

## Where to Dine

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**E**ven though Venice doesn't grow much of its own produce, it's surrounded by a rich agricultural district and plentiful vineyards, and specializes in fresh seafood. Venice's restaurants are among the most expensive in Italy, but we've found some wonderful moderately priced trattorie.

Some restaurants still offer a *menu turistico* (tourist menu) at a set price. It includes soup (nearly always minestrone) or pasta, followed by a meat dish with vegetables, topped off by dessert (fresh fruit or cheese), plus a quarter liter of wine or mineral water, bread, cover charge, and service (you'll still be expected to tip). Some restaurants serve a fixed-price meal called a *menu a presso fisso*, which rarely includes the cost of your wine but does include taxes and service.

If you want only a plate of spaghetti or something light, you can patronize any number of fast-food cafeterias (also look for *rôtisserie* or *tavola caldas*). You don't pay a cover charge and can order as much or as little as you wish. Pizzerias are another good option for light meals or snacks. Many bars or cafe-bars also offer both hot and cold food throughout the day. If you're lunching light in the heat, ask for panini, rolls stuffed with meat. *Tramezzini* are white-bread sandwiches with the crust trimmed.

### 1 Near Piazza San Marco

#### VERY EXPENSIVE

**Harry's Bar** (★★) VENETIAN Harry's Bar serves some of the best food in Venice, though your tab will be painful. Harry, by the way, is an Italian named Arrigo, son of the late Commendatore Cipriani. Like his father, Arrigo is an entrepreneur extraordinaire known for his fine cuisine. His bar is a big draw for martini-thirsty Americans, but Hemingway and Hotchner always ordered bloody marys in their day. The most famous drink, which was originally concocted here, is the Bellini Prosecco and white-peach juice, wonderful when created properly, though we've had a watered-down horror here in the off season (a real disappointment at 13€/16\$). You can have

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your choice of dining in the bar downstairs or the room with a view upstairs. We recommend the Venetian fish soup, followed by the scampi thermidor with rice pilaf or the seafood ravioli. The food is relatively simple but absolutely fresh.

Calle Vallarosso, San Marco 1323. ☎ 041-5285777. www.cipriani.com. Reservations required. Main courses 50€–100€ (\$60–\$120). AE, DC, MC, V. Apr–Oct daily 10:30am–1am; Nov–Mar daily 10:30am–11pm. *Vaporetto*: San Marco.

## EXPENSIVE

**Antico Martini** ★★☆☆ VENETIAN/INTERNATIONAL Antico Martini elevates Venetian cuisine to its highest level (though we still give Harry's a slight edge). Elaborate chandeliers glitter and gilt-framed oil paintings adorn the paneled walls. The courtyard is splendid in summer. An excellent beginning is the *risotto di frutti di mare* ("fruits of the sea") in a creamy Venetian style with plenty of fresh seafood. For a main dish, try the *fegato alla veneziana*, tender liver fried with onions and served with polenta, a yellow cornmeal mush. The chefs are better at regional dishes than at international ones. The restaurant has one of the city's best wine lists, featuring more than 350 choices. The yellow Tocai is an interesting local wine and especially good with fish dishes.

Campo San Fantin, San Marco 1983. ☎ 041-5224121. Reservations required. Main courses 25€–65€ (\$30–\$78); fixed-price menus 47€–55€ (\$56–\$66) 4-course, 80€ (\$96) 6-course. AE, DC, MC, V. Thurs–Mon noon–2:30pm; Wed–Mon 7–11:30pm. *Vaporetto*: San Marco or Santa Maria del Giglio.

**La Caravella** ★★☆☆ VENETIAN/INTERNATIONAL La Caravella has an overblown nautical atmosphere and a leather-bound menu that may make you think you're in a tourist trap. But you're not. The restaurant contains four dining rooms and a courtyard that's open in summer. The decor is rustically elegant, with frescoed ceilings, flowers, and wrought-iron lighting fixtures. You might begin with an antipasti *misto de pesce* (assortment of fish) with olive oil and lemon juice, or prawns with avocado. Star specialties are *granceola* (Adriatic sea crab on carpaccio) and chateaubriand for two. The best item to order, however, is one of the poached-fish options, such as bass, priced according to weight and served with a tempting sauce. The ice cream in champagne is a soothing finish.

In the Hotel Saturnia International, Calle Larga XXII Marzo, San Marco 2397. ☎ 041-5208901. Reservations required. Main courses 30€–35€ (\$36–\$42). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–3:30pm and 7pm–midnight. *Vaporetto*: San Marco.

**Quadri** ★★☆☆ INTERNATIONAL One of Europe's most famous restaurants, the Quadri is even better known as a cafe (p. 168); its

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## *Tips* Fish Tips

Venice's restaurants specialize in the choicest seafood from the Adriatic—but beware that the fish dishes are *very* expensive. On most menus the price of fresh grilled fish (*pesce alla griglia*) commonly refers to the *etto* (per 100g) and so is a fraction of the real cost. Have the waiter estimate it before you order to avoid a shock when your bill comes.

The fish merchants at the Mercato Rialto (Venice's main open-air market) take Monday off, which explains why so many restaurants are closed on Monday. Those that are open on Monday are selling Saturday's goods—beware.

