

ITALY

A&M Club

October 2024

TRUFFLE Hunting

HARVEST Season

Abruzzo Region

History of the Italian Meatball

CIAO A TUTTI HOWDY AGS



As the vibrant colors of fall begin to blanket the Italian countryside, we're thrilled to bring you the October edition of the Italy A&M Club e-newsletter. This month, we're celebrating the magic of the autumn season in Italy, where centuries-old traditions and natural beauty come to life in exciting ways. From bountiful harvests to culinary delights, this edition is packed with stories and updates that will transport you right into the heart of Italy.

First, we'll explore the richness of Italy's fall harvest. October is a special time here, as vineyards, olive groves, and orchards yield their precious bounty. We'll take a look at the traditions surrounding the harvest season and highlight some of the must-see events, festivals, and activities you can enjoy during this time.

Another fall favorite we're excited to cover is truffle hunting. Italy is famous for its prized truffles, and we'll dive into the tradition of hunting for these culinary treasures, sharing tips on where to experience this unique adventure for yourself. If you've ever been curious about the thrill of the hunt or the allure of these delicacies, this is a feature you won't want to miss.

Next, we'll take you on a virtual journey to the breathtaking Abruzzo region. Often overlooked by travelers, this region is a hidden gem with its rugged mountains, rolling hills, stunning coastlines and medieval villages.

We'll highlight what makes Abruzzo so special—from its natural beauty to its rich cultural heritage—and give you inspiration for your next Italian getaway.

For the foodies in our club, we have a special feature on the history of the Italian meatball. You'll not only learn about its fascinating origins but also get a classic, tried-and-true recipe to make delicious meatballs at home. It's the perfect way to bring a taste of Italy to your table as the cooler weather sets in.

And of course, we haven't forgotten our beloved Aggieland! We've got the latest campus news and updates on A&M sports, including how our teams are faring this season. For a little slice of home, don't miss our "Texas Tidbits" section, where we'll share some fun and quirky facts about the Lone Star State that'll bring a smile to your face.

So, grab a warm drink, settle in, and enjoy this packed edition of our October newsletter. Whether you're savoring the flavors of the fall harvest, discovering the charms of Abruzzo, or catching up on Aggie sports, there's something here for everyone. Let's continue celebrating our love for Italy, Texas A&M, and the enduring spirit of our Aggie community.

Thanks, ciao and gig'em!

Ryan '91



*Once a year
go some place
you've never been before.*

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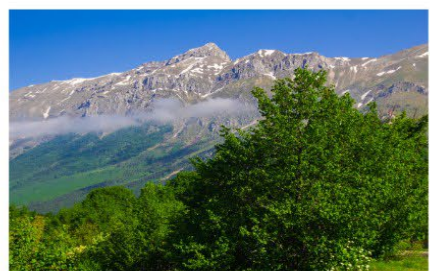


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TEXAS A&M CAMPUS REMEMBERED



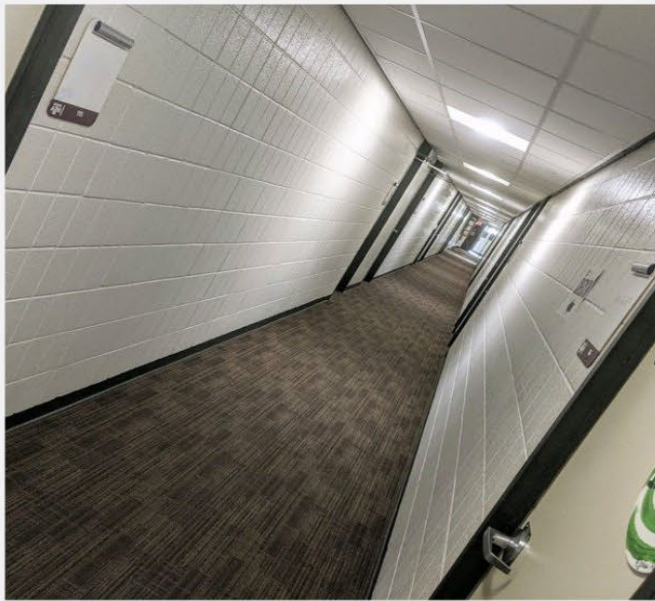
KRUEGER HALL



Krueger Hall was constructed in 1972 on the south side of campus and has a courtyard in the center. The residence hall was the first dorm open to women for living on campus. It is connected to three other dorms via a common area. Today, the hall is coed and suite-style, meaning double rooms are adjoined by bathrooms.

Krueger Hall contains 238 rooms spread out on four floors. Krueger is one of four residence halls connected to The Commons, a large, modern complex with numerous study/meeting spaces including the Community Learning Center, Game room, 24-hour Information Desk, convenience stores, mailroom, water bottle refilling stations, and large food court managed by Dining Services downstairs.

The coed hall is named after Carl C. “Polly” Krueger, class of 1912. The distinguished alumnus served as president of the Association of Former Students from 1924 to 1925, and was on the university’s Board of Directors from 1947 to 1953 and was a recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Award. Mr. Krueger was a native of San Antonio, and served as the leader of the Ross Volunteers. He also won the gold medal as the best drilled freshman and sophomore.



DEMAND FOR TEXAS A&M EDUCATION AT ALL-TIME HIGH

Enrollment grew 2.1 percent for the 2024 fall term, a year-over-year increase of 1,615 students.



*M*ore students than ever are choosing Texas A&M

University for its time-honored traditions, Core Values and commitment to educational excellence, resulting in record applications and enrollment numbers for the fall 2024 semester.

Increasing demand for an Aggie education translated to a 2.1% increase in enrollment over last fall, with 79,105 students enrolled at Texas A&M University — across all of its locations — as of the 20th day of classes on Sept. 16. Much of the enrollment growth was concentrated in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Mays Business School, Texas A&M

University Law School and the Bush School of Government and Public Service with graduate programs accounting for more than half of the overall growth.

