



Sfinzione vendor

**INSIDE:**

- Palazzo Venart in Venice 3
- Guide to Palermo's Markets 4
- Panelle and Pastelle 6
- Palermo Street Food Tours 8

CELEBRATING 15 YEARS OF GREAT TRAVEL ADVICE

# DREAM OF ITALY®

Volume 16, Issue 3

[www.dreamofitaly.com](http://www.dreamofitaly.com)

April 2017

## Exploring Palermo Through Street Food

If “the way to a man’s heart is through his stomach,” then, man or woman, if you love to travel and learn about a culture through its cuisine, you will be bewitched by *Palermo*. Once you start exploring the Sicilian city’s markets and thoroughfares, you’ll be romanced immediately by the exotic aromas, flavors and textures of her hand-held culinary offerings.

You’ll also realize how different it is from mainland Italy. Palermo’s recipes reflect her position in the Mediterranean: they are a tribute to her extensive, multicultural heritage and her desire to look forward while also recognizing the past.



Allison Scola

Roughly 3,000 years ago, the *Conco d’Oro*, or Golden Crescent, as the area around Palermo is now known, was a tranquil bay with a coastline that extended into a plain rich with flora and fauna. The Phoenicians, who were master mariners and merchants from what is now Lebanon, Israel and Syria, understood its value and established a trading post between two fresh-water rivers. They called it Ziz, meaning flower.

Over time, the Phoenicians transformed into a more sophisticated civilization: the Carthaginians, who developed Palermo into an important outpost of its North African dominion.

*continued on page 4*



Palazzo Venart

### *New Hotels in Italy's Big Three Cities*

**ROME, FLORENCE, VENICE:** these cities are impossible to visit just once. Fortunately, Italy’s “big three” cities, though filled with history and vestiges of the past, always have something new to offer to make a visit exciting and fresh. The hotel scene in Italy is dynamic and fast-paced. New properties are popping up, each with amenities and décor more unique than the last. Here are three to note:

*Rome: 4-Star With Smart Phone*

The new 4-star property *Hotel Degli Artisti* sets a high bar for service and style in the Eternal City. The location



Hotel Degli Artisti

is top notch, very close to major sites, shops and restaurants. It takes just eight minutes to walk to the Spanish Steps and about 20 minutes to arrive at *Piazza Navona*, yet the street where it is located is quiet and peaceful. In fact, the back side of the hotel faces

*continued on page 2*

*Palermo* is the Italian Capital of Culture for 2018.



Hotel Degli Artisti

the St. Isidore's College, an Irish Franciscan outpost which offers vistas of green (and mass in English on Sunday.)

With 35 rooms, the hotel is stylish without trying too hard to be trendy. Dark hardwood floors and cream-colored walls can be found throughout with all the latest amenities, including ample charging ports. The hotel has many options for families and can connect up to three rooms to accommodate parents and kids.

A small but lively bar next to the lobby offers a gathering spot before heading out for the evening. There is a rooftop terrace with bar in season and a solarium to enjoy the Roman sunshine and views.

My favorite extra, however, has to be the smart phone they issue to each guest upon arrival. It's loaded with all sorts of information to help you enjoy Rome and get around with ease. Never once did I have to use my own phone and incur any kind of data usage charges.

From my arrival at the Degli Artisti, I was treated with kindness and warmth. The hotel itself has only been open since the summer of 2016, but is led by a very experienced general manager and team. *Benedetto, Virginia, Gabriele* and *Francesca* constantly asked what else they could do for me to make my stay more comfortable.

Upon arrival, Gabriele made me a *cappuccino* and delivered it to me personally. At breakfast, Giorgio brought me some fresh *ricotta* cheese, which he had picked up in the countryside on the way into work. Such kindnesses were much appreciated and helps to set the property apart from others in Rome.

**Hotel degli Artisti**

Via degli Artisti, 18

Rome

(39) 06 42014991

[www.hoteldegliartisti.com](http://www.hoteldegliartisti.com)

Rates: Start at 145€ during low season and 290€ during high season, with breakfast.

