

Dining Out Special. Italian Meat Dishes in Town

Tommaso Cartia (November 17, 2016)



In the Italian dietary tradition, meat has a long and articulated history with roots stretching to antiquity, in which cultural, economical and social aspects are bonded together. Therefore one can distinguish different culinary approaches to meat consuming. In the Middle Ages, the Lord's supper was rich on wild game meats while the peasants' diet was poorer—they couldn't even afford pork,



then considered a rich privilege for the wealthy.

Many of the typical meat-based recipes you can savor today were born in the taverns and squares of Italy's many cities and they mirror the diverse regional identities that shaped the country's modern food map. Armed with bow and arrow, we've been haunting the jungles of the New York City restaurant scene to capture the best Italian meat dishes on offer, to make you taste all the richness of that eclectic gastronomy tradition. We ventured to the West Village and Lower Manhattan to discover the homemade grilled Sicilian meatballs and the Roman classic "Saltimbocca." We scurried up to Midtown and all the way to the Upper East side to find the "Milanese Veal Chop" or the "Ossobuco."

We hopped up to the Bronx to savor some typical Campania-style meat dishes, crossed bridges to get to Queens where we found authentic Abruzzo meat recipes, and reached all the way down to Brooklyn to catch a "Maialino da Latte." Last but not least, we sailed on a boat to Staten Island and after a long crossing we crashed at the Sicilian tavern of Capizzi, where we were treated with the secret recipe of "Pollo Nonna Lucia."

Here is the story of our journey among some of the best kept culinary secrets we discovered.

Upper East Side

[Sette Mezzo](#) [2]

969 Lexington Avenue

☎ (212) 472-0400

CUISINE traditional

AMBIENCE sophisticated

PRICE \$\$\$

In the middle (mezzo), between 70 and 71 streets in the Park Ave Olympus, stands this legendary restaurant named like the Italian hazard card game "sette e mezzo". And hazardous indeed was the journey of Gennaro Vertucci, when in the late 80s he moved from the southern region of Cilento, Salerno, to New York and opened one of the first authentic Italian restaurants in the city, Piccolo Vico. Legitimate heir of Piccolo Vico is "Sette Mezzo" which found two other exceptional fathers to break through New York dining scene: Oriente Manià and Nino Esposito.

Coming from the North of Italy, Friuli area, Manià met Vannucci again in the middle between the north and south Italian culinary tradition, and the clash of these opposites is the secret of the restaurant perfect and balanced fusion vibe. A luxury caterer for its rich and famous clientele, notoriously Oprah Winfrey is a restaurant fan and the one who started the word of mouth between her celebrity friends, "Sette Mezzo" cuisine follows the rules of Mediterranean cooking - fresh home made prepared ingredients, never overcooked, natural flavours, herbs, olive oil, no fussy sauces - spicing it up with some stronger tastes coming from the North. The chef buys the meat on a daily basis to cook it right away and never stores it, that's why the restaurant has a weekly routine of rotating dishes.

On Thursday you can find "Ossobuco", the sliced veal chunk, on Friday the mouth watering baby lamb chops, so tender you barely feel like you are eating meat. Deer cooked the Friulano style with polenta and chestnuts is a clients favourites in winter time, along with the Milanese boned veal, the most requested dish in the menu, coated with pressed breadsticks that make the breading extremely crunchy; served with salad and tomatoes. "Sette mezzo" canteen also offers a selection of rare and precious wines from Friuli.

[Paola's](#) [3]

1295 Madison Avenue

☎ (212) 794-1890



CUISINE typical
AMBIENCE elegant
PRICE \$\$\$

If you step by Paola's on Wednesday night you might have the chance to bump into Mr. Robert De Niro himself, a regular and affectionate client of the restaurant. And just this per se, tells a lot of how executive chef Paola Bottero and her son Stefano built a name for themselves in the ultra competitive world of NYC dining. Daughter of Alessandro Bottero, a violin virtuoso playing with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra in New York, Paola left Rome at age 16 to follow her father, then worked as a translator for the Italian Trade Com-mision, and didn't know at the time that destiny had other plans for her future. Her brothers worked in the food industry and opened the historical 65 Irving Place, providing the family a template for culinary achievement.