“The demand for an Aggie education has never been higher, and that says a lot about what we stand for: excellence, integrity, leadership, loyalty, respect and selfless service, in addition to giving our students a superior academic experience,” said General (Ret.) Mark A. Welsh III, president of Texas A&M. “As we lead the state in educating Texans, we are committed to offering the No. 1 student experience to the next generation of leaders who will put those Core Values into practice to change our state and nation.”

By The Numbers

Out of the 72,560 students at the College Station campus, which saw a 2% enrollment increase over the fall 2023 term, 57,659 are undergraduates. More than half of the growth is attributed to graduate students. This growth occurred in unison with a modest and strategic decrease in new, first-time undergraduates. Texas A&M reported 12,531 first-time college students this semester, which includes students enrolled in programs at A&M Engineering Academies across the state as well as the Galveston and McAllen campuses. This represents a 9.8% decrease from fall 2023. Meanwhile, first-time graduate student enrollment is up 9.8% from 4,630 last fall to a current total of 5,083.

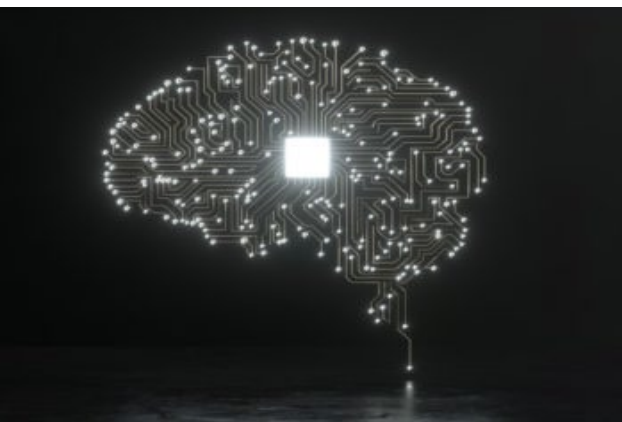
“We strategically grew specific programs on campus while intentionally enrolling a smaller new undergraduate cohort this year,” said Chris Reed, associate vice president for enrollment management and chief enrollment officer. “Doing so has allowed us to enroll yet another highly competitive class while ensuring we can maintain a world-class student experience.”

Of the freshman students admitted across all Texas A&M campuses this fall, 47% were among the top 10% of their graduating high school classes. That number is 50% for freshmen enrolled at the College Station campus. Texans comprise 94% of the undergraduate student body at Texas A&M.

As the largest university in the state, growing at a rate double that of other public universities over the past 10 years, Texas A&M has been closely monitoring and analyzing the impact of its growth on the campus community. Earlier this year, the university conducted a Capacity Study to review the current infrastructure, teaching capacities and staffing levels and identify current and future capacity of enrollment on the main campus. To read the entire article click [here](#).

A COLLEGE EDUCATION WILL BE 'MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER' IN AGE OF AI

A professor at Texas A&M's Mays Business School says critical thinking and people skills will become increasingly valuable as artificial intelligence enters the workforce.



*A*s companies around the world rush to capitalize on the potential of artificial intelligence tools like ChatGPT, increasing numbers of young people are wondering how this new technology will impact their career prospects.

A recent survey conducted by ADP Research found that Americans aged 18 to 24 were more likely than any other age group to believe AI will replace some or most of their existing job functions, driving some to pursue trades and other blue-collar jobs thought to be more “AI-proof.” While the apparent job security and high earning potential of these roles make

them an attractive prospect for many, students shouldn’t discount the long-term value of a college degree, says Dr. Shrihari Sridhar, senior associate dean at Texas A&M University’s Mays Business School. Rather than be made obsolete by AI, he said, many of the skills emphasized in higher education will actually become more valuable as AI tools transform the workplace.

Over time, as the more repetitive or predictable aspects of a job are offloaded to AI, the need for strong critical thinking and people skills will become even greater, Sridhar said, as companies seek out employees who can accomplish what AI cannot. “You need broad-based skills. You need critical thinking. You need to be able to solve problems with other people. You need creative breakthroughs, and you need societal and emotional intelligence,” Sridhar said. “All of those are things you get at a college.”

To read more about the importance of education in the age of AI click [here](#).

TEXAS A&M DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGICAL AND AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERING RANKED NO. 1 IN NATION

The department tops U.S. News & World Report's rankings for 2025.

*T*he Texas A&M Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering shared the No. 1 ranking among undergraduate programs in the United States, according to the U.S. News & World Report “Best Colleges” list for 2025.



The Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering is part of both the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and the College of Engineering at Texas A&M University. The department jumped two spots from its No. 3 ranking in 2024. Dr. Patricia Smith, head of the Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering, said the top ranking is a milestone faculty, staff and students should celebrate. Smith said the ranking reflects a collective commitment to excellence and the daily efforts of everyone in the department.

To read more about the ranking click [here](#).



TRUFFLE HUNTING

in Italy

The Tradition of Truffle Hunting

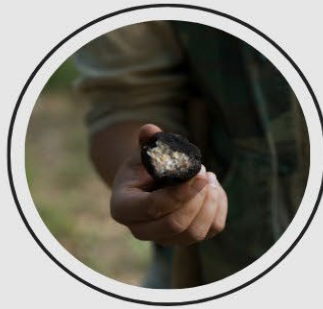
Truffle hunting, or "caccia al tartufo," is steeped in centuries-old tradition. Trained dogs, known as "truffle dogs" (and in some cases pigs), are used to sniff out these buried treasures. The most famous breed for truffle hunting is the Lagotto Romagnolo, a curly-haired dog native to Italy, whose sense of smell is so refined that it can detect truffles hidden under several inches of soil.

The hunters themselves, called trifolai, have often passed down the secrets of truffle hunting from generation to generation. These experts know the best places to search—secluded forests, often off the beaten path. Truffle hunting isn't just about finding the fungi, but is also about understanding the landscape, the weather conditions, and the perfect symbiotic relationship between trees and truffles.