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elegant premises open onto Piazza San Marco, where a full orchestra often adds to the magic. Many diners come just for the view and are often surprised by the high-quality cuisine and impeccable service (and the whopping tab). Harry's Bar and the Antico Martini serve better food, though the skills of Quadri's chef are considerable. He's likely to tempt you with dishes like scallops with saffron, salt codfish with polenta, marinated swordfish, and sea bass with crab sauce. Dessert specialties are “baked” ice cream and lemon mousse with fresh strawberry sauce.

Piazza San Marco, San Marco 120–124. ☎ 041-5289299. Reservations required. Main courses 33€–45€ (\$40–\$54). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sun noon–2:30pm and 7–10:30pm. *Vaporetto*: San Marco.

## MODERATE

**Centrale Restaurant & Lounge** VENETIAN/MEDITERRANEAN Only a 1-minute walk from Piazza San Marco in the center of Venice, this restaurant lies in a historical *palazzo* dating from 1659. The facade is pierced with three showcase windows on Piscina Frezzeria, plus an antique door opening directly onto the water canal, Rio dei Barcaroli, should you arrive by gondola. It's location is divine—just 30m (100 ft.) from the La Fenice opera house. Spike Lee or other celebrities visiting Venice might be seen lingering for hours (at least until the un-Venetian hour of 2am), enjoying after-theater cocktails in its lounge, with bamboo, screen, metal chairs, and a backlit crystal bar over busy fabrics. The intelligent, flavorful cuisine features such delights as risotto with scampi and champagne; black tagliolini flavored with squid ink served with raw scampi; or lobster served with pepper, lemon, garlic, and olive-oil sauce. Chefs make a delightful beef carpaccio and also satisfy the

palate with a beef filet with a green or pink peppercorn sauce served with steamed fresh vegetables.

Piscina Frezzeria, 1659B San Marco. ☎ 041-2960664. Reservations required. Main courses 14€–26€ (\$17–\$31). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 7pm–2am. *Vaporetto*: San Marco.

**Da Ivo** ★ TUSCAN/VENETIAN Da Ivo has a faithful crowd. The rustic atmosphere is cozy and relaxing, your well-set table bathed in candlelight. Florentines head here for fine Tuscan cookery, but regional Venetian dishes are also served. In season, game, prepared according to ancient traditions, is cooked over an open charcoal grill. One cold December day our hearts were warmed by homemade *tagliatelle* (flat noodles) topped with slivers of *tartufi bianchi*, the unforgettable pungent white truffle from Piedmont. Dishes change according to the season and the availability of ingredients, but are likely to include swordfish, anglerfish, or cuttlefish in its own ink.

Calle dei Fuseri, San Marco 1809. ☎ 041-5285004. Reservations required. Main courses 30€–40€ (\$36–\$48). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–2:30pm and 7–10:30pm. Closed Jan 6–31. *Vaporetto*: San Marco.

**Do Forni** ★ VENETIAN Centuries ago, this was where bread was baked for monasteries, but today it's the busiest restaurant in Venice, even when the rest of the city slumbers under a wintertime Adriatic fog. It's divided into two sections, separated by a narrow alley. The locals prefer the front part, which is decorated in Orient Express style. The larger section in back is like a country tavern, with ceiling beams and original paintings. The English menu (with at least 80 dishes, prepared by 14 cooks) is entitled "Food for the Gods" and lists specialties like spider crab in its own shell, risotto primavera, giant grilled scampi, and sea bass in parchment.

Calle dei Specchieri, San Marco 457. ☎ 041-5232148. Reservations recommended. Main courses 19€–28€ (\$23–\$34). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–4pm and 7pm–midnight. *Vaporetto*: San Marco.

**Ristorante da Raffaele** ★ ITALIAN/VENETIAN The Raffaele has long been a favorite canal-side restaurant. It's often overrun with tourists, but the veteran kitchen staff handles the onslaught well. The restaurant offers the kind of charm and atmosphere unique to Venice, with its huge inner sanctum and high-beamed ceiling, 17th- to 19th-century pistols and sabers, wrought-iron chandeliers, a massive fireplace, and hundreds of copper pots. The food is excellent, beginning with a choice of tasty antipasti or well-prepared pastas. Seafood specialties include scampi, squid, and

deep-fried fish. The grilled meats are wonderful. Finish with a tempting dessert.

Calle Larga XXII Marzo (Fondamenta delle Ostreghe), San Marco 2347. ☎ 041-5232317. Reservations recommended Sat–Sun. Main courses 12€–26€ (\$14–\$31). AE, DC, MC, V. Fri–Wed 11:30am–2:30pm and 6:30–10pm. Closed Dec 10–Jan. *Vaporetto*: San Marco or Santa Maria del Giglio.

**Ristorante Noemi** VENETIAN The decor of this place includes a multicolored marble floor in abstract patterns and swag curtains covering big glass windows. The foundations date from the 14th century, and the restaurant opened in 1927, named after the matriarch of the family that continues to own it. Specialties, many bordering on *nuova cucina*, include homemade ravioli filled with duck and black truffles, salmon crepes with cheese, and fillet of sole Casanova, with a velouté of white wine, shrimp, and mushrooms. For dessert, try the special lemon sorbet, made with sparkling wine and fresh mint.

Calle dei Fabbri, San Marco 912. ☎ 041-5225238. Reservations recommended. Main courses 19€–28€ (\$23–\$34). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sun 11:30am–1am. Closed Dec 15–Jan 15. *Vaporetto*: San Marco.

