



il
GARGANELLO
- adventures in italy -

Emilia Romagna Part I

Cervia, Milano Marittima & Cesenatico

Our food journey begins in Matteo's home region of Emilia Romagna! Famous for it's food & hospitality!

Matteo's home is a 20 minute drive from the Adriatic Coastal towns of Milano Marittima, Cervia and Cesenatico or well over an hour in peak summer season. Italians and foreigners flock to these seaside destinations for the sun and to be seen, Milano Marittima being the most famous for VIPs and people watching. Personally I prefer the beaches on the Mediterranean coast in Liguria however it is well known the hospitality you will discover in Emilia Romagna is far superior.

August is the peak summer season, I would try to avoid it as it's the most expensive and sometimes the beaches have to be closed because of the water quality...ahem yes which can be quite uninviting. Italians, as I discovered, don't necessarily go to the beach to swim and for crystal clear waters, more for the right "Bagno" with a good bar/restaurant to meet up with friends.

Milano Marittima comes alive at night time with bars, restaurants and shops staying open till late in the summer season.

Cervia is possibly more beautiful in winter especially when the sun is shining, I have great memories of long walks along the canal after a long lazy lunch...

Matteo's first kitchen job was in Milano Marittima at a bar/restaurant called "Loco Squad", we still love going there in summer time with it's casual yet romantic setting, delicious food and a great wine selection. It is always first on our list!

Perhaps the most historic produce from the region is the Sale di Cervia from La Salina Camillone, sea salt has been harvested here since Etruscan times (pre-Roman). In summer from June to early September you can take a guided tour and watch the salt harvesting process on Thursdays and Sundays, and purchase bags of this delicious seasoning to take home.



FOOD

Pescheria di Cesenatico / Pescheria Comunale

This 100 year old fish market is located in
Piazza Fiorentini, 5, 47042 Cesenatico
Monday to Saturday from 8.30am

As Matteo say's, the earlier you go the better and always look for locally sourced produce – Matteo loves Triglie (Mullet), Cannocchie (a crustacean most similar to Morton Bay Bugs with a sweeter taste), Vongole (clams and he prefers the smallest ones), Seppie (little cuttlefish) Alici freschi (fresh anchovies), Sgombri (Spanish Mackerel), Rombo (Turbot), Ali di Razza (sting ray wings) and my personal favourite wild caught Branzino (Sea Bass) and Orata (sea Bream) – these won't be inexpensive but are absolutely delicious.

Il Mercato dei Contadini

Monday – Saturday from 7.30am until 12 ish
This beautiful fruit and vegetable market is located behind the Pescheria di Cesenatico in Piazza Fiorentini

Casa Del Formaggio Cervia

Piazza Andrea Costa, 40, 48015 Cervia
Open Monday to Saturday
A lovely food providore for cheese, salumi, pasta, biscotti, oils, vinegars... we found ourselves here daily

Cafe Degli Archi

Piazza Andrea Costa 36
We have been coming here for years! Best coffee and brioche I have found and a great location near to the seaside. Note the Piazza/car park is full on Thursdays for the market!

Mercato di Cervia

Piazza Andrea Costa
Open Thursdays 8am till 1pm
This is not about food, but everything else! Every Thursday throughout the year this outdoor market consumes piazza Andrea Costa, note that if you are wanting to park near the shops / cafes in Cervia it's best to avoid the Piazza on Thursdays!

Osteria / Bar Loco Squad

Viale Forli 24, Milano Marittima
In summer it's open weekdays from 5pm and weekends from 11am This was the place of Matteo's first summer job in a kitchen! Very cool bar and osteria, meet for a drink and people watch or stay for dinner and listen to their cool tunes.

Osteria del Gran Fritto

Corso Giuseppe Garibaldi 41
Porto Canale 47042 Cesenatico
The second restaurant of Ristorante La Buca, this osteria is one of the first (of very few) restaurants right on the beach in Milano Marittima. They are family friendly, do a great fritto misto (fried little fish, prawns and calamari) but don't ask for any lemon! I love taking the kids to the beach in the morning and walking over for a lazy fish lunch with a glass of chilled Verdicchio! If you would prefer more elegant dining La Buca is beautiful, generally best to order the tasting menus on offer so you can try more dishes and keep your budget under control!

Vittorio Ristorante

Zona Darsena a Ponente
Via A Doria 3, Cesenatico
This is our all time favourite restaurant in the area, old school but fabulous. I'd go with the waiters recommendation but must have is the risotto "alle Vongole" which comes to the table in a copper saucepan, it's a generous serve for a minimum of 2 people.