The Allure of Truffle Hunting in Italy: A Gourmet Adventure



Few culinary experiences can rival the thrill of truffle hunting in Italy. Every autumn, when the air turns crisp and the leaves blanket the forest floors, Italy becomes a treasure trove of one of the world's most prized delicacies: truffles. These elusive fungi, hidden beneath the earth, are a true embodiment of Italy's culinary heritage and gastronomic prestige.



What Are Truffles?

Truffles are a type of fungus that grow symbiotically with the roots of certain trees, most notably oaks, hazelnuts, and beeches. There are two main types of truffles prized in Italy: the white truffle (*Tuber magnatum*) and the black truffle (*Tuber melanosporum*). White truffles are typically found in northern Italy, particularly in regions like Piedmont, while black truffles are more common in central Italy, including Tuscany and Umbria.



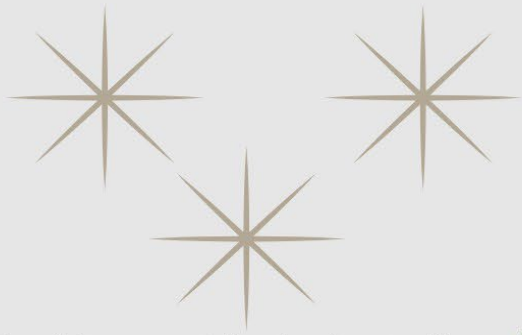
What makes these knobby little fungi so valuable? It's their rich, earthy flavor that adds an almost indescribable depth to dishes. Combined with their rarity, truffles have become a sought-after ingredient in gourmet cuisine worldwide.

Where to Hunt for Truffles



Italy boasts several key truffle-hunting regions:

- **Piedmont:** Known for the prestigious white truffle, this region hosts the famous Alba White Truffle Fair every fall, where gourmands gather to celebrate and purchase the best of the season.
- **Tuscany:** The rolling hills of Tuscany are ideal for black truffles, particularly in the provinces of Siena, Pisa, and Florence. Some areas even produce the rare "Marzuolo" truffle, a spring variety.
- **Umbria:** Often referred to as the "Green Heart of Italy," Umbria is a black truffle haven. The medieval town of Norcia is particularly famous for its high-quality black truffles, and the surrounding forests are prime hunting grounds.
- **Marche:** This less touristy region on the Adriatic coast offers both white and black truffles, making it a must-visit for serious truffle enthusiasts.



The Hunt Experience

For visitors, participating in a truffle hunt is a unique way to connect with Italy's rural culture. Many local guides and trifolai offer organized tours where you can follow the dogs through the woods, learning firsthand about this ancient practice. These hunts are often followed by tastings of the day's finds, paired with fresh pasta, eggs, or risotto—classic dishes that highlight the truffle's flavor.



The Harvest Season

Truffle hunting season varies depending on the type of truffle. White truffles are typically harvested from October to December, with their peak in November, while black truffles are harvested from December to March. This makes fall the perfect time to plan a truffle-hunting excursion in Italy, combining the experience with the beauty of the autumn landscape.



Tips for Truffle Hunting



- **Wear proper attire:** Truffle hunting often takes place in dense forests, so sturdy shoes and weather-appropriate clothing are a must.
- **Book in advance:** Truffle hunting is becoming an increasingly popular tourist activity, so reservations for tours during peak season are recommended.
- **Respect the environment and land:** Truffle hunting is a delicate balance between man and nature. Trifolai are often very protective of their hunting grounds, so it's important to follow their lead and tread lightly.



Storing your truffles:

Enjoying your truffle finds can seem intimidating, but with the right methods and materials, it can be quite easy. The first step to preserving truffles is to purchase containers that are airtight, such as glass or ceramic jars. If possible, they should also have a layer of rice at the bottom of them to further preserve the truffle's flavor and aroma. Freezing also works well for preservation, though it should be done right after harvesting so that your truffles don't lose their flavor. When frozen, make sure to place your truffles in an airtight container before putting them into the freezer.



A Taste of Tradition



After a day of truffle hunting, savoring the fruits of your labor is a must. Many truffle tours end with a meal featuring fresh truffles shaved generously over dishes like tagliolini, ravioli, or scrambled eggs. Pair your meal with a glass of local wine—perhaps a Barolo from Piedmont or a Montepulciano from Tuscany—and you’ll understand why truffles are celebrated as the diamonds of the kitchen.



So, whether you’re a food lover, an adventurer, or simply curious about one of Italy’s most revered culinary traditions, consider adding a truffle hunt to your Italian travel itinerary. The experience of discovering these fragrant fungi, combined with the stunning autumn landscapes, is an unforgettable journey into the heart of Italian culture.






Join the Hunt!

If you're interested in organizing a truffle hunting excursion this fall, check out the key truffle-hunting regions section in the newsletter for tips on the best regions to visit, or connect with fellow club members who may be planning a trip. There's no better way to celebrate the season than by indulging in this Italian tradition!

Buon appetito!

A top-down view of a white bowl filled with a rich, orange-red curry. The curry contains chunks of meat, potatoes, and vegetables, garnished with fresh green herbs and a drizzle of white cream. The bowl is set against a dark, textured background with scattered dried leaves and seeds. A large white quote is centered over the bowl.

“
Food is essential
to life, therefore
make it good
”

CHEF HARRISON WAYNE



ITALIAN MEATBALLS

The Humble History of the Italian Meatball: A
Delicious (and Slightly Cheesy) Tale

Ah, the Italian meatball. Is there a more comforting, satisfying morsel of food than a tender, juicy meatball nestled in a pool of rich tomato sauce? Whether you're twirling spaghetti or mopping up sauce with a hunk of bread, meatballs

are at the heart of many Italian meals. But where did this iconic dish come from? And why, oh why, is there a song about one tragically rolling away?

Let's take a bite out of history.

A Meatball by Any Other Name



Contrary to popular belief, the origins of the meatball aren't strictly Italian. Cultures all over the world have their own versions—think Swedish köttbullar, Turkish köfte, and the Middle Eastern kibbeh. Even the Romans had a thing for mixing ground meat with herbs and spices. However, the Italian polpetta stands out as a true culinary masterpiece.