*Florence:* **Treasure Box**

This quiet little treasure box in the center of Florence is on Via del Moro, just around the corner from some of my favorite restaurants as well as great shopping. *Al Palazzo del Marchese di Camugliano* is the family home of the *Marquis Lorenzo Niccolini di Camugliano*, who converted this family home into a luxury property with quite a personality. While it opened a few years ago, it is worth talking about because it is still one of the best new openings in Florence in recent years.

When you enter the *palazzo* and take the steps (there is also an elevator) up to the *piano nobile*, it's as if you are entering the world of Florentine aristocracy as lived by a warm and refined family, complete with classical music to welcome esteemed guests. The public

rooms include photos and drawings of the family, so they are a real presence here.

This historic residence is composed of just 10 guest rooms, each with their own character, as one would expect to find in a home. The rooms vary in size, but all are elegant and well proportioned, the smallest at over 400 square feet. The rooms feature various accommodations, include high ceilings, high quality furnishings and fabrics, frescoes, coffered ceilings, beams and astonishing detail due to the exquisite care taken throughout the years. There are connecting room options to accommodate families comfortably, which is notable in a property of this size.

One room features a massive bathtub in an absolutely theatrical setting. The two enormous suites overlook the garden and each has a private area carved out for occupants to enjoy.



Palazzo del Marchese di Camugliano



Palazzo del Marchese di Camugliano

When converting the residence, much thought was given to create comfortable surroundings for guests, such as double sinks in all but one of the rooms and complimentary minibars.

Special touches like no charge for room service, breakfast served until noon, and snacks and beverages available at all times all contribute to the feeling of being a

guest in a very special home, one where you'll want to linger. This special place is for guests who enjoy a refined setting with fine art and



discreet, high-level service.

One of my favorite restaurants in Florence, *L'Osteria di Giovanni* (Via del Moro, 22; [www.osteriadigiovanni.com](http://www.osteriadigiovanni.com); 39-055-284897) is just a few doors down at Via del Moro, 22. Stop in here for a traditional Florentine meal and say hello to *Giovanni Latini*, who is a longtime fixture in Florence. Around the corner, dine at Buca Mario (Piazza degli Ottaviani, 16r; [www.bucamario.com](http://www.bucamario.com); 39- 055-214179), another great restaurant for local specialties.

#### Al Palazzo del Marchese di Camugliano

Via del Moro, 15

Florence

(39) 055 2654578

[www.palazzodicamugliano.com](http://www.palazzodicamugliano.com)

Rates: Start at 200€ during low season and 350€ during high season, with breakfast.

#### Venice: Green Space and Luxury

It's a rarity to find much green space in the center of Venice, but the still under-the-radar *Palazzo Venart Luxury Hotel* has that and so much more to offer the client who is in search of a cut above. This 16th-century former *Palazzo Bacchini delle Palme* was masterfully and meticulously restored over a two-year period to the highest standards with a crack team of designers, architects, and historians and opened as a hotel in August of 2016.

Renaissance frescoes, rich *Rubelli* silks covering the walls, exquisite stucco work, marble bathtubs, high-quality period furnishings, and intricate wooden flooring contribute to the

sense of lush living at every turn. Whether you disembark and arrive at the property by boat and walk through the well-manicured Italianate garden or you approach through the *Santa Croce* neighborhood and arrive through the magnolia-lined courtyard, you will sense something special that sets it apart from other luxury properties in Venice.

Each of the hotel's 18 rooms is named after someone or some aspect of Venetian culture and history, so you're sure to learn something new. Among our favorites: the St. Mark Room, which features gleaming original Venetian *terrazzo* flooring, painted wooden beams, and a double height ceiling, all with a view of the Grand Canal.

The Christine di Pizan Suite, named for one of the world's first female authors and intellectuals, has a separate salon with an oh-so-comfortable chaise lounge with views of the Grand Canal through a beautiful leaded glass window. But each room is unique and sumptuous and you will

feel the soul of Venice in these spaces.

And the dining...*Chef Enrico Bartolini* already had two Michelin stars by the age of 33, and his considerable talents

are on show at the Venart's intimate restaurant (only 40 seats), *GLAM*. It's always a good sign when locals eat there, and it has developed that clientele. The restaurant also offers *al fresco* dining in the private courtyard during the summer months.



