

An Italian Summer in Washington D.C.

Francesca Maltauro (July 18, 2017)



Exploring the "American Rome"! Italian food culture has found a following in the capital by appealing to both Italian Americans and new Italian immigrants.

As elsewhere in the United States, the Italian dining scene in Washington DC owes much of its success to the history of Italian immigrants and their settlement in the city, in particular at the beginning of the 20th century on the eastern side of Judiciary Square.

Although there is not really a Little Italy in Washington, like those in New York or San Francisco, the options for Italian dining are varied and of great quality. Better yet, the Italian food culture has found its way in the capital through both Italian Americans and Italian immigrants who created their own venues, sharing different backgrounds and experiences.

Thanks to these developments, the Italian dining scene is becoming more innovative and exciting, contributing to educating the Capital's residents on food and to awareness of the many shades of Italian cuisine—from regionally-focused restaurants to classic Italian fare, from Neapolitan pizza to all-Italian delis—you will find a spot for every palate in D.C.

Take Fiola in Penn Quarter, for instance: it shines thanks to renowned chef Fabio Trabocchi, who



brings Italian fine dining to an altogether new level. Furthermore, as Italy speaks through its regions, so does Italian food, and D.C.'s increasing regional spots reflect this, from the Milanese Sette Osteria to the Neapolitan Il Canale. And don't miss [Al Tiramisù](#) [2], featured in this issue with our exclusive interview to its founder and chef [Luigi Diotaiuti](#) [3].

So, enjoy our selection for this Summer and stay tuned for more on i-Italy.org!

Our Selection for this Summer

NORTHWEST

[Siroc](#) [4]

915 15th Street NW
(202) 628-2220

Cuisine: Modern

Ambience: Elegant

Price: \$\$\$

The wide range of meal options and knowledgeable staff at Siroc create a fantastic dining experience. Head chef Martin Lackovic has traveled the world to perfect his highly refined menu after his upbringing in a family of restaurateurs. After years of research and training in South Africa and Europe, he returned to the United States to open his very own restaurant in Washington DC. Each dish at Siroc is filled with flavor, and the wine list is impressive—with a selection from Tuscany, Piedmont, Veneto, and Campania. However, if you're in the mood for something other than an Italian wine, pop the cork on a bottle from France or Spain. Lackovic orchestrates flavors from high quality ingredients pumped into Italian pastas, meats, and sweets to create sensory delights. If you are looking for top notch food, solid service, and the feeling of being spoiled, Siroc is the perfect place for you.

PENN QUARTER

[Fiola](#) [5]

601 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
(202) 628-2888

Cuisine: Traditional

Ambience: Elegant

Price \$\$\$\$

Fiola prides itself on its fresh cheese, seafood, meats, and pasta that create a well-rounded and authentic Italian experience. Fabio Trabocchi, from a farming family in Le Marche, and his wife Maria, the daughter of a Spanish diplomat, formed a culinary dream team from their passion for gastronomy. They constantly set the bar high for themselves and strive to develop inventive recipes. The menu has specials that change daily, but it always contains delicacies. The cocktails, coffees, and wines available pair well with the rest of the menu. The wines change seasonally but are primarily from Italy, Spain, and Germany. A trip to Fiola is sure to turn any day into a special occasion.

GEORGETOWN



[Pinstripes](#) [6]

1064 Wisconsin Avenue NW
(202) 625-6500

Cuisine: Traditional
Ambience: Trendy
Price: \$\$\$

Pinstripes is not your ordinary Italian restaurant. Here, a typical mellow atmosphere is replaced by family entertainment. Upon entering the beautiful brick building alongside the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, you'll have the chance to satisfy your cravings while challenging your friends and family to a game of Bocce ball or bowling. With its massive menu, private event rooms, heated outdoor patio, thirst quenching cocktails, and modern G-town vibe, this fun "Bistro, Bowling, Bocce" joint keeps patrons extremely satisfied. The beverage menu is extensive and includes wine, beer, and cocktails. Many of the wines you'll see are produced in Napa Valley, and at the bar you'll find seasonal beer on tap. The lunch and dinner menus offer Italian-American classics such as incredible flat bread pizzas, zuppa del giorno, and highly praised jumbo crab cakes. The alluring cuisine, helpful staff, and lively atmosphere create a sophisticated experience that is absolutely worth every penny.

