



COOKING UP A DELICIOUS HISTORY LESSON



Mary Ann Esposito
Ciao Italia Host

When you think of Ken Burns, it's unlikely that you picture the filmmaker with his sleeves rolled up and his hands in pasta dough. But when *CIAO ITALIA* host Mary Ann Esposito asked America's favorite documentarian to help her out in the kitchen this summer, Burns was happy to oblige.

"I had no idea that this would wind up with Ken Burns," said Esposito happily. She came up with the idea for *MAKING JEFFERSON'S MACCARONI PIE* while looking for a way to celebrate the Italian-American contribution to America's founding.

"I started thinking about food. Food led me to macaroni and cheese. Macaroni and cheese led me to Thomas Jefferson," said Esposito. "It was a kind of puzzle. Who knows the most about Thomas Jefferson? Ken Burns."

Macaroni and cheese is, of course, a classic American comfort food, but the connection between mac and cheese and the writer of the Declaration of Independence is less obvious. It starts to come together more clearly, however, when you learn that Esposito began her professional career as a history teacher.

This might not come as a surprise to fans of *CIAO ITALIA*, where Esposito has always included the history of a dish in her research process. "Everything that we do for the show involves digging into history," she pointed out. "Why is it called this? Who first made this? How many variations are there?"

She suspects macaroni and cheese, in some form, has been around for quite awhile. "There was macaroni, called by a different name in ancient Rome, and there was cheese," Esposito noted. "There always was cheese!"

Given her passion for both food and history, it's not surprising that Esposito had already read one of America's first and most influential cookbooks, *The Virginia Housewife*, written by Mary Randolph. Randolph was a cousin of Thomas Jefferson's and included in her book a recipe for a macaroni pie that Jefferson served at Monticello.

"It really isn't a finite recipe," Esposito said. She worked closely with historians at Monticello to recreate an authentic version of the recipe, based on Randolph's writing and other likely influences. For example, Jefferson is believed to have come across Maccaroni Pie while in Italy, however, the recipe would have actually been created by James Hemings, Monticello's enslaved chef, whose culinary training in France probably influenced the dish.

Esposito also drew inspiration from the documented reactions of guests who dined on macaroni pie. One diarist, Reverend Manasseh Cutler, wrote of "a pie called macaroni, which appeared to be a rich crust filled with the strillions of onions." His dining companion, Meriwether Lewis of the Lewis and Clark expedition, explained to the reverend that they were actually eating noodles covered in parmesan.

As becomes apparent in *MAKING JEFFERSON'S MACCARONI PIE*, Cutler and Lewis weren't dining on the elbow macaroni we know today. "Pasta was more a gourmand name for macaroni. Even when I was growing up, pasta was always called macaroni, no matter what it was," Esposito explained. "Jefferson spelled it with two C's, just because of the dialectical word for macaroni in Naples at the time he traveled."

With the recipe for the dish in place, Esposito had a special finishing touch in mind for her program: having Ken Burns join her to provide his extensive knowledge on both Jefferson and the Revolutionary era.

"I thought he was great to work with," exclaimed Esposito. "He was curious. He had a lot of questions. He worked well with his hands. He had a lot to offer in terms of the historical perspective on Jefferson."

As fascinating as this history is, it begs the question: is this early American macaroni pie any good? On the day of filming, Esposito recalled, one of the production's gaffers called dibs on the pie. "He ate the whole thing, so he must have liked it!"

MAKING JEFFERSON'S MACCARONI PIE will premiere on NHPBS on Thursday, November 26th at 8:30 PM and will be available to stream online at nhpbs.org/maccaroni.

NHPBS PRIMETIME PICKS



Vote 2026:
PBS News Election Special
TUE Nov 3 | 8 PM NHPBS

Watch mid-term election results roll in with Amna Nawaz, Geoff Bennett and the PBS News team. Throughout the evening, they'll provide the solid, reliable reporting, context and analysis that has made them the most objective newscast on television.



