



# AIFS FLORENCE MEAL VOUCHER INFORMATION BOOKLET 2010



**GUSTO  
LEO** *best gelato  
in town!* 

PIZZERIA - SPAGHETTERIA  
OPEN BAR

*Golden View*  
**OPEN BAR**



## **AIFS FLORENCE MEAL VOUCHER GUIDE**

Thank you for signing up for the AIFS Meal Voucher scheme!

In this booklet you will find the descriptions of the restaurants that are part of the AIFS meal voucher scheme.

Please take care of your vouchers. They will not be replaced if you lose them or put them in the washing machine by accident! Each voucher has your name on it and is your property – keep in mind that those pieces of paper are valuable!

All vouchers expire at the end of the program and cannot be used after the program finish date. No refunds can be given for unused vouchers.

Please note that you cannot share with another person the food that the meal voucher entitles you to. 1 person = 1 voucher. You can pay for other people with your vouchers, as long as you are present and sign the voucher.

### **ITALIANS + FOOD**

Food is a vital part of being Italian. Each restaurant is proud of the food they serve. You will not find any chain type restaurants; each one is very individual and often reflects the personality of the owners. Likewise the serving staff do not depend on tips, so the quality of service varies in comparison to the USA – having said that as small tip is always appreciated!

The eating experience is different to the USA. Italians like to have at least two courses, smaller in size to US portions. A big difference is Italians don't snack between meals, so when it comes to meal times, they are ready and really quite hungry! They also tend to eat a lot later than people in the US.

*Antipasto* – Hams, Cheese, Bruschetta, Crostini

*Primo Piatto* – Traditionally a small plate of pasta, soup or risotto.

*Secondo Piatto* – Usually a meat or fish dish on its own.

*Contorni* – Separate plates of vegetables to go with your secondo.

*Insalata* – Salad, traditionally eaten after your meal to cleanse the palate.

Look out for words your server might use, such as *dopo* = afterwards, *insieme* = together and *subito* = immediately.

### **RESTAURANT ETIQUETTE**

Having an AIFS Meal Voucher does not entitle you to an automatic reservation. The restaurants we use are popular so they get busy, particularly

on Friday and Saturday evenings. Some of them are quite small in size, so if a group of you want to eat together it is advisable to book in advance. All restaurants in Italy are non-smoking. However, smoking is still permitted on the terrace or patio areas. A lot of Italians still smoke, so be warned that if you are sitting outside you may be surrounded by their fumes.

Italian food is fantastic! Please listen to the advice and recommendations of the restaurant staff. This is a great opportunity for you to try new things. Please don't pass judgement on 'unusual' foods until you've tried it. You never know, you might love tripe..!



Some of the menus may be confusing at first but you will soon start to recognise dishes and types of pasta. A small dictionary may be handy to help translate certain dishes and ingredients. (*Che cos' è?* – What is it?)

If you start asking for fat-free, low-carb specials then it is unlikely you will get a positive response...Don't do it! However, all of the menus available on the meal voucher scheme will have a vegetarian option – even if it is not specifically called such. If in doubt ask. (*è vegetariano?* – Is it vegetarian?)

Some of the restaurants do offer a Take Away Service but not all of them. Please check before ordering. (*Da portare via?* – To take away?)

Asking for a box/doggy bag at the end of your meal for any food you haven't eaten is not encouraged, at least not until you are a regular. It is just not an Italian thing to do!

Students who are not on the meal voucher scheme are welcome to eat at the restaurants as well. They will just choose from the regular menu and pay a regular check at the end. It is also possible to pay for other people with your vouchers as long as you are there to sign them.

### WHAT YOUR MEAL VOUCHER COVERS

Most restaurants charge each person sitting down a cover charge (*coperto*). This can be at least €2 (often higher) and covers bread and general service. Each restaurant is different but your voucher entitles you to at least a main course (*primo* or *secondo*) and a starter or dessert and includes the *coperto*. Bottled water is usually also included, but if not then you can either pay for bottled water or ask for water from the faucet (*rubinetto*).



