

NOT JUST TOMATO: A GLOBAL HISTORY.

Preserved food in the contemporary age (19th-20th centuries): making, trade, consumption, marketing, and technology.

Stefano Magagnoli

The House of the Rising Tomato. The birth of tomato canning industry in Parma

At the middle of 19th c. in the province of Parma tomato growing is almost unknown as well as its use wasn't widespread yet in the Italian cuisine.

Shortage of demand, as well as backwardness in the techniques of preservation, didn't encourage the development of a transformation industry.

Towards the end of the 19th Cattedra ambulante di Agricoltura started to promote tomato growing for increasing the farmers' income. The overall output grew over time causing a "supply shock" that led to the creation of a new industry to preserve the unconsumed product.

This is the starting point of a manufacturing sector even today one of the most important economic activities in the province of Parma and one of the biggest tomato cluster in Italy.

Rita D'Errico

What's inside? The origins of food safety for canned products in Italy (from the end of the 19th to the mid-20th centuries)

Although canned food made its appearance in the first decade of the 19th century when the revolutionary Appert method was introduced as a means of preserving army rations, it took some time and a particular combination of circumstances before it became widespread among the general public, going on to assume the status of an icon of mass consumerism by the 1960s. Prominent among the aforementioned circumstances was the evolution of health legislation, which used regulations and guidance to push the food preservation industry towards ever-higher quality and health standards. This process involved differing timescales and methods according to the country in which it took place. Consumers' natural diffidence towards canned food would have been difficult to overcome without a guarantee that such foods were healthy and safe despite being concealed from the senses. This diffidence had proved to be justified, particularly in the early years, when numerous cases arose of food poisoning, often resulting in death, with the nefarious effects of chemical and metallic additives in canned foods being discovered at the expense of unsuspecting consumers. This study begins with an analysis of these issues in the Italian context so as to bring into focus the main steps that brought into being legislation on preserved foods between the '20s and the beginning of the 80s, when Italy saw the creation of the first body of laws dedicated specifically to canned foods, thanks also to the stimulus of European legislation.

Claudio Besana

Consumptions, manufacturing, and canning industry in Italy after WWII

The consumption of animal conserves grew slowly in post war Italy, according with general backwardness. The 1960s are an important turning-point, and Italy started its transformation towards industry which determined the deep change of lifestyle and consumption behavior.

Unlike vegetable conserves, animal ones are made with imported raw materials and, especially in the meat sector, by a few companies. Many of them have been acquired by foreign multinationals at the ending of the 20th century.

In recent years something new happened. On the supply side, the move towards diversification emphasizing quality. Special attention will be given to the Bolton group, a family company specialized in the canned tuna sector, which is grown by acquiring French and Spanish companies.