

From Facebook

Capeeshe Italiano? By **Toni Salerno Reale**

I just had to share this here. I hope it doesn't offend anyone.

Capeeshe Italiano?

I'm sending this out to every person I know who is Italian, could be Italian, is married to an Italian, lived with Italians or wants to be Italian.....!!!!

Let's start at the beginning.

Come stai?

Molto bene.

Bongiorno.

Ciao.

Arrivederci.

Every Italian from Italy knows these words and every Italian-American should.

But, ...what about the goomba speech pattern? Those words and phrases that are a little Italian, a little American, and a lot of slang.

Words every Paesano and Bacciagalooop have heard, - words we heard throughout our Little Italy neighborhood of New York or New Jersey or Chicago (or Schenectady, too)

This form of language, the 'Goomba-Italiano' has been used for generations.

No gangster slang terms like 'whack' or 'vig,' if that's what you are thinking---nope, this is real Guido talk!

The goomba says "ciao" when he arrives or leaves. He says "Mama Mia or Maddone" anytime emotion is needed in any given situation.

"Mannaggia", "meengya," "oofah," and of course, "va fongool" can also be used. Capeesh?

He uses a "moppeen" to wipe his hands in the cucina, gets "agita" from the gravy and will "shkeev" meatballs unless they are homemade from the famiglia.

Always sfoonge your bread in the pot of gravy (sauce) or you will be considered a real googootz or Mezzo-finoorkio.

There are usually plenty of "mamaluke" guys in the neighborhood and the girls with the reputations are a "faccia-bruta," "puttana" or a "schifosa."

If called "cattivo," "cabbadost," "sfatcheem," "stupido," or "strunz," you are usually a pain in the ass.

A "crazy diavolo" can give you the malokya (evil eye), but that red horn (contra malokya) will protect you if you use it right.

Don't forget to always say per favore and grazia and prego.

If you are feeling "mooshadda" or "stounad" or "mezzo-morto," always head to Gram's and she will fix you up with a little homemade manicott', cavadell', or calamari,' or some ricotta cheesecake.

Mangia some zeppoles, canolis, torrone, struffoli, shfoolyadell', pignoli cookies, or a little nutella on pannetone. Delizioso!

I think I will fix myself a sangweech of cabacol' with some proshoot and mozarell' or maybe just a hot slice of peetza.

So "salud" if you have any Italian blood in you and you understood anything written here!

Then, you are numero uno and a 'professore' of the goombas.

And now the little Italo-American 'tidbits':

Italians have a \$60,000 kitchen, but use the \$100, 35 year old stove from Sears in the basement to cook things on.

There is some sort of religious statue in the hallway, living room, bedroom, front porch and backyard.

Our parents' outdoor table was linoleum covered with small, chrome metal trim along the edges. The living room was filled with old wedding favors with bows and stale almonds (they were too pretty to open and eat).

All lampshades, stuffed chairs and stuffed couches were covered with stiff, clear plastic.

A portrait of the Pope and Frank Sinatra hung in the dining room.

God forbid if anyone EVER attempted to eat 'Chef Boy-ar-Dee', 'Franco American,' 'Ragu,' 'Prego,' or anything else labeled as Italian in a jar or can.

Meatballs were made with pork, veal and beef, and PLENTY OF CHEESE mixed together.

Turkey was served on Thanksgiving AFTER the manicotti, gnocchi, lasagna, and minestrone or scarole soup.

Sunday dinner was at 1:00 PM sharp. The meal went like this: The table was set with everyday dishes. It doesn't matter if they didn't match. They were clean; what more do you want?

Wine, homemade, was served up in small water or old jelly glasses.

A clean kitchen towel was put at Nonno's & Papa's plates because they wouldn't use napkins.

Homemade wine, a pitcher of water and bottles of 7-UP are on the table.

First course, antipasto. Change plates.

Second course, macaroni or ravioli. (All pasta was called macaroni...)

Change plates.

Third course was usually roast beef, some chicken with potatoes and vegetables. Change plates.

THEN, and only then - NEVER AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MEAL - would you eat the salad drenched in oil & homemade strong, red-vinegar dressing..

Change plates.

Next course, fruit & nuts - in the shell - on paper plates because you ran out of the real ones.

You pinched yourself on that damn nutcracker. How many times..?

Last was coffee with anisette, some espresso for Nonno, 'American' coffee for the rest - with hard cookies (biscotti) to dunk in the coffee with more fruit and some cheese.

The kids would go out to play.

The men would go lay down. They slept so soundly that you could do brain surgery on them without anesthesia. The women cleaned the kitchen.

We got screamed at by Ma or grandma, and half of the sentences were English, the other half in Italian.

Italian mothers never threw a baseball in their life, but could nail you in the head or back with their shoe thrown from the kitchen while you were in the living room. And if they got close enough, the big macaroni spoon.

True Italians will love this. Those of you who are married to Italians will understand this.

And those who wish they were Italian, and those who are friends with Italians, will remember with a smile.