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EATING

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Dining out is a delicious way to enter into the Roman spirit. It's one of the finest things to do in Rome, despite all the other things jostling for your attention.

Romans love to eat, and eat well. Any Roman you ask will have an opinion on the best restaurants in town, the best ice cream and the best pizza. Eating is a sociable experience: long and lingering (a lazy lunch at a neighbourhood restaurant) or short and sizzling (a boisterous pizza with 49 friends). Romans also have high expectations of the kitchen, and fresh, local, seasonal ingredients are the norm, rather than the exception. It's a Mediterranean cuisine, with the addition of a penchant for deep-fried things and a special spot for innards. And of course there's pizza. Here pizzas are served thinner than you've ever seen them, wood-charred, with burnt edges and bubbling-hot toppings.

It used to be that Rome's eateries paid more attention to food than to décor or anything else, but the city has changed over the last few decades and there are ever-increasing opportunities to eat in gorgeous interiors, peruse fantastic wine lists and be wooed by sensitive service. There are also new-style trattorias, which update the simple neighbourhood formula with innovative menus and increased efforts to wine and dine their customers. That said, most Romans will always return to their favourite, well-worn trattoria, and there's no need to write a requiem for the gingham tablecloths and spindly tables on a cobbled street yet. Or for the waiter who slaps down your plate and scribbles your bill on the paper tablecloth. Often the best meal you have will be at the cheapest place, with the shortest menu – if you only serve deep-fried fish, you're going to do it well.

If your interest in Roman food goes further than just eating, consider signing up for a cooking course (see p288).

HISTORY

Petronius wrote a satirical account of the banquet of the newly wealthy Trimalchio in the 1st century AD, which fixed in the collective consciousness that the ancient Romans ate dormice seasoned with poppies and honey. But the fundamentals of Roman cuisine have remained the same throughout history, resting on the availability of local ingredients: olives, olive oil, pulses, cured pork, lamb, offal, vegetables, wild greens, *pecorino* cheese, ricotta, wood-baked bread, pasta and fish. Innards yes, mice no.

In the past, butchers who worked in the city abattoir were often paid in meat as well as money. But they got the cuts that the moneyed classes didn't want, the offal, and so developed ways to cook them – usually extremely slowly to develop the flavour and disguise their beginnings. The Roman staple *coda alla vaccinara* translates as 'oxtail cooked butcher's style'.

The growing numbers of pilgrims from the 14th century onwards meant a proliferation of taverns and *osterie* (neighbourhood inns), which usually specialised in one dish and *vino della casa* (house wine). The arrival of the potato and tomato from the New World in the 16th century didn't have an immediate impact, though obviously the Romans eventually started to use these novel vegetables.

Deep-frying is a staple of *cucina ebraico-romanesca* (Roman-Jewish cooking), and dates to the period between the 16th and 19th centuries when the Jews were confined to the city's ghetto. To add flavour to their limited ingredients – those spurned by the rich, such as courgette (zucchini) flowers – they began to fry everything from mozzarella to salted cod. *Bresaola* – wind-dried beef, often served as an antipasto – is another feature of Roman-Jewish cuisine, as a replacement for prosciutto.

Grand Tourists (rich pilgrims, in search of Art rather than God) arrived in the 18th century, and *osterie* began to get more sophisticated. Pizza only arrived post-WWII, introduced by southern migrants. The 1980s saw the development of *cucina creativa* – more experimental ways of cooking. Sometimes this was a simple twist, such as adding a different ingredient to a written-in-stone recipe or using an unlikely kind of pasta with a traditional sauce.

CELEBRATING WITH FOOD

In Rome, to have a good time you need food. Rites-of-passage celebrations all involve sumptuous spreads that are often laid on as much to impress as to enjoy, as anyone who has eaten their way through a nine-course wedding banquet can testify.

Festivals in Italy usually have ancient roots – when Christianity came along, many were just adapted to the new figurehead. The biggest festivals are Natale (Christmas), Pasqua (Easter) and Carnevale (the period leading up to Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent). The classic way to celebrate any feast day is to precede it with a day of eating *magro* (lean) to prepare for the overindulgence to come. On Vigilia (Christmas Eve), for example, tradition dictates that you eat little during the day and have a fish-based dinner as a prelude to the excesses of the 25th. Many special days have dishes associated with them: at Carnevale, the sweets to eat are *bigné* (fried cream-filled pastries); on Ferragosto (Feast of the Assumption; 15 August) Romans eat *pollo e peperoni* (chicken with peppers).

Most festivals have some kind of food involved, but many of them have no other excuse than food. These are called *sagre* (feasting festivals) and are usually celebrations of local specialities such as *porchetta* (a hog spit-roasted with herbs and served cold), hazelnuts, wine and sausages.

ON THE MENU

Home Comforts

Roman favourites are all comfort foods, deceptively simple and notably iconic. In the classic Roman comedy *I Soliti Ignoti* (Big Deal on Madonna Street; 1958), some inept thieves break through a wall to burgle a safe, but find themselves in a kitchen by mistake, and console themselves by cooking *pasta e ceci* (pasta with chickpeas). Try *pasta e ceci* in winter or if you're in need of the nutritional equivalent of a cuddle.

DOS & DON'TS

- Italians dress relatively smartly at most meals, so brush up when eating out.
- Bite through hanging spaghetti rather than slurp it up.
- Pasta is eaten with a fork only.
- Don't ask for salt unless you want to offend the cook. (It's hardly likely you'll need it: Rome was once a stop on Via Salaria, the Salt Road, and still loves its salt.)
- It's OK to eat pizza with your hands.
- In an Italian home you can, and should, *fare la scarpetta* (make a shoe) with your bread and wipe plates clean of sauces. If you want to be refined about it, use your fork. If you're in relaxed company, use your hands. At a restaurant it's not good manners to eat bread with your pasta, but most people do.
- If invited to someone's home, traditional gifts are a tray of *dolci* (sweets) from a *pasticceria* (pastry shop), a bottle of wine or a bunch of flowers.
- At restaurants, leave a tip: anything from 5% in a pizzeria to 10% in a more upmarket place. At the very least round up the bill.
- Don't be surprised to see *pane e coperto* (bread and cover charge; €1 to €5 per person) added to your bill.

In *Un Americano a Roma* (An American in Rome; 1954), Roman actor Alberto Sordi decides he wants to be an American. He comes home to a bowl of pasta and glass of wine prepared by his mama, but rejects it, saying Italian food is for peasants. He tries instead to eat bread with milk, mustard, yoghurt and marmalade, as he says the Americans do, before spitting it out with the immortal line: 'Maccarone, why are you looking at me? You provoke me and I shall destroy you!' A black-and-white photo of him forking the spaghetti into his mouth is probably more commonly reproduced than the Sistine Chapel.

But which sauce swayed Sordi? It could have been *spaghetti alla carbonara*, a gorgeous, barely-there sauce of egg, cheese and *guanciale* (cured pig's cheek). It was born out of poverty as this was, obviously, a less-sought-after cut of meat, used sparingly to give flavour. In these richer days, pancetta (cured bacon) is usually used instead. The egg is added raw, and stirred into the hot pasta to cook it. It's debatable why it's called *carbonara* – some say it's because it was the coal workers' favourite, and some that it's after the specks of black pepper that finish off the dish.

Another great belly-filling favourite is *butatini all'amatriciana* (with tomato sauce, onions, fried pancetta, cheese and chilli), which originated in Amatrice, a town east of Rome. The dish is an adaptation of *spaghetti alla gricia* (pasta with *pecorino* cheese, black pepper and pancetta), which comes from the town of Griciano in northern Lazio. A daring Amatrice cook added tomatoes, creating *amatriciana*.

Likewise, sparing amounts of prosciutto and sage are used to spark up the veal dish *saltimbocca* (the deliciously named 'leap in

the mouth'), while the humble chicken broth is given a lift by the addition of Parmesan and whisked egg to make the soup *stracciatella*.

Rome's often spectacularly scrumptious *spaghetti cacio e pepe* is piping-hot pasta topped with freshly grated *pecorino romano* (a sharp, salty, sheep's milk cheese), ground black pepper and a dash of olive oil. Deceptively simple, it's famously difficult to get right.

There are vast numbers of pasta shapes, such as *ravioli* (fresh pasta envelopes, often filled with spinach and ricotta), and sturdy *rigatoni* (tubes with ridges) traditionally served with *pagliata* (veal or lamb intestines). Spaghetti – *spago* means 'twine' – is best served with thin or oily sauces, such as *alle vongole* (with clams). *Bucatini* (little holes), classically Roman, holds a hearty sauce well. It's thicker than spaghetti and with a hole through its centre, so that the pasta cooks evenly. If you're eating *bucatini* in a restaurant, even if you're dining with the pope, it's permissible to tuck your napkin into your collar, such is the splash factor. The proximity of the Vatican might have inspired another popular, thick, ropelike shape – *strozzapreti* (priest-strangler).

When in Rome...

One of the great must-eats of the Lazio region is *porchetta*, not a suckling pig, but a hog roasted by a *porchettaio* (*porchetta* chef) on a spit with herbs and an abundance of *finocchio selvatico* (wild fennel). The best comes from Ariccia, in the hills around Rome, but many small shops in Frascati (p278) sell *porchetta* and young fresh white wine, and you can sit outside at trestle tables for a ravishing picnic. Other great meat dishes include *abbacchio al forno* (lamb roasted with rosemary and garlic), usually accompanied by potatoes, also roasted with rosemary.

If you eat offal, head to Testaccio district, the area around the old slaughterhouse and the heart of the *cucina Romana*. Here you can

try pasta with *pajata*, made with the entrails of young veal calves, considered a delicacy since they contain the mother's congealed milk. If you see the word *coratella* in a dish, it means that you'll be eating lights (lungs), kidneys and hearts. Offal is cooked with *carciofi* (artichokes), which cuts its richness and leaves the palate refreshed. At other times tomato is used, and the expression *in umido*, while normally meaning cooked in a broth, in Lazio tends to mean cooked in a tomato-scented broth. A typical Saturday-in-Rome dish is *trippa alla romana* (tripe cooked with potatoes, tomato and mint and sprinkled with *pecorino* cheese).

Seafood can be excellent in Rome, fished locally in Lazio. There are lots of dedicated seafood restaurants, usually upper-range places with delicate takes on fish such as sea bass, skate and tuna. According to the culinary calendar, decided by the Catholic Church to vary the nutrition of its flock, fish is eaten on Friday, and *baccalà* (salted cod), often eaten with *ceci* (chickpeas), usually on Wednesday.

Thursday is the day for *gnocchi* (dumplings). The traditional Roman recipe uses semolina flour and makes heavy *gnocchi*, but you can also find the typical *gnocchi* with potatoes, usually served with a *ragù* (sauce), which in Rome (unlike, say, Bologna) contains more tomatoes than meat.

Of the deep-fried delicacies, you can choose between fillets of *baccalà*, *fiore di zucca* (courgette flowers) stuffed with mozzarella and anchovies, and *carciofi alla giudia* (artichokes) – if *alla romana* these are cooked with oil, garlic and mint. *Suppli* are rice balls, shaped like large croquettes. If they contain mozzarella, they're called *suppli a telefono* because when you break one open, the cheese forms a string like a telephone wire between the two halves. Fried things are usually eaten at either Roman-Jewish restaurants or pizzerias.

If popping into a bakery, a Roman speciality that can become addictive is *pizza bianca*, a

plain pizza brushed with salt, olive oil and often rosemary. In many bakeries and cafés you can buy this split and filled with something to make a sandwich. A classic construction-worker's lunch is *pizza bianca* stuffed with mortadella, glazed down with white wine.

Desserts (*dolci*) tend to be the same at every trattoria: tiramisu, *pannacotta* (literally 'cooked cream', with added sugar and cooled to set) and so on, but for a traditional Roman *dolce* you should look out for ricotta cakes – with chocolate chips or cherries or both – at a local bakery. Many Romans eat at a restaurant and then go elsewhere for a gelato and a coffee to finish off the meal.

Market Fresh

What's on sale at the market that morning decides what's on the menu, and Romans get excited as broad beans arrive in May, figs in June, peaches in July, courgettes and aubergines in summer, and so on around the year. Vegetables to look out for include *puntarelle* (Catalonian chicory) tossed in a garlic, olive oil and anchovy dressing; *broccoli romanesco* (like broccoli), mainly found in winter; bitter wild chicory; and *lattuga romana*, which resembles cos lettuce. In spring, *fave* (broad beans) are eaten after meals (leaving mountains of green pods) with a slice of *pecorino romano* cheese; the 1st of May is a big day for doing this. Then, of course, there's Rome's rotund, fleshy, delicious artichoke. Herbs are so important that at the market the trader will usually stuff some in free at the end of your purchase, according to what's in season: some parsley, basil, and a stick of celery for your mama's *ragù*.

WHERE TO EAT

Eateries are divided into several categories. A *tavola calda* (hot table) offers cheap, pre-prepared pasta, meat and vegetable dishes. Quality is usually reasonable while atmosphere takes a back seat. In Ostia Antica (p266) you can see a *thermopile* complete with frescoed menu, the *tavola calda's* ancient ancestor.

A *rosticceria* sells cooked meats but often has a larger selection of takeaway food. There are also takeaway pizza joints serving ready pizza *al taglio* (by the slice). When it's good, it's very good. A pizzeria will, of course, serve pizza, but generally also a full menu including antipasto, pasta, meat and vegetable dishes. Pizzerias are often only open in the evening.

CLOSED IN AUGUST?

Most eateries close for at least a week in August, but the timings vary from year to year. We have listed here where restaurants close for the whole month. With others it's advisable to ring first in August to check that everyone hasn't gone to the beach.

You can eat well at many *enoteche*, wine bars that usually serve snacks (such as cheeses or cold meats) and some hot dishes.

For a full meal you'll want a trattoria, an *osteria* (neighbourhood inn) or a *ristorante* (restaurant). The difference between them is now fairly blurred. Traditionally, trattorias were family-run places that offered a basic, affordable menu of local dishes. Thankfully, a few still are. *Ristoranti*, however, offer more choice and smarter service, and are more expensive.

VEGETARIANS & VEGANS

Vegetarians can eat well in Rome, with the choice of profuse antipasti, pasta dishes, *insalati*, *contorni* and pizzas. There are a couple of extremely good vegetarian restaurants, and some of the more creative restaurants have increased numbers of vegetarian dishes.

Be mindful of hidden ingredients not mentioned on the menu – for example, steer clear of anything that's been stuffed (like courgette flowers, often spiced up with anchovies) or check that it's *senza carne o pesce* (without meat or fish). Note that to many Italians vegetarian means you don't eat red meat.

Vegans – as always – are in for a much tougher time. Cheese is used universally, so you must say '*senza formaggio*' (without cheese). Also remember that *pasta fresca*, which may also turn up in soups, is made with eggs. The safest bet is to self-cater or try a dedicated vegetarian restaurant, which will always have some vegan options.

