



“A plate of pasta with Grazia from Bologna“

[21. März 2021](#) / [fraufritzsche](#) / [Keine Kommentare](#) / [Bearbeiten](#)

Today I eat "A plate of pasta with.... Grazia." I take you virtually to Bologna and to a very special host who is very close to my heart: Grazia Azzaroni. A true Bolognesi and an expert on the cuisine of Bologna and Emilia Romagna. Bologna stands above all for its cuisine, especially for its pasta tradition. So it was natural for me to go in search of a host in Bologna who would show me the pasta world of Bologna authentically, privately and at home. A cooking school is out of the question for me. When Grazia opened the door to her apartment I was immediately in love, so to speak. Here two equal souls have met, with the same passion for Italian cuisine, the same warmth and love to cook together. Grazia reveals you some real Bologna insider tips for your next city trip, she makes you really hungry for the world's best lasagna and warms your heart, it's all about food and travel. Just read for yourself.

Grazia, we're chatting over a plate of pasta. What is your favorite pasta?

Actually I don't have a favorite pasta, I have many favorite pastas. Since I grew up eating fresh and seasonal food, pasta is associated with a special part of the year and events for me. Now it's spring, so I'd love to chat with you over some homemade lasagna with artichokes.

Perfectly selected. Lasagna makes my mouth water and artichokes are one of my favorite vegetables. What does this mean to you?

Artichokes are healthy, easy to prepare and also delicious. The six layers of lasagna sheets are alternated with grated Parmigiano Reggiano and bechamel. You could finish them with a light red wine. A delight.



Grazia in her kitchen - of course there is lasagna.

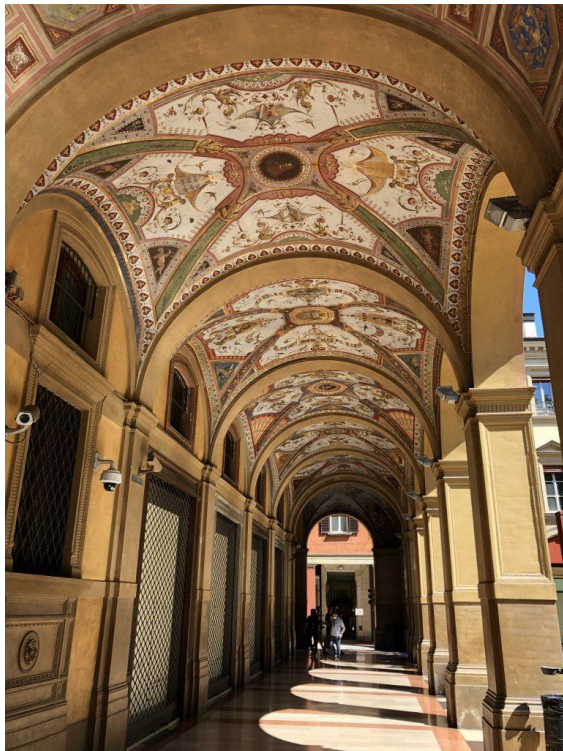
Ohhhh, now I want to eat a piece of your lasagna right away. My fork is already ready. So quickly get off the subject. Bologna is your home. What makes the city so lovable for you? What do you actually call the people of Bologna?

My family has been from Bologna for three generations, since 1900. I know the people of Bologna very well, we call ourselves Bolognesi. When I talk about us, I can say that I love my

people, for better or for worse, just like you love and accept your family. The good is a big part of our historical background and character, the area is rich and the people in the city have always been prosperous, culturally progressive and open-minded, in Bologna new trends are created in different fields. Character-wise, we like to enjoy life in all its aspects, we are tireless workers, hospitable and generous, family-loving and tradition-conscious.

I can only underline that. Hospitable, generous, family-loving and traditional - I felt all of that about you right away. You live that. What would you recommend to someone who has not yet been to Bologna. What should he or she do or see?

That's the one tip I have for anyone visiting Bologna who doesn't have too much time. Bologna is crisscrossed by ancient and elegant arcades for almost 40 kilometers, which are the essence of the city. They have very ancient origins, considering that they date back to the Middle Ages, when Bologna became a popular destination for literati and people who came from the countryside. Originally they were made of wood, today they are made of stone, with the exception of the arcades of Casa Isolani in Strada Maggiore, which are still original. Walking under the arcades of Bologna is like going back in time. You can choose between different itineraries through the center of Bologna, it is generally the best way to move around the city center.



Die Porticis Bolognas



Das Universitätsviertel

You can also visit the University of Bologna, which was founded in 1088. It is the second oldest existing university in the world after the University of al-Karaouine in Morocco. During the Middle Ages it was an important center of European intellectual life and attracted scholars from all over Christendom. If you like music, visit the famous Museum of Music, which attracts visitors from all countries. And you can always take a gelato break. Speaking of gelato, remember that the University of Gelato is here in Bologna.

I enjoyed strolling under the Arcades. One immediately feels noble like the ladies of the world and a small side effect is that a visit to the city is completely independent of the weather. I would definitely like to visit the Gelatoma Museum. During my stay, it had unfortunately not worked out with the free dates under Corona. So as a Bolognainsider: Do you have a "secret" favorite place or tip for my readers?

