

Rome restaurants: Tips and tricks for people eating in Rome.

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**By stefano sandano**

Eating and drinking in Rome restaurants.

Rome is not only the capital of Italy but also of the region of Lazio, which is famous for its food. Robust flavours and rich sauces abound in many typical dishes of the area, and pasta and gnocchi in all their many forms ( especially fettucine ) are served in restaurants across Rome city.

Lazio is notable for dishes featuring milk-fed lamb (abbacchio), veal (vitello), Parma ham (saltimbocca), thin-cut steak and offal, all of which are served with delicious herbs and seasonings. Best fish choices in Rome include sea bass (spigola), fried cod (baccalà), bream (orata) and turbot (rombo). Artichokes (carciofi) are scattered all over menus through the winter, before spring heralds the vignarola – a tasty blend of peas, fava beans, and artichokes served with cured pork cheek. Fried sweetbreads are also a Roman speciality.

Rome is rich in markets and this is often reflected in the wonderful variety of superb vegetables served in the city's restaurants. Beans are used a good deal in the cuisine and appear in many dishes, hot and cold. On a cool winter's day the visitor seeking a warming lunch could do no better than to choose a tasty minestrone soup, which is another of the area's specialities.

Standard 'tourist menus' generally offer good value, beginning with bread and olive oil with soup or pasta; a simple meat or fish dish with vegetables (contorni) for secondi; and cheese or fresh fruit to finish; accompanied by a carafe of locally produced Frascati white or red wine from Tuscany. As a rule, main dishes do not come with vegetables, which are ordered separately.

Whether you are dining in a no-frills trattorie or a more formal ristorante, owners and chefs invariably take pride in sourcing the best seasonal produce. Vegetarians can expect most first (primi) pasta courses to be meat-free; other choices include a seasonal vegetable 'fritto misto' ('mixed fried') or side dish combo, the verdure miste ('mixed green'). Kosher choices are limited because of the prevalence of meat and cheese, particularly pork.

As elsewhere in Italy, pizza remains a popular staple food for the restaurant and the street, and the Roman version is a hybrid between the thick crust, rustic Neopolitan variety and the thinner, more

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fancy Northern version. Away from the main tourist areas, most restaurants only serve pizza at dinner time.

The neighbourhoods of Trastevere, San Lorenzo and Testaccio are known for offering reasonably priced, authentic Roman cuisine; whilst restaurants around Campo de' Fiori and Piazza Navona are pleasurable places to dine, with musicians on hand to entertain.

Virtually every bar and dining establishment in Rome will offer first-rate filter coffee; Italians regard frothy cappuccinos as a morning drink and rarely a post-prandial treat, when the pick-me-up espresso or macchiato is preferred. Ice creams are sensational, creamy gelato and refreshing granita (sorbetts) come in a host of enticing flavours, such as coffee, coconut, liquorice or sour cherry, that are lovingly

prepared for an incomparable all-day dessert.

If one to write of Rome and omit mention of its gustatory delights the whole world would protest, because in Rome eating is an art and cooking a science, and he who does not know not what Rome provides knows neither art nor science.

Stefano Sandano is an archaeologist of Rome and is the owner of the website

<http://www.secchiorestaurant.it>

where you can find more informations about tips and tricks for people eating and drinking in the restaurants of Rome.

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**By stefano sandano**

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Stefano Sandano is an archaeologist of Rome and expert of the Eternal City. He's also the owner of the website

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