Palazzo Venart

Palazzo Venart exudes romance and is a great choice for a honeymoon or anniversary. It can also be an amazing location for a destination wedding.

#### Palazzo Venart Luxury Hotel

Santa Croce, 1961

Venice

(39) 041 523 3784

[www.palazzovenart.com](http://www.palazzovenart.com)

Rates: Start at 300€ during low season and 425€ during high season, with breakfast.

—Rosanne Cofoid

*Rosanne Zammuto Cofoid is the owner of La Dolce Via Travel, a premier boutique Italian travel company developed out of her love and passion for this beautiful land and its people. For more information, visit [www.ladolcevitatravel.com](http://www.ladolcevitatravel.com)*



Palazzo Venart

## DREAM OF ITALY®

**Kathleen A. McCabe**  
Editor in Chief and Publisher

Executive Editor: Bethanne Patrick

Associate Editor: Elaine Murphy

Design: Kim Leaird

[www.leaird-designs.com](http://www.leaird-designs.com)

*Dream of Italy*, the subscription travel newsletter covering Italian travel and culture, is published 10 times a year. Delivery by mail is \$87 in the U.S., Canada and abroad. A digital subscription (downloadable PDFs) costs \$77 per year. Subscriptions include online access to more than 140 back issues and regular e-mail updates.

#### Three ways to subscribe:

1. Send a check to *Dream of Italy*, P.O. Box 2025, Denver, CO 80201
2. Call 202-297-3708
3. Subscribe online at [www.dreamofitaly.com](http://www.dreamofitaly.com) (Visa, Mastercard and American Express accepted)

#### Editorial feedback is welcome.

E-mail: [kathy@dreamofitaly.com](mailto:kathy@dreamofitaly.com)

#### Advertising opportunities are available.

E-mail: [kathy@dreamofitaly.com](mailto:kathy@dreamofitaly.com)

Copyright © 2017 *Dream of Italy*, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Reproduction in whole or part without permission is prohibited. Every effort is made to provide information that is accurate and reliable; however, *Dream of Italy* cannot be responsible for errors that may occur. ISSN 1550-1353 [www.dreamofitaly.com](http://www.dreamofitaly.com)

# and fastest growing sectors.

# Palermo Street Food *continued from page 1*

The Greeks, who ruled eastern Sicily at the time, eventually took control of the western Sicilian city and renamed it Panormus, meaning all-harbor.

The resource-rich and accessible port made the region very attractive, and thus began a long history of colonization by the Romans,

Byzantines, Arabs, Normans and Spanish, with additional cultural influences such as North African, Jewish, French, German and British mixed in.

The diversity of ingredients and flavors brought by the immigrant city's peoples expanded with each invasion

and settlement, which still today, results in a figurative and literal melting pot of cultures, ideas and recipes.

At the table, one should absolutely delight in *pasta con le sarde* (*bucatini* pasta with fresh sardines, wild fennel, golden raisins, pine nuts, onions, white

## The Markets



### Ballarò

The ancient Ballarò market is alive and dynamic in Palermo's *Centro Storico*, south of via Maqueda where *Via Casa Professa* and *Via Ballarò* meet. Reminiscent of a North African market, among its crowded alleyways and covered stalls one can find vegetables, dried fruits and preserves, spices, seeds, and grains from around the region, fish and meat, and cheeses. Artwork and local crafts as well as housewares and souvenirs may also be



procured and a number of snack bars and family-run eating establishments will satisfy your cravings. The best time to visit the centuries-old center is during the morning after 6 a.m. up until lunchtime, when the vendors are singing their Arabic-sounding songs hoping to attract the most sales. Because of the gritty scenery, Ballarò is a destination for street art aficionados.

### Il Capo

Enter *Mercato Il Capo*, meaning "the head," from *Porta Carini* at *Via Volturmo*, south of *Teatro Massimo*. You'll immediately feel transported to another world, complete with singing butchers, decapitated swordfish, and exotic fruits. Be prepared for a motorcycle to drive right through the labyrinth of multicolored, umbrella-covered stalls offering local products from octopus to salted ricotta to wild-fennel pestos and bitter orange marmalades.