**Taverna la Fenice** ★★ ITALIAN/VENETIAN Opened in 1907, when Venetians were flocking in record numbers to hear the bel canto performances in nearby La Fenice opera house (which burned down a few years ago), this taverna is one of Venice's most romantic dining spots. The interior is suitably elegant, but the preferred spot in fine weather is outdoors beneath a canopy. The service is smooth and efficient. The most appetizing beginning is the selection of seafood antipasti. The fish is fresh from the Mediterranean. You might enjoy the *risotto con scampi e arugula*, *tagliatelle* with cream sauce and exotic mushrooms, John Dory fillets with butter and lemon, turbot roasted with potatoes and tomato sauce, scampi with tomatoes and rice, or *carpaccio alla Fenice*.

Campiello de la Fenice, San Marco 1939. ☎ 041-5223856. Reservations required. Main courses 20€–31€ (\$24–\$37). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sun 7–11pm. *Vaporetto*: San Marco.

**Trattoria La Colomba** ★ VENETIAN/INTERNATIONAL This is one of Venice's most distinctive trattorie, its history going back at least a century. Modern paintings adorn the walls; they change periodically and are usually for sale. Menu items are likely to include at least five daily specials based on Venice's time-honored cuisine, as well as *risotto di funghi del Montello* (risotto with mushrooms from the local hills of Montello) and *baccalà mantecato* (milk-simmered dry

cod seasoned with onions, anchovies, and cinnamon and served with polenta). The fruits and vegetables used are for the most part grown on the lagoon islands.

Piscina Frezzeria, San Marco 1665. ☎ 041-5221175. Reservations recommended. Main courses 35€–50€ (\$42–\$60). AE, DC, MC, V. Fri–Wed noon–3pm; daily 7–11pm. Closed Wed Nov–Apr. *Vaporetto*: San Marco or Rialto.

## INEXPENSIVE

**Le Bistrot de Venise** ★ *Finds* VENETIAN A classic Venetian cuisine, based on time-tested recipes handed down from generations, is served at this well-attended cafe-brasserie, which is also the site of occasional live music and poetry readings. It is countercultural hip, and attracts a lively crowd, often young and often local, until late at night. Many of the recipes are from the 16th or 17th century, and until the revival of this bistro were relatively forgotten by Venetian chefs. You might begin with a soup enjoyed in Venice 3 centuries ago: fennel with egg yolk, grapes, pine nuts, and cinnamon. One main-course recipe even dates from the 14th century—

### Something Sweet

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If you're in the mood for some tasty gelato, head to the **Gelateria Paolin**, Campo Stefano Morosini (☎ 041-5225576), which offers 20 flavors. It has stood on the corner of this busy square since the 1930s, making it Venice's oldest ice cream parlor. You can order your ice cream to go or eat it at one of the sidewalk tables (it costs more if you eat it at a table). April through October it's open daily 10am to midnight; November through March hours are daily 10am to 8:30pm.

One of the city's finest pastry shops is the **Pasticceria Marchini**, Ponte San Maurizio, San Marco 2769 (☎ 041-5229109), whose cakes, muffins, and pastries are the stuff of childhood memories for many locals. The high-calorie output of the busy kitchens is displayed behind glass cases and sold by the piece for eating at the bar (there are few tables) or by the kilogram for takeout. The pastries include traditional versions of *torte del Doge*, made from almonds and pine nuts; *zaleti*, made from a mix of cornmeal and eggs; and *bigna*, akin to zabaglione, concocted from chocolate and cream. It's open daily 8:30am to 8:30pm.



ravioli with herbs, sweet spices, and cheese. An old-fashioned quiche with prawn tails and scallops is served with an orange sauce, and sea-bass filet comes in a light almond crust with saffron sauce. A favorite dish of ours is the baked monkfish with cherry tomatoes in a marinated nest of zucchini. For desserts, we recently sampled a white truffle parfait in a vanilla-and-poppy-seed glaze.

Calle dei Fabbri, San Marco 4685. ☎ 041-5236651. Main courses 14€–30€ (\$17–\$36). MC, V. Daily 11am–1am. *Vaporetto*: Rialto.

**Le Chat Qui Rit** *Value* VENETIAN/PIZZA This self-service cafeteria/pizzeria offers food prepared “just like mama made.” It’s very popular because of its low prices. Dishes might include cuttlefish simmered in stock and served on a bed of yellow polenta, or various fried fish. You can also order a steak grilled very simply, flavored with oil, salt, and pepper or a little garlic and herbs. Main-dish platters are served rather quickly after you order them.

Calle Frezzeria, San Marco 1131. ☎ 041-5229086. Main courses 4.50€–15€ (\$5.40–\$18); pizzas 6€–9€ (\$7.20–\$11). AE, DC, MC, V. Nov–Mar Sun–Fri 11am–9:30pm; Apr–Oct daily 11am–9:30pm. *Vaporetto*: San Marco.

**Osteria alle Botteghe** VENETIAN/ITALIAN Once you’ve located the bigger-than-life Campo Santo Stefano, you’ll find this osteria a great choice for a light snack or an elaborate meal. Stand-up hors d’oeuvres (*cicchetti*) and fresh sandwiches can be enjoyed at the bar or the window-side counter; more serious diners can choose from pasta dishes or *tavola calda* (a buffet of prepared dishes like eggplant parmigiana, lasagna, and fresh cooked vegetables in season, reheated when you order) and repair to tables in the back. Vegetarians will be happy with the vegetable lasagna. Classic dishes include a tender Venetian liver with polenta.

