



Santo Palato

INSIDE:

The Best Pizza in Rome 3

Roman Suppli at Sbano 5

"Aparthotels" in Venice 6

Italian Judaism Museum

Opens 8



Casa Burano

DREAM OF[®] ITALY



Dream Of PUBLICATION

Volume 17, Issue 6

www.dreamofitaly.com

August 2018

Dine as The Romans Do

Some elements of Roman cuisine are initially hard to wrap your head around. When I first moved to the Eternal City four years ago, I was less than enthused about trying Roman specialties like calf intestines, and the stomach lining of sheep, but the mastery of Roman chefs in taking these humble ingredients and elevating them to delicious levels is unmatched in the Italian culinary world. Historically a poor cuisine, peasant dishes of the past are now the solid platform on which modern powerful Roman cuisine was built.



absolute favorites. I have found them thanks to my Roman friends' recommendations and insistence. I've been to these places more times than I can count and I am surprised at every visit by the dynamic flavors. At these restaurants, you will always see, smell and taste authentic Rome with every bite.

Oasis of Authentic Rome

Santo Palato is a traditional Roman restaurant with all the comforts of the cuisine of the capital such as tripe, oxtail stew, salt cod, and *carbonara*. Nestled on a quiet street off a busy intersection of the *San Giovanni*

These restaurants are a few of my

continued on page 2

Unique New Stays in Venice



In a city only six square miles in size that welcomes upwards of 30 million travelers annually, finding a special place to feel at home in Venice can certainly be daunting. Visiting Venice is so much more than a single day trip and staying even just a few days allows guests an opportunity to enjoy the best of the city in the tranquil early mornings and calm evenings. Several newer properties located off the beaten path offer unique locations where guests can live the city as its residents do.

Casa Burano

Those who have visited the quaint fishing island of *Burano* in the northern lagoon will easily remember the facades in every color under the rainbow together with hoards of visitors. Burano is usually only a day-trip destination for visitors but the real magic happens as the sun comes up in the early morning and again in the evenings when the island's small canals are more mirror-like than water filled.

The island is indeed full of residents, which is hard to imagine in the middle of the day as visitors flock to

continued on page 6

Romans eat gnocchi on Thursdays.

Rome Dining *continued from page 1*



Cultivar Studio

Sarah Cicolini

neighborhood, this restaurant feels like visiting a relative's home for dinner. The team at Santo Palato is led by an amazing young chef named *Sarah Cicolini* who is as friendly in the dining room as she is creative and smart in the kitchen.

The walls of this *trattoria* have custom artwork made for the restaurant designed with a 1920s/30s feel. The simple tables and chairs and clean colors of the space are the perfect backdrop to frame these beautiful designs.

The menu here never disappoints and is never the same. While you will always find a carbonara made with the perfect blend of cured pork, egg and *Pecorino*, there are seasonal surprises on the blackboard hung near the kitchen window, like the late-summer staple of a side of *erbe selvatiche*, or wild herbs.

Practically the essence of Rome on a plate, the *rigatoni alla pajata* is sensational. Calves' intestines slow cooked in tomato sauce make the sauce for this pasta. The intestines, given that the calves had never eaten anything but their mother's milk, are creamy and delicate. This dish is an ode to the culinary tradition of Rome, generally considered a poor cuisine, and is a testament to Cicolini who makes it fit for a royal feast.

The young and friendly wait staff are quick to recommend a dish, happily



Santo Palato

sharing their opinions on which creations you absolutely cannot miss and what new developments are coming out of the kitchen on any given day. The atmosphere of this place feels like your grandma's kitchen and often Sunday lunches are booked a week in advance, so reservations are definitely recommended. It's easy to see why this trattoria has done so well in its first year in business.

Santo Palato

Piazza Tarquinia, 4/A/B

(39) 06 77207354

Open for dinner only Tuesday to Friday; lunch and

dinner on Saturday and Sunday.

Closed Monday



Small Restaurant, Big Taste

Mazzo is more of an experience than simply a place to have a meal. This tiny restaurant located in the up-and-coming neighborhood of *Centocelle* in eastern Rome, is the brainchild of *Francesca* and *Marco*, a young couple who met in culinary school and call themselves "The Fooders." The pair and their very small staff invent recipes with seasonal ingredients and create flavor combinations you would never think to make at home.

The attention to ingredients is paramount for the chefs.