Be sure to pick up *Nocellara del Belice* olives, salted capers from the island of *Pantelleria* and chocolate from *Modica*. As you walk east towards *Via Beati Paoli*, turn onto *Via Sant'Agostino*, where you'll find stores selling everything from sneakers and sundresses to draperies, artisanal linens, and religious artwork and kitschy lamps. Note that today, much of these items are made in China and India; however, there are a few gems made in Sicily. The best time to go is during the morning after 6 a.m. and through lunchtime.



### Vucciria

*Vucciria* is the oldest, most famous of Palermo's outdoor street markets, dating back a millennium. It was immortalized by painter *Renato Guttuso* with his painting *La Vucciria*, which he painted in 1974. Nestled between *Piazza San Domenico* and *Via Vittorio Emanuele*, the market no longer has the vibrancy that *Guttuso* captured—or that its name, meaning "chaos" signifies—however, in addition to a handful of fruit and vegetable and fish stalls, one can find old photos and books, antiques, souvenirs and housewares during the day.

The market was infamous at one time because of its intertwining with the Mafia. Additionally, there is an oft-used Sicilian idiom, "*Quanno i balati ra Vucciria s'asciucanu*," that means, "When the pavement of the Vucciria [market] is dry." In English, we would say, "When Hell freezes over." The irony of this well-known expression is that today, the significance of the Vucciria market is fading and the pavement, which was once constantly wet because of the

bustling fish and fruit and vegetable stalls, is now often dry because of inactivity.

Today, the Vucciria market comes alive at night, after 7:30 p.m. when

*Piazza Caracciolo* and its side streets host pop-up carts and tables of vendors selling *panelle*, *cazzilli*, *pane ca' meus* and more, and the city's young people, artists and musicians come to socialize at what becomes an outdoor nightclub.

1€ = \$1.07 at press time

# With warm nights, *Palermo* is one



*On the streets, however, you'll find a cuisine specifically meant for eating while bartering in the market, socializing with friends on the seashore, or simply relishing as you make your passeggiata in the early evening light.*

wine, olive oil and saffron, then topped with crispy bread crumbs) and *anelletti al forno* (ring pasta baked with tomato beef ragu, red wine, peas, *caciocavallo* cheese and breadcrumbs) and *caponata* (a sweet and sour chutney made with either eggplant, tuna or swordfish).

On the streets, however, you'll find a cuisine specifically meant for eating while bartering in the market, socializing with friends on the seashore, or simply relishing as you make your *passeggiata* in the early evening light.

One can't discuss Palermo without recognizing its reputation as a hub of brutal organized crime. The Mafia wars of the 1960s and 1980s and subsequent "maxi-trials" featuring hundreds of Mafiosi made headlines throughout the world. But since the early 1990s, there has been a concerted local and national effort to conquer the disease of the *Cosa Nostra*. (Read more about this online on the *Dream of Italy* Blog.)

Without doubt, Palermo is looking to its future, while at the same time celebrating the heritage that makes it a fascinating center. In 2015, it was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site for nine civil and religious structures dating from the era of the Norman kingdom of Sicily that illustrate the socio-cultural syncretism between Western, Islamic, and Byzantine cultures. For the past two years, it has been the home of the

annual *Festival delle Letterature Migranti*, or Festival of Migrant Literature.

In December, Palermo was proclaimed *Italy's Youth Capital*, named so for its initiatives supporting young people—initiatives that are part of a larger, multi-year plan the city has undertaken to support the next generation with educational, cultural, and employment opportunities in order to prevent the flight of skills that has plagued the region for decades.

It's an exciting time to visit the ancient port and experience not only its new energy, but also the cultural heritage that makes it extraordinary. Most notably, the city has been named as Italian Capital of Culture for 2018. (See more on the blog about this.) Palermo will also host *Manifesta 12*, the 12th addition of the European Biennial of Contemporary Art, in 2018. The word will truly be out that Palermo has it all: history, arts and culture that rival any European city and an accessible cuisine that will bewitch your senses.