## **TRATTORIA NELLA**

Via Delle Terme 19/r

Tel. 055 218925

[www.trattorianella.com](http://www.trattorianella.com)

### **OPENING HOURS:**

PRANZO (Lunch) 12.00pm – 3.00pm

CENA (Dinner) 7.00pm – 10.30pm

CHIUSO LA DOMENICA (CLOSED SUNDAY)

### **RESTAURANT DESCRIPTION:**

This small family-owned restaurant is something of a Florentine Institution, having been in the same family for over forty years. The current owners are musical twin brothers Federico and Lorenzo (Nella was their grandmother's name) - so don't blame the wine if you think you are starting to see double! They have a small menu of traditional Tuscan food, don't be afraid to ask questions and investigate the daily specials. Due to its size it does fill up rather quickly so making a reservation is always a good idea! When you book, make sure you mention that you will be using AIFS meal vouchers. It is not the best place to go with a large crowd of people.

### **PAST STUDENT OPINIONS.....**

Great pasta and we love those crazy twins!

### **AIFS STAFF THOUGHTS...**

Ahh lovely little Nella. Smack dab in the heart of the city yet most tourists pass it by. Small and intimate, they do an amazing Ribollita and great fish specials on a Friday & the Cinghiale (wild boar) is not to be missed.



### **MEAL VOUCHER PROCEDURE**

Show your Meal Voucher to the staff on arrival. You will be given the AIFS special menu. Your Meal Voucher entitles you to the following options:

1. A Starter + First course + Water
2. A Starter + Second course + Water



## TRATTORIA CASALINGA

Via Dei Michelozzi 9/r

Tel. 055 218624

**OPENING HOURS:** (All times are approximate)

PRANZO (Lunch) 12pm-2pm

CENA (Dinner) 7.30pm – 10pm

CHIUSO LA DOMENICA (CLOSED SUNDAY)

### RESTAURANT DESCRIPTION:

If you want an authentic, traditional, no nonsense Italian food experience then Casalinga is your place. No reservations. No menus in English. No frills, no messing about and it's great. This is an interesting place to sample some wonderful dishes from a changing menu (It depends on what is in season). It's a surprisingly big place, with plenty of tables but it is very popular with locals so it does fill up quickly and lines can be long.

### PAST STUDENT OPINIONS

"So much food!"

### AIFS STAFF THOUGHTS...

Just go find a couple of people who like to try new things, leave any US pre-conceptions behind and take a risk with the menu! This is a really good place to have a primo and a secondo (the roast rabbit is excellent) along with some contorni (the roast potatoes, carrots and spinach are always good). The staff can seem pretty rushed but don't let that put you off!



*"This trattoria is a cheerful family-run place where you can get a filling meal. Don't expect to linger as there is usually a line of expectant diners eager to take over your table" Lonely Planet - Italy*

### MEAL VOUCHER PROCEDURE

When you are seated tell the staff you are part of the AIFS meal vouchers scheme. "Sono dell'AIFS"

Your Meal Voucher entitles you to:

A First course, a Second course, a side dish and Water



## **PALLE D'ORO**

Via Sant'Antonino 43-45 r

Tel. 055 291985

[www.paginegialle.it/palledoro](http://www.paginegialle.it/palledoro)

### **OPENING HOURS:**

PRANZO (Lunch Midday -2.30pm)

CENA (Dinner) 6.30pm – 9.30pm

CHIUSO LA DOMENICA (CLOSED SUNDAY)

### **RESTAURANT DESCRIPTION:**

This famous trattoria is very close to the bustling markets of San Lorenzo and the Mercato Centrale. The trattoria dates back to 1860 and has a great selection of dishes. Please note it opens early, compared to the other restaurants in the scheme. Service is prompt and attentive but the place does close relatively early in the evening so don't hang about.

### **PAST STUDENT OPINIONS**

"Great choice of pasta and quick service."

### **AIFS STAFF THOUGHTS...**

It's always a friendly welcome at "Golden Balls". Luca and Eduardo are always friendly as is all the rest of the staff. We have worked with them for years so they know our students well. Portions are healthy and it is handy if you are near the Santa Maria Novella Train Station. They also do take away if you are in a rush.

