

Favorite Restaurants in Florence



VILLAS-AND-VINES.COM

CLASSIC TUSCAN FOODS

Foods in Italy aren't all the same, for example, in Tuscany the menus are different from what you will find in Rome, versus what you will find on the Amalfi Coast. Even the pizza is different in the different regions. In Tuscany, especially the fall and winter the foods are hearty and feature lots of meat dishes. Now days there are several seafood restaurants in Florence but that is not the typical cuisine.

Here are some of the classic dishes you should try when in the region of Tuscany including Florence.

Zuppa di Cipolle (Onion Soup) - This soup differs from the French version since it is made with red onions, white wine and usually simmered in a chicken broth.

Ribollita (Tuscan bread Soup) - Every restaurant has their own version. It is one of my favorite soups and is only available in the fall and winter. This is a heartier version of a minestrone soup.

Pecorino Cheese (Sheep Cheese) - You won't find as much Parmesan here since Pecornio is the cheese of choice. It is served as a soft cheese or hard cheese on antipasti platters and pasta dishes.

Cannellini Beans - This popular bean is grown in the Sibillini mountains and similar to a navy bean in flavor. They are usually simmered with onions, celery, carrots, garlic and sage and drizzled with olive oil just before serving. A bowl of this soup is the perfect start to a nice lunch.

Fiori di Zucca Fritti or Fiori Ripieni (Fried or Stuffed Zucchini Flowers) - These are available in the spring and summer. I order them everytime they are offered. The fried ones are my favorite but I also enjoy them when stuffed with goat cheese.

Porcini Mushrooms - Try them in a variety of dishes from soups, steak sauces, or on top of pasta.

Tartufo (Truffles) - Fall is the time to enjoy freshly harvested truffles. There is no comparison to freshly shaved truffles vs. the nasty truffle oil you have in the states.

Pappardelle alla Ragu Cinghiale - This is a wide noodle served with a meat sauce of wild boar. Once you try this you may never want spaghetti bolognese again.

Bistecca alla Fiorentina (Florentine steak) - This is a usually a 2-inch thick T-bone that is seasoned with salt, and olive oil and served very rare.

Tripe - The locals love it. I haven't tried it and don't intend to.

LA LAGGIA AT BELMOND VILLA SAN MICHELE

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED - Although this is not technically in Florence; it is too good not to mention. This former Monastery turned hotel/restaurant sits just outside of Florence in Fiesole with a magnificent view overlooking Florence. We came for lunch so we could sit on the terrace and admire the view. This is one of my all time favorite restaurants. If you aren't afraid of spending a **lot of money**, this should be on your list. The service was amazing and the food was incredible. The menus incorporate seasonal products from the region, with the emphasis on local Tuscan cuisine.

Step out into their beautiful Italian gardens and savor a cocktail, accompanied by sweeping views of Florence. Lunch: 1:00 – 2:30pm and Dinner: 7:30 – 10:30pm
EXPENSIVE



<https://www.belmond.com/villa-san-michele-florence/restaurants-in-florence>

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OLIO RISTORANTE

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED - We fell in love with this small restaurant when we stopped for lunch. We tried to go back for dinner and they were booked for the next several days. It's located on the Oltrarno side in a historic mansion. The food is Tuscan with a creative twist. Moderately priced



<http://www.oliorestaurant.it>

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IL CAMINETTO

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED - I asked one of our friends how he enjoyed his meal and he said, "well, it isn't the best pork chop I've had in Tuscany, it is the BEST PORK CHOP I'VE EVER HAD"! The restaurant is located in the old town center that overlooks the Duomo square. The atmosphere is warm and refined and the service is nice. When the weather is pleasant you can dine on the terrace and enjoy the architecture of the Duomo! Moderately priced.



