomites of the Fassa Valley, Brenta, the Gardena and Fiemme Valleys and Pale di San Martino. This setting encloses an extraordinary variety of landscapes: magnificent snow-capped mountaintops, woods, wide valleys, streams, lakes, the enchanting play of light between the spires of the Dolomites, typical villages with soaring bell towers, and the myriad shades of unadulterated nature.

Hundreds of miles of ski slopes make this region a cutting-edge tourist destination - Madonna di Campiglio, Canazei, Moena and San Martino di Castrozza are the best known resorts, popular in both winter and summer for their natural surroundings, sport activities and fun.

The landscape of Lake Garda is particularly picturesque; it narrows in Trentino, appearing as a fjord between the high mountains.

Land of confluence between Latin and Nordic worlds, Trentino Alto Adige is the guardian of a remarkable cultural heritage, made up of prehistoric evidence, charming castles, sanctuaries and towns with great historical and artistic significance.

A number of spa towns offer treatments and therapies, of which Merano, Lèvico Terme, Pejo, Rabbi and Comano Terme are the most famous.

The provinces of the region are Bolzano and Trento.

DOLOMITES: THE ROSE-TINTED MOUNTAINS

The Dolomites constitute the eastern part of the Alpine Mountain Range, and are one of the 55 Italian sites on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

The zone recognized as composing UNESCO covers 141,903 hectares and three regions (Trentino Alto Adige, Veneto and Friuli Venezia Giulia) and five provinces (Trento, Bolzano, Belluno, Pordenone and Udine); it also includes 18 peaks that rise over 3,000 meters (9,843 feet).

The mountainous groups included run from the Brenta Dolomites to the Catinaccio and the Latemar, between the Alto Adige and the area of Trento; from the Dolomites of Sesto to the Pale di San Martino; from the massif of Marmolada to the group composed of Pelmo and Croda da Lago, to then arrive at the Friulian Dolomite chain, the most eastern of them all.

Le Corbusier, one of the most noted architects of the 1900s, defined them as the “most beautiful architectonic work in the world.”

And indeed, the Dolomites offer a magnificent panorama: mountains constructed with walls of rock, ice caps, karst systems, unbelievably high spires, towers and pinnacles – mountains molded and shaped by the elements, and where the cultures of Italy, Germany and the native Ladin community all meet and intertwine.



The Dolomites take their name from the French geologist Dieudonné Dolomieu, who discovered the properties of the dolomite, a hard, chalky rock that is rich in the mineral dolomite, highly present in this mountain system.

The rock evidently gives to the mountains a very distinct white cast (which is why they are also called the “Pale Mountains”), but the most particular tones arise every evening when the sun starts to set: the colors go from pinkish hues to fiery reds, the phenomenon referred to as Alpenglow.

This entire process can be explained by the fact that up until 250 million years ago, these mountains were a mass of shells, corals and algae under the sea. They emerged only 70 million years ago. It is this combination of circumstances that make these structures, rich in Mesozoic fossils, the amazing geological formations that they are.



SPORT, SKI AND NATURE IN THE DOLOMITES

The chain's westernmost appendage is the Brenta Group, where one finds the epitome of mountain tourism: Madonna di Campiglio. Also known as the "Queen of the Dolomites," the famous locality of Pinzolo, situated in the Val Rendena, is one of the most important ski hubs nationally.

Pinzolo also boasts more than 37 miles of slopes and 20 ski lifts. The 3-Tre Slope is a favorite: this name refers to the "Three Races of Trentino," where special slalom contests take place during the World Cup of Alpine Skiing.

However, the Dolomites officially begin east of Trento, where lies the ski district between Val Cisson and the Valleys Fiemme and Fassa, and where San Martino di Castrozza, Predazzo, Cavalese, and the communities of Moena and Canazei meet, surrounded by the summits of Mounts Sella, Sassolungo and Marmolada. In the northernmost section, in the Province of Bolzano, Val Gardena – bordered on its north by the Siusi Alps – offers fascinating displays of nature amidst the prestigious Ortisei and the elegant Santa Cristina and Selva.

Here one can find the Sasslong, one of the most famous ski slopes in the entire world, where the World Cup in Freestyle Skiing is held every year - it is, after all, one of the most spectacular alpine freestyle ski descents around.

Beyond the Sella Pass, Val Badia extends over the gems of the Ladin community, comprising the characteristic San Cassiano, La Villa and Corvara. Once having crossed the Falzarego Pass, one will see Arabba, sitting on the border between the regions of Veneto and Alto Adige.