The earliest known recipe for meatballs can be traced back to ancient Persia, but the Italians have long claimed the spotlight for perfecting it. Traditional Italian meatballs, or polpette, were made from whatever meat was available—beef, veal, pork, or even fish. They were typically small and served as a simple dish, not always with the pasta or sauce we associate with today's spaghetti-and-meatball dinners. It wasn't until Italian immigrants arrived in America that meatballs grew to their modern, mouthwatering, oversized glory.



THE LEGEND OF THE SNEEZED-AT MEATBALL

Now, we can't talk about meatballs without bringing up one of the most iconic meatball-related songs ever to grace childhood singalongs: *On Top of Spaghetti*.

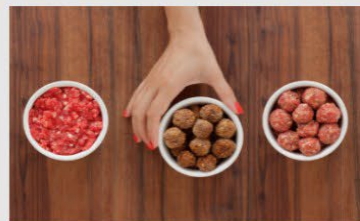
You know the one: *On top of spaghetti, all covered with cheese, I lost my poor meatball, when somebody sneezed.*

It's a tragedy wrapped in a melody. One minute, you're enjoying a plate of spaghetti, and the next, your poor meatball is careening off the table, thanks to an ill-timed achoo. You'd think meatballs are sturdy enough to withstand a little sneeze, but no—this one rolls right off, gathering dust, dirt, and despair as it tumbles along. It's a cautionary tale about the fragility of the meatball. Handle with care, folks, or you, too, may witness a rogue meatball on the run!



The Italian-American Connection

In Italy, meatballs are typically served on their own, maybe with some crusty bread or a simple side. It wasn't until Italian immigrants landed on American shores that the pairing of meatballs with spaghetti became a thing. Faced with more affordable meat and a desire to stretch meals, Italian-Americans started adding more meat to their diets. Cue the larger, saucier meatball we know and love today—often served with a mountain of pasta to create that hearty, comfort-food combo we adore.



Let's get one thing straight: the Italian meatball is not just a ball of meat. No, friends, it is a bite-sized treasure trove of flavor, history, and the occasional airborne disaster. So next time you sit down to a plate of spaghetti and meatballs, remember: history is delicious, but a well-placed sneeze guard is priceless.

Buon appetito!



GREAT PLACES TO EAT ITALIAN MEETBALLS



Trattoria - Mamma Gina

Borgo S. Jacopo, 37/R - 50100 FIRENZE (FI), Contact: [+39 055 2396009](tel:+390552396009)

Located in the heart of Florence, Mamma Gina's offers a refined take on traditional Tuscan cuisine. Their meatballs, made from high-quality meats and simple seasonings, are served with fresh tomato sauce and reflect the rustic flavors of the region.



Antica Trattoria da Pietro

Via de' Falegnami, 18a, Bologna, Emilia-Romagna, Italy

Known for its Bolognese cuisine, this trattoria serves meatballs with a Northern twist, often cooked in broth or accompanied by a thick, rich sauce. The meatballs are a comforting, hearty option in this food-rich city.



Trattoria Da Enzo al 29

Via Di Monte Testaccio, 30 - 00153 Rome, Contact: [+39 06 574 3816](tel:+39065743816)

One of Rome's oldest restaurants, Checchino offers hearty Roman fare, including traditional meatball dishes. The atmosphere reflects old-school Rome, with recipes passed down through generations.



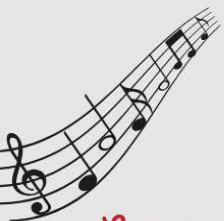
Osteria della Mattonella

Via Giovanni Nicotera 13 - 80132 Naples, Contact: [+39 081 416541](tel:+39081416541)

Neapolitan cuisine includes meatballs as a staple, and this local gem offers meatballs bursting with flavor. Often served in ragù or alongside pasta, the meatballs here are hearty and delicious.



On Top of Spaghetti



Lyrics

On top of spaghetti,
All covered with cheese,
I lost my poor meatball,
When somebody sneezed.

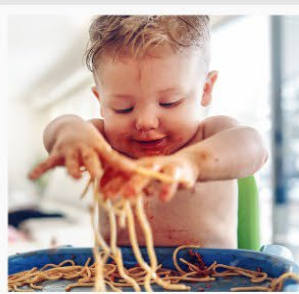
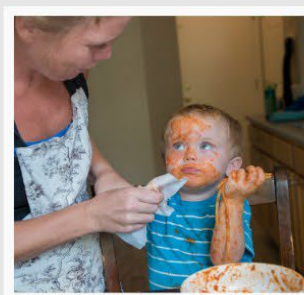
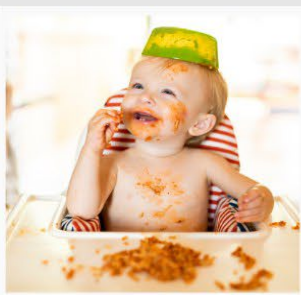
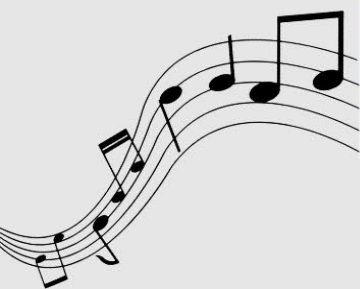
It rolled off the table,
And on to the floor,
And then my poor meatball,
Rolled out of the door.

It rolled in the garden,
And under a bush,
And then my poor meatball,
Was nothing but mush.

The mush was as tasty
As tasty could be,
And then the next summer,
It grew into a tree.

The tree was all covered,
All covered with moss,
And on it grew meatballs,
And tomato sauce.

So if you eat spaghetti,
All covered with cheese,
Hold on to your meatball,
Whenever you sneeze.



OnTopOfSpaghetti.mp3
scoutsongs.com / 01:21





THE SECRET TO KEEPING YOUR MEATBALLS IN LINE: A RECIPE!