<http://www.ilcaminetstofirenze.it/en>

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PANDEMONIO

I love this place! I come here every time I'm in Florence. It has a good mix of local Florentines and tourists. Mama Giovanna runs the kitchen and her husband oversees the dining room. The menu is hearty Tuscan cooking offering authentic primi, such as ribollita and pappa al pomodoro, alongside more inventive offerings such as fresh pasta al ragu, and house-made tortellacci (large pasta pockets) with a Gorgonzola and radicchio sauce. Secondi choices may be classic Florentine steak or sliced (tagliata), with either arugula and balsamic vinegar or artichokes and Parmesan. Pale yellow linen tablecloths and candlelight in the evenings. There is a nice garden patio when the weather is nice. Call ahead for reservations. After dinner, be sure and ask for some of Mama's limoncello, it is some of the best I've had. Moderately priced.



<http://www.trattoriapandemonio.it>

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LA BOTTEGA DEL BUON CAFFÈ

La Bottega del Buon Caffè combines classic Florentine style with a relaxed sense of designer elegance and glamour. Located near the Arno River it offers alfresco dining beneath the magical shadows of the medieval tower of San Niccolo.

With a vibrant atmosphere and stylish décor, is the perfect venue in which to enjoy exceptional food and the very finest Tuscan wines. Offering a unique and unforgettable dining experience, our Michelin starred restaurant is just a few minutes from the very center of Florence. The philosophy is simple – to serve the very finest locally grown food, exquisitely prepared and beautifully presented within a relaxing and elegant environment.

Creative Head Chef, Antonello Sardi, is a native of Florence and originally started his career as a kitchen assistant. He is an imaginative chef and has worked with some of the regions' most respected chefs in the industry.



<https://www.borgointhecity.com/en/>

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BUCA LAPI

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED - The oldest restaurant in Florence. It was founded in 1880 in the beautiful 16th century cellars of Palazzo Antinori. As the name says, Buca, means "hole" and as soon as you step down into the basement you will be welcomed by Luciano, the owner.

The kitchen is on display and open to guests for full views. This is a true example of what Tuscan food is all about. For the first course try the ravioli stuffed with spinach and ricotta with sage and butter cream. The *Bistecca all Fiorentina* should not be missed if you haven't tried it. Open for dinner only. Moderately priced



<http://www.bucalapi.com>

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LA LOGGIA DEL PIAZZALE MICHELANGELO

This is in one of the best locations for gorgeous views of Florence. Why go where all of the crowds are (they are standing across the street) when you can come and have a glass of wine while admiring the view. We came for drinks but the menu looks great if you would like to dine *al fresco* on one of the beautiful terraces.



<http://ristorantelaloggia.it>

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TRATTORIA 4 LEONI

Anthony Hopkins ate here on several occasions for lunch when he was filming. A rustic-turned trendy trattoria, serves upscale versions of Tuscan cuisine. Delicious appetizers such as artichokes with cream cheese, and zucchini with stracchino cheese, hearty first courses and second courses including their famous bistecca (grilled steak served rare) and for *Peposo all'Imprunetina* (peppery stew). Desserts can't be forgotten; pear and chocolate cake is just one of their offerings. If you pass on dessert, there is an excellent gelato shop across the piazza you should give a try. If the weather is nice you will want to make a reservation for one of the tables outside in the small piazza. Moderately priced.



<http://www.4leoni.com/>

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OBICA MOZZARELLA BAR

This is not your typical Tuscan restaurant but it is quite good with a modern take "California" take on Tuscan food. The creative chef is actually from San Francisco and offers excellent main course salads, a variety of dishes with mozzarella and pizza and pasta dishes. The dishes are well presented and the staff is professional.



<http://www.obica.com/restaurants/florence>

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CANTINETTA ANTINORI

"WINE BAR"

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED - Just off of the city's high fashion street of Via Tornabuoni is an iconic palazzo dating back to the 1400's, owned by the distinguished Antinori family, wine-makers for over 600 years . This family spans over 26 generations in the wine industry. If you aren't able to go to their place in Tuscany this is the next best place. You'll find Cantinetta Antinori on the ground floor of the Antinori Mansion, serving up traditional Tuscan fare along with Antinori wines and fresh produce from their farms on crisp, white tablecloths. Enjoy the food and have fun!



