

SEPTEMBER

2024

ITALY

A&M Club



TRAVEL, LIFESTYLE, HISTORY & CUISINE

THE TEXAN
CONNECTION TO THE
DISCOVERY OF ST.
PETER'S BONES

AFFOGATO: ITALY'S
SWEET BALANCE
BETWEEN COFFEE
AND DESSERT

SPECIAL INSIGHT: CANAL VISTAS OF VENICE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

04 **Ciao a Tutti & Howdy Ags**

Welcome to September

10 **Texas Connection to St. Peter's Bones**

The unexpected connection to Texas that highlights the demand for one of Rome's most exclusive tours

06 **Texas A&M Campus Remembered**

Kyle Field

14 **The Legacy of Ancient Italian Recipes**

Discover how today's Italian cooking is rooted in its ancient past

08 **Campus News**

All things Aggieland

18 **Canal Vistas of Venice**

Each vista in Venice tells its own story



20 ROSSA DI ROTONDA PEPPERS

Italy's hidden culinary gem

24 AFFOGATO

A sweet balance between coffee and dessert

28 FRIULI-VENEZIA GIULIA

Tucked in the Northeastern corner this region has it all

36 Aggie Sports Update

All things Aggie athletics

38 PASTA ALLA NORMA

Classic Sicilian Dish

40 TEXAS TIDBITS

Fun facts and stories about Texas

43 PAROLE FINALI

See you next month

Dear Italy A&M Club Members,

As we welcome the month of September, I hope this newsletter finds you all in good health and high spirits. This time of year always brings a sense of renewal and excitement as we transition into the fall season.

With the new academic year beginning, it's a great time to reconnect with fellow Aggies and celebrate our shared heritage. We have several exciting events and activities planned for the coming weeks, from football game listening parties to community service opportunities. We encourage everyone to get involved and make the most of these opportunities to strengthen our Aggie network here in Italy.



CIAO A TUTTI & HOWDY AGS!



This month, we're also spotlighting some incredible stories from across Italy and sharing experiences that capture the spirit of Aggieland across the globe. We hope you find inspiration in these stories and feel a deeper connection to Italy and our Aggie family.

As always, we're grateful for your continued support and involvement. If you have any feedback or suggestions for future newsletters, please don't hesitate to reach out. Together, we can make our Italy A&M Club even stronger.

Thanks, ciao and Gig 'em!

Ryan '91

Choices

"You can all go to hell; I will go to Texas" — Davey Crockett

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"You may have the universe if I may have Italy." — Giuseppe Verdi, Italian composer

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TEXAS A&M CAMPUS REMEMBERED



KYLE FIELD



Regarded as one of the nation's most intimidating road venues, Texas A&M's Kyle Field has been the home of the Aggie football team since 1905. Kyle Field was named for Edwin Jackson Kyle, who served as Texas A&M's dean of agriculture and athletic council president. Kyle donated a 400-by-400 foot area of the southern edge of campus that had been assigned to him for horticultural experiments. The permanent seating on the east and west sides of Kyle Field were added in 1927 and the horseshoe was completed in 1929. The stadium was expanded in 1967 to include two decks of grandstands, and the third decks were added to the east and west sides in 1980. The Aggies played on grass through the 1960s, but A&M became one of the many schools that switched to artificial turf in the early 1970s. Grass returned to Kyle Field in 1996 and the Aggies currently play on grass. In April of 2012, it was announced that Texas A&M University and the 12th Man Foundation engaged Populous to lead the design study phase for the renovation and redevelopment of Kyle Field, recognized as the nation's top college football gameday experience and "Home of the 12th Man." On May 1, 2013, the Texas A&M Board of Regents approved a \$450 million renovation of the famed stadium, the first phase of which was completed prior to the start of the 2014 season and the second to be fully completed prior to the 2015 campaign. The redeveloped Kyle Field features an expanded seating capacity of ~ 107,700, making it one of the five largest stadiums in collegiate football.



FORMER COLLEAGUE OF BOEING STARLINER ASTRONAUTS DISCUSSES FLIGHT TEST RETURN STATUS

Texas A&M Vice President and Galveston Campus Chief Operating Officer Michael Fossum, a former astronaut, explains how Suni Williams and Butch Wilmore are spending their time on the International Space Station.



*T*exas A&M Vice President Col. Michael E. Fossum describes NASA astronauts Suni Williams and Butch Wilmore as former military combat pilots who know how to accept a mission — “even the changes that come along the way.”

The two astronauts traveled to the International Space Station (ISS) in June aboard Boeing’s new Starliner spacecraft for what was meant to be a short test mission. More than two months after they were supposed to return to Earth, Williams and Wilmore are still on the ISS due to numerous technical issues and propulsion system malfunctions the Starliner experienced before it managed to dock at the space station.

NASA is expected to announce a decision soon on a return plan — possibly using SpaceX’s Crew Dragon capsule. Fossum is a former astronaut who was part of the same 1998 NASA astronaut training class as Williams, and met Wilmore when he joined two years later. Watching the news unfold from Earth, Fossum said he’s concerned for his friends’ safety, but is confident NASA will find a solution to safely bring Williams and Wilmore home.

“They’re going to roll with the punches and see what happens,” Fossum said. “My thoughts are really with their families... but both Butch and Suni were military members. Their families are used to dealing with deployments and with NASA. Things happen, the crew is safe right now, and I trust NASA to do the right thing to get them home safely.”

Confident that the mission will be a success, Fossum said his friends are hopefully able to enjoy the extra time they’re getting to spend in space.

“I know them really well, and in a way, I think they were a little disappointed to fly in space with such a short amount of time,” Fossum said. “It’s a big deal to be the first people to crew a brand-new spacecraft. So they’re excited about that, and they both also have done long duration missions on the space station before. They’ve been up there for six months before, and they both loved it, so they were willing to go back.”

Life Aboard The International Space Station

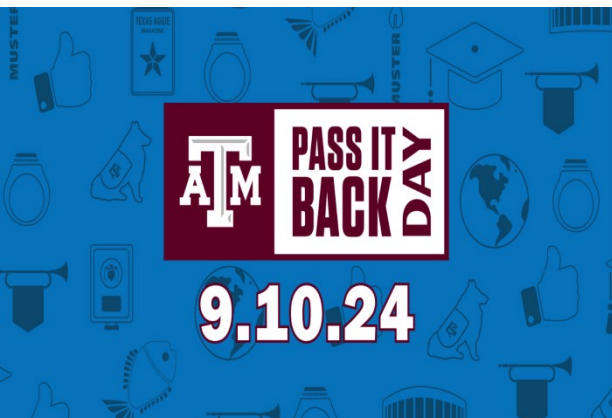
Fossum was commissioned as an officer in the U.S. Air Force after earning a bachelor of science in mechanical engineering from Texas A&M in 1980. He joined the university after retiring from NASA’s Johnson Space Center in 2017, and currently holds the title of Texas A&M vice president, chief operating officer of the Galveston campus, and superintendent of the Texas A&M Maritime Academy.


As a veteran of three space flights who logged more than 194 days in space (including more than 48 hours in seven spacewalks) during his 19 years as an astronaut, Fossum is familiar with what Williams and Wilmore’s days are probably looking like aboard the ISS.

To read the entire article click [here](#).

PASS IT BACK DAY

Step Up - To Pass It Back



 Pass It Back Day is The Association of Former Students annual day of giving. The Association's ambitious goal is to raise gifts from 1,879 donors in 24 hours to show the power of the Aggie Network for the benefit of Texas A&M and Texas Aggies.

