

## Calling all Foodies... to the Movies

By Tom Sims, Executive Director, Cape May Film Society

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Who doesn't love good food? Who doesn't love a good movie? Now when you can bring those two together... how appetizing! Cape May is in the last few days of the second annual educational/cultural event "Chautauqua at the Shore" hosted by Cape May Forum. The topic: "Guess What's Coming to Dinner: The Politics of Food in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." The Forum includes lectures and arts/cultural events, and local groups from around the region host special events focused around the subject. This year, the focus is on food... how it's grown, how it gets to your table, and how it's consumed.

When the Cape May Film Festival was asked to show films that feature big screen cuisine, there were a lot of choices. The first film that came to our collective mind was *Big Night* (1978), which our Film Society had already shown as part of its "Buried Treasures" series a couple of years ago. The film, about two brothers who struggle to keep their restaurant afloat, has as a primary character some of the most tantalizing Italian creations—not to mention the often underrated Stanley Tucci. But before *Big Night* there was *The Big Swallow*, a 1901 short British fantasy film about a man who eats a camera. Buster Keaton and Fatty Arbuckle starred in *The Cook* (1918) where Keaton plays the waiter and Arbuckle the cook trying to come to the aid of a pretty cashier.

So which film would we choose? There are a host of documentaries that we could have chosen to fit this theme: such as *Super Size Me* (2004) that journals the life of a man committed to eating only McDonald's food for an entire month or *Food Inc.* (2008) that examines how food is delivered to the public. Or maybe even a narrative film that looked at the food industry would work—such as *Fast Food Nation* (2006) which takes a look at the life of food executives in a fictitious (okay maybe not so fictitious) fast food empire. But... we decided to perhaps let the lecturers turn to these films for reference material.

We decided to screen a narrative film but even here there are a host of films (a bushel of films?): *Babette's Feast* (1987), *Diner* (1982), *Dinner Game* (1998), or *Julie and Julia* (2009). This weekend, we will show the animated classic *Ratatouille* (2007), where it's rat against chef in the kitchens of Paris. So which food flick is your fav? The first person to email their favorite "foodie" film to [capemayfilm@hotmail.com](mailto:capemayfilm@hotmail.com) gets a free weekend pass to the Cape May Film Festival, October 21-23, 2011 at the Chalfonte Hotel.