Beneath the Plan de Corones is the Isarco Valley, which Bressanone does a fine job of embellishing, and the Pusteria Valley, with the villages of Brunico and San Candido.

Between Alto Adige and Veneto, the silhouettes of the Three Peaks of Lavadredo stand out – along with Monte Cristallo, they hover over the "Pearl of the Dolomites," that is Cortina d'Ampezzo and its neighboring Valleys of Comelico and Cadore. Host to the 1956 Winter Olympic Games and defined solely in the terms of chic and ski, Cortina is a glitzy, glam symbol both on the Italian and international scenes. It has always been a top destination for mountain and nature enthusiasts, as well as those in search of winter sport activity and, in general, fun.



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At the base of the National Park of the Bellunesi Dolomites (that extends all the way to Feltre), the imposing Marmolada, Monte Civetta and Pale di San Martino rise, with the nearby hub of Agordo, an international destination for Alpine skiing.

On the Dolomites' northeastern edge, between the Province of Udine and Pordenone, is the beautiful and evocative Regional Park of the Friulian Dolomites. Among the Trentino and Alto Adige ski hubs, mostly located in Val di Fassa, Val Gardena and Val Badia, Dolomiti Superski, the largest ski district internationally, allows skiers to reach some of the most famous and best-equipped slopes in the Dolomites. This also includes the wild and fascinating zones of the Friulian Dolomites like Valcellina, the Valle del Tagliamento, Val Colvera and Val Tramontina, all ideal for trekking and nature excursions.

From the website of Italia-Agenzia Nazionale Turismo. Trentino Alto Adige, <http://www.italia.it/en/discover-italy/trentino-alto-adige.html>



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THE LATINS



By Carlo Tasciotti

Former FAO staff member

The Latins settled in the center of the Italian peninsula, on the west coast, in the territory located on the final left part of the Tiber River, between the end of the second and the beginning of the first millennium BC, an area later enlarged which was called *Latium Vetus* and also *Latium antiquum*. Beyond the Tiber river lived the Etruscans, therefore in a clockwise direction there were the Sabines, the Equi, the Ernici, the Rutuli and to the south, beyond the last two, there were the Volsci (see map of the geographical area of *Latium Vetus*).



The origin of the people and the name make them derive from the Latin king, ruler of Alba Longa; while the settlements in the territory in that period were Ardea, Laurentum (Castelporziano), Lavinium (Pratica di mare), Ostia and Rome much later. The Latin king, in the tale of the Aeneid, welcomes Aeneas fleeing from Troy by now destroyed, when he lands on the coast of present-day Lazio and gives him his daughter Lavinia in marriage. The Greek poet Hesiod in *Theogony*, which is one of the oldest works belonging to Greek literature, also deals with the Latin king, as ruler of a people of the Tyrrhenian Sea. *Theogony* literally means “birth of the gods, defined as a mythological poem and also the essential source for Greek mythography. The work, written around the year 700 BC, describes the stages of divine genealogies, from the primordial Chaos from which everything originates, up to the rise of Zeus, the king of all gods.

Latini



According to ancient historians and the Roman poet Virgil himself, after the death of the Latin king and, later, of Aeneas himself, the indigenous population of the area merged with the Trojan refugees and gave rise to the Latin People (12th century BC). From the more accepted modern historiography, unlike the hypothesis of the Greco-Roman historiography of an origin from Asia Minor, the Latins, belonging to the Indo-European peoples, descended in Italy during the second millennium BC perhaps coming from central Danube Europe, even if theories of their indigenous origin are not to be excluded.

However, it is now generally accepted that a population, different from the one previously residing there, arrived in Latium in the protohistoric era. These people, on the basis of linguistic considerations and a series of archaeological finds, are identified with the Latins.

The arrival of the new population has produced new ways of burial of loved ones through cremation, as identified by the most ancient archaeological finds dating back to a period ranging from the 11th to the 9th century BC (those of Gabi and the nearby Osa necropolis of Lavinium and Ficana), while instead the sepulchers of previous eras used exclusively the burial rite. The first tombs distinguished by this new rite can be dated around the 10th century BC, and first appeared in the Colli Albani area, south of the current Grottaferrata, and then spread to other parts of Latium, including Rome. On the basis of these considerations, the Roman tradition indicating this hilly group the fulcrum of the Latin nation would seem to find confirmation.

The development of the Latins is connected to the development of Rome. The major settlements of the Latins were Albalonga (Monte Albano), Ardea, Laurentum (Castelporziano), Lavinium (Pratica di Mare), Ostia and then Rome.

