



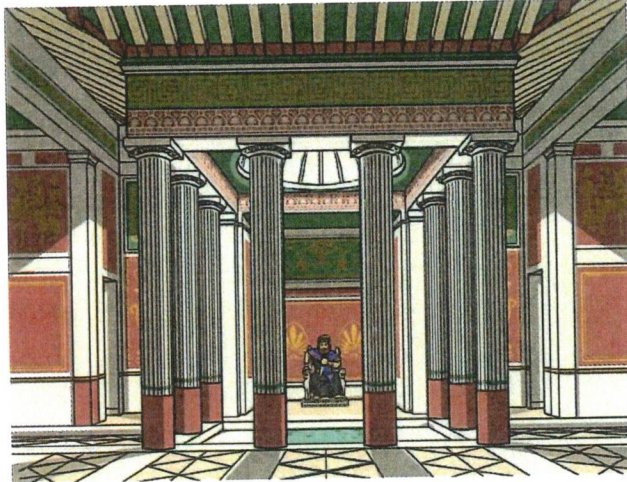
Interesting facts about Rome

- Modern Rome has 280 fountains and more than 900 churches.
- Nearly 700,000 euros worth of coins are tossed into Rome's Trevi Fountain each year. The proceeds are donated to Caritas to help those in need.
- The Romans had built a road network of 53,000 miles by the early fourth century. Each Roman mile was about 4,800 feet and marked by a milestone, giving birth to the saying "All roads lead to Rome."
- In Ancient Rome, only free-born men were allowed to wear togas, a sign of Roman citizenship. Women wore stolas, the female version of togas, made from linen.
- The mascot of Rome is a she-wolf that cared for brothers Romulus and Remus, the mythological founders of Rome.
- Rome became the capital city of unified Italy in 1870, taking the title from Florence.
- Law in Rome allows cats to live without disruption in the place they were born. Wild cats can be climbing the walls of the Colosseum and sleeping among the ruins of the Forum.
- Women in ancient Rome dyed their hair with goat fat and beech wood ashes. The most popular colors were red and blond.
- The first ever shopping mall was built in Rome between 107 and 110 AD by Emperor Trajan. It sold a wide variety of goods and grocery items.
- Rome's first university, La Sapienza, established in 1303 AD, is the largest in Europe and the second largest in the world.
- Rome has a museum dedicated entirely to pasta.
- St Peter's Basilica inside Vatican City is the largest church ever constructed.
- Rome is often referred to as the City of Seven Hills due to its geographic location and as the "Eternal City."
- Rome is generally considered to be the cradle of Western civilization and Western Christian culture, and the center of the Catholic Church.

The Story of Romulus and Remus

A long, long time ago, in Alba Longa in Italy, King Numitor lived. He was not king for long because his younger brother, Amulius, wanted to be king and managed to get the throne.

To make sure that nobody else would take the throne back off him, he had Numitor's sons killed and made his daughter, Rhea Silvia, become a Priestess



of Vesta meaning she was not allowed to have children so there was no one who could be king in the future.



However, his plan went wrong because Rhea Silvia had twins with Mars, the Roman God of War as the father. Amulius was scared of Mars, so he did not kill Rhea Silvia for breaking the rules instead he put her in prison and told a servant to take the twin boys and leave them in the River.

Amulius did not know that when the servant came to the River he felt sorry for the boys, and let them float down the river in their basket where he hoped they would be rescued.

The boys were saved when a wolf found them and took them to safety where she protected and cared for them. The wolf looked after the twins until a shepherd came one day and took them home to be looked after by him and his wife. They called the boys Romulus and Remus.

The shepherd and his wife cared for the two boys as if they were their own sons and Romulus and Remus became shepherds like their father.

