



Atmospheric streetside eateries in central Rome



Carla Capalbo

# My Rome

There's no shortage of things to do and see in the Eternal City. But where best to recharge your batteries? Carla Capalbo reveals her top spots to eat and drink like the locals in Italy's capital

ROME NEVER LOSES its exoticism, especially when you come from northern Europe. Jasmine, citrus blossom (the Italians call their perfume zagara) and pine perfume the air, along with whatever the nonnas are cooking for lunch. Roman windows are open most of the year!

Rome's beloved amatriciana and carbonara sauces, its roast lamb (called abbacchio) sauced with rosemary and anchovies, and its stuffed artichokes and other seasonal greens all make for colourful, hearty meals that cry out for equally characterful wines to go with them.

Lazio's wine scene is starting to make a name for itself and Rome has easy access too to the native wines of Italy's southern regions.

The city is home to all manner of wine bars, including several that feature organic and artisanal natural wines (La Barrique, Litro and Mostò are great, as well as those named below). Restaurant wine lists have

become much more diverse and exciting. The advent of Airbnb et al now makes it easier to stay in more residential areas, away from the tourist hordes thronging the centre. Even verdant upmarket areas such as I Parioli are opening up: I love experiencing these neighbourhoods, especially with a kitchen. Then I can live out my fantasy: to shop at the amazing street and covered markets and cook as a Roman.

Whether it's at the expensive but picturesque morning market in the Campo dei Fiori, or in the recently refurbished neighbourhood markets (mercati rionali) in Testaccio, Piazza Vittorio – which caters for the city's large multi-ethnic community – Piazza Epiro, or the Mercato Trionfale in the Prati district, the foods on offer are inspiring. Look for Pecorino cheeses, baby fava beans and estate-bottled olive oils.

To sample food and wine while you shop, or vice versa, Eataly at Ostiense

is a destination. You'll find its vast market of high-quality Italian foods and wines interspersed with places where meat, fish, vegetables and pasta are cooked before your eyes. Great for edible presents.

Fine dining is evolving in Rome, too. The chefs who first offered creative cuisine – like three-star Michelin Heinz Beck at La Pergola, Anthony Genovese (*see No9, p102*) and the Troiani brothers at Il Convivio – continue to inspire younger chefs. Giulio Terrinoni's elegant Per Me is one. Angelo Troiani also has an involvement in Assaggia, where you sample multiple dishes from the new Roman repertoire. If you can muster some Italian, Gambero Rosso publishes an annual guide to Rome's food and wine scene that offers much more food for thought.

*Carla Capalbo is a food, wine and travel writer. Her books include The Food and Wine Guide to Naples and Campania*

## MY TOP 10 IN ROME

### 1 Enoteca Trimani

The Trimani family runs Rome's oldest wine shop – with more than 6,000 labels, including many artisan and natural – and also produces wine from its own estate in Lazio. The multi-generational business began in 1821 and moved to its present location on the corner of Via Goito in 1876. Next door, in what was Rome's first wine bar, Carla Trimani cooks delicious local dishes and serves artisan salumi and cheeses to accompany the exciting wine list. [www.trimani.com](http://www.trimani.com) and [ilwinebar@trimani.com](mailto:ilwinebar@trimani.com)

Photographs: SvetlanaSF/Getty; Carla Capalbo

### 2 Hostaria da Benito e Gilberto

When in Rome, Romans love to eat seafood: the coast is nearby. This small, family-run restaurant is filled with locals



Hostaria da Benito e Gilberto

– including clergy from the nearby Vatican – tucking into large platters of raw and cooked shellfish and other seafood. Don't miss the iconic pasta e fagioli (dried beans with tiny pasta, assorted shellfish and a kick of chilli). The mostly white wine list fits the bill. [www.benitoegilberto.it](http://www.benitoegilberto.it)

### 3 Neve di Latte

If you visit the late Zaha Hadid's MAXXI contemporary art museum (and you should), you'll be close to one of the city's best gelaterie. Neve di Latte means milk snow, and ice cream that is pure and

natural features here. Made from scratch, it leaves your palate clean and refreshed, with ice cream flavours including Sicilian ricotta and Avola almond, and sorbets such as cherry and Mantuan melon.

[www.nevedilatte.it](http://www.nevedilatte.it)

## 4 Roscioli

Roscioli started as a modest bakery in the heart of the city and has grown into one of Rome's top food resources for bread, pizza, food and wine. It's still a thrill to enter the main shop in Via dei Giubbonari, lined with fabulous salumi and cheeses, and work one's way to the back where there are tables for lunch and dinner with great wines by the glass too: book ahead!

