



Mondo Nutella: Spreading a Piece of Italy Throughout the World

Francine Segan (October 08, 2015)



Responding to increasing demand for the Italian delicacy in the US, Mondo Nutella (Nutella World)—Gigi Padovani’s insightful book about Europe’s favorite spread— has finally been translated into English.

Lately, Nutella is starting to make its way from the breakfast (and snack) nooks of Europeans, who have been enjoying this delicious cocoa and hazelnut spread for over 50 years now, to the hearts (and tummies) of Americans.

Padovani begins his informative and highly enjoyable book Mondo Nutella on a humorous note. The book’s first chapter, “Napoleon’s Fault,” traces the origin of Nutella back to the shortage of cocoa in continental Europe that the emperor caused by blocking trade with Britain.

As a result, Italian chocolate-makers decided to mix the declining supply of cocoa with hazelnut and created what is known in Turin as “giandujot.”



A european delicacy “made in Italy”

Thanks to the marketing genius of Michele Ferrero, this delicious and (for its time) innovative product derived from the more solid giandujot that literally “spread” throughout Europe beginning in the 1960s.

Michele Ferrero proved his genius right off the bat, renaming the product his father Pietro created in a pastry shop in Alba, Northern Italy. The product was originally called “Supercrema.” Ferrero combined the word “nut,” whose root comes from German, one of the most widely used languages in Europe, with the suffix “-ella,” giving the name a more “Latin” flavor.

He also placed great emphasis on the quality of the products used to make Nutella and other goods attached to the Ferrero brand, which is a common selling point for successful Italian products. As a result, sales went up and Nutella became a staple product, beloved by children - and their parents - all over Europe.

Nutella and pop culture

As Padovani explains in his book, much of Nutella’s success derives from its association with famous figures - in fact, the book has an entire section dedicated to the social significance of Nutella, including its string of advertisements featuring prominent Italians and foreigners. Thanks to such ingenious marketing, the product became an integral part of Italian, French and German society.

Its presence in popular culture is astounding. From TV ads to websites to social media outlets, Nutella is found everywhere. Even more striking, as well as extremely effective, is the unsolicited celebration of the product by influential figures, including politicians, actors, musicians and athletes.

Reflecting their genuine love for Nutella, people often mention it on social media platforms like Twitter or Facebook. And sometimes those people just happen to be Lady Gaga, who made casual mention of her fondness for the spread while tweeting about the success of her new album. Official or not, the wealth of online publicity has certainly played a huge role in the recent diffusion of the delicious spread on this side of the Atlantic.

The land of peanut butter may not lack for spreads, nevertheless it has enthusiastically welcomed Nutella into its supermarkets, restaurants and kitchens. Credit for its popularity is also due to initiatives like Eataty’s Nutella Bar in New York, where the creamy chocolaty spread is served with Italian favorites like gelato, fruit, pastries, and other European staples like crepes and waffles.

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