



ITALIAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE

October Newsletter

Virginia's grandfather, late 1920

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BOUNGIORNO!

Over 5 million Italians immigrated to the United States between 1820 and 2000. Currently, there are over 26 million Americans of Italian descent residing in the United States. This makes Italian-Americans the fifth largest ethnic group in our nation!

CIAO ITALIA!

Most of the Italians who immigrated to the U.S. came from the southern part of Italy, including Sicily, as poverty and over-population were greater in the southern part of the country, especially in the latter part of the 19th century. In fact, the Italian government encouraged southern Italians to leave the country and voyage to the U.S. Many ancestors of today's Italian-Americans came due to this policy.

PATRIMONIO

First celebrated in 1989, Italian American Heritage Month is in October to coincide with Columbus Day, as Christopher Columbus has been widely presumed to be Italian. See more about Columbus Day and Italian-Americans on Page 2!

The images above are photos of Virginia's grandfather and great-aunts in the late 1920s

ITALIAN-AMERICANS IN ALABAMA

Nina Miglionic (1913-2009)



The daughter of Italian immigrants, Nina Miglionic was an Italian-American lawyer who advocated positive change in Alabama. She was the first woman to be elected to the Birmingham City Council, where she served for 22 years. Because of her support for women's and civil rights, a bomb, which fortunately did not explode, was placed on her porch in 1965, and a cross was burned in her yard in 1974. She earned her law degree at the University of Alabama, and was subsequently one of the first women lawyers in Alabama to start her own practice after receiving her only job offer as a secretary (provided she knew how to type and would be willing to learn shorthand). Working diligently to build her own general practice meant handling criminal cases, which required that she visit clients in jail. Her mother would say, "Nina, a lady doesn't go to the jailhouse," to which Miglionic would reply, "Mother, I'm not a lady; I'm a lawyer." At present, she still holds the title of the longest practicing female attorney in Alabama, having practiced law for 73 years.



A depiction of the lynch mob on March 14, 1891, before they broke into the prison and killed 11 Italian-Americans

ITALIAN-AMERICAN HISTORY

In 1891 (during a period of mass Italian immigration), after the police chief of New Orleans was gunned down in the street, police rounded up 250 Sicilian immigrants without cause, trying nine for murder. After all were acquitted for lack of evidence, a 20,000-person mob organized by the mayor and prominent New Orleans citizens stormed the prison and killed the nine men, plus two more Sicilians being held on unrelated charges.

Subsequently, anti-Italian rhetoric surged throughout the United States. Many Americans viewed the lynching as a positive event, with the New York Times publishing an editorial in which they endorsed several negative stereotypes of Italian-Americans, and called them "a pest without mitigations." Teddy Roosevelt, then a member of the U.S. Civil Service Commission, wrote his sister about the lynching, stating his belief that it was "rather a good thing."

To decrease anti-Italian prejudice, a group of New York Italian-Americans took advantage of the 400th anniversary of Columbus's voyage in 1892, a date celebrated by Americans for decades, by highlighting the widely-held belief that Christopher Columbus was an Italian (although his origins remain unknown to this day). Consequently, Columbus Day was far more widely celebrated, and was the reason October was selected as Italian-American Heritage month.

In recent years, many have come to understand the lack of sensitivity inherent in celebrating the "discovery" of America, a land that was very much inhabited when explorers arrived. As a result, many instead celebrate *Indigenous Peoples Day* on the second Monday of October. Last year, the Commission for Social Justice—the anti-bias arm of the Order of Sons & Daughters of Italy—engaged the current New Orleans Mayor for an official Proclamation of Apology, which was offered at a recent April 12, 2019 ceremony in New Orleans.

Information obtained from the Order of Sons & Daughters of Italy at osia.org

PSYCHOLOGY OF ITALIAN-AMERICANS

WORKING WITH PATIENTS INVOLVED IN THE MAFIA: Considerations From Italian Psychotherapy Experiences (2004)
Girolamo Lo Verso, PhD, and Gianluca Lo Coco, PhD

In this article, the authors report findings from 10 years of studying psychological characteristics of members of the Italian Mafia. The authors illustrate the typical psychological profile of mafiosos and their families, and discuss the general impact of *La Cosa Nostra** on the identity development of those who seek to join. They also describe the specific training and supervision Italian clinicians must receive in order to work with mafioso patients, as many of these patients experience unique psychological distress.

