Restaurants in Florence: 20 Top Choices from Food Critics, Travellers and Locals

Restaurants in Florence can fall into two categories: a waste of money or a religious experience.

But where then, can religion be found?

If you're like me, you associate Italy with eating stellar meals. But you can't expect that to be a sure thing in restaurants in Florence -- because anywhere the tourists outnumber the locals -- the odds are stacked against you.

Don't waste your precious time wandering around saying, "Where should we eat?"

There are literally HUNDREDS of restaurants in Florence. But you don't need hundreds; you just need a few awesome spots for your stay.

I've got your back! I've listed 20 Florentine addresses that will bring you dangerously close to dinner nirvana.

Stick to your budget

You can spend between 8 and 800 euros at restaurants in Florence. Sometimes you wanna splurge. Other times you just wanna go where the local builders eat -- they don't want to spend more than 15 euros to do that, including a glass of house hooch. So here's the deal:

- I've hit the streets myself. I've sourced opinions of locals. It's was hard work eating my way through the restaurants of Florence, but I do it for the team
- I've highlighted crowd-sourced reviews of thousands of travellers from Trip Advisor
I've listed opinions of the world's top food critics and included them in the Michelin guides section.

I've consulted an Italian language food book called Il Mangiarozzo and translated their recommendations to English. Si! Lo fatto!

If you don't find a restaurant in Florence from my list below that will bring you to tears with joy -- then you simply cannot be helped.

At least not today.

The 5 Best Restaurants in Florence: Trip Advisor

Whether you love or hate Trip Advisor is irrelevant. It is still the largest source of travel related opinion on the web. Sure, some are fakes posted by jealous business owners, but you can't deny that there are tons of legitimate travellers who converge on Trip Advisor to dish the good the bad and the downright nasty.

1. OsteriaVini e Vecchi Sapor

This spot is a stones throw from Palazzo Vechio and serves traditional fare from a blackboard menu under wood beamed ceilings. Not only is it rated by hordes of Trip Advisor fans, I must note that it is also recommended in a very Italian, very unpretentious food guide Il Mangiarozzo (more listings from this guide below). Reservations are mandatory.

Address: Via dei Magazzini 3r | Hours: Tues-Sat 9am -11pm; Sun noon-2:30pm | Phone: 055 293045 | Spend: First course €6 - 8; main course €10 - 14

2. Brown Sugar

Located in the heart of town, overlooking Piazza San Firenze and via della Condotta, 100 metres from Piazza Signoria is a cocktail lounge and eatery that peeps rave about.

Address: Piazza di San Firenze 5 | Hours: Mon-Sun 11:30am-3:30pm; 7pm-11pm | Phone: 055 217031 | Spend: €20 - 32
3. **Enoteca Pitti Gola e Cantina**

This place served fresh pastas, local cheeses with charcuterie and pops the cork on great wines, all within view of the Pitti Palace.

Address: Piazza Pitti 16 | Hours: From 1pm to Midnight | Phone: 005 212704 | Spend: €41 - 69

4. **Zeb**

Zeb gets a hella lotta love from the Trip Advisor gang -- there are almost 200 reviews about this place! Their dedicated clientele love to eat whatever this mom and son team have on the stove. They also run a food shop next door.

Via San Miniato 2 Rosso/r | Hours: Mon-Tue 9:30 am-8 pm; Thu-Sat 9:30 am-10:30 pm; Sun 9:30 am-5 pm | Phone: 055 2342864 | Spend: €20 - 25

5. **Trattoria da Ginone** (no site)

Traditional Tuscan trattoria in a casual setting that is praised for being warm and welcoming.

Via dei Serragli 35r | Hours: Closed Sunday | Phone: 055 218758 | Prices: €20 - 35

**The 5 Best Restaurants in Florence: Michelin Guides**

The Michelin guides are the *oldest and most famous food and hotel guides in Europe* and the Michelin star ratings are like the Academy Awards of the food world.

Every new edition brings tons of speculation from foodies worldwide (especially in France where it is based) on who will be stripped of their stars or awarded one. **Their food inspectors go to ridiculous lengths to remain completely anonymous** -- they can’t even tell their own families what they do for a living.

Getting a Michelin star at your restaurant gives you massive brag rites: it was picked by the snobbiest, most cultured, most professional food critics in the world.

The Michelin star rating is between 1 and 3. Getting 3 Michelin stars is fantastically impossible: **only 6 restaurants were given that designation in all of Italy** in the latest edition. Worldwide -- there are around 80 that hold 3 star prestige. Expect to
set your credit card in flames after dining at these following spots, but you can always douse it with a little Chianti to cool it off.

1. **Enoteca Pinchiorri**

   This is the only 3 Michelin starred restaurant in Florence. The wine list is epic and they feature a tasting menu: 15 small plates starting at 200 euro/person.