Paola's started helping them, and she saw how the restaurant was becoming successful and glamorous, scoring regular fans like Andy Warhol and Paul Newman. She continued on this new path by then going to work for the well known Roman family "The Lattanzis", who at the time had the only 3 stars Italian restaurant in New York as awarded by [Mimi Sheraton](#). [4] The synergy between her worldly cultured background and her training in the world of top class dining is the reason for Paola's glorious success between Upper East side ritz and glam community. The new chef Matteo Calciati and sommelier Romolo Algeni offer a menu of the most authentic "Cucina Italiana", a various regional selection of wines and dishes with an emphasis on Roman cuisine. All organic wild Amish meat from Pensylvania, Paola's meat dishes specialties include the "Milanese Veal Chop", a pounded chop crusted with bread crumbs and smothered with arugula and tomatoes; the "Short Ribs" marinated in red wine with vegetables; the "Pollo alla cacciatora", hunter style chicken with onions, tomatoes and wine and the "Scaloppine al marsala", escalopes in Marsala wine. Sommelier Romolo Algeni suggests a [Chianti di Antinori](#). [5]red wine or a Barolo or a Brunello to go with the meat dishes. All biodynamic wines you can all have just by the glass.

Midtown West

[Etcetera Etcetera](#) [6]

352 W 44th Street
☎ (212) 399-4141
CUISINE typical
AMBIENCE sophisticated
PRICE \$\$\$

Elegance, warmth, style and refined service are some of the adjectives that flow through your mind as soon as you step into "Etcetera Etcetera". De- spite its beautiful interior, it is when you finally taste the food that you understand why Etcetera has become through the years one of the Broadway scene's favourite spots for dining. This enchanting combination of good food and lovely atmospere is all due to the owner of the restaurant, Daniele Kucera, who brought to New York his worldly, intercontinental taste. Growing up in Trieste and Fiume on the Italian-Croatian border, Daniele had the chance to experience the stimulating melting pot of that unique corner of Italy. His passion for cooking started there during those childhood days where his favourite past time was to sit in the kitchen, listening to Beethoven and watch the women of his family work their magic in front of the old wood-burning stove. In 1992 he arrived in New York, invited by the legendary guru and ambassador of Italian food Tony May, founder of the "San Domenico" and president of GRI - Gruppo Ristoratori Italiani. After years of diligence in the food industry he finally opened Etcetera Etcetera, his own personal vision of a contemporary Italian restaurant, traditional and sophisticated at the same time, like its mouth-watering menu, truly Italian but with a cosmopolitan flare to it. For this fall Daniele recommends the "Guinea stuffed with speck and chestnuts in a sauce of pomegranate grains" to savoir with a good Cannonau Sardo red wine or a Barbera or Barolo. Another peculiar meat dish of the season is the "Lamb Shank with broccoli rabe, polenta and a reduction in red wine" to pair with a good Malbec Mendoza red wine.



West Village

[Lupa Osteria Romana](#) [7]

170 Thompson Street

☎ (212) 982-5089

CUISINE typical

AMBIENCE rustic

PRICE \$\$\$

Opened in 1999, a partnership between [Mario Batali](#) [8], [Joe Bastianich](#) [9], [Mark Ladner](#) [10] and Jason Denton, this casual restaurant specialized in Roman trattoria fare is as rustic, friendly and yet intimate and romantic as an authentic Roman tavern should be. Highest quality products selected to maintain the visceral true flavour of Roman cuisine, cooked with not too much fuss, tasteful but simple. Chef Robert Zwirz presents his menu as guided by a Roman driving force with a spin on modernization but always in the spirit of tradition. Their selection of meats it's particularly various and exciting. Starting with their appetizer "Lupa Made" - cured meats and cold cuts which includes tongue, fennel and black pepper cooked pork shoulder and pig head cheese. As for their second courses the menu is rich with Roman standards like "[Saltimbocca](#) [11]" - veal, prosciutto and sage; "[Coda alla vaccinara](#) [12]" - braised oxtail with tomato, pinenuts and golden raisins and the sinfully delicious "Pollo alla diavola" - devil style spicy and hot deboned half chicken super crispy, fully cooked into a mix of peppers infused in an oil with an intense spicy flavour, served with seasonal vegetables. Not just meats of course, Lupa is big on Roman pasta dishes, [Spaghetti alla Carbonara](#) [13], [Bucatini all'Amatriciana](#) [14], [Cacio e pepe](#) [15]. With the special fixed price menu "Roman Tasting" one can experience all of the Roman's delicacies accompanied by sumptuous Roman wines.

[Via Carota](#) [16]

51 Grove Street

☎ (212) 255-1962

CUISINE traditional

AMBIENCE rustic

PRICE \$\$\$

Under the Tuscan sun, in a 17th century country house in via Carota, Rita Sodi was born, a little girl with two big dreams in life: becoming a fashion designer and opening a restaurant. Drive and determination led her to accomplish both goals, moving her steps from via Carota to the fashion streets of the world and ending her journey in Christopher Street, New York, in the heart of the West Village where she first opened "I Sodi", a lowkey, utterly traditional and perfectly executed Tuscan food restaurant. On another of her faithful travels, this time to Rome, Rita met Jody Williams, the Californian chef of the popular and critically acclaimed "Buvette", a French bistrot also in the West Village. They clicked and become instant partners sharing the same vision and passion for cooking. From that fellowship came the idea to open Via Carota, an Italian gastroteca inspired in the culinary selection and in the rustic decor by Rita's country house. The meat menu offers some tasty and flavourful dish like the "Coniglio Fritto" - fried rabbit with rosemary and garlic, cooked the way that Rita's mother did, or the "Uccelli scappati" (escaped birds), with groves and pancetta.