### **MEAL VOUCHER PROCEDURE**

On arrival inform the waiting staff that you are part of the AIFS Florence Meal Voucher Program. They will give you a special menu.

Your meal voucher entitles you to:

A choice of a First course (primo), a Second course (secondo) and a side dish (contorno) from the meal voucher menu. Water is included.

At lunch time the menu is more limited as they do the Florentine version of fast food with all the local market traders coming in for a sandwich or quick bowl of pasta. It is very popular so you may have to wait a little while.



## **GOLDEN VIEW OPEN BAR**

Via Dei Bardi 58 r

Tel. 055 214502

[www.goldenviewopenbar.com](http://www.goldenviewopenbar.com)

**OPENING HOURS:** 11.30am – 2.00am  
TUTTI I GIORNI (Everyday)

### **RESTAURANT DESCRIPTION:**

Location, location, location! It is hard to believe that over the last eight years this restaurant has transformed from being a fast food eatery to the beautiful & luxurious restaurant you find today. We will be honest; it can sometimes be a bit of a tourist trap & therefore quite busy but the view is worth it! Booking is always advisable. Inside you will find a great selection of dishes covering all styles of Italian cooking. An extensive selection of wines is also available. On some evenings there is a live Jazz band playing a selection of soothing tunes.

### **PAST STUDENT OPINIONS**

"Love, love, love it...perfect for date night or impressing the family!"

### **AIFS STAFF THOUGHTS...**

"Golden View is lovely and it's always open! Portions are good and it has a great atmosphere, particularly when the band is playing. You can dress up and have a more formal evening, it's a nice place to take any family or friends who maybe visiting."



### **MEAL VOUCHER PROCEDURE**

On arrival, please inform the waiting staff that you are part of the AIFS Florence Meal Voucher Program. They will give you a special menu.

You can have a dish from two of the four options – Pastas, Pizzas, Secondi, Salads.

Water is not included.



**GUSTO LEO**  
Via Proconsolo, 8-10 r  
Tel. 055 285217  
www.gustoleo.com

**OPENING HOURS:** From 8am to 1am  
TUTTI I GIORNI (Everyday)

### **RESTAURANT DESCRIPTION:**

This laid back and friendly restaurant attracts a steady mix of locals dropping in for their daily pranzo (lunch) as well as tourists feeling peckish on the way from Santa Croce Church to the centre of the city.

### **PAST STUDENT OPINIONS**

"Gusto Leo is the best; they are always super friendly & give enormous portions!"

### **AIFS STAFF THOUGHTS...**

"You know when you feel like simple pasta and a salad, at 4pm... OK it's against the rules of Italian eating so to speak but hey you can't help it if you're hungry! Gusto Leo is a good place to go, as you'll get sorted out no problem!"

### **MEAL VOUCHER PROCEDURE**

Show the staff your AIFS Meal Voucher on arrival. You can choose one of the following options from

1. Any Bruschetta + First Course + Water
2. Any Pizza + Mixed Salad + Water
3. Any Bruschetta or Mixed Salad + any Piatto di Leo + Water
4. Any Big Salad + Any Dessert + Water



## **TRATTORIA ANITA**

Via del Parlascio, 2

Tel. 055 218 698

### **OPENING HOURS:**

PRANZO (Lunch 12pm to 2.30pm)

CENA (Dinner 7pm to 10pm)

CHIUSO DOMENICA

### **RESTAURANT DESCRIPTION:**

Typical cosy Tuscan trattoria, serving great homemade food. A lunchtime favourite with the locals that work in the area. Trattoria Anita is always very popular with our students especially for group dinner and celebrations! It's really handy for school and definitely worth a visit!

### **PAST STUDENT OPINIONS**

"We always enjoy the service we get at Trattoria Anita and there is always so much food!!"

### **AIFS STAFF OPINIONS**

"Not so many tourists and you get loads for your voucher"

### **MEAL VOUCHER PROCEDURE**

On arrival tell them that you are part of the AIFS meal voucher scheme. They will give you the regular menu to choose from. Select any combination you wish!

Any Pasta dish + any main course + choice of side vegetables + dessert + water !