A Lazio culture is associated with the Latins, or rather the formation of the Latin ethnos, that is their way of life, which at the end of the second millennium BC had already organized into a series of communities which had Alba «Longa» as their main center.

While according to the scholar Theodor Mommsen (1817-1903), who formulated his thesis mainly on a linguistic basis, the origin of the Latin was not indigenous, but rather the result of a migration from the Apennine ridge, from north to south, along the western side of the peninsula. The migration of the Latin group would have extended from Lazio to present-day Calabria. Following the



subsequent arrivals from the south of Samnites and Greeks, the presence of Latin populations would have contracted towards the north, to coincide with the Latium Vetus (or Latium



Priscum), which was roughly delimited by the Tiber to the north, by the Prenestini Mountains and a short stretch of the River Treverus (Sacco) to the east, from the Lepini and Ausoni Mountains to the south and from the Tyrrhenian Sea to the west.

The presumed presence of the Latin people in the lands south of Lazio is however defined by Mommsen as not documentable. For the German historian, the presence of the Latin people in Campania (among which the scholar includes the Ausoni), is inferred from the name of some Campania localities such as Nola (new city) or Volturnus

(from the Latin *volvere*), which would document the presence of the Latins before the arrival of the Samnites and the Greeks. As for the presence of the Latin people in the lands that would later be occupied by the Lucani and Bruzi, it is defined by Mommsen as probable, even if not documentable.

The other Italic populations of historical times, such as Umbri, Volsci, Piceni, Marsi and Sabini, who also belonged to the group of Indo-European-speaking populations, settled in Italy migrating from the north along the Apennine ridge, following a path from north to south, subsequent to that of the Latins.

In this first period of the Iron Age, the population of the Latins was divided into a series of autonomous rural groupings, often with a fortified village in the center (oppidum) and closely connected to each other. At the time, the sense of an origin, of belonging and of common cults was deeply felt, which led many of these entities to give life to real federations or leagues. These inhabited centers originally having a religious character, over time also managed to give themselves common regulations that governed the defense of the territory, trade and other matters of general interest. The *Lega Albense* was perhaps the oldest among the federations of *Latium Vetus*: it was made up of about thirty centers, the so-called *populi albenses*, mentioned by Pliny the Elder. The term albenses would indicate the fact that all these peoples used to participate in the ceremony of the sacrificial banquet on *Mons Albanus*, in the sanctuary of *Jupiter of Latium*. The center of this large urban group was the city of Alba Longa, which was razed to the ground around the middle of the 7th century BC at the time of Tullo Ostilio.

At the end of this same century and in the following, many other Latin centers were absorbed into the Roman state. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Strabo and Pliny have focused, in their works, on the most ancient communities of *Latium Vetus*, many of which had already disappeared for centuries when the three writers set about to describe them. It is not even possible to establish the exact location of some of them, including Alba Longa itself.

According to traditional historiography, the properly urban development of Rome and the Latium only began to take shape in the period between the end of the seventh century BC and the first half of the following century. In the last three decades of last century, this approach was challenged by the research, findings and important doctrinal contributions of a group of archaeologists and historians, not only Italians, led by Andrea Carandini. In 1988 the first city walls of Rome were discovered, dating back to around 725 BC, while even earlier significant testimonies had already come to light, from the eighth century BC, relating to the cities of Praeneste and Tibur, which were the two greatest Latin centers apart from Rome; the latter absorbed under its power all the *Latium Vetus* in the Roman State, effectively decreeing the end of the Latins as a political and economic entity.

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CHICKEN WITH PEPPERS

A Traditional dish of Roman and Lazio cuisine



by Flavia Beniamini and Mattia Maria Rossi

They are two Chefs who have had the luck, the audacity and the opportunity to travel the world doing what they love and have always wanted to do: cooking. After working for more than ten years in major international restaurants, they returned to Rome for the birth of their little Romeo and to undertake the activity of Chef at Home with the creation of the Flavorossi project

Welcome back to the culinary column of FLAVOROSSII!

In this period the heat becomes more and more intrusive, the change of season has left us with the usual aftermath and we are already thinking of the long-awaited summer holidays, but the desire to discover a new recipe is never lacking.

Today we will talk about a dish as simple as it is ancient: ***Chicken with Peppers***, a traditional dish of Roman and Lazio cuisine that is prepared especially in summer and that never fails on the table of August.