Nature
Humanlike: The Chimps of Fongoli
WED Nov 11 | 8 PM NHPBS

See how the chimpanzees in Fongoli, Senegal have adapted humanlike behaviors to survive their extreme Saharan environments. A 25-year study uncovers chimps hunting with spears, sheltering in caves, digging wells and reading fire.



Crime and Punishment in America
MON Nov 16 | 8 PM NHPBS

At once expansive and intimate, Lynn Novick's documentary offers an epic look at the American criminal justice system. Through the voices of people personally impacted by both crime and punishment, the series explores the tension between vengeance and mercy, justice and redemption.



Making Jefferson's Maccaroni Pie
THU Nov 26 | 8:30 PM NHPBS

Filmmaker Ken Burns and CIAO ITALIA host Mary Ann Esposito celebrate America's 250th by making one of Thomas Jefferson's favorite recipes from scratch. The two PBS icons discuss Jefferson and how this Revolutionary-era dish differs from the mac and cheese we love today.



Fir Traders
THU Nov 26 | 9 PM NHPBS

George and his son Illan, observant Jews, run one of the biggest Christmas tree operations in New Hampshire. As the holiday approaches and customers line up, they and their eccentric team are knee-deep in everything evergreen.



Paul Simon:
The Quiet Celebration Concert
FRI Nov 27 | 9 PM NHPBS

Join the legendary singer and songwriter for an unforgettable concert from his Grammy-nominated album *Seven Psalms*. This intimate evening also features new arrangements of timeless classics, deep cuts and musical discoveries.

5 CHANNEL SPOTLIGHT

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OUR HOMETOWN: PLAINFIELD

THU Nov 19 | 7:30 PM NHPBS

Host Becky Rule visits Plainfield, a small town made up of two villages in the shadow of Mt. Ascutney. Known as the home of artist Maxfield Parrish, our local storytellers paint a picture of a town as rich in community spirit as it is in natural beauty. You can find even more at nhpbs.org/hometown.



SECRETS OF THE DEAD: FINDING AMERICA'S FALLEN

SUN Nov 15 | 9 PM NHPBS EXPLORE

Veterans unearth the site of the Battle of Camden and explore how the Continental soldiers' loss there turned the tide of the American Revolution. This unique SECRETS OF THE DEAD episode explores not just a fascinating piece of American history but the ties between military veterans past and present.



AMERICA'S TEST KITCHEN: ALL-TIME BEST THANKSGIVING

FRI Nov 20 | 9 PM NH CREATE

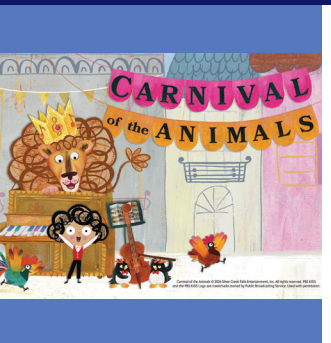
Turkey time is nearly here, and AMERICA'S TEST KITCHEN has everything you need to ensure a flawless, festive table. Prepare your gathering with delicious dishes, from fresh takes on Thanksgiving classics to foolproof dinner table staples.



RACING THE REZ

FRI Nov 13 | 7 PM NH WORLD

For the Navajo and Hopi, running is much more than a sport, it's woven into the cultural fabric of their lives. In the rugged canyon lands of Northern Arizona, Navajo and Hopi cross-country runners from two rival high schools vie for the state championship while striving to find their place among their native people and the larger American culture.



CARNIVAL OF THE ANIMALS

MON Nov 16 | 2:30 PM NHPBS KIDS

A young hero races to find Lion's stolen crown. Along the way, he meets thirteen animals preparing for the carnival. The animated special is set to Saint-Saëns' iconic *Carnival of the Animals*, recorded live by Gustavo Dudamel and the LA Philharmonic. It's a magical way to introduce kids to classical music.