I love to go shopping in the morning at the outdoor market stalls. It reminds me of the time when I used to go there every Saturday morning with my mom. I'm talking about the area around the "Quadrilatero." It had its greatest development in the Middle Ages and has not changed its vocation over the years. Goldsmiths, butchers, fishermen, "salaroli" (workers who pickled meat to cure it), the furriers, barbers and the society of painters, the most important craft guilds of the city, were based here. At the beginning of the 20th century, most of these guilds moved to the heart of the district. In the Middle Ages they were located in the narrow alley called Middle Market, which later, after the reconstruction, became Via Rizzoli. Today it is located in an area of the historical center of Bologna bordered by Piazza Maggiore, Via Rizzoli, Piazza della Mercanzia, Via Castiglione, Via Farini, Piazza Galvani and Via dell'Archiginnasio. In this area there is a high density of stores, especially jewelers, butchers, delicatessens, greengrocers, bakeries, stores with traditional cuisine and artisan activities and other specialized trades with a long tradition. These are stores where often families have passed the business from generation to generation. The "Quadrilatero" is one of the places where you can see the identity of the city and its long and lively economic and cultural history.



Mercato di Mezzo

This is also one of my favorite neighborhoods and reading your description makes me want to grab my shopping basket and head out. Let's stay with the culinary. Bologna is nicknamed "La grassa"/ "the fat one" and is synonymous with cuisine. What is the specialty in Bologna?

Actually, Bolognese people don't like to be associated with something "fat" as "Bologna, the fat", that's why we like to speak of "Bologna, the city of food". Bologna's cuisine has ancient origins that go back to the Middle Ages, when the city was one of the six most famous and richest cities in what is now called Europe. Bologna was as famous as Paris. Some of the most popular fresh egg pasta varieties are handmade in Bologna. We have many specialties, I'll just pick two for your readers, tortellini and lasagna. A famous chef once said: "Keep the softness of lasagna alla Bolognese in your mouth piece by piece; let the rich flavors of ragù, bechamel sauce and parmesan cheese melt away; you have all the fat Bologna - La Grassa - on your side".



Grazia with a guest making tortellini.

I'm tasting it on my tongue right now, too. I find "the city of food" also much more appropriate. It's one big treat and a delight. Can you tell us about Bologna's traditional cuisine?

The traditional cuisine of Bologna is the celebration of food. Traditional families still cook and prepare the dishes all together on special occasions and during holidays. I think we have it in our DNA, we prepare our meals according to the ritual of tradition. For me, lasagna is at the top of the list. Lasagna used to be very different from what we know today. Originally it was cut into squares, baked in a pot and served with cheese and vegetables. It was not until the 14th century, when it was recorded in an old cookbook of the time, that lasagna began to be cooked in layers. Finally, in 1935, Paolo Monelli (1891-1984), in his famous book "The Wandering Glutton", reported his experience with the green lasagna from Bologna. This event meant a boost for the presence of this traditional cuisine all over the world, especially after the Second World War. Tortellini, tortelloni and tagliatelle should also be put on the podium, along with Bolognese-style mixed roast, Bolognese escalope, amazing cured meats like mortadella, prosciutto, coppa di testa, pancetta fresca, salame. If you like cake, the risotto cake is my absolute favorite since I was a kid, I can eat a whole baking pan by myself!

The risotto cake sounds a bit special at first. But important to know: It is purely one of the best desserts in Bologna. Your description of tradition warms my heart. Because that's exactly what I fell in love with. We know each other personally. Last year I stood in front of your apartment to learn from you about the traditional cuisine of Bologna and how to make tortellini in the original. For me, from the first moment, it was as if we had known each other forever. I really learned so much from you and really appreciate your recipes and knowledge. All the things you just described, you also live in your cooking classes. What do you still remember?

I remember feeling the same way about you. It seemed like we had met a long time ago. That's the magic of making pasta from scratch, with flour-smeared hands in a Bolognese kitchen. Tasting amazing flavors sometimes unknown to the palate is the best part of this culinary experience.



Me - rolling out the pasta dough in Grazia's kitchen



At the table at Grazia`s home I felt like a little queen

We both have a similar professional socialization and a love of Italian cuisine. In the meantime, you've left PR behind and devoted yourself entirely to the kitchen. What can guests learn from you - and how can they book with you?

My guests and I, we both learn from each other, we love homemade food. I show how to prepare with the secret ingredient I learned from my mother and my mother learned from my grandmother, the secret that makes all recipes absolutely delicious, joy and love. I share my love and joy of cooking traditional, festive family dishes, along with the spirit of Bolognese family cooking. I also enjoy teaching how to present food. Guests can inquire and book through my English-language website: <https://www.frommykitchen.it> or by emailing mgraziazzaroni@mail.com.

And I can really recommend this from the bottom of my heart. When you are in Bologna, let Grazia enchant you into the real Bologna. You'll feel the true spirit of Italian cuisine and tradition. The pasta plate is slowly emptying and we come to the last question: where does a Bolognesi go on vacation in Italy?

Well, I usually go on vacation in the summer. In June I like to go for a few days to Riccione or Milano Marittima on the Adriatic coast, two tourist seaside resorts where I used to go with the family, I feel at home there. In July or August I like to spend my vacation on a small island, rent a small motorboat and spend my days swimming, sunbathing and eating fish freshly caught by the local fishermen.

That sounds like a dream vacation and really good relaxation. Good food and feet in the sea, lovely. Thank you so much for sharing a plate of pasta with me. I'm longing to finally make up for my postponed second trip to Bologna to cook with you again.

While creating this post I actually got such a huge craving for lasagna, I made one the same day - traditional artisan of course. You can find my recipe [here](#).

Fancy a city break to Bologna? Then check out my travel post. A little tour and tips for your stay in Bologna can be found [here](#).



Eine selbstgemachte Lasagne hebt dich mit allen Sinnen in den Himmel