Giovanna Di Lisiandro

Francesca and Marco



Mary Stuart

Fried tripe

They strive to use organic meats and biodynamic vegetables from local farms. They take classic Italian ingredients and revamp them with new techniques, wilder cuts, and interesting twists. Recently, they've presented a *trippa fritta*, or fried tripe, on their menu. Tripe is an important element in Roman cuisine usually served in a rich tomato sauce but the Fooders imaginatively present it as a fried dish.

The space of *Mazzo* is very small and holds one large table similar to that of a home dining room. There are 10 spaces at the table for guests to eat and a small table in an adjacent corner has two bar stools where another couple can sit. The atmosphere of the restaurant is intimate and inviting and the communal table lends itself to conversation between couples and small groups seated all together. Given the very limited seating, reservations are strictly required.

On a giant blackboard taking up the entire wall behind the central dining table, *Marco* and *Francesca* write the day's specialties. The well-thought-out dishes such as their thrice cooked boiled, roasted, and fried pork belly served with seasonal veggies are proof of the pair's dedication to finding perfect flavors, textures and symmetry in their dishes.

Given the intense dedication to

Ancient Roman cuisine was stro

the flavor schemes, the Fooders will also gladly recommend the perfect wine or liquor to go with your meal, or to end on. While it may seem anything but Italian, the Mississippi Mud Pie at this restaurant is better than what you might have in the U.S. It may seem like a wild card on which to end your Italian meal, but it is one of the most memorable desserts in the city.

Mazzo

Via delle Rose, 54
(39) 06 64962847
www.thefooders.wordpress.com
Open Monday to Friday 6 p.m. to midnight,
Saturday from 1 p.m. to 3:30 pm and 7 p.m.
to midnight.
Closed Sunday

The Best Pizza in Rome

Doodles and paintings of chubby cats don the walls of this *Monteverde* pizzeria. The logo of *La Gatta Mangiona* is a cat with its paw over its belly, reclining after a delicious and abundant meal. Consistently named as one of the best pizzerias in Rome and on the top 10 list of pizzerias in Italy, it is easy to see why from the moment you walk past the desserts table, proudly on display, reminding visitors to save space for the grand finale of their homemade *tiramisù*.

A blackboard on the wall displays the fried starters and pizzas of the day.

Roman rice balls, called *suppli*, and potato *crocchette* are made with interesting ingredients putting them light years ahead of most other pizzerias' offerings. Mouthwatering and just the right amount of spicy, a



Giancarlo Casa



La Gatta Mangiona

La Gatta Mangiona
Via Federico Ozanam, 30-32
(39) 06 5346702
www.lagattamangiona.com
Open daily from 7:30 p.m. to 11:15 p.m.



crowd favorite is the mashed potato-filled *crocchetta* dotted with Calabrese sausage spread called '*nduja*.

While the starters are exceptional, the main event is the pizza. The form reigns in a class of its own like the child of Roman thin crust pizza and Neapolitan pizza. The *pizzaiolo* here creates delectable pies with seasonal elements.

In the winter, they make a pizza with *puntarelle* and anchovies that is a fun twist on the typical Roman salad, which is made with the curled tops of asparagus chicory plants, called *puntarelle*, and dressed with anchovies, garlic, black pepper and olive oil. A yearlong staple and crowd pleaser, the *pizza Gateau*, is a white pie with potatoes, *prosciutto* and *stracciatella*, a soft, fresh cheese with a creamy, buttery taste.

Cold beer on tap, delicious appetizers and perfect pizza pies make it clear to see why this pizzeria is often booked up a week in advance. They also do take-out if you cannot find a spot in the dining room during dinner hours.

La Gatta Mangiona
Via Federico Ozanam, 30-32
(39) 06 5346702
www.lagattamangiona.com
Open daily from 7:30 p.m. to 11:15 p.m.

In a League of Its Own

Italian food is so well known all over the world that it is hard to imagine a new creation that captures the familiar magic of Italian cuisine. Essentially a triangle of pizza dough stuffed with classic Italian and Roman dishes like chicken *cacciatore*, eggplant *parmigiana*, *trippa alla romana*, and meatballs in tomato sauce to name a few, *Trapizzino*, the dish and the eatery, will quickly become a favorite.

The brain child of Roman *pizzaiolo Stefano Callegari*, trapizzino is made with a mother yeast that has been handed down for many generations and originates in Southern Italy. The

continued on page 4

DREAM OF ITALY®

Kathleen A. McCabe
Editor in Chief and Publisher

Executive Editor: Bethanne Patrick
Associate Editor: Elaine Murphy
Design: Kim Laird
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 150 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 (Visa, Mastercard and American Express accepted)

Dream of Italy and *Dream of* are registered trademarks of Dream of Italy, Inc.

