



DINING IN THE CITY: FLORENCE

Like any major city with lots of visitors, Florence has its share of fine restaurants, from international *haute cuisine* to neighborhood *trattorias*. The city's most famous contribution to the Italian kitchen is its popular specialty, *bistecca alle Fiorentina*, a thick grilled steak.

Florence is very much a city of neighborhoods. This list concentrates on two, the central area near *Il Duomo*, and the charming neighborhood on the other side of the Arno, near the *Giardino di Boboli* and *Palazzo Pitti*. Florence's immediate surrounding area is also covered, and there is a special section on Florentine nightlife.

A hint from George Lesser on ordering wine in a Florentine restaurant: Many Florentine restaurants no longer offer a Chianti Classico, or "Gallo Nero," as the house wine, but an inferior red instead. Yet a Chianti Classico is often available for a price comparable to that of the inferior house wine, so it pays to ask.



Central Florence

Alle Murate, Via Ghibellina, 52r, is a stylish, modern restaurant with a creative menu featuring Tuscan and Southern Italian specialties. The ambience is sophisticated yet informal, and the menu allows diners to sample regional or creative cuisine. Alle Murate is known for its wines, so you might consider splurging on a good bottle here. Dinner only.

Closed Mon. & August **055/240618**

Antico Fattore, Via Lambertesca, 1r, very near the *Uffizi* (from the *Piazza della Signoria* through the *Uffizi* and take your first right), serves an "old-fashioned Florentine" lunch to many local businessmen and a few tourists.

Closed Sun. & 15 July-15 August **055/288975**

Armando, Borgo Ognissanti, 140r, is a good, inexpensive place for lunch or dinner. The pasta is wonderful. Sometimes at dinner the place is crowded with actors, singers, and musicians from the nearby *Teatro Municipale*. Credit cards are accepted.

Closed Sun., Mon. at lunch & August **055/216219**

[Il] Bambino, Corso Italia, 35, is a newly opened restaurant that has become an immediate success. *Il bambino* (the child) is actually Mr. Raul, a former wrestler who has sustained a passionate interest in food and drink, and is an experienced restaurateur. Although the restaurant is large, Mr. Raul circulates among the tables, ensuring that all of his customers are well attended.

Closed Wednesday and August. Open 9-3:30 and 6-1 **055/2657881**

Bar Enoteca Fuori Porta, Via Monte alle Croci, just beyond the Porta S. Niccolo, is a successfully run vineria. Andrea is responsible for the wines, Angelo for the cheese, and Rocco takes care of the administration. This enoteca has become one of Florence's most popular meeting places. One can sit in either of two charming dining rooms or outside on the lovely street. Dishes are freshly and rapidly prepared, and the wine list includes more than 600 labels. Even when very crowded, the service is remarkably commendable. *Closed Sun. & 2nd & 3rd wk. in Aug.* **055/234 2483**

[La] Baraonda, Via Ghibellina, 67r, is a charming upscale trattoria serving an array of traditional fare as well as creative specialties (including vegetarian selections). La Baraonda's menu varies daily but the signature *polpettone* (meatloaf) can be enjoyed any day of the week. The *torta di mele* (apple tart) is enthusiastically recommended, and the selection of Tuscan wines is ample.

Closed Sun, Mon. lunch & August **055/2341171**

Borgo Antico, Piazza San Spirito, 6r, is a traditionally rustic trattoria/pizzeria. During the summer, the outside seating offers a lovely view of the piazza and church. Although famous for its pizza and very generous portions, the entire menu is worth trying. Moderately priced.

055/210437

[Le] Botteghe di Donatello, Piazza Duomo, 27r, is good "for a quick, light meal, either for lunch or dinner," say Tom Tully and Diane Meyer.

055/216678

Buca Lapi, Via del Trebbio, 1r, is a 5-10 minute walk from the Duomo. Food, service and atmosphere are excellent. Prices are mid-range for city standards. Call for reservations. *Closed Aug.*

055/213768

Cantinetta Antinori, Piazza Antinori, 3, is set on the ground floor of a Renaissance palace and is an elegant place for lunch, highly recommended by Richard & Colette Martin, of Worthington, OH.