To truly experience Palermo, you must hit the streets and relish all it offers. A good place to start is through your stomach. Below is a guide to Palermo's hand-held cuisine found throughout the city, but most prominently in its multi-sensory, outdoor markets, Il Capo, Ballarò and Vucciria (see sidebar for details on each one).

Savor multi-cultural Palermo one bite at a time.

## Arancine

The Arabs introduced rice to Sicily in the tenth century, mixed it with saffron, and somewhere along the way—no one really knows when—Sicilians created *arancine*. The name, *arancina*, is a play on the word *arancia*,

or orange, the fruit, because arancine look like oranges. Arancine are fried rice balls stuffed with beef ragu, peas, saffron, and



*caciocavallo* cheese. The perfect arancina is a combination of crunchy on the outside, which when approached like one eats an apple, are hot, creamy, soft, and gooey on the inside.

Round ones signify that they contain beef *ragu*. Oval-shaped arancine indicate they are "*di burro*," in other words, they contain butter, *prosciutto cotto*, saffron, mozzarella and perhaps some béchamel. Don't confuse Palermo's arancine with Catania's arancini, for in Eastern Sicily, arancini are cone-shaped. (Note, the feminine versus masculine association of the word—their gender is a friendly debate between western and eastern Sicilians).

*continued on page 6*

# of the hottest cities in Europe.



I like to say that they take the form of Mount Etna, and when you bite into one, it explodes in your hand and mouth, like a volcano. Today, arancine are found in many sizes and are made with various ingredients. These cited are the traditional recipes.

During the Feast of Santa Lucia on December 13, Palermitani eat arancine with fervor. My favorite arancine can be eaten at *Friggitoria Gastronomica da Arianna* (see sidebar for details).

### Sfincione Palermitano

Not to be confused with pizza, *sfincione* is more like what Americans call *faccaccia*. Different still, it is a spongy bread with a mixture of tomato puree, anchovies, caciocavallo and pecorino

cheeses, sautéed onions, oregano, breadcrumbs, salt, pepper, and olive oil baked into the top of it. It's best when enjoyed warm and drizzled with olive oil.



In Bagheria, the town where some of my Sicilian family lives, which is about 40 minutes east of Palermo by car, sfincione is thicker—I've had it both red and white. White, i.e., without tomato, has fresh ricotta baked into it. Contrary to Italian-American tradition, my family, as do most Bagherese, customarily eat sfincione on Christmas Eve. They reserve their holiday banquet for Christmas Day.

Because tomatoes only arrived in the 16th century when they were brought by the Spanish from the New World, food historians believe that white sfincione has Jewish origins and it's an older recipe than red sfincione.

Look for the sfincione vendor daily, on the corner of *Via Maqueda* and *Via Sant'Agostino* from mid-morning to mid-afternoon.

### Panelle

*Panelle* are flat chickpea-flour fritters made with fresh parsley, lemon juice, salt and olive oil. They hail from the Palermo region and are eaten as finger food or inside a bun as a *panino*. Eat them hot. They will melt in your mouth.

Chickpeas (also known as garbanzo beans) have been in Sicily for

millennia. Because they were thought to have medicinal properties and to aid fertility, they were associated with Venus. Have you fallen in love yet?

Visit Friggitoria Gastronomica da Arianna for hot, melt-in-your-mouth panelle.

### Cazzilli (Crocchè di Patate)

If panelle had siblings, *cazzilli* would be *panelle's* brothers and sisters. *Cazzilli*, which is a vulgar way of saying "little penises," are potato croquettes. They are eaten individually with your fingers, or often, they are paired with panelle and stuffed inside a sesame seed bun and sprinkled with



lemon juice and olive oil and eaten as a sandwich. When they are hot from the fryer, this, *i miei amici*, is something special! The

ingredients are simple: potatoes, fresh parsley (or mint), grated caciocavallo cheese, salt, pepper and olive oil. The ones photographed (and long-since eaten!) are from in Il Capo open-air market in Palermo.

Visit Friggitoria Gastronomica da Arianna for excellent *cazzilli*.