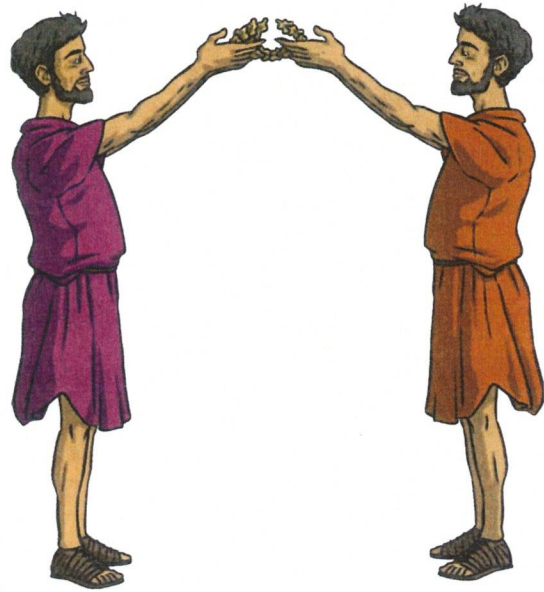


The Story of Romulus and Remus

One day, Romulus and Remus met some of the king's shepherds and the men got into a fight. Remus was caught and taken back to King Amulius, who did not know who he was.

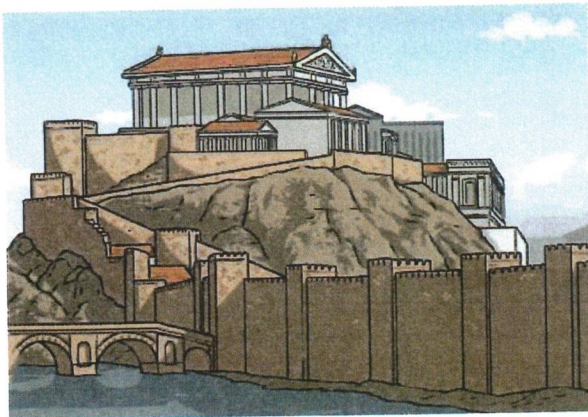
Meanwhile, Romulus decided to go and rescue Remus. He travelled to Alba Longa, killed the king and saved his brother.

The people of the city were not angry with the boys because they found out who they were. Instead, they wanted to crown them both as kings but the boys did not want to be kings because they wanted to build their own city somewhere else. So they went in search of a place.



They eventually found a place but they argued about on which hill the city should be built. Romulus wanted Palatine Hill but Remus wanted Aventine Hill so they decided to wait for a sign from the gods to tell them which hill they should use.

The sign from the gods was a group of birds but each brother believed they had won so the problem was not solved. Romulus decided to start building a wall around Palatine Hill, but Remus was jealous and started a fight where Remus was killed.



Romulus was now free to build his city, which was finished on the 21st April 753BC. He made himself king and named the city 'Rome' after himself. This was the start of one of the most powerful cities in the world for the next thousand years.

The Artichoke

Artichoke Festival in Ramacca (Catania)

Two weekends dedicated to the area's artichoke.

From April 5th to 7th and from 12th to 14th, 2024 in Ramacca, province of Catania, is the place of the Artichoke Festival, one of the most important events connected to Sicilian food.

The Artichoke Festival, reaching this year its 32nd edition, is dedicated to the violet artichoke, also called "Violetto Ramacchese", which has been harvested for centuries in the countryside around Ramacca.



The event takes place in the historical center of Ramacca. Visitors can taste artichoke-based dishes, enjoy live concerts, attend workshops, go on guided tours along the naturalistic path of the Crystals of Gesso...

Brief History of the Artichoke...and the Mafia

By **Daniela Blei**

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In California, March marks the start of artichoke season. That's when the vegetable — officially, a spiky flowering plant called a thistle — starts showing up in farmers markets across the state.

Cooked and eaten around the Mediterranean for at least two millennia, the ancient artichoke is known as the "aristocrat" of the vegetable world, with its delicate flavor and impenetrable exterior, at least to the uninitiated.

It's also the subject of a little-known chapter in the history of organized crime. Almost a century ago, New York City mobsters weren't just bootlegging, gambling, and loansharking. They were engaged in another shady million-dollar operation: artichoke racketeering.

The Heart of the Matter

The story starts in the 1890s, when Italian immigrants first brought the artichoke to California, where it thrived in the cool, foggy fields of Monterey County. It took a few years until a local businessman, John Debenedetti, quit his day job and dedicated himself to developing California's artichoke industry.

He discovered that big profits were to be found not just in his hometown, where the vegetable sold for a nickel, but in the northeast, where Italian Americans, eager to get their hands on an old-world delicacy, would pay fifty cents to a dollar. Especially sought after was the baby artichoke, more versatile than the larger globe variety, and used in fried, Roman-style preparations.