ANCIENT ROME

Ancient Rome has lots of restaurants, some fantastic, but it pays to be wary of poor food at inflated prices around the main tourist haunts. If you're near the Colosseum or the Forum, you can also look in nearby Celio (p201), to the southwest, or Monti (p195), just north of Via Cavour. The restaurants of San Giovanni (p201) are also close by. From the Campidoglio you can wander down to the Centro Storico (p186).

EAT AS THE ROMANS DO

For *colazione* (breakfast), most Romans head to a bar for a cappuccino and *cornetto* – a croissant filled with *cioccolata* (chocolate), *marmellata* (marmalade) or *crema* (custard cream).

The main meal of the day is *pranzo* (lunch), eaten at about 1.30pm. Many shops and businesses close for three to four hours every afternoon to accommodate the meal and siesta that follows. On Sundays *pranzo* is sacred.

Cena (dinner), eaten anytime from about 8.30pm, is usually a simple affair, although this is changing as fewer people make it home for the big lunchtime feast.

A full Italian meal consists of an *antipasto* (starter), a *primo piatto* (first course), a *secondo piatto* (second course) with an *insalata* (salad) or *contorno* (vegetable side dish), *dolci* (sweet), fruit, coffee and *digestivo* (liqueur). When eating out, however, you can do as most Romans do, and mix and match: order, say, a *primo* followed by an *insalata* or *contorno*.

PRICE GUIDE

The pricing in this chapter refers to the average cost of a meal that includes *antipasto* (starter), *primo* (first course), *secondo* (second course) and *dolce* (dessert), with a glass of wine.

€	under €25
€€	€25 to €50
€€€	over €50

SAN TEODORO Map p60 Ristorante €€€

% 06 678 09 33; Via dei Fienili 49-50; meals €80; h Mon-Sat; g Via del Teatro di Marcello

Both ancient and cutting-edge (it's set on a medieval piazza, with vaulted ceilings and paintings by contemporary Roman artists), San Teodoro's sophisticated takes on traditional dishes keep this restaurant at the top of Rome's dining charts. Although it offers a hit list of Roman classics, it's best known for its delicious seafood creations, including baked sea bass served coated in artichokes. Chocolate, ricotta and ice cream appear in various guises for dessert, while the wine list will please most amateur connoisseurs.

LA PIAZZETTA Map p60 Ristorante €€

% 06 699 16 40; Vicolo del Buon Consiglio 23a; meals €35; h Mon-Sat; m Colosseo *Molto simpatico*, on a tiny medieval lane, this gay-friendly restaurant has a fabulous antipasti buffet and equally impressive *primi* and *secondi* – try the yolk *carbonara*. A dessert-sampler buffet means you don't have to face a difficult decision between puddings.

CENTRO STORICO

Around Piazza Navona, Campo de' Fiori and the Pantheon you'll find a plethora of eateries, including some of the capital's best restaurants (both contemporary and traditional Roman). Again, look out for overpriced tourist traps. The picturesque Jewish Ghetto is famous for its unique Roman-Jewish cooking.

PANTHEON & AROUND

LA ROSETTA Map pp74-5 Seafood €€€

% 06 686 10 02; Via della Rosetta 8-9; meals €80; h lunch Mon-Fri, dinner Mon-Sat; g or j Largo di Torre Argentina; a

La Rosetta is so excellent that it doesn't have to be overly formal. Some say this is

Rome's best fish restaurant; others say it's the best in Italy. Chef Massimo Riccioli's dishes are often startlingly simple – there's nothing complex about cuttlefish with lemon and olive oil or *linguine ai frutti di mare* (flat spaghetti with seafood) – but they're prepared with genius. He can also innovate, as his spaghetti with scampi and courgette flowers or *moscardini* (baby octopus) with mint show. Outside you glimpse the Pantheon but it's better inside amid yellow hues and white tablecloths. Bookings are essential.

TRATTORIA Map pp74-5 Ristorante €€€

% 06 68301 427; Campo Marzio Via del Pozzo delle Cornacchie 25; meals €55; h dinner Mon-Sat; g or j Largo di Torre Argentina; a Walk through the discreet entrance and up the stairs to find yourself in the city's most innovative Sicilian restaurant. It has an excellent reputation for its interpretations of classics such as *frittata* and *pasta alla Norma* (with fried aubergine, tomato, basil and ricotta), as well as delicious fried *gnocchi* with *culatello* (a kind of prosciutto), all served amid modernist minimalism that's as well-thought-out as the food.

BOCCONDIVINO Map pp74-5 Ristorante €€

% 06 683 08 626; Piazza di Campo Marzio 6; meals €50; h Mon-Sat; g Via del Corso; a This 'Divine Mouthful' is surprisingly good value. A modernist marriage of steel, Roman columns, fake zebra skin and contemporary art, the design fits the largely successful fusion fare. Typical dishes include *coda di rospo con caponata di melanzane e cipolla di Tropea stufate* (angler fish with aubergines and Tropea onions), and there's a bargain lunchtime set menu.

IL BACARO Map pp74-5 Ristorante €€

% 06 687 25 54; Via degli Spagnoli 27; meals €50; h lunch Mon-Fri, dinner Mon-Sat; g Corso del Rinascimento; a

You'll have to book, as Il Bacaro is the size of a postage stamp and always busy. It might be small but it's perfectly formed: the *primi* (first courses) are imaginative – try *spaghetti con gamberi, porcini, pecorino e tartufo* (spaghetti with prawns, porcini mushrooms, cheese and truffles) – the meat dishes are beefy and the wine list is well chosen. Summer seating spills out under a vine-covered pergola.

OSTERIA SOSTEGNO Map pp74-5 Osteria €€

% 06 679 38 42; Via della Colonnelle 5; meals €45-50; g or j Largo di Torre Argentina; a Here you have stumbled on a well-kept secret. It's intimate, a favourite of journalists and politicians, with simple yet excellent dishes such as *caprese* (tomato and mozzarella salad) or *lasagnetto al forno con punte di asparagi* (little lasagne with asparagus heads). There's a charming small terrace between the steep walls of a narrow alley. Nearby is the similarly splendid *Ristorante Settimio* (Map pp74-5; % 06 678 96 51; Via della Colonnelle 14; meals €45-50), run by the same family.

ARMANDO AL PANTEON

Map pp74-5 Trattoria €€

% 06 688 03 034; Salita dei Crescenzi 31; meals €45; h Mon-Fri, lunch only Sat, closed Aug; g or j Largo di Torre Argentina; a For over 45 years (since 1961) this warm, family-run trattoria, almost opposite the Pantheon, has been dishing out hearty staples such as herring with red onion and beans or *gnocchi* with tomato sauce. It's down-to-earth, classic and authentic, despite its history – philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre and footballer Pelé have both eaten here. To finish try the homemade cakes. Booking is advisable.

OBIKÀ Map pp74-5 Mozzarella Bar €€

% 06 683 26 30; Piazza di Firenze; meals €35; h noon-11.30pm; g Via del Corso; a Part of Rome's new guard, this is a mozzarella bar that resembles a sushi joint, but with the white stuff rather than the fishy stuff. The name isn't Japanese: it means 'here it is' in Neapolitan dialect, and the mozzarella arrives fresh daily at 8am. Try the *burrata* (mozzarella-like cheese filled with cream). Brunch is famously good too. Décor is ancient meets modern with columns and an underlit floor.

GREEN T Map pp74-5 Chinese €€

% 06 679 86 28; Via del Piè di Marmo 28; dishes €7-20; g or j Largo di Torre Argentina It's unusual to find good Chinese food in Rome, and this elegant place, both modern and classical oriental in look, is something entirely different: a tearoom and boutique, serving street food, meat and fish dishes, as well as a selection of raw seafood.

RICCIOLI CAFÉ Map pp74-5 Seafood €€

% 06 682 10 313; Via delle Coppelle 13; sushi from €2.50; h 10am-12.30am Mon-Thu, 10am-1.30am Fri & Sat; g Corso del Rinascimento The brainchild of Rome's sultan of seafood, La Rosetta's Massimo Riccioli (see [opposite](#)), this perennially chic oyster bar and restaurant specialises in seafood, mostly raw. There's superfresh sushi and sashimi, oysters (from Brittany) and a range of Mediterranean shellfish. You eat on blue-velvet banquettes under twisted modernist chandeliers, and there's *aperitivo* (see the boxed text, [p192](#)) and occasional DJs, but if none of this takes your fancy, you can take away between 10am and 9pm.

ENOTECA CORSI Map pp74-5 Wine Bar €€

% 06 679 08 21; Via del Gesù 87; meals €25; h Mon-Sat; g or j Largo di Torre Argentina Merryly worse for wear, family-run Corsi is a genuine old-style Roman eatery. The look is rustic – bare wooden tables, paper tablecloths, lined with wine bottles – and the atmosphere one of controlled mayhem. The menu, chalked up on a blackboard, contains homely dishes using good, fresh ingredients, such as *cacio e pepe* (pasta with *pecorino* cheese and ground black pepper) or *pasta e ceci* (pasta with chickpeas). It follows the culinary calendar, so if it's *gnocchi*, it's Thursday.

PIZZA FLORIDA Map pp74-5 Pizza al taglio €

% 06 688 03 236; Via Florida 25; pizza slice around €3; h 10am-10pm Mon-Sat; j Via Arenula You'll spot this takeaway place by the surrounding busy buzz. Run by the friendly Fiori family, it offers delicious slices of pizza with a fantastic range of fresh toppings, such as fontina cheese, bacon and chilli.

PIAZZA NAVONA & AROUND

IL CONVIVIO DI TROIANO

Map pp74-5 Ristorante €€€

% 06 686 94 32; Via dei Soldati 31; meals €100; h 8-11pm Mon-Sat; g Corso del Rinascimento Michelin-starred Il Convivio, tucked away in a 16th-century *palazzo* (mansion) north of Piazza Navona, is run by the talented Troiano brothers. It's elegant, intimate and impeccable. Menus are seasonal but you could be eating *maltagliati di farina kamut con ragu di quaglia, funghi porcini*

THE FABULOUS FABIO BALDASSARE

Fabio Baldassare is chef at one of the city's best restaurants, **L'Altro Mastai** (below). From a Roman family of cooks, he has worked with some big names, including the legendary Heinz Beck at the Hilton's La Pergola, Heinz Winkler in Germany and Raymond Blanc in England. In 2000 he took over at L'Altro Mastai. He also teaches at **Citta del Gusto** (p206).

What are your specialities?

I change the menu according to the season. In summer, I cook dishes such as foie gras with prickly pears, gazpacho and red onions, risotto with cantaloupe and capers, and pig-head ravioli with buffalo mascarpone and caviar. In winter, from November to December I have a white-truffle menu – people are always asking for white truffles.

What is your inspiration?

My cooking is Italian, but creative. Of paramount importance to me are the ingredients. The ingredients are all Italian, often from Lazio, but the essential thing is that they are the best quality. I try to put things together in a way that is very elegant, so that when you eat you taste the flavour, taste originality, and sometimes the combination creates a surprise.

Most Italians love their mama's cooking: has your biggest influence been your mama, Heinz Beck or Raymond Blanc?

All my family cook, but to learn to cook the way that I do, I went outside the family. I studied with Heinz Beck and Raymond Blanc to learn other things. My family kitchen I know by heart, but it is a different mentality to the type of cuisine I create now.

How do you think things are changing in Rome?

It's no longer a city full of trattorias and *osterie*. More restaurants are placing more importance on style, on waiters, on wines, as you find in London and New York. There are more tastes available – such as Japanese and vegetarian – and Michelin-starred restaurants.

Apart from L'Altro Mastai, where would you recommend visitors to Rome go to eat?

Agata e Romeo (p195) is an excellent restaurant, or **Sora Lella** (p193) on Tiberina island is good for traditional Roman cooking.

e mirtili (homemade kamut-wheat egg pasta with quail ragout, porcini mushrooms and blueberries) or *vermicelli di Gragnano all'amatriciana* (Gragnano vermicelli with bacon and tomato sauce). There's an accompanying wine list of more than 2000 labels. Booking is essential and an attitude of reverence recommended.

L'ALTRO MASTAI Map pp74–5 Ristorante €€€

☎ 06 683 01 296; Via G Giraud; meals €100, 7-course tasting menu €85; h dinner Tue-Sat, closed Aug; ☍ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II

L'Altro Mastai is a graceful, special-occasion place, with an interior that manages to be both grand and intimate. Service is fabulous and Fabio Baldassare's cooking expert and innovative (for an interview with Baldassare, see p187). His creations include cod dressed with caviar and John Dory fillet with artichokes and liquorice, but he never lets creativity get in the way of balance and flavour.

CASA BLEVE Map pp74–5 Wine Bar €€

☎ 06 686 59 70; Via del Teatro Valle 48-49; meals €45; h lunch Tue-Sat, dinner Wed-Fri, closed Aug; ☍ or j Largo di Torre Argentina

While away an afternoon in this stately, column-lined courtyard roofed with stained glass. It's ideal for a romantic or epicurean assignation accompanied by sublime wine and cheeses (mature or fresh, such as mozzarella and *burrata*), cold cuts, *carpaccio* (thin slices of raw beef) and amazing roulades.

CUL DE SAC Map pp74–5 Wine Bar €€

☎ 06 688 01 094; Piazza Pasquino 73; meals €35; h Mon-Sat; ☍ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II

A handy address just off Piazza Navona, Cul de Sac is a deservedly popular wine bar with food. The wine list features 1500 international labels, while the menu reveals a French bias: moreish meat pâté, *carpaccio*, delicious cheese and cured hams. The outdoor tables fill quickly, so you might have to duck into the narrow interior.

DA FRANCESCO

Map pp74–5 Trattoria, Pizzeria €€

☎ 06 686 40 09; Piazza del Fico 29; meals €25; ☍ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II
Paper tablecloths, frazzled yet jovial waiters, tables sprawling along the cobbled street, and a menu of pizza, pasta and meat – this is the classic eat-up-and-ship-out joint. Long on character and short on frills, it's popular and fills up quickly, so unless you rock up early you'll have to queue. Pizzas are tasty and typical, beer is on tap and music comes by way of folksy guitar-strumming buskers.

ALFREDO E ADA Map pp74–5 Trattoria €

☎ 06 687 88 42; Via dei Banchi Nuovi 14; meals €20; h dinner Mon-Fri; ☍ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II

Find a seat at this tiny, brick-arched and wood-panelled place, with its spindly marble-topped tables, and then eat what Ada puts in front of you (there's no menu). It'll be simple tasty staples like pasta with tomato sauce and *salsiccia con fagioli* (sausage with beans). Dessert comes from Ada's legendary biscuit tin.