East Village

[Via Della Pace](#) [17]

48 East 7th Street

☎ (212) 253-5803

CUISINE typical

AMBIENCE friendly

PRICE \$\$



Infectious, friendly and hip is the atmosphere that embraces you when you step in “Via della Pace” and you are welcomed by owner Giovanni Bartocci who exudes that kind of Roman goliardery that immediately puts you at ease. If you are waiting for a table he will likely offer you a nice aperitif, bruschette, and a good glass of wine and chew the fat with you. And if you are a true Roman you would recognize the same vibe you would feel wandering the center of the eternal city where via della Pace lays just a few minutes walk from Piazza Navona, and you stop by the landmark spot “Bar della pace” for dinner or more casual drinks. This trendy East Village Italian joint has become through the years a neighborhood favorite pick offering the best traditional Roman recipes at very affordable prizes in a warm boutique environment, perfect venue for any occasion. This Fall you can savour homely Roman meat dishes like “Straccetti di vitella alla Cicerone” – sautéed veal stripes with arugula, cherry tomato and shaved parmigiano; and more hip ones like “Bistecca al tartufo” – grilled rib eye steak with truffle oil served with mashed potatoes.

Lower Manhattan

[Piccola Cucina Osteria Siciliana](#) [18]

196 Spring Street

☎ (646) 478-7488

CUISINE typical

AMBIENCE friendly

PRICE \$\$

The successful story of “Piccola Cucina” is, without a doubt, the story of executive chef Philip Guardione, a true Sicilian raised in the shadow of Mount Etna, who as a child used to help his grandmother prepare food for the holidays. The traditional, ancient secret recipes of true Sicilian cooking were passed down from those experienced hands to the ones of the young talented Philip; the same ones that today enchant the palate of the world with their wizardry in cooking. Recently opened in New York, this boutique doll-house size restaurant has already gained press attention and important catering engagements such as for the prestigious Consulate General of Italy. Philip promises to amaze its customers once again this Fall with an unique selection of signature Mediterranean meat dishes reinterpreted with a modern creative twist. The “Polpette della Nonna con Caponata Siciliana – home-made grilled meatballs with Sicilian caponata”, is a classic and something you will hardly find anywhere else in the city. Bread, sundried tomatoes, anchovies, capers, pecorino cheese from Ragusa, lemon peel and wild fennel; a big explosion of flavours in a tiny tasty meatball. Another seasonal special is the “Wild Fennel Pork Shank” paired with “Caponatina from Palermo”, a characteristic caponata made with fried eggplants. If you feel like having a more casual night out or a quick bite and a drink you don’t want to miss “Piccola Cucina Wine Bar” on 184 Prince Street, where you can taste exquisite Sicilian wines and delightful tapas like the famous “[Arancini](#) [19]”, fried rice balls with a ragu and mozzarella center

The Bronx

[San Gennaro](#) [20]

2329 Arthur Avenue

☎ (718) 562-0129

CUISINE typical

AMBIENCE rustic

PRICE \$\$

If you hop on train for a quick trip to the Bronx you will save hundreds of dollars on air-fare to fly to a small cute village in Italy, because that’s exactly the atmosphere you will drink in. Specifically the Arthur’s Avenue area is as Italian as you could possibly wish with the folkloristic Arthur’s Avenue Market where you can find fresh authentic Italian foods and products, simply the best in the city. To enrich the Italian character of the Bronx here it comes “San Gennaro”, another Arthur’s avenue Italian flagship jewel. Chef Gennaro Martinelli from Capua, Caserta in the Campania region, brought



to the Bronx the tradition of his family restaurant along with his international experience. Graduated in Paris from the “French Culinary Institute” he started his career as Sous Chef at “Vesuvio” restaurant at the Champs- Èlysées and after that he opened restaurants all over the world as well as being engaged as Chef for the Italian Embassy in Africa, Brazil, Thailand and many other countries. He then finally arrived in New York and settled down in the Bronx offering his cooking expertise in line with the Arthur’s Avenue typical Italian restaurants but expressing his own creativity as well with many daily specials and it’s particularly evident from the traditional but inventive meat dishes he proposes. “San Gennaro” is the most distinctive one, a pan-seared chicken breast with prosciutto, spinach, fresh mozzarella in a light brown sauce. “Pollo alla francese” mix the Italian taste with the chef experience with French cooking – lightly floured chicken in a butter and white wine, lemon sauce. But with “Pollo allo Scarpariello” we go back to Campania – chicken in a white lemon sauce with rosemary and sweet sausage, vinegar and pepper.