In 1917, Debenedetti established an artichoke growers' association in Half Moon Bay, just south of San Francisco, and soon farmers began shipping crates across the continent in newly refrigerated train cars.

Dipping into Artichokes...it didn't take long for the artichoke's popularity to explode in a few East Coast cities. Street vendors hawked the thistle from pushcarts in New York and Philadelphia. At markets in Italian neighborhoods in New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Connecticut, a rare European import became a springtime staple from California.

The 1921 Fannie Farmer's cookbook was the first to feature recipes for boiled artichokes (served with béchamel or hollandaise), deep-fried artichokes, and another variation, stuffed with ground chicken and drizzled with thin white sauce. "No new vegetable has ever made so rapid an inroad into the market as

the artichoke," said L. Casazza, a wholesale merchant, speaking to the *New York Times* in 1926. "Just a flavor of garlic is necessary."

All Choked Up

But the story of the American artichoke took an unusual turn, thanks to Ciro Terranova, New York City underboss of the infamous Morello Family, an artichoke dealer who set out to corner the U.S. market for the California commodity.

The Sicilian-born Terranova, who traveled in an armored limousine with bullet-proof windows, sent his men to coerce importers into selling them artichokes at a fraction of the original cost. Those who refused to cooperate were savagely beaten by the mob. In turn, Terranova sold his seized artichokes to local vendors, doubling prices and pocketing the profits.

His racket earned him a nickname: the Artichoke King. By 1930, New York newspapers featured regular reports about a criminal enterprise that stretched all the way across the continent to California, where Terranova's armed thugs intimidated growers into selling their crop directly to them.

Turning Over a New Leaf

One morning in December 1935, help finally came from Fiorello La Guardia, New York City's mayor. Arriving at the Bronx Terminal Market at dawn, La Guardia climbed onto the back of a flatbed truck and read from a statement, proclaiming an emergency and banning the "sale, display, or possession" of the artichoke in New York City.

Kidnapping, extortion, and murder could be traced to sales of the thistle, explained the mayor, leaving him no choice but to banish it from New York, beginning the day after Christmas. "I like artichokes, particularly with hollandaise sauce," he conceded, but the ban "will remain in force until the grip of the racketeers is broken."

Criminal prosecutions followed, but the ban piqued the public's curiosity, making artichokes more popular than ever. "Local wholesalers were swamped with orders," explain historians Michael Svanevik and Shirley Burgett.

The LaGuardia's ban was lifted within a week.

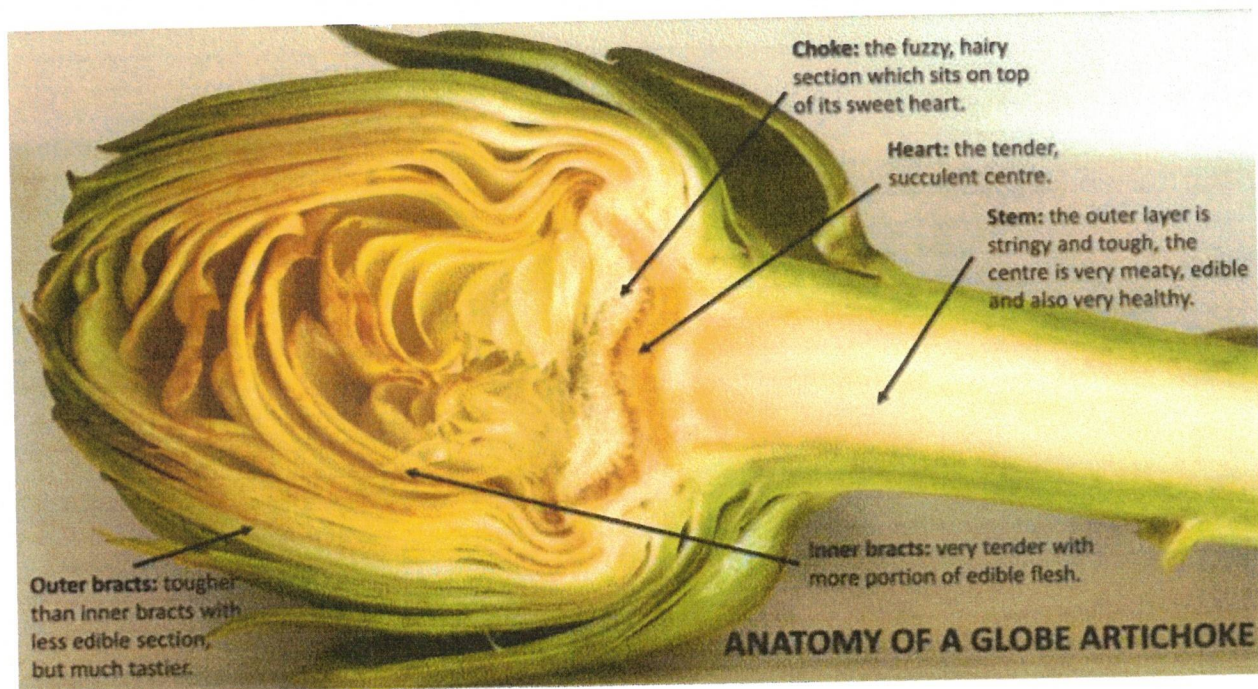
Criminal investigations targeting Terranova and his men soon destroyed the racket. Indictments and prison sentences followed. By the end of January 1936, importers were freely selling artichokes to the public at regular prices, much to the relief of California growers. Just two years after Mayor La Guardia's proclamation, the Artichoke King died a poor man.

