

Italian Championship of Pasta Kicks Off!

Tommaso Cartia (February 27, 2017)



What does the teaching of the Italian language have in common with Italian cooking and the new Italian Championship of Pasta in New York? Aside from the obvious fact that they are all Italian excellencies, the answer is in the name of Raffaella Galliani.

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Raffaella Galliani is a dynamic, passionate, and proactive woman with a flurry of ideas and plentiful positive energy. Founder of Italian language school [Speakitaly NYC](#) [3], she recently came up with the idea to bring to New York the [Italian Championship of Pasta](#) [4], which is organized like a soccer competition among various Italian restaurants around the city. The competition, that will start on March 7th and run till September 12th, 2017, involves eight different Italian regions and sixteen



original recipes, two per region, and four evenings for the finals.

A Pasta Competition

Raffaella explains this delicious idea: "The evening functions in this manner: There are X people at a restaurant and the same number in another one. In order to vote for the best pasta, every participant will be given a card with the numbers 1-10. Two pasta dishes from two different regions will be chosen. Finally, the votes for all four different pastas are counted. The region that receives the most votes continues on. At the end of the championship, one ticket, out of all of the tickets purchased, is chosen, and the ticketholder will win a five-day trip to Rimini and a pre-trip crash course in Italian with Speakitaly NYC."

"Two young Italians, Camillo and Letizia, invented the championship," she continues, "they proposed it in Paris, and after four successful years, they decided to expand. That's how they found me. Our objective is to promote Made in Italy by proposing authentic pasta dishes and how they are eaten in Italy. It's not a true competition, as you might expect, because the format needed to be different, and it needed to involve many more restaurants; NYC is full of authentic Italian restaurants. Our idea is to promote the concept of sitting down together for a good pasta meal, and then the competition effect is added to make it even more fun. It's a game, not a competition between restaurants. That's why we promote regions and not restaurants."

In Love with New York City - Raffaella's Story

How did Raffaella get involved with such a project? Like everything in Galliani's life, it was a matter of love, love for her Italian culture and love for New York as well.

Her love story with New York, as with all great love stories, seems to have been written in the stars. It's a series of particular coincidences that a romantic would simply call "destiny." After arriving in New York ten years ago for a vacation, Raffaella met the man who would eventually become her husband. Love, courage, and perhaps a smidgen of adolescent recklessness pushed her to take chances. She graduated in foreign language and literature from the University of Bergamo, and she specialized in linguistics at Rome's La Sapienza. Raffaella then tried to circulate her resume in New York. After three months, as luck would have it, she found a language school that was interested in hiring her as an Italian teacher. Initially, it was a challenge, but eleven years later, through both ups and downs, Raffaella is still here in New York.

She's in love with her husband, in love with Italian cuisine, in love with her dear Italian language—which she continues to teach with incredible passion—and simply in love with life.

Speakitaly NYC

Raffaella founded her own personal Italian language school, [Speakitaly NYC](#) [3]. Its strength is in Raffaella's eclectic personality. Her students are not merely students; they are people with whom she can develop true relationships. She teaches them Italian, but she also entertains them and makes them laugh. She fosters the atmosphere of a group and of a community.

With her strong yet sweet tone, Raffaella tells us, "I want to bring people to gather and make them have fun. Students are people, not customers. If you do something with love, if you put your heart into it, with a bit of luck, I'm sure you'll be successful."

However, destiny had more in store for Raffaella than she expected. Another one of her passions, Italian cooking, would magically transpire into something more.

One day she decided to organize an event, celebrating her 10 years of teaching, and invite her students for a classic Italian Sunday lunch at the New York restaurant Cacio e Vino. It was an informal, friendly occasion. She certainly wasn't expecting almost fifty people to come to the lunch.

Sunday Lunch Italian Style



From there came the idea for her to continue on this path and to organize Sunday Lunch in important Italian restaurants in New York. Furthermore, she began a partnership with [Nonna Box](#) [5], which is an Italian version of Blue Apron. This original idea was inspired by only the best traditional, regional Italian cuisine—hailing from our mothers and grandmothers. The boxes can be bought online, and they arrive at your home with a recipe and the ingredients to cook it. Raffaella decided to give away boxes during various language competitions for her students. Once again she made language-learning fun and had the students smiling.

The Pasta Championship is another of the important goals that Raffaella's heart and passion have centered in promoting our Italian Culture here in New York. Another of the many beautiful chapters in the book of her life.

To participate as the jury in the tastings, you must buy a ticket [>>>](#) [6]

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