DA TONINO Map pp74–5 Trattoria €

☎ 06 687 70 02; Via del Governo Vecchio 18; meals €15-20; h Mon-Sat; ☍ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II
You'll be hard-pressed to find a cheaper place for a sit-down meal in central Rome. Unsigned Tonino's is a wonderfully low-key place with yellowing pictures hanging on white walls, and is always packed. There's no menu – the waiter will reel off the choices. You can't really go wrong – everything's pretty good – but if you want a recommendation, go for the *pasta alla gricia* (pasta with *pecorino* cheese, black pepper and pancetta). It's not a place to linger – more hungry bargain-hunters will need your table.

INSALATA RICCA Map pp74–5 Ristorante €

☎ 06 856 88 036; Largo dei Chiavari 85; salads €6.50-9; ☍ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II
Tapping into a taste for salad among all that pizza and pasta, Insalata Ricca is reliable and popular, with numerous branches. It offers a huge choice of meal-sized salads ranging from traditional tomato and mozzarella to out-there apple and walnut. You'll find branches at **Piazza Pasquino 72** (Map pp74–5; ☎ 06 683 07 881), **Via Giulio Cesare Santini 12** (Map pp122–3) and **Via FP Calboli 50** (Map pp130–1; ☎ 06 375 13

941), and handily near the Vatican at **Piazza del Risorgimento 4** (Map pp130–1; ☎ 06 397 30 387).

LA FOCACCIA Map pp74–5 Pizzeria €

☎ 06 688 03 312; Via del Pace 11; pizzas €5.50-8.80; h 12.30pm-12.30am Tue-Sun; ☍ Corso del Rinascimento; a
Hotfoot it to an outside table at this unsigned, gay-friendly pizzeria. It faces the beautiful Chiostro del Bramante, and inside the downstairs dining room is surprisingly big. As well as great bruschetta, you can eat wood-fired pizzas and breads, and delicate fresh pastas.

LO ZOZZONE Map pp74–5 Panini €

☎ 06 688 085 75; Via del Teatro Pace 32; pizza bianca €2.50-5; h 9am-9pm Mon-Fri, 10am-11pm Sat, 11.30am-5.30pm Sun; ☍ Corso del Rinascimento
The 'Dirty One' (a nickname that unfortunately stuck) is a brilliant *panino* (bread roll) joint, and is leaving its dirty roots further and further behind. These days there are chairs and tables, inside and out! Pay at the register for a regular or large *pizza bianca*, then ask for it to be stuffed with your belly's desire at the bar.

PIZZERIA DA BAFFETTO

Map pp74–5 Pizzeria €

☎ 06 686 16 17; Via del Governo Vecchio 114; pizzas €7; h 6.30pm-1am; ☍ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II
Once a meeting point for '60s radicals and now a raucous pizzeria beloved of loud locals and less-loud tourists, Da Baffetto offers the full-on wham-bam Roman pizza experience. To partake, join the queue and wait for the bustling waiters to squeeze you into whatever table space is available. The pizzas are the thin-crust Roman variety, served bubbling hot from the wood-fired oven. Expect to be hurried on your way once you've finished.

PIZZERIA LA MONTECARLO

Map pp74–5 Pizzeria €

☎ 06 686 18 77; Vicolo Savelli 11-13; pizzas €4.50-9; h noon-3pm & 6.30pm-1am; ☍ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II
La Montecarlo, another true-Roman pizzeria full of raucous charm, is ideal for sightseers exploring the *centro storico* (historic centre), but is also crammed with pizza-hungry locals. Expect thin, wood-charred pizzas, paper

SELF-CATERING

There are various supermarkets dotted around the city centre. All are open from around 8am to 8pm daily.

Conad (Map pp90–1; basement level, Stazione Termini)

DeSpar (Map pp74–5; Via Giustiniani 18b–21) Near the Pantheon.

DeSpar (Map pp74–5; Corso Vittorio Emanuele II 40)

Di per Di (Map pp90–1; Via Vittoria)

Di per Di (Map pp108–9; Via dei Santi Quattro)

Sir (Map pp90–1; Piazza dell'Indipendenza 28)

Todis (Map pp122–3; Via Natale del Grande 24)

tablecloths, celebrity photos on the walls, milling queues and supercharged waiters.

VOLPETTI ALLA SCROFA

Map pp74–5 Pizza al taglio €

€2-7.50; h 7am-8.45pm Mon-Sat, 9am-8.45pm Sun; g Corso del Rinascimento

Volpetti offers scrumptious pizza, *pizza rustica* and pastries to take out, as well as a selection of top-notch daily *tavola calda* delights (set menu €10), which you can eat in or out. This is also a glorious deli with delicacies including truffles, salami and cheese.

CAMPO DE' FIORI & AROUND

CAMPONESCHI Map pp74–5 Ristorante €€€

€2-7.50; h dinner Mon-Sat; g Corso Vittorio Emanuele II To catch up on Rome's high-level gossip, elegant, elitist Camponeschi is the place to eavesdrop. In a romantic setting on Piazza Farnese, it's a favourite of politicians, diplomats and rich industrialists. Inside it feels like a refined wedding reception, complete with floral decorations. The cuisine is a mix of French and Mediterranean, with game in the hunting season, lobster, black truffles and fish, and a lengthy wine list to satisfy its quaffing clientele.

HOSTERIA DEL PESCE

Map pp74–5 Seafood €€€

€2-7.50; h 7am-8.45pm Mon-Sat, 9am-8.45pm Sun; g Corso del Rinascimento One of the capital's hottest seafood restaurants, this place has filled the bellies of

Francis Ford Coppola and Giorgio Armani among other megastars. It sports a studiously low-key look of hardwood floors and deep-blue walls, gets packed, and serves unforgettable, ultrafresh food. Squid is fried and served with creamy mash, risotto is dyed jet-black with octopus ink, while sea bream, snapper and turbot are grilled to crispy perfection, all accompanied by white wines only. Booking is advised.

AL BRIC Map pp74–5 Ristorante €€€

€2-7.50; h 7am-8.45pm Mon-Sat, 9am-8.45pm Sun; g Corso Vittorio Emanuele II Intimate and renowned, especially for its wine list, this place has several rooms in a 16th-century building, all lined with wine bottles and the lids of wooden wine boxes. Cuisine is creative and designed to complement the wines, with dishes such as grilled tomato with *pecorino di fossa* (sheep's cheese aged in caves) and spaghetti with figs, white prawns and Roquefort cheese.

VINERIA ROSCIOLI SALUMERIA

Map pp74–5 Wine Bar €€€

€2-7.50; h 7am-8.45pm Mon-Sat, 9am-8.45pm Sun; g Corso del Rinascimento Walk in here and swoon over the mingled aromas. Once a traditional deli, this is now a temple to food, with lots of fantastic olive oil, cheeses (around 450 varieties), Italian and Spanish hams and so on to buy. You can eat in the *molto chic* interior under the exposed brick arches with their modernist paintings, and the wine list has some 1100 labels (900 Italian, 200 French). The affiliated *bakery* (p192) is nearby.

DITIRAMBO Map pp74–5 Trattoria €€

€2-7.50; h 7am-8.45pm Mon-Sat, 9am-8.45pm Sun; g Corso del Rinascimento Ditirambo is a recommended, convivial, new-wave trattoria. The interior looks like a regular, if upmarket, neighbourhood place, but the innovative cooking takes risks (mainly hits, with the occasional miss). Ingredients are organic and seasonal and there are an unusual number of vegetarian options. Try the delicate antipasti, such as ricotta with marinated artichokes. It's a favourite of theatrical and media types, as well as tourists, and is unpretentious and popular, so be sure to book.

RENATO E LUISA Map pp74–5 Trattoria €€

€2-7.50; h 7am-8.45pm Mon-Sat, 9am-8.45pm Sun; g Corso del Rinascimento A favourite among vivacious young Romans, this backstreet new-style trattoria is always busy. The cooking is more complex than the norm, with a buttery French twist. Try dishes such as the delicious goat's cheese and honey starter. Service can be haphazard.

GRAPPOLO D'ORO Map pp74–5 Trattoria €€

€2-7.50; h 7am-8.45pm Mon-Sat, 9am-8.45pm Sun; g Corso del Rinascimento More up to date (in design terms) than nearby Ditirambo, this is a similarly buzzing, informal, stylish eatery among the sometimes lacklustre options in this neighbourhood. The food is creative without being over-designed, but with old favourites such as *spaghetti alla carbonara* and meatballs.

HOSTARIA COSTANZA Map pp74–5 Osteria €€

€2-7.50; h 7am-8.45pm Mon-Sat, 9am-8.45pm Sun; g Corso del Rinascimento This is old-school Roman dining at its best. In the basement of Pompey's Theatre, Costanza serves up simple and wonderfully cooked food such as a creamy *riso con fiori di zucca* (risotto with courgette flowers), perfect *ravioli di carcioffi* (ravioli with artichokes) and a simply delicious *filetto di manzo al barolo* (fillet of beef with *barolo* wine sauce). The waiters are friendly, the house wine is quaffable and the prices are remarkably reasonable. Bookings essential.

LA CARBONARA Map pp74–5 Ristorante €€

€2-7.50; h 7am-8.45pm Mon-Sat, 9am-8.45pm Sun; g Corso del Rinascimento La Carbonara offers superb ringside seating on the never-dull Campo de' Fiori. The food is good, earthy Roman fare that comes at surprisingly honest prices. As its name suggests, it's known for its *spaghetti alla carbonara*, although the restaurant is actually named after a coal shop that the owner's father once ran.

OSTERIA AR GALLETTO

Map pp74–5 Osteria €€

€2-7.50; h 7am-8.45pm Mon-Sat, 9am-8.45pm Sun; g Corso del Rinascimento You wouldn't expect there to be anywhere reasonably priced on Piazza Farnese, one of Rome's loveliest outdoor rooms, but this

long-running *osteria* is the real thing, with good, honest Roman food, a warm local atmosphere and dazzlingly set exterior tables. Roasted chicken is the house speciality (*galletto* means little rooster), but the roasted lamb in season is just as fine.

SERGIO ALLA GROTTA

Map pp74–5 Trattoria €€

€2-7.50; h 7am-8.45pm Mon-Sat, 9am-8.45pm Sun; g Corso del Rinascimento A flower's throw from the Campo, Sergio's is what a proper Roman trattoria should look like: chequered tablecloths, bustling waiters, steaming plates of pasta, and not a frill in sight. A loyal following enjoys classic hearty Roman pastas – *cacio e pepe*, *carbonara*, *amatriciana* – and large steaks grilled over hot coals. In the summer there are tables outside on the cobbled, ivy-hung lane.

ANTICA HOSTARIA ROMANESCA

Map pp74–5 Osteria €€

€2-7.50; h 7am-8.45pm Mon-Sat, 9am-8.45pm Sun; g Corso del Rinascimento If you want to sit and eat on the happening Campo, watching the flower market by day and the bar hoppers by night, this is a good choice. It's a simple, straightforward Roman eatery, with a cramped, TV-dominated interior and lots more seating outside on the square. Food is fine and good value, including *bucatini all'amatriciana* and meatballs.

SCIAM Map pp74–5 Middle Eastern €€

€2-7.50; h 7am-8.45pm Mon-Sat, 9am-8.45pm Sun; g Corso del Rinascimento For something entirely different, head to this sultry eatery, its ceiling thick with coloured-glass lanterns and walls hung with kilims. Nestle around the little wooden tables and recline on cushions and low seats. You can eat meze and sip mint tea (no alcohol is served) and pretend you're on another continent. There's a glass-bead, lamp and tile shop next door.

THIEN KIM Map pp74–5 Vietnamese €€

€2-7.50; h 7am-8.45pm Mon-Sat, 9am-8.45pm Sun; g Corso del Rinascimento Rome's lone Vietnamese restaurant is fortunately a winner. The dimly lit interior reveals few oriental trappings but the food

top picks

APERITIVO

Young Romans have embraced the Milanese import of the *aperitivo*. Not just a drink, this is the array of hot and cold snacks – mini pizzas, rice salads, *suppli* (rice balls), pasta and so on – that many bars, restaurants and even shops offer from around 6pm to 9pm. Snacks are sometimes free with your drink, or there's a dedicated charge for a drink and a snack. If you have enough helpings, you can skip dinner and turn straight to the Drinking & Nightlife chapter.

Some of the best spots for an *aperitivo*:

- Freni e Frizioni (p225)
- Doppiozero (p224)
- La Mescita (at Ferrara; p204)
- Obikà (p187)
- Red (p209)
- Société Lutece (p214)
- Friends Art Café (p226)

is pure Vietnamese, if adapted for Italian tastes. To start there's an excellent Green Paradise Island soup (a broth of vegetables, prawns and pork scented with ginger, lemon grass and celery); mains include spicy fried fish in *nuoc nam* (fish sauce).

FILETTI DI BACCALÀ Map pp74–5 Trattoria €

Map pp74–5 Trattoria €
% 06 686 40 18; Largo dei Librai 88; meals €15;
h 5-10.30pm Mon-Sat; j Via Arenula

On a pretty, scooter-strewn piazza, this tiny old institution serves classic cod and chips, without the chips (the name means 'fillet of cod'). You can have the crispy battered veggies instead.

BRUSCHETTERIA DEGLI ANGELI

Map pp74–5 Pub, Ristorante €

% 06 688 05 789; Piazza B Cairoli 2a; bruschettas/pastas €8/7; h noon-3pm & 7.30pm-1.30am Mon-Sat; j Via Arenula

A vibrant pub-style place, this unpretentious joint specialises in bruschetta. Thick slabs of toasted bread come with a range of toppings: from the classic tomato, basil and olive oil to courgette flowers and mozzarella, and, in season, truffles. There are also decent pasta dishes and steaks, and a good range of seldom-seen Italian beers. In summer you can sit outside, though the views are nothing special.

FORNO DI CAMPO DE' FIORI

Map pp74–5 Pizza al taglio €

% 06 688 06 662; Campo de' Fiori 22; pizza slices from €2; h 7am-1.30pm & 5.30-8pm Mon-Wed, Fri & Sat, 7am-1.30pm Thu; g Corso Vittorio Emanuele II

A brilliant pit stop when there's too much to see to pause for a meal, the Forno is most renowned for its thin, crispy, direct-from-the-oven pizza. Afficionados swear by the *pizza bianca* although the *pizza rossa* (with tomato) is just as good. You can snack by Palazzo Farnese in the square next door.

ANTICO FORNO ROSCIOLI

Map pp74–5 Bakery €

% 06 686 40 45; Via dei Chiavari 34; h 6am-8pm Mon-Fri, 6am-2.30pm Sat, closed Sat in Aug; j Via Arenula

Not the renowned delicatessen and *wine bar* (p190), but the bakery around the corner, this fabulous place lives up to the culinary standards of its brother enterprise and has delicious pizza by the slice (the *pizza bianca* is legendary) as well as irresistible cakes. Perfect for putting together a picnic.

