NEWS LESSON

A Chef Was Sacked Over Pineapple. Was He Defending Anything Real?



BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. Who decides what counts as an authentic dish?
2. Have you ever changed a traditional recipe from your own country?
3. Why do people argue about food so easily?

2 Key words

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

1	**reliable**	☐	A	having a job with a company
2	**cheerful**	☐	B	to do with places and where they are
3	**employment**	☐	C	makes someone have to do something
4	**geographical**	☐	D	happy and positive
5	**pressure**	☐	E	strong influence that makes you do something
6	**fashions**	☐	F	styles that are popular for a short time
7	**offends**	☐	G	makes someone feel upset or insulted
8	**obliges**	☐	H	almost certain to work every time

3 Read

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

Davide Tamburella would not put pineapple on a pizza, and it cost him his job. A food historian argues that the tradition he protected keeps moving.

1 It is one of the most reliable ways to start an argument at dinner: ask whether pineapple belongs on a pizza. For some people, sweet fruit and salty cheese are a small, cheerful act of rebellion. For others, the combination ruins the entire evening. One Italian chef felt strongly enough that the disagreement ended his employment.

2 Davide Tamburella was working at a restaurant in Brisbane, Australia, when he refused to put pineapple on a pizza. He would not give way to his customers or to his boss, insisting that the combination was an insult to Italian culture. The restaurant sacked him. The detail that makes the story funnier is geographical: Queensland grows almost all of Australia's pineapples.

3 He has company. In 2017 Maurizio Landi, a chef from Bologna, was sacked by a bistro near Lyon after resisting pressure to cook his pasta for longer and to serve spaghetti bolognese. In Bologna, ragù is eaten with tagliatelle and nothing else, so the request was close to an insult.

4 Writing in The Guardian, the food historian Luca Cesari offers an explanation that is more sympathetic than it first appears. Italians can sense that their cooking is under pressure, he suggests. Food fashions move faster than ever, and there are now more chefs on television than grandmothers cooking at home. Defending a recipe is a way of defending something larger.

5 The difficulty is that the recipes keep moving too. Cesari notes that several of the rules modern Italians enforce would have puzzled their ancestors. Pasta was eaten soft for centuries, and macaroni with cheese was served beside meat from the Middle Ages onwards. A spoonful of cream in a carbonara is now enough to cause an argument, yet a few Roman cooks introduced it in the 1960s and kept it up for forty years.

6 Even the pineapple is less settled than it sounds. Gino Sorbillo, one of the most respected pizza makers in the world, has allowed it on a white pizza with no tomato, which would otherwise make it too acidic. Franco Pepe created a filled pizza cone he called the AnaNascosta, the hidden pineapple. Being Italian, it turns out, does not require a single opinion about every topping.

7 Cesari's list of inconsistencies goes on. Grated cheese on fish offends many Italians, who will nonetheless order the thoroughly traditional mussels with pecorino. A cappuccino after dinner attracts horrified looks, while a caffè macchiato, much the same drink in a smaller cup, passes without any comment at all.

8 None of that obliges anybody to enjoy it. You can dislike pineapple on pizza for the ordinary reason that you dislike the taste. The interesting question is why a small yellow fruit makes so many of us ready to defend everything standing behind it.

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. Maurizio Landi was sacked in the same country as Davide Tamburella. T F NG
2. Sorbillo leaves tomato off the pineapple pizza because tomato would make it too acidic. T F NG
3. Tamburella had worked at the Brisbane restaurant for several years. T F NG
4. Many Italians who dislike grated cheese on fish still eat mussels with pecorino. T F NG
5. The cream in carbonara disappeared from Roman kitchens within ten years. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

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

ancestors **grated** **horrified** **inconsistencies** **rebellion** **resisting** **sympathetic** **thoroughly**

1. Teenagers often show a small act of _____ by refusing to wear the clothes their parents choose.
2. My _____ lived in the same village for centuries, so our family recipes are very old.
3. The manager was _____ when I explained why I was late, and said it could happen to anyone.
4. The report listed several _____ in the company's rules, such as different holidays for similar jobs.
5. He spent months _____ pressure to change the menu.
6. The soup was _____ cooked, so there was no need to leave it on the heat any longer.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. Tamburella _____ at a restaurant in Brisbane when he refused to add pineapple. (WORK)
2. Several of the rules Italians enforce today _____ their ancestors, who ate soft pasta. (PUZZLE)
3. Maurizio Landi _____ by a bistro near Lyon in 2017. (SACK)
4. By the 1960s, pasta _____ soft for centuries. (EAT)
5. Gino Sorbillo _____ pineapple on a white pizza. (ALLOW)

7 Language focus: linking words

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. Check where the gap sits: between two clauses, at the start of a sentence, or before a noun phrase.

despite	moreover	nonetheless	otherwise	therefore	unless	yet

1. Italians defend old rules fiercely, _____ many of those rules are quite recent.
2. _____ the pressure from his boss, Tamburella would not add pineapple.
3. Sorbillo leaves the tomato off the white pizza. _____ , the pineapple would taste far too acidic.
4. Pasta was eaten soft for centuries. The rule that it must be firm is, _____ , quite modern.
5. Pineapple on pizza may not suit your taste. _____ , that is no reason to look down on people who enjoy it.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

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

1. The chef lost his job over a topping. Was that a reasonable price?
2. Cesari says cream in carbonara was once normal. Does that change your view of food rules?
3. What food opinion would you defend at a dinner table?

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

4 True, false or not given

1 F · 2 T · 3 NG · 4 T · 5 F

5 Vocabulary

1 rebellion · 2 ancestors · 3 sympathetic · 4 inconsistencies · 5 resisting · 6 thoroughly

6 Verb forms

1 was working · 2 would have puzzled or would puzzle · 3 was sacked · 4 had been eaten · 5 has allowed

7 Language focus

1 yet · 2 Despite · 3 Otherwise · 4 therefore · 5 Nonetheless

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