WINDOWS TO THE WILD



THE PATHS WE SHARE

WED Nov 4 | 7:30 PM NHPBS



OUT OF BOUNDS

THU Nov 5 | 8 PM NHPBS



BIRDS, BOW AND BIKES

THU Nov 12 | 8 PM NHPBS



FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

THU Nov 19 | 8 PM NHPBS



WHAT NATURE IGNITES IN US

THU Nov 26 | 8 PM NHPBS

ON-AIR | MOBILE | ONLINE | CLASSROOMS | COMMUNITY

NH PBS NOVEMBER 2026 PROGRAM SCHEDULE

	6:30 PM	7:00 PM	7:30 PM	8:00 PM	8:30 PM	9:00 PM	9:30 PM	10:00 PM
Sun. 11/1	Energy Switch	Death In Paradise		Professor T (UK)		Maigret On Masterpiece		The Gold On Masterpiece**
Mon. 11/2	PBS News Hour*	Weekends with Yankee	Joseph Rosendo's Steppin' Out	Antiques Roadshow		Pati Jinich Explores PanAmericana		Coming Home: from Shadowland to Spiritworld**
Tue. 11/3	PBS News Hour*	Weekends with Yankee	In The Americas with David Yetman	Vote 2026: PBS News Election Special**				
Wed. 11/4	PBS News Hour*	Weekends with Yankee	Windows to the Wild The Paths We Share	Nature The Pigeon Hustle		NOVA Evolution: The Mating Game		Secrets of the Dead** Saving Tangier Island
Thu. 11/5	PBS News Hour*	Weekends with Yankee	P. Allen Smith's A Sense of Place	Windows to the Wild Out of Bounds	First Peoples, First Stories	The American Buffalo**		
Fri. 11/6	PBS News Hour*	Weekends with Yankee	Rick Steves' Europe	Washington Week with the Atlantic	Firing Line with Margaret Hoover	Salute to Service 2026: A Veterans Day Celebration		Lied About My Age: A Marine In World War II**
Sat. 11/7	How We Grieve	Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries		Father Brown		Sister Boniface Mysteries		Death In Paradise**
Sun. 11/8	Energy Switch	Death In Paradise		Professor T (UK)		Maigret On Masterpiece		The Gold On Masterpiece**
Mon. 11/9	PBS News Hour*	Weekends with Yankee	Joseph Rosendo's Steppin' Out	Antiques Roadshow		Pati Jinich Explores PanAmericana		Medicine Ball**
Tue. 11/10	PBS News Hour*	Weekends with Yankee	In The Americas with David Yetman	We Chose to Go to the Moon				Frontline** Coal's Human Cost
Wed. 11/11	PBS News Hour*	Weekends with Yankee	Windows to the Wild Out of Bounds	Nature Humanlike: The Chimps of Fongoli		NOVA Evolution: On the Run		Secrets of the Dead** Finding America's Fallen
Thu. 11/12	PBS News Hour*	Weekends with Yankee	P. Allen Smith's A Sense of Place	Windows to the Wild Birds, Bow, and Bikes	Native Waters: A Chitimacha Recollection	The American Buffalo**		
Fri. 11/13	PBS News Hour*	Weekends with Yankee	Rick Steves' Europe	Washington Week with the Atlantic	Firing Line with Margaret Hoover	Great Performances** Romeo & Juliet		
Sat. 11/14	Eddy's World	Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries		Father Brown		Sister Boniface Mysteries		Death In Paradise**