But the artichoke lived on, and in the wake of the ban, instructions for novice eaters began appearing in national newspapers and magazines. "After the artichoke is well boiled it is ready for either the hollandaise or the butter sauce. One approaches the vegetable from the outside, eating only the tender lower edge of each leaf as it is removed from the core," wrote the *New York Times* in 1936. Beneath the tough, thorny layers, said the author, lay a hidden, sweet center. The artichoke was said to be a metaphor for life.

Artichokes come in all varieties of shapes and colors.

1. **Baby Anzio Artichoke:** This petite variety measures just **2 inches in diameter**. Harvested early, it boasts a sweet and nutty flavor, often enjoyed grilled or roasted with garlic, butter, or olive oil.
2. **Big Heart Artichoke:** As the name suggests, this artichoke grows without thorns. It produces a dense bud that's **3-5.5 inches wide**. Pair it with Parmesan Soup for a delightful culinary experience.
3. **Castel Artichoke:** With its light green and round shape, the Castel artichoke is a nutritional powerhouse. Loaded with vitamin B, potassium, calcium, and antioxidants, it's perfect when steamed or boiled with a dip.
4. **Chianti Artichoke:** This Italian variety produces **4-5-inch-wide green artichokes** adorned with maroon dashes on their leaves. Try stuffing them with dried tomatoes and cheese for a flavorful treat.
5. **Fiesole Artichoke:** Fiesole features a tulip-shaped flower with deep violet-wine colored skin. Among baby artichoke varieties, it's the most delicious, offering an intense nutty and fruity flavor with grassy tones.
6. **Green Globe Artichoke:** The Green Globe is the most common artichoke. It has wide, deep green buds with a light purple tinge. Excellent for salads, it pairs well with spicy and flavorful dishes.

7. **Imperial Star Artichoke:** A popular homegrown variety, the Imperial Star artichoke is known for its large heart. It's a great choice for gardeners who want to grow their own artichokes.
8. **Jerusalem Artichoke:** Also called the sunchoke. Are elongated tubers. They have a distinct flavor and are often used in cooking. Taste like a potato when fried.
9. **Lyon Artichoke:** Lyon artichokes are prized for their large hearts. They're a delightful addition to various dishes.
10. **Sangria Artichoke:** With its deep purple and meaty appearance, the Sangria artichoke adds visual appeal to your plate.
11. **Omaha Artichoke:** Known for its less bitter taste, the Omaha artichoke is a unique variety.
12. **Carciofo Romanesco Artichoke:** This artichoke is purple with a green tinge and offers a distinctive flavor.
13. **Tempo Artichoke:** A hybrid variety with a purple tinge, the Tempo artichoke is worth exploring.
14. **Siena Artichoke:** Late maturing and full of flavor, the Siena artichoke is a delightful addition to any garden.
15. **Violetta Artichoke:** With its thick purple leaves, the Violetta artichoke is both beautiful and tasty.