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

## 5 Al Ceppo

The Parioli district is residential, leafy and upmarket, with fabulous villas and parks nearby. Al Ceppo is in the heart of the neighbourhood, with an elegant interior that includes a giant wood-fired grill. The mood is more refined than rustic, posh but not stuffy or pretentious. Hand-made pastas and Roman vegetables, grilled meats, along with an ambitious wine list.

[www.ristorantealceppo.it](http://www.ristorantealceppo.it)

## 6 Niko Romito Spazio

This award-winning, self-taught chef from Abruzzo to the east of Rome has recently opened an innovative multifunctional space in Rome: Pane e Caffè serves excellent light meals and breakfasts (with some of the best bread around); Spazio offers the chance to graduates of his chef school to create classic modern Italian cuisine at affordable prices. Bravo Niko!

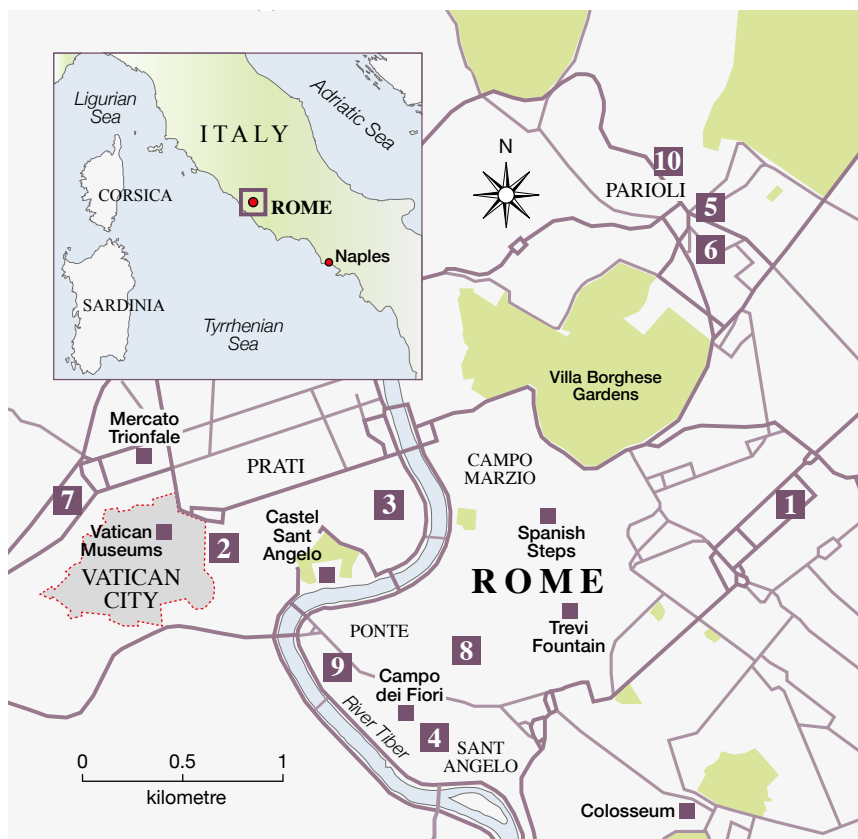
[www.spazionikoromito.com](http://www.spazionikoromito.com)

## 7 Pizzarium

Gabriele Bonci is the mastermind behind some of Rome's finest pizzas and even has his own TV show. His work on yeasts and primary ingredients has given this tiny stand-up shop a cult following. Go for the most delicious crust and digestible pizzas:



Roscioli



Map: Maggie Nelson



Chef Anthony Genovese, Il Pagliaccio

they're sold by weight and are topped with high-quality ingredients. If you're staying in Rome you can also get them delivered! [www.bonci.it](http://www.bonci.it)

## 8 Armando al Pantheon

If you're after really traditional Roman fare – from tripe to stuffed artichokes, amatriciana pasta and lamb's intestines – you need look no further than this classic trattoria. It's a Roman favourite, bang in the centre of town. The wine list is interesting too, thanks to the owner's daughter, Fabiana Gargioli, who manages it. [www.armandoalpantheon.it](http://www.armandoalpantheon.it)

## 9 Il Pagliaccio

Chef Anthony Genovese's jewel-box restaurant is a fine-diner's dream, with two Michelin stars among its accolades.

Lose yourself in the sleek, spotlit interior: its Asian feel is reflected in the chef's immaculately presented dishes, often fusing Mediterranean and more exotic flavours. The wine list is 1,300 wines long, and there's even the option to dine in the cellar. A blow-out destination.

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

## 10 Bulzoni

This local wine bar in Parioli is a great place for an afternoon snack or light dinner with a glass of wine (at very reasonable prices). The bar also serves as a shop, so bottles line the walls and range from Italian classics to some more adventurous choices – check out the inner room for those. A wide pavement hosts outdoor tables, presenting a chance to sit and watch the Romans, not the tourists.

[www.enotecabulzoni.it](http://www.enotecabulzoni.it)



Bulzoni