**IT’S TIME FOR A WINTER FEAST**

**Food and wine in Trentino**

**Here, Italy meets the Alps, with spectacular gastronomic results.**

Trentino sits at the junction between two climates and several culinary traditions, and its cuisine is a melting pot of ingredients and methods. Dinner here might include olive oil from the shores of Lake Garda, cheese from a mountain dairy, pasta, local venison, and maybe some apple strudel made with an old Hapsburg recipe.

Parts of the province also offer superb conditions for wine-making. Sparkling Trentodoc Spumante, elegant Teroldego, sweet Vino Santo: at every stage of the meal there is something distinctive to drink. So whether you’re celebrating a spectacular day of skiing in a mountain refuge, snacking your way through a Christmas market, or sitting down to dinner in a Michelin-starred restaurant, you can expect a delicious and memorable experience.

**Climate, rigour, and authenticity: they’re all essential ingredients**

It’s the variety that strikes you first. Organic fruit and veg, craft beer, olive oil, fresh fish, venison, pasta, beef, and several unique kinds of cheese: we make or harvest them all in Trentino. But spend any time with us and pretty soon you’ll realise that it’s the quality and authenticity of our produce that really counts.

There’s a modern rigour to what we do, too – establishing DOP status for many of our products, controlling quality, and ensuring both the purity and authenticity of the raw ingredients. As a result, you’ll find every valley has its signature products, and its food heroes, too.

Highlights include the light, fruity olive oils from Garda Trentino; mortandela and speck from our artisan butchers; and trout and char from our lakes and rivers. Many of our local cheeses are made only with hay-milk, produced by cows fed exclusively on grass or hay. Puzzone di Moena, Vezzena and Trentingrana DOP are three of the names to look for.

**Three native grape varieties and a world-beating sparkling wine**

In Trentino, centuries of wine-making tradition are reflected in the fact we have three of our own indigenous grape varieties. We’re not short of modern ambition, either. In 1993 our Trentodoc Spumante was the first *metodo classico* sparkling wine outside Champagne to win D.O.C status - and comes festooned with international awards. If you want to add some sparkle to Christmas, or toast a memorable day out on the snow, it’s the natural choice.

Nosiola, Marzemino and Teroldego are our native grapes, but others love it here, too. Müller-Thurgau, for example, is producing spectacular results on the steep-sided hills of the Val di Cembra, thanks to the area’s hot days, cool nights and well-drained soils. The valley even has its own festival dedicated to the grape: the Rassegna dei Müller-Thurgau dell'Arco Alpino.

Of course, proper oenophiles will want to visit the cellars themselves. But for the quickest introduction to Trentino’s 500 D.O.C. wines, a tour of the Palazzo Roccabruna in Trento is a must. Here, the sommeliers of the Enoteca Provinciale run regular tasting nights, which will guide visitors to our best wine-makers and vintages.

**A taste of Christmas in our festive markets**

In the festive period, Christmas markets light up many of our towns and villages, and are the perfect place to sample seasonal flavours and treats. The biggest markets are in Trento and Rovereto, but the tradition is celebrated in every valley – often in beautiful and historic surroundings, such as Cavalese and Canale di Tenno. The markets usually run from late November until early January.

**Wherever you go, Zelten is a must.** Zelten means “rarely” in German, and the name gives you an idea of how special this rich Christmas fruitcake is. Every family has its own recipe, but the core of dried fruits, nuts, cinnamon and either grappa or rum is constant. Look out for local specialities too, such as *carne salada* (salted meat) with beans, which is served in Canale di Tenno, as well as honey, cured meats, fruit syrups, regional cheese, and – of course – mulled wine. You may be offered the odd shot of schnapps too.

**Nothing beats a meal in a gourmet mountain hut**

To understand just how distinctive and delicious a winter holiday in Trentino can be, you need to visit one of our gourmet mountain huts. Many are beside the pistes in our ski resorts: and international visitors are often stunned by the quality of the cooking and the reasonable prices, compared with ski areas elsewhere in the Alps. Among the names to be reckoned with are Fienile Monte close to Passo Sella above Canazei, Baita Checco in the Catinaccio ski area above Vigo di Fassa, Rifugio Meriz above Andalo, and the Rifugio Doss del Sabion, above Pinzolo.

But the most memorable meal in a mountain restaurant is usually dinner. That’s when the mountains are at their quietest, and the landscapes seem most magical. The contrast between the hushed, chilly landscapes outside and the warm hospitality within feels miraculous. Rifugio Fuciade, Capanna Cervino and the Malga Millegrobbe are among our atmospheric addresses.

For the full effect, you should try snow-shoeing beneath the stars to reach your supper. But if your legs are tired after a day of winter sports, don’t worry. Many hut owners will whisk you to and from your table by snowmobile or even a horse-drawn sleigh.

**Six of our restaurants now have Michelin stars**

Trentino’s rich mix of ingredients and culinary traditions is a godsend for our most ambitious and talented chefs. Six now have Michelin stars, including Alfio Ghezzi at Locanda Margon, just south of Trento. In November 2016 he won his second star – the first Trentino chef to do so.

In each of these stellar restaurants you can expect a warm welcome as well as a sense of gastronomic adventure. Among the many standout dishes is Stefano Ghetta’s *Uovo Soffice di Tamion* at ‘L Chimpl, in the Val di Fassa. A soft-egg confection of rich, deep flavours, it incorporates wild spinach from the fields next to the restaurant, local Cuor di Fassa cheese and black truffles from Monte Baldo above Lake Garda.

**Pizza: an Italian classic, with a Trentino twist**

Parents can relax. This is the land of pizza. There are few kids whose eyes won’t light up at the mention of it at suppertime.

The grown-ups will be licking their lips too, because in Trentino we’re pushing the boundaries of this classic Italian dish, with bases made from spelt and kamut, as well as ordinary flour, and toppings which bring together some of our best local produce. Look out for Trentingrana cheese, olive oil from Lake Garda and even venison prosciutto.

Info: [visittrentino.info/snow-italian-style](http://www.visittrentino.info/snow-italian-style)

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