Sun. 11/15	Energy Switch	Death In Paradise		Professor T (UK)		Maigret On Masterpiece		The Gold On Masterpiece**
Mon. 11/16	PBS News Hour*	Weekends with Yankee	Joseph Rosendo's Steppin' Out	Crime and Punishment In America				Crime and Punishment In America
Tue. 11/17	PBS News Hour*	Weekends with Yankee	In The Americas with David Yetman	Crime and Punishment In America				Crime and Punishment In America
Wed. 11/18	PBS News Hour*	Weekends with Yankee	Windows to the Wild Birds, Bow, and Bikes	Crime and Punishment In America				Crime and Punishment In America
Thu. 11/19	PBS News Hour*	Weekends with Yankee	Our Hometown Plainfield	Windows to the Wild For The Next Generation	Crime and Punishment In America			
Fri. 11/20	PBS News Hour*	Weekends with Yankee	Rick Steves' Europe	Washington Week with the Atlantic	Firing Line with Margaret Hoover	Great Performances Dudamel's Inaugural Season with NY Philharmonic		
Sat. 11/21	Our Hometown Plainfield	Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries		Father Brown		Sister Boniface Mysteries		Death In Paradise**
Sun. 11/22	Energy Switch	Death In Paradise		Professor T (UK)		Maigret On Masterpiece		The Gold On Masterpiece**
Mon. 11/23	PBS News Hour*	Weekends with Yankee	Joseph Rosendo's Steppin' Out	Antiques Roadshow		Antiques Roadshow		Independent Lens** Storming: Seasons of Care
Tue. 11/24	PBS News Hour*	Weekends with Yankee	In The Americas with David Yetman	Finding Your Roots The Long Way Home		American Masters Liz Diller & Ric Scofidio: Architect Provocateurs		Frontline**
Wed. 11/25	PBS News Hour*	Weekends with Yankee	Windows to the Wild For The Next Generation	Nature Christmas in the Alps		NOVA Decoding Da Vinci		Secrets of the Dead** Jamestown's Dark Winter
Thu. 11/26	PBS News Hour*	Monadnock: The Mountain That Stands Alone		Windows to the Wild What Nature Ignites In Us	Making Jefferson's Maccaroni Pie	Fir Traders	Turkey Town	An Anthem to America: Ken Burns & Florentine Films 50 Years**
Fri. 11/27	PBS News Hour*	Weekends with Yankee	Rick Steves' Europe	Washington Week with the Atlantic	Firing Line with Margaret Hoover	Paul Simon: The Quiet Celebration Concert**		
Sat. 11/28	John Denver's Rocky Mountain High			This Land Is Your Land (My Music Presents)			50 Years with Peter, Paul and Mary**	
Sun. 11/29	The Dean Martin and Frank Sinatra Family Christmas Show			All Creatures Great and Small: Christmas Cheer			Destination Masterpiece**	
Mon. 11/30	PBS News Hour*	Weekends with Yankee	Carpenters: Close to You & Christmas Memories (My Music Presents)				60s Pop, Rock & Soul (My Music Presents)**	