To avoid any future meatball-related disasters, I've got just the thing: a foolproof recipe that keeps your meatballs tender, juicy, and right where they belong —on your plate, not under the couch.

Let's Cook! The Perfect Meatball Recipe
In honor of this saucy history (and to ensure no one loses their meatball to a rogue sneeze), here's a simple and delicious meatball recipe to try at home.

CLASSIC

ITALIAN MEATBALLS





INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb ground beef (*because nothing says "stay put" like beef*)
- ½ lb ground pork (*a.k.a. the meatball glue*)
- 1 cup breadcrumbs (*because we need structure, people!*)
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese (*the real MVP*)
- 2 cloves garlic, minced (*no vampires allowed*)
- 2 large eggs (*holds it all together in case of emergency sneezes*)
- ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley (*so you can pretend you're fancy*)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 cup milk (*trust me, it's the secret sauce for tender meatballs*)
- Olive oil for frying (*because fried = flavor*)
- Your favorite marinara sauce (*the cherry on top*)

DIRECTIONS

- **Mix It Up:** In a large bowl, combine ground beef, pork, breadcrumbs, Parmesan, garlic, eggs, parsley, salt, and pepper. Mix it all together, but don't get too enthusiastic. (We're making meatballs, not dough balls.)
- **Milk It:** Slowly add the milk, mixing gently. This will keep your meatballs moist and sneeze-resistant.
- **Roll 'Em:** Shape the mixture into golf-ball-sized meatballs. Not too big, not too small—just right.
- **Fry 'Em:** Heat olive oil in a large pan over medium heat. Fry the meatballs, turning occasionally, until they're golden brown and crispy on all sides. This should take about 10 minutes. (**Pro tip:** keep a lid on the pan. This should protect you from both sneezes and flying meatballs.)
- **Simmer Down Now:** Once your meatballs are crispy and brown, transfer them into a pot of marinara sauce. Let them simmer gently for 20-30 minutes. You'll know they're ready when your kitchen smells like heaven.

Serve with spaghetti (*because obviously*) and top with extra Parmesan for good measure.

And there you have it! Not only have you learned the (mostly true) history of the Italian meatball, but you're also armed with a recipe that'll ensure your meatballs stay safely on the plate—even in the face of a sneeze.

So next time you sit down to a plate of spaghetti and meatballs, remember: history is delicious, but a well-placed sneeze guard is priceless.

Buon appetito!



»» ITALY «« FALL HARVEST



OCTOBER'S BOUNTY

**"IL RACCOLTO
D'AUTUNNO CI RICORDA
CHE LA PAZIENZA E IL
LAVORO DELLA TERRA
PORTANO SEMPRE BUONI
FRUTTI."**

»»» RACCOLTA

October in Italy is a celebration of nature's abundance, where the countryside buzzes with the excitement of harvest. As the summer heat fades and a crispness settles in the air, Italians embrace one of the most beloved times of year: the season of the "raccolta," or harvest. It's a month full of festivals, family gatherings, and, of course, incredible food.

A TIME OF ABUNDANCE «««

Italy's diverse geography makes October a special time for harvesting different types of produce. From the golden vineyards of Tuscany to the olive groves of Puglia, and the truffle-rich forests of Piedmont, every region has something unique to offer. Grapes, olives, chestnuts, mushrooms, and truffles are among the prized items gathered during this time, each playing a key role in local traditions and cuisine.

**"The fall harvest
reminds us that
patience and
working the land
always bring good
fruits."**

WINE HARVEST

>>> VENDEMMIA

October is synonymous with wine in Italy. The vendemmia, or grape harvest, is not only an agricultural activity but also a cultural celebration. Regions like Tuscany, Piedmont, and Veneto are famous for their wine production, with vineyards stretching for miles across the rolling hills. This is the time when families, workers, and even volunteers pick the season's ripened grapes, which will later transform into some of Italy's finest wines—Chianti, Barolo, and Amarone, to name a few.

Many wineries open their doors to visitors during the vendemmia, offering guided tours, tastings, and even the opportunity to participate in the harvest itself. It's a chance to witness the centuries-old tradition of winemaking up close.

**"LA VENDEMMIA NON È SOLO
UN RACCOLTO DI UVA, MA UN
RACCOLTO DI CULTURA E
TRADIZIONI."**

**"The grape harvest
is not just a
gathering of grapes,
but a gathering of
culture and
traditions."**

OLIVE HARVEST

>>> RACCOLTA DELLE OLIVE

Equally important is the olive harvest, with regions like Puglia, Umbria, and Sicily leading the way. October marks the beginning of the olive picking season, which can extend into November depending on the variety and location. The freshly pressed olive oil, known as "olio nuovo," is eagerly awaited every year, with its vibrant, peppery flavor that's far stronger than what you might find bottled later in the year.

Visitors to olive-growing regions can often take part in harvesting activities, learning the art of hand-picking and even tasting the newly pressed oil drizzled over local bread—simple but divine.



OLIVE OIL PRODUCTION

While the wine harvest grabs much of the spotlight, the olive harvest is equally revered, especially in regions like Tuscany, Puglia, Umbria, and Sicily. October marks the beginning of the olive-picking season, which can extend into December depending on the variety and location. Olive trees dot the landscape in these regions, their silver-green leaves shimmering in the autumn sun, and families gather to harvest the fruit that will become the backbone of Italy's culinary identity: olive oil.

The Art of Olive Harvesting

Traditionally, olives are harvested by hand or with rakes, a method that respects the delicate fruit. However, many olive groves now use mechanical shakers that gently vibrate the tree's branches, causing the ripe olives to fall into waiting nets. This process must be done carefully because bruising or damaging the olives can affect the quality of the oil.

Harvesting happens in a race against time, as olives are highly perishable once picked. The best producers ensure that the olives are pressed within 24 hours of harvesting to capture the freshest flavors.