### Pastelle

*Pastelle* are deep-fried, hand-held dreams. Vegetables such as broccoli, carduna, artichoke hearts, eggplant, and squash are coated with a thick flour-and-water batter, while sardines are lightly battered. One could compare them with Japanese tempura, yet with a thicker coat of semolina flour. The vendor will hand them to you half wrapped in a piece of thin paper.

Ask for a few extra pieces to catch the juices that will drip down your arm as you sink your teeth into them.



You'll find these in Il Capo market, right near *Porta Carini*.

### Babbaluce or Lumache

At the height of summer and especially during mid-July's *Il Festino*, Palermo's feast for their patroness Santa Rosalia, *babbaluce* are ubiquitous. Babbaluce, or lumache in Italian, are small land snails that reside on fences, logs, and rocks in the countryside. They are collected by hand, cleaned, and brought to the big city where they are served steamed and tossed with garlic, olive oil, and fresh Italian parsley. You eat them with toothpicks or suck them right out of the shell.

# Palermo was severely dam

Babbaluce can be found from late June to early August in all the markets. It will be ready to eat during the evenings in the Vucciria.



## Stigghiola

*Stigghiola* looks like a ringlet-inspired sausage. It is made from wrapping or spiraling the small intestines of sheep or goat that have been soaked in wine



around fresh, flat-leaf parsley and thick, green onions, leeks or

scallions (and sometimes bacon). This “sculpture” is seasoned with salt and pepper, then grilled on an open flame, preferably in the street. Once off the grill, it’s doused with fresh lemon juice and cut into small, bite-sized pieces or eaten on a skewer (like a kebab) or in a bun.

I recommend you try it at Dainotti’s Street Food.

## Frittola or Fruttula

When you see a guy with a deep cauldron covered with a cloth and he reaches inside clandestinely, you know you have crossed the line into serious foodie-territory.



*Frittola*, small pieces of beef offal, is not found as commonly as other street food because it is not for the faint of heart. Try the

vendor at the entrance of Il Capo at Porta Carini.

## Pane ca’ meusa or Pane con la milza

The gold ring of Palermitano street food, *pane ca’ meusa*, consists of a soft sesame seed bun (also known as *vastedda*) stuffed with veal’s spleen (and sometimes lung) that has been boiled and then fried in lard. To keep it moist, the *vastiddu*,



or street vendor who specializes in *meusa*, continually sautés the spleen in his shallow caldron. When it is *maritata*, it is “married” with grated caciocavallo or ricotta cheese. When enjoyed *al limone*, it is simply spleen and lemon.

Locals flock to *Pani Ca’ Meusa Porta Carbone* to eat their spleen sandwiches.

## Vastedda

*Vastedda* is a sesame seed bun. You’ll often hear the word *vastedda* used to describe a sandwich, which could be stuffed with any number of things; a common one in Palermo is fresh ricotta topped with grated caciocavallo cheese. *Vastedda* are also known as *moffoletta*. (Note that *Vastedda* is also the name of a *primo sale* sheep’s milk cheese that is aged in bowls. Because of its round shape, it is also referred to as *vestedda*.)

Antica Focacceria San Francesco offers many different *vastedda* options.

# Rosticcerie and Tavole Calde

## Antica Drogheria Dainotti

Via Porta Carini, 45  
(39) 340 8703497

Open daily, 8 p.m. to 1:30 a.m.

In the *Il Capo* market, Dainotti’s Street Food, a local favorite, is a nighttime establishment where you can enjoy different *vastedda* (sandwiches), *stigghiola* (seasoned and grilled lamb guts) and more.

## Antica Focacceria San Francesco

Via A. Paternostro, 58  
(39) 091 3200264

Open daily, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.

[www.anticafocacceria.it](http://www.anticafocacceria.it)

A favorite of locals and tourists, *Antica Focacceria San Francesco* is a cafeteria of street food and other *Palermitano* dishes. This is a family-friendly establishment with comfortable seating, so here, it’s safe for your kids to try *pane ca’ meusa*.

## Friggitoria Gastronomia da Arianna

Via Porta Carini 51  
(39) 320 6120933

Open most days in the morning through evening.