BERNASCONI Map pp74–5 Café €

Map pp74–5 Café €
% 06 688 06 264; Piazza B Cairoli 16; h 7am-8.45pm Tue-Sun; j Piazza B Cairoli

Cheery and tiny, this blink-and-you'll-miss-it kosher patisserie is well worth swinging into. The *cornetti* (croissants filled with chocolate, marmalade or custard cream) are fabulous. It's a stand-up coffee shop: listen out for banter behind the bar and keep an eye out for the best cakes.

JEWISH GHETTO

Map pp74–5 Ristorante €€€

% 06 688 06 629; Via Monte de' Cenci 9; meals €55; h Tue-Sat, noon-3pm Sun; j Via Arenula
Veritable Roman-Jewish Piperno, tucked away on a cobbled corner, is a wood-panelled restaurant of the old school, where white-clad waiters serve some of Rome's best deep-fried food, such as *filetti di baccalà*, *carciofi alla giudia* (Jewish-style artichokes) or *fiore di zucca ripieni e fritti* (cheese-and-anchovy-stuffed courgette flowers). It might feel odd to ask the waiter for *palle del Nonno* ('grandpa's balls') but cast aside your qualms and try the delicious ricotta and chocolate puffs. It's formal without being stuffy and is

perfect for family occasions. Booking is essential on Sundays.

VECCHIA ROMA Map pp74–5 Ristorante €€€

Map pp74–5 Ristorante €€€
% 06 686 46 04; Piazza Campitelli 18; meals €55; h Thu-Tue; g Via del Teatro di Marcello
At venerable Vecchia Roma (Old Rome) polite waiters wear white jackets, oil paintings hang in the dining rooms, candles light the outdoor terrace, celebrities sparkle and politicians scheme. The menu changes with the season, offering fabulous salads in summer, 101 things to do with polenta in winter and lots of decent pastas and risottos year-round. Also worth a mention is the abundant antipasto selection of buffalo mozzarella, stuffed squid, prawns, fried bits and bobs, and assorted vegetables.

DA GIGGETTO Map pp74–5 Trattoria €€

Map pp74–5 Trattoria €€
% 06 686 11 05; Via del Portico d'Ottavia 21-22; meals €45; h Tue-Sun; j Piazza B Cairoli
One of the best-known restaurants in the atmospheric Ghetto area, Da Giggetto is a marvellous labyrinth famous for its Roman-Jewish cooking. Particularly good are the fried starters like *carciofi alla giudia* and *fiore di zucca*; *baccalà* is another tried-and-tested favourite. Bag an outside table next to the ancient ruins of the Portico d'Ottavia.

LA TAVERNA DEGLI AMICI

Map pp74–5 Trattoria €€€

% 06 699 20 637; Piazza Margana 37; meals €45; h Tue-Sun; g Piazza Venezia

Roman politicians like to eat well, and La Taverna degli Amici is where many from the nearby Democratici di Sinistra headquarters come to lunch. On a quintessential ivy-draped piazza on the edge of the Jewish Ghetto, it serves consistently good Italian food: pasta and risotto, meat classics like *saltimbocca alla romana* (veal with ham), fish and homemade desserts. There's also an excellent wine list. It gets busy at lunchtime so service can be slow.

SORA MARGHERITA Map pp74–5 Trattoria €€

Map pp74–5 Trattoria €€
% 06 687 42 16; Piazza delle Cinque Scole 30; meals €28; h 12.30-3pm Tue-Fri & Sun, 12.30-3pm & 8-10.30pm Sat; g Via Arenula
Rough-and-ready Sora Margherita started as a cheap kitchen for hungry locals, but word has spread. Expect dog-eat-dog queues; cheap, hearty pasta; Roman and Jewish dishes slapped down on Formica

table tops; and a rowdy Roman atmosphere. Service is prompt and you're expected to be likewise. It's closed weekends in summer as, according to the sign, '*tutti al mare*' (everyone's at the beach).

PANE, VINO E SAN DANIELE

Map pp74–5 Wine Bar €€

% 06 687 71 47; Piazza Mattei 16; dishes €4.50-8.50; h 12.40pm-2am Mon-Sat; g or j Largo di Torre Argentina

This wine bar explains itself in its name: 'bread, wine and San Daniele' – San Daniele being a sought-after ham from the north of Italy. It's a friendly place in the Ghetto, all dark wood and mirror-lined. Try all sorts of northern hams and salamis, alongside samples from a strong wine list. A great place for a drink and a light meal.

BOCCIONE Map pp74–5 Pasticceria €

Map pp74–5 Pasticceria €
% 06 687 86 37; Via del Portico d'Ottavia 1; h 8am-7.30pm Sun-Thu, 8am-3.30pm Fri; j Piazza B Cairoli

You'll spot this small, ancient, Jewish bakery by the queue. Specialities include ricotta cake with chocolate flakes and cherries, marzipan amaretto biscuits, and *mostacciolo romano* (a kind of sweet biscuit) – all served by a particularly grumpy elderly ladies.

LA DOLCEROMA Map pp74–5 Bakery €

Map pp74–5 Bakery €
% 06 689 21 96; Via del Portico d'Ottavia 20; pastries €2.50-5; h 8am-1.30pm & 3.30-8pm Tue-Sun; j Piazza B Cairoli

'Sweet Rome' specialises in sticky Austrian strudels, Sacher torte, pastries, muffins and cookies. It also has splendid ice cream, and everything's made on the premises. Perfect when the legs are beginning to go and the spirit's waning.

ISOLA TIBERINA

Map pp74–5 Ristorante €€€

% 06 686 16 01; Via Ponte Quattro Capi 16; meals €60; h Mon-Sat; g or j Viale di Trastevere; a
You can't beat the romance of Sora Lella's setting, on the River Tiber's tiny island. Ring the doorbell to gain entrance to this timeless institution, named after the owner's mother, who was a Roman TV star. The classic Roman menu has some twists, like aubergine *parmigiana* with added nuts, ricotta and honey, as well as crowd-pleasers such as *amatriciana* with gnocchi (ideal for a winter's night).

VIA DEL CORSO & AROUND

OSTERIA DELL'INGEGNO

Map pp74-5 Ristorante, Vegetarian €€€
% 06 678 06 62; Piazza di Pietra 45; meals €60;
h lunch & dinner Mon-Thu & Sat, lunch Fri, dinner Sun; g Via del Corso; a

A casual yet chic restaurant, this is a favourite of Italian politicians and their glamorous entourages. Eat inside at brightly painted tables, surrounded by cubist-style paintings, or outside overlooking the charming square and temple of Apollo. Food has an adventurous twist, and dishes include a delicious salad of fresh buffalo mozzarella, baby chicory and anchovies, and *farfalle* (butterfly-shaped pasta) with leeks and saffron. It's open all afternoon and there's *aperitivo* available up to 7.30pm.

GINO

Map pp74-5 Trattoria €€
% 06 687 34 34; Vicolo Rosini 4; meals €40;
h Mon-Sat; g Via del Corso
Conviviality should be this place's middle name. Hidden down a narrow lane, it's friendly and always busy, a favourite of local politicians and journalists. Here you can eat fabulously executed staples such as *gnocchi* and *tonnarelli* (square-shaped spaghetti) under painted vines, overlooked by some of the loudest murals in town.

MATRICIANELLA

Map pp74-5 Trattoria €€
% 06 692 02 132; Via Frattina 94; meals €40;
h Mon-Sat; g Via del Corso
Romans love this quintessential yet upmarket trattoria, with its typically Roman cuisine, gingham tablecloths and chintzy murals. It's on a quiet cobbled street with some charming outside seating. The fried snacks are great (try fried potato peel and ricotta), meat dishes fabulous and the chocolate and ricotta dessert a grand finale. Book ahead.

OSTERIA DELLA FREZZA

Map pp74-5 Osteria €€
% 06 322 62 73; Via della Frezza; meals €40;
g Piazza Augusto Imperatore
Part of the 'Gusto (below) complex, della Frezza is trendy yet simple, with white-tiled, photo-covered walls and a monochrome look. It's part *osteria*, part *enoteca* and part tapas bar. As well as selections of meat or cheese, you can order *cicchetti* (mini-helpings) of pasta, meat and fish dishes on the menu, such as *tortelli di baccalà* (cod in pasta wraps) and fried *ricotta*.

'GUSTO

Map pp74-5 Pizzeria, Ristorante €
% 06 322 62 73; Piazza Augusto Imperatore 9; pizza €7-11; g Piazza Augusto Imperatore
If Terence Conran was Italian, he might have dreamed up 'Gusto, once a mould-breaking warehouse-style gastronomic complex. Now it's all a bit '90s, but it still has a buzz and is a great place to sit and eye up the new Richard Meier-designed *Ara Pacis* museum (p85). Go for the Neapolitan-style pizzas rather than the fusion food in the restaurant. Around the corner, *No28* (dishes €14-26; h 9am-2am Tue-Sun Jul & Aug, 9am-2am daily Sep-Jun) is a café-cocktail bar bearing the same hallmarks of industrial chic and interesting cuisine, while *Osteria della Frezza* (above) is around the back.

RÉCAFE

Map pp74-5 Pizzeria €
% 06 681 34 730; Piazza Augusto Imperatore 36; pizzas €6.50-10; h pizzeria noon-3pm & 7.30pm-12.30am, bar 8.30am-midnight; g Piazza Augusto Imperatore
On perhaps the chicest square in Rome (it's overlooked by the new *Ara Pacis* museum), this is Rome's chicest pizzeria. Take your food outside, or dine inside under twisted globe-like chandeliers in an airy space. Roman thin-crust pizzas are the name of the game, but it's also a good place for a drink.

PIZZERIA AL LEONCINO

Map pp74-5 Pizzeria €
% 06 686 77 57; Via del Leoncino 28; pizza €5-8.50;
h Thu-Tue; g Via del Corso
It can be difficult to source a cheap meal in upmarket Tridente, which is why Leoncino should be celebrated. A boisterous neighbourhood pizzeria with a wood-fired oven, it has two small rooms, cheerful décor and gruff but efficient waiters who will serve you an excellent Roman-style pizza and ice-cold beer faster than you can say *delizioso*.

ESQUILINO, QUIRINALE & PIAZZA DI SPAGNA

This area stretches southeast from Piazza del Popolo, across the area called Tridente and the chic streets close to Piazza di Spagna, where restaurants cater to wealthy Romans and hungry tourists. Politicians like to eat well, so there are some splendid restaurants around the presidential palace and parliament.

Monti, north of the Colosseum, has some wonderful choices. An ancient slum, it's one of Rome's most interesting up-and-coming districts, with intimate bars, *enoteche*, restaurants and boutiques.

Around Stazione Termini it's hard to find a good restaurant as most cater only to tourists, but there are a few, and this area contains Rome's best ethnic eats. In San Lorenzo, the vibrant boho student area east of Termini, you'll find some extraordinarily good restaurants and dirt-cheap pizzerias.

ESQUILINO & MONTI

AGATA E ROMEO Map pp90-1 Ristorante €€€
% 06 446 61 15; Via Carlo Alberto 45; meals €100;
h Mon-Fri, closed 2 weeks in Jan & Aug;
m Vittorio Emanuele

A match made in heaven: Agata's food and Romeo's wine cellar. This pioneering restaurant nowadays has more rivals, but still wields culinary clout. Agata specialises in finding new takes on traditional dishes. Frequent crowd-pleasers include *coda alla vaccinara* (oxtail) and *filetto di tonno con semi di sesamo* (tuna fillet with sesame seeds). Her *millefoglie* (*millefeuille*; literally 'thousand leaves', small iced cakes made of puff pastry, filled with jam and cream) are legendary.

HASEKURA

Map pp90-1 Japanese €€
% 06 483 648; Via dei Serpenti 27; meals €50;
h Mon-Sat; m Cavour
Favoured by actors and celebrities, tourists and Japanese expats, Hasekura has a simple interior and extremely good food. As well as sushi and sashimi, there is excellent tempura and traditional meat dishes.

IL POSTO ACCANTO

Map pp90-1 Ristorante €€
% 06 474 30 02; Via del Boschetto 36a; meals €50;
h closed Sat lunch & Sun; g Via Nazionale
On pretty Via del Boschetto, this homely, family-run restaurant is small – there are

only 25 places – and instantly memorable, lined by harvest-festival displays of fruit and veg. The food is splendid, with home-made ravioli and fish among the house specialities.

TRATTORIA MONTI

Map pp90-1 Trattoria €€
% 06 446 65 73; Via di San Vito 13a; meals €50;
h lunch & dinner Tue-Sat, lunch Sun; m Vittorio Emanuele; a
The Camerucci family runs this inviting, brick-arched place, offering top-notch traditional cooking from the Marches region. Expect homemade soups, gamey stews, elaborate pastas and ingredients such as *pecorino di fossa* (sheep's cheese aged in caves), goose, sultanas, mushrooms and truffles. Try the speciality egg-yolk *tortelli* pasta. Desserts are also delectable, including apple pie with zabaglione. You'll need to book ahead.

LA CICALA E LA FORMICA

Map pp90-1 Ristorante €€
% 06 481 74 90; Via Leonina 17; meals €35-40;
h Mon-Sat; m Cavour
A charming, hip restaurant, the 'Cicada and the Ant' serves up simple Italian food with a smile. There's a good selection of pasta, meat and seafood dishes, including a delicious *carpaccio di pescespada* (delicate slices of raw swordfish). It has a barrel-vaulted, arty interior decorated with Schiller-style paintings, and a few outside tables.

IL GURU

Map pp90-1 Indian €
% 06 489 04 656; Via Cimarra 4-6; set menus €15-20; h 7.30pm-midnight; m Cavour
In the atmospheric Monti district, Il Guru is filled with embroidered drapes and elaborate statuettes, and is a popular place for Indian food. The tandooris are prepared in a proper tandoori oven, the curries and vegetables are tasty and the setting is suggestive, albeit of Rome rather than Rajasthan.

DOOZO

Map pp90-1 Japanese €€
% 06 481 56 55; Via Palermo 51; sushi €6-10;
g Via Nazionale; a
Catering to Rome's fashion for multipurpose venues, Doozo (meaning 'welcome') is also a bookshop and a gallery. It offers tofu, sushi, *soba* (buckwheat noodle) soup and other Japanese delicacies, plus beer and green tea. On the street parallel to noisy Via Nazionale, it's a little oasis, particularly the small garden.

top picks

VIEWS

- Ar Galletto (p191)
- Dal Bolognese (p209)
- Da Gigetto (p193)
- Il Palazzetto (p197)
- 'Gusto (right)

DA RICCI Map pp90-1 Pizzeria €
% 06 488 11 07; Via Genova 32; pizzas €8;
h 9pm-midnight Tue-Sun; g Via Nazionale; a
In a tranquil, cobbled *cul-de-sac* a step
away from smoggy Via Nazionale, Rome's
oldest pizzeria started life as an *enoteca*
in 1905. The sign says Est! Est!! Est!!! – Da
Ricci's other name – after the white wine
from the north of Lazio (see the boxed
text, p271). Pizzas are thick-based Nea-
politan (though you can get thin-based if
you're a Roman aficionado).

