

A close-up photograph of a white ceramic plate filled with a creamy risotto. The risotto is garnished with several large, pinkish-orange shrimp, a small piece of browned butter, and finely chopped green herbs. The plate is set on a dark wooden surface.

A year of Taste

Food is everywhere.

Bright on Instagram, starry on red guides, symphonic on Netflix. The offer is exploding. Even in Bologna I run into the same restaurants and bars that you see in Milan, London, NYC.

I created Taste Bologna to open the doors of my house and let people fall in love with it and its food. Now that the world knows that Bologna isn't only a name for a fake packed meat sauce, the challenge is to find the real food and keep it alive.

I'm sure you've met people who care about food. They are easy to recognize. But maybe their shop is in a tiny dark street, or in a workers' neighbourhood, or in a foggy village. Or just under your nose, but behind a big wall you've never crossed. Maybe they haven't been on TV yet and never will, or they are too tired and alone to have a Facebook page.

But if you ask them about their food, the chest of gold opens.

A year of Taste is a selection of food places where, behind a photo, there's a man or a woman that you'd want to talk with.



Andrea

Casa Artusi

Respect the natural ingredients.

Love the beauty and the goodness wherever they are.

This sentence is written on Pellegrino Artusi's cookbook preface and on the first page of Casa Artusi menu.

Opened in 2007 inside an ancient monastery, Casa Artusi is a museum, a library, a cooking school and a unique restaurant. This food sanctuary is inspired by Pellegrino Artusi: an Italian cook and pilgrim born in Forlimpopoli in 1820. Amongst the 790 recipes of his cookbook, the restaurant selects some Emilia Romagna classic dishes as well as some modern variations. For a full introduction into Artusi's cuisine, you can pick the tasting menu (4 courses, 26€).

Casa Artusi is a place to remind that good food isn't exclusive, expensive or trendy. Food just needs respect and people who love it.

A pilgrim and his devotees have this clear in mind.





Vicolo Colombina

It's usually a terrible idea to pick a restaurant near a city landmark.

Vicolo Colombina is set just next to San Petronio Basilica, 50m from Piazza Maggiore. But Bologna is (still) not Venice, Rome or Florence, fortunately.

If Max Poggi was a band, I'd have all his records and never miss out a concert. He creates his Sgt. Pepper's and Kid A in his restaurant outside Bologna, but he keeps the tradition alive at Vicolo Colombina. With some eclectic variations.

Like tortelloni with beans, cream of savoy cabbage and almonds: the look of a classic pasta with a surprising stuffing and sauce. Both my eyes and mouth were really happy.

Young and kind staff, intimate location and good wine list to complete another great show.

I'm ready for the encore.



Trattoria Collegio di Spagna

People usually ask me where to eat well made bolognese cuisine and it's not an easy question to answer.

I was grown with baby's pacifier and ragù and lots of restaurants offer a good bolognese cuisine, but very far from the one I had at my grandmother's..

This cosy osteria in front of Collegio di Spagna (from which it takes its name) is a great exception.

Rough flavours, old recipes (who makes stuffed zucchini any more?) and care for fresh ingredients (don't ask for tortellini with broth in July) make it a reference in the city centre. Courtesy and honest prices make the rest to have a great dinner.

Roccati

Everyone knows Quadrilatero market. Set just behind Piazza Maggiore, day&night with people sit outside eating taglieri; English menu and famous brands boutiques in every corner.

But if you look carefully you can find secret places, hidden behind thick old walls.

Roccati family started to produce chocolate and pastries for the Royal House during the 18th century in Turin.

They arrived in Bologna almost 100 years later, in 1996, but now their kingdom is under the towers.

In Turin they have learnt how to craft Gianduja chocolate with hazelnuts from Langhe hills. A shop that looks like a jewellery: a glass counter with perfect pralines like golden rings to admire.

The hardest part?

Choose amongst the different shapes and filling.



Bianco Farina

Pasquale Penne has a red rose tattoo on his right arm. But not only flowers grow from his hands.

Opened in November 2017,

Bianco Farina is a small pizzeria in Bolognina, a workers neighbourhood behind the train station.

White neon lights, TV, tables close to each other doesn't make it the most romantic place to propose to your girlfriend but...what a pizza!

2 days of leavening, 70% hydration, only 2 pizzas at a time in the wood oven to keep the temperature. If you love Napoli style pizza you must go.





Aspasso

Some of you might already know about passatelli. I love talking about them during our food tours.

It's a leftover dish that reuses old crusted bread and mix it with Parmigiano Reggiano cheese and eggs. Then pressed into small holes to make the one and only spaghetti bolognese.