Editorial feedback is welcome.
E-mail: kathy@dreamofitaly.com

Copyright © 2018 *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

Rome Dining *continued from page 3*



Trapizzino

living substance is fed water and flour daily, and the perfect dough is testament to how much care the team puts into these hand-size triangles.

The original location of Trapizzino sits on the side of the *Piazza of Santa Maria Liberatrice* in the heart of *Testaccio*, just a few steps from the river banks of the Tiber. *Testaccio* is often considered the birthplace of modern Roman cuisine and that reputation exudes from each filling the shop makes.

During the sweltering summer months in Rome, Trapizzino adapts to what customers crave and makes chilled options. The *lingua in salsa verde* is cow tongue in a green herby sauce and satisfies a more adventurous palate. Another favorite, the *doppia panna* combines creamy *straciattella* cheese and anchovies for a perfect summer time meal.

The trapizzino craze has gone international and Callegari and his team have opened multiple locations in Rome and Milan, as well as in Japan, Australia and New York City.

Trapizzino Testaccio

Via Giovanni Branca, 88
(39) 06 4341 9624
www.trapizzino.it
Open daily Tuesday to Sunday, 12 p.m. to 1 a.m.
Closed Monday



Trattoria in a Green Garden

Tucked away in the *Monteverde* neighborhood, close to the gates of the spacious *Villa Pamphili* park, sits *Da Cesare al Casaleto*. If you didn't know to look for this gem of a *trattoria*, you would probably walk right by it.

On a quiet street, *Da Cesare's* large dining room is hidden across a large outdoor garden shielded from passersby by hedges and ivy. This restaurant serves Italian classics, but upgraded. Roman classics, such as *trippa alla romana* (sheep stomach lining cooked for many hours with tomato sauce and topped with *pecorino* Romano cheese and mint), are served in abundant portions and the recipes are tried and tested to absolute perfection.

The two must-try dishes at *Da Cesare* are delicious starters sure to win over anyone who tastes them. The first dish is the *polpette di bollito*, shredded beef brisket meatballs, with a pesto sauce and shredded *pecorino* cheese on top.



Crochette di melanzane



Da Cesare

The second dish is the fried *gnocchi cacio e pepe*. These fried potato pasta clouds are covered in creamy *pecorino* and a generous dousing of black pepper, a play on the famous Roman *cacio e pepe* usually made with *tagliatelle*.

Be sure to leave room for the pastas and main courses since they are refreshing revisits to Roman classics but with a modern flare. The owner of this place, *Leonardo*, and his wife *Maria Pia*, give a home-style feel to this restaurant with its multicolored glasses and clean white linens. *Leonardo* is an expert on natural wines and is always happy to recommend which will go best with what you order.

During summer months, *Leonardo* and *Maria Pia* are joined in the dining room and the outdoor garden by their daughter who sometimes takes orders from customers and charms them into ordering desserts despite being stuffed after the delicious meals. Complete your meal with the *millefoglie*. The crispy wafers are lined with *crema pasticcera*, a smooth, creamy custard, and have a glazed *amarena* (sour cherry) on top making this dessert the literal cherry on top to a perfect meal.

Da Cesare al Casaleto

Via del Casaleto, 45
(39) 06 536015
www.trattoriadacesare.it
Open daily for lunch and dinner, except Wednesday.

Craft Beer, Pizza and Suppli

Opened in 2016, this pizzeria and artisanal beer lover's paradise was born of a partnership between *Stefano Callegari* (of Trapizzino), *Marco Pucciotti*, a young Roman restaurateur, and *Giovanni Campari*, founder of

Romans traditionally eat



Cacio e pepe pizza



Sbanco chefs

Birrificio del Ducato in Parma. These three experts have created a cool and inviting atmosphere to enjoy *supplì*, which are Roman rice balls that come in a variety of flavors, pizza and beer on tap with friends and family.

True to the Roman roots of its owners, Sbanco's supplì are exceptional. Ever-changing season to season, the menu makes for an exciting surprise at every visit. A jewel of the pizzeria, the *supplì carbonara* is the best rice ball in the entire city. Stuffed with egg, cured pork meat, pecorino and black pepper, *Sbanco* pays a perfect tribute to this pillar of Roman cuisine. It is ingeniously served to guests in a new form, but the flavor is heartwarming familiar. It is exactly that of a big bowl of carbonara, as good as any Roman grandma makes.