Why 9/10/24?

Utilizing a 24-hour period and tangible goal of gifts helps galvanize Aggies to pass it back to the next generation.

Where do the gifts go?

All funds raised will make a lasting impact through supporting academics and traditions, current and former students, enriching the entire Aggie experience.

As a donor, how can I get involved?

Buy back a missing year bar at a 50% discount!
Increase your Century Club level
Make a future year gift

Ask your family, friends and coworkers to consider giving on Pass It Back Day!

[Spread the word on social media!](#)

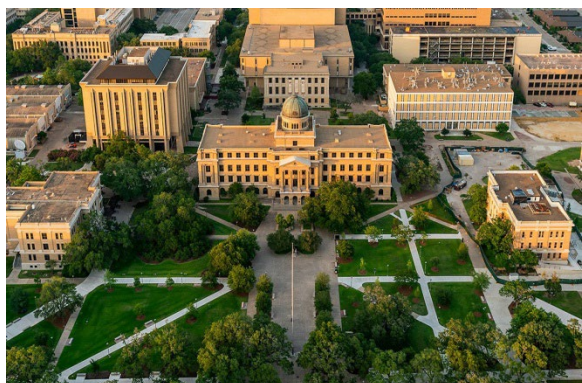
We will be sending additional information out soon on how you can donate on **Pass It Back Day** and how you can support the **Italy A&M Club**. More to follow as we get closer to **September 10**. To read more about **Pass It Back Day** and how you can help click [here](#).

EIGHT TEXAS A&M SCHOOLS TO BECOME COLLEGES

The list includes seven academic units that previously held the "college" label, as well as the new College of Performance, Visualization and Fine Arts.

exas A&M University is officially changing the names of eight

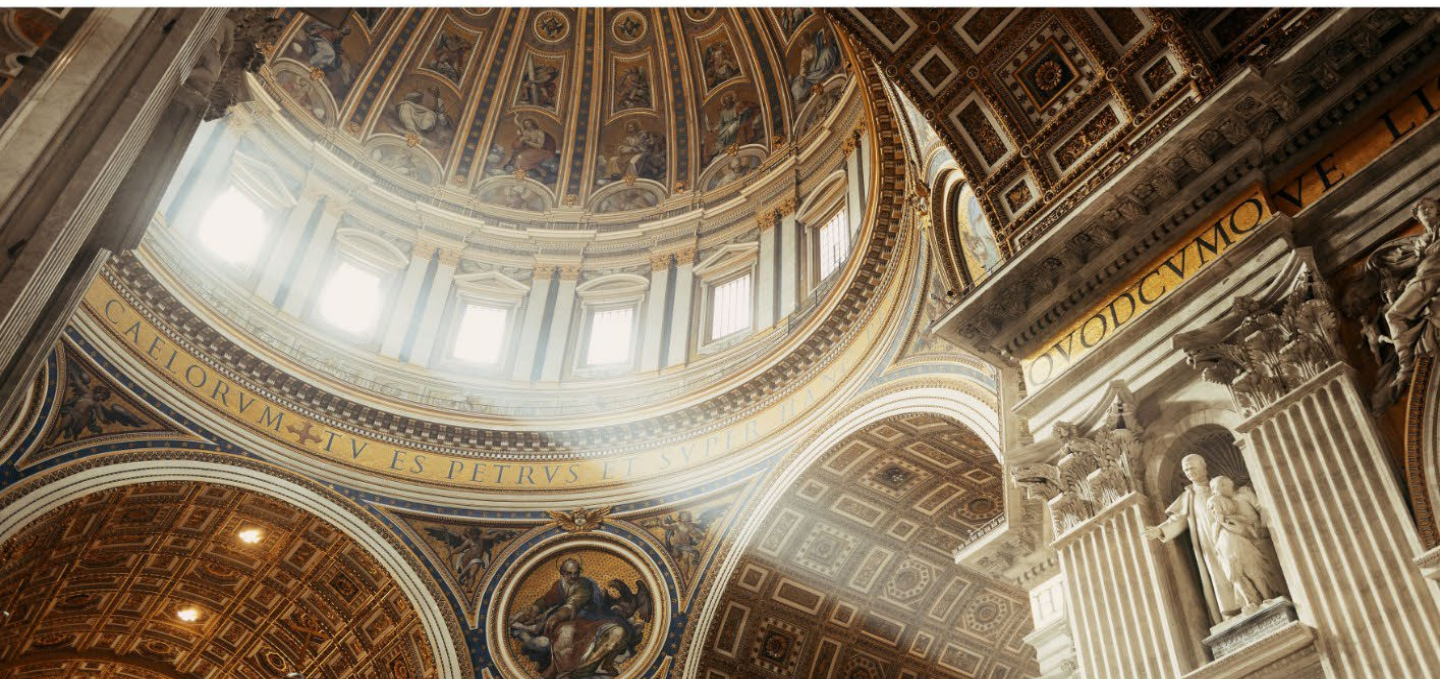
academic units from "school" to "college," following approval from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board earlier this year. The change, which goes into effect Aug. 15, was announced by Texas A&M Provost and Executive Vice President Dr. Alan Sams in an email to faculty. All seven units that transitioned to using the "school" label during the university's academic realignment in 2022 will return to their prior status as colleges. In addition, the School of Performance, Visualization and Fine Arts — created during the same realignment — will become the College of Performance, Visualization and Fine Arts.



To read more about these new colleges and to see the complete list of changes click [here](#).

Texas Connection to the discovery of St. Peter's Bones

The discovery of St. Peter's bones is one of the most significant archaeological finds in Christian history, and it is deeply connected to the heart of Roman Catholicism. This event also ties in with an unexpected connection to Texas and highlights the demand for one of Rome's most exclusive tours—the Scavi Tour, which offers a rare glimpse into the ancient world beneath St. Peter's Basilica.

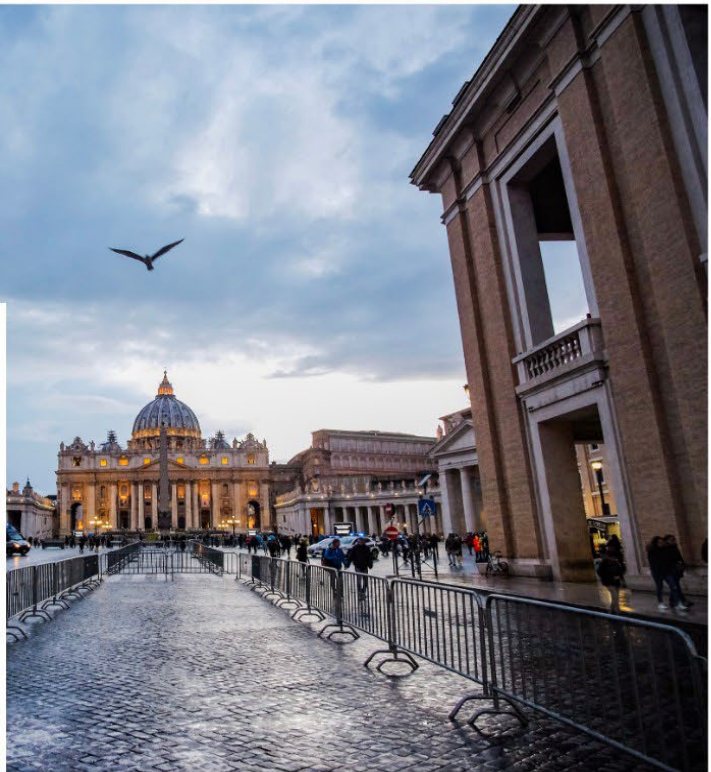


St. Peter, regarded as the first Pope and one of the most prominent apostles of Jesus Christ, was martyred in Rome around 64 AD. According to tradition, he was crucified upside down at his own request and buried in a modest grave on Vatican Hill. Over centuries, the location of his tomb became obscured, with successive constructions of St. Peter's Basilica eventually towering over it. By the 20th century, the exact location of St. Peter's final resting place had become one of the Church's greatest mysteries.