Calle delle Botteghe, San Marco 3454. ☎ 041-5228181. Main courses 8€–15€ (\$9.60–\$18). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11am–4pm; Tues–Sun 7–11pm. *Vaporetto*: Accademia or Sant’Angelo.

**Trattoria da Fiore** *Value* VENETIAN/ITALIAN Don’t confuse this trattoria with the well-known and very expensive Osteria da Fiore. You might not eat better here, but you’ll be a lot happier when your bill arrives. Start with the house specialty, *penne alla Fiore* (prepared with olive oil, garlic, and seven in-season vegetables), and you may be happy to call it a night. Or skip right to another popular specialty, *fritto misto*, comprising more than a dozen varieties of fresh fish and seafood. The *zuppa di pesce*, a delicious bouillabaisse-like soup, is stocked with mussels, crab, clams, shrimp, and chunks of

fresh tuna. This is a great place for an afternoon snack or light lunch at the Bar Fiore next door (10:30am–10:30pm).

Calle delle Botteghe, San Marco 3461. ☎ 041-5235310. Reservations suggested. Pasta dishes 8.50€–15€ (\$10–\$18); main courses 18€–25€ (\$22–\$30). AE, DC, V. Wed–Mon noon–3pm and 7–10pm. *Vaporetto*: Accademia.

## 2 In Castello

### EXPENSIVE

**Do Leoni** ★★ VENETIAN/INTERNATIONAL For years this restaurant was known by the French version of its name, Les Deux Lions. In the elegant Londra Palace, it offers a panoramic view of a 19th-century equestrian statue ringed with heroic women taming (you guessed it) lions. The restaurant is filled with scarlet and gold, a motif of lions patterned into the carpeting, and reproductions of English furniture. Lunches are brief buffet-style affairs, where diners serve themselves from a large choice of hot and cold Italian and international food. The appealing candlelit dinners are more formal, emphasizing Venetian cuisine. The chef's undeniable skill is reflected in such dishes as chilled fish terrine, baked salmon in champagne sauce, and baby rooster with green-pepper sauce. If the weather permits, you can dine out on the piazza overlooking the lions and their masters.

In the Londra Palace, Riva degli Schiavoni, Castello 4171. ☎ 041-5200533. Reservations required. Main courses 16€–36€ (\$19–\$43). Guests of the Londra Palace receive 10%–30% discount. AE, DC, MC, V. Restaurant daily noon–3pm and 7:30–11pm; bar daily 10am–12:30am. *Vaporetto*: San Zaccaria.

### MODERATE

**Al Covo** VENETIAN/SEAFOOD Al Covo has a special charm, due to its atmospheric setting, sophisticated service, and the fine cooking of Cesare Benelli and his Texas-born wife, Diane. What's their preferred dish? They respond, "That's like asking us, 'Which of your children do you prefer?'" Look for a reinvention of a medieval version of fish soup; potato gnocchi flavored with go (local whitefish); seafood ravioli; linguine blended with zucchini and fresh peas; and delicious *fritto misto* with scampi, squid, a bewildering array of fish, and deep-fried vegetables like zucchini flowers. Al Covo prides itself on not having any freezers, guaranteeing that all food is fresh every day. Note that this place is near Piazza San Marco, not near Rialto, as you might think when you see a square on your map with a similar name.

Campiello della Pescaria, Castello 3968. ☎ 041-5223812. Reservations recommended for dinner. Main courses 9€–26€ (\$11–\$31); fixed-price menu 49€ (\$59). No credit cards. Fri–Tues 12:45–2:15pm and 7:45–10pm. *Vaporetto*: Arsenale.

**Al Mascaron** VENETIAN Crowd into one of the three loud, boisterous dining rooms here, where you'll probably be directed to sit next to a stranger at a long trestle table. The waiters will come by and slam down copious portions of fresh-cooked local specialties: deep-fried calamari, spaghetti with lobster, monkfish in a salt crust, pastas, savory risottos, and Venetian-style calf's liver (which locals prefer rather pink), plus the best seafood of the day made into salads. There's also a convivial bar, where locals drop in to spread the gossip of the day, play cards, and order vino and snacks.

Calle Lunga Santa Maria Formosa, Castello 5225. ☎ **041-5225995**. Reservations recommended. Main courses 13€–25€ (\$16–\$30). No credit cards. Mon–Sat noon–3pm and 7:30–11pm. Closed Jan. *Vaporetto*: Rialto or San Marco.

**Nuova Rivetta** *Value* SEAFOOD Nuova Rivetta is an old-fashioned trattoria where you get good food at a good price. The most popular dish is *frittura di pesce*, a mixed fish fry that includes squid or various other “sea creatures” from the day's market. Other specialties are gnocchi stuffed with spider crab, pasticcio of fish (a main course), and spaghetti flavored with squid ink. The most typical wine is sparkling Prosecco, whose bouquet is refreshing and fruity with a slightly sharp flavor; for centuries it has been one of the most celebrated wines of the Veneto.