Please note that no alcoholic beverages or coffee will be covered by your voucher. If you order them you have to pay yourself.



## **RISTORANTE LE CARCERI**

Piazza Madonna della Neve,3  
(off Via Ghibellina)  
Tel. 055.247.9327

### **OPENING HOURS**

PRANZO (Lunch 12pm to 3pm)  
CENA (Dinner 7pm to 11.30pm)  
CHIUSO LUNEDÌ

### **RESTAURANT DESCRIPTION:**

If you fancy something a little bit different why not eat dinner in an ex-prison?! Seriously. This unique restaurant used to be home to Florence's criminals, you can even see one of the old cell doors in the bathrooms. So it's an interesting place to eat your dinner and the food's pretty darn good too.

### **PAST STUDENT OPINIONS**

Le Carceri is a shiny-new addition to the AIFS meal Voucher Scheme, so go give it a try and let us know what you think!

### **AIFS STAFF OPINIONS**

"It's well worth heading a little way off the tourist track to this restaurant which is owned by the same people as old favourite Ristorante Il Teatro. Inside it's really stylish and quirky, plus the food was great."

### **MEAL VOUCHER PROCEDURE**

Upon arrival let the staff know that you are part of the meal voucher scheme. You can choose from the following three options (water included):

1. Pizza + Salad or Dessert
2. First course + Salad or Dessert
3. Piatto Unico (Main dish – by itself)





## **RISTORANTE IL TEATRO**

Via Ghibellina, 128

Tel. 055 246 69 54

### **OPENING HOURS:**

PRANZO (Lunch 12pm-3pm)

CENA (Dinner 7pm-12am)

TUTTI I GIORNI (Everyday)

### **RESTAURANT DESCRIPTION:**

A firm favourite for the last couple of years, the lovely Mirella and her staff will take good care of you. Opposite the Teatro Verdi (hence the name) it gets busy with guests enjoying a pre- or post- theatre meal. Indeed, there are plenty of pictures on the wall of famous Italian customers.

Large pizzas made by the talented Pizzaiolo (pizza chef) who you can see at work at the back of the restaurant, great pasta dishes, and friendly staff. We love it and hope you will too!

### **PAST STUDENTS OPINIONS**

“Friendly, relaxed, great service - we practically lived there!”

### **AIFS STAFF OPINIONS**

“One of the best restaurants in Florence I think, great menu, lovely relaxed atmosphere and you always leave so full you can barely walk!! We love it!”

### **MEAL VOUCHER PROCEDURE**

Upon arrival let the staff know that you are part of the meal voucher scheme. You can choose from the following three options (water included):

1. Pizza + Salad or Dessert
2. First course + Salad or Dessert
3. Piatto Unico (Main dish – by itself)



**HOUSE OF SIZZLE**  
Via Dei Benci 35 r  
Tel. 055 2344904  
www.redgarter.it

**OPENING HOURS:**  
CENA (Dinner) 6pm to Late  
(Often 11pm sometimes later)

### **RESTAURANT DESCRIPTION:**

As the name kinda suggests, this option is not very Italian. They do a range of American/Mexican food as well as the usual Italian fayre. Enchiladas and nachos are side by side on the menu with Italian steak, tagliatelle and salads. No pizza here. It is run by Francesco who is 1/2 Italian, 1/2 British and 100% a sports fan, so there's satellite TV showing all the major US sports events, including college sports. They also do take away. This is the one time when you can split a voucher between more than one person.

### **PAST STUDENT OPINIONS**

"Really close to school and makes a nice change to pasta and pizza!"

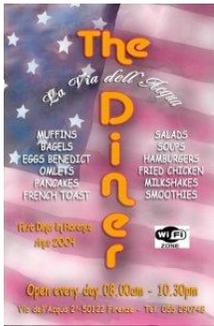
### **AIFS STAFF OPINIONS**

"Not so traditional but the service is good and friendly and we all need a taste of home sometimes. They will even give you a doggy bag!"

