

#foodfortalk: Preserving Italy by Domenica Marchetti

Joelle Grosso (September 19, 2016)



From sweet and sour roasted peppers with capers to peaches in grappa-spiked syrup, you can find everything that has to do with canning, curing, infusing, and bottling Italian flavors in Domenica Marchetti's new book, *Preserving Italy*. The author was in conversation with food enthusiast, Jacqueline Greaves Monda, at Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò last Thursday, September 15th.

Despite being a native of the United States, [Marchetti](#) [2]'s abruzzese heritage was very prominent in her upbringing. Her mother was born in Chieti, a charming hilltop town near the Adriatic coast and this influence would turn out to be more important than Marchetti could have ever imagined as a child. In fact, it took a while for her to realize that her passion for food should be her work. She studied Journalism at Columbia University and was a newspaper reporter long before giving into her culinary desires.



On September 15th at the [Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò](#) [3], Marchetti told food blogger [Jacqueline Monda](#) [4] and the audience about the [amarene](#) [5] her grandmother would often make. Amarene are sour cherries which she would then preserve in grain alcohol and brandy over time. Even though her grandmother passed away when Marchetti was just eight years old, those preserved cherries still remained after her death. They were a direct link to her grandmother even though she was no longer around physically.

It was this particular memory that was the inspiration for her new cookbook. It was the realization of the strange ability to be able to hold onto tradition and pause time through the preservation of ingredients. Marchetti even added that those cherries had lasted even longer because her parents allowed her to eat one only when she had a “mal di pancia” so she admitted that she would make sure to get stomachaches often.

Her belief is that “preserving is so central to the Italian table from the salumi and cheese to the digestivo.” This book doesn’t only explain and demonstrate this crucial concept but it serves as a trip through Italy as well. Throughout the book, Marchetti implements the typical Italian mindset of only using ingredients that are in season as well as using them in their entirety without any waste. Even though the idea of preserving in bulk may seem overwhelming, the process is actually quite simple. In fact the author says the only real challenging part for her is finding quality Mediterranean ingredients in the United States, like green walnuts for example. It is possible, however, to find good products and she says you can even find pretty decent olive oils at places like Costco and Wegmans!

Some of Marchetti’s favorite pages from the book are the green tomatoes preserved in salt and the spaghetti al limone which features her lemon infused olive oil recipe. She concluded that “cuisine is always moving” and that although she loves the idea of tradition and keeping traditions alive, there must always be room made for innovation. That special mix of innovation and tradition is laid out beautifully in the her cookbook, [Preserving Italy](#) [6].

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[5] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amarena_cherry

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