Campo San Filippo, Castello 4625. ☎ **041-5287302**. Reservations required. Main courses 8€–15€ (\$9.60–\$18). AE, MC, V. Mon–Sat 10am–10pm. Closed July 23–Aug 20. *Vaporetto*: San Zaccaria.

**Restaurant da Bruno** VENETIAN On a narrow street about halfway between the Rialto Bridge and Piazza San Marco, this “country taverna” grills its meats on an open-hearth fire. You get your antipasti at the counter and watch your prosciutto being prepared—paper-thin slices of spicy ham wrapped around breadsticks (*grissini*). In season, Bruno does some of Venice's finest game dishes. A typical Venetian dish prepared well here is *zuppa di pesce* (fish soup). Other specialties are beef filet with pepper sauce, scampi and calamari, veal scaloppine with wild mushrooms, and squid with polenta.

Calle del Paradiso, Castello 5731. ☎ **041-5221480**. Main courses 10€–30€ (\$12–\$36); fixed-price menu 12€–25€ (\$14–\$30). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–3pm and 6:30–11pm. *Vaporetto*: San Marco or Rialto.

**Ristorante Corte Sconta** SEAFOOD The Corte Sconta is behind a narrow storefront you'd ignore if you didn't know about this place. This modest restaurant boasts a multicolored marble floor, plain wooden tables, and not much of an attempt at decoration. It has become well known, however, as a gathering place for artists,

writers, and filmmakers. As the depiction of the satyr chasing the mermaid above the entrance implies, it's a fish restaurant, serving a variety of grilled creatures (much of the "catch" is largely unknown in North America). The fresh fish is flawlessly fresh; the gamberi, for example, is placed live on the grill. A great start is marinated salmon with arugula and pomegranate seeds in olive oil. If you don't like fish, a tender beef fillet is available. The big bar is popular with locals.

Calle del Pestrin, Castello 3886. ☎ 041-5227024. Reservations required. Main courses 13€–20€ (\$16–\$24). MC, V. Tues–Sat 12:30–2:30pm and 7:30–9:30pm. Closed Jan 7–Feb 7 and July 15–Aug 15. *Vaporetto*: Arsenale.

### 3 Near the Ponte di Rialto

#### EXPENSIVE

**Al Grasso de Uva** ★ SEAFOOD/VENETIAN “The Bunch of Grapes” is a great place for a special meal. Decorated in old taverna style, it offers several air-conditioned dining rooms. One has a beamed ceiling, hung with garlic and copper bric-a-brac. Among Venice's best fish restaurants, it's hosted biggies like Liz Taylor, Jeanne Moreau, and Giorgio de Chirico. You can help yourself to all the hors d'oeuvres you want (the menu tells you it's “self-service mammoth”). Next try the *gran fritto dell'Adriatico*, a mixed treat of deep-fried fish. The desserts are also good, especially the peach Melba.

Calle Bombasari, San Marco 5094. ☎ 041-5200150. Reservations required. Main courses 28€–35€ (\$34–\$42). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sun noon–3pm and 7–11pm. Closed Aug 5–20. *Vaporetto*: Rialto.

#### MODERATE

**Fiaschetteria Toscana** ★ *Value* VENETIAN There may be some rough points in the service at this hip restaurant (the staff is frantic), but lots of local foodies come here to celebrate special occasions or to soak in the see-and-be-seen ambience. The dining rooms are on two levels; the upstairs level is somewhat more claustrophobic. In the evening, the downstairs is especially appealing with its romantic candlelit ambience. Menu items include *frittura della Serenissima* (mixed platter of fried seafood with vegetables), veal scallops with lemon-Marsala sauce and mushrooms, ravioli stuffed with whitefish and herbs, and several kinds of Tuscan-style beefsteak.

Campo San Giovanni Crisostomo, Cannaregio 5719. ☎ 041-5285281. Reservations required. Main courses 15€–30€ (\$18–\$36). AE, DC, MC, V. Wed–Mon 12:30–2:30pm; Wed–Sun 7:30–10:30pm. *Vaporetto*: Rialto. Closed July.

**Il Milion** VENETIAN With a tradition extending back more than 300 years and a location near the rear of San Giovanni Crisostomo,

this restaurant is named after the book written by Marco Polo, *Il Milion*, describing his travels. In fact, it occupies a town house once owned by members of the explorer's family. The bar, incidentally, is a favorite with some of the gondoliers. The menu items read like a who's who of well-recognized Venetian platters, each fresh and well prepared. Examples are veal kidneys, calf's liver with fried onions, grilled sardines, spaghetti with clams, risotto with squid ink, and assorted fried fish. The staff is charming and friendly.

Corte Prima al Milion, Cannaregio 5841. ☎ 041-5229302. Reservations recommended. Main courses 10€–20€ (\$12–\$24). AE, MC, V. Daily noon–3pm and 6:30–11pm. Closed Aug. *Vaporetto*: Rialto.

**Il Sole Sulla Vecia Cavana** ★ *Finds* SEAFOOD This restaurant is off the tourist circuit and well worth the trek through the winding streets. A *cavana* is a place where gondolas are parked, a sort of liquid garage, and the site of this restaurant was such a place in the Middle Ages. When you enter you'll be greeted by brick arches, stone columns, terra-cotta floors, framed modern paintings, and a photo of 19th-century fishermen relaxing after a day's work. The menu specializes in seafood, like a mixed grill from the Adriatic, fried scampi, fresh sole, squid, three types of risotto (each with seafood), and a spicy *zuppa di pesce*. *Antipasti di pesce Cavana* is an assortment of just about every sea creature. The food is authentic and seems prepared for the Venetian palate—not necessarily for the visitor's.