### **MEAL VOUCHER PROCEDURE**

On arrival tell Francesco that you are part of the AIFS meal voucher scheme. He will give you the regular menu to choose from. Select any combination you wish from chicken wings to fajitas to traditional pasta. Your AIFS voucher will cover 12.50 Euros worth of food and the cover charge. If you order under this amount you will not receive change. If you go over you can just add the extra money yourself.

Please note that no alcoholic beverages will be covered by your voucher. If you order them you have to pay yourself.



**THE DINER**  
Via dell'Acqua, 2  
Tel. 055 290748  
[www.theflorencediner.com](http://www.theflorencediner.com)

**OPENING HOURS:** 8am – 10.30pm  
TUTTI I GIORNI (Everyday)

### **RESTAURANT DESCRIPTION:**

If you are feeling a little homesick, then The Diner is the perfect place to go for a taste of home. Offering a range of American food including fried chicken, burgers, pancakes and milkshakes, The Diner is the perfect break from the usual pizza and pasta dishes. There is also free Wi-Fi access.

### **PAST STUDENT OPINIONS**

"The Diner was the perfect antidote for homesickness. Just a little taste of home every now and then – the bagels are great and so are the pancakes!"

### **AIFS STAFF OPINIONS**

"Really tasty comfort food...great to have up your sleeve for those days when pasta just won't do!"

### **MEAL VOUCHER PROCEDURE.....**

On arrival tell the staff that you are part of the AIFS meal voucher scheme. You will be given the regular menu to choose from. Select any combination you wish and your AIFS voucher will cover 12.50 Euros worth of food and the cover charge. If you order under this amount you will not receive change. If you go over you can just add the extra money yourself.

Please note that no alcoholic beverages will be covered by your voucher. If you order them you have to pay yourself.



## **OSTERIA DE'PECCATORI**

Piazza San Firenze, 14r

Tel. 055 287 462

**OPENING HOURS:** 9am-1am  
TUTTI I GIORNI (Everyday)

### **RESTAURANT DESCRIPTION:**

Just a stones throw from the AIFS Study Centre, which makes it perfect for a quick lunch in between classes. The Osteria has continuous opening hours too, so if your body clock is still a bit jetlagged, you can get lovely hot meals at any time of the day! The Osteria de'Peccatori serves up a plethora of heart warming Italian delights such as the classic Ribollita or Tortellini alla Norma. Given that the name of the Osteria translates as restaurant of Sinners...I'd guess they've got a great selection of desserts as well!

### **PAST STUDENT OPINIONS**

Whilst we've been fans of Osteria de'Peccatori for some time now, it is a brand spanking new addition to the AIFS meal voucher family so why not give it a try and be sure to report back to us on what you think!! We might even quote you in next year's handbook!

### **AIFS STAFF THOUGHTS**

The Osteria has a friendly and relaxed atmosphere and is clearly popular with tourists and locals alike, I'm always well looked after when I dine there and leave feeling full & happy!

### **MEAL VOUCHER PROCEDURE**

On arrival inform the staff that you are part of the AIFS meal voucher scheme. You will be given a menu to choose from & can select your meal plan from the following choices.

1. Any Bruschetta + First Course + Water.
2. Any Pizza + Mixed Salad + Water.
3. Any Salad + Dessert + Water.

## FOOD AND DRINK.....and a little bit of etiquette

Eating is one of life's great pleasures for Italians and to eat and drink in Italy is the best way to embrace the country's life style and culture. The concept of *cucina italiana* (Italian cuisine) doesn't actually exist as the food varies a lot from region to region. There are, however, many staple foods which bind the regions and have thus been exported around the world and classed as typically Italian. Here are some of the main ones as well as some Italian dining etiquette and basic vocabulary to help you along the way!

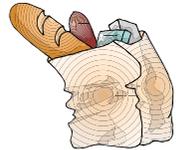
Traditionally the main meal consists of many courses:

The meal starts with **antipasto** (appetizer), which could be *bruschetta / crostini* (bread with various toppings), *prosciutto crudo e melone* (cured ham with melon) or a selection of cold meats (*antipasto rustico*) such as *prosciutto*, *bresaola* (cured beef), *salami* etc.

Next comes the **primo piatto** (first course), which is typically a small plate of pasta, risotto or a soup.

