

WEEKENDER

15 reasons to visit Rome

Craft beer, whimsical gelato flavours and twists on Roman classics are a few of the trends luring us to Italy's capital this spring

Words KATIE PARLA Map PATRICK O'LEARY



TRUST olive Katie Parla is a food historian, food critic, craft beer expert and author of the best-selling mobile app *Katie Parla's Rome*, a curated guide to the city's best drinking and dining destinations.

➊ Please refer to map on next page

Clockwise from top: Colosseum; gelato at Gelateria Fatamorgana; mont blanc de foie gras at Metamorfofi; Daniela's Cooking School

1 At **DalVerme** (Via Luchino Dal Verme 8, dalverme8.tumblr.com), a dimly-lit watering hole in Pigneto, bartenders craft cocktails to each customer's palate. Try an American classic like a sazerac or old-fashioned, or let the bartender tweak iconic European cocktails to your taste (from €5).

2 **Andrea De Bellis**, who opened his eponymous pastry shop near Campo de' Fiori (Piazza del Paradiso 56, pasticceriadebellis.com) in March, takes Roman dessert traditions to the next level with his creative concoctions. Employing the highest quality ingredients, his signature fried croissants and made-to-order millefoglie, are decadent, flaky homages to French tradition (from €2).

3 Swirl and sniff your way to Italian wine expertise with **Vino Roma** (Via in Selci 84G, vinoroma.com). At this wine tasting studio in the Monti, trained sommeliers teach the basics of drinking and enjoying vino. Focus on

regional specialities at 'My Italians' tastings or toast to the weekend with 'Sparkling Saturdays'. Tastings from €42 per person.

4 When in Rome, cook as the Romans do with **Daniela del Balzo** (danielascookingschool.com). Her cooking classes begin in the New Testaccio Market to buy fresh ingredients for the day's lesson before retreating to her stunning apartment near the Circus Maximus where she teaches her tricks of the trade. Classes from €150 per person.

5 Get a taste for Italy's budding Italian craft beer traditions at **Birra+ in Pigneto** (Via del Pigneto 105, birra+it). A rotating selection of eight domestic and foreign draughts entices casual drinkers (from €3.50), while connoisseurs come for rare bottles. Whiskey drinkers flock here for the ever-growing list of artisanal malts.

6 Rome may not be renowned for its international cuisine, but Ethiopian restaurant, **Mesob** (Via Prenestina 118, mesob.it), is the reason it definitely should be. Chef Kuki Tadese's doro wot (a spiced chicken stew) and braised collard greens will make you forget all about spaghetti alla carbonara. Her soulful dishes are served on delicious home-made gluten-free injera bread. Full meals from only €8.50.

7 At Michelin-starred **Metamorfofi** in Parioli (Via Giovanni Antonelli 30, metamorfofiroma.it), chefs Roy Caceres and John Regefalk blend their international culinary influences for a well-heeled crowd. For a thorough sampling of their creative cuisine, order the Assaporando menu, which features signature dishes such as deconstructed carbonara or a lacquered eel, glazed with a Japanese-style glaze, soy sauce, mirin, sake, sugar and eel bones. Tasting menus from €60. 🍷

PHOTOGRAPHS: ALAMY, KATIE PARLA, JUSTIN FOLKES/LOVELY PLANET TRAVELLER

eat away city break

8 Sergio Esposito's stall, **Mordi e Vai** in the New Testaccio Market (Via Alessandro Volta Box 15, mordievai.it) serves a limited but satisfying selection of Roman classics to take away or eat on the fly. Try the panino alla picchiapo (€3), a sandwich filled with braised beef made using Esposito's family recipe.

9 A 30-minute ride from central Rome to the end of the #8 tramline delivers you to the city's best trattoria, **Cesare al Casaletto** (Via del Casaletto 45, 0039 06 536015). The menu blends creative starters like fried gnocchi on a bed of pecorino romano and black pepper sauce, a twist on the classic pasta dish cacio e pepe, with more straightforward mains, such as stewed tripe and braised oxtail. The outstanding wine list focuses on traditional wines. Meals from €30.