INDIAN FAST FOOD Map pp90-1 Indian €
% 06 446 07 92; Via Mamiani 11; curries €5.50-7.50;
m Vittorio Emanuele
A genuine Indian takeaway just off Piazza
Vittorio Emanuele II, this basic place might
not look like much, but it has great curries
and spicy samosas. The fare is displayed
for easy picking – just point to what you
want – and you can either take it away or
eat under neon lighting to a soundtrack of
Hindi hits.

PANELLA L'ARTE DEL PANE
Map pp90-1 Pizzeria al taglio €
% 06 487 24 35; Via Merulana 54; pizza slices
€2.50-5; h 8am-2pm & 5-8pm Mon-Fri, 8am-2pm
Sat; m Vittorio Emanuele
A devilishly tempting bakery near the
Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore, offering
a magnificent array of pizza, focaccia, rice
balls, fried croquettes, pastries and choco-
late that is every bit as tasty as it looks.
You can eat in, standing at one of the tiny
circular tables, or take away.

QUIRINALE TO THE TREVI FOUNTAIN

PAPÀ BACCUS Map pp90-1 Ristorante €€€
% 06 427 42 808; Via Toscana 36; meals €60;
h Mon-Fri, dinner Sat; g Via Boncompagni
To breed your own hogs to ensure a ready
supply of quality meat requires a passion
that verges on obsession. But it's exactly
what the owner of this refined Tuscan
restaurant does. Meat rules here, with pride
of place going to the succulent Chianina
beef, but there's plenty else besides, includ-
ing *panzanella* (a summery starter of bread
with salad, herbs and oil). Reservations are
preferred, and you can sit outside on the
quiet cobbled street.

AL PRESIDENTE Map pp90-1 Seafood €€€
% 06 679 73 42; Via Arcione 95; meals €55;
g Via del Tritone
Al Presidente is a discreet, greenery-
shrouded place, under the walls of the
residential palace. Its classy air is matched
by the sophisticated seafood-centred menu.
Innovative dishes include *baccalà* whisked
into polenta and grilled, and *trippa di coda di
rosapo* (a tripe of angler fish).

NANÀ VINI E CUCINA Map pp90-1 Trattoria €€
% 06 691 90 750; Via della Panetteria 37; meals
€45; h Lunch & dinner Tue-Sat, lunch Sun;
g Via del Tritone
It's tricky to find somewhere reasonable
near the Trevi Fountain, but this is an ap-
pealing and simple trattoria. Eat in the large
inviting interior, under huge brass pipes, or
outside on the *piazetta*. Try starters such
as courgette flower stuffed with buffalo
mozzarella or seafood salad, then move on
to something like *orecchiette* (ear-shaped
pasta) with a sauce of courgette and clams.

VINERIA CHIANTI
Map pp90-1 Wine Bar, Ristorante €€
% 06 678 75 50; Via del Lavatore 81-82; meals €40;
h Mon-Sat; g Via del Tritone
Many restaurants around the Trevi are to be
avoided, but this ivy-clad wine bar is an ex-
ception. Specialising in Tuscan dishes, it also
serves imaginative salads (such as pine nuts,
cinnamon, pear and blue cheese), pastas
and meat dishes, and pizza in the evenings.
It's a great place to eat in summer, when
tables spill out onto the tiny piazza outside.

ANTICO FORNO Map pp90-1 Panini €
% 06 679 28 66; Via delle Muratte 8; panini €2.50;
h 7am-9pm; g Via del Tritone
A minisupermarket opposite the Trevi Foun-
tain, this busy place has a well-stocked deli
counter where you can choose a filling for
your freshly baked *panino* or *pizza bianca*.
There's also a good selection of focaccia
and pizza, and it's great value for its loca-
tion. If you fancy another sandwich, follow
tradition and throw a coin into the fountain.

DA MICHELE Map pp90-1 Pizzeria al taglio €
% 349 252 53 47; Via dell'Umiltà 31; pizza slices
from €2; g Via del Corso
The kosher pizza of Zi'Fenizia was a Ghetto
institution, but has now moved to this

more central spot, capably catered by pizza
chefs Michel and Cinzia. It's without cheese:
try the delicious anchovy and endive or
marinated courgettes.

PIAZZA DI SPAGNA & AROUND

IL PALAZZETTO Map pp90-1 Ristorante €€€
% 06 699 341 006; Via del Bottino 8; meals €55;
h lunch Tue-Sun, closed Aug; m Spagna
A sun-trap shaded terrace hidden at the
top of the Spanish Steps, the location here
can't be beat – it's perfect for a glass of
prosecco (sparkling wine) and a light meal
such as salad or pasta on a sunny day.
There's a pricier but recommended res-
taurant for dinner in the evenings (tasting
menu €85), and the *palazzo* also houses the
wine academy (p288).

OSTERIA MARGUTTA
Map pp90-1 Trattoria €€€
% 06 323 10 25; Via Margutta 82; meals €55;
h Mon-Sat; m Spagna; a
The epitome of a picturesque trattoria,
theatrical Osteria Margutta is colourful both
inside and out: blue flowers and ivy cover
the quaint entrance, while inside is all blue
glass, rich reds and fringed lampshades.
Plaques on the chairs testify to the famous
thespian bums they have supported. The
menu combines classic and regional dishes,
with fish served fresh on Tuesday, Friday and
Saturday. Desserts are homemade, there's a
top wine list and the service is friendly.

DIFRONTE A Map pp90-1 Ristorante €€
% 06 678 03 55; Via della Croce 38; meals €35;
h noon-midnight Tue-Sun; m Spagna; a
Difronte a is colourful, funky and fun. A
bright jumble of bare brick, yellow-and-
red walls, wrought iron and protruding
lights, it's good-looking and surprisingly
good value. It caters to most tastes: there's
bruschetta, pasta (including a lip-smacking
orecchiette with prawns, pesto and cream),
grilled meat, pizza and salad. An excellent
option for a light lunch or a lively night out.

FIASCHETTERIA BELTRAMME
Map pp90-1 Trattoria €€
Via della Croce 39; meals €45; m Spagna
With a tiny dark interior and high ceilings,
Fiaschetteria (meaning 'wine-sellers') is a
discreet, intimate, stuck-in-time place with
a short menu and no telephone. Expect

traditional Roman dishes (*pasta e ceci* and
so on) and fashionistas.

MARGUTTA RISTORANTE
Map pp90-1 Vegetarian €€
% 06 678 60 33; Via Margutta 118; meals €45;
m Spagna or Flaminio; a
Vegetarian restaurants in Rome are rarer
than parking spaces, and this black-, red-
and grey-toned place is an unusually chic
way to eat your greens. Most dishes are
excellent, with offerings such as artichoke
hearts with potato cubes and smoked pro-
volone cheese. There's an impressive wine
list and staff are friendly and bilingual. Best
value is the Saturday/Sunday buffet brunch
(€15/25), with up to 50 dishes; on Sundays
it's accompanied by live music. Around 70%
of ingredients used are organic, all pasta
and desserts are homemade, and – vegans
rejoice! – it also offers a four-course vegan
menu (€30).

OTELLO ALLA CONCORDIA
Map pp90-1 Trattoria €€
% 06 679 11 78; Via della Croce 81; meals €40;
h Mon-Sat; m Spagna; a
A perennial favourite, Otello is a haven near
the Spanish Steps. Outside dining is in the
vine-covered courtyard of an 18th-century
palazzo, where, if you're lucky, you can
dine in the shadow of the wisteria-covered
pergola; indoors is cramped yet attractive,
cluttered with pictures. The fairly priced
food's pretty good, with an ample selection
of antipasti, pastas and *secondi*, ranging
from *sauté di cozze* (sautéed mussels) to fried
brains and roast turbot.

MARIO Map pp90-1 Trattoria €€
% 06 678 38 18; Via delle Vite 55; meals €35;
h Mon-Sat; g Via del Corso; a
Under a wood-beamed ceiling, Mario has
been serving up earthy Tuscan cooking to
tourists and locals since 1960 – and the
interior doesn't seem to have changed
much. Try classics such as *ribollita* (bread
soup) and *pappardelle alle lepre* (pasta with
hare sauce), or fuel your shopping with a
bistecca alla fiorentina (Florentine steak).

PALATIUM Map pp90-1 Wine Bar €€
% 06 692 021 32; Via Frattina 94; meals €35;
h 11am-midnight Mon-Sat; g Via del Corso; a
An unusual, sleek, chic wine bar, usefully
placed in the upmarket Tridente shopping

CREAMY OR FRUITY, THAT IS THE QUESTION

Ice cream is big business in Italy. The average Italian family spends €80 on ice cream a year, and has shown no sign of cutting back on the sweet stuff despite economic woes.

It's all come a long way since Nero snacked on snow mixed with fruit pulp and honey. No-one's quite sure where ice cream originated, but credit is usually given to the Arabs, who are said to have developed techniques for freezing fruit juices and to have made the first sorbets. The word sorbet probably derives from the Arab word *scherbet*, meaning 'sweet snow', or from *sharber*, meaning 'to sip'. When the Arabs invaded Sicily they brought their food with them and the fame of their frozen drink began to spread.

Fast forward to the Renaissance and 16th-century Florence, where two cooks made ice-cream history. The first, Ruggeri, was a chicken farmer who made it to the culinary big time thanks to a sorbet he made for Catherine Medici. The second, Bernardo Buontalenti, was a well-known architect who stunned the gastronomic establishment by producing a frozen dessert based on zabaglione and fruit.

Both are considered founding fathers of Italy's *gelato* culture, which, while one of the country's most successful exports, is best experienced first-hand. In summer the seasonal fruit flavours are the ones to go for, while cream-based flavours are preferable in winter – but really, it's whatever takes your fancy. You'll usually be asked if you want *panna* (cream) with your ice cream. A good call is *si*.

In the lion days of summer, another Roman treat is *grattachecca* – a crushed-ice sensation, drowned in a fruity syrup of your choice. It'll cool you down on a sultry night, and is the perfect accompaniment to a riverside stroll. There are several stands around the central bridges over the River Tiber.

The following are the *crème de la crème*, but if you're in any gelateria, a tip is to check the colour of the pistachio: ochre-green = good, bright-green = bad. Most places open from around 8am to 1am, though hours are shorter in winter. Prices range from around €1.50 to €3.50 for a *cono* (cone) or *coppetta* (tub).

Al Settimo Gelo (Map pp130–1; % 06 372 55 67; Via Vodice 21a; ☪ Piazza Giuseppe Mazzini) The name's a play on 'seventh heaven' and it's not a far-fetched title for one of Rome's finest, with a devotion to natural flavours and the best possible ingredients – pistachios from Bronte, almonds from Avola, and so on. Try the Greek ice cream or cardamom made to an Afghan recipe.

Ara Coeli (Map pp74–5; % 06 679 50 85; Piazza d'Aracoeli 9; ☪ Piazza Venezia) Close to the base of the Campidoglio steps and offering more than 40 flavours of excellent organic ice cream, semicold varieties, Sicilian granita and yoghurt.

Fiocco di Neve (Map pp74–5; % 06 678 60 25; Via del Pantheon 51; ☪ or j Largo di Torre Argentina) Tiny place, grumpy staff, natural colours – this has all the hallmarks of a good Roman gelateria. Romans come to the 'Snowflake', near the Pantheon, when they're in the mood for something creamy. Zabaglione is the speciality.

GINA Map pp90–1 Café €€
% 06 678 02 51; Via San Sebastiano 7a; snacks €8–12; h 11am–8pm; m Spagna; a
Tucked around the corner from the Spanish Steps, this is an ideal place to drop into once you've shopped. Comfy white seats are strewn with powder-blue cushions, and the walls are hung with modern paintings. You can eat light snacks such as bruschetta with buffalo mozzarella and anchovies, pasta with beans, or smoked-salmon sandwiches. Villa Borghese picnics for two (€40) are also provided.

PIAZZA BARBERINI & AROUND
TULLIO Map pp90–1 Ristorante €€€
% 06 475 85 64; Via di San Nicola da Tolentino 26; meals €60; h Mon–Fri; m Barberini; a
A formal wood-panelled restaurant whose simple, classic, mainly Tuscan formula has

attracted a faithful clientele of politicians, journalists and artists since the days of *la dolce vita*. Pasta dishes range from the simple *tortellini in brodo* (pasta in broth) to the decadent *tagliolini con tartufo bianco* (pasta with white truffle). Meat, including the famous *bistecca alla fiorentina*, is grilled over a charcoal fire, while *biscotti* (almond biscuits) are dipped in sweet *vin santo* (holy wine) for a traditional dessert.

NATURIST CLUB – L'ISOLA
Map pp90–1 Vegetarian, Seafood €
% 06 679 25 09; 4th fl, Via delle Vite 14; set menu €14, meals €25; h Mon–Sat; ☪ Via del Corso
In attic-like, wood-lined rooms, this self-service vegetarian restaurant has a rustic feel and serves a variety of tasty salads and pasta dishes, including vegan options and some fresh fish. The food is good and the setting intimate – a world away from the street below. Reservations are requested for the evening. Nudity not necessary.

Gelateria dei Gracchi (Map pp130–1; % 06 321 66 68; Via dei Gracchi 272; m Lepanto) Gluten-free cones are available, as well as varieties made with/without milk. It's famous for its seasonal fruity flavours: wild strawberry, peach and mint.

Gelateria della Palma (Map pp74–5; % 06 688 06 752; Via della Maddalena 20; ☪ Via del Corso) Not as classy as some, but kids will love this ice-cream version of Willy Wonka's chocolate factory, offering up to 100 different flavours. There's a smaller branch in **Via del Lavatore** (Map pp90–1), near the Trevi Fountain.

Gelateria Giolitti (Map pp74–5; % 06 699 12 43; Via degli Uffici del Vicario 40; ☪ Corso del Rinascimento) A historic gelateria that started as a dairy in 1900 and still pushes Roman buttons. Gregory Peck and Audrey Hepburn swung by in *Roman Holiday* and it used to deliver to Pope John Paul II.

Gelateria Pasqualetti (Map pp74–5; % 06 687 89 40; Piazza della Maddalena 3a; ☪ or j Largo di Torre Argentina) Graziella and Patrizia Pasqualetti have introduced their father's amazing ice cream to Rome from Orvieto. The secret is the ingredients: pistachios from Bronte, almonds from Avola, pine nuts from Pisa and hazelnuts from the Langhe in Piedmont. Try the strawberries and cream, *stracciatella*, chocolate, fig, or blackberry – though everything is scrumptious.