The main dish, **secondo piatto**, comes next, which is meat or fish. This is often eaten with a side salad (*insalata*) or a vegetable dish or two (**contorno**).

Fruit (*frutta*) comes next or occasionally a dessert (**dolce**) and finally there is always **caffé**.



## PIZZA

Apart from pasta, this is probably Italy's most famous export, yet the real thing is nothing like the impostors you find around the world! Though pizzas do vary slightly from region to region, they are usually simpler than the American style pizzas, with a thinner base and fewer but fresher ingredients. You're unlikely to find a deep-pan, stuffed crust pizza with a Mexican chicken topping! The only variation you may find is the *calzone* - the folded, stuffed pizza.

Pizza doesn't come in regular, medium or family sizes either and generally you don't share them. You **just** order the one you want and eat the whole thing! Pizza may also be eaten as a snack in rectangular slices known as *pizza al taglio*.



### Some Classics...

*Funghi* – with mushrooms

*Capricciosa* – olives, mushrooms, artichokes and prosciutto (but please note that in Southern Italy, a *capricciosa* is generally a completely different pizza topped with ham, egg and mushrooms)

*Frutti di mare* – a mixture of seafood

*Napoletana* – anchovies

*Quattro formaggio* – four cheese

*Verdura* – vegetable (whatever is in season)

*Margherita* – tomato, mozzarella, basil

*Marinara* – tomato sauce but no cheese

**Etiquette:** Pizza is often eaten with the fingers. Cut manageable slices and eat away. Or just cut a big piece, fold it over and use your fork! Pizza is generally washed down with a light beer or water, but rarely wine.

## PASTA

Synonymous with Italian food all over the world! It's either dried or fresh and comes in many, many shapes and sizes. Different types of pasta are designed to go with different types of sauces. Here are some of the famous ones..

*Spaghetti, tagliatelle, fettuccine* are all long noodles of various thicknesses.

*Pappardelle* – wide, flat ribbons (in Tuscany, often served with *cinghiale* or wild boar)

*Penne* – short tubes

*Ravioli* – Flat, square-shaped, stuffed pasta parcels

*Tortellini* –smaller, crescent-shaped stuffed pasta parcels

*Fusilli* – spirals

*Gnocchi* – not pasta, but small potato dumplings



As pasta is the *primo piatto* in Italy, and not the main course, it is often served in smaller servings and with simpler sauces than you might use at home so as not to fill you up before the main course. Sauces are often tomato-based, perhaps with some meat, or vegetables or seafood... but never all at once. The pasta is also lightly coated in the sauce, not drowned in it!

### Some sauces...

*Pesto* – basil, garlic, oil, pine nuts, and parmesan

*Arrabbiata* – tomatoes and chilli

*Carbonara* – bacon and a creamy egg-based sauce

*Al Ragù* – meat in a tomato sauce – also known as Bolognese - usually served with tagliatelle – not with spaghetti

*Napoletana* – tomatoes and basil

*Vongole* – clams, garlic, oil

*Alla Matriciana* – tomato and bacon

*Panna* – cream, prosciutto and peas

**Etiquette:** hmm... this is a tricky one as it much depends on the type of pasta you are eating. The short more manageable ones like *penne* and *fusilli* are simply eaten with a fork. Longer more difficult ones like spaghetti are twisted around the fork and popped into the mouth. If some pieces escape just chew them off rather than sucking them up. Italians don't cut up long pasta into short pieces and as a rule they don't usually use a spoon to twisel it around the fork! Tip: if you have too much spaghetti on your fork, you can use the side of the fork to cut some off.

## MEAT, POULTRY AND SEAFOOD

This is the main event, the *secondo piatto*. Served grilled, fried or roasted with a simple sauce so as to not distort the flavour of the meat.

