



Indulge in Italy



10 Italian dishes you must try

If you've scored some cheap flights to Italy don't limit yourself to Italian pizza and gelato! Here are 10 lesser-known dishes you need to have on your next trip to Italy.

by Cindy-Lou Dale

BIGOLI IN VENICE

Spaghetti will become a carb of the past, once you've sampled bigoli, the signature pasta of the Veneto region. Unlike smooth, thin spaghetti, bigoli noodles are thick, coarse and tubular (each has a hole in the middle, like bucatini) and are traditionally handmade from buckwheat flour and duck eggs. Bigoli, served, generally, with a simple red wine sauce that clings to the thick, rough noodles is then garnished with parsley and a sprinkle of Parmesan.

RIBOLLITA IN FLORENCE

Ribollita is a dish invented by servants who would collect their master's unfinished bread and vegetables and boil it up to create ribollita soup. Considered peasant food, you'd never guess by tasting it! Despite its humble beginnings, ribollita is proudly considered one of Tuscany's most important (and delicious) dishes.

RISI E BISI IN MOGLIANO

Risi e bisi, or "rice and peas," may not sound like Italy's most refined dish, but it's remarkably tasty. As the name implies, it consists only of rice and peas, cooked with stock and seasonings much like a traditional risotto, except



without the constant stirring so to achieve a slightly soupier texture. The result is a clean, exquisitely balanced dish which, in typical Venetian fashion, allows its main ingredients to shine.

TORTELLINI EN BRODO IN ROME

For many families in northern Italy, specifically Emilia-Romagna, tortellini en brodo is a kitchen staple, particularly during the holidays. Unlike regular tortellini, served in a heavy cream sauce, this is like a homemade chicken broth (think the Italian version of wonton soup), except it's filled with veal and Parmigiano Reggiano cheese and is topped off with a sprinkling of grated Parmesan. You'll never want to eat tortellini any other way.

CANEDERLI IN MONCLASSICO

Like Tuscany's ribollita, the canederli from Italy's Trentino-Alto Adige region is made using leftover bread; this time, it's mixed with eggs and milk to create a golf ball-sized dumpling—like the German knödel. For extra flavor speck (smoked, raw ham typical of northeast Italy), cheese, and spices are added before the canederli is boiled in a beef or chicken broth. You can eat it with melted butter or in a shallow bowl of broth—comfort food like no other.





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OSSO BUCO ALLA MILANESE IN MILAN

If there's one meat dish you must try in Italy, let it be osso bucco and not chicken parmigiana (which, if truth be told, isn't Italian). You can't go wrong with veal shanks braised slowly in white wine, served with a tangy, garlicky gremolata. There are numerous versions of this dish, so be sure to order the original Milanese—and don't forget to scoop out the rich, buttery marrow from inside the veal bones.

CACCIUCCO IN LIVORNO

Not a fish person? Cacciucco will change that. The spicy, zesty seafood stew is native to Livorno, historically made by fishmongers using the day's unsold catch—which might include shellfish, monkfish, even squid and octopus. The fish is cooked in a rich tomato and chili-based broth flavored with garlic and sage then served with crusty bread—necessary for scooping up the remaining broth in your bowl. It's so good that Italian immigrants in San Francisco created an Italian-American version, cioppino, using Pacific Ocean seafood and with the addition of wine.

FOCACCIA DI RECCO IN GENOA

This dish is one of the top reasons you'll love Liguria, right up there with Portofino and the Cinque Terre. It hails from the Genovese town of Recco and is one of the region's yummiest yet effortless specialties: it's a thin sheet of baked focaccia (flat olive-oil bread) with a creamy layer of Stracchino cheese in the center. Think grilled cheese, but better.

BOTTARGA IN TAORMINA

Widely known as the caviar of the south, it's not so much a dish as it is an ingredient: Bottarga is salted, cured mullet roe—delicacy of both Sardinia and Sicily. Used in many regional southern dishes because of its rich, briny, salty flavor, it's grated over linguine, shaved atop bitter greens, or sliced with buttered bread or crostini.



TORRONE IN MODICA

The origins of torrone are somewhat blurry—some foodies say it originates from Lombardy, others insist it's Sicilian. But this is irrelevant. What does matter is the taste. It's a creamy, sticky, nougat-like candy made with honey, egg whites, toasted nuts, and citrus zest, sold in thick slabs at cafes and sweet shops across Italy. Go for the "original," but one modern variant gets the thumbs up as it comes dipped in chocolate!

Pizza, spaghetti, and gelato—they're all fabulous, but that's just three of Italy's gastronomic contributions to the world. With myriads of regional dishes and a remarkable parade of street food, don't deny yourself Italy's other culinary pleasures.



WOW air offers cheap flights to Milan, Italy during the spring and summer season, from the beginning of April until mid-October. Find your flight from Canada or the US to Italy at wowair.com.



Italy has great food, but it's most famous contributions to the culinary world are not the primary reason you should visit, it's all those other dishes. Just take your pick. WOW air will get you there.