

All One

The 18 Essential Bologna Restaurants

Where to find world-class pasta, mortadella, and pizza al taglio in this historic Italian city

by Coral Sisk | Dec 1, 2017, 9:31am EST

Bologna, nicknamed "*la dotta, la grassa, e la rossa*" (the learned, the fat, and the red), is appearing on the radar of food-loving travelers more and more, according to Coral Sisk, a Florence-based food writer and [culinary tour guide](#). And, with the [recent opening](#) of FICO Eataly World, Bologna has become a confirmed culinary capital.

The city is rich with quality ingredients thanks to the nearby Po Valley, which is responsible for the bulk of central and northern Italian food production, including high-caliber foods known the world over, like aged balsamic vinegar, Parmigiano-Reggiano, and cured prosciutto di Parma. But, Sisk says, "Bologna's pride and joy is its mortadella, and you'll be hard-pressed to not see this ham on every menu in town."

In fact, meat and carbs are the hallmarks of Bologna's dining scene, and the city is the birthplace of lasagna, tagliatelle al ragu, tortelloni, and tortellini in broth (the way it should always be served, if you ask purists), as well as lesser-known specialties *passatelli* and *gramigna*.

However, Sisk notes, a recent boom in tourism, coupled with the city's reputation as a university town, can make quality dining in the city center hard to find. Although locals often head to the countryside to avoid mediocre restaurants, these 18 spots are the quintessential places to savor world-famous Bolognese cuisine, no car necessary.

Without further ado, and in geographic order, the 18 essential restaurants in Bologna.

Prices per person

S = Less than €20 (less than USD \$21)

SS = €20 - €40 (USD \$21 to USD \$42)

SSS = €40 - €60 (USD \$42 to USD \$63)

SSSS = More than €60 (more than USD \$63)

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10 Restaurant I Carracci

Bologna's food scene is generally refined, with little in the way of modern, Michelin-star-style dining. However, I Carracci, located in the city's lone five-star luxury hotel, executes a classic fine dining experience with the exceptional food and all-out pampering one would come to expect of a luxury hotel restaurant. Plus, original 15th-century frescoes by the Carracci family lend ambience to the dining room. Executive chef Claudio Sordi succeeds in elevating comforting Bolognese classics with elegant modernity. The tortellini, in a Parmigiano cacio e pepe sauce and a with a dried porcini and olive powder crumble, are unforgettable. Pro tip: Stick with Bolognese classics like pasta, *cotoletta alla Bolognese*, and rice pudding cake for dessert, and you'll be guaranteed a divine meal. [\$\$\$\$]



Tortellini at Restaurant I Carracci | Photo by Coral Sisk

Grand Hotel Majestic
Via Manzoni, 2, 40121 Bologna BO, Italy
051 225445

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