Friggitoria Gastronomia da Arianna is a gift from heaven. Once you have eaten their *arancine*, *cazzilli* and *panelle*, it will be hard to find another place just as good.

## Pani Cà Meusa Porta Carbone

Via Cala, 62  
(39) 091 323433

Open daily, 7:30 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Locals will tell you that this is the place to go for *pane ca’ meusa*. Established in 1943, the family-run business takes its spleen sandwich very seriously.

*continued on page 8*

# aged during World War II.



## Semenza

At festivals such as Il Festino, the July 14-15 feast for *Santa Rosalia*,

you'll see kiosks beautifully painted like



Sicilian carts and filled with *semenze*—various seeds, mixed nuts, and toasted chickpeas, to name a few items.

## Bricoché con Gelato

Street food in Palermo is not limited to lunch or night time. During the summer, you can also eat it for breakfast! After all, *bricoché con gelato*



consists of sweet bread and milk, right? As I learned from a waiter at a *gelateria* off Palermo's *Piazza Castelnuevo*, the brioche's form—that is, a woman's breast—encourages you to nurse your favorite flavor of the heavenly frozen delight just as a newborn suckles her mother's breast.

Historians will tell you that we have the Arabs to thank for reintroducing flavored and sweetened snow from Sicily's mountaintops (the Romans once relished it during summer months). Over time and through much experimentation, *gelato* was created in Sicily's kitchens. *Mille grazie!*

Find brioche con gelato throughout Palermo. At *Gran Café San Domenico* on *Piazza San Domenico* at *Via Roma*, you'll enjoy excellent gelato.

1€ = \$1.07 at press time

## Cannoli

It is impossible to determine from where *cannoli* originated; however, there are a few theories, and one of those says that the world-renowned Sicilian pastry first was savored during Roman times. As Salvatore Farina supposes in his book *Sweet Sensations of Sicily*, "Probably, long ago, in the wild days of the *Saturnali* and the old-style Carnival, street sellers prepared *cannoli*



in the noisy and crowded public squares, filling the shell with ricotta and honey cream. This confection that comes in natural portions is ideal for eating outside, just as one does today with an ice cream cone."

Once the Arabs arrived and introduced sugarcane, and therefore sugar into Sicily's kitchens, the beloved *cannolo* we know today was created and perfected (note that one cannoli is *un cannolo*).

The best time of the year to eat cannoli, because of when the sheep ricotta is tastiest from the green grasses, is in the spring. Excellent cannoli can be found throughout Palermo. Make sure the *pasticceria* fills the shell upon ordering, otherwise don't accept it.

Street food is enjoyed throughout the year. The best times of the day to encounter roving street vendors in Il Capo and Ballarò markets is from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.

However, note that Sunday and Monday are slower days on the streets because vendors often take these days off.

*Arriariatevi!* Sicilian for "Enjoy!"



—Allison Scola

Allison Scola is the owner and curator of Experience Sicily, a boutique tour operator and educational company. For more, visit [www.experiencesicily.com](http://www.experiencesicily.com)

## Street Food Tours & Events



**StrEat Palermo** ([www.streatpalermo.it](http://www.streatpalermo.it); 39-3472-605090) is a fantastic street food and cultural tour through Palermo's markets. I highly recommend *Marco Romeo* and his team of professional guides who know the best (and safest, in terms of food safety) vendors from which to savor these delights. Those visiting the east side of Sicily can enjoy *StrEat Catania*.

Tours are held daily from June to September for three hours, starting at 10:30 a.m. The cost is 30€ per person. Four-hour daily tours are held May through October, also starting at 10:30 a.m. and costing 39€ per person. Summer evening tours, starting at 8 p.m. and featuring the *Vucciria* market and *La Cala* boardwalk are available by request. You must reserve ahead. Private tours are also available.

Reservations are required.

**Palermo Street Food Fest** hosts city-sponsored events throughout the year. For upcoming dates, visit their website at [www.palermostreetfoodfest.it](http://www.palermostreetfoodfest.it)

The patron saint of *Palermo* is *Santa Rosalia*.

April 2017  
8  
www.dreamofitaly.com