Rio Terrà SS. Apostoli, Cannaregio 4624. ☎ 041-5287106. Main courses 16€–23€ (\$19–\$28); fixed-price menu 20€ (\$24). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sun noon–3pm and 6:30–10:30pm. *Vaporetto*: Ca' d'Oro.

**L'Osteria di Santa Marina** ★ *Finds* VENETIAN/ITALIAN Near Ponte di Rialto, this discovery is the domain of Agostino Doria and Danilo Baldan, the latter a Cipriani (of New York) alum. Together they forged their own place combining a rustic yet classic decor. In a warm and cozy setting, you feel right at home as you partake of their savory cuisine. The cuisine is light, full-flavored, and impertinently inventive as evoked by the lasagna, served crepe-style with fresh shrimp and purple radicchio. The ravioli with turbot and mussels in a crayfish sauce has subtly intermingled flavors. Incidentally, all the pasta is homemade. Other standout dishes are the shrimp in *saor* (confit) with a smattering of chopped leeks and ginger, and the veal cheek braised with potatoes, sautéed soft-shell crabs, and artichokes, or the John Dory filet baked with vegetables au gratin. For dessert, try the crunchy nougat cake with macaroons and eggnog sauce.

5911 Campo Santa Marina. ☎ 041-5285239. Reservations recommended. Main courses 12€–25€ (\$14–\$30). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sat 12:30–2:30pm; Mon–Sat 7:30–9:30pm. Closed Jan 10–25 and 2 weeks in Aug (dates vary). *Vaporetto*: Rialto.

**Poste Vecie** ⚡ SEAFOOD This charming restaurant is near the Rialto fish market and connected to the rest of the city by a small, privately owned bridge. It opened in the early 1500s as a post office, and the kitchen used to serve food to fortify the mail carriers. Today it's the oldest restaurant in Venice, with a pair of intimate rooms (both graced with paneling, murals, and 16th-century mantelpieces) and a courtyard. Menu items include fresh fish from the nearby markets; a salad of shellfish and exotic mushrooms; tagliolini flavored with squid ink, crabmeat, and fish sauce; and the *pièce de résistance*, *seppie* (cuttlefish) *à la veneziana* with polenta. If you don't like fish, calf's liver or veal shank with ham and cheese are also well prepared. The desserts come rolling to your table on a trolley and are usually delicious.

Pescheria Rialto, San Polo 1608. ☎ 041-721822. Reservations recommended. Main courses 15€–30€ (\$18–\$36). AE, DC, MC, V. Wed–Mon noon–3:30pm and 7–10:30pm. *Vaporetto*: Rialto.

**Ristorante Al Mondo Novo** VENETIAN/SEAFOOD In a Renaissance building, with a dining room outfitted in a regional style, this restaurant offers professional service and a kindly staff. Plus, it stays open later than many of its nearby competitors. Menu items include a selection of seafood, prepared fried or charcoal grilled. Other items are *maccheroni alla verdura* (with fresh vegetables and greens), an antipasti of fresh fish, and beef fillets with pepper sauce and rissole potatoes. Locals who frequent the place always order the fresh fish because the owner is a wholesaler in the Rialto fish market. Salizada di San Lio, Castello 5409. ☎ 041-5200698. Reservations recommended. Main courses 18€–31€ (\$22–\$37). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11:30am–11pm. *Vaporetto*: Rialto or San Marco.

**Trattoria alla Madonna** VENETIAN No, this place has nothing to do with *that* Madonna. It opened in 1954 in a 300-year-old building and is one of Venice's most characteristic trattorie, specializing in traditional Venetian recipes and grilled fresh fish. A good beginning might be the *antipasto frutti di mare*. Pastas, polentas, risottos, meats (including *fegato alla veneziana*, liver with onions), and many kinds of irreproachably fresh fish are widely available. Many creatures of the sea are displayed in a refrigerated case near the entrance.

Calle della Madonna, San Polo 594. ☎ 041-5223824. Reservations recommended but not always accepted. Main courses 12€–20€ (\$14–\$24). AE, MC, V. Thurs–Tues noon–3pm and 7:15–10pm. Closed Dec 24–Jan and Aug 4–17. *Vaporetto*: Rialto.

## INEXPENSIVE

**Ai Tre Spiedi** (Value VENETIAN Venetians bring their visiting friends here to make a good impression without breaking the bank, and then swear them to secrecy. Rarely will you find as pleasant a setting and as appetizing a meal as in this casually elegant trattoria with exposed beam ceilings and some of the most reasonably priced fresh-fish dining that will keep meat-eaters happy as well. If you order a la carte, ask the English-speaking waiters to estimate the cost of your fish entree, since it'll typically appear priced by the *etto* (100g).

Salizzada San Cazan, Cannaregio 5906. ☎ 041-5208035. Main courses 10€–13€ (\$12–\$16). AE, MC, V. Tues–Sat noon–2:30pm and 7–9:30pm; Sun 12:30–3:30pm. *Vaporetto*: Rialto.

