

A TOUR OF *Italian* *Flavor*



Paisano's Restaurant offers fine Italian cuisine and an education about the diverse flavors of Italy.

By Alexandria Zertuche

It has become common knowledge that Paisano's Trattoria & Pizzeria is the place to get delicious and authentic Italian food in Georgetown. Most of the cuisine at Paisano's is the classic comfort food that immediately comes to mind when most people think "Italian": velvety soups, savory pastas, and, of course, pizza. However, Chef Karim Aliani spent several years studying cooking in Northern Italy, and hopes to dispel the notion that there is a single monolithic "Italian" cuisine.

Northern Italian cuisine tends to focus on butter, cream, and meat-based sauces--such as alfredo and bolognese--because Northern Italy, neighbor to Switzerland and Austria, enjoys mountainous terrain and a wealth of excellent grazing for cattle. Central Northern Italy is the origin for quintessential Italian food products like prosciutto di Parma and Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese. These staples have made their way into Southern Italian cuisine--and indeed, all over the world.

Despite influence from the north, Southern Italy has a cuisine all its own. It is best described as bright and lively, as it is imbued with the flavors of the Mediterranean: tomatoes, olives (and olive oil), and fish. Pizza



hails from the south; the classic pizza Margherita--a specialty at Paisano's--derives most of its flavors from the vibrant and fresh produce available in the Southern Italian climate.

Italian wines also differ greatly by region. Those who enjoy white Italian wines such as Pinot Grigio or Moscato might be interested to know that chances are, they were imported from the north. Prosecco, an increasingly popular Champagne-like sparkling wine, is also northern. The north of Italy is not just for white wine, however: important reds like Sangiovese and Valpolicella are also produced there. Southern Italy produces spicy Grenache and fruity Syrah grapes which can be found as varietals as well as blended. Naturally, Paisano's features a wine list that showcases the best wines from all over Italy, and staff are happy to offer suggestions and pairings that will make any meal sing.

Paisano's does, however, have a specialty that would be difficult to find

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in either Northern or Southern Italy: their gluten-free menu. Co-owner Jeana Aliani's own gluten intolerance led them to develop this menu to help others with similar dietary restrictions enjoy amazing Italian food. In particular, Paisano's gluten-free pizza is both exceptional and exceptionally popular. For more information about Paisano's, as well as their full menu, visit www.paisanoscucina.com or call 512-863-6344.

Paisano's
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