COCQUINARIUS

Located in the heart of the city next to *Piazza del Duomo* is a great find for a seasonal kitchen and wine bar. It's located inside an old barn from the 1300's. The owners were trying to keep it as original as possible without adding or removing any walls when building the kitchen. Other additions to the interior is the beautiful chandelier found in a cellar in Bordeaux and the tables of the original Moulin Rouge in Paris. They offer wines from small local vineyards that are not well known. Pastas are outstanding and they focus on the season - try the pear and pecorino ravioli or the burrata ravioli with pistachio. Moderately priced.



<http://www.coquinarius.com>

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TRATTORIA LA GROTTA GUELFA

This is one of the first restaurants I come to when I'm in Florence. It's extra special if the air conditioned/heated patio is available. In the last few years it has become popular or been discovered. For this reason, I would make a reservation especially for lunch. The appetizers are large enough to share and the pasta dishes are generous as well.

You can't go wrong with the hunter's antipasto or the carpaccio with arugula and parmesan. I never had anything I didn't like here and must be the reason it is so popular now. Moderately priced.



<http://www.grotaguelfa.it/>

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OSTERIA DEL CINGHIALE BIANCO

Cinghiale Bianco is located on the ground floor of thirteenth century tower in Borg San Jacopo, one of the quaintest streets of medieval Florence, among art galleries, antique shops and fine boutiques. The first dining room is situated right in the old tower, with the original antique stone walls in view. The second dining room and the kitchen were built in the tower's old courtyard, which was covered by vaults in 1500 in order to best bear the weight of the historic building. With its characteristic and romantic charm, candle-lit stone niches in "pietra serena", Cinghiale Bianco offers a very special ambience. We went for lunch and everyone loved the first courses and pasta dishes. Service was friendly and accommodating. It is located near the famous Cinghiale bronze statue. Closed on Wednesday.



<http://cinghialebianco.com/it/menu>

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TRATTORIA DA SERGIO

"Family run, simple and inexpensive traditional Tuscan fare and the menu is handwritten daily, of just five or six dishes. For anyone who seeks true traditional fare. Known by locals simply as 'Da Sergio,' they have been serving traditional Tuscan fare since 1915. This is a place where the potatoes are peeled and sliced fresh daily, and where the same locals eat lunch almost daily. Fourth-generation Gozzi brothers, Andrea and Alessandro, run the entire show, the former from the kitchen and the latter from the bustling dining area. Everything in the kitchen is fresh and locally sourced. They don't even have a freezer. They get their ingredients every morning from the market; the meat from Simone Manetti and the fish from Gianni Massimiliano. These same Florentine families of butchers and fishmongers their father, grandfather and great grandfather bought from. OPEN ONLY FOR LUNCH AND THEY DON'T TAKE RESERVATIONS. Inexpensive



NO WEBSITE AVAILABLE FOR DA SERGIO

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MERCATO CENTRALE

Even if you're not a foodie this indoor market is something to see! Located between the San Lorenzo Church and the train station, it's tucked away behind all of the tent vendors who sell their wares in front of the building. Open daily from 10 am until midnight.

On the ground floor are hundreds of farmers, cheese makers, butchers, florists, seafood mongers and wine shops who take center stage. All of the shops are run by artisan traders who share a passion for their craft. There are over 500 places to sit and enjoy a meal that is committed to a high standard of quality and all dishes are prepared inside the Mercato. Similar to a farmers market, you pay each shop owner individually. The displays are beautifully presented and the prices are competitive. You are sure to find the perfect gift to bring back with you. Pizzicheria Baroni is a great shop with cheeses, wine, biscotti and more. They ship to the states at very reasonable prices.

Take the escalator to the second floor and there are several small restaurants similar to a food court at the mall except these have great quality. This is the place to come and try a variety of foods. During the lunch hour it can be very crowded, however, there are plenty of tables and places to sit.