Although often considered a vegetable, artichokes are a type of thistle. This plant originated in the Mediterranean and has been used for centuries for its potential medicinal properties. Its alleged health benefits include lower blood sugar levels and improved digestion, heart health, and liver health.

Artichoke extract, which contains high concentrations of compounds found in the plant, is also increasingly popular as a supplement. Artichokes are low in fat while rich in fiber, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. Particularly high in folate and vitamin C, they also supply important minerals, such as magnesium, phosphorus, and potassium.

Jerusalem Artichoke/Sunchoke



Happy Liberation Day Italy



Background

After two years of fighting and thousands of deaths, in **April 1945**, the Resistance successfully liberated several Italian cities. Over the course of four days, beginning on April 21, the soldiers freed Bologna, Parma, Reggio, Emilia, and, on the final day of uprising, Milan and Torino.

What Do People Do?

Liberation Day (*Festa della Liberazione*) remembers Italians who fought against the Nazis and Mussolini's troops during World War II. The day honors those who served in the Italian Resistance. Marching bands, music concerts, food festivals, political rallies, and other public gatherings take place in many places in Italy.

Symbols

The Italian flag is usually seen in parades to celebrate Liberation Day. The song 'Bella Ciao' is also played often around this time of the year, as it was sung by the Italian resistance during World War II.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM ITALY'S LIBERATION DAY

E questo è il fiore del partigiano ... morto per la libertà!

(This is the flower of the partisan ... who died for freedom)

"Bella Ciao"

On April 25, you'll hear this refrain throughout every corner of Italy, sung on street corners by small groups, played on the radio or performed by bands in parades and local plazas. Set to the melody of a traditional folk song, "Bella Ciao" was the anthem of the Italian resistance movement during World War II, often sung by the left-wing anti-fascist rebels who fought against the atrocities of the Nazis and the leader of Italy, Benito Mussolini. Even today, the lyrics are symbolic of the sacrifices made for freedom.

While Italy has been a democratic republic since 1946, many Italians remember a time when they did not have such freedom. That history is honored throughout Italy on April 25 with La Festa della Liberazione, or Liberation Day, festivities. Every year, the entire country joins together to celebrate its liberation from the Nazis and pay tribute to those who lost their lives in the fight to free their country.

"OH PARTISAN, COME TAKE ME WITH YOU ..."

When Italy entered an armistice with the Allies in 1943, thousands of Italians took up arms as part of the resistance to the fascist dictatorship of Benito Mussolini. No longer satisfied to live under Mussolini's control, the Resistance initially comprised independent soldiers who had once been members of Italy's many political parties — including more than 35,000 women. While the infighting among members of the resistance was sometimes fierce, the soldiers remained committed to the same cause: Italy's liberation.

After two years of fighting and thousands of deaths, in April 1945, the Resistance successfully liberated several Italian cities. Over the course of four days, beginning on April 21, the soldiers freed Bologna, Parma, Reggio, Emilia, and, on the final day of uprising, Milan and Torino.

TORINO'S ROLE IN LIBERATION

While members of the Resistance fought bravely in every Italian city, perhaps nowhere was the loss felt more than in the industrial city of Torino, the center of Italy's car-making industry. Many of the workers in the factories and other establishments around the city refused to comply with the Wehrmacht, or German military forces. As a result, as many as 7,000 of the workers were taken to a concentration camp in Cefalonia, where they perished under harsh labor conditions or in lethal gas chambers.

LA FESTA DELLA LIBERAZIONE

While many festivals in Italy are only celebrated locally, Liberation Day is a "Red Day" on the calendar or a national holiday. Most of the country shuts down — including public buildings and transportation, and many restaurants — so citizens can attend parades, concerts, demonstrations, speeches and ceremonies honoring those who lost their lives at the hands of the Nazis, particularly the Resistance fighters.

