

Italy Unpacked: the uses of 'Italian' food cultures in contemporary British television food programming

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My paper explores the meanings attached to 'Italian' culinary culture as it is re-located within British cookery TV in the UK. Although 'Italian food' is one of the most familiar and indigenized 'foreign' foods in the UK, it is still sometimes represented in terms of its strangeness and its difference to 'British food'. My paper focuses on three prime-time television culinary travelogues – *Jamie's Great Italian Escape* (Channel 4, 2005), *Two Greedy Italians* (BBC2, 2011-12) and *Italy Unpacked* (BBC2, 2013-) - to examine what 'Italian food' is made to mean as it is mediated for British audiences. I also identify how the images generated in such series are put to use more generally in British food culture and, in particular, I explore how 'Italian' food culture is used to offer magical solutions to perceived problems with food practices in the UK. The travelogues I discuss emphasize the mobility of their chef-presenters who travel across Italy and enable British audiences to engage in forms of virtual travel. However, while 'Italian food' has clearly been globalized in a range of ways, I analyze the significance of the way in which 'Italian' culinary culture is represented in terms of immobility, slowness, locality and tradition.