

RECOMMENDED FOOD AND RESTAURANTS IN FLORENCE

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BEFORE EVERYTHING. The very first guide is based on the Florence local Marco and my own experience in Florence with Bo (6 days) when participating the conference “Group Theory in Florence IV”. For a more comprehensive guide on food and culture of Florence, please refer to Marco.

All the photos have only been cropped or rotated from the original picture taken with our phone – they have not been edited or enhanced in any other way (because there is no need).

0. SPECIAL FOOD

We start with the list of special food in Florence.

- Bistecca alla Fiorentina (Florence special T-bone steak)
- Trippa alla Fiorentina (Florentine style tripe)
- Lampredotto
- Ice cream (yes, ice cream, which is said to be originated from Florence)

And of course, some Italian special.

- Pizza
- Pasta
- Coffee (Italy has better and probably cheaper coffee than anywhere else in the world)
- Tiramisu
- Chinò (Chinotto)

Let us discuss Chinotto in more details before turning to restaurant recommendations. Chinotto is a special soft drink in Italy, similar to cola. According to Wiki, it is made from the fruit of *Citrus myrtifolia*, a kind of myrtle-leaved orange tree. The fruit is not very sweet. Instead, it has a bittersweet taste to finish, and the bitter taste will disappear quickly, leaving the slight fresh sweet in your mouth. Chinotto can be found in probably every pub or supermarket in Italy.

1. TRATTORIA MARIONA

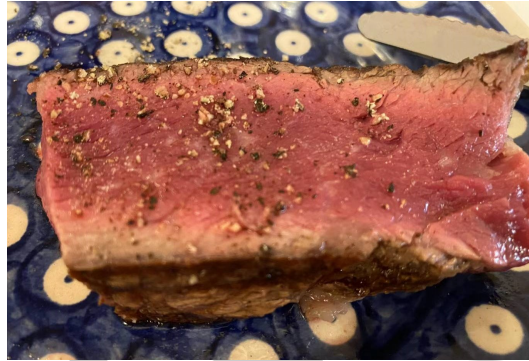
Our clear favourite. There are two places, both of which are located in the city centre. Their Florence special T-bone steak (shown in Figure 1) was the best steak I have ever had.

FIGURE. 1. Florence special T-bone steak



The rare steak was super juicy, but with very little blood coming out when we cut (see Figure 2). The skin was crispy and perfectly salted. The steak was placed in a hot plate so that the temperature of the skin would not drop sharply.

FIGURE. 2. A slice of the steak



The roasted potato (€6.00) served with the steak was also tasty.

Another highlight was the free starter bread. The waiter gave us salt and olive oil, and we also asked for crushed chilli. They are perfectly combined as shown in Figure 3.

FIGURE. 3. Bread with salt, olive oil and crushed chilli



There is a special menu everyday. We ordered a dessert from that, which is shown in Figure 4 (but we forgot its name). The outside was in a flavour of rose, covering a chocolate cream cake inside. Delicious!

FIGURE. 4. Dessert



2. AFFÈ DI BACCO

Favourite pizza restaurant. Slightly away from the city centre, but with buses it is never a problem. Only dinner is served, and make sure to book in advance if you have more than 2 people.

Based on Marco's suggestion, we ordered Maialona (€9.50) and Zorro (€9.30) – both were incredible.

If you love meat, you should try Maialona (see Figure 5). It is a red base pizza with mozzarella, fior di latte (a type of fresh, soft cheese made from cow's milk), frankfurter, cooked ham, sausage and salami.

FIGURE. 5. Maialona



Zorro (Figure 6) was made with cooked ham, truffle drops, buffalo morsels and tomato. The ham tastes even better than the one in Maialona, thanks to the truffle.

FIGURE. 6. Zorro



3. LAMPREDOTTO CART

Located in the centre, this might be tourists' favourite as the menu is provided in 5 different languages (Italian, English, Chinese, Japanese and Korean). It is also very famous on the Chinese app Xiaohongshu (小红书).