Closed Sat., Sun. & Aug. **055/292234**

Cantinetta da Verrazzano, Via Dei Tavolini 18, near Dante's house. This pizza, *focaccia*, pastry and wine tasting restaurant has an excellent reputation.

Closed Sun. **055/268590**

[La] Carabaccia, Via Palazzuolo, 190r, near the Borgo Ognissanti. Moderate prices. Credit cards not accepted.

Closed Sun., Mon. lunch **055/214782**

Cavallino, Via delle Farine, 6r, & Piazza Signoria, comes highly recommended by Victor & Mary Ellen Ham, of Bethlehem, PA, who also mention that it is highly regarded by Florentines.

055/215818

Cibreo, Via dei Macci, 118/r, overlooking Sant' Ambrogio market, is a trendy restaurant offering imaginative versions of classic Florentine dishes. The service is excellent and the food superb, served in the formal dining room or in the casual and less expensive (but equally memorable) back room trattoria annex.

Closed Sun. & Mon. & mid-July-mid-Sept. **055/2341100**

Da I Cinque Amici, Via de' Cimatori, 30r, serves a good lunch at moderate cost near the train station. It fills up rapidly for lunch. *Closed Mon.* **055/396672**

Da Pennello, Via Dante Alighieri, 4r, near *Il Duomo* offers a fine *antipasto* table. No credit cards. *Closed Sun. Mon. & August.* **055/294848**

Da Sergio, Piazza San Lorenzo, 8r, gets raves for its pasta with tomato sauce. The trattoria has a familial air, a simple menu and open seating. Lunch only. No credit cards. *Closed Aug.* **055/281941**

Di Vinus, Via dell Orto, close to the Piazza dei Carmine, is a trendy, popular meeting place for Florentine youth. The food is prepared by a promising young chef, and the waiters are professional. The interior is elegant and lavishly decorated, and the atmosphere is lively. **055/224148**

Enoteca Le Barriques, Via Del Leone 40/r, is a quiet restaurant where conversation is unobstructed as one enjoys a simple meal and a remarkable wine list. The two young owners have a refined knowledge of wine and cuisine and are delighted to answer questions. Soft colors and artful lighting creates a relaxed and intimate atmosphere. Open all day and until midnight. **055/224192**

Enoteca Pane e Vino, Via di S. Niccolo, 70 a/r, was one of the very first wine bars to be opened in Florence and is located in one of the most interesting areas of the city. Since its foundation, the Enoteca has retained its tradition of serving wines that it believes will come to be of great standing. The menu is based upon traditional recipes enlivened by imaginative twists. Much attention is directed towards the ingredients, and the atmosphere is surely one of the most pleasant in town. *Closed Sun. & at lunch & 2/3 wk. August* **055/2476956**

Enoteca Pinchiorri, Via Ghibellina, 87, is on the ground floor of a 15th century palazzo and is one of the most famous and most expensive restaurants in the center of Florence. It is often described as Italy's best restaurant, and is reputed to have the finest wine cellar in Europe. Reservations required. *Closed Sun., Mon., Tue. at lunch & August* **055/242777**

Garga, Via del Moro, is known among Florentines for its exquisite food and wonderful variations on traditional Italian dishes. Mr. Garganelli, his wife, and their son run the restaurant, a series of intimate dining rooms decorated with fanciful murals painted by the owner himself, who is known to occasionally break into operatic arias while creating new and exotic dishes for his customers. The waiters, led by Garga's son, Andrea, are young and professional, and the combination of exotic and traditional taste offered by Garga's menu make it one of the best restaurants in Florence and worth its \$\$\$ prices. *Closed Mon. & Sun. lunch* **055/239889**

Giacosa, Caffè Pasticceria, Via Della Spada, is a famous Florentine institution reputed to serve the best coffee in town. Prices are reasonable if you eat standing up. Pay first. It is a convenient place to have a sandwich, *un dolce*, and a cup of coffee. **055/2396226**

[La] Giostra, Borgo Pinti, 10r, near *Il Duomo* and the post office, stays open late at night and serves nice food in a festive atmosphere. The free glass of *asti spumante* and assorted antipasti make a nice introduction to this family-run restaurant. A relatively modest place you will enjoy, especially when you receive the bill. **055/241341**

Harry's Bar, Lungarno Vespucci, 22r, is famous and expensive. Harry's serves an international menu, including American hamburgers and martinis. Dress is casual and reservations are required. The bar is open until midnight. *Closed Sun. & Dec. 15-Jan 5* **055/2396700**

I'cche C'e C'e, Via Magalotti, 11r, is a lively and popular trattoria down a narrow alley near the Piazza di Santa Croce. Although the name is hard to pronounce, the good food is hard to forget.