The pièce de résistance of Sbanco is a Callegari classic: the *cacio e pepe* pizza. What is probably the most famous of all Roman pastas, cacio e pepe might seem like a strange flavor for a pizza, but the perfectly melted pecorino cheese and the heavy dose of black

pepper are a flavor explosion for your mouth from the first bite.

The pizza dough is cooked first with ice cubes, then when the ice melts, the cheese gets added and the final result is the creamiest pizza you have ever tasted. This pie is best ordered as an appetizer to share because everyone at your table will want a slice.

Be sure to get an artisanal beer with your meal. It's fun to walk along the extensive bar and ask the knowledgeable bartenders about the types of beers on tap. There are many to try and they will gladly help you find the perfect beer for your order.

Sbanco

Via Siria, 1
(39) 06 789318
sbanco.business.site

Open for dinner, Monday to Saturday, and for lunch and dinner on Sunday.

Gastronomia Romanesca

If you find yourself in *Testaccio Market* and want to grab a handful of the essence of Roman cuisine, visit *Sergio* at *Mordi e Vai*. Inspired by the historically poor cuisine of Testaccio, this sandwich shop, run by a former butcher of the same market, creates masterpieces on loaves of bread.

The *alessi di scottona e cicoria* is a tried and true favorite. All other sandwiches pale in comparison to this hearty boiled shredded beef and stewed chicory; expertly compiled like a jigsaw puzzle so no morsel slips out. You might encounter a small wait at the counter if you visit during the lunch time rush.

1€ = \$1.14 at press time



Mordi e Vai

Be sure to take a number and keep an eye on the ticker, but while you wait for your turn, try to get a peek at the many Roman dishes behind the counter glass. Vegetarian options like the *carciofi alla romana* made with artichokes and a hefty helping of garlic, parsley and olive oil, and other options like veal *alla carbonara* entice visitors to get multiple sandwiches to share. While the choice of which sandwich to get is a tough one, have faith that you cannot make a wrong decision. Everything at this shop gets made with expert hands.



The smell and explosions of flavor in the sandwiches will lure you through the market to this stand, and the *polpette della nonna* will blow your mind and please your palette. These meatballs made with boiled shredded beef, breadcrumbs, lemon zest and some special ingredients leave a lasting impression on customers. Unassuming on the outside, these saucer-shaped meatballs will keep you dreaming of Mordi e Vai long after you've left.

Mordi e Vai

Via Beniamino Franklin 12E, Box 15
(39) 339 1343344
www.mordievai.it
Open Monday to Saturday, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

—Danielle Abbazia

baccalà (salted cod) on Fridays.

Venice Stays *continued from page 1*

any of the numerous lace stores. However, *Casa Burano* offers a unique opportunity to stay on the island and live among the locals in their *albergo diffuso*, a dispersed hotel.



Burano

This is an innovative hospitality concept that started in Italy in the 1980s as a means of reviving small, historic Italian town centers. The hotel is not a single block, which makes sense in Burano where every building on the island is modest in size. Rather, the hotel is comprised of a series of historic buildings in the small community, run like a hotel.

The owners of the nearby *Venissa* vineyards (and Michelin-starred restaurant) on the connecting island of *Mazzorbo* purchased five properties and meticulously restored them in collaboration with local suppliers and artisans so as to offer a total of 15 rooms on the island.

The entryway pavements and bathroom tiles are all from *Orsoni*, just across the lagoon in Cannaregio where they have been producing hand cut artisanal mosaics since 1888. Breakfast is delivered daily to each building's ground floor breakfast room and each room in the house receives their own basket of freshly baked breads, yogurt, fruit and jams.

It is a wonderful experience to throw open the windows and watch the local residents stroll *their* island, chat over morning coffee and soak in the start to

the day. The morning light and empty streets are a photographer's dream as are the early evenings and quiet nights. Burano is a place where many people still leave their doors unlocked, most bicycles are left leaning against a wall without a lock and the pace of life is simple.

Casa Burano

F.ta S. Caterina, 3
Mazzorbo
(39) 041 5272281
www.casaburano.it

Rates: Start at 100€ per night for a Comfort room and 150€ for a Suite. All include breakfast.



