

Pizza and Digital Storytelling: Authenticity that Creates Value

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The agri-food sector of pizza has been profoundly transformed by the **spread of digital**. The role of this tool has revealed itself to be decisive in enhancing **the narrative of the pizza experience**. It has brought to light, and continues to do so, the fundamental characteristics of this food: its **human and cultural** dimension, as a symbol of sharing and versatility; and the **qualitative** one, linked to the identity of the product. But above all, it has highlighted the ability of those who work in this sector **to use technology without compromising its authenticity**. In this article, we explore the voices that confirm this vision, those of the three curators of [50 Top Pizza](#), collected on the occasion of the award

ceremony of **50 Top Pizza Italia 2025**: Barbara **Guerra**, Luciano **Pignataro**, and Albert **Sapere**.

Pizza as a psychological and cultural need

It is not just flour, water, tomato, and mozzarella. Pizza is a **universal language**, a daily gesture that unites territories, generations, and cultures in a transversal way. It is one of those foods that speak of home, of rooted habits, of shared pleasure. And it is also one of the most powerful symbols of the Italian food system in the world.

It is not surprising, therefore, that it is considered in all respects a **comfort food**, that is, a food that generates emotional well-being, linked to affective memories and moments of conviviality. This is also confirmed by Doxa research for Eataly (2021), whose data state that **86% of Italians** consume pizza at least once a week: a result that shows how this food has long ceased to be just a meal, and has become, and is now considered, a **cultural symbol**.

In fact, culturally speaking, **Luciano Pignataro** himself, one of the major observers of Italian gastronomic culture and among the curators of 50 Top Pizza, affirms that *"Pizza is a psychological need"*. This reflection synthesizes the **social function** of this food, that of a meal that celebrates conviviality and a key symbol, like also coffee in the mother city of pizza. The consumption of pizza is often linked to ritualized moments, such as Friday night spent with family or the evening with friends, whether at home or on the street, ordered or homemade. Moreover, the journalist continues by maintaining that *"It is not only a food that feeds, it is a food that welcomes to the table"*. In these situations, food stops being mere nourishment and transforms into a **relational glue**.



Source: Canva Photos

This affective dimension, rooted in Italian everyday life, also explains why pizza has managed to speak to so **many different cultures**, entering their rituals without losing itself.

Barbara Guerra: every community has its pizza

Thanks to its cultural characteristics of **adaptability**, and to the spread of **authenticity**, pizza has been capable of becoming part of the various communities of the world, in the most diversified ways

In fact, pizza outside of Naples, outside of Italy as we know it, **does not lose its nature, but transforms**. According to **Barbara Guerra**, one of the three curators of 50 Top Pizza, the secret of the international success of pizza lies in its ability to **enter into tune with the tastes of the communities that welcome it**:

“Tastes are not identical everywhere: every community has its consumption habits, its lifestyles, its own organoleptic perception of the ingredients.” — B. Guerra

It is in this way that **local styles of pizza** are born, which welcome the tastes and preferences of a determined community. Examples are the **New York Style Pizza**, the **Brazilian Paulista Pizza**, or the more acidic one with extreme bakes typical of **Northern Europe**. These variations do not betray pizza, but strengthen it in its community and collective vocation.



Source: Canva Photos

Because when a style truly meets the taste of a place, it becomes **part of that place, it assumes its language.**

As Barbara Guerra underlines, it is not a matter of adapting to please everyone, but of dialoguing with cultural specificities without losing the essence. In this balance between Italian roots and local adaptation, pizza asserts itself as a perfect example of **glocal food**.

Digital pizzerias: identity, aesthetics, and narration

However, authenticity is not asserted only on the plate, but also in the way in which pizza and its experience are told. And in this, Italian pizzerias have become protagonists of a small revolution.

Many of them, even before equipping themselves with a website, have built a living and coherent presence on **social media**, making themselves recognizable not only for the quality of the product, but for the ability to transmit a strong and rooted identity, made of **passion and transparency**.

Albert Sapere observes how pizzerias are by now true “*digital venues*,” born with a native narrative vocation. Through photos, videos, infographics, and **daily storytelling**, the elements present on the pizza come to life, transforming this dish into a shareable visual language.

And Luciano Pignataro adds: “*Pizza owes all its current fortune to social media, to the fact that pizza makers have become communicators of themselves and manage to speak to peers as no other category that operates in food has managed to do*”.

Digital storytelling: emotion, authenticity, and relationship

The world of pizza has been among the most skillful, in the food sector, at transforming **the story into value**. Videos, stories, live broadcasts, and posts have turned spotlights on ovens and doughs, but also on people and territories. Digital pizza makers, often started from simple stories, have become **ambassadors of local identities** capable of speaking to the world. In the spread of the experience and the story of pizza, **the digital has played a key role**. It has allowed for the transmission of emotions, to give voice to crafts, to build an authentic relationship between those who make and those who consume.

As Pignataro observes: “*Today everything is told, but precisely because everything is told it is necessary to put those who have something to tell in a position to be able to do so. And the customer perceives the truth of the experience only when it is actual*”.

In this sense, the narration of pizza on social media links to what **Rural Hack** defines as a mediated food experience: a **culinary experience** lived through the screen, capable of generating **emotion, desire, and connection**.



Source: Canva Photos

When pizza becomes visual perception and desire

Even the gaze on pizza has assumed an increasingly relevant role. It is not just a matter of aesthetics or “*instagrammability*,” but of **how the visual can influence judgment**. A study conducted by **Saint-Eve et al. (2025)** confirms that pizzas with **visible ingredients, bright colors, and fresh vegetables** are perceived as **tastier and healthier**.

In 2025, pizza is more than a food. It is social cohesion, a symbol that evolves while remaining faithful to its roots. It is comfort food because it reassures, but it is also **identity food, capable of telling stories of territory and of adapting without losing its nature**.

As the curators of 50 Top Pizza remind us, those who have known how to communicate with authenticity have found in the digital an ally, not a compromise. The result is a **narratable product, which unites different communities around a common language**.

What does pizza teach us about how food can hold together authenticity, innovation, and community?

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Fonte: <https://www.ruralhack.org/en/pizza-and-digital-storytelling-authenticity-that-creates-value/>