Closed Mon., Aug. & 15 Jan. - 10 Feb. 055/290485

[II] Latini, Via dei Palchetti, 6r, is found in the old stables behind the *Palazzo Rucellai*, near *Santa Maria Novella*. This noisy, boisterous eatery offers superb food, but George Lesser suggests that food and service are both better later in the evening when the clientele shifts from tourists to locals. Moderately expensive.

Closed Mon. & 2 wks. in Aug. 055/210916

Leo in San Croce, Via Torta, 7r.

Closed Mon. 055/210829

[La] Maremma, Via Verdi, 16r, serves typical Tuscan cuisine.

Closed Wed. 055/244615

Mossacce, Via del Proconsolo, 55/r, is the favorite of John and Ann Pilgrim: "affordable, delicious & near Borgo Pinti." Tuscan specialties in a 100-year old busy restaurant between *Il Bargello* and *Il Duomo*. No reservations.

Closed Sat., Sun. & Aug. 055/294361

Natalino, Piazza San Pier Maggiore, is centrally located and is one of Florence's oldest restaurants, still providing customers with quality food in a pleasant atmosphere. Discover an early fresco by Annigoni in the main room, probably painted in exchange for a choice of the menu's fine but pricey fare. Try the *ravioli nudi*.

Closed Mon. 055/289404

Oliandolo, just around the corner from the Duomo in Via Ricasoli, is a vineria with a limited but good menu of fast and not-so-fast food, including cheese, sausages, Tuscan ham, and other Tuscan dishes, as well as an expertly compiled wine list. The waiters create a lighthearted atmosphere which attracts many locals at lunchtime. It is also a great place to go for brunch.

Closed Sun. & 2 wks. in Aug. 055/211296

Osteria, Via del Moro, 18/20, offers traditional cuisine at moderate prices in an old-style dining room.

Closed Sun. & Mon. lunch & in Aug. 055/284897

Osteria all'Antico Mercato, Via Nazionale, 78r, near the main train station.

Closed Sun. 055/2841824

Osteria del Caffè Italiano, Via Isola delle Stinche, 11/13r, serves a standard trattoria menu (some first rate salumi and pecorino) at reasonable prices, though the decor is slightly more formal than that of the usual trattoria. An ample selection of red wines can be enjoyed by the glass or the "taste" (*degustazione*).

Closed Mon. 055/289368

Otello, Via degli Orti Oricellari, 36r, is a family managed restaurant serving Tuscan cuisine in a classic-style atmosphere. The *lombatina* (veal steak) is recommended.

Closed 4-20 Aug. 055/216517

Pallottino, Via Isola delle Stinche, 1r, is an inexpensive restaurant offering good *bistecca* and other traditional dishes, right next door to *Vivoli*, the famous ice cream parlor.

055/289573

[II] Pandemonio, Via del Leone, between Piazza Tasso & Via del'Orto, is a well-run family restaurant, in spite of its name, which means that the restaurant is "an infernal mess." Specialties from a variety of regions are imaginative, with wines from respected local vineyards. Garden dining.

Closed Sun. & 3 wks. in Aug. 055/224002

Paoli, Via Dei Tavolini, 12r, according to Ronald and Claire Sansone of Weston, CT, “was great!! Pricey, but worth it.”
Closed Tues. & August 055/216215

Rivoire, on the Piazza della Signoria, is the city’s most elegant *gran caffè*, recommended to us for its hot chocolate and as a good place to rest and enjoy the passing crowd.