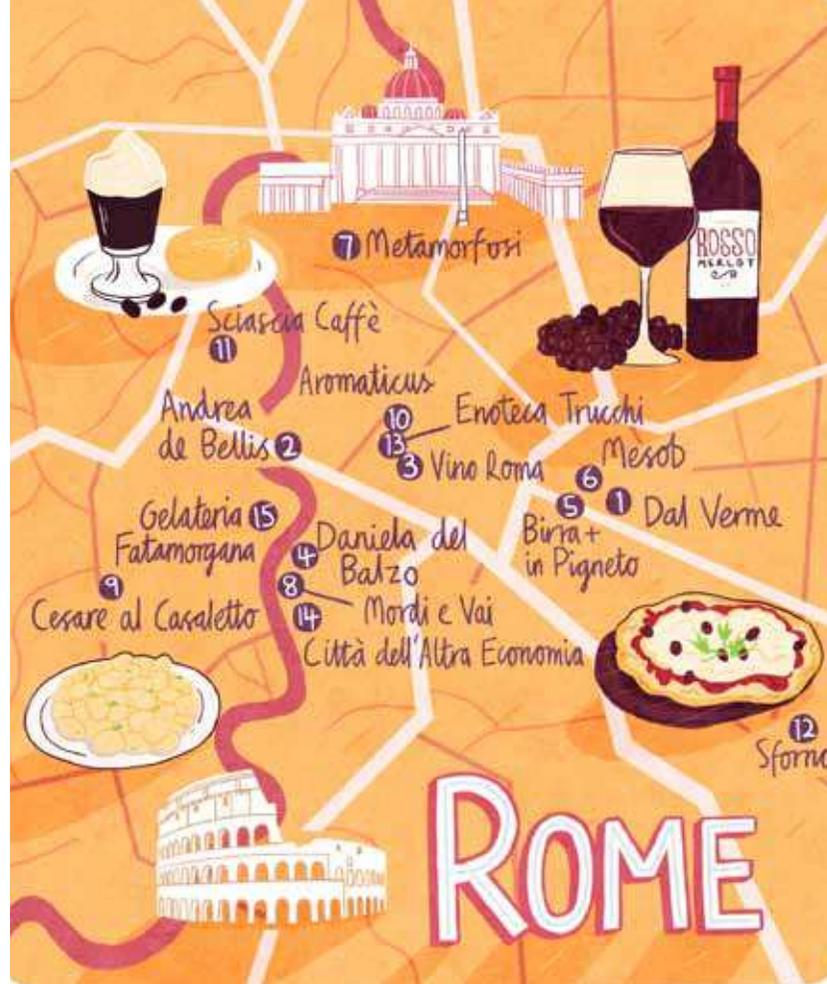
10 **Aromaticus** (Via Urbana 134, aromaticus.it), a gardening shop in the Monti district serves light and flavourful salads (from €7) made from aromatic herbs and seasonal produce.

11 Just north of the Vatican, **Sciascia Caffè** (Via Fabio Massimo 80A, sciascia1919.com) has been in business for nearly a century, serving intense but balanced espresso and other strong coffee (from €1) to a loyal clientele. In the summertime, ask for a granita di caffè, a slushy coffee-flavored drink served with whipped cream. Coffee from €1.

12 The best pizzeria in Rome? **Sforno** (Via Statilio Ottato, 110-116, sforno.it), which rejects the thin-crust, local style and embraces the thick-rimmed Neapolitan tradition (from €15). Start with supplì (deep fried rice balls), then pair your pizza with a craft beer.

13 Bustling wine bar, **Enoteca Trucchi** (Via Cavour 198, enotecatrucchi.it) recently added a tasting space next door where you can order wines by the glass. The mostly-Italian wine list is a who's who of the country's great female wine makers. Bottles from €15.

14 The ruins of this abandoned slaughterhouse were transformed into organic market and coffee shop, **Città dell'Altra Economia** (Largo Dino Frisullo, cittadellaltraeconomia.org), which also



hosts a farmers' market among the old corrals on Sundays.

15 Artisan gelato maker, Maria Agnese Spagnuolo, has a flare for creative flavour combinations. At each of her citywide **Gelateria Fatamorgana** outlets, look for



flavours like wasabi-grapefruit and, among the dozen dark chocolate flavours, Kentucky, made with unsmoked tobacco. Cups from €2. (gelateriafatamorgana.it)

For more information on Rome's tourist sights and restaurants, visit 060608.it

HOW TO DO IT

GET THERE fly from London Gatwick to Rome Fiumicino for (£59 return) (easyjet.com).

STAY THERE Check into the centrally-located and well-appointed rooms at the Hotel Ponte Sisto (hotelpontesisto.it) from €205 b&b, or try the more intimate accommodation at Hotel Campo De' Fiori (hotelcampodefiori.com), a boutique hotel near the market of the same name, with doubles from €242 b&b.

ON A BUDGET? Book a room at The Beehive (the-beehive.com), within easy striking distance of the city's main sites. Rooms from €70, dorm beds from €25.

€118*
PER PERSON

*price includes return flights and half share of the lowest rate double room listed above, for two nights.

Clockwise from top left: pizza at Sforno; fish from the New Testaccio Market; St Peter's Basilica and the city skyline