Hotel Heureka

Returning to the historic center of Venice in *Cannaregio*, *Hotel Heureka* is a stunning new property located near *Madonna dell'Orto* that opened in late 2017 after a lengthy and careful five-year restoration. It's nestled on a canal and in between residential properties and artisan workshops.



Hotel Heureka

This area of Cannaregio is a densely populated residential area full of elementary schools, preschools, supermarkets, hair salons and pharmacies. There are also numerous wine bars and restaurants of every category all within a 10-minute walk. There is so much to see and enjoy in this area, one might not even need to leave the immediate surroundings.

The *Madonna dell'Orto Church* is decorated with the stunning canvases

of *Jacopo Tintoretto*. The Jewish Ghetto here also recently marked the 500th year since its founding.

The hotel is a gem with a meticulously maintained private garden flanked on either side by boat warehouses due to the proximity to the lagoon. Guests can peek into the windows and see any number of traditional boats being restored.

There are only 10 rooms at the Heureka so the feeling is one of being at home. Each room has been eclectically designed and furnished, with luxurious soaking baths and elegant bathrooms. The Austrian owners purchased the property because of their love of Venice and the top floor is their private residence. They scoured the city and countryside for interesting furnishings.

Here the classic blends perfectly with the modern and surprising deep, rich hues are found throughout the property. Staying at the Heureka allows guests to truly feel at home but with all of the conveniences and amenities of a hotel and a caring staff.

Hotel Heureka

Cannaregio 3534
(39) 041 5246460
www.hotel-heureka.com

Rates: Start at 210€ for a deluxe room and 370€ for a junior suite with garden view, with breakfast.



Palazzo Volpi

Just over the *Cannaregio* border into *Castello*, *Palazzo Volpi* occupies a prominent location in *Campo Santi Giovanni e Paolo*. Palazzo Volpi is part of a new accommodation category called an "aparthotel" — a luxury apartment rental with hotel amenities and services.

The city of Venice is consider

The restoration of this property was a labor of love for designers *Anna Covre* and *Frederic Tubau* as they returned to Covre's Venetian roots. The units overlook the square and the *Scuola Grande di San Marco* with its 16th-century Renaissance façade that is now the entrance to Venice's hospital.



Palazzo Volpi

The couple designed all furnishings and the lighting fixtures and it's here that you see the Japanese influence from their past projects and overseas sojourns. The French influence, which is where their primary residence is located, is seen with the toiletry products by Paris-based stylist David Mallet.

The apartments are spacious, well designed and comfortable from the velvet chairs and couches to the Frette linens and the well-stocked kitchens, which include high-end appliances. Each of the three units also has a washing machine and coveted dryer, a rarity for most Venetians.

The location is not too far from one of Venice's newest businesses, *I&S Organic Farm* (Cannaregio 3818; www.iesfarm.com), the Venetian retail store from the island of Sant'Erasmo's only organic farm. It's truly farm-to-table and the owners take great pride in their seasonal produce, which is harvested early each day before crossing the lagoon to Venice. They also have a delicious range of their jarred tomato and kale pesto sauces as

well as sauerkrauts and pickled beets.

Each kitchen at Palazzo Volpi is well-stocked so guests can feel completely comfortable cooking without missing that "one" necessary item that so often happens in traditional apartment rentals. Another perk of staying here is the morning aroma of freshly baked pastries from the bakery downstairs, Venice's beloved *Rosa Salva*.

Palazzo Volpi

Castello 6805a

Campo S.S. Giovanni e Paolo

(39) 331 4299308

www.palazzovolpi.com

Rates: Start at 480€ per suite per night. Coffee and tea included in each suite.



Palazzo Morosini degli Spezieri

Palazzo Morosini degli Spezieri, located in the sestiere of San Polo, is a 15th-century nine-unit "aparthotel" overlooking one of the city's most picturesque residential corners in *Campiello Sant'Agostin*. The amenities and furnishings are five-star quality and the service is impeccable. Manager *Pietro Rusconi* trained with the finest; his father was the esteemed manager of the exclusive Hotel Cipriani for decades. So it is safe to say that hospitality is part of his DNA.



Palazzo Morosini degli Spezieri

The on-site technology is impressive and fits in seamlessly with the modern

and antique furnishings. A mounted iPad in each unit controls the temperature, lights and even music with preloaded playlists. The furnishings have been sourced from all over the Veneto and combined together with soothing color palettes and complementary fabrics, the interiors are simply dreamy. Several of the units have their own private balconies and terraces while a lush garden space is accessible to all guests.