Sabatini, Via de' Panzani, 9a, is an expensive, traditional restaurant with excellent food and service, near the train station.
Closed Mon. 055/211559

Sasso di Dante, Piazza delle Pallottole, 6r, next to *Il Duomo* (toward the right back corner of the cathedral), is a charming restaurant with outdoor tables so that you can dine *all'aperto*. The pasta is wonderful, as are the *lasagna* and *ribollita*, a bread, cabbage and white bean soup which is a Tuscan specialty.
Closed Tuesday 055/282113

Sostanza, Via del Porcellana, 25r, is Florence’s oldest restaurant. It doesn’t offer much in the way of ambience, but the *bistecca* (beef steak) and *petti di polo* (chicken breast) are said to be some of the best in town. There are two seatings for dinner, at about 8:00 and 10:00. Prices are moderate. Credit cards not accepted. *Closed Sat., Sun, Aug. & Dec. 24-Jan. 8 055/212691*

[La] **Spada**, Via della Spada, comes highly recommended by our customers for its great roasted meats, its friendly owners, and its reasonable prices. Near our apartment on della Spada. **055/218757**

Taverna del Bronzino, Via delle Ruote, 25r, a little larger, a little more formal, and a bit expensive. The taverna is frequented by Florentines, and the food is delicious, with memorable pasta dishes, salad, and fish (especially calamari).
Closed Sun. & Aug. 055/495220

Trattoria degli Antellesi, Via Faenza, 9r, offers good Tuscan and less traditional cuisine (including vegetarian fare) for lunch or dinner.
Open daily April – Nov. 055/216990

Trattoria "Il Caminetto," Via dello Studio, 34r, is located on a street that runs perpendicular to the south side of *Il Duomo* near *Sasso di Dante*. It is inexpensive and fun, with casual (but prompt) service and good food.
Closed Wed., 15 -20 Feb. & 15-30 July 055/2396274

Trattoria Mario, Via Rosina, 2r, offers delicious regional classics in a tiny dining room that looks in on a glassed-in kitchen. The menu includes the city’s least expensive steak Florentine, and the wine list is impressive. Arrive at noon to avoid waiting for a table at this popular spot. Lunch only. No credit cards.
Closed Sun. 055/218550

Trattoria Marione, Via della Spada, 27r, is a lively restaurant with friendly service, reasonable prices, and a menu that offers wonderful regional dishes, including the “best *ribollito* in Tuscany.”
Closed Sun. & Aug. 055/214756

Trattoria Zà-Zà, Piazza Mercato Centrale, 26r, has a Bohemian atmosphere, with picnic tables, rows of Chianti bottles, huge bunches of garlic, and posters of popular celebrities decorating its paneled walls.
Closed Sun. 055/215411

Tredici Gobbi, Via del Porcellana, is located on a quiet road in which the restaurant is the main attraction. The menu combines tradition with imagination to produce some splendid dishes which are served in beautiful dining rooms or in a courtyard. The wine list is traditional and excellent, making this a popular venue with several regular customers.
Closed Mon. at lunch. 055/284015

[La] **Vecchia Bettola**, Piazza Tasso, 34r, right off of Viale Ariosto, is the classic Florentine trattoria (with traditional marble tables) offering a variety of typically Tuscan dishes at reasonable prices.
Closed Sun., Mon. & Aug. 055/224158

[Il] **Vegetariano**, serves strictly vegetarian fare. Creative and delicious. Near the San Zanobi apartments.
Closed Mon. & at Lunch on Sat. & Sun. 055/475030

Vivoli Gelateria, Via Isola delle Stinche, 7r, is famous, and is claimed by Carol and Bill Whittemore to be the best ice cream parlor "in the world."
Closed Mon. Mon. 055/292334

[Le] **Volpe e L'Uva**, 30m from the *Ponte Vecchio*, is a small, exclusive restaurant that is the outlet for a number of rare wines from vineyards with limited production. Run by Emilio and Riccardo, who are highly specialized in their field and are also responsible for the preparation of wine lists for several of the city's finest restaurants, Le Volpe e L'Uva offers a variety of French delicacies, along with some exceptional salted Tuscan meats and superb cheeses, the perfect accompaniment to the wines. There are few better ways to spend an afternoon.
Closed Sun. 055/239 8132

[The] **Yellow Bar**, Via del Pronconsolo, 39r (across from the Bargello), is "a casual pizza, pasta, beer place with great salad, a friendly staff, and a family atmosphere" (David & Janis Gonzalez, Santa Fe, NM).