Ristorante Le Ghiaine

Via Romea Nord, 180 Cervia
Opened by friends on Matteo's, this is a fabulous place to eat outdoors in summer offering regional dishes from Romagna with a modern touch. Note: take insect repellent for out door dining!

Agriturismo CaMi

Via Argine Sinistro, 84 Ravenna
Named after the owners (the chef and his partner Mi) this is a relaxed but elegant restaurant and about 10 minutes drive from downtown Milano Marittima. Great fresh produce and another modern take on regional dishes.

Bagno Salsedine 367

Via Marradi, 11, Lido di Savio
Another seaside place Matteo worked at in his early chef years. This is such a great place, owners Alessandro (Dusman) and Alessandra year in year out are the best hosts. They offer everything from beach beds (lettini), lunch, dinner and their beach bar is perfect for an aperitivo. We generally go for the day, have lunch and a bottle or two of wine from their great wine list and relax for the afternoon and into the early evening before heading home. Dusman is passionate about wine and always has new discoveries for us to try each year. 367 is the number of the Bagno, which means there are plenty to choose from but this is our favourite.

Wine Market

Viale Matteotti, 54 Milano Marittima
If you are looking for some great wine for your holiday the Wine Market has always been great.

Gelato "Lo Slurp"

Rotonda 1 Maggio 17, 48105 Cervia Milano Marittima

Gelateria Jolly

viale Alfredo Oriani 25, 48015 Cervia Milano Marittima

Puro & Bio

Viale Nazario Sauro 136, 48015 Cervia

Piadina

There are Piadinarie everywhere in their striped tents cooking delicious piadina to order which is always a great street food option for lunch or an afternoon snack! Matteo's favourite is Prosciutto di Parma, Stracchino (fresh spreadable cheese from cows milk) & Rucula.

Tagliolini al Nero di Seppia con Vongole e Fiori di Zucca

Squid Ink Tagliolini with Pippies & Zucchini Flowers

Great fish markets are like lolly shops for Matteo, and we always buy more than we planned! The day he made this pasta dish he bought enough produce to make:

- Scampi, prepared similar to sashimi, butterflied and served with lemon zest, EVOO & Sale di Cervia
- Anchovies, crumbed & fried
- Squid Ink Tagliolini with Pippies
- Poached sting ray wing salad with steamed potato, cherry tomatoes, celery & parsley
- Calamari with fresh figs & rocket
- Sea Bass risotto with wild herbs

Needless to say it was a big day spent in the kitchen and a wonderful afternoon of eating!

Ingredients

for 4 serves:

- 400g Squid Ink Tagliolini
 - 1Kg Pippies
 - Garlic 2 cloves
 - Fresh Thyme or Marjoram 2 sprigs
 - 8 Zucchini Flowers (clean and cut in thin strips)
 - Extra Virgin Olive Oil
 - Salt
 - Black Pepper
 - Parsley, finely chopped
- Preparation:



First step is “blanching” the pippies. In a large saucepan pour water (just to cover the bottom); add garlic, herbs, a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil and the pippies. Turn the burner on and cover with the lid; as soon as the pippies start opening, remove them from the pot into a tray to cool down.

If your saucepan/pot is not big enough for a whole kg of pippies, you can do this in smaller batches (using the same liquid).

As soon as you can handle them, start removing the pippies from the shell. Pour the cooking liquid through a sieve to remove any sand from the pippies and reserve on the side.

Bring 5 litres of water to the boil (with 40 to 45g of salt in it); in another saucepan (I would use a 30/32 cm wide), bring the reserved liquid from the pippies to the boil.

Cook the tagliolini in the salted boiling water (if you are using fresh pasta, it will take a couple of minutes only; in case of bought pasta, follow the cooking instructions).

Strain them “al dente”, let’s say 30/40 seconds before they are cooked, and toss them in the boiling liquid from the pippies, making sure you stir constantly to cook to finish cooking the pasta.

Add the pippies and zucchini flowers, drizzle some extra virgin olive oil. Stir through the pasta. At this point if you need more liquid to finish cooking the pasta, use some of the pasta cooking water.

Now you have to make sure that the pasta is cooked (the way that you like it) and the sauce is “creamy” and not too thin; you can find this out using a wooden spoon: if you can draw a line in the bottom of the pan, the sauce is perfect! Finish with parsley and serve.

Buon appetito!