The most elaborate celebrations occur in the capital city of Rome, notably the Italian president's annual visit to the Ardeatine Caves mausoleum, where 335 Romans were killed by Nazis in 1944. However, every city hosts events to honor the holiday. Even in smaller cities, like Torino, you'll find parades and other events taking place throughout the day.

It's been said that those who forget the mistakes of the past are doomed to repeat them, but the Italian people are committed to remembering and honoring those who came before and led their country to where it is today. La Festa della Liberazione is just one of the many ways that they do so.

5 MAGGIO 1945:
POCHI GIORNI DOPO
LA LIBERAZIONE,
LA SFILATA
DEI PARTIGIANI
DAVANTI A PALAZZO
DUCALE A VENEZIA:
IN PRIMO PIANO
ANCHE DUE DONNE



Italian partisans marching into Venice after the liberation of Italy in 1945

Rome's Birthday - April 21

1. What is the traditional founding year of Rome, according to Roman mythology?
 - A) **753 BC** (Correct)
 - B) 509 BC
 - C) 336 BC
 - D) 44 BC
2. Which twin brothers are credited with founding Rome?
 - A) Castor and Pollux
 - B) Achilles and Patroclus
 - C) **Romulus and Remus** (Correct)
 - D) Theseus and Pirithous
3. Which of the following architectural innovations is Rome known for developing?
 - A) The pyramid
 - B) **The arch** (Correct)
 - C) The obelisk
 - D) The lighthouse
4. What is the name of the ancient stadium used for chariot races in Rome?
 - A) The Pantheon
 - B) **The Circus Maximus** (Correct)
 - C) The Colosseum
 - D) The Forum Romanum
5. Which Roman emperor is famous for his wall that marked the northern frontier of Britannia?
 - A) Augustus
 - B) Nero
 - C) **Hadrian** (Correct)
 - D) Marcus Aurelius
6. Rome is known as the city of how many hills?
 - A) Five
 - B) **Seven** (Correct)
 - C) Nine
 - D) Ten

Artichoke Festival - April 24-28

1. Which Italian region is most famous for its artichokes?

- A) Tuscany
 - B) Lombardy
 - C) Sicily
 - D) **Lazio** (Correct)
2. **What is a popular Italian dish that features artichokes?**
- A) Risotto
 - B) Tiramisu
 - C) Carbonara
 - D) **Carciofi alla Romana (Roman-style Artichokes)** (Correct)
3. **In which season are artichokes primarily harvested in Italy?**
- A) Winter
 - B) **Spring** (Correct)
 - C) Summer
 - D) Autumn
4. **What type of artichoke is considered the finest by many chefs?**
- A) Green Globe
 - B) **Violetto** (Correct)
 - C) King
 - D) Jerusalem
5. **Artichokes are part of which plant family?**
- A) Nightshade
 - B) **Thistle** (Correct)
 - C) Legume
 - D) Root
6. **Which vitamin is particularly abundant in artichokes?**
- A) Vitamin C
 - B) **Vitamin K** (Correct)
 - C) Vitamin A
 - D) Vitamin E

Liberation Day - April 25

1. **What event does Italy's Liberation Day commemorate?**
- A) The end of the monarchy and the establishment of the republic
 - B) The signing of the Lateran Treaty
 - C) **The liberation of Italy from Nazi occupation during WWII** (Correct)
 - D) The unification of Italy
2. **Which of the following songs became a symbol of the Italian resistance movement against fascism during WWII?**
- A) O Sole Mio

- B) Va' Pensiero
 - C) **Bella Ciao** (Correct)
 - D) Funiculì, Funiculà
3. **What year did Italy officially celebrate its first Liberation Day as a national holiday?**
- A) **1946** (Correct)
 - B) 1952
 - C) 1948
 - D) 1960
4. **Which Italian city was among the first to be liberated from Nazi occupation?**
- A) Rome
 - B) Naples
 - C) **Florence** (Correct)
 - D) Milan
5. **Which Italian partisan leader played a significant role in the resistance movement?**
- A) Giuseppe Garibaldi
 - B) **Giacomo Matteotti** (Correct)
 - C) Enrico Fermi
 - D) Luigi Cadorna
6. **After WWII, Italy established a new form of government. What was it?**
- A) Monarchy
 - B) **Republic** (Correct)
 - C) Communist state
 - D) Military dictatorship