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## Cooking Lessons with Italian Masters

🕒 AUGUST 2015 BY 👤 ROBERTA ROBERTI

*Eating good Italian food is great, but getting hands-on cooking lessons from chefs in Italy is even better*

Many travelers like to eat and drink their way around the world, but a sub-trend that's been growing in culinary tourism over the last few years is cooking instruction in various cuisines in their lands of origin. This is particularly popular in Italy, as more and more people want to master authentic Italian food. Authenticity has become a badge to be earned and displayed proudly, and Italian schools, restaurants, and hotels are accommodating travelers who want to learn directly from Italian cooking masters.

### Cooking Class in Puglia

The surge in culinary tourism has encouraged the rise of culinary travel agencies offering packages to multiple destinations that mix cooking classes with on-site food/beverage producer tours, product sampling, and site-seeing excursions. These packages are all-inclusive and include transfers and accommodations, many of which are 4- and 5-star hotels. (What's included will vary from company to company and, of course, prices will vary as well.) One program from **Tour de Forks** ([www.tourdeforks.com](http://www.tourdeforks.com)) to Emilia Romagna in northern Italy provides an example of such a package:

- Transfer from airport to hotel in Bologna
- 1 half-day guided tour for Bologna (with tastings)
- 3 nights in 4-star hotel in Bologna
- Visit + tasting/lunch at a traditional balsamic vinegar producer
- Half-day guided tour of historic Parma
- 2 nights at a country estate

Lifestyles” class may include some of the following dishes (as described on their site):

**Fiori di Zucca:** – delicate Italian squash flowers stuffed with Ricotta and basil.

**Arancini:** handmade rice balls, stuffed with cheese, peas, meat and flash-fried to a golden crisp.

**Focaccia and Pizza:** fresh handmade dough baked in a wood-burning oven topped with rosemary and fresh cherry tomatoes.

**Fresh Pasta and Ravioli:** learn how to mix ingredients for fresh pasta, a seasonal or cheese stuffing, such as Ricotta and pumpkin or smoked Mozzarella, basil and eggplant.

**Fresh Orata and Foglie di Limone:** fresh caught-sea bass grilled on lemon leaves. Pasta con le Vongole pasta with sea clams.

**Pasta e Zucca:** fresh country pumpkin sautéed with pasta.

**Tittoli:** fried polenta triangles.

**Melanzane Ripiene:** stuffed eggplant.

**Pesce all’Acqua Pazza:** Fish in “Crazy Water” with fresh tomato, white wine, garlic and parsley.

**Totani e Patate:** local calamari sautéed with potato and fresh cherry tomato.

**Risotto al Limone:** slow cooked rice in a creamy lemon sauce.

**Torta Caprese** chocolate almond cake from Capri.

**Torta di Limone:** tasty lemon cake made with almonds and lemons.

**Zeppole:** light fried pastries filled with cream and dusted with powdered sugar.

**Biscotti:** Italian cookies flavored with almond, orange or lemon.

### **Villa Scarpariello, Amalfi coast**

**Culture Discovery Vacations** ([www.culturediscovery.com](http://www.culturediscovery.com)) will take you to various Italian locales, and hook you up with olive oil and Medieval chestnut festivals and truffle hunting.

### **Casa Gregorio Kitchen, Rome**

At **Casa Gregorio** ([www.italyculinaryholiday.com](http://www.italyculinaryholiday.com)), there’s only one destination—Rome—but you can choose between two all-inclusive packages: “Roman Countryside,” which focuses on local traditions, and “La Dolce Vita,” which delivers a “sophisticated Italian dining experience not to be missed.”

If Tuscany is your focus, **Tuscookany** ([www.tuscookany.com](http://www.tuscookany.com)) has three programs to choose from: a one-week Italian, a three-day Italian, and a one-week Mediterranean. The Mediterranean program includes creating an “elaborate Italian dinner, a light Spanish lunch, an exotic Moroccan dinner, and a traditional French Provencal supper.”

Note that the prices these companies quote do not include airfare to Italy, but they do include transportation between destinations on the itinerary.

When you arrive home, you will not only have new skills in your culinary arsenal, you'll have amazing memories of apprenticing with master chefs in one of the most beautiful countries in the world. You also will have eaten some of the best food, tried some top-notch artisanal products, and maybe made a friend or two.

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*by Roberta Roberti*

Roberta is a writer and editor living in New York City. Her articles have appeared in numerous publications and her cookbook, [\*\*Vegetarian Italian: Traditions, Volume 1\*\*](#), was released in 2014, with volume 2 soon to follow. She is a graduate of The Natural Gourmet Institute in NYC, did her internship at The James Beard House, and had the honor of being a James Beard Scholarship recipient. Find out more about her here:

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