

PIZZA – IN TOKYO?

According to CBS Sunday Morning on November 11, 2018, now some the tastiest pizza is being made in Tokyo. Yes, I said Tokyo. Here's how.



Tsubasa Tamaki

Tsubasa Tamaki is a pizza maker who has never set foot in Italy. "Of course, I would like to visit Italy," said Tamaki. "But in my mind, I want to focus on creating *Japanese Neapolitan* pizza." He uses the traditional brick oven with an open fire; the firewood heats the oven to a red hot 900 degrees. What makes Tamaki's pizza Japanese? Well, he throws a salt punch, a handful, directly into the oven, where the pizza is baking, to enhance the flavor. He also pushes the pizza closer to the fire, closer than Italians do, in search of the perfect burned edge. But what really sets Tamaki's pizza apart is the handful of Japanese cedar chips he tosses in at the last minute, which smoke the oven and glaze the dough with a slight bitterness.

Just 10 months after Tamaki opened the doors of Pizza Studio Tamaki (or PST), the famed Michelin guide was already recommending his pizza. Perhaps more importantly, it's kid-tested and mother-approved.



Example of Japanese Pizza

"I never thought I would say this coming from close to New York, in New Jersey," said one woman. "I think pizza here in Tokyo is better than a lot of the places in the U.S."

But if Tokyo has become an unlikely pizza mecca, it's thanks largely to a restaurant that opened more than two decades ago, called Seirinkan. Its owner, Susumu Kakinuma, studied pizza making in Naples and brought it home to Tokyo. To this day, he serves only two kinds of pizza, the original "M & M's": the margherita and the marinara.

Still, how can Italian pizza be a success in Toyko? Why would pizza appeal to the Japanese taste? Some think the answer lies in the culture of Japan - the exactness, the striving for perfection – that makes pizza in Japan work. One person said, "Japan has a history and a culture of valuing commitment as a way of defining success – not necessarily connecting success with making the most number of pizzas, but making the best pizzas as well as you can make them."

CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

Tree of Light



The ceppo known as The Tree of Light is a wooden frame with a pyramid shape; it has several feet high and supports many shelves in its several tiers. The ceppo has like bottom a manger scene and on the shelves above are placed small gifts of fruit, candy and presents. It is also beautifully decorated with gilt pinecones, colored paper, little candles and pennants. At the top is placed a star or a small doll. The ceppo is in the old Tree of Light tradition which became the Christmas tree in other countries

Urn of Fate



With the family gathered on la Vigilia (Christmas Eve), the day of il cenone (light eating in preparation for the holiday) draws to a close. No meat is eaten on this day, but the traditional evening feast of fish and vegetables leaves no one hungry. Afterwards, the family waits expectantly to draw a gift from an ornate bowl

known as the Urn of Fate. Although an empty box or two may lurk and result in a sad face of fate, each family member is eventually rewarded with a small gift drawn from the bowl before departing for Christmas Eve mass.

Prepared by Jennifer Murphy

References

- <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/tokyo-pizza-makers-a-slice-of-japan/>
- <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/376332112585097562>
- <https://italoamericano.org/story/2017-12-15/christmas-in-italy>