From Tree to Bottle

Once harvested, the olives are taken to a local press where they undergo a cold extraction process to preserve the flavor and health benefits. Olives are first washed, then crushed into a paste. The paste is slowly stirred to release the oil droplets, a process called "malaxation." It is then spun in a centrifuge, which separates the oil from the water and solid components of the olive. The result is "olio nuovo" (new oil), a bright green, intensely flavored olive oil that is the pride of the harvest.

Italy's olive oil is categorized based on the quality and method of production. The highest grade is Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVOO), which is produced without the use of chemicals or excessive heat. To qualify as EVOO, the oil must have low acidity and pass strict taste tests, ensuring it delivers the rich, peppery, and slightly bitter flavor that aficionados seek.



Olio Nuovo: A Special Treat



Olio nuovo, the first pressing of the season, is especially prized for its fresh, pungent flavor and vibrant color. It is celebrated at festivals across Italy, often served simply with fresh bread or used to dress seasonal vegetables. In Tuscany, olio nuovo is drizzled over "fettunta," a rustic, toasted bread rubbed with garlic — a simple dish that highlights the intense flavor of the freshly pressed oil.



Visitors to olive-growing regions during October can participate in the harvest and witness the production process first-hand. Many agriturismo (farm stays) offer tours of their groves and presses, where you can sample olio nuovo straight from the source. The experience provides a deep connection to the land and its produce, offering a taste of one of Italy's most treasured culinary traditions.



The olive harvest in Italy is not just about the production of oil; it's a symbol of Italy's commitment to sustainable, traditional agriculture. Many olive groves are family-owned and have been passed down through generations, with farmers taking pride in maintaining their trees and preserving the land. The focus on hand-harvesting and traditional methods reflects Italy's belief in quality over quantity, ensuring that the olive oil remains a product of passion and craftsmanship.



CHESTNUTS, TRUFFLES & PUMPKINS

>>> CASTAGNE

Chestnut festivals ("sagre delle castagne") are scattered across Italy, particularly in the mountainous regions. Chestnut trees thrive in areas like Tuscany, Emilia-Romagna, and Campania, and their harvest brings villages together to celebrate this humble, yet versatile, ingredient. Chestnuts are roasted over open fires in the streets, filling the air with a smoky sweetness that draws people to gather and enjoy.

>>> TARTUFO

Truffle hunting is another highlight of the Italian autumn. The white truffles of Alba are particularly renowned and fetch high prices in international markets. October is the height of truffle hunting season, where specially trained dogs and their handlers comb the forests for these aromatic treasures. Many towns host truffle fairs, like the famous Alba Truffle Festival, where chefs and food lovers come together to savor the delicacy.

**"IL PROFUMO DI
CASTAGNE ARROSTITE
E IL CALORE DELL'OLIO
NUOVO SONO IL CUORE
PULSANTE
DELL'OTTOBRE
ITALIANO."**

**"The smell of
roasted chestnuts
and the warmth of
new olive oil are
the heartbeat of
Italy in October."**

>>> ZUCCA

As the vibrant hues of autumn begin to paint the Italian countryside, one harvest in particular takes center stage in kitchens across the country — the pumpkin, or "zucca." While Italy is known for its wines, olive oil, and truffles, the humble pumpkin has its own moment of glory during the fall months, especially in northern regions like Lombardy, Veneto, and Emilia-Romagna.

Pumpkins in Italy are more than just a crop — they represent the essence of the fall season. Whether you're wandering through a pumpkin festival, enjoying a warm plate of tortelli di zucca, or simply admiring the golden fields during the harvest, the Italian autumn wouldn't be the same without this beloved fruit.

A SEASON OF UNITY



Celebrate the Harvest

For many Italians, the fall harvest represents more than just a time to gather fruits and vegetables; it's a time of unity and celebration. In smaller communities, the harvest is a family affair, with members of all ages contributing to the labor-intensive process. In larger operations, neighbors and workers from nearby towns come together to help with the harvest, sharing meals, stories, and traditions passed down through generations.

Throughout October, Italy's love for food, tradition, and community is on full display. Whether you're wandering through vineyard-covered hills, strolling through a chestnut festival, or indulging in a freshly prepared truffle dish, fall is a time to connect with the land, celebrate the harvest, and embrace the country's deep agricultural roots. It's a reminder that, in Italy, food is not just sustenance; it's a celebration of life, family, and the land.

So, if you're in Italy during the fall, make sure to join in the festivities, taste the season's freshest produce, and experience the magic of Italy's October harvest season—where every olive, grape, and truffle tells a story of centuries-old traditions and timeless flavors.

Discover ing Abruzzo



Italy's Best-Kept Secret

Nestled between the Adriatic Sea and the Apennine mountains, Abruzzo remains one of Italy's most under-the-radar regions. It's a treasure trove of natural beauty, authentic Italian charm, and rich cultural traditions. Whether you're seeking picturesque hill towns, unforgettable food and wine, or an adventure in the great outdoors, Abruzzo delivers it all—minus the tourist crowds.

Must-Visit Cities and Towns

Abruzzo's cities are a perfect blend of history, art, and culture.

L'Aquila, the regional capital, showcases a stunning array of Renaissance architecture, ancient churches, and a story of resilience following its 2009 earthquake. Wander through **Piazza del Duomo** and visit the **Basilica di San Bernardino** before heading to the **Forte Spagnolo**, an imposing 16th-century fortress.



For a coastal escape, head to **Pescara**, Abruzzo's largest city. Pescara offers a mix of modern vibrancy and laid-back seaside charm. The long stretch of beach along the Adriatic is perfect for sunbathing, while the city's center offers shopping and dining with a relaxed, small-town feel.



Don't miss **Sulmona**, a gem in the heart of the Peligna Valley, known for its stunning Romanesque and Gothic architecture. It's also the birthplace of **Ovid**, the Roman poet. Be sure to visit the **Piazza Garibaldi**, home to the city's vibrant market, and the **Sulmona Aqueduct**, dating back to 1256.