According to Wiki, lampredotto is a typical Florentine dish made from the fourth and final stomach of cattle, the abomasum.

We ordered a sandwich with lampredotto and a sandwich with Florentine style tripe. Both of them were topped with spicy sauce, and the lampredotto was also topped with a green sauce called "salsa verde". They were truly spicy – suitable for most of Chinese people. There is also non-spicy option.

4. DA GARIBARDI

Also in the centre. It is a big restaurant with plenty of seats, especially during the week.

They have basically everything. We went there with our friends, so we were lucky to order and explore a lot.

The steak and pizza were great, but since we had already went to Trattoria Mariona and Affè di Bacco, they did not have chance to top the list.

My favourite was the Florentine style tripe (€12.00, see Figure 7), beating every other place we went to. They also had Bo's favourite chilli oil in Europe because it is really spicy.

FIGURE. 7. Florentine style tripe



5. GASTRONOMIA PIZZERIA PANICO

The most generous restaurant we have ever seen. It is located in the residential area (which is near the centre), so it is quieter than other places.

Why do I say they are generous? Because the free starter breads (our favourite) was already a meal amount (see Figure 8). Everything was freshly baked. We also took away a focaccia for the breakfast next day, and even though, it was delicious.

FIGURE. 8. Free starter breads



This is another famous restaurant on Xiaohongshu – the owner knew it, so every time he saw an Asian face, he would recommend food based on this app. So we did not need to deal with one of the most difficult problems in the world (which is “what to eat”).

As recommended by the owner, we had Salento lasagna (Lasagna Salentina, €12.00) and Spaghetti with Piccantina tuna (Spaghetti al Tonno Piccantina, €12.00), as shown in Figure 9, with Tiramisu (€6.00) to finish. A bit too much for us, but tasty.

FIGURE. 9. Salento lasagna (left) and Spaghetti with Piccantina tuna (right)



6. BOTTEGA DI PASTICCERIA MASACCIO

A great place to have coffee and cake, which is very close to Gastronomia Pizzeria Panico. It appears to be one of Marco’s weekly coffee place. No more comment because we did not have another sample for them to compare with.

7. ANTICO VINAIO

It is a sandwich place with long queue every day. Be sure to decide what to order in advance, otherwise you may feel a bit awkward with lots of people waiting for you. The sandwich was freshly made and was large amount.

8. MISTER PIZZA

I do not think the pizza can match Affè di Bacco (though it is still great), but if you come at 9pm in summer it will be an ideal place – you can see the most beautiful view of Florence Cathedral when the weather is clear. For example, Figure 10 was taken somewhere next to it.

FIGURE. 10. Beautiful view of Florence Cathedral near Mister Pizza



And it has the best-looking Tiramisu I have ever had, see Figure 11. It was also very tasty.

FIGURE. 11. Tiramisu



9. ICE CREAM PLACES

Marco recommended eight ice cream shops and we went to two of them. Unfortunately, we had no time to take photo in the hot summer.

Eduardo is Marco's favourite. According to Marco, pistachio never goes wrong. Indeed, the pistachio in Eduardo was perfect.

We went to Gelateria della Cantina together with Marco, where we had Gusto della Cantina (a bit alcoholic flavour) and Nocciola (Hazelnut in English) as he suggested, as well as one with coffee flavour. All fantastic – Gusto della Cantina is my favourite, Nocciola is Bo's favourite, and coffee never disappoints us.

10. GUSTO NOVE RISTORANTE (酒食记)

Chinese food is not just chow mein or fried rice or something similar – for us they are just what Tesco's meal deals (but with expensive price) are to British.

We conclude with this Chinese restaurant because I think they can survive in China, as it has some special regional food, which cannot be found even in some Chinese cities. For example, I have never had 水盆羊肉 (Xi'an style lamb soup with vermicelli) in China, so we tried there. The correct way to enjoy it is to tear the Chinese style steamed bun (馍, in a slight cumin flavour) and mix them with the soup.

Another star was the Chinese BBQ – a bit expensive, but very tasty (in the overseas Chinese standard).

FOOD