



Madame
Germaine

Italian Dolce Vita

Antipasto

Italian cuisine ignites the taste buds like no other meal will! Every service is an experience, and a true Italian will be proud of every bite of food. With a simple bite of prosciutto and cheese, we couldn't even complain!

At the first service, there will always be "antipasto". The first course of a hearty Italian dinner usually starts with meat, cheese and/or bread. Generally speaking, this appetizer is accompanied by a variety of Parma ham, mortadella, salami, prosciutto, mozzarella and olives. When presented on a beautiful wooden board or a shiny tray, it becomes very elegant!

Figs grown throughout Italy are a delicious anytime treat, but a salad of fresh goat cheese and sweet and tangy figs is a delectable option. Otherwise, a refreshing caprese salad, with rich slices of mozzarella, juicy ripe tomatoes and fresh basil leaves to tie it all together will have you knocking your socks off. The balsamic drizzle tops off a perfect flavor combination to start your meal. It's just light enough to keep you excited for your starter, yet rich enough to satisfy your cravings.

For bread, crostini and bruschetta are both wonderful. Although the two are incredibly similar, bruschetta is usually on a slightly larger piece of toast. Crostini is a toasted slice of a bun like a baguette. Bruschetta is best roasted with a little olive oil and garlic and garnished with a simple tomato and basil. For the crostini, a mixture of ricotta and figs is another great incorporation of figs into and balances the small piece of toast well.

Whichever dish you choose, antipasto is meant to excite your palate and stomach just enough to keep you going until your meal.





Primo

What would this service be without a delicious plate of pasta? As the first course of a traditional Italian meal, the primo usually consists of a meal that is not meat. Pasta, soup, lasagna or risotto all qualify for a delicious serving of primo. While being light enough that you can then feast on a juicy piece of steak or tender chicken, it should also satisfy you. Even after wolfing down a lot of antipasto!

A bowl of soup can do the trick. A minestrone with beans, potatoes, mushrooms and vegetables is both salty and textured. Another option is the Italian wedding soup, with meatballs, spinach and ditalini – another primo course staple.

If pasta is what you crave, you have all the options in the world. With a choice of rigatoni or tagliatelle and a variety of sauces to choose from, you simply can't go wrong. A vodka sauce is perfect for a simple dish. Bolognese is perfect when you fancy something a little heavier. Pesto is tasty because it's the perfect combination of fresh basil and pine nuts with mild olive oil.

Also in the pasta category, lasagna piles up plenty of flavor points with its layers. Whether stuffed with meat, layered with eggplant, or simply stuffed with ricotta, a lasagna will always do the job.

Of course, if all else fails, a creamy risotto is perfect for a big bowl of rice. Prepared with Parmesan cheese, onions, butter and broth, risotto is a simple yet vibrant and hearty meal. For a burst of freshness, garnishing it with basil ties it all together and prepares your palette for the next dish, il secondo.





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Secondo

The Secondo, or second course, resembling what we would consider the main course. Consisting of meat or fish, these dishes tend to come in smaller portions and are quite simple, complementing the other parts of the meal perfectly.

A very famous Italian "secondo" dish is Pollo Alla Cacciatora. This simple recipe consists of pan-fried chicken then simmered with tomatoes and peppers. It gets extra flavor from rosemary, garlic and wine. If you've never tried this classic, go for it. It's pretty easy to make at home too! For a pork option, you might lean towards a serving of Porchetta, a classic Italian recipe for boneless pork shoulder, stuffed with sausage and wrapped in – yes, you guessed it – more roast pork! Finally, you could also cook a veal dish, such as Vitello ai Funghi, an extravagant plate of grilled veal cutlets with a choice of wild mushroom or lemon sauce.

If you're looking to find a vegetarian portion, you'll likely see Melanzane Alla Parmigiana on the menu. Although it is meatless, it is quite an elegant dish. By the way, the name of the dishes in Italian says a lot about the protein used, its cut and how it was cooked.





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Contorno

Along with your "secondo", you'll need a side dish (or two!) to go with it. These side dishes are known as "contorno".

"Contorno" dishes are traditionally served with and alongside your main course. These options typically consist of a light salad or well-prepared and well-seasoned vegetables. What's great about them too is that they're simple and easy to make. Just a little seasoning, high quality olive oil and fresh herbs will do the trick.

A tasty option is made with artichokes, an extremely popular Italian ingredient. Carciofi Arrostiti, or grilled artichokes, created with the right seasoning of olive oil, garlic, salt and pepper, makes a delicious accompaniment to any main course. Artichokes can be prepared in a variety of ways, expanding the many ways to consume them. They are usually steamed, boiled or grilled during preparation.

You haven't completely finished your Italian experience if you haven't tried stuffed zucchini flowers. Zucchini stuffed with mozzarella cheese and prosciutto. A mix to die for!