Iberto Pica (Map pp74–5; % 06 688 06 153; Via della Seggiola; j Via Arenula) A long-standing, old-fashioned bar, with shrub-shaded seating where you can savour the many flavours – all the classics as well as some wild cards such as macadamia. Try the rice flavours (like frozen rice pudding) – yum.

La Fonte della Salute (Map pp122–3; % 06 589 74 71; Via Cardinale Marmaggi 2–6; ☪ or j Viale di Trastevere) It might not be quite the 'fountain of health', but the fruit flavours are so delicious they're bound to lift your spirits, and it has soy- and yoghurt-based gelato too.

Old Bridge (Map pp130–1; % 06 397 23 026; Via dei Bastioni di Michelangelo 5; m Ottaviano-San Pietro) Conveniently set near the wall of the Vatican, this tiny parlour cheerfully dishes up big portions of delicious ice cream. Try the chocolate or pistachio, with a dollop of cream on top.

Pellacchia (Map pp130–1; % 06 321 08 07; Via Cola di Rienzo 103; m Lepanto) A landmark on the ice-cream map, this is convenient for the Vatican and splendid for classics such as coffee, zabaglione, chocolate and seasonal fruits.

San Crispino (Map pp90–1; % 06 679 39 24; Via della Panetteria 42; m Barberini) Most concur this is the best gelato in Rome, but it's a fine-food experience rather than a wholly indulgent one. Service is grouchy, and the delicate, strictly natural and seasonal flavours are served only in tubs (cones would detract from the taste).

Tre Scalini (Map pp74–5; % 06 688 01 996; Piazza Navona 30; ☪ Corso del Rinascimento) Turn your Piazza Navona stroll into a revelation by sampling a *tartufo nero*: a rich ball of chocolate gelato, filled with huge chunks of chocolate and served with cream. As a satisfied punter put it: 'this must be what darkness tastes like.'

veal, homemade pasta and scrumptious pasta fillings such as mashed pumpkin. Magnificent.

PIAZZA DELLA REPUBBLICA & AROUND
DONATI Map pp90–1 Ristorante €€
% 06 49 18 68; Via Magenta 20; meals €30; h Mon–Sat, closed mid-Jul–mid-Aug; m Termini; a
Termini district is full of second-rate tourist traps, but this is a straightforward traditional restaurant serving up competent takes on dishes such as fried seafood or spaghetti with mussels and clams. You can eat inside, in the high-ceilinged hasn't-changed-for-years interior, or outside on the cobbled street. Around the corner is the similar **Regina** (% 06 445 38 34; Via dei Mille 46).

COLLINE EMILIANE Map pp90–1 Trattoria €€
% 06 481 75 38; Via degli Avignonesi 22; meals €45; h lunch & dinner Tue–Sat, lunch Sun; m Barberini; a
Splendid food is the name of the game at this warm, elegant trattoria. It flies the flag for Emilia-Romagna, the Italian province that has gifted the world Parmesan cheese, balsamic vinegar, bolognese sauce and Parma ham. It's all about cream,

PIAZZA DELLA REPUBBLICA & AROUND

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LA GALLINA BIANCA Map pp90–1 Pizzeria €
% 06 474 37 77; Via A Rosmini 9; pizzas €6–11;
h noon–3pm & 6pm–midnight, to 1am Sat & Sun;
m Termini; a
The 'White Hen' is a friendly, handy pizzeria among the minefield of tourist trash around Termini, serving great thick-crust Neapolitan pizzas made from slow-risen dough. It's large and airy, decorated in cool pale blue and old wood, with shaded outside seating on a not-too-busy street.

AFRICA Map pp90–1 Ethiopian & Eritrean €
% 06 494 10 77; Via Gaeta 26–28; mains €10;
h Tue–Sun; m Castro Pretorio; a
Dimly lit Africa, serving Ethiopian and Eritrean food to expats and curious Romans since 1978, really feels like it could be somewhere else. The food is spicy and served without cutlery. Use your fingers to dig into falafel and *sambusas* (a cross between a spring roll and a samosa), and scoop up meat and vegetables with soft, spongy *injera* bread before finishing off with sweet halva and spicy tea. It makes a change.

AL FORNO DELLA SOFFITTA
Map pp90–1 Pizzeria €
% 06 420 11 164; Via Piave 62; pizzas €8; h lunch & dinner Mon–Fri, dinner Sat & Sun; m Repubblica; a
None of those namby-pamby thin crusts – this is pure Neapolitan pizza, keeping workers from nearby offices happy with its cheery décor, substantial dough and fine array of toppings. Try the *amatriciana*, topped with pancetta and tomato.

RISTOFER Map pp90–1 Tavola Calda €
Via Marsala 13; meals €7; m Termini
Technically Ristofer is a railway-workers' canteen, but it's open to the public and is cheerily welcoming and completely institutional. Just go through the massive wooden doors, grab a tray and choose whatever looks good on the day. It's not gourmet food, but if you want a cheap, belly-filling meal, at €7 for a *primo*, *secondo* and *dolce* it's just the ticket.

SAN LORENZO & BEYOND
UNO E BINO Map p103 Ristorante €€€
% 06 446 07 02; Via degli Equi 58; meals €55–60;
g Via Tiburtina; a
San Lorenzo harbours some culinary diamonds and this is the biggest sparkler of

them all, though it's a very minimalist sparkler. Classy yet relaxed, it's bottle-lined, with paper tablecloths. It's won lots of awards, and Giovanni Passerini cooks fine, adventurous food with a Sicilian slant, such as *fagottelli* envelopes stuffed with *pecorino* cheese, garlic, tomato, date and almond milk. It's always full, so you'll need to book ahead.

TRAM TRAM Map p103 Ristorante, Seafood €€
% 06 49 04 16; Via dei Reti 44; meals €50;
h Tue–Sun; g Via Tiburtina; a
This trendy yet old-fashioned, lace-curtained trattoria is usually filled with San Lorenzo hipsters. It takes its name from the trams that rattle past outside and offers traditional dishes, such as *baccalà* on Friday, as well as southern specialities such as *orecchiette alla Norma* (ear-shaped pasta with fried aubergine, tomato, basil and ricotta) and *riso cozze patate* (rice, mussels and potatoes).

ARANCIA BLU Map p103 Vegetarian €€
% 06 445 41 05; Via dei Latini 55–65; meals €35;
h dinner; g Via Tiburtina; a
The 'Blue Orange', a laid-back, softly lit, contemporary-chic bistro, is the place to head for creative vegetarian food. It offers dishes such as ravioli stuffed with ricotta, black olives, pistachio and orange, and has a great wine list of more than 400 choices. The chocolate-tasting menu is a nice touch.

POMMIDORO Map p103 Trattoria €€
% 06 445 26 92; Piazza dei Sanniti 44; meals €35;
h Mon–Sat; g Via Tiburtina; a
Throughout San Lorenzo's metamorphosis from down-at-heel working-class area to down-at-heel bohemian enclave, Pommidoro has remained the same. A much-loved local institution, it's a great century-old trattoria, with high star-vaulted ceilings, a huge fireplace and outdoor conservatory seating. It's a focus for local intellectuals, including controversial film director Pier Paolo Pasolini. Celebs still stop by – from Nicole Kidman to Fabio Cappello – but it's an unpretentious place with superb-quality traditional food, specialising in magnificent grilled meat.

FORMULA UNO Map p103 Pizzeria €
% 06 445 38 66; Via degli Equi 13; pizzas €4.15–6.50; h 6.30pm–1.30am Mon–Sat; g Via Tiburtina
As far removed from a relaxed eating experience as most visitors would want to handle, this historic San Lorenzo pizzeria,

with wooden tables, whirring fans and whizzing waiters, is always packed with local students and slumming uptowners. Consequently, you'll need to join the waiting throng and learn the underhand art of Roman queuing. Place-mats double as menus and you can order tasty snacks like bruschetta and *suppli al telefono* as well as cheap-as-chips thin-crust pizzas.

SOUTHERN ROME

Although these are touristy districts, there are some splendid restaurants in the areas around San Giovanni and down towards the Colosseum. Further south, if you are walking the Via Appia Antica, you can stop to eat in the almost-countryside.

To the southwest is Testaccio, a traditionally working-class enclave once famous for its abattoir. Consequently this is one of the best areas to eat real Roman cuisine. Many of the older trattorias and restaurants specialise in the so-called *quinto quarto* (fifth quarter, or the insides of the animal), though they are also good for other dishes if you think offal is awful. Today Testaccio is famous for its nightclubs and bars – for more on these see p223.

SAN GIOVANNI

CHARLY'S SAUCIERE
Map pp108–9 Ristorante €€
% 06 704 95 666; Via di San Giovanni in Laterano 270; meals €45; h lunch Tue–Thu, dinner Mon–Sat; m San Giovanni; a
To recharge between San Giovanni and the Colosseum, try this small Italian-Swiss restaurant, with twee lace curtains, crisp white tablecloths and theatrical deep-red curtains. Choose from a menu that features delectable onion soup, Roquefort salad, different takes on steak and even fondue for two. Wines are mainly French.

LA TANA DEI GOLOSI
Map pp108–9 Ristorante €€
% 06 772 03 202; Via di San Giovanni in Laterano 220; meals €45; h 7.30–11.30pm Mon–Sat; m Colosseo
This simple-looking restaurant, created as a culinary adventure, has a changing menu that travels all around Italy twice monthly, featuring different regional cuisines. A southern period, for example, may feature *tiella barese* (rice, mussels and potatoes) and

polpette di melanzane (aubergine balls). All ingredients are exceptional: it's the holy grail of regional excellence pursued with dedication.

CELIO
TAVERNA DEI QUARANTA
Map pp108–9 Trattoria €€
% 06 700 05 50; Via Claudia 24; meals €30;
h Mon–Sat; m Colosseo
Off the main tourist track but near the Colosseum, this airy trattoria is run by gentle staff and offers super, simple Roman cooking, with delicious daily pasta specials, great bruschetta and *arostocini* (beef kebabs). There's some outside seating on the leafy yet busy street.

CAFÉ CAFÉ Map pp108–9 Café €€
% 06 700 87 43; Via dei Santi Quattro 44; dishes €8–15; h 11am–1.30am, lunch noon–3.45pm, dinner 7.30pm–midnight; m Colosseo; a
This is a hugely popular gem, the kind of pint-sized wine bar, restaurant and café that everyone needs in their neighbourhood. The changing menu features light stuff such as *caprese* as well as tastes from elsewhere like hummus and tzatziki. The few outside tables overlook the Colosseum at the end of the street.

LE NAUMACHIE Map pp108–9 Pizzeria €
% 06 700 27 64; Via Celimontana 7; pizzas €5–8.50; m Colosseo; a
This modern, popular pizzeria caters to locals and tourists, has a brick-arched, spacious interior, and offers classic Roman pizzas at both lunch and dinner, with tried-and-tested toppings such as *capricciosa* (a variety of toppings, usually mushroom, ham, artichoke and olives) and *marinara* (seafood).

VIA APPIA ANTICA & THE CATACOMBS

CECILIA METELLA Map pp108–9 Ristorante €€
% 06 511 02 13; Via Appia Antica 125; meals €35;
h Tue–Sun; g Via Appia Antica; a
Near the catacombs of San Callisto, the outside seating here is great, set on a low hill under a vine canopy and with glimpses of the jewel-green countryside. Inside resembles a wedding-reception room, but it's attractive, if formal, and the food is good

too, including *polenta ai porcini* (polenta with porcini mushrooms).

AVENTINO & TESTACCIO CHECCHINO DAL 1887

Map pp108–9 Ristorante €€€

☎ 06 574 63 18; Via di Monte Testaccio 30; meals €60; h Tue–Sat, closed Aug; g or j Via Marmorata; a

A pig's whisker from the city's former slaughterhouse, Checchino is a Roman institution, one of the grander restaurants specialising in offal, from calf heads to pig trotters. Run by the fifth generation of the Mariani family, it has risen from humble

top picks

MARKETS

Rome's fresh-produce markets are a fabulous feature of the city's foodscape. Go to see what's in season and enter the fray with all the neighbourhood matriarchs. There's always an explosion of colour: fresh fruit and veg, meat and fish stalls, breads, cheeses and so on. Food markets operate from around 7am to 1.30pm, Monday to Saturday.

Rome's most famous markets include the following:

- **Campo de' Fiori** (Map pp74–5; g Corso Vittorio Emanuele II) The most picturesque, but also the most expensive. Prices are graded corresponding to the shopper's accent, so the Roman pays one sum, the Italian another and the non-Italian yet another.
- **Nuovo Mercato Esquilino** (Map pp90–1; Via Lamarmora; m Vittorio Emanuele) One of Rome's cheapest markets and the best place to find exotic herbs and spices.
- **Piazza dell' Unità** (Map pp130–1; g Piazza del Risorgimento) Near the Vatican, this is a good place to stock up for a picnic.
- **Piazza San Cosimato** (Map pp122–3; g or j Viale di Trastevere) Some tourist tat has crept in to Trastevere's neighbourhood market, but it's still the business with foodstuffs.
- **Ponte Milvio** (Map pp150–1; g Ponte Milvio) North of the city centre, Ponte Milvio caters to the well-heeled shoppers of Flaminio.
- **Testaccio** (Map pp108–9; Piazza Testaccio; g or j Via Marmorata) The most Roman of all the city's markets. Sharpen your elbows and admire the queuing techniques of the elderly ladies. It's noted for its excellent quality and good prices.

roots to become one of the city's most vaunted eateries, attracting a well-to-do clientele of local regulars and curious foreigners. For those who can't stomach the Roman soul food there's more standard seasonal fare and a comprehensive wine list.

AGUSTARELLO Map pp108–9 Trattoria €€

☎ 06 574 65 85; Via Giovanni Branca 98; meals €35; h Mon–Sat; g or j Via Marmorata; a Old-timer Agustarello hides its in-the-know hubbub behind frosted glass. Inside, plain and simple, is thoroughly Roman, from the clientele to the food. It serves mostly offal, specialising in sweetbreads and oxtail, but if innards aren't your thing, you'll still eat splendidly here (though vegetarians may want to give it a miss).

DA FELICE Map pp108–9 Trattoria €€

☎ 06 574 68 00; Via Mastro Giorgio 29; meals €35; h Mon–Sat; g or j Via Marmorata; a Film director Roberto Benigni has written a poem to this place. As well as for its food, it's renowned for the way cantankerous old Felice used to vet his clients. He's retired now but still keeps an occasional beady eye on proceedings. The trattoria has smartened up a lot, and is hidden behind frosted glass. If you make it inside you'll enjoy true Roman fare, great pasta and lots of meat and offal. You might get in trouble if you don't finish your food though.