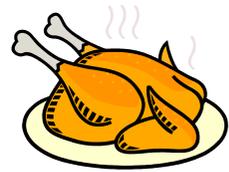
Chicken breast – *petto di pollo*    Steak – *bistecca*

Lamb – *agnello*                      Veal – *Vitello*

Tripe – *Trippa*                        Beef – *Manzo*

Pork – *Arista/Maiale*                Sausage – *Salsiccia*

Ham (cured) – *Prosciutto (crudo)*



The most famous local dish is the "*Bistecca alla fiorentina*" – a huge slab of beef that is served rare, i.e. very bloody and hardly cooked at all. It is a dish that is quite expensive as the meat is of such good quality but it is usually shared between two or more people. Be warned that prices are usually by the kilo and it's easy to end up paying more than you bargained for!

**Vegetables** are often ordered on the side with a main dish (*secondo piatto*) and are called *contorni*. Vegetarianism is not common in Italy and vegetarians are not specifically catered for. Nevertheless, you can still eat very well if you are a vegetarian provided you like pasta and/or risotto. Vegetarian main dishes are a rarity, but you could always order a selection of *contorni* or salads. Eggplant, zucchini, peppers and artichoke are particularly common.

## CHEESE

Italians love their cheese and use it in every course throughout a meal. Cheese can be made from cow's milk, sheep's milk and even buffalo milk, and with over 400 varieties you are bound to find at least one that you like! Some famous ones...

*Parmigiano* (parmesan) – the strong, hard one usually grated and sprinkled over pasta. It is also great on a slice of Tuscan bread with a piece of *prosciutto* (cured ham).

*Mozzarella* – the light, soft cheese ball that is sliced and put on pizzas. Also great in an *insalata caprese* – sliced tomatoes with slices of mozzarella on top, garnished with shredded basil leaves, seasoned and drizzled with olive oil. *Mozzarella di bufala* made with buffalo milk, is even nicer, though it is more expensive.

*Pecorino* – a hard cheese made with sheep's milk. It can be used in cooking or in sandwiches... and it also comes sweet (*dolce*) or salted (*salato*).

## DOLCI

Though desserts (*dolci*) are often reserved for Sundays or feast day lunches, they are fantastic! They tend to be predominantly made of either fruit or pastry or they may be frozen. Cakes (*torta*) are often saved for a special occasion and *biscotti* (cookies) and other treats from the *pasticcERIA* (bakery) are often eaten at the end of a meal or for *merenda* (snack time at around 5 o'clock).

Some *dolci* you should try are..

*Tiramisú* – a chilled sponge dessert made with coffee, a sweet liqueur and mascarpone cheese. The name literally means “pick me up”.

*Panna Cotta* – meaning “cooked cream” ... delicious!

*Zabaglione* – eggs, sugar and Marsala all whipped up.

*Zuccotto* – ice cream cake with sponge, cream and chocolate.

*Torta della nonna* – custard cream and pine-nut cake.

*Macedonia*– fruit salad



## WINE

*Vino* is another staple of the Italian diet. It is an essential accompaniment to any meal and is never drunk in excess. The style of wine varies throughout the country so try tasting wines of various regions. The local wine, Chianti, is of course world famous. You could also try *Brunello* of Montalcino, the *Vino Nobile* of Montepulciano or the white *Vernaccia* of San Gimignano.



The pre-dinner drink, *aperitivo*, is usually taken after work at about 7-8pm and often accompanied by free finger food which you can help your self to. The *aperitivo* might be *prosecco* (champagne), or a fruit cocktail.

After dinner it is customary to take a *digestivo*, a digestive liqueur. There are various *digestivi*, all of various strengths and tastes. *Grappa* is really strong, as are most of the *amaro* (bitter) drinks. If you prefer something sweet, try *limoncello* (a sweet lemon drink) or *sambuca* (a sweet aniseed drink). They are all quite potent, and are to be sipped rather than downed in one – you have been warned!

***Although it seems that alcohol plays an important part in the everyday Italian life, it is rarely abused or drunk to excess and drunkenness is seriously frowned upon. Alcohol, in whatever form, is always accompanied by food and never drunk for the sake of it... therefore, Italians rarely get drunk and certainly don't drink to get drunk.***

## CAFFE'

Coffee in Italy isn't like anywhere else in the world: it's better. It is an important focus throughout the day and there are specific ones to be taken at specific times..