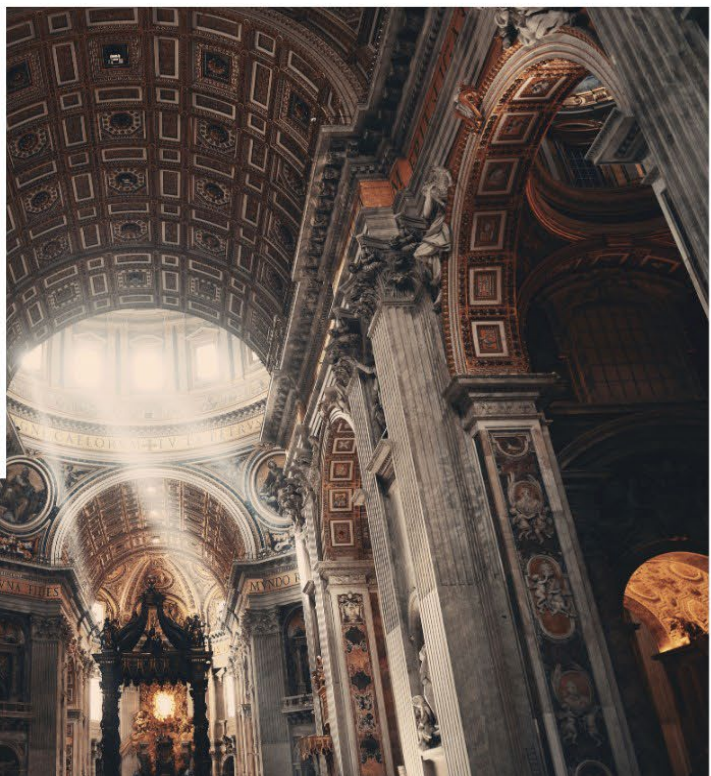
In 1939, during renovations of the basilica, workers inadvertently discovered an ancient necropolis buried beneath the church. This prompted Pope Pius XII to commission a secret excavation, known as the Scavi, to search for the tomb of St. Peter. After years of painstaking work, archaeologists uncovered a modest tomb beneath the basilica, which was marked by graffiti reading, "Peter is here." Inside, they found bone fragments that were later identified as likely belonging to St. Peter himself, a discovery officially announced by Pope Paul VI in 1968.



The story of St. Peter's bones takes an unexpected turn with the involvement of George Strake, a Texan oil magnate whose deep Catholic faith led him to play a crucial role in the excavation. Strake, born in 1894, struck oil in 1930 on a piece of land in Conroe, Texas, just north of Houston, which became one of the largest oil discoveries in U.S. history. This windfall made him an extraordinarily wealthy man, but Strake was also a devout Catholic who saw his wealth as a means to support his faith.



In the 1940s, George Strake donated a significant sum of money to the Vatican, which was used to fund the continuing excavation of the necropolis beneath St. Peter's Basilica. Strake's financial support was instrumental in allowing the archaeologists to carry out their work, which eventually led to the discovery of the bones believed to belong to St. Peter.



The Scavi Tour: The Hardest Ticket to Get in Rome



The Scavi Tour, which takes visitors through the necropolis beneath St. Peter's Basilica, has become one of the most coveted experiences in Rome. It provides an exclusive opportunity to explore the very site where St. Peter's bones were discovered, offering a deeply moving experience for those interested in early Christian history and the roots of the Catholic faith.

Due to the delicate nature of the archaeological site and the limited space, the Vatican restricts the number of visitors allowed on the Scavi Tour each day. Securing a ticket is notoriously difficult, requiring advance reservations that often need to be made months before a visit. The tour is not widely advertised, and tickets are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, making it one of the hardest tickets to obtain in Rome.

For those fortunate enough to secure a spot, the Scavi Tour is a journey back in time. Visitors descend beneath the basilica, walking through ancient Roman streets, passing by tombs of early Christians, and eventually standing before the simple, yet profound, resting place of St. Peter. It is a rare and intimate experience that brings the history of the Church to life, offering a direct connection to the apostolic era.



Travel Diaries: Scavi Tour



The discovery of St. Peter's bones is a cornerstone of Christian archaeology, revealing the final resting place of the apostle who is central to the Catholic faith. The unexpected connection to Texan George Strake underscores the far-reaching influence of faith and philanthropy, illustrating how a man from Texas could impact one of the most significant archaeological discoveries in Vatican history.

Meanwhile, the Scavi Tour remains one of Rome's most elusive and sought-after experiences, providing an unparalleled opportunity to connect with the ancient history of the Church and the legacy of St. Peter. Only 250 people are allowed through each day – compare that to the 30,000 that visit the Vatican Museums!

To request tickets for the Scavi Tour click [here](#). Keep in mind there is no guarantee you will get a ticket, but it can't hurt to try.

To learn more about this remarkable archeological discovery and the ties to a Texas oilman pick up a copy of the book, *The Fisherman's Tomb; The True Story Of The Vatican's Secret Search* by John O'Neill.

The Legacy of Ancient Italian Recipes: A Culinary Odyssey

Italy's rich culinary heritage is deeply rooted in its ancient past, with recipes and cooking techniques that have been passed down through generations. The first known Italian cookbooks provide a fascinating glimpse into the ingredients, methods, and flavors that have shaped modern Italian cuisine.





Ancient Italian Cookbooks: The Foundations of Culinary Tradition

One of the earliest known collections of Italian recipes is "De Re Coquinaria" (On the Subject of Cooking), attributed to Apicius, a Roman gourmet who lived during the 1st century AD. Although it is uncertain whether Apicius himself authored the book, it remains a crucial resource for understanding ancient Roman gastronomy. The text comprises over 400 recipes, showcasing a wide array of ingredients and cooking methods that reflect the diverse influences on Roman cuisine, from Greek to Middle Eastern.

Another significant text is "Etymologiae" by Isidore of Seville, written in the 7th century. While not solely a cookbook, this encyclopedic work includes sections on food and cooking, providing valuable insights into the ingredients and culinary practices of the time.



Ingredients: A Palette of Ancient Flavors

Ancient Italian recipes relied on a variety of ingredients that are still central to Italian cuisine today. Key ingredients included:

- **Olive Oil:** Used extensively for cooking and seasoning, olive oil was a staple in ancient Roman kitchens. It was often infused with herbs and spices to enhance its flavor.
- **Garum:** A fermented fish sauce, garum was a ubiquitous condiment in Roman cooking, akin to modern-day soy sauce or Worcestershire sauce. It added a savory depth to dishes.
- **Honey:** With sugar yet to be introduced to Europe, honey was the primary sweetener, used in both sweet and savory dishes.
- **Herbs and Spices:** Herbs such as oregano, thyme, and mint, along with spices like black pepper, cumin, and coriander, were essential for flavoring food.
- **Vegetables:** Common vegetables included legumes, leeks, onions, garlic, and cucumbers, many of which were consumed both raw and cooked.
- **Grains:** Emmer wheat was a staple grain, used to make bread and porridge. Barley and millet were also widely consumed.
- **Meats and Fish:** While meat was less common among the lower classes, it featured prominently in the diets of the wealthy. Popular meats included pork, lamb, and various game. Fish and seafood were also highly valued, especially in coastal areas.