Queens

[Trattoria L’incontro](#) [21]

21-76 31street

☎(718) 721-3532

CUISINE traditional

AMBIENCE friendly

PRICE \$\$

They say that behind a great man there’s always a great woman, and that’s definitely the case of chef Rocco Sacramone who learnt from his mother Tina all the secrets of Abruzzese cooking, ancestral recipes that could only survive by word of mouth from one generation to another. From 1999 that special wealth of knowledge came to light in New York thank to the opening of Trattoria L’incontro, a place where you can feel like you are guests at the Sacramones in Abruzzo. A local artist was asked to paint the walls of the restaurant with murals resembling images of Rocco and Tina hometown in Abruzzo and the interior design of the tavern recreates that ambience of a family style dining gathering. Tradition and modernity coexist in the menu selection which highlights how the chef of “La trattoria” mastered the rare ability to maintain a dish traditional adding a trendier flare which never overshadows the integrity of the recipe and the purest aromas using only the freshest and organic ingredients. As for the restaurant meat dishes, chef Rocco went hunting to offer his guests the most refined and exquisite meats. “Pollo Quattro funghi” is a best seller – chicken in a four mushrooms sauce: porcini, oyster, Portobello and Button mushrooms. The surprising “Filetto di Manzo” it’s another unique delicacy, a filet mignon topped with demiglaze, champagne and gorgonzola sauce. “Carre d’agnello” is another special dish – rack of lamb seasoned with homemade spices.

Brooklyn - Williamsburg

[Antica Pesa](#) [22]

115 Berry Street

☎(347) 763-2635

CUISINE typical

AMBIENCE rustic

PRICE \$\$\$

Located in the very heart of Rome, between the intricate maze of streets of Trastevere neighborhood, Antica Pesa is a place where you can magically go back in time to the 17th century when villagers in Vatican City used scales (pesa) to portion food brought in from local farmers to give to the less fortunate. In 1992 the Panella family opened this restaurant naming it “Antica Pesa” (The Old Scales), to pay an homage to that honorable tradition. The true and rustic Roman cuisine based on seasonal and mostly organic product, which is the restaurant traditional trend, can now be savoured in the hip Williamsburg neighbourhood where the Panella family decided to give a New



York home to their historical spot. The young and talented executive chef Patrizia Volanti shares with Antica Pesa the same commitment to preserving the authenticity of the old recipes, adapting them to the territory with a creative nod to modern trends. The menu is seasonal, it changes every three months according to the freshness of the ingredients, some provided by local small farmers and some imported directly from Italy like parmigiano reggiano, pecorino Romano Fulvi or prosciutto di Parma. For this Fall Patrizia thought of an unique meat dish that graces the Antica Pesa menu along with the Roman classics: “Il Maialino da Latte”, D’Artagnan milkfed porchetta with roasted yellow peaches in rosemary oil, baked cherry tomatoes, grilled fennel, toasted spicy almonds and Dijon mustard sauce.

Staten Island

[Capizzi](#) [23]

4126 Hylan Blvd 113 Berry Street

☎ (718) 569-3180

CUISINE typical

AMBIENCE rustic

PRICE \$\$

There is no place like home except Grandma’s” and there is no possible better food like the one that you can taste when you are invited to an everlasting holiday lunch in a Sicilian home with grandma cooking up a storm for you. This is the atmosphere you will feel at Capizzi, this lovely and cozy restaurant opened by Joe Calcagno to honour the memory of her grandmother and named after the city in Sicily where she immigrated from. Everything from the recipes to the furniture in the restaurant belonged to Joe’s grandma, with the black and white TV, the vinyl record player from the 60s and the credenza by the coffee spot. With an emphasis on pizzas, cooked in the old fashion wood burning, Capizzi’s menu is as simply rustic as simply exquisite, with home-made fresh pasta and a selection of the most typical Italian fish and meat dishes. The “Pollo di Nonna Lucia”, chicken with sweet cherry peppers and potatoes in a white wine sauce, is Capizzi’s most signature and popular dish. Another unmissable delight is the “Pollo al Martini”, panko parmigiano crusted chicken breast served with cream martini sauce and sea-sonal vegetables.

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[2] <http://yelp.com>

[3] <http://www.paolasrestaurant.com>

[4] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mimi_Sheraton

[5] <http://antinorichianticlassico.it/en>

[6] <http://www.etcetcnyc.com>

[7] <http://www.luparestaurant.com>

[8] <http://www.mariobatali.com>

[9] <http://www.joebastianich.com>

[10] <http://delposto.com/restaurant/mark-ladner/>

[11] <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saltimbocca>

[12] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coda_alla_vaccinara

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[16] <http://www.viacarota.com>

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