If you simply order **caffé**, you will get a small, strong shot of black coffee (what you call espresso) and this can be taken at anytime of the day. Variations on this include **caffé macchiato** – espresso “stained” with a dash of milk, **caffé corretto** – an espresso with a dash of *grappa* or another liqueur, **caffé doppio** – double shot of espresso, **caffé lungo** –



a “long” espresso, served in a normal espresso cup but with more water, and finally an **Americano**, an espresso served in a larger cup with water added. **Cappuccino** – is coffee with hot frothy milk. The Italians tend to drink this and **caffé latte** – predominantly milk with a little coffee, at breakfast or up until lunchtime. They are never drunk after a meal as they are considered too heavy - you should already be satisfied by what you have eaten!

## WATER

Acqua is obviously a staple of any diet! You can drink the water from the faucet though, obviously, it will taste differently to the water back home and you may not like it. Bottled water (*acqua minerale*) comes either *naturale* (still) or *frizzante* (sparkling) and in bars and restaurants you are likely to be asked which you prefer.



## FOOD/DINING VOCABULARY

|                                 |                                  |                          |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Agnello</b> – lamb           | <b>Forchetta</b> – fork          | <b>Pere</b> – pear       |
| <b>Antipasto</b> – starter      | <b>Formaggio</b> – cheese        | <b>Piatto</b> – plate    |
| <b>Aragosta</b> – lobster       | <b>Fritto</b> – fried            | <b>Piselli</b> – peas    |
| <b>Arance</b> – oranges         | <b>Fragole</b> – strawberries    | <b>Pollo</b> – chicken   |
| <b>Aglio</b> – garlic           | <b>Funghi</b> – mushroom         | <b>Polpo</b> – octopus   |
| <b>Arrosto</b> – roasted        | <b>Gamberi</b> – prawns          | <b>Prosciutto</b> – ham  |
| <b>Ben cotto</b> – well done    | <b>Il conto</b> – the check/bill | <b>Riso</b> – rice       |
| <b>Bistecca</b> – steak         | <b>Insalata</b> – salad          | <b>Sale</b> – salt       |
| <b>Bollito</b> – boiled         | <b>Manzo</b> – beef              | <b>Spinaci</b> – spinach |
| <b>Burro</b> – butter           | <b>Marmellata</b> – jam          | <b>Tacchino</b> – turkey |
| <b>Calamari</b> – squid         | <b>Melanzane</b> – eggplant      | <b>Té</b> – tea          |
| <b>Cameriere/a</b> – waiter/ess | <b>Mele</b> – apples             | <b>Tonno</b> – tuna      |
| <b>Carote</b> – carrot          | <b>Miele</b> – honey             | <b>Uva</b> – grapes      |
| <b>Ciliegie</b> – cherries      | <b>Olio</b> – oil                | <b>Uova</b> – eggs       |
| <b>Cipolla</b> – onion          | <b>Panna</b> – cream             | <b>Vino</b> – wine       |
| <b>Coltello</b> – knife         | <b>Pane</b> – bread              | <b>Vitello</b> – veal    |
| <b>Coniglio</b> – rabbit        | <b>Pancetta</b> – bacon          | <b>Vongole</b> – clams   |
| <b>Cotto</b> – cooked           | <b>Patate</b> – potatoes         | <b>Zucchero</b> – sugar  |
| <b>Cozze</b> – Mussels          | <b>Crudo</b> – raw               | <b>Pepe</b> – pepper     |
| <b>Cucchiaio</b> – spoon        | <b>Peperoni</b> – peppers        |                          |

## Preparations

|   |                                |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Al forno</b> – baked   | <b>Al sangue</b> – rare        | <b>Al vino</b> – in wine sauce |
| <b>Alla griglia</b> – grilled   | <b>Ben cotto</b> – well cooked |                                |
| <b>Carpaccio</b> – raw/marinated strips usually of beef but also fish |                                |                                |
| <b>Crudo</b> – raw  | <b>Fresco</b> – fresh          | <b>Fritto</b> – fried          |
| <b>Non troppo cotto</b> – medium rare                                 |                                |                                |
| <b>Piccante</b> – spicy   | <b>Ripieno</b> – stuffed       |                                |