



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

FOOD JOURNEYS *of a* LIFETIME

500

*Extraordinary Places to Eat
Around the Globe*



COOKERY SCHOOLS IN ITALY

The locations are glorious, and the cuisine is exceptionally rich and varied. Up and down the Italian peninsula, schools teach you how to cook traditional dishes the authentic local way.

1 Villa Giona, Verona, Veneto

Lodged in the splendor of the 16th-century Villa Giona, you learn how to make dishes such as fresh tortelloni filled with Swiss chard and ricotta. Writer Giuliano Hazan gives the cookery instruction, while Marilisa Allegrini of the nearby Allegrini winery teaches you about Italy's wine regions. Also included are tours of dairies producing Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese.

Planning One-week courses are held four to five times a year. www.villagiona.it

2 Divina Cucina, Florence, Tuscany

A Florentine resident with more than 20 years of professional cookery experience, American Judy Witts Francini gives classes for up to six people, guaranteeing a hands-on experience for all. Menus change with the seasons, inspired by the offerings at Florence's Mercato Centrale, steps away from Francini's apartment.

Planning Classes are offered year-round. www.divinacucina.com

3 Cucina con Vista, Bagno a Ripoli, Tuscany

After a decade running the kitchen at La Baraonda restaurant in Florence, Elena Mattei opened her school in a farmhouse in the hills southeast of the city. Students learn how to make classic regional fare—"grandmother's cooking"—including chicken-liver pâté on toast and meatballs with tomato sauce. Guided tours of Florence's Sant'Ambrogio market and wine tours through Chianti are popular field trips.

Planning Cucina con Vista (Kitchen with a View) offers one- to four-day programs year-round. www.cucinaconvista.it

4 Villa San Michele, Fiesole, Tuscany

Housed in a 15th-century former Franciscan monastery, the Villa San Michele School of Cookery offers classes given by professional chefs from Italy's Orient-Express hotels. Sessions cover pastas, risottos, soups, and other Italian staples, with an emphasis on the Tuscan tradition.

Planning Classes are run from April through October. There is a program for children aged 8-14. www.villasanmichele.com

5 Alla Madonna del Piatto, Assisi, Umbria

Every lesson with the husband and wife duo, Letizia and Ruurd Mattiacci, begins with a shopping trip to the nearby village of Santa Maria degli Angeli. The focus of their classes, given in their farmhouse bed and breakfast north of Assisi, is Umbrian and Sicilian food, such as ravioli, fettuccine, and cantaloupe melon mousse. Seasonal vegetables and herbs come from their garden.

Planning The Mattiaccis run classes twice a week on weekdays, from mid-March through December. www.incampagna.com

6 Fontana del Papa, Tolfa, Lazio

In their 16th-century farmhouse north of Rome, Assuntina Antonacci and her husband Claudio host courses where you experience Italy through its cuisine in a home setting. As well as teaching you how to prepare pasta, gnocchi, saltimbocca, and calzone, the Antonaccis lead hikes through the countryside so you can sample local edible flora. All courses include wine and olive-oil tastings—the olive oils are produced on the property.

Planning Classes run year-round. www.cookitaly.it

7 Diane Seed's Roman Kitchen, Rome, Lazio

British-born cookbook author Diane Seed has lived in Rome for 30 years. You will leave her classes—given in her home in the Doria Pamphili Palace—with a wide repertoire of Roman recipes, including deep-fried zucchini flowers in yeast batter, *panna cotta*, and pork with fennel and orange. Trips to the market in the nearby Campo dei Fiori bring seasonality to the menu.

Planning Seed gives classes year-round, except August. She is famous for incorporating Roman history into her talks. www.dianeseed.com

8 Mamma Agata, Ravello, Campania

Amato "Mamma" Agata teaches cooking in her cliff-side home, situated 1,000 ft (300 m) above the Gulf of Salerno with majestic views along the Amalfi Coast. Day-long courses include a three-hour cookery session, where you learn home-style southern dishes. Mamma's cherished specialties include lemon cake and *limoncello*, using organic lemons from her garden.

Planning Classes are offered year-round. www.mammaagata.com

9 Savoring Sardinia, Orosei, Sardinia

In the seaside village of Orosei on Sardinia's east coast, chef Maria Chessa teaches you the secrets of island dishes, such as seafood risotto and fish ravioli. You tour vineyards and visit a baker making *pane carasau*—thin, crisp, double-baked bread, traditionally eaten by Sardinian shepherds. Lodging is provided in a family-run bed and breakfast, which also has an outstanding restaurant.

Planning Courses last four or seven days, from September through May. www.ciaolaura.com

10 Casa Vecchie, Valledlunga, Sicily

On her family's wine estate and farm near Palermo, cookbook author Anna Tasca Lanza teaches you how to prepare Sicilian sauces and specialties, such as caponata and pasta with sardines. You shop at markets in the village of Valledlunga, tour the family winery, and observe shepherds making local cheeses.

Planning One-, two-, three-, and five-day classes are available September–November and March–May. www.absoluteitalia.com

Right: The fruits and products of southern Italy's sun-drenched landscape are on display outside a shop on the spectacular Amalfi Coast, south of Naples.