Ancient Italian cooking techniques were surprisingly sophisticated. Roasting, boiling, and frying were common methods, as were more complex processes like baking and fermenting. Recipes often called for the use of mortar and pestle to grind spices and herbs, ensuring a more intense flavor.

One notable aspect of Roman cuisine was the emphasis on balancing flavors. Recipes frequently combined sweet, sour, salty, and bitter elements to create complex and harmonious dishes. This approach can be seen in modern Italian dishes like agrodolce (a sweet and sour sauce) and the use of balsamic vinegar.

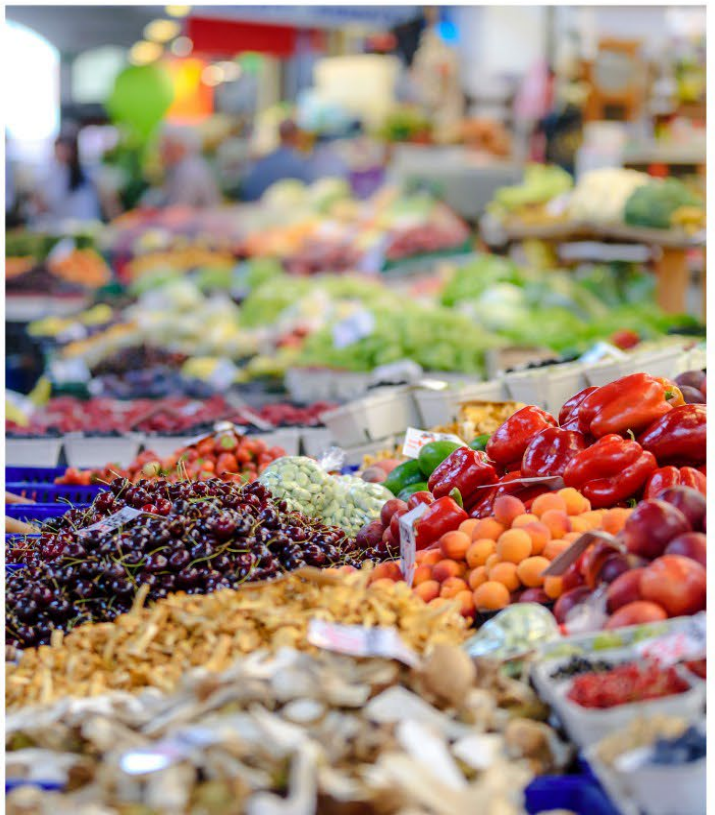
INFLUENCE ON MODERN ITALIAN COOKING

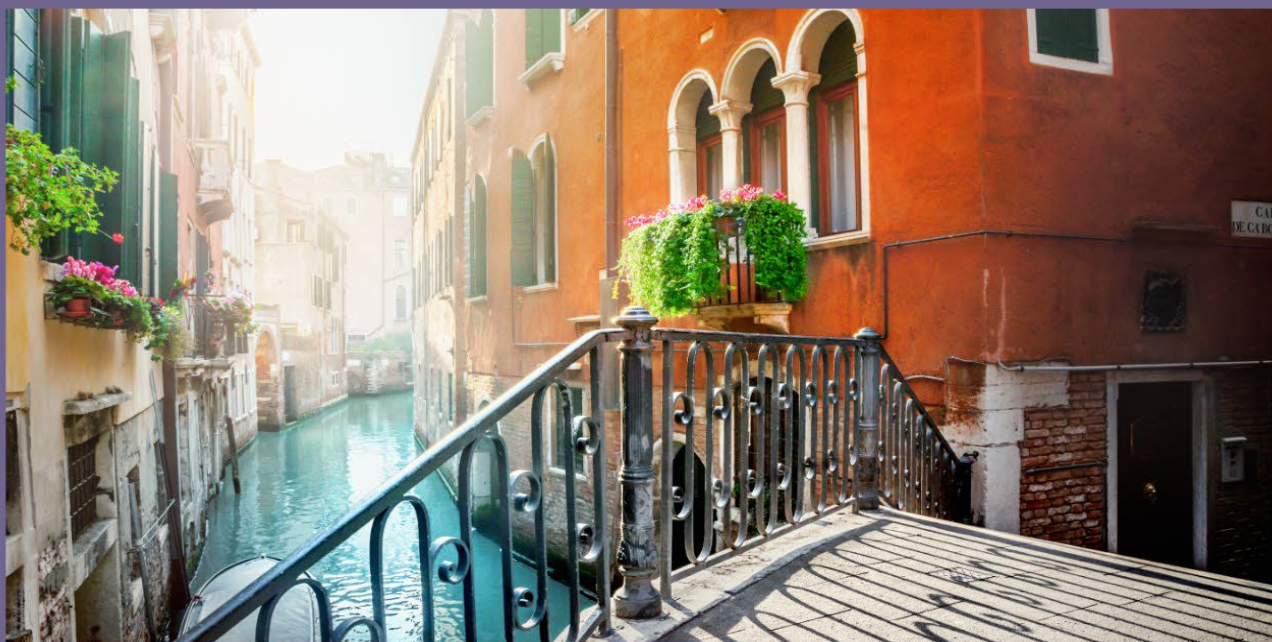
The influence of ancient Italian recipes on contemporary cuisine is profound. Many ingredients and techniques from Roman times have been seamlessly integrated into modern Italian cooking. For instance, the use of olive oil as a primary cooking fat and the popularity of herb-infused oils can be traced back to ancient practices. Similarly, the combination of sweet and savory flavors remains a hallmark of Italian cuisine, evident in dishes such as prosciutto e melone (prosciutto with melon) and various balsamic vinegar dressings.

Moreover, the ancient Roman focus on fresh, seasonal ingredients is a principle that continues to guide Italian chefs today. The emphasis on local produce and simple, high-quality ingredients is a direct legacy of ancient culinary traditions.



Ancient Italian recipes, as documented in early texts like "De Re Coquinaria" and "Etymologiae," provide a fascinating window into the culinary practices of the past. The ingredients and techniques used by the Romans have left an indelible mark on modern Italian cuisine, influencing everything from the use of olive oil to the balance of flavors in a dish. As we savor the rich and varied dishes of contemporary Italian cooking, we are, in many ways, tasting the legacy of ancient Rome. This enduring connection to the past is a testament to the timeless appeal and adaptability of Italian culinary traditions.





Venice is a city of timeless allure, where every corner whispers stories of a rich and vibrant past. Nestled on a network of winding canals, the city is a labyrinth of narrow streets, arched bridges, and elegant piazzas, all shimmering with a unique blend of history and romance. The soft glow of sunset over the Grand Canal, the gentle lull of gondolas gliding through the water, and the ornate façades of centuries-old buildings create an atmosphere that feels both otherworldly and intimate. Venice is a place where art, architecture, and history converge in a living masterpiece, inviting visitors to lose themselves in its enchanting beauty.