Natural Wonders



Abruzzo boasts three national parks, with **Gran Sasso e Monti della Laga National Park** being one of the most spectacular. Here, you'll find **Campo Imperatore**, often called the "Little Tibet" of Italy, an otherworldly high-altitude plain perfect for hiking. If you're lucky, you might even spot the elusive Abruzzo chamois or golden eagle.

Majella National Park is equally stunning, filled with ancient forests, deep gorges, and some of Italy's best hiking trails. The park is home to many hermitages, including **Eremo di San Bartolomeo**, where monks once sought spiritual refuge in these peaceful surroundings.

For sea lovers, **Costa dei Trabocchi** is a must-see. This stretch of coastline is dotted with **trabocchi**—ancient fishing platforms suspended over the water. These wooden structures, some of which have been converted into restaurants, offer a taste of fresh Adriatic seafood with unforgettable views.



Lago di Scanno



Often referred to as "The Heart Lake" due to its striking heart shape when viewed from above, is one of the most enchanting natural sights in Abruzzo. Nestled in the Apennine Mountains, this serene lake lies just outside the medieval town of **Scanno**, offering a picturesque escape for nature lovers and romantics alike. Surrounded by lush forests and dramatic mountain peaks, the lake's calm waters create a perfect reflection of the sky and its surroundings, adding to its magical atmosphere.

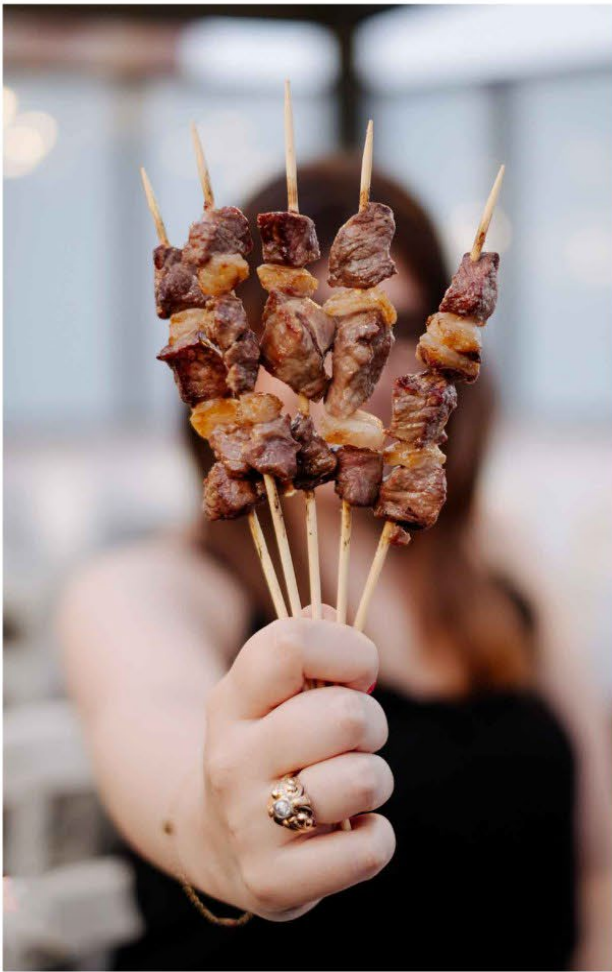
The lake is a popular spot for outdoor activities, including hiking, swimming, and boating. The **Sentiero del Cuore** (Heart Trail) is a must-do for those seeking to capture the perfect view of the heart shape from the surrounding hills. This easy yet scenic hike rewards visitors with stunning panoramas of the lake and the surrounding Abruzzese wilderness.

Beyond its natural beauty, **Lago di Scanno** is steeped in local legends. It's said that the heart shape was formed by a love story between a shepherd and a fairy, adding a mystical element to its allure. Whether you're exploring the nearby town of Scanno with its cobblestone streets and centuries-old traditions or simply relaxing by the water, a visit to Heart Lake is a peaceful and romantic highlight of any trip to Abruzzo.

Food and Wine

Abruzzo is a paradise for foodies. Known as the land of **arrosticini**, the region's signature dish is simple yet mouthwatering: skewers of lamb grilled to perfection over open coals. You'll find them at festivals, markets, and even roadside stands. Pair them with a glass of **Montepulciano d'Abruzzo**, the region's robust red wine, or a crisp **Trebbiano d'Abruzzo** white.

Pasta alla chitarra, another Abruzzese specialty, is a must-try. Made using a special tool called the chitarra (a wooden frame with thin strings), the pasta has a unique texture that pairs beautifully with rich tomato-based sauces. And for a sweet finish, try **confetti di Sulmona**—delicate, colorful sugar-coated almonds that have been a local tradition for centuries often found in the shapes of flowers.





FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Abruzzo's calendar is filled with festivals celebrating its deep-rooted traditions. In **Scanno**, one of Italy's most beautiful medieval towns, the **Processione delle Verginelle** takes place each August, where girls dressed in white carry candles in honor of the Virgin Mary. It's a beautiful, timeless ritual in the heart of Abruzzo's rugged mountains.

For those visiting in winter, **L'Aquila's Christmas Market** is a magical experience, offering a mix of handmade crafts, local foods, and traditional holiday cheer. But perhaps the most unique event in Abruzzo is **La Perdonanza Celestiniana**, held every August in L'Aquila. This religious festival commemorates Pope Celestine V's granting of plenary indulgence and draws thousands of pilgrims and tourists alike.





Abruzzo Awaits

Abruzzo is a region that promises unforgettable experiences, from its rugged mountain landscapes to its pristine beaches, from medieval towns to mouthwatering cuisine. Its rich cultural traditions and warm hospitality ensure that visitors leave not only with memories but a sense of having discovered something truly special. Whether you're planning to explore its national parks, sample its culinary delights, or simply soak in the region's unspoiled beauty, Abruzzo is calling.

Pack your bags and prepare for an Italian adventure that's off the beaten path—but sure to be at the top of your travel list.

AGGIE SPORTS UPDATE



Aggies Down Arkansas in Southwest Classic for Fourth Straight Win

The Texas A&M football team defeated Arkansas, 21-17, in a hard-nosed, physical SEC battle at the Southwest Classic inside AT&T Stadium.

