

BON APPÉTIT INSIDER

Rome Florence Venice

RESTAURANTS

HOTELS

MARKETS

WINE BARS

CAFFÉS

FOOD SHOPS

COOKING CLASSES

Where to go now? In Italy's three grandest cities, we've spent more than a year gathering all of the info on where to eat, sleep, and drink, and what not to miss.

We explored, talked to the locals, and ate at more than 200 restaurants. So no more guessing. Here's where to go now. This 14-page up-to-the-minute guide is the indispensable key to all the best places. ▶



The courtyard of the Hotel Locarno in Rome.

Hotels

Red-Hot Modern Haven

ALEPH Good versus evil, angels and demons...sounds more like a Dan Brown novel than a hotel, but this is the concept behind Rome's finest boutique hotel. Designer Adam Tihany plays with contrasts: heavenly blue rooms, blood-red lobby; rapturous spa treatments, sinful dungeon setting. And the hotel's location—just a short walk from the Spanish Steps—can't be beat. Via San Basilio 15; 011-39-06-422-901; boscolohotels.com

Best Value Downtown

HOTEL PORTOGHESI Faithful fans have been coming to this centrally located 27-room haunt for 185 years. And now all of the rooms—if still on the small side—have been modernized. The hotel is almost always booked with architects and historians, who find its location near most of the city's architectural jewels ideal. The prices, reasonable for Rome, and the rooftop breakfast terrace are added bonuses. Via dei Portoghesi 1; 011-39-06-686-4231; hotelportoghesiroma.com



The bar (left) and lobby of the Aleph hotel.

Room with a (Breath)aking View

HOTEL EDEN Sure it's beautiful, sure it's swank, but this hotel also offers some of the best views in town. And talk about location: on the hill just past the top of the Spanish Steps—right in the middle of the action. If a stay here is out of reach, dine at La Terrazza dell'Eden or

head up to the rooftop bar for a nightcap and a taste of the view. Via Ludovico 49; 011-39-06-470-121; hotel-eden.it

Chic and Comfortable

HOTEL MELLINI Hip but cozy, this hotel does everything right. There are luxe bathrooms, spacious guest rooms, and a pretty breakfast courtyard. On the west side of the Tiber River in Prati, the Mellini is near Vatican sightseeing and the funky caffés and shops of the Trastevere. Via Muzio Clementi 81; 011-39-06-324-771; hotelmellini.com

Cooking Classes

Best Place to Pretend You're Roman

DIANE SEED'S ROMAN KITCHEN The author of *The Top One Hundred Pasta Sauces* offers three-day, weekend, and weeklong cooking classes in her home, which overlooks Piazza Venezia. Students trek to the market to shop for ingredients, then help prepare lunch—with the Forum and the Colosseum as a backdrop. Via del Plebiscito 112; 011-39-06-679-7103; italiangourmet.com

Best Culinary and Cinematic Synergy

ROMAN HOLIDAY CULINARY ADVENTURES Remember the scene in *Roman Holiday* when Audrey Hepburn gets carried up the stairs in a palazzo garden? Welcome to your kitchen for the day. Health counselor Diane Epstein and private chef Jenny Nichols welcome students into Nichols's home (the famous movie setting) for a lesson in seasonal Roman cooking—and eating. Via Margutta 51; 011-39-06-578-0144; astheromansdo.com

Where Hemingway Would Have Stayed

HOTEL LOCARNO Make like a 1920s expat and surround yourself with Art Deco decor (be sure to request a room in the main building). Pop into the bar for an aperitivo—and creative little nibbles—before heading out to dinner, or swing by before bed for a digestivo. Great location: just west of the Piazza del Popolo, close to the Spanish Steps. Via della Penna 22; 011-39-06-561-0841; hotellocarno.com ▶