NEWS LESSON

The Pineapple Row Is Not Really About Pineapple



BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. Can a tradition be real if it is only fifty years old?
2. Is protecting a national cuisine different from protecting a language?
3. What does it mean to call a dish authentic?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**decline**	☐	A	people or groups with official power or expert opinion
2	**mockery**	☐	B	laughing at someone in an unkind way
3	**accelerating**	☐	C	a slow fall in quality or strength
4	**innovations**	☐	D	getting faster
5	**outrage**	☐	E	strong anger about something that seems wrong
6	**permitted**	☐	F	allowed
7	**united**	☐	G	joined together and agreeing
8	**authorities**	☐	H	new ideas or methods

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

A sacking in Brisbane has revived a familiar argument about authentic food. The historian who joined in suggests the fight matters more to us than the recipe does.

1 Some disagreements can divide a table before anyone has eaten. Pineapple on pizza is the reigning example. Its defenders enjoy the sweetness against the salt, and a little pleasure in breaking a rule. Its opponents regard the whole arrangement as evidence of a civilisation in decline.

2 Davide Tamburella went further than an opinion. Working at a restaurant in Brisbane, he refused to put pineapple on a pizza, would not yield to his customers or his employer, and was sacked for it, insisting throughout that the combination insulted Italian culture. Queensland, as it happens, grows almost all of Australia's pineapples, which gives the stand a certain splendid futility.

3 He joins a small tradition. In 2017 Maurizio Landi, from Bologna, lost a job near Lyon for refusing to overcook pasta and to produce spaghetti bolognese, a dish his home city does not recognise. There, ragù meets tagliatelle and nothing else.

4 Writing in The Guardian, the food historian Luca Cesari treats this with affection rather than mockery, and then quietly removes the ground from under it. Italians can feel their cuisine slipping, he argues, with food fashions accelerating and more chefs on television than grandmothers at the stove. The instinct to guard it is understandable. The trouble is the thing being guarded.

5 Cesari's list is quietly devastating. Pasta was eaten soft for centuries. Macaroni with cheese sat beside meat dishes from the Middle Ages. Cream in a carbonara, now close to a criminal offence, was introduced by Roman cooks in the 1960s and persisted for forty years before everyone agreed to forget it. Grated cheese on fish provokes outrage from people who will happily eat the thoroughly traditional mussels with pecorino. A cappuccino after dinner horrifies waiters, while a caffè macchiato, which is much the same drink in miniature, passes without comment.

6 Nor is the profession united. Gino Sorbillo has permitted pineapple on a white pizza, where no tomato makes it too acidic. Franco Pepe built the AnaNascosta, a filled cone of pineapple, San Daniele ham and Grana Padano. A London chain spent the summer selling a spiced pineapple sauce specifically to annoy the prejudice out of existence. Italian pizzerias, meanwhile, sell frankfurters with chips, speck with mascarpone and tuna with onion, and the traditional pizza of Pesaro arrives as a margherita under hard-boiled eggs and mayonnaise.

7 The longest view belongs to a newspaper. In December 1860 the Morning Post described Neapolitan pizza and reported that the highest authorities dismissed anchovies, sausage and mushrooms as modern innovations unworthy of the name. The toppings change; the authorities are permanent.

8 Cesari's conclusion is the sharpest thing in the piece. Italians, he suggests, do not need pineapple pizza in order to eat. They need it in order to have something to despise, because despising it places you on the right side of a line. That is worth holding on to when the next argument starts, because the heat rarely comes from the ingredient. It comes from what we have decided the ingredient stands for.

Sources: The Guardian, Pineapple on pizza is an insult to our great Italian cuisine, and here's why we secretly love it. Picture: .

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. The 1860 report suggests that complaints about toppings are older than the pineapple row. (T) (F) (NG)
2. Tamburella and Landi lost their jobs for the same reason. (T) (F) (NG)
3. The AnaNascosta is sold by the London chain mentioned in the article. (T) (F) (NG)
4. The article implies that some Italians accept mussels with pecorino while objecting to cheese on fish in general. (T) (F) (NG)
5. Some Roman cooks were still putting cream in carbonara in the 1980s. (T) (F) (NG)

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

ambition	despise	devastating	dismissed	persisted	reigning	tolerance	unworthy

1. The _____ champion defended her title for the third year running.
2. Despite repeated warnings, the rumour _____ for decades before anyone checked its source.
3. The committee _____ the complaint as trivial and moved on to the next item.
4. The inspector's report was _____, exposing every flaw in the safety system.
5. Some people _____ reality television yet watch it every week.
6. She considered the offer _____ of her talents and turned it down.

6 Word forms

Use the word in brackets to make a word that fits the gap.

1. Cesari's examples expose a striking _____ in what Italians condemn. (CONSISTENT)
2. The speed of change has produced a growing sense of _____ among Italian cooks. (SECURE)
3. The chef's _____ to compromise cost him his job. (WILLING)
4. Critics find the topping _____ because it breaks a rule they have never questioned. (ACCEPT)
5. The historian's account is _____ rather than hostile. (SYMPATHY)

7 Language focus: linking words

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. Some of these only work at the start of a sentence, and some need a clause, a noun or just a short phrase after them.

albeit	hence	meanwhile	notwithstanding	provided	thereby	whereas

1. The row is lively, _____ rather short on historical evidence.
2. _____ Tamburella insisted on tradition, Cesari shows how recent most of it is.
3. _____ the historian's evidence, many diners still insist the rule is ancient.
4. Objections to toppings date back to 1860; _____ , today's outrage is hardly new.
5. Defenders of tradition issue warnings; _____ , pizzerias in Italy sell frankfurters with chips.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. Cesari suggests Italians need pineapple pizza to despise rather than to eat. Is he being unfair?
2. The 1860 newspaper complained about anchovies and mushrooms. Will today's outrage look the same in a century?
3. Does knowing a tradition has changed make you less willing to defend it?

9 Role-play: pineapple on the menu

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · the restaurant owner

A customer wants pineapple on a pizza. Your chef says no. Ask why he refuses and what he wants to do. Decide whether to say yes, say no, or find a middle way.

Student B · the chef

You are a proud Italian chef. A customer wants pineapple on a pizza and you think it's wrong. Explain your reasons, but remember that you need your job.

Useful phrases

I'm sorry, but I can't put pineapple on a pizza.

It's not a real Italian pizza.

The customer's always right, you know.

I'd rather lose my job than do it.

Could we offer it on a white pizza?

Let's find a solution we're both happy with.

Afterwards, tell the class: did the chef keep his job, and who gave way first?

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 C · 2 B · 3 D · 4 H · 5 E · 6 F · 7 G · 8 A

4 True, false or not given

1 T · 2 F · 3 NG · 4 T · 5 T

5 Vocabulary

1 reigning · 2 persisted · 3 dismissed · 4 devastating · 5 despise · 6 unworthy

6 Word forms

1 inconsistency · 2 insecurity · 3 unwillingness · 4 unacceptable · 5 sympathetic

7 Language focus

1 albeit · 2 Whereas · 3 Notwithstanding · 4 hence · 5 meanwhile

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