[Click for more information](#)



Aggies Reverse Sweep Missouri for First Conference Win, 3-2

The Texas A&M volleyball team secured its first reverse sweep since 2015, as it outlasted Missouri in Reed Arena, 3-2 (17-25, 20-25, 25-23, 25-21, 15-12).

[Click for more information](#)



Aggies Tame No. 5 Tigers, 4-1

Sydney Becerra scores two goals as A&M blasts its way past previously unbeaten Auburn.

[Click for more information](#)



HEADLINES

SOCCER (W): [Aggies Claim Program's 500th Win](#)

FOOTBALL: [SEC Nation Heading to Aggieland](#)

CROSS COUNTRY: [Aggies Claim Pair of 2nd-Place Finishes at TAMU Invitational](#)

BASEBALL: [SEC Schedule Announced for Aggie Baseball](#)

SWIMMING & DIVING: [Texas A&M Unveils 2024-25 Schedule](#)

BASKETBALL (M): [Aggies Gear Up for 2024-25 with UH Exhibition Clash](#)

BASKETBALL (W): [Women's Basketball SEC Schedule for 2024-25 Campaign](#)



Texas

TIDBITS

TEXAS STORIES,
FACTS AND HISTORY
PLUS A LITTLE FUN
TOO. BLUEBONNETS
AND BEEF, OIL
WELLS AND FRIDAY
NIGHT LIGHTS.



Answer 1: [Texas](#) and [Dakota](#) are both derived from the word friend in different Native American languages.

Answer 2: The Tower of the Americas. Designed by San Antonio architect O'Neil Ford, the 750-foot tower was the tallest observation tower in the U.S. between 1968 and 1996, when it was overtaken by the Las Vegas Stratosphere Tower. The tower contains a revolving restaurant and can be accessed via one of three elevators.

[\(Read More Here\)](#)

Answer 3: Pope John Paul II. On September 13, 1987, the pontiff led mass for some 350,000 faithful at the future site of Stevens High School in San Antonio. He also drove by the Alamo and led a smaller service at the downtown San Fernando Cathedral.

[\(Click here for more information\)](#)

Answer 4: At Air Force Plant 4 in Fort Worth, operated by Lockheed Martin Aeronautics. The first F-35 rolled off the assembly line in 2006, and nearly 1,000 have been delivered since then, with some being built in conjunction with overseas partners.

[\(See the Full Story\)](#)

QUESTION 1: WHAT DOES THE NAME TEXAS SHARE IN COMMON WITH THE NAME DAKOTA?

Question 2: What prominent San Antonio landmark was built for the 1968 international exhibition known as the HemisFair?

Question 3: What is the only pope to have visited Texas?

Question 4: Where in Texas is the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter jet manufactured?





THE ITALY A&M CLUB NEEDS YOUR ASSISTANCE



The Italy A&M Club Needs Your Help!

• BREAKING NEWS

UPDATE – The Association of Former Students has finished helping us with our website! Here's the link www.italyags.aggienetwork.com

We have down loaded each of our e-newsletters along with other content. I can't thank them enough for the help. In the future we will be adding a *Facebook* page to accompany our *Instagram* postings. These mediums will allow us to post news articles, our monthly newsletters, *Instagram* postings and other social media. So everyone is aware our newsletter reaches out to OVER 1,400 readers each month. Thank you all for your contributions to it's success.

• Italy A&M Club Scholarship

The club is exploring the possibility of establishing a scholarship program. The scholarship would be available to club members who live in Italy but are attending Texas A&M, their family members who are attending Texas A&M or possibly students who are studying abroad from Texas A&M in Italy (semester abroad program).

We are considering hosting a silent auction to help raise funds for the scholarship. If you are interested in donating to the auction or in the establishment of the scholarship please reach out to me directly.



• News – Extra, Extra Read All About it!

Please feel free to share any photos, news articles, announcements, births, graduations, Silver Taps, career changes or any other news you would like to share with the club. We will find ways to include them in the regular updates.

• Logo

We are looking to create our clubs logo and we need your help. We need to generate a few ideas for our logo. If you have any ideas or thoughts please let me know.

• Recipes

Feel free to submit your favorite recipe(s) to be include with the monthly/periodic updates. We would love to share them with the group.

• Feedback

Please provide feedback on this format, the content and any ideas you may have on ways we can generate additional engagement. Please encourage other people to join the club and to follow us on *Instagram*.

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Parole Finali



As we wrap up this October edition of the Italy A&M Club e-newsletter, we can't help but marvel at the richness of this season and the unique experiences it brings. From the excitement of the fall harvest to the adventure of truffle hunting, this month has been a celebration of Italy's culinary and cultural heritage. We hope these stories and insights have inspired you to embrace all that this beautiful season has to offer.

In addition to our Italian highlights, we've enjoyed sharing more about the fascinating Abruzzo region, a place full of natural wonders and hidden history. Whether you're planning a trip or just dreaming of future travels, we hope Abruzzo has found a place on your list of must-visit destinations.

Of course, no newsletter is complete without a nod to our Aggie roots. The history of the Italian meatball not only offered us a taste of tradition but also a reminder of the importance of shared meals and moments, much like the sense of family and unity we cherish within the A&M community. And with the latest sports and campus updates, it's clear that the Aggie spirit is as strong as ever, both here in Italy and back home in Texas.

As we look ahead to the rest of the fall season, we encourage you to stay connected, and continue to engage with the club. Whether you're in Italy or beyond, our Aggie family is here to support and celebrate one another. We're proud to be part of this global community and excited for what lies ahead.

Thank you for taking the time to read, explore, and enjoy this month's edition. Let's carry the energy and inspiration of October into the coming months, making the most of every opportunity to connect, learn, and share in the true Aggie spirit.

Until next time—Gig 'em and Forza Aggies!

Ryan '91



Be sure to follow us on Instagram at: [Italy_am_club](#) and please visit our web page at www.italyags.aggienetwork.com.