

Questionnaire for video-interviews re: “Food, Hunger, Migration and the American Myth in Sicily at the Time of the WWII Allied Landing”

1. What do you remember about the period of World War II? Do you have any specific memories of the arrival of the Allies/Americans?
2. In your recollection, was that a period of food rationing, or did people have easy access to food to eat? And, if so, what food could be found and by what means?
3. Did military activities affect habits and methods around food storage and preparation, and if so which ones? Were there any American products in the form of provisions (wheat, for ex.) that substituted the Italian ones?
4. Pictures and videos from those days (see Robert Capa’s photos and U.S. government videos) often show American soldiers distributing, or even tossing, food items to local residents (chocolate bars, dried meat, canned milk, etc.). These images portray America as the land of abundance there to help Sicilians. Do you remember if it was really like this? What things were soldiers giving out?
5. What did local people think of these American products as compared to foods they were accustomed to? Did they begin to use them out of hunger, or just out of curiosity?
6. Did you meet any soldiers personally? Did you get to know a soldier of Italian, or especially Sicilian origin, perhaps one even coming from your town? Do you recall if soldiers spoke Italian, or the dialect, and if they knew about aspects of Sicilian culture?
7. Do you recall sharing local dishes or Sicilian products (food or beverage) with soldiers?
8. After the war, were these new American (food) products found more readily in the market, or maybe arriving in Sicily as gifts from American relatives via post or in the course of a visit?
9. Do you have some object or picture from that period (during and after the war) that you might want to show us?