The fabulous *Rialto* Market is a five-minute walk from the property and the area is filled with bakeries, grocery stores, cafés, restaurants, bars and small fine food stores. This is another very residential area where guests easily fit into the fabric of Venetian life. In terms of sight-seeing in the area, guests are in close proximity to the *Frari Church*, the *Scuola Grande di San Rocco* and the *Scuola Grande San Giovanni Evangelista*.

Palazzo Morosini degli Spezieri

San Polo 2348

(39) 375 5049734

www.morosinideglispezieri.com

Rates: Range from 180€ to 250€ per night, plus a 70€ final cleaning charge. Breakfast available by request.

These wonderful accommodations welcome visitors to areas where they can slip into their own Venetian life and feel at home for the duration of their stay.

—Jill S. Weinreich

A love of exploring new places brought Jill Weinreich to Venice in 1996 and she has never looked back. Being a freelance translator, English teacher and event organizer still leaves her with time to marvel at Venice's beauty, which never gets old!



bring a charge for daytrippers.

Italian Judaism Museum Opens

During World War II, the city prison in *Ferrara*, a city of about 133,000 between Bologna and Venice, detained Jews who came from Ferrara's *ghetto* and who were later sent to concentration camps. Now, that same prison has been converted to Italy's first museum dedicated to Jewish history.

The *National Museum of Italian Judaism and the Shoah* (MEIS) opened in December 2017 with a narrative, immersive and multimedia approach, incorporating interactive maps, timelines, video testimonials from Italian Jews, and minute-long films containing information from scholars. The museum's rooms are mostly empty of artifacts, choosing instead to tell the Italian-Jewish story through narration.

That said, the museum does have some Jewish artifacts that were found throughout Italy. One such piece, on loan from the National Archaeological Museum of Naples, is the epitaph of Claudia Aster, a 25-year-old brought from Jerusalem to Rome as a slave.

The temporary exhibit space was formerly the men's quarters of the prison. The run-down women's building was razed and, in the space where it once stood, is a garden called the "Maze of Questions" that explains Jewish dietary laws as visitors walk among planted herbs.

Museum director Simonetta Della Seta told the *Washington Post* that MEIS is not a Jewish museum, but rather "a national museum dedicated to Jews." Nor is it a memorial museum, she says, because "if you're going to

speak about Jews as dead people, it's not me" — as the museum focuses on the way Jews lived in Italy for thousands of years instead of how they suffered.

Italy has the oldest Jewish community in the Western world, dating back to

161 BC.
Romans
conquered
Jerusalem 200



Architectural fragments from Jerusalem



Garden of Questions

years later, and by 80 AD Romans had brought Jewish slaves from present-day Israel and had them build the Colosseum. In medieval times, after the Spanish Inquisition forced Jews to either convert to Catholicism or flee Spain, the ruling monarchs in Ferrara — at the time, the Este family — encouraged Jews to settle in the city, beginning Ferrara's 1,000-year-old connection to Jewish history.

However, like in the rest of Italy, Ferrara began to withdraw its welcome to Jews during World War II, forcing them to live first in ghettos and then in the city's prison before sending them to concentration camps. About 7,500 Italian Jews died in the Holocaust, and about 420 were killed in military combat.

At its most populous in 1800, Ferrara's Jewish community comprised about 2,000 people; today, only a few dozen

Jews live in the city. In all of Italy, the Jewish-Italian population at its height numbered about 50,000; today it is about 28,000.

A national museum of Jewish history has been a long time coming: MEIS is the result of a 2003 law passed by the Italian Parliament mandating the establishment of a national Jewish museum. This year is the 80th anniversary of Italy's anti-Jewish laws, that were put into place in 1938 — and, at a time when much of the Western world is grappling with the resurgence of anti-Semitism and nationalist ideology, MEIS brings into focus both the past and present.



MEIS exterior

In response to the museum's opening, Ferrara is once again becoming a center of Jewish culture. The city offers a self-guided walking tour of Jewish landmarks, including the synagogue, cemetery, and former ghetto, with a map available at the city tourist office.

In the next three years, the museum will add five new glass buildings in the shape of books — one to represent each book of the Torah — that will contain a kosher restaurant, auditorium, educational and youth spaces and an archive.

MEIS

Via Piangipane, 81
Ferrara
(39) 06 3996713
www.meisweb.it
Open Tuesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Admission: 10€



In the 1500s, Italy was the center of Jewish publishing.