DUPONT CIRCLE

[Sette Osteria](#) [7]

1666 Connecticut Avenue NW
(202) 483-3070

Cuisine Regional (Milanese)
Ambience Rustic
Price \$\$

This is the perfect combination of a convenient location, great outdoor and indoor dining options, speedy service, and tasty food for brunch, lunch or dinner. Sette Osteria utilizes fresh ingredients for each authentic Italian dish such as spaghetti alla carbonara, penne all'arrabbiata, fried calamari, and many more. If you're in the mood for a pizza, you can choose from almost 20 different types that are baked in the restaurant's wood-fired oven. The wine list is a fabulous compilation of bottles from Piedmont, Veneto, Tuscany, and Calabria along with domestic wines from California. Perhaps you're curious how Sette Osteria got its name; sette in Italian means "seven" and is superstitiously recognized across Italy as being a lucky number. For a wonderful Italian experience in America's capital, Sette Osteria is the place to go.

COLUMBIA HEIGHTS

[Maple](#) [8]

3418 11th Street NW
(202) 588-7442

Cuisine: Traditional
Ambience: Cozy
Price: \$\$

Nestled in 11th street's "hip strip," Maple adds a splash of Italian culture to the thriving Columbia Heights neighborhood. Get the night started with a delightful selection of cocktails and wines and a



tasty appetizer at their trendy wooden bar. Their signature dishes feature the freshest ingredients and are sure to send your tastebuds on a Mediterranean excursion. Some noteworthy menu options include linguine puttanesca, bruschetta with eggplant, and a mouthwatering lamb ragù with tagliatelle. These succulent entrees will keep you coming back for more. On the weekend be sure to stop by for brunch. The egg and cheese panini—accompanied by a buy one, get one free Mimosa or Bloody Mary—is sure to cure a bad case of the weekend “brunchies.” With the floor to ceiling windows and refined decor, Maple provides a refreshing environment.

A NEIGHBORHOOD GEM IN GEORGETOWN

[Il Canale](#): [9]

Where Italians Go to Eat (and drink) Italian
1065 31st Street NW (Georgetown)
(202) 337-4444

Located in the heart of charming Georgetown, **[Il Canale](#)** [10] has become a real neighborhood gem, providing great quality since its opening. It is a delight and remains true to its motto: “It’s where Italians go to eat Italian.” Owner Joe Farruggio was born in Sicily and moved to the US when he was 17 years old in order to follow his dream of entering into the American food industry. Specializing in Southern dishes, with a focus on Neapolitan fare, chef Farruggio brought to the Capital the best of southern Italian fare, with tantalizing appetizers, like the classic Arancini siciliani, fried rice balls filled with mozzarella, meat sauce and green peas, or the flavor-packed Impepata di Cozze, steamed mussels with extra virgin olive oil, parsley, crushed black pepper. Or try their homemade pasta, from **Scialatielli** with Seafood, to pillowy gnocchi and ravioli filled with meat deliciousness. All pasta and meat dishes are equally as delicious and maintain that same fabulous Neapolitan quality. **Chef Farruggio** knows how to keep his clientele, especially since he brought his skills for pizza making to DC. His thin crust pizza creates unavoidable feelings of nostalgia for anyone who has previously experienced true Italian pizza. With the options of white, red and stuffed pizzas, everyone will be satisfied. Diners at Il Canale will be able to see their pizza in the making, thanks to the dedicated area in the restaurant. To make it even more special and genuine, chef Farruggio wisely imported the beautiful wood-fired oven from Naples, as he does with Buffalo mozzarella, and various other ingredients that preserve the authentic Italian taste. Il Canale protects Neapolitan pizza’s heritage as a member of **[Verace Pizza Napoletana Association](#)** [11], which sets the standard for the perfect Neapolitan pizza. Dig into one of these mouth-watering pies, from the classic Margherita to the Del Pizzaiolo, with Buffalo mozzarella, burrata, arugula, bresaola, and grape tomatoes, and you will want to come back for more! Also, ask your waiter for the extensive wine list: the staff is not just friendly, they are also very knowledgeable about the best pairings and very attentive to your needs--they will enhance your whole dining experience. And the setting is beautiful too: bright, modern, and ample.

In other words, Il Canale is a perfect entry into Washington D.C. Italian dining scene.

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