CANAL VISTAS OF VENICE

Venice is a city that seems to float on water, a shimmering jewel nestled within the Venetian Lagoon. It's a place where time appears to stand still, allowing visitors to step into a world where the past is beautifully preserved in every stone and canal. The city's labyrinthine streets and waterways create an enchanting maze that invites exploration and discovery at every turn. Venice is often described as a city of dreams, a place where reality blends seamlessly with the ethereal, and where every corner holds a story waiting to be told.

The vistas of Venice's canals are nothing short of magical. As you wander through the city, you'll find yourself constantly captivated by the play of light on water. The Grand Canal, the main artery of Venice, is a breathtaking sight, lined with majestic palaces and ancient churches that reflect their grandeur onto the shimmering water below. The smaller,



quieter canals, with their picturesque bridges and charming, weather-worn buildings, offer a more intimate glimpse into Venetian life.



Each vista along the canals tells its own story, from the bustling Rialto Market, where traders have gathered for centuries, to the quiet, secluded corners where locals hang their laundry to dry. The iconic gondolas, with their graceful curves and rich, dark colors, glide serenely through the canals, offering passengers a unique perspective on this city of water.

In Venice, the canals are not just pathways but are also living, breathing entities that pulse with the rhythms of the city. They reflect the sky, capture the light, and mirror the centuries-old architecture that lines their banks, creating a constantly changing panorama of beauty and charm. Whether bathed in the golden light of dawn or softly illuminated by the glow of street lamps at night, the canals of Venice are a sight to behold, capturing the imagination and heart of every visitor.



Nestled in the heart of Basilicata, a region often overshadowed by its more famous neighbors in Italy, lies a culinary treasure that has been captivating food enthusiasts for generations—the Rossa di Rotonda. This deep red, egg-shaped pepper, with its unique flavor profile, is not just a staple of local cuisine but also a symbol of the rich agricultural heritage of Rotonda, a small town in the province of Potenza.



THE FASCINATING HISTORY OF THE ROSSA DI ROTONDA: ITALY'S HIDDEN CULINARY GEM

The Rossa di Rotonda (*Solanum Aethiopicum* L.) is believed to have been introduced to the area by the ancient Romans, who brought it from Africa and the Middle East as they expanded their empire. However, it wasn't until the 17th century that the pepper truly found its home in the fertile lands of Rotonda. Here, it thrived in the region's unique climate—characterized by hot summers and cold winters—and began to take on the distinctive qualities that make it so special today.

The pepper became an integral part of the local diet, appreciated not only for its flavor but also for its resilience and versatility. Farmers in Rotonda perfected the cultivation of this plant, passing down their knowledge through generations. The Rossa di Rotonda eventually gained Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) status, ensuring its production was preserved and recognized as a unique agricultural product of Italy.



Rossa di Rotonda is a Culinary Star in Italian Cuisine



The Rossa di Rotonda is prized for its thick flesh, which has a slightly sweet taste with a hint of bitterness, and its rich red color that intensifies during the drying process. It's used in various forms—fresh, dried, powdered, or pickled—each adding a unique touch to dishes.

In Rotonda, the most traditional way to use Rossa di Rotonda is in a dish called "peperoni cruschi." The peppers are sun-dried and then fried quickly in olive oil, transforming them into crispy, savory snacks that are often crumbled over pasta, added to salads, or served as an appetizer with bread. The flavor of peperoni cruschi is a revelation, offering a complex blend of sweetness, smokiness, and a slight tang that elevates even the simplest dishes.

Another popular use is in "salsiccia rossa di Rotonda," a local sausage where the pepper is mixed with pork, garlic, and fennel seeds. The pepper not only gives the sausage its characteristic color but also imparts a depth of flavor that has become synonymous with the region's cuisine.

The Rossa di Rotonda is more than just a pepper; it's a symbol of the rich cultural and agricultural history of Rotonda. As modern agriculture and global trade threaten the uniqueness of local crops, preserving and promoting such products has never been more critical. By incorporating Rossa di Rotonda into your cooking, you're not just enjoying a delicious meal—you're also helping to keep a centuries-old tradition alive.



While the Rossa di Rotonda is still relatively unknown outside Italy, it's slowly making its way into gourmet kitchens worldwide. If you're lucky enough to get your hands on this prized pepper, here are a few ways to incorporate it into your recipes:

Bringing Rossa di Rotonda to Your Kitchen



1. **Peperoni Cruschi Pasta:** Prepare peperoni cruschi as described before and crumble them over a simple pasta dish with garlic, olive oil, and a sprinkle of pecorino cheese. The peppers add a delightful crunch and a burst of flavor that will transport you to the hills of Basilicata.

2. **Roasted Rossa di Rotonda Peppers:** For a more straightforward preparation, roast the peppers with olive oil, garlic, and herbs. The roasting process enhances their sweetness and makes them a perfect side dish for grilled meats or fish.

3. **Rossa di Rotonda Pesto:** Create a unique twist on traditional pesto by blending dried Rossa di Rotonda with almonds, olive oil, garlic, and a touch of aged cheese. This pesto can be used as a spread on sandwiches, a topping for bruschetta, or a sauce for pasta.



4. **Salsiccia Rossa di Rotonda:** If you're feeling adventurous, try your hand at making homemade sausage using Rossa di Rotonda. The process may be labor-intensive, but the result is a flavorful, aromatic sausage that pairs beautifully with a glass of red wine.

In the world of gastronomy, where new trends often overshadow the old, the Rossa di Rotonda stands as a testament to the enduring power of heritage and tradition.

So next time you're looking to add a bit of authentic Italian flavor to your dishes, consider the Rossa di Rotonda—a small pepper with a big story.

Enjoy!

IT BLOWS MY MIND THAT

NASA is able to receive
data from 4.67 **BILLION**
miles away, but I lose
Wi-Fi signal in my
kitchen!



In the world of Italian cuisine, where every dish is a masterpiece and every coffee is a ritual, the affogato stands out as a delightful paradox. It's neither fully a dessert nor just a coffee—it's both, and yet so much more.

AFFOGATO: ITALY'S SWEET BALANCE BETWEEN COFFEE AND DESSERT



“Affogato: proof that sometimes, two good things can come together to make something extraordinary.”

— Luigi Cucchi, Founder Pasticceria Cucchi, Milano

The affogato, which translates to “drowned” in Italian, is as simple as it is elegant: a scoop of gelato, typically vanilla, is “drowned” in a shot of hot espresso. This culinary creation is a perfect reflection of Italian life—where simplicity meets indulgence, and the ordinary becomes extraordinary.



The exact origins of the affogato are shrouded in a bit of mystery, much like many other iconic Italian dishes. However, it is widely believed to have originated in the northern regions of Italy, where both gelato and espresso are cultural staples. In cities like Milan and Turin, where people have a sophisticated palate for coffee, the affogato became an instant hit. After all, what could be better than combining two of Italy’s greatest culinary loves?

Gelato, which predates the affogato by several centuries, has been an Italian favorite since the Renaissance, with its roots tracing back to the courts of Florence. Espresso, on the other hand, didn’t come into its own until the early 20th century, when the first espresso machines started appearing in Italy. When these two came together, it was a match made in heaven.



Imagine yourself in a quaint Italian café on a hot afternoon. The sun is blazing, and you’re in desperate need of something refreshing. You could go for a gelato, but that seems too pedestrian for the moment. You could order an espresso, but it’s just too warm outside. Then, you see it on the menu—affogato. Suddenly, your choice is clear.