TRATTORIA DA BUCATINO

Map pp108–9 Trattoria €€

☎ 06 574 68 86; Via Luca della Robbia 84; meals €35; h Tue–Sun; g or j Via Marmorata Popularity has seen this long-standing neighbourhood place expand down into the basement. Ask for a table upstairs (with wood panels, empty chianti bottles and a mounted boar's head) or outside, as downstairs has less atmosphere. Of the antipasti, try the terrific *insalata di mare* (seafood salad), while afterwards a bowl of steaming pasta is where it's at: the signature dish is *bucatini all'amatriciana*.

PIZZERIA REMO Map pp108–9 Pizzeria €

☎ 06 574 62 70; Piazza Santa Maria Liberatrice 44; pizzas €6; h 7pm–1am Mon–Sat; g or j Via Marmorata Not a place for a romantic tête-à-tête, Pizzeria Remo is one of the city's most popular pizzerias, busy with noisy hordes of young

Romans. Expect to queue if you arrive after 8.30pm. The pizzas are among the biggest and thinnest in Rome, sizzling with toppings on the crisp, charred base. Place your order by ticking your choices on a sheet of paper slapped down by an overstretched waiter.

VOLPETTI PIÙ Map pp108–9 Tavola Calda €

☎ 06 574 43 06; Via A Volta 8; pasta/meat dishes €4/5; h Mon–Sat; g or j Via Marmorata One of the few places around town where you can sit down and eat well for less than €10, Volpetti Più is a sumptuous *tavola calda* with pizzas, pastas, soups, meats, vegetables and fried nibbles. The quality is as impressive as the quantity, and the booming cooks who dish out the food are always willing to explain what everything is (in Italian).

OSTIENSE & SAN PAOLO

DA ENZO Map pp108–9 Trattoria €€

☎ 06 574 13 64; Via Ostiense 36; meals €25; h Mon–Sat; m Piramide With just a few tables, this is a classic Roman family-run trattoria that's been here for around 50 years. The chef used to cook at the parliament, and now feeds the workers from the nearby market. The fresh pasta is divine, the sausage super and the tiramisù feathery light.

HOSTARIA ZAMPAGNA

Map pp108–9 Trattoria €€

☎ 06 574 23 06; Via Ostiense 179; meals €25; h closed dinner Sun; g Via Ostiense The trendification of Via Ostiense – with ever-growing numbers of bars and clubs in its side streets – has thankfully bypassed this humble trattoria near the Basilica di San Paolo fuori le Mura. As for the past 80 years, you sit down to good hearty food prepared according to the city's weekly calendar. It's all splendid: try *spaghetti alla carbonara*, *alla gricia* or *all'amatriciana*, then tuck into tripe, beef or *involtini* (stuffed rolls of meat).

TRASTEVERE

Once working-class and poor, now pricey and picturesque, Trastevere has a huge number of restaurants, trattorias, cafés and pizzerias. The better places are generally tucked away in the maze of side streets, while many of the higher-profile places have long since foregone quality, reckoning (rightly) that people will come all the

same. Still, it's not just tourists here – Romans like to eat in Trastevere too. Find the right spot and you'll have a memorable experience.

EAST OF VIALE DI TRASTEVERE

ASINOCOTTO Map pp122–3 Ristorante €€€

☎ 06 589 89 85; Via dei Vascellari 48; meals €55; h dinner Tue–Sun; g or j Viale di Trastevere; a Asinocotto means 'cooked donkey' but don't let that put you off. The cooking here is creative, with imaginative, balanced, harmonious dishes such as loin of lamb stuffed with foie gras and caramelised figs, or swordfish with capers. The interior is invitingly hung with grapevine lighting, and it's one of Rome's few self-proclaimed gay-friendly restaurants.

LA GENSOLA Map pp122–3 Ristorante €€

☎ 06 581 63 12; Piazza della Gensola 15; meals €50; h closed Sun Jul–Aug; g or j Viale di Trastevere; a This discreet Sicilian smasher fills small, brightly lit, graceful adjoining rooms, and offers superb cooking. It specialises in seafood – try the delicious tuna tartare or pasta with fresh anchovies. This is the kind of restaurant you want to have in your neighbourhood: it's unpretentious but classy, waiters are knowledgeable and quirky, and foodies will love it. There's a five-course *menu di pesce* (fish degustation menu, €39), complete with water and decent house wine.

SPIRITO DIVINO Map pp122–3 Ristorante €€

☎ 06 589 66 89; Via dei Genovesi 31; meals €45; h 7.30pm–midnight Mon–Sat; g or j Viale di Trastevere; a Spirito Divino is in a medieval building that once housed the oldest synagogue in Rome – the walls date to 980, while the wine cellar is even older. The menu is not just traditional; some of the recipes are ancient, such as pork Mazio-style, which dates back around 2000 years. More modern dishes, all delicious, include linguine with seafood, lamb with pepper and peach chutney, and a sublime *crème brûlée*.

DA ENZO Map pp122–3 Trattoria €€

☎ 06 581 83 55; Via dei Vascellari 29; meals €25; h Mon–Sat; g Piazza Sonnino A warm-yellow, welcoming, pocket-sized trattoria, open to the street and decorated with pictures of cats. There are a few

outside shaded tables. You can start with bruschetta with *burrata*, and go on to *rigatoni cacio e pepe* followed by *abbacchio al forno* (roasted lamb) and other such Roman classics.

JAIPUR Map pp122-3 Indian €€

☎ 06 580 39 92; Via di San Francesco a Ripa 56; curries €5-12; h Tue-Sun & dinner Mon; g or j Viale di Trastevere; a Jaipur is a cut above most other Indian restaurants in Rome and has an airy interior covered in Indian paintings to get you in the mood. Popular with young Romans and the city's foreign student population, it specialises in northern Indian cooking, with a large selection of tandoori dishes as well as those old friends – *tikka masala* and *rogan josh*. Vegetarians are well catered for.

PANATTONI Map pp122-3 Pizzeria €

☎ 06 580 09 19; Viale di Trastevere 53; pizzas €7; h 7pm-2am Thu-Tue; g or j Viale di Trastevere; a Locals know it as *I obitorio* (the morgue) because of its marble tabletops, but thankfully the similarity stops there. This is one of Trastevere's liveliest pizzerias, with paper-thin pizzas, a clattering buzz, grumpy waiters, street-side seating and excellent fried starters (specialties are *suppli* and *baccalà*).

SISINI Map pp122-3 Pizza al taglio €

Via di San Francesco a Ripa 137; pizza slices from €2; h Mon-Sat, closed Aug; g or j Viale di Trastevere Spot it by the crowd. Locals know where to come for the best *pizza rustica* in Trastevere, and you'll need to jostle with them to make it to the counter. Here, simple styles reign supreme – try the *margherita* or *marinara* and you'll see what we mean. It's also worth sampling the *suppli* and roast chicken.

WEST OF VIALE DI TRASTEVERE

ALBERTO CIARLA Map pp122-3 Seafood €€€

☎ 06 581 86 68; Piazza San Cosimato 40; meals €90; h dinner Mon-Sat; g or j Viale di Trastevere; a Alberto Ciarla's Trastevere fish restaurant is a historic landmark on the city's gastronomic map. It's on the corner of the piazza that houses the area's food market, and the décor is a time warp of 1970s glamour. Food is spectacular in a more tasteful sense. There are three seafood tasting menus: *grande cucina* for lobsters, oysters and refined delicacies; *cucina tirrenica* for Mediterranean prawn salads and pasta with seafood; and *crudo* for marinated raw fish and marine molluscs.

CHECCO ER CARETTIERE

Map pp122-3 Ristorante, Osteria €€€€/€€

☎ 06 581 70 18; Via Benedetta 10; meals restaurant/osteria €80/35; g Piazza Trilussa; a Something of a food complex, this is a restaurant, bakery, gelateria and *osteria*. With a swinging 1950s feel, the restaurant is wood-panelled throughout and terracotta-floored. Walls are smothered in black-and-white photos of celebrities savouring Roman dishes such as *saltimbocca alla romana* or *bombolotti* (ridged tube pasta) *all'amatriciana*. Some tables are tucked into alcoves for intimate parties, or there's a large convivial room with wooden columns and an outside patio. There's a special smoking room between this and the *osteria*, which is a small, appealing place with a few daily specials. The cakes at the *café* (h 7am-1am) are delicious, and the ice cream good too.

FERRARA Map pp122-3 Wine Bar, Ristorante €€€

☎ 06 583 33 920; Via del Moro 1a; meals €60; g Piazza Trilussa; a In whitewashed, elegant cellars that offset a glamorous crowd, this restaurant/*enoteca* cellar/shop is a temple to wine, and even well-informed amateurs might need the waiters' friendly help navigating the two-volume (one for red, one for white) 1000-label wine list. The food is modern and on the whole manages to keep up. Try *orecchiette* with courgette and ginger-scented prawns, or *tagliioni* (thin, delicate strands of pasta) with white truffles. Alternatively, stop by for a drink at the snug bar, La Mescita, with *bunissimo aperitivo*.

PARIS Map pp122-3 Ristorante €€

☎ 06 581 53 78; Piazza San Calisto 7; meals €50; h Tue-Sat & lunch Sun; g or j Viale di Trastevere; a Nothing to do with Paris (it's the name of the founder), this is thoroughly Roman – the best place for Roman-Jewish cuisine outside the Ghetto. Inside are wooden beams and a big chandelier; outside are tables on the cobbled square. Dishes include the outstanding *carciofi alle giudia*, the tempura-crisp *fritto misto con baccalà* (deep-fried vegetables with salted cod) and, on Tuesday and Friday, the rare dish of *minestra di arzilla ai broccoli* (skate soup with broccoli).

RIPA 12 Map pp122-3 Seafood €€

☎ 06 580 90 93; Via di San Francesco a Ripa 12; meals €45; h Mon-Sat; g or j Viale di Trastevere; a Whether or not it's true that *carpaccio di spigola* (very fine slices of marinated raw sea bass) was first served at this graceful, wood-beamed Calabrian restaurant, the seafood here is top-notch. On the menu you'll find a mix of dishes playing on traditional themes – *gnocchetti con fagioli e cozze* (small gnocchetti with beans and mussels), for example – as well as Calabrian specialties such as fiery-hot salami. There are some street-side tables but unless you want your fish smoked by traffic fumes you're better off inside.

GLASS HOSTARIA

Map pp122-3 Wine Bar, Ristorante €€

☎ 06 583 35 903; Vicolo del Cinque 58; meals €45; g Piazza Trilussa; a For verging-on-quiet Trastevere, the self-conscious modishness of this place stands out. It sits on a corner near Piazza di Santa Maria and is a nice place for a drink as well as a meal – you can sit outside and have a glass of *prosecco*. It's less expensive than you might expect from the modernist décor. The wine list and creative Italian cuisine are impressive – with imaginative dishes such as rosemary tagliatelle with *ragù* of goose, cherries and mushrooms, or pork medallions with crispy savoy cabbage.

CASSETTA DI TRASTEVERE

Map pp122-3 Trattoria €€

☎ 06 580 01 58; Piazza de' Renzi 31a; meals €35; g Piazza Trilussa; a With outside seating on a cobbled Trastevere corner, this characterful trattoria is

held in high regard by Italians, who will cheerfully queue for a table, either inside or out. What they're waiting for is their share of the no-nonsense hearty fare served in pleasantly large portions. Particularly good is the *crema di fave con crostini* (broad-bean puree with croutons) and *pasta e fagioli* (thick borlotti-bean soup). Service can be slow when it's busy.

ALLE FRATTE DI TRASTEVERE

Map pp122-3 Trattoria €€

☎ 06 583 57 75; Via delle Fratte di Trastevere 50; meals €30; h Thu-Tue; g or j Viale di Trastevere; a A warm, welcoming trattoria with chirpy paintings, frothy curtains, delicious food and outside seating, Alle Fratte is a big hit with savvy priests, busy businesspeople and grateful tourists, all eager to tuck into big plates of classics like *orecchiette a cacio e pepe* (OK, the real Roman recipe uses spaghetti) and main courses of roasted fish and escalope. The friendly English-speaking staff work hard and are happy for you to linger over post-dinner coffee and liqueurs.

LA BOTTICELLA Map pp122-3 Trattoria €€

☎ 06 581 47 38; Vicolo del Leopardo 39a; meals €30; h 4pm-midnight Mon-Tue & Thu-Sat, noon-3pm Sun; g Piazza Trilussa On a quiet Trastevere backstreet, La Botticella offers pure Roman cooking, outside under the lines of flapping washing, or inside in the twee dining area. Menu stalwarts include tripe and *rigatoni alla paiata* (pasta with calf's intestines), but there are less demanding dishes if you're not feeling brave, such as an excellent *spaghetti all'amatriciana* and *fritto alla botticella*, a tempura-like dish of deep-fried vegetables and delicious apple slices.

MARIO'S Map pp122-3 Trattoria €€

☎ 06 580 38 09; Via del Moro 53-55; meals €25-30; h Mon-Sat; g Piazza Trilussa A bit smarter in recent years, Mario's nevertheless remains what it has always been – a modest trattoria plastered with postcards and photos, serving homely food to whoever's hungry. Mamma shuffles from kitchen to table in her slippers, bringing out bowls of steaming pasta, plates of grilled meat and generous carafes of house wine. It's all good but the ricotta and

top picks

PIZZA

- Pizzeria da Baffetto (p189)
- Dar Poeta (p206)
- Panattoni (above)
- Pizzeria Remo (p202)
- Forno di Campo de' Fiori (p192)

spinach ravioli served in butter and sage is wonderful.

DA LUCIA Map pp122–3 Trattoria €
% 06 580 36 01; Vicolo del Mattonato 2; meals €20–25; h Tue–Sun; g Piazza Trilussa
Eat beneath the fluttering knickers of the neighbourhood at this terrific trattoria, frequented by hungry locals and tourists. On a cobbled backstreet that is classic Trastevere, it serves up a cavalcade of Roman specialities including *trippa all romana* (tripe with tomato sauce) and *pollo con peperoni* (chicken with peppers), as well as bountiful antipasti.

DA AUGUSTO Map pp122–3 Trattoria €
% 06 580 37 98; Piazza de' Renzi 15; meals €20; h closed Aug; g Piazza Trilussa
As a concession to the modern age, Augusto has printed a menu on laminated plastic. But don't look for other frills at this long-standing, much-loved trattoria. For a truly Roman meal plonk yourself at one of his rickety Formica tables and choose from the selection of traditional starters, pastas and meat dishes. Everything's good – the *rigatoni all'amatriciana* and *straciatella* (clear broth with egg and Parmesan) are smashing. Tables spill out into the square in summer.

DAR POETA Map pp122–3 Pizzeria €
% 06 588 05 16; Vicolo del Bologna 46; pizzas €8; h dinner; g Piazza Trilussa; a
Dar Poeta, a breezy, cheery pizzeria hidden away in an atmospheric side street, is a

contender for Rome's best pizza. The base is somewhere between wafer-thin Roman and Neapolitan comfort food, and the slow-risen dough apparently makes it easier to digest. There are also great bruschettas and salads, and it's famous for its unique ricotta and Nutella calzone. It's great for kids: they can run up and down the alley when they get bored. Expect to queue, elbows at the ready.