**La Cosa Nostra*, translated literally as "our thing", refers to one of many Italian Mafias located primarily in Sicily.

A Room of (His) Own: Italian and Italian-American Male-bonding Spaces and Homosexuality (2008)
Joan Weibel-Orlando

In this article, the author discusses the perpetuation of male-only organizations among Italians and Italian-Americans. She investigates two such organizations—one in Tuscany and one in Connecticut—in the context of gender identity and conceptualizations of masculinity within Italian culture. She compares behavior within these groups to widely-held stereotypes of Italian men: "hot tempered, competitive, prone to violence, [and] mother adoring."

Interested in learning more about Italian-American Heritage? Check out this two-part documentary by PBS! (available free on youtube):

The Italian-Americans, narrated by Stanley Tucci

Part 1:
<https://youtu.be/dmXEUCH3KxQ>
Part 2:
<https://youtu.be/KCOeQibXwqQ>

See Dr. Fauci's recent remarks for Italian-American heritage month!

Link:
https://youtu.be/SKT51_LyrVs



BUON CIBO, BUON UMORE!

GOOD FOOD, GOOD MOOD!

PASTA

Form flour on wooden board in well and add eggs, olive oil, and salt into the well. Using a fork, beat the eggs in the well (for a newbie, I suggest beating the eggs, oil, and salt mixture beforehand, and then adding it to the well). Then slowly incorporate the flour using a fork. When the flour is almost completely incorporated, use your hands and begin kneading the dough. If the dough is too sticky, sprinkle more flour; if the dough is too dry, add a teaspoon (or more) of water. Knead the dough for a good 10 minutes until soft, smooth, and it springs back when you poke it. Form the dough in a bowl and wrap in plastic wrap. Let dough rest for 30 minutes. Roll out the dough with a pasta machine and cut into desired pasta type.

(serves 4)
2 cups all purpose flour (Italian 00 flour is preferred if you have it)
3 eggs
1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
Pinch of salt



If you don't have a pasta machine, roll out the dough (very thin—Italians say you should be able to read a newspaper through it). Once rolled out, fold it into thirds and cut to desired pasta type. Note: if the well breaks, don't panic! and just continue to incorporate the flour at the break. It will turn out fine.



You can hang the pasta on a pasta drying rack (if you have one). Or you can leave the pasta on the worksurface as long as it's dusted with flour. Cook pasta in large pot of generously-salted boiling water, stirring occasionally. Cook for about 2-5 minutes (depending on thickness, size, quality of pasta). The pasta should be al dente (firm to the bite, not soggy or floppy). The only way to know if it's ready is by tasting it. Drain the pasta, holding back a couple tablespoons of the cooking water. Return pasta to the pot (with the saved cooking water). Add sauce in the pot immediately and toss the pasta with the sauce.

SALSA POMODORO

(serves 4)
4 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
3 cloves garlic, minced
2 small yellow onions, chopped
28 oz can crushed tomatoes (fresh tomatoes chopped & seeded preferred, but not necessary)
12 oz can stewed tomatoes, Italian style (with basil and/or oregano)
2 teaspoons sugar
Salt and pepper to taste
Parmigiano cheese to taste

Heat olive oil in a pot on low heat. Add garlic and onion and cook until translucent. Then pour in the cans of tomatoes (or fresh tomatoes) and add sugar. Let sauce cook through for at least 30 minutes until it thickens. Add salt and pepper to taste. Add Parmigiano cheese to taste right before serving.

PANNA COTTA

(serves about 8)
2 cups milk
4 cups heavy cream
0.5 oz unflavored gelatin (2 packets of 0.25 oz)
½ cups sugar
2 tsp vanilla extract
Toppings of your choice (i.e, fresh fruit or berry sauce)

Pour ½ cup of milk in bowl and pour gelatin over it to let it soften. In a pot, heat heavy cream and the rest of milk (1½ cups) with the sugar until it starts to boil. Remove from heat and add the vanilla. Gently stir in the softened gelatin mix and stir well. Pour the panna cotta mix into serving glasses (or molds if you prefer). Let the mix cool down and then refrigerate it overnight (at a minimum for 4 hours). Serve in the glasses or remove from molds. Garnish with your topping of choice. Fresh fruit is a classic and tastes great!