



VNY *La Voce di New York*

The First Italian English Digital Daily Newspaper in the US

≡ ENGLISH EDITION LETTERS NEW YORK U.N. NEWS PEOPLE ARTS LIFESTYLES FOOD & WINE TRAVEL ITALIAN EDITION 🔍



Food & Wine

October 20, 2022

The Hype About Tripe: An Acquired Taste but Eaten Worldwide

Not one of the stars of Italian cuisine, but certainly one of the most authentic and loved dishes



Italian Hours

Lucy Gordan



Trippa alla romana. Photo: Gordan/VNY

🕒 Time: 4 mins read

Think *cucina italiana* and you'll immediately come up with pizza, pasta, tomato sauce, pesto, and gelato. Few foreigners would ever dream that another multi-regional Italian dish is *trippa* or tripe, inexpensive, often stewed in tomato sauce and topped with grated *pecorino* (sheep) cheese.

Except for in the United States and Canada, it's eaten worldwide (especially in France). Nonetheless, although an acquired taste even for Italians, several of the *stivale's* cities, Treviso, Turin, Milan, Parma, Bologna, Genoa, Lucca, Florence, Naples, and Ragusa, boast their very own recipes.



Maurizio Marchetto's lampredotto stand in Florence. Photo: @fragolosablog

To name some examples: in Treviso it's a soup eaten on market days; in Turin they serve it with mushrooms; in Genoa with beans, peas, and potatoes; in Lucca with cinnamon; in Ragusa with capers, almonds, walnuts, thyme, and cinnamon; and in Naples simply boiled with salt and lemon juice. In fact, no self-respecting Neapolitan crèche would be complete without its 'o *piere e o' musso* (pig's feet and cow snouts) a seller's stall decorated with its garland of terracotta lemons. The Romans and the Milanese traditionally eat tripe on Saturdays, but in Milan they call it *busecca* and other Italians call the Milanese *buseconi* or tripe eaters. However, *busecca* is not your ordinary tripe; it comes from *la cuppa* and *la francese*, Milanese dialect for "cap" and "the Frenchwoman". The "cap" is the caul and "the Frenchwoman" is curly tripe.

In Florence, especially in the once working-class neighborhood of *San Frediano* in the *Oltrarno* or "Across the Arno", they too specialize in curly tripe, but they call it *lampredotto*, the lining of the cow's last stomach. After a morning seeing the masterpieces in the Pitti Palace and Massaccio and Masolino's frescoes in the Brancacci Chapel of *Santa Maria del Carmine* Church, stay in San Frediano to sample the city's best *lampredotto* together with the local craftsmen at *Trattoria Diladdarno* (*Via de' Seragli* 108r, 011-39-055-224917, closed Mondays), *Vinesio* (*Borgo San Frediano* 145r, 011-055-223449, closed Mondays) or *La Casalinga* (*Via dei Michelozzi* 9r, 011-39-055-218624, closed Sundays), three old-fashioned neighborhood *trattorie*.

Surprise: if you're short on time, *lampredotto* is the fast food of Florence. It's sold, boiling-hot, chopped finely before your eyes, from street carts, and served "*classico*" with salt and pepper for 4 euros or "*complete*" with green and/or hot sauce, also on a hard roll the top of which has been dipped in hot broth for 5 euros. Open from around 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. weekdays as well as Saturday mornings,



A lampredotto sandwich. Photo: [@fragolasablog.com](https://www.instagram.com/fragolasablog)

mobile *tripperie* are located at: *Loggia del Porcellino*, *Piazza de' Cimatori*, in the parking lot of *Piazza Porta Romana*, *Via dell'Ariento* (just outside the Central Market), *Via dei Macci* (near *Santa Croce* and the market of *Sant'Ambrogio*), *Lorenzo Nigro* in the Central Market, and *Via Maso Finiguerra* plus *Piazza dei Nerli* (south of the *Amerigo Vespucci* bridge).

Maurizio and his brother Roberto Marchetto own the cart in *Piazza de' Cimatori*. They are the nephews of *Palmiro Pinzuti*, nicknamed “Miro”, their cart’s first owner, whom I came to know well because I purposely lunched there every time I went to Florence. “Miro” had emigrated from Calabria some 40 years ago and at first sold *lampredotto* from his bicycle. On a recent visit Maurizio told me that *lampredotto* had to boil for at least two hours in vegetable broth and remain in the pot of very hot broth until served. He also told me that his best customers were Chinese, Koreans and Asians in general, whereas the British and South Americans won’t

even accept a taste.

As for Rome, the neighborhood for tripe is *Testaccio*, in ancient times the Eternal City’s port. *Testaccio* refers to the high hill of broken and discarded potsherds of the *terracotta* amphora containing grain, olive oil or wine unloaded there. Beginning in the 1880s, soon after the Unification of Italy, the municipal slaughterhouse was located here until it closed in 1975. Its workers were paid in kind with the *quinto quarto* or *fifth quarter*, ie. the part of the cow with no bones: offal (heart, lungs, liver, sweetbreads, tripe, and intestines) as well as oxtail.



Sergio Mariani, father of the present owners Elio and Francesco, serving a plate of rigatoni con la pajetta to Aldo Fabrizi and Amerigo Petrucci, the mayor of Rome (1964-7) Photo credit: www.checcinodal1887.com.

So, for the best tripe in Rome, head to *Checchino dal 1887*, today owned and run by the brothers Francesco and Elio, the fifth generation of the Marino family to own *Checchino dal 1887* (Via di Monte Testaccio 30, 011-39-065746318, closed Mondays. Nearby at Via Marmorata 39, also worth a stop is *Trattoria Perilli*, 011-39-065755100.

Farther afield on the Tiber Island at Via Ponte Quattro Capi 16, 011-39-06681601, closed Sundays-Wednesdays, is picturesque *Trattoria Sora Lella*, founded by Elena Fabrizi, the sister of the comedian Aldo and still run by her family.

A new biography with recipes *Annamo bene la cucina romana di Sora Lella* written by her four grandchildren, Mauro, Renato, Simone and Elena Trabalza, who run the *trattoria* today, with a preface by Carlo Verdone, was just published on October 19th by Giunti (24.90 euros).


Historically-speaking, in Rome there's an expression "*Non c'è trippa per gatti*" which literally translates: "There's no tripe for cats" and metaphorically means both "There's little hope that you'll achieve what you want, no matter how hard you try" and "You have to make do with what you have and not expect extras". Apparently when London-born Ernesto Nathan was mayor of Rome from 1907-13, he cancelled an entry in the municipal budget, which paid for "*frattaglie* (innards) *per gatti*". Nathan crossed it out and wrote in the margin "*Non c'è trippa per gatti*." Thus, no more public charity for the city's ever-increasing cat population!


Personally-speaking: Several years ago, before internet, I wrote a column in an American inflight magazine about the specialties and where to eat them in European cities. The editor sent me a FAX

asking: “Do the Romans really eat innards?? When I replied “Yes”, he wrote back: “And do you?”



The Neapolitan version of tripe. “O’ piero e o’ musso”.
Photo: Wikipedia

 Share on Facebook

 Share on Twitter



Lucy Gordan
Italian Hours

Former editor at the American Academy in Rome and at the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization, with journalistic accreditation in Italy and t...

DELLO STESSO AUTORE

The Hype About Tripe: An Acquired Taste but Eaten Worldwide
Lucy Gordan

Surprise: the First Pumpkin Pie Was Roman!
Lucy Gordan