The beauty of affogato lies in its contrast. The cold, creamy gelato slowly melts under the warmth of the freshly brewed espresso, creating a blend of textures and flavors that’s both comforting and invigorating. Each spoonful is a revelation, a perfect balance of bitter and sweet, hot and cold, smooth and rich.

“There’s something special about an affogato, a dessert that allows you to have your coffee and eat it too.”

— Marité Costa, Al Bicerin Caffè - Turin

Affogato
- Italy's
sweet
life in a
cup.



AFFOGATO: MORE THAN JUST A DESSERT

While the classic affogato remains a simple combination of vanilla gelato and espresso, modern interpretations have taken the dish to new heights. Some add a splash of liqueur, like amaretto or Frangelico, for an extra kick. Others experiment with different gelato flavors—pistachio, chocolate, or hazelnut—to complement the coffee's robust notes.

In Italy, affogato is more than just a treat; it's an experience. It's often enjoyed as a post-meal dessert or an afternoon pick-me-up, perfect for those moments when you can't decide between coffee and dessert.

The affogato embodies the Italian philosophy of enjoying life's simple pleasures. It's a reminder that indulgence doesn't have to be complicated, that sometimes the best things come from pairing the familiar in unexpected ways.

In a country that prides itself on culinary traditions, the affogato is a delightful example of how innovation and tradition can coexist. It's a testament to Italy's ability to take something as simple as coffee and ice cream and turn it into a culinary icon.

So, the next time you find yourself in Italy—or even in your own kitchen—consider giving the affogato a try. It's more than just a dessert; it's a taste of Italy's sweet life in a cup.

A man with dark hair, wearing a dark suit jacket over a light blue shirt, is holding a silver, ribbed vintage microphone. He is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. The background is dark.

When someone yells

“STOP”

I never know if it's in

The Name of Love,

If it's

Hammertime,

Or if I need to

Collaborate & Listen

Admit it...you sang all three
of them in your head didn't
you?!?

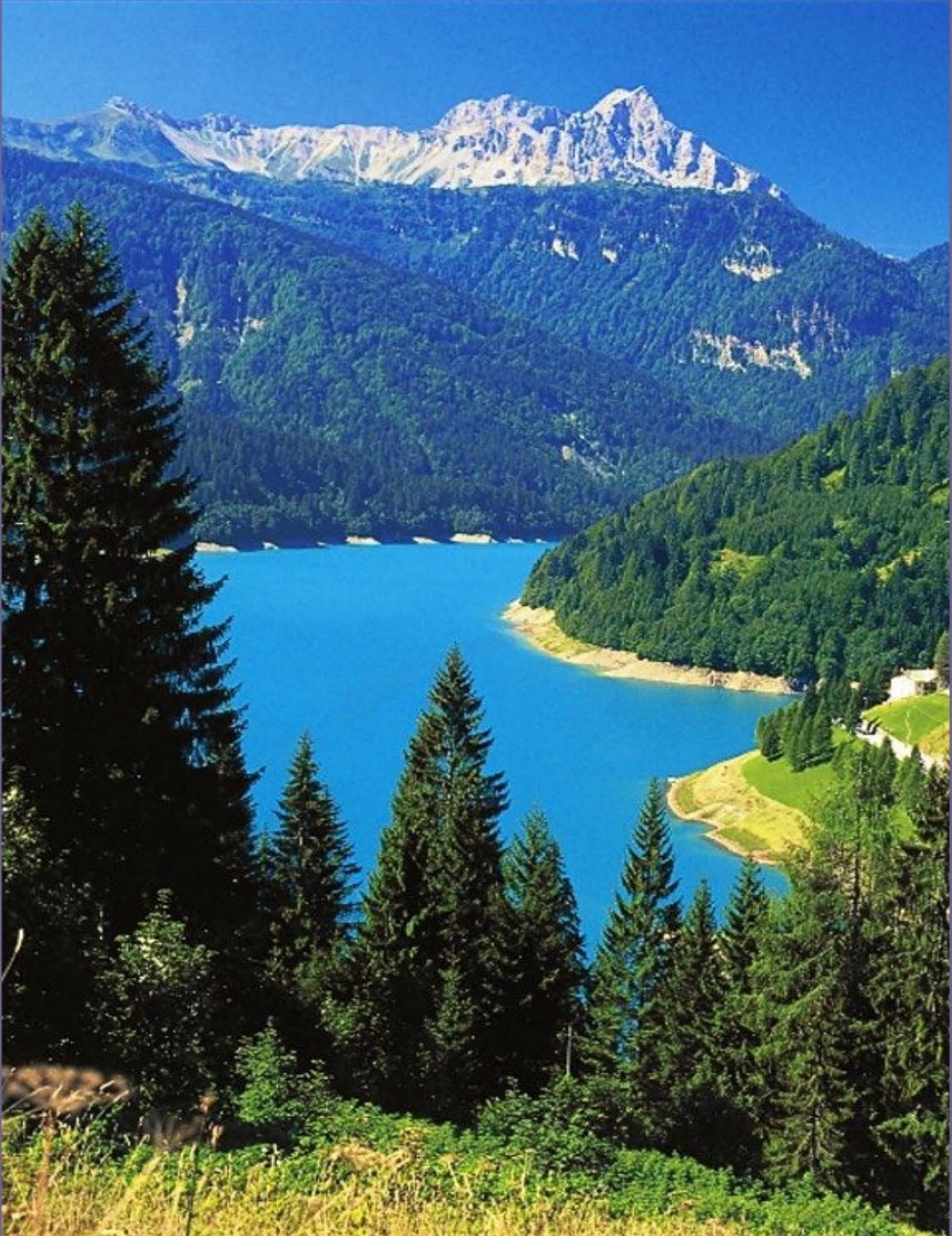


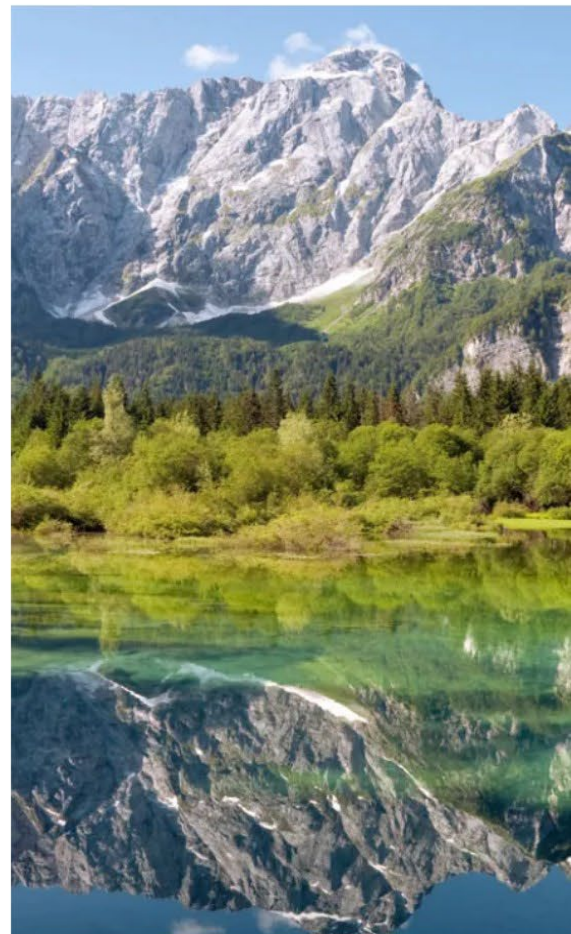
*Tucked away in the northeastern corner of Italy,
Friuli-Venezia Giulia is a region that often flies
under the radar of the average traveler.*

FRIULI-VENEZIA GIULIA



Today, despite being a few hours from Venice, Friuli-Venezia Giulia is one of Italy's least touristed regions, but those in the know are heading here for cultured cities, deliciously wild landscapes and the fascinating Slovenian-Croatian-Austrian-Italian cultural mash up.