**Osteria da Andrea** (Value VENETIAN/ITALIAN The *bacaro*, the traditional workingman's *osteria*, is back in vogue in Venice. This rustic *bacaro* is near the Rialto on its own little square, its back door opening onto a prime bit of the Grand Canal. Downstairs, owner and manager Andrea Varisco dispenses excellent wines to an appreciative crowd of locals. Upstairs, at well-placed tables under brick ceiling vaults, a light, creative menu is served. Allow plenty of time because service can be slow in summer, and many dishes are cooked to order—the ringside view of the Grand Canal from the outdoor tables makes up for the wait. Prepare to fill up on flavorful dishes like steamed fish with fresh vegetables, grilled radicchio with Gorgonzola, or carpaccio of *branzino* (sea bass) with fresh and aromatic herbs. We're also fond of the grouper with artichokes. An especially good vegetarian dish is endive with melted Moriacco cheese and walnuts. Of course, everything tastes better with a bottle of Tocai wine from the Friuli district.

122 Campo San Giacometto. ☎ 041-5232061. Reservations required. Main courses 10€–16€ (\$12–\$19). No credit cards. Daily 10:30am–3pm; Tues–Sat 6:30pm–midnight. *Vaporetto*: Rialto.

**Rosticceria San Bartolomeo** (Value VENETIAN/ITALIAN This *rosticceria* is Venice's most popular fast-food place and has long been a blessing for cost-conscious travelers. Downstairs is a *tavola calda* ("hot table") where you can eat standing up, but upstairs is a restaurant with waiter service. Typical dishes are *baccalà alla vicentina* (codfish simmered in herbs and milk), deep-fried mozzarella (which the Italians call *in carrozza*), and *seppie con polenta* (squid in its own ink sauce, served with polenta). Everything is accompanied by typical Veneto wine.

Calle della Bissa, San Marco 5424. ☎ 041-5223569. Main courses 6€–15€ (\$7.20–\$18). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sun 9am–9pm (Easter–Nov 14 and for Carnevale open daily). *Vaporetto*: Rialto.

**Tiziano Bar SANDWICHES/PASTA/PIZZA** The Tiziano Bar is a *tavola calda* (“hot table”). There’s no waiter service; you eat standing at a counter or sitting on one of the high stools. The place is known in Venice for selling pizza by the yard. From noon to 3pm it serves hot pastas such as rigatoni and cannelloni. But throughout the day you can order sandwiches or perhaps a plate of mozzarella.

Salizzada San Crisostomo, Cannaregio 5747, in front of the Sanctuary. ☎ 041-5235544. Main courses 7€–9.50€ (\$8.40–\$11). No credit cards. Daily 8am–10:30pm. *Vaporetto*: Rialto.

## 4 In Santa Croce

### MODERATE

**Trattoria Antica Besseta** ★ (Finds VENETIAN) If you manage to find this place (go with a good map), you’ll be rewarded with true Venetian cuisine at its most unpretentious. Head for Campo San Giacomo dell’Orio; then negotiate your way across infrequently visited piazzas and winding alleys. Push through saloon doors into a bar area filled with modern art. The dining room is hung with paintings and illuminated with wagon-wheel chandeliers. Nereo Volpe, his wife Mariuccia, and one of their sons are the guiding force, the chefs, the buyers, and even the “talking menus.” The food depends on what looked good in the market that morning, so the menu could include roast chicken, fried scampi, *fritto misto*, spaghetti in sardine sauce, various roasts, and a selection from the day’s catch. The Volpe family produces two kinds of their own wine, a pinot blanc and a cabernet.

Campo SS. de Ca’ Zusto, Santa Croce 1395. ☎ 041-721687. Reservations required. Main courses 13€–25€ (\$16–\$30). AE, MC, V. Thurs–Mon noon–2:30pm; Wed to Mon 7–10:30pm. *Vaporetto*: Riva di Biasio.

## 5 In San Polo

### EXPENSIVE

**Osteria da Fiore** ★★ (Finds SEAFOOD) The breath of the Adriatic seems to blow through this place, though how the wind finds this little restaurant tucked away in a labyrinth is a mystery. An imaginative fare is served, depending on the availability of fresh fish and produce. If you have a love of maritime foods, you’ll find everything from scampi (a sweet Adriatic prawn, cooked in as many ways as there are chefs) to *granzeola*, a type of spider crab. In days gone by, we’ve sampled fried calamari (cuttlefish), risotto with scampi, *tagliata* with rosemary, *masenette* (tiny green crabs you eat shell and



all), and *canoce* (mantis shrimp). For your wine, we suggest Prosecco, with a distinctive golden-yellow color and a bouquet that's refreshing and fruity. The proprietors extend a hearty welcome to match their fare.

Calle del Scaleter, San Polo 2202. ☎ 041-721308. Reservations required. Main courses 34€–43€ (\$41–\$52). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sat 12:30–2:30pm and 8–10:30pm. Closed 3 weeks in Aug and Dec 25–Jan 14. *Vaporetto*: San Tomà.

