

Febbraio 2022

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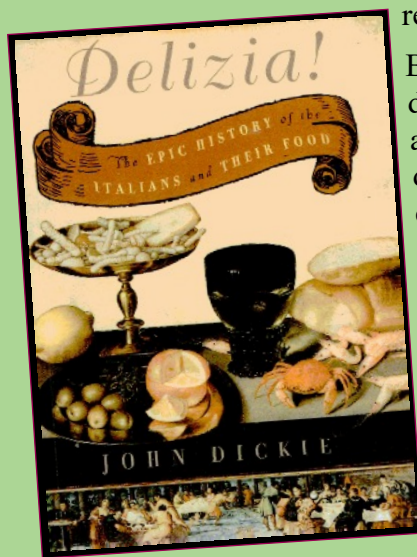


FOOD MULTICULTURALISM ON FEB. 20

Join us on Sunday, **Feb. 20 at 3:30pm at 215 Oswego Summit** in Mountain Park for a look at Sicily as a crossroads for culture and food. Our tourguide will be Angela Zagarella, Tuscan Association member, college instructor and a newly elected member of *Comitato Italiani Estero*, which represents Italian citizens living in the western United States. (Learn more about her on page 2.)

Zagarella will share photos and experiences from her three-month trip back home to Sicily last summer, and the research she's been doing ever since on how the region's cuisine has developed over the much of the past 1000 years.

If you'd like to get a "taste" (yes, pun intended) of what she'll be discussing, pick up John Dickie's book *Delizia! The Epic History of the Italians and Their Food*. Read the second chapter about Palermo in the Middle Ages and how pasta, or at least its starchy forerunner, *itriyya*, came to the region from North Africa.



Both Zagarella and Dickie define "Italian food" as an assortment of regional dishes, ingredients and customs, some developed in Italy and others left there by others who visited or occupied the peninsula over the years ... or by contemporary peoples who have come to Italy to put down roots.

The author and our presenter both make the case that Italian food is defined by those who make and eat it ... and *vice versa*.

Zagarella says that nowhere is that more true than in a restaurant in Rome called *Gustamundo* where, according to its [Website](#), "every dinner [tells] a story." At their weekly "cuisine of the world" dinners, they invite cooks in who are recent immigrants or refugees to Italy to share their skills and the recipes of their homelands with the restaurant's patrons. But is that "Italian food" or "food for Italians?"

Zagarella would simply answer "yes."

**NEXT MTG:
SUNDAY, FEB. 20**

3:30 PM

**AFTER THAT:
APRIL 24**

THE PREZ SEZ...

BY GEORGE LAFRAZIA

The holidays are over and the new year is moving along very fast. Spring is knocking at the door and I have a strong urge to be outside in my garden, but it's still a little cold though.



We have a good meeting planned and I hope Vincenzo will be there to lead the play of bingo "Italian" style. There is one very important issue to be resolved NEW OFFICERS.

The April meeting and the summer picnic will be my last official functions, We need one or two members to step up to keep the club going. *Why not you? Please consider taking the reins!*

There has been some correspondence from Tuscany, but nothing very positive about returning to the previous arrangement of support from them. Carlo Mannocci and Jimmie Moglia have provided translation help and advice with negotiations.

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FROM FOOD TO SICILY TO IMMIGRATION TO COM.IT.ES, ANGELA HAS IT COVERED



Our guest speaker on Feb. 20, Angela Zagarella, is a whirlwind of activity. She is the Italian Program Coordinator at Portland State University, where she has taught classes in Italian language, literature and film for nearly three decades.

She helped form *Caffe Culturale*, a virtual space which explores a wide array of Italian culture, including history, books, art, music, language and current events.

Recently, she was one of four people from the Northwest elected to Com.It.Es (*Comitato Italiani all'Ester*), an advocacy group representing Italian citizens who live in the western U.S.

So, as you can see, Zagarella's busy! So much the better that we'll have her all to ourselves on Feb. 20 when she'll speak to us. Her presentation is part travelogue, part food talk and part sociology lesson, all merging into her topic, the Arab influence on Sicilian cuisine.

A native of Siracusa, Sicily (where her mother still lives), she moved to Portland in 1988. She spent three months on the island last summer. It was her first visit in a couple of years.

"I'm an American, living here. But when I go back

home, I have a 'double-gaze,'" she said. "One is the gaze of an American visiting, where there are lots of surprises. I have a lot of wonder. I want to take a picture of everything." And she nearly did, like the palm-lined beach at the lower left. It's Capo Pacero, Sicily's southernmost point, due east of Tunis, Tunisia.

"But then I have my native eyes, so I look at things that I am familiar with and that I grew up with. During my trip, my mother was cooking and going to the market. We had all of this fresh produce, and I was taking lots of pictures of what we were eating," she said. It got her thinking about food as a way to examine her scholarly focus: Italian diversity and multiculturalism. She didn't have to look far.

"Almost every famous dish that we have in Sicily goes back to the Arabs (that is, people from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia)," she said. "The Arab presence – I don't say domination, I say presence – lasted for almost 300 years. And rather than Arab or, more

(see **ARAB INFLUENCE**, page 3)



HE'S BACK! STANLEY TUCCI RESUMES HIS TOUR MARCH 13

A CNN ORIGINAL SERIES

STANLEY
TUCCI
SEARCHING FOR
ITALY



Stanley Tucci's love letter to Italy and its food returns to CNN on March 13 at 9:00pm. The Internet is all a-Twitter (yes, again pun intended!) about where the actor is headed for the show's second season. Early guesses, based on recent Tucci sightings in these areas include: Turino, Venice, Valle D'Aosta and Umbria. Of course, we won't know for sure until the season premiere.

ARAB INFLUENCE IN SICILY, AT ONE TIME PROFOUND, CONTINUES TO THIS DAY

(continued from page 2)

specifically, North African, these people considered themselves Mediterraneans. They left an imprint that is still very noticeable today,” Zagarella explained. “We shared a corridor of exchange – in a way, we were one people, and you can see that in our food.

“We wonder today how these two different worlds – the East and West – can come together peacefully. In food, that sort of meeting of cultures, the Arab and the Western, happens beautifully,” she said.

Zagarella will have much more to say about Sicily and multiculturalism at our meeting on Feb. 20. Food will be the jumping off point.

“Food is a powerful platform to talk about what is

happening to cultures because people relate to food,” she says. “They like food and it is an easy way to bring up issues that in another context people might not be as receptive.”

It isn’t exactly multicultural, but Zagarella’s recent election to Com.It.Es, along with three others from the Seattle area, should bring more of a multi-regional perspective to the 12-person committee. Though it represents Italian citizens who live in nine states, its close ties to the Italian Consulate office in San Francisco has meant Com.It.Es’ impact has been felt mostly in California. Given the new Pacific Northwest members, that could be changing.

“I really want to leave an imprint,” Zagarella said. She hopes to get more Northwest high schools to offer

Italian. “When you have a language [program] you have a lot of culture. I also would like to work on recognizing the Italians who first established themselves here in Oregon. There were people who did wonderful things for our community. It would be good to have something that documents the Italian presence here, as they have in the Bay Area.”



One of Zagarella’s favorite stops in Sicily during her trip last year was Buscemi, a village of 900 people which is an open-air museum dedicated to life in a rural town a century or more ago. These are just a couple of her photos from the trip. We’ll see lots more during her presentation on Feb. 20.