FRIULI- VENEZIA GIULIA

Those who venture here are rewarded with a unique blend of cultures, breathtaking landscapes, rich history, and some of the finest food and wine Italy has to offer. It's a place where the Alps meet the Adriatic Sea, and where Italian charm is interwoven with influences from Slovenia and Austria. This is Friuli-Venezia Giulia, one of Italy's hidden gems, waiting to be discovered.

CITIES TO EXPLORE

Start your journey in Trieste, a coastal city that exudes a distinct Austro-Hungarian flair. Wander through its grand piazzas, such as Piazza Unità d'Italia, the largest sea-facing square in Europe. Take a leisurely stroll along the waterfront, where you can enjoy the serene views of the Adriatic Sea and savor a cup of coffee at one of the city's historic cafés. Don't miss the Miramare Castle, perched on a cliff overlooking the sea, with its stunning gardens and opulent interiors that tell tales of royal intrigues.



Head inland to Udine, a charming city known for its Venetian architecture and vibrant piazzas. The city's heart is the Piazza della Libertà, considered the most beautiful Venetian square on the mainland, where you can admire the Loggia del Lionello, a splendid 15th-century building. Climb to the top of the hill to reach the Udine Castle, which now houses museums and art galleries that provide a glimpse into the region's rich history.

Another gem is Gorizia, a city that straddles the border with Slovenia, where you can witness the seamless blend of Italian and Slavic cultures. Visit the Gorizia Castle for panoramic views of the surrounding hills and vineyards, and wander through the quaint old town with its mix of architectural styles.



Cividale del Friuli is a historic town on the banks of the Natisone river. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is rich in wonders that hark back to an ancient Lombard civilization. Be sure to also visit the Ponte del Diavolo (Devil's Bridge). Destroyed and rebuilt several times, it rises above the Natisone river and offers romantic views of the city. The historic center is full of places selling local products, as well as artisan and antiques shops.





MUST-ATTEND EVENTS

Friuli-Venezia Giulia is a region that knows how to celebrate. One of the most popular events is the Barcolana Regatta in Trieste, held every October. It is one of the largest sailing races in the world, attracting thousands of participants and spectators. The regatta transforms the Gulf of Trieste into a spectacular sea of colorful sails, and the city comes alive with music, food, and festivities.

For wine lovers, the Friuli DOC wine festival in Udine is a must. Held in September, this event showcases the best wines of the region, particularly the white wines for which Friuli is renowned. Stroll through the streets of Udine as they are filled with food stalls, live music, and, of course, wine tastings.



SIGHTS NOT TO MISS



Nature lovers will be enchanted by the region's diverse landscapes. The Dolomites, a UNESCO World Heritage site, offer endless opportunities for hiking, skiing, and mountaineering. In the summer, the lush green valleys and jagged peaks are perfect for exploring on foot or by bike. In winter, the mountains become a snowy wonderland for skiers and snowboarders.

The Laguna di Marano, a tranquil lagoon near the town of Marano Lagunare, is a paradise for birdwatchers and those looking to escape the hustle and bustle. Take a boat tour to explore the lagoon's hidden canals, reed beds, and islands, and enjoy a leisurely lunch at a waterside trattoria, sampling fresh seafood straight from the Adriatic.

CULTURAL EVENTS

The region's cultural calendar is filled with events that celebrate its diverse heritage. In July, the town of Cividale del Friuli hosts the Medieval Festival, where the streets are transformed into a medieval marketplace, complete with jousting tournaments, street performances, and traditional crafts. This event is a wonderful opportunity to step back in time and experience the region's rich history firsthand.

Another highlight is the Pordenone Silent Film Festival in October, the world's leading festival dedicated to silent cinema. Film enthusiasts from around the globe flock to Pordenone to watch rare silent films accompanied by live music, a unique experience that transports you back to the early days of cinema.



CULINARY DELIGHTS



Friuli-Venezia Giulia is a culinary treasure trove, where each bite tells a story of tradition and local pride. The region's cuisine is a delightful mix of Italian, Austrian, and Slavic influences, resulting in unique dishes that are both comforting and delicious.



Start with a plate of frico, a crispy cheese pancake made from Montasio cheese, potatoes, and onions. This humble dish is the ultimate comfort food and pairs perfectly with a glass of local wine. Speaking of wine, Friuli-Venezia Giulia is famous for its white wines, particularly the Friulano, Sauvignon Blanc, and Pinot Grigio. Be sure to visit the Collio wine region, where rolling vineyards produce some of the finest wines in Italy.



Don't miss the chance to try goulash, a hearty stew of meat and paprika that reflects the region's Austro-Hungarian heritage. And for dessert, indulge in gubana, a sweet pastry filled with nuts, raisins, and spices, often enjoyed during festive occasions.

Friuli-Venezia Giulia may not be as famous as Tuscany or the Amalfi Coast, but that's exactly what makes it so special.

It's a region where you can escape the crowds and discover a more authentic side of Italy, where the landscapes are as diverse as the culture, and where every meal is a celebration of local flavors.

So, pack your bags and set out to explore Friuli-Venezia Giulia – a hidden corner of the world that promises unforgettable experiences.



Lago di Fusine and the Julian Alps, in Friuli-Venezia Giulia Italy



Dignano, Friuli-Venezia Giulia Italy

“Friuli-Venezia Giulia is a land of hidden treasures, where every corner reveals a piece of history, every meal tells a story, and every view takes your breath away.” -

**Massimiliano Fedriga,
President of the Friuli-
Venezia Giulia
autonomous region**

AGGIE SPORTS UPDATE



Bussey Named to Freshman of the Year Preseason Watch List

Regarded as one of the nation's top two-way recruits in the 2024 signing class, Bussey was rated a 5-star prospect and the country's No. 1 athlete by multiple sources.

[Click for more information](#)

Athletics Announces Celebration of 50 Years of Women's Athletics at Texas A&M

Texas A&M Athletics and Director of Athletics Trev Alberts announced the year-long celebration of the 50th anniversary of women's athletics in Aggieland.

[Click for more information](#)

Aggies Claim Record Eight Medals at Paris Olympics

Texas A&M Athletics claimed a school-record eight medals at the 2024 Olympics, besting its previous record of seven set at the Tokyo Games.

[Click for more information](#)



HEADLINES

TENNIS (W): [No. 1 Stoiana Headlines Five Aggies in the ITA Top 100](#)

CROSS COUNTRY: [McRaven Named S. Central Region \(W\) Coach of the Year](#)

VOLLEYBALL: [Texas A&M Volleyball Slated for Four National Broadcasts](#)

TENNIS (M): [Aggie Pros Rinderknech, Krajicek, Withrow Ready for U.S. Open](#)

SOCCER (W): [Aggies Blank Fairfield, 3-0, on Fish Camp Night](#)

FOOTBALL: [Beginner's Luck: Bucky and the '87 Aggies](#)

EQUESTRIAN: [Pair of Aggies Earn AQHA 2024 Emerging Leader Award](#)

PEOPLE WHO
THINK YOU GET
BORING AS YOU
AGE.