## 6 In Dorsoduro

### MODERATE

**La Furatola SEAFOOD** La Furatola is very much a neighborhood hangout, but it has captured the imagination of local foodies. It occupies a 300-year-old building, along a narrow flagstone-paved street that you'll need a good map and a lot of patience to find. Perhaps you'll have lunch here after a visit to San Rocco, a short distance away. In the simple dining room, the specialty is fish brought to your table in a wicker basket so you can judge its size and freshness by its bright eyes and red gills. A display of seafood antipasti is set out near the entrance. A standout is the baby octopus boiled and eaten with a drop of red-wine vinegar. Eel comes with a medley of mixed fried fish, including baby cuttlefish, prawns, and squid rings.

Calle Lunga San Barnaba, Dorsoduro 2870A. ☎ 041-5208594. Reservations required. Main courses 20€–25€ (\$24–\$30). AE, DC, MC, V. Fri–Sun 12:30–2:30pm; Fri–Mon 7:30–10:30pm. Closed Aug and Jan. *Vaporetto*: Ca' Rezzonico.

**Locanda Montin** ★ INTERNATIONAL/ITALIAN The Montin opened after World War II and has hosted Ezra Pound, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, and the artist friends of the late Peggy Guggenheim. More recent visitors have included everybody from Brad Pitt to Mick Jagger. It's owned and run by the Carretins, who have covered the walls with paintings donated by or bought from their many friends and guests. The arbor-covered garden courtyard is filled with regulars, many of whom allow their favorite waiter to select most of the items for their meal. The frequently changing menu includes a variety of salads, grilled meats, and fish caught in the Adriatic. Desserts might include *semifreddo di fragoline*, a tempting chilled liqueur-soaked cake, capped with whipped cream and wild strawberries.

Fondamenta di Borgo, Dorsoduro 1147. ☎ 041-5227151. Reservations recommended. Main courses 14€–23€ (\$17–\$28). AE, DC, MC, V. Thurs–Tues 12:30–2:30pm; Thurs–Mon 7:30–9:30pm. Closed 10 days in mid-Aug and Tues in July, Aug, and Nov–Mar. *Vaporetto*: Accademia.

## 7 On Isola della Giudecca

### VERY EXPENSIVE

**Ristorante Cipriani** (★★★) ITALIAN The grandest of the hotel restaurants, the Cipriani offers a sublime but relatively simple cuisine, with the freshest of ingredients used by one of the best-trained staffs along the Adriatic. This isn't the place to bring the kids—in fact, children under 6 aren't allowed (a babysitter can be arranged). You can dine in the formal room with Murano chandeliers and Fortuny curtains when the weather is nippy, or on the extensive terrace overlooking the lagoon. Freshly made pasta is a specialty, and it's among the finest we've ever sampled. Chef's specialties include mixed fried scampi and squid with tender vegetables and sautéed veal fillets with spring artichokes. Come here in October for the last Bellinis of the white-peach season and the first white truffles of the season served in champagne risotto. Menu items include: Italian vegetable soup, perfumed with pesto; homemade thin gnocchi pasta with tuna, eggplant, and fresh mint leaves; eggplant gnocchi with tomato and basil sauce; double beef entrecôte, charcoal-grilled with béarnaise sauce; roasted Adriatic turbot with stewed baby artichokes; sea bass baked in a sea salt crust with marinated tomato and fresh basil sauce; and short pasta sautéed with rabbit, veal, and broad bean sauce.

In the Hotel Cipriani, Isola della Giudecca 10. ☎ **041-5207744**. [www.hotelcipriani.com](http://www.hotelcipriani.com). Reservations required. Main courses 25€–43€ (\$30–\$51). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 12:30–3pm and 8–10:30pm. Closed Nov–Mar. *Vaporetto*: Zitelle.

### EXPENSIVE

**Harry's Dolci** (★) INTERNATIONAL/ITALIAN The people at the famed Harry's Bar (see listing earlier in this chapter) have established their latest enclave far from the maddening crowds of Piazza San Marco on this little-visited island. From the quay-side windows of this chic place, you can watch seagoing vessels, from yachts to lagoon barges. White napery and uniformed waiters grace a modern room, where no one minds if you order only coffee and ice cream or perhaps a selection from the large pastry menu (the zabaglione cake is divine). Popular items are carpaccio Cipriani, chicken salad, club sandwiches, gnocchi, and house-style cannelloni. The dishes are deliberately kept simple, but each is well prepared.

Fondamenta San Biago 773, Isola della Giudecca. ☎ **041-5224844**. Reservations recommended, especially Sat–Sun. Main courses 28€–31€ (\$34–\$37); fixed-price menu 50€ (\$60). AE, MC, V. Wed–Mon noon–3pm and 7–10:30pm. Closed Nov 1–Mar 30. *Vaporetto*: Santa Eufemia.

## 8 On the Lido

### MODERATE

**Favorita SEAFOOD** Occupying two rustic dining rooms and a garden, Favorita has thrived here since the 1920s, operated by the Pradel family, now in their third generation of ownership. Their years of experience contribute to flavorful, impeccably prepared seafood and shellfish, many of them grilled. Try the *trenette* (spaghetti-like pasta) with baby squid and eggplant, potato-based gnocchi with crabs from the Venetian lagoon, or grilled versions of virtually every fish in the Adriatic, including eel, sea bass, turbot, and sole.

Via Francesco Duodo 33, Lido di Venezia. ☎ **041-5261626**. Main courses 13€–20€ (\$16–\$24). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sun noon–2:30pm and 7:30–10:30pm. *Vaporetto*: Lido di Venezia.

**Ristorante