PIZZERIA DA VITTORIO Map pp122–3 Pizzeria €
% 06 580 03 53; Via di San Cosimato 14; pizzas €3–7; h noon–11.30pm; g or j Viale di Trastevere; a
One of the few pizzerias in this neck of the woods to serve thick-crust Neapolitan-style pizzas, backstreet Vittorio is a consistent crowd-pleaser. The tiny interior is decorated with murals depicting appropriately Neapolitan scenes such as an erupting Vesuvius, and heavens with happy eaters. There are also a few outside tables. You'll find all the regular pizzas plus a few house specialities such as the Vittorio (fresh tomato, basil, mozzarella and Parmesan) and the Imperiale (fresh tomatoes, lettuce, cured ham and olives); football fans might like the Maradona, made in honour of Naples' favourite football superstar.

PIZZERIA IVO Map pp122–3 Pizzeria €
% 06 581 70 82; Via di San Francesco a Ripa 158; pizzas €6; h closed Tue; g or j Viale di Trastevere; a
One of Trastevere's – if not Rome's – most famous pizzerias, Ivo's is perennially popular.

It has been slinging pizzas for some 40 years, and still the hungry come. With the TV on in the corner and the tables full, Ivo's a noisy and vibrant place where the crispy, though not huge, pizzas are made with conventional toppings (exceptions include an unorthodox Gorgonzola and apple combo) and the waiters fit the gruff-and-fast stereotype.

VALZANI Map pp122–3 Pasticceria €
% 06 580 37 92; Via del Moro 37; cakes €3; h 10am–8.30pm Wed–Sun, 3–8.30pm Mon & Tue, closed Jul & Aug; g or j Piazza Sonnino
The speciality of this humble cake shop, opened in 1925 and not redecorated since, is the legendary *torta sacher*, the favourite cake of Roman film director Nanni Moretti. But there are also chocolate-covered *mostaccioli* (biscuits), Roman *pangiallo* (honey, nuts and dried fruit – typical of Christmas) and Roman *torrone* (nougat). If help is needed, the owners speak English and will happily discuss your requirements.

FORNO LA RENELLA Map pp122–3 Pizzeria al taglio €
% 06 581 72 65; Via del Moro 15–16; pizza slices from €2; h 9am–1am; g Piazza Trilussa
The wood-fired ovens at this historic Trastevere bakery have been firing for decades, producing a delicious daily batch of pizza, bread and biscuits. The bread's made first but when the embers die down the white-tops turn their hands to pizza. Toppings (and fillings) vary seasonally. Popular with everyone from skinheads with big dogs to elderly ladies with little dogs.

VATICAN CITY & BORGO

Beware, hungry tourists, as there are tons of overpriced, mediocre eateries around the Vatican and St Peter's, aimed at the thousands who pass through here each day and need somewhere to flop and refuel. It's worth making the extra effort to find somewhere listed in this guide, as there are fabulous places amid the follies.

North of the Vatican is Prati, an upmarket, largely residential district and location of the RAI TV headquarters. It has some excellent, interesting restaurants feeding the hungry media.

Note that there's a branch of the reliable In-salata Ricca (p189) on Piazza del Risorgimento, and several great ice-cream places (see p198).

SICILIANBOCCA Map pp130–1 Trattoria €€
% 06 373 58 400; Via Emilio Faà di Bruno 26; meals €45; h Mon–Sat; m Ottaviano–San Pietro; a
Lemon-yellow and lined in dazzling southern ceramics, this trattoria is sunny in demeanour and colour. It's a great place to sample sumptuous seafood, Sicilian specialities like *caponata* (browned vegetables, anchovies and capers), and the island's legendary desserts, such as *cannoli* (fried pastry tubes filled with ricotta) accompanied by *panetteria*, the great muscatel. There's another branch in Flaminio (Map pp150–1; % 06 324 01 87; Via Flaminia 390; h Tue–Sun).

SETTEMBRINI VINO E CUCINA Map pp130–1 Wine Bar €€
% 06 323 26 17; Via Luigi Settembrini 25; meals €40; h Mon–Sat; g Piazza Giuseppe Mazzini; a
A pared-down, new-style wine bar, Settembrini offers an excellent wine list and a limited but imaginative menu that includes vegetarian options. Inside is ash-wood and slate décor with dramatic blown-up black-and-white photos on the walls; there are also outside tables. Join the media lovelies taking time out from the nearby RAI headquarters who come to enjoy its degustation menu (€45) or its new-wave rustic dishes. There's a lunchtime buffet (€12).

DEL FRATE Map pp130–1 Wine Bar, Osteria €€
% 06 323 64 37; Via degli Scipioni 118; meals €35–40; h lunch & dinner Mon–Fri, dinner Sat & Sun; m Ottaviano–San Pietro; a
Locals love this upmarket wine bar, and it's a great escape from the Vatican. The tall yet small brick-arched rooms have wooden tables and large barrels, while bottles of wine line the walls. Interesting cuisine includes some delicious *crudo* (raw) dishes, such as beef tartare, as well as great *primi*. *Aperitivo* is available from 6.30pm every evening.

TAVERNA ANGELICA Map pp130–1 Trattoria €€
% 06 687 45 14; Piazza Amerigo Capponi 6; meals €35–40; h dinner Mon–Sat, lunch & dinner Sun, closed 2 weeks Aug; m Ottaviano–San Pietro; a
A gorgeous, creative trattoria tucked away at the edge of the Borgo, this has an elegant, gracious interior with huge wicker lampshades and copper-framed pictures. Food is imaginative, with delicate and delicious flavours: take, for example, *tonnarelli* with garlic and oil, *pachino* (a type of cherry

CITTÀ DEL GUSTO

In the industrial hinterland to the south of Trastevere, Italy's premier food organisation Gambero Rosso runs a gleaming, six-storey shrine to food. Housed in a former warehouse, the Città del Gusto (City of Taste; Map pp108–9; % 06 551 12 21; www.gamberorosso.it/portale/cdg/scuole; Via Enrico Fermi 161) is an impressive futuristic glass-and-steel construction where you can study food, read about it, cook it and even eat it.

The foodie fun starts on the 2nd floor (the 1st is given over to temporary exhibitions), where you'll find the cookbook shop, a pizza workshop and the centre's excellent restaurant, the Osteria del Gambero Rosso (% 06 551 12 277; pizzas €14, meals €30; h 9am–4pm Mon, 9am–11.30pm Tue–Fri, 7.30–11.30pm Sat).

Having eaten your fill, try a trip to the theatre – there are two in the building. On the 3rd floor, next to the cookery school (for information on courses see p288), there's the amphitheatre-shaped Teatro della Cucina, where you can watch top Italian and international chefs perform. Two floors up, the Teatro del Vino stages various wine-related events, including lessons and tastings. To put your newly acquired *vin*o expertise to the test, adjourn to the wine bar (% 06 551 12 264; h 7.30pm–midnight Tue–Sat) on the same floor.

In between the two theatres, on the 4th floor, are the TV studios of the 24-hour satellite channel Raisat Gambero Rosso.

To get to the Città del Gusto by public transport take bus 780 from Viale di Trastevere.

tomato) and ricotta. Sunday lunch is a bargain at €20 or €25 (two different set menus).

HOSTARIA-PIZZERIA GIACOMELLI

Map pp130–1 Pizzeria €€
% 06 372 59 10; Via Emilio Faà di Bruno 25; meals €35; h closed Aug; m Ottaviano-San Pietro; a This neighbourhood restaurant has them queuing around the block for thin and crispy Roman pizzas. The décor is nothing fancy (high ceilings, lots of photos), but the reliably good food has locals voting with their feet. There's also some in-demand outside seating under striped awning on the pleasant street.

IL BAR SOTTO IL MARE

Map pp130–1 Ristorante €€
% 06 397 28 413; Via Tunisi 27; meals €35; h lunch & dinner Tue-Sun, dinner Mon, closed lunch Aug; m Cipro Musei Vaticani Only a few minutes' walk straight down the road from the Vatican entrance, this easy-going restaurant is nonetheless tucked away and feels like a find. It's a laid-back place with a funky vibe: blue arched rooms set the submarine theme and the menu is full of delicious, simply cooked seafood. Service can be a bit laid-back too.

DINO & TONY

Map pp130–1 Trattoria €€
% 06 397 33 284; Via Leone IV 60; meals €25; h Mon-Sat; m Ottaviano-San Pietro A rarity in the Vatican area, Dino & Tony is a genuine and simple little trattoria with gingham tablecloths, some streetside seating, reasonable food and reliably gruff Roman service. Famous for its *amatriciana*, it also has fabulous antipasti and a beautiful *granita di caffè* (crushed-ice coffee), served in a glass and topped by an inch of whipped cream. Helpings are so generous that it's best to order one course at a time. If, for example, you ask for a little antipasti, expect ham, salami, croquettes, vegetables au gratin, stuffed olives and half a pizza with four different toppings.

CACIO E PEPE

Map pp130–1 Trattoria €
% 06 321 72 68; Via Avezzana 11; meals €20; h Mon-Sat; g Piazza Giuseppe Mazzini Romans flock for the home cooking at this humble trattoria, with gingham-clad tables spreading across the pavement in all directions. They'll even put up with freezing winter temperatures to sit outside and

dig into great steaming bowls of classics as *spaghetti alla carbonara* and meatballs, rather than wait to eat in the tiny interior. Dessert is fruit and the coffee's good.

ENOTECA CARSO

Map pp130–1 Wine Bar €
% 06 372 58 66; Via Carso; meals €20; h Mon-Sat; g Piazza Giuseppe Mazzini Locals love this unassuming place with streetside seating. It has a great range of fresh wines on tap or from the bottle, and can't-go-wrong tasty dishes of the day such as mozzarella-and-tomato salad or pasta with basil and tomato – point and choose from the glass cabinet. The waiter with the headband will see you right for wine.

OSTERIA DELL'ANGELO

Map pp130–1 Trattoria €€
% 06 372 94 70; Via Giovanni Bettolo 24; meals €20; h lunch Tue-Fri, dinner Mon-Sat; m Ottaviano-San Pietro Having hung up his boots, former rugby player Angelo runs a neighbourhood trattoria that's hugely popular (making a reservation a must), with paper cloths on solid wooden tables, burly fresh-from-the-scrum waiters, photos of Angelo's sporting heroes and a sociable atmosphere. On the menu are robust versions of Roman favourites like *tonnarelli cacio e pepe*, skate soup with broccoli, and an enormous set menu (€25) that includes wine and water. If you have roast meat, don't miss the roast potatoes.

SHANTI

Map pp130–1 Indian, Pakistani €
% 06 324 49 22; Via Fabio Massimo 68; meals €20; h daily; m Ottaviano-San Pietro; a Deservedly popular, this small Indian and Pakistani restaurant has delicately spiced dishes (tandooris, dhals and the like) served in an appealing setting – an intimate room, dimly lit, with lots of intricately carved wood and eastern decoration.

FRANCHI

Map pp130–1 Delicatessen €
% 06 687 46 51; Via Cola di Rienzo 198; panini €2.50-4; m Ottaviano-San Pietro Franchi is a fine-food landmark. Assistants in white jackets work with a dexterity that only comes with years of practice, slicing hams, cutting cheese, weighing olives and preparing *panini*. There's also wine, vegetables conserved in oil, and truffles. You can buy ready-made dishes, such as poached salmon, baked aubergine *parmigiana* or

zucchini a la Barese (Bari-style courgette), to take away or eat at stand-up tables. Its fried dishes are renowned.

PIZZERIA AMALFI

Map pp130–1 Pizzeria €
% 06 397 33 165; Via dei Gracchi 12; pizzas €5-8.50; m Ottaviano-San Pietro; a This neighbourhood pizzeria is so popular that it recently expanded into the next shop. Murals of the Bay of Naples and other Neapolitan vistas set the scene for punters tucking into splendid thick-crust pizzas.

DOLCE MANIERA

Map pp130–1 Pasticceria €
% 06 375 17 518; Via Barletta 27; cornetti from €0.30; h 24hr; m Ottaviano-San Pietro Down some stairs, this cake-filled corner is crammed full of every possible type of *cornetto* (croissant). It supplies most of the cafés in the area with their fresh *colazione* staples. You can also buy big slabs of *pizza rosso* and other savouries – at any time of day or night!

VILLA BORGHESE & NORTHERN ROME

This area encompasses Piazza del Popolo and Villa Borghese. The areas west and further north are either upmarket residential or given over to office space, so they're busy by day and subdued at night.

PIAZZA DEL POPOLO & AROUND

DAL BOLOGNESE Map pp150–1 Ristorante €€€
% 06 361 14 26; Piazza del Popolo 1; meals €65; h Tue-Sun; m Flaminio; a See and be seen and mingle with the beautiful at this chic restaurant. Dine inside surrounded by wood panelling and exotic flowers, or outside watching people saunter across the piazza. As the name suggests, Emilia-Romagna dishes are what you get. Everything is good, but try the tagliatelle

with truffles, tuna tartare or the damn fine fillet steak.

LA BUCA DI RIPETTA

Map pp150–1 Ristorante €€€
% 06 321 93 91; Via di Ripetta 36; meals €65; h Tue-Sun; m Flaminio; a Popular with actors and directors from the district, who know a bargain when they see it, this is cheery and dependable, and you may have to queue. Cooking is robust. Try the country-style soup with rosemary-scented bread or the roasted suckling pork with potatoes and you'll be fuelled either for more sightseeing or for a lie down.

PIZZA RÉ

Map pp150–1 Pizzeria €
% 06 32 11 468; Via di Ripetta 14; pizzas €6-9.50; m Flaminio a Part of a chain, but a good one, this popular pizzeria – handy for Piazza del Popolo – offers Neapolitan-style pizzas, with thick doughy bases and delicious, diverse toppings. The salads are fresh and the antipasti is great – try the fried things or the *mozzarella fresca di bufala e prosciutto San Daniele* (buffalo mozzarella with San Daniele dry-cured ham). There's a narrow strip of outdoor tables. It's busy so you might have to book or wait.

FLAMINIO

RED Map pp150–1 Fusion €€
% 06 806 91 630; Viale Pietro de Coubertin 30; meals €45; g or j Viale Tiziano, or shuttle bus M from Stazione Termini; a Hobnob with artistic Romans in this snazzy bar-restaurant at Renzo Piano's grey, podlike Auditorium Parco della Musica. It's a glamorous place with curvaceous wicker furnishings and red interior, and live jazz every Thursday night. The food is duly modern and sees old ingredients given a contemporary make-over in dishes such as giant prawns with balsamic vinegar, or pork fillets with cranberries. There's also *aperitivo* (€10).

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