   Address: Via Ghibellina 87 | Hours: Thursday to Saturday for dinner only | Phone: 055 242757 | Spend: €155-225

2. **Ristorante Ora d’Aria**

   This is a 1 starred restaurant inside the city. It’s co-owner and head chef, Marco Stabile has honed his skills in the top restaurants in Italy and he is an executive chef at a new project in Miami. The prices are incredibly reasonable for this type of fame and the interior is sleek and sexy. I will be making a pilgrimage to this place on my upcoming trip to Italy.

   Address: Via dei Georgofili 11R | Hours: Tues - Sat 12:30 - 14:30 / Mon - Sat 19:30 - 22:00 | Phone: 055 2001699 | Spend: €50 - 64

3. **Il Palagio**

   This spot is located in the posh Four Seasons Hotel Firenze and is awarded 1 Michelin star. Inside has vaulted ceilings with garden views and you can eat al fresco in the good months. Multi-course tasting menu by exec Chef Vito Mollica and wine pairings make this a fun evening out.

   Address: Borgo Pinti, 99 | Hours: Breakfast and dinner everyday | Phone: 055 2626450 | Spend: €70 - 90

4. **La Tenda Rossa**

   You'll have to travel outside of the city to reach this spot. But you will eat at a restaurant maintained by 3 families. And for that the Michelin guides says it's 3 times as good.

   Address: Piazza del Monumento 9/14 I - 50020 Cerbaia | Hours: Monday to Saturday lunch and dinner / closed lunchtime Monday | Phone: 055 826132 | Spend: 60 - 110
5. **Osteria di Passignano**

This restaurant isn't inside the city, but halfway between Sienna and Florence in chianti classico (picture rolling hills and cypress lined roads in the most famous region in Tuscany). You could stay at the Agriturismo Fonte de' Medici -- it takes incredible willpower not to board a plane instantly to do just that. I could be there by tomorrow, poolside, with a wine cellar visit and reservation at Osteria di Passignano. Perfection.

Address: Via Passignano 33 l - 50028 Passignano | Hours: 12:15 - 14:15 / 19:30 - 22:00 | Phone: 055 807 1278 | Price: €55-65

**The 5 Best Restaurants in Florence: Locals**

Locals and seasoned travellers to Florence love to boss you around and tell you where to eat. Let them do it.

1. **L'Osteria di Giovanni** (my recommendation)

The lovely Freya suggested I go check out this place. It's ran by a famous family in the Florentine dining scene and has lots of fans. Caterina, Giovanni's daughter, made us feel very welcome and I'll look forward to going back -- probably with 12 women in tow on one of my trips. This osteria has a charcoal grill where you can order your Bistecca alla Fiorentina. You can also order something different from what you might be used to: Braised rabbit with Vernaccia wine and green olives. Of course I would recommend a side of fried zucchini blossoms.

Address: Via del Moro 22, Florence | Hours: 12:30pm-3pm ; 7pm-11pm | Phone: 055 284897 | Spend: €30 - 45

2. **Il Santo Bevitore** (my recommendation)

I spent a fab girls weekend in Florence with my friends last spring. We were coming off the high from the success of the group trip that I hosted in the Cinque Terre. Of course, since I work in Italy, a trip to Florence is incomplete without researching the hot restaurants and hotels where next seasons lucky people will stay. The interior is really beautiful but intimate and low-key. The tables were packed with local shopkeepers and neighbours for lunch. Don't miss the adorable deli "Il Santino" beside Il Santo -- it's owned by the same people.
3. **Hostaria Il Desco** (Rosa's recommendation)

This place will save your life! Picture the pulsating waves of people that converge around the Ponte Vechio. Now imagine escaping, slipping down a tiny alleyway of a street, and finding a shady sanctuary that serves awesome food at the best prices your gonna get in this town (lunch is a deal!). They also have gluten free menu options. Seeing a rice cake in Italy is like a rainbow of alternative grain love in wheat-land. I ate soup and it was fantastic. Rosa recommends their sublime gorgonzola and pear gnocchi and the most light and fluffy cheese cake you've ever tasted. Reservations are recommended cause during the nights the locals take over.

Address: Via delle Terme 23/R | Hours: Closed on Monday at dinner | Phone: 055 294882 | Prices: €15 - 40

4. **Ristorante Accademia** (Freya's recommendation)

Ristorante Accademia is situated in the historical San Marco square, just a stone's throw away from Michelangelo's David. After you pound the pavement at a morning Accademia session with Freya, just pull up a chair and take a load off. Take several loads off (and go to bed after) with the 'wine and dine' menu. It's a four course meal, with each course paired with a wine carefully selected by sommelier Gianni.