Aspasso is a food truck that brings the joy of passatelli to squares and streets. I found them parked in Cesena, a beautiful town not far from Adriatico sea.

I had passatelli cacio e pepe with Pecorino cheese, black pepper and lemon zests. If you've missed them, they're a good reason to check Skyscanner.

Cremeria Capolinea

Cremeria Capolinea in Reggio Emilia is one of those places that worth a trip.

Bologna is second to none about gelato, but at Capolinea I've found something different. The courage of pushing limits away to get something new.

So near the classics like pistachio or strawberry, all well made, you can try Orient Express: coffee gelato with nutmeg and orange zest. Or meet the unusual marriage between pineapple and rosemary. Or why not a salty flavour like butter and anchovies?





Ristorante Marconi

We remember food not only for the flavour, but also for the people with whom we share it. I chose to celebrate Taste Bologna's 5th birthday with all my guides at Ristorante Marconi, a Michelin starred restaurant just outside Bologna.

Opened in 1983 it's now owned by 2 brothers: Aurora in the kitchen and Massimo between the tables. Soft lights, wood made furniture, surprising food.

During a 5 courses menu (70€) we explored the world of Aurora.

After a slice of pizza, made by their bakery Forno Mollica, to start we entered in a rush of flavours. First risotto with raw fish and seaweed powder. Then a fantastic squid, served with the grill on the table, to soak in a caciocavallo cheese sauce with lemon and peas. Definitely one of my best dishes of 2018.

Max Poggi

Dear Max,

It's good to see you again. This time in Trebbo, outside Bologna, in the foggy countryside where both of us grew up. I can only guess why you decided to create here, far from the lights of the city and the starts of the guides, your heavenly food world.

Your cuisine is deeply bounded with our land. And from there it can take flight. One of your menu is called *Divertiti* (have fun), and I know that the fun is both for me, sit on your elegant living room, and for you in the kitchen. Your staff shows how professional doesn't have to mean formal.

I know well the rough hands of the farmers who grow the prime vegetables used for your Russian salad or for the fake arrosto immersed in smoke. But if there's a dish that I won't forget is the perfectly cooked, soft and tasty pigeon. An underrated local bird, ready to open his wings over Bologna.

Good luck, Andrea





Trattoria da Me

Under the portico of Via San Felice you find an old light sign saying TRATTORIA.

Trattoria Da Danio opened in 1937: cheap prices, old photos on the walls and ragù slowly boiling for 12 hours. Now Danio's granddaughter Elisa wears the cooking apron and she didn't only change the name of the restaurant

As well as the traditional dishes that Elisa learned from her nonna Ada, at Trattoria da Me you find a modern Italian cuisine with prime ingredients.

Start with a mix of cured meat and cheese served with fried crescentine, hard to find inside Bologna city walls. Or go straight to the pasta: their tortelloni with gorgonzola cheese, fig and hazelnut are original and delicious.

From appetizer to dessert everything is made with care.

Vetro

I'm sure you have a new organic/veggie/vegan-friendly bistrot in your town. Light wood furniture, plants between the tables and avocado salad in the menu. Looks familiar?

Most of these places live a couple of seasons, then they are replaced by the new ***put the next food trend here***. But in this wood of trees that all look the same, there are a few places that will last.

Vetro opened in 2016 inside Giardini Margherita's greenhouses. It's one of the places where you can't make a wrong choice: everything is well made.

Start with their gently fried lentils falafel with veg mayonnaise and then get their amazing celeriac ravioli with almonds and avocado.

Desserts are made by a young German pastry chef: simple and delicious.





Forno Brisa

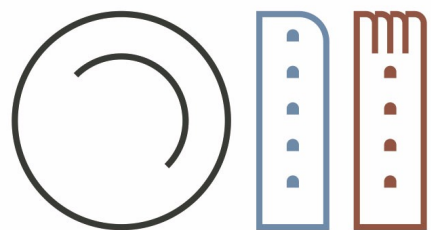
Forno Brisa is more than just a bakery: it's a project about the production of bread with the aim to bring to Bologna a tasty and healthy bread.

The first shop opened in Via Galliera where you can also find roman style pizza and cakes.

They only use untreated organic stone-ground flour, such as sicilian tumminia, and starter.

Great rising and right baking with a top quality ingredients, a quality confirmed by the easy digest and by the unique taste and variety of the pizzas. Forno Brisa could be an original meeting point for a different aperitif or for a healthy lunch break.

During Christmas time they also produce panettoni, one of my favorite is with marron glacé and cacao bean.



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www.tastebologna.net