Please Note: Programs on NHPBS begin before 6:30 PM when marked *. Programs end at 10:30 PM unless marked **
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	6:30 PM	7:00 PM	7:30 PM	8:00 PM	8:30 PM	9:00 PM	9:30 PM	10:00 PM
Sun. 11/1	Antiques Roadshow*	Nature Tiger Island, Part II		NOVA Evolution: Body Builders		Secrets of the Dead Field of Vampires		Samhain: The Birth of Halloween**
Mon. 11/2	Samantha Brown's Places to Love	PBS News Hour		Hotel Portofino		Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries		Good Karma Hospital**
Tue. 11/3	Samantha Brown's Places to Love	PBS News Hour		Death In Paradise		Downton Abbey Season 4 On Masterpiece		The Gold On Masterpiece**
Wed. 11/4	Samantha Brown's Places to Love	PBS News Hour		Maigret On Masterpiece		Professor T (UK)		Miss Scarlet and the Duke On Masterpiece**
Thu. 11/5	Samantha Brown's Places to Love	PBS News Hour		Father Brown		Sister Boniface Mysteries		Inspector George Gently**
Fri. 11/6	Samantha Brown's Places to Love	PBS News Hour		Finding Your Roots Family Recipes		Leonardo da Vinci**		
Sat. 11/7	The Lawrence Welk Show*	Finding Your Roots Family Recipes		American Experience Victory in the Pacific				The Songwriters Rafe Van Hoy
Sun. 11/8	Antiques Roadshow*	Nature The Pigeon Hustle		NOVA Evolution: The Mating Game		Secrets of the Dead Saving Tangier Island		Chesapeake Bay By Air**
Mon. 11/9	Samantha Brown's Places to Love	PBS News Hour		Hotel Portofino		Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries		Good Karma Hospital**
Tue. 11/10	Samantha Brown's Places to Love	PBS News Hour		Death In Paradise		Downton Abbey Season 4 On Masterpiece		
Wed. 11/11	Samantha Brown's Places to Love	PBS News Hour		Maigret On Masterpiece		Professor T (UK)		Miss Scarlet and the Duke On Masterpiece**
Thu. 11/12	Samantha Brown's Places to Love	PBS News Hour		Father Brown		Sister Boniface Mysteries		Inspector George Gently**
Fri. 11/13	Samantha Brown's Places to Love	PBS News Hour		Finding Your Roots Fathers and Sons		The American Buffalo**		
Sat. 11/14	The Lawrence Welk Show*	Finding Your Roots Fathers and Sons		Armed with Language		I Lied About My Age: A Marine In World War II		The Songwriters Kent Blazy
Sun. 11/15	Antiques Roadshow*	Nature Humanlike: The Chimps of Fongoli		NOVA Evolution: On the Run		Secrets of the Dead Finding America's Fallen		Road to Rome: World War II**
Mon. 11/16	Samantha Brown's Places to Love	PBS News Hour		Hotel Portofino		Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries		Good Karma Hospital**
Tue. 11/17	Samantha Brown's Places to Love	PBS News Hour		Death In Paradise		Downton Abbey Season 5 On Masterpiece		The Gold On Masterpiece**
Wed. 11/18	Samantha Brown's Places to Love	PBS News Hour		Maigret On Masterpiece		Professor T (UK)		Miss Scarlet and the Duke On Masterpiece**
Thu. 11/19	Samantha Brown's Places to Love	PBS News Hour		Father Brown		Sister Boniface Mysteries		Inspector George Gently**
Fri. 11/20	Samantha Brown's Places to Love	PBS News Hour		Finding Your Roots Hold The Laughter		The American Buffalo**		
Sat. 11/21	The Lawrence Welk Show*	Finding Your Roots Hold The Laughter		JFK: Breaking The News		Space Chase USA		The Songwriters Steve Bogard
Sun. 11/22	Antiques Roadshow*	Northern Nights, Starry Skies		NOVA The Next Pompeii		Secrets of the Dead Nero's Sunken City		Secrets of the Dead** Returning to Babylon
Mon. 11/23	Samantha Brown's Places to Love	PBS News Hour		Hotel Portofino		Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries		Good Karma Hospital**
Tue. 11/24	Samantha Brown's Places to Love	PBS News Hour		Death In Paradise		Downton Abbey Season 5 On Masterpiece		The Gold On Masterpiece**
Wed. 11/25	Samantha Brown's Places to Love	PBS News Hour		Maigret On Masterpiece		Professor T (UK)		Miss Scarlet and the Duke On Masterpiece**
Thu. 11/26	Samantha Brown's Places to Love	PBS News Hour		Father Brown		Sister Boniface Mysteries		Inspector George Gently**
Fri. 11/27	Making Jefferson's Maccaroni Pie	PBS News Hour		Finding Your Roots The Long Way Home		Our Hometown Plainfield	Fir Traders	Monadnock: The Mountain That Stands Alone**
Sat. 11/28	The Lawrence Welk Show*	Lawrence Welk - Milestones & Memories						Memory Makeover with Daniel Amen, MD
Sun. 11/29	Nature* Christmas in the Alps		Rick Steves Mighty Alps			Rick Steves European Christmas		
Mon. 11/30	Paul Simon: The Quiet Celebration Concert*	PBS News Hour		Destination Masterpiece			All Creatures Great and Small: Christmas Cheer**	

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MAKING JEFFERSON'S
MACCARONI PIE

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