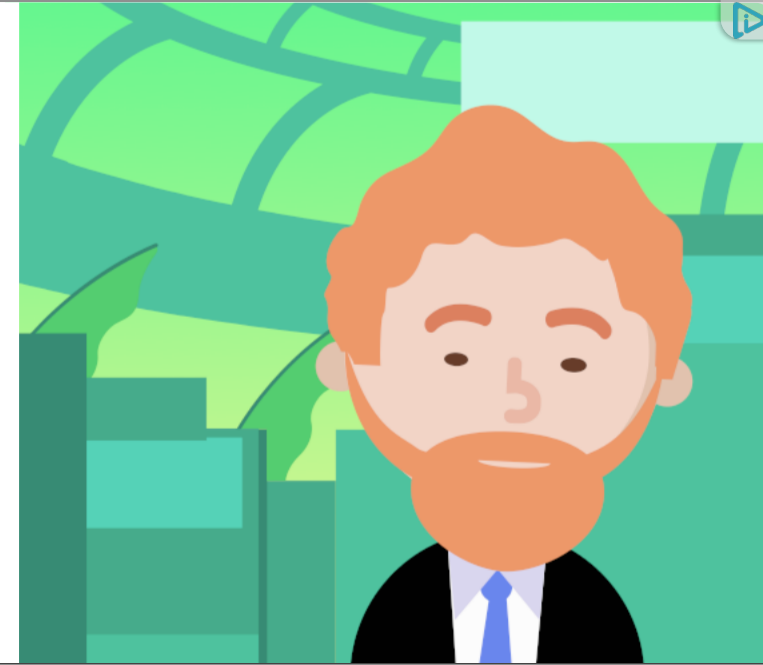


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Ten fantastic holidays for Italy-loving foodies



Photo: Danny Nicholson



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Any vacation in Italy will include plenty of food and drink, but why not learn how to cook your favourite dishes yourself? Here's our guide to ten food and drink-themed courses.

Learn to brew the perfect coffee



Photo: Salomé Chaussure/Flickr

Coffee is a key part of the Italian culture, but instead of simply spending your trip sipping *cappuccini* on terraces, why not get a taste for life on the other side of the bar? Florence's [Espresso Academy](#) offers a range of courses including basic, intensive and café latte art, while the [Terzi Coffee School](#) in Emilia Romagna offers intimate workshops in small groups. And if you're really serious about coffee, [Florence Culinary School](#) offers up to four weeks of lessons - or even *barista* internships for those with Italian language skills.

Take a pasta-making course



Photo: Luca Nebuloni/Flickr

Italian pasta is truly an art; there are over a hundred varieties, and each one pairs best with a certain type of sauce. To ensure you never again commit the cardinal sin of ordering spaghetti bolognese (find out why that's a no-no [here](#)), you can take a one-day pasta lesson at [Emilia Delizia](#) in Bologna or the city's [Culinary Institute](#), which offers a course taught by an Italian granny. In Naples, [Mami Camilla](#) offers a week-long course with two hours of pasta study each day.

Go truffle hunting



Photo: Kent Wang/Flickr

Italian truffles are one of the most prestigious ingredients out there - two years ago, a single truffle [sold for €90,000](#) at auction. But searching for them yourself is not advised as they can be hard to differentiate from poisonous varieties, or even to locate at all, so it's best to join a local expert. The good news is there are plenty of options to do just that - [Love Umbria](#) offers truffle-hunting tours, as does Tuscany-based [Truffle Hunter](#), where you can also learn how to cook with truffles or take a wine and truffle tour for a truly decadent experience. Both of these options are shorter trips, but with [Expressions Holidays](#) you can go to Piedmont for a five-day truffle extravaganza.

Whip up some gelato



Photo: Derek Key/Flickr

Most holidays to Italy will include plenty of gelato-eating, but why not make this the year you learn how to make your own ice cream? [Mama Isa](#), based near Venice, offers artisanal gelato-making courses between one and six days long and Bologna's [Gelato Museum](#) (yes, you read that right) offers everything from tasting sessions to 'gelatology' classes to afternoon workshops, while [Walks Inside Rome](#) provides child-friendly gelato lessons in the capital.

Indulge in Italian wine



Photo: Jeff Kubina/Flickr

Of course, any holiday can be a wine-tasting holiday if you want it to be, but taking an expert-led tour will add a touch of sophistication. Many bars and hotels across the country offer wine-tasting classes, but for the full experience, why not try a day trip with [Swirl the Glass](#), which runs wine tours across the Amalfi coast, or book a holiday with [Smooth Red](#), whose tours take place all over the country, lasting between three and seven days and specializing in bespoke experiences to fit your budget and preferences.

Become a pizza pro



Photo: Kenko*/Flickr

Learning to make a proper pizza (with no ham or pineapple in sight) in a wood-fired oven might just be the ultimate Italian culinary experience. [PizzAcademy Sanremo](#) offers afternoon masterclasses or you can become a *pizzaiolo* extraordinaire by taking a week-long course in Sorrento through [GoLearnTo](#) or with Sorrento-based [Travel with Laura](#). A word of warning though – once you've learned how to make the real deal, you'll never be able to look at a takeaway pizza again.

Get to grips with olive oil



Photo: Dave Fayram/Flickr

Italians take their olive oil pretty seriously, and the country has [made headlines](#) recently with reports of sub-quality oil being passed off as 'extra-virgin'. Learn how to tell the difference (you can start by [following our tips here](#)) and make your own top notch oil by enrolling on a course. [Toscana Mia](#) offers an olive oil and wine tasting tour where you'll learn about the different types of olive trees and the olive harvest, while the [Florence School of Olive Oil](#) offers comprehensive courses where you can learn to make your own.

The great Italian bake-off



Photo: jeffreyw/Flickr

From Sicilian *cannoli* (pictured) to Tuscan *biscotti*, Italy does sweet treats very well. [Culinary Vacations](#) offers workshops for bakers of all levels, and will tailor the lessons to include your favourite cakes. Alternatively, [Travel with Laura](#) offers a four-day course in

Sorrento covering a wide range of Italian bakes, with the option of an intensive course. And remember, if you've made it yourself, the calories don't count...

Become a bartender extraordinaire



Photo: Didriks/Flickr

If the extent of your drink-mixing skills is adding vodka to a variety of soft drinks, there's no better place to become an expert than in the home of the Bellini and Martini. You can take lessons in Italian cocktails in fancy Tuscany hotel [Il Pellicano](#) or opt for an ['Apericena' workshop](#) with award-winning food writer Elizabeth Minchilli in Rome, where you'll learn how to make Italian cocktails and finger food. If you're serious about doing it as a job, the [European Bartending School](#) in Milan offers four-week courses which will get you up to a professional standard.

Or just do a bit of everything



Photo: Revol Web/Flickr

Can't decide which of the courses you like the sound of best? No problem; plenty of companies run more general Italian cooking holidays, so you can build up a varied repertoire of dishes and wow dinner party guests once you get home. You can book via international agents such as [GoLearnTo](#), who may be able to advise you on a particular school, or book directly with local companies such as the highly-rated [Tuscookany](#) school, or organic farm [La Tavola Marche](#), which offers an *agriturismo* experience at a rural farmhouse



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