HAVE CLEARLY
NEVER
EXPERIENCED THE
THRILL OF SEEING
TWO
HUMMINGBIRDS AT
THE FEEDER AT
THE SAME TIME.



Pasta alla Norma

Ingredients to make Pasta alla Norma



Don't let summer pass you by without making Pasta alla Norma at least once.

This classic Sicilian dish stars the Queen of summer produce: Eggplant. Deep fried in extra virgin olive oil, the eggplant cubes fit snugly inside those rings of Pasta Calamari.

Don't be wary of frying in extra virgin olive oil. Not only is it traditional, it's actually healthier than frying in other oils. We use Corbarino tomatoes to form the sauce. Their natural sweetness and flavorful skins really round out this dish!

Pasta alla Norma originates from the Sicilian East coast, the city of Catania.

Together with Vincenzo Bellini, a world famous opera composer from the early 1800's, it's considered a staple of Sicilian culture. But what do pasta and an opera composer have in common?

Well, one of the most lyrically beautiful and famous operas written by Vincenzo Bellini is called "Norma".

And a legend tells that in early 19th century, an Italian writer Nino Martogli, tasting a dish of this pasta, then exclaimed: Chista è 'na vera Norma! (This is a real Norma!)

So, it's quite possible that this pasta dish was named after the opera.

True or not, but it's certainly a masterpiece of its kind.



TIME: 1 HOUR

Pasta alla Norma

SERVES: 4

Pasta alla Norma is a satisfying Sicilian pasta recipe with tender eggplant, herby tomato sauce, and ricotta salata cheese. All the comforting Italian flavors we love in just one pan. This is a vegetarian pasta recipe that even meat lovers will enjoy!

Ingredients

- Eggplant, 450g / 1 lb, cut into 1/2 inch cubes
- Coarse Sea Salt, to taste
- Extra Virgin Olive Oil, 350ml / 1.5 cups + 2 tbsp
- Garlic, 1 clove, peeled and left whole
- Chili Peppers in EVOO (optional), 1 tsp or to taste
- Tomato Concentrate, 1 tbsp thinned with a splash of white wine or water
- Dried Oregano, 1 tsp
- Corbarino Tomatoes, 1 jar (680g / 23.9oz)
- Calamarata Pasta or Large Tube Pasta, 1 bag (500g / 1.1 lbs)
- Ricotta Salata, 60g / 2 oz, coarsely grated
- Fresh basil leaves, to serve

Directions

1. If you have time, place the eggplant cubes in a colander and sprinkle them with Trapani sea salt. Leave to rest for 40 minutes to draw out excess liquid.
2. In a deep-sided, heavy bottomed pan, heat the 350ml / 1.5 cups extra virgin olive oil to 375°F / 190°C. Working in batches, deep fry the eggplant cubes until golden brown, about 5-7 minutes. Drain on paper towels. You can do this step well ahead of time!
3. In a pan, heat 2 tbsp of extra virgin olive oil over medium-low heat. Add the garlic clove to flavor the oil, then remove it when it begins to color (about 3-5 minutes). Reduce the heat to low and add the chili peppers, thinned tomato paste, dried oregano, and Corbarino tomatoes. Gently cook the sauce for about 10 minutes.
4. While the sauce is simmering, bring a large pot of water to boil, salted to taste and begin cooking the calamari or large tube pasta. When they're 5 minutes or so away from al dente, stir the fried eggplant cubes into the tomato sauce. Drain the pasta when it's about one minute shy of al dente, reserving a cup of pasta water. Take the sauce off the heat and stir in the pasta, adding pasta water and additional EVOO as necessary.
5. Divide between bowls and serve immediately, sprinkled with the coarsely grated ricotta salata, freshly torn basil leaves, and an additional drizzle of extra virgin olive oil.

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a red barn. The barn has the words "GIG 'EM AGGIES" painted on its side in large, white, block letters. The sky above the barn is a mix of dark, stormy clouds and bright, orange, and yellow light from a setting or rising sun, creating a dramatic effect. The foreground shows some dry grass and a few small yellow flowers.

Texas

TIDBITS

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

GIG 'EM
AGGIES



QUESTION 1: WHAT TEXAS STADIUM WAS THE FIRST TO INSTALL ARTIFICIAL TURF?

Answer 1: The Houston Astrodome. Shortly after the Astrodome's completion in 1965, the stadium's natural grass died, and a synthetic turf developed by agrochemical giant Monsanto was installed. Initially sold as "ChemGrass," the innovative product was later rebranded as AstroTurf.

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

Answer 2: Cadillac Ranch. Completed in 1974 along Route 66, the unique display is made of ten Cadillacs built between 1949 and 1963 buried nose-first at 60-degree angles to the ground. The Amarillo Museum of Art is hosting an exhibit documenting the attraction's 50-year history this summer through August 15.

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

Answer 3: Mission Espada. Founded in 1690 as San Francisco de los Tejas near present-day Weches, the mission was moved to its current location near the San Antonio River in 1731 and renamed Mission San Francisco de la Espada.

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

Answer 4: Galveston. In 1880, the city was the largest in the state, with a population of 22,248. and 14, 1938.

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

Question 2: What iconic roadside attraction in Amarillo draws more than 1.4 million visitors every year?

Question 3: What was the first mission founded in Texas?

Question 4: What was the first city in Texas to get electricity and telephone service?





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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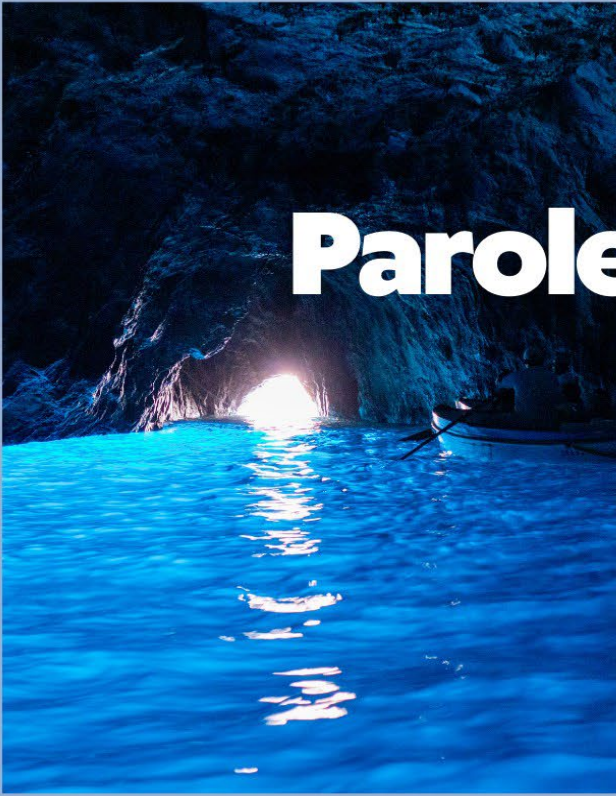
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Parole Finali



As we wrap up this month's newsletter, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed their time, thoughts, suggestions and experiences. It's inspiring to see our community's dedication and enthusiasm shine through, no matter where we are in the world.

Remember, our club thrives because of members and readers like you who bring the spirit of Aggieland to life in Italy. Let's continue to stay connected, support one another, and share our Aggie pride far and wide.

If you have any suggestions or would like to contribute to future editions, please don't hesitate to reach out. Your input is invaluable, and I'd love to hear from you!

Until next time, take care, and Gig 'em!

Ryan '91

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