Address: Piazza San Marco 7/R | Hours: 12pm-3pm; 7pm-11pm | Phone: 055 217343 | Spend: €20 - 40

5. **Trattoria la Casalinga** (my suggestion)

It is no secret that I love the Oltrarno (across the Arno) district of Florence. If you can locate Piazza Santo Spirito then head in that direction -- La Casalinga is just a few paces away. It's inexpensive, it's cozy and it is packed with people. I like eating lunch there, but like most eateries in Florence it closes between lunch and dinner so get there at "Italian working people's lunch time" not "wandering around Florence and damn it's already 4pm" lunch time or you'll miss the boat -- or the steak.
The 5 Best Restaurants in Florence: Il Mangiarozzo

I picked up the latest edition of *Il Mangiarozzo* in Italy. The coolest thing about this guide is that **every restaurant listed costs 45 euros** or much less for a multi-course meal (not including wine) per person. It also features only typical Italian trattoria and osteria, usually family run and historically significant to a region.

You won't find any fusion or any hip in the below selections -- **just regionally specific Italian food it's been made for generations**. In *Il mangiarozzo* 2012, they review over 1000 osteria and trattoria in Italy "that you must eat at once in your lifetime". If you will be travelling Italy for any length of time and you are really into food, I suggest you buy this book at a local bookstore once you land. Even if it is in Italian it will do 2 things: give you names and addresses of great eats in every region and also serve you up a deal -- many restaurants will give you a little treat, like a drink on the house or a discount on your bill, when you have the book on you.

Here is a sampling of 5 in no particular order from the 2012 edition.

1. **Antica Trattoria "Da Tito" dal 1913**

I quote the owner: "Sai, io voglio fare solo il ristorante di una volta: pochi piatti, ma eseguiti benissimo". I'll translate: "You know, I want to have a restaurant like in the past: very little menu choice but each of those choices exquisite." You will eat artisan cheese from Bagno a Ripoli, fresh pasta made in house with mushrooms, or with a sausage sauce with lardo di Colonatta (have you ever tried that?). You'll also find cabbage and bean soup, wild boar pasta (le pappardelle al cinghiale), and desserts which are heavy on the chocolate and cream. Don't miss the artisanal cantuccini -- the dried biscuit you eat with the fortified wine in Tuscany called vin santo.

Address: Via San gallo 112/r | Phone: 055 472475 | Spend: €35- 40

2. **Da Nerbone Due** (no website)

The book says: "We are in the region of lampredotto (the original peasant food, a Florentine meat made of boiled cow stomach) , we are in the region of half of the population of Florence, we are in the San Lorenzo market". This stall at the San
Lorenzo market is their top solution for a quick, economical and delish lunch. Yes, you can just grab a sandwich but you can also find warm meals and spend a respectable 15 euro. They serve pappa al pomodoro, pasta with wild boar or deer or duck, bean and pasta soup, mushroom risotto, ribollita, Florentine tripe, beef and potatoes. They also have fish options like baccala (salted cod) and seafood risotto. You can buy a glass of Chianti Classico for 1.50 € to wash it all down. Expect to wait in line and get there early, they close at 2pm.

Address: Mercato Centrale di San Lorenzo | Hours: Closed Sundays, open till 2pm | Spend: €12 - 15 euro

3. Il Latini

Il Latini is a Florence institution and they have a virtual guidebook filled with many love letters about the food. It has loyal foreign clientele that visit every time they are in Florence and for that reason you will hear a lot of buzz about this place. This restaurant is related, family wise, to L'Osteria di Giovanni (above). Anyways, it's not just the foreigners you'll find, as there are many Italians in love with the Latini family: both their food and their company.

Address: Via dei Palchetti 6/r | Hours: Phone: 055 289794 | 12pm-12am, closed on Monday | Spend: €40 - 45

4. Al Tranvai

I've included this restaurant from Il Mangiarozzo because it is likely you'll find yourself in Florence, near the Ponte Vechio, and be suddenly famished and exhausted and looking for salvation from crowds and heat and art. Take a chill pill, cross the bridge and head to my favourite neighbourhood in Florence, San Frediano -- in Oltrarno near Piazza Santo Spirito. Al Tranvai serves "casalinga" food, unpretentious home cooked nosh. They also serve gluten fee meals.

Address: Piazza Torquato Tasso 14/r | Hours: closed Sundays and Monday for lunch | Phone: 055 225197 | Spend: €25 - 30

5. Trattoria Lo Stracotto

Run by two very pleasant cousins from Tuscay, Tomamaso e Francesco, you'll find this eatery in the San Leonardo di Firenze neighbourhood. You'll eat Tuscan specialties like you've heard of before: pappa col pomodoro (tomato and bread
soup), tripe, bistecca all Fiorentina (steak), ribollita (stew) as well as cheeses with jam, veg risotto, mixed Tuscan salami, pasta with beef and balsamic vinegar and stuffed chicken.

Address: Piazza Madonna degli Aldobrandini 17/r | Hours: never closed | Phone: 055 2302062 | Spend: €25 - 35

*****

So, there you have it: 20 ideas for restaurants in Florence to steal. Buon appetito!

Note: all phone numbers must affix +39 if dialing from outside Italy. Obviously all prices are approximate and they don't include vino. Nice try though.