

Traditional food and wines in Verona

Since the days of ancient Rome, the noble families of Verona were famous throughout the Empire for the tastiness of the lunches they offered during memorable receptions and opulent banquets. In medieval chronicles, it was told that the Scala family (Scaligeri Seignior) gladdened the guests of their court with rich libations and delicious dishes. All from Verona love good food, whatever their class, with a passion that they have been able to raise to genuine art contriving, with flair and imagination, exquisite meals with poor products.

First dishes (Primi piatti - Pasta)

Rice is widely grown in Northern Italy. Therefore, risotto is a popular dish in Verona.

- **Risotto al Tastasal** is a sausage-based risotto of ground pork seasoned with salt and lots of pepper.
- **Risotto al Radicchio** is made of a bitter Italian vegetable (red salad, called radicchio). The dish gets its sweetness with onion, pancetta, and red wine.
- **Risotto all'Amarone** gets its flavor from the region's most powerful wine, Amarone della Valpolicella. It is a red wine made of grapes that are dried for three-to-four months before fermentation. The wine is an intense red wine with flavors and aromas of dried fruits, tobacco, and dried spices.



Bigoli is the signature pasta of the Veneto. It is similar in shape to spaghetti, but thicker. Traditionally it was made of buckwheat flour, but today wholewheat flour gives it a slightly darker finish. Sauces vary around the Veneto: it can be found with duck (anatra) or donkey (asino) or horse (cavallo) or salted sardines and onions.



Gnocchi is another traditional pasta of the region. The potato-filled pasta dumplings are a delicious paste made with potatoes, white flour and eggs. They are typically served with tomato sauce or a horse meat stew.



Main courses (Secondi)

Main courses include cod, beef cheek, and veal liver, all served with polenta. **Polenta** is a traditional side dish of the region. It is corn meal cooked in salted water, and is served soft and creamy, fresh off the stove (with beans and games) or left to cool for half a day and then cut into squares and lightly grilled.



Boiled beef and salsa pearà (sauce made with breadcrumbs, cheese, marrow, broth and black pepper) is the soul of Verona cuisine.



Horse is also a popular food in Verona. The meat is served as bistecca di cavallo (horse steak), sfilacci (shredded and cured), and pastisada (braised). Pastisada dates back to the 5th century AD when a battle was fought between the King of Italy (Odoacer) and the King of Ostrogoths (Theodoric). After the battle, thousands of fallen horses littered the land. The people were so hungry that the meat was left to marinade in red wine with spices and vegetables, then slow cooked.

Desserts (Dolci)

Pandoro is a Veronese cake that is popular all over the world during the holiday season. Its name comes from its golden color (pandoro = pane d'oro = bread of gold), a result of numerous egg yolks. It is made in a star-shape mold and sprinkled with powdered sugar before serving. It can be served as it is or with different types of creams or sauces, including mascarpone, melted chocolate, or cream.



Wines (Vini)

A lot of wines are produced on the hills around Verona: white wines like Soave and Custoza Doc (Classic and Recioto), red wines like Bardolino and Valpolicella (Amarone and Recioto), and sparkling wine like Prosecco di Valdobbiadene.