<http://www.mercatocentrale.it/en/>

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CAFE DEGLI ARTIGIANI

Located in my favorite section of Florence in the San Spirito in the Oltrarno. This is where the locals go for great coffee. Yes, there are plenty of places in Florence to find great coffee but this one is famous for its' rich, dark and somehow creamy coffee. If you love your coffee, then you must give it a try.

They opened a gelateria across the piazza that recently won one of the highest awards in Italy for gelato. Both places are worth searching out. Inexpensive



<http://www.firenze-oltrarno.net/caffeartigiani/>
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MORE RECOMMENDED RESTAURANTS IN FLORENCE

Alle Murate
Via del Proconsolo, 6
39 055 240618
Elegant and creative cuisine
Closed Monday

Al Tranvai
Piazza Torquato Tasso, 14/r
39 055 225197
Small trattoria with Tuscan food
Closed Sunday

Buca dell'Orafo
Via de' Girolami, 28/r
39 055 213619
Amazing atmosphere - Tuscan cuisine
Closed Sunday and Monday

Cibreo Ristorante
Via del Verrocchio, 8/r
39 055 2341100
Cozy with excellent cuisine
Closed on Monday

Coco Lezzone
Via Ghibellina, 26/r
39 055 287178
Rustic trattoria, homemade dishes
Closed on Sunday

Targa Bistrot
Lungarno Cristoforo Colombo, 7
39 055 677377
Lovely setting - creative cuisine
Closed Sunday

Enoteca La Sosta del Rossellino
Via del Rossellino, 2/4 - Settignano
39 055 697245
Refined trattoria with creative cuisine
Closed Monday and Tuesday

Enoteca Pinchiorri
Via Ghibellina 87
39 055 242757
Famous all over the world - refined cuisine
Closed on Sunday

La Cucina del Salviatino
Via del Salviatino, 21 - Fielsole
39 055 9041111
Typical trattoria with Tuscan cuisine
Closed on Sunday

Ristorante Le Fonticine
Via Nazionale, 79/r
39 055 282106
Tuscan atmosphere and cuisine
Closed Sunday and Monday

Sabatini
Via de' Panzani 9/A
39 055 282802
Elegant ambience - high-quality cuisine
Closed Monday

Trattoria Marione
Via della Spada, 27r
39 055 214756
Typical trattoria with Tuscan cuisine
Closed Sunday

THE FOLLOWING RESTAURANTS ARE NOT FOR EVERYONE

It seems all of the restaurant reviews list the same restaurants over and over again. Many of the editors have never eaten at the places they are recommending. They simply research online and read reviews from other writers written throughout the years. The following restaurants will appeal to some in particular while they may not be appreciated by others. While I'm not telling you to avoid these places you should do your research before going and make sure it is right for you.

La Giostra - Owned and run by a Hapsburg prince who is charming and will greet you with a glass of Prosecco. He knows how to put on a show for the tourist. The food was good the first time I went in 2000. Since then I've been disappointed every time. I finally gave up and have found other places worthy of the high priced menu. It is now average food at a high price. Reservations are a must if you decide to go.

Il Latini - This is another place all of the first-timers go. There will be a huge crowd out front waiting for the restaurant to open. Prosciutto and salami are hanging from the ceiling. When the doors open, everyone is seated and the service is quick to start bringing out platters of food. Everyone sits at communal tables with bright florescent lighting. There used to be a set price of about 50 euros per person for all the food and wine you could drink. It is great for large groups, young families and students. The servers start bringing out plates of food and don't stop until you are full. The service is quick so they can get you in and out and start with the second seating.

Trattoria Sabotino - This is a no-frills, bare-bones place with friendly owners. No reservations are required. It is one of the cheapest and most affordable places for a no-frills meal. The tables are covered with plastic tablecloths and the lighting is industrial-strength fluorescent lighting. It is located in the San Frediano area near the entry gates. This is a place where the neighborhood locals come for a quick bite of home cooking.