Usually this information displaces those unfamiliar with this gastronomic custom: but why, Chicken with Peppers is not a summer dish! Well, we cannot deny it: among its many qualities, lightness is certainly not counted, but chicken with peppers is a versatile dish, good both hot and cold, which resists and proudly stands out under the summer sun of terraces, meadows and beaches.

The oil that oozes from the meat and from the vegetables itself is not useful for relieving the sensation of heat that this season reserves for us, but this does not seem to scare the Romans, who for generations have been consuming this dish in the hot days of August, and especially Mid-August.

Ferragosto is an ancient holiday, born in ancient imperial Rome. In fact, it derives from the Feriae Augusti, a period in honor of the Emperor Octavian Augustus: a month of rest and celebrations dedicated to the celebration of the harvests and a holiday much appreciated by the ancient Romans also for the large amount of food that was consumed. Currently it is celebrated on August 15 and what still recalls the ancient Roman tradition is the food: tables laden with many delicacies of all kinds.

Traditional Chicken with Peppers Recipe:

- 500 g of free-range chicken cut into pieces with skin
- 2 red and yellow peppers
- 2 cloves of garlic
- 100 g of white wine
- 200 g of peeled tomatoes
- mint
- extra virgin olive oil
- salt
- pepper



Clean the peppers, remove the seeds and white filaments, cut them into large slices. Remove the central core from the 2 pieces of garlic and brown them in a high-sided saucepan with the oil, remove the garlic and add the chicken cut into pieces. Brown the chicken well on all sides for about 5 minutes, add salt and pepper. Add the white wine and let it evaporate. Add the tomatoes to the chicken, cook and add the peppers. Season with salt and continue cooking with the lid left slightly raised with a wooden spoon. Cook for about 45-50 minutes over medium heat, stirring occasionally. Season your chicken with peppers with fresh oregano or marjoram. Serve the chicken hot accompanied by homemade bread for the typical “scarpetta”.



Our reinterpretation of *Chicken with Peppers* —————



To try to make this historic dish more “summer friendly” we decided to take a cue from the desert Bedouins, who usually drink hot tea to keep their body temperature at acceptable levels, and we decided to serve buttons with a dough made of dehydrated peppers stuffed with chicken stew, with a chicken broth and lemongrass (our signature touch), a mint oil.



Ingredients for the pepper powder:

- 2 red peppers

Take the peppers and put them on the stove over low heat with a flame spreader, toast all sides well and put them to rest in a paper bag.



After 30 minutes, peel the peppers, so as to remove all the burned part, remove the seeds and blend them until you get a paste, roll out the dough very finely on 2 sheets of parchment paper and let it dry in the sun (as tradition dictates). After a couple of days the dough will have become dry and you can remove it from the parchment paper and blend it again, to obtain a very fine powder.



Ingredients for the dough:

- 1 egg and 1 yolk
- 100 g of flour 00
- 20 g of red pepper powder (recipe above)

Form a fountain with the flour mixed with the pepper powder, place the eggs in the middle and slowly incorporate the flour with a fork, finish the dough by hand until you get a smooth and homogeneous ball.

Ingredients for the filling:

For the filling of the button you can follow the traditional recipe of the chicken, once you have removed the chicken meat from the bones, put the chicken peppers and all the sauce in the blender and blend well, this will be the filling of our buttons / ravioli / agnolotti or any size of pasta you want to make.

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Ingredients for the broth:

- 500 g of chicken bones
- 1 stick of fresh lemongrass

Oil the chicken bones well and toast them in the oven at 230 degrees until they are golden brown, then put them in a saucepan covering them with cold water and bring them to a boil.

Once the water boils, lower the heat to low and put the lemongrass previously cut in half lengthwise, simmer for a couple of hours to obtain a nice intense broth.

Ingredients for the oil:

- 1 bunch of mint
- seed oil

Blanch the mint in salted water for 30 seconds, after having cleaned all the leaves from the branches, and immediately put it in water and ice. Squeeze it well from the excess water and weigh it, put the mint in the blender and 3 times its weight in seed oil, set the temperature to 70 degrees and blend for 3 minutes, pass everything through a kitchen cloth in the refrigerator (it will take at least an hour).

To serve the dish, blanch the pasta you have chosen and prepared previously (bottoni/ ravioli /agnolotti) in salted water and heat the broth separately, once you have put the broth and pasta in a bowl, put a few drops of mint oil and a grated lemon zest to enhance the presence of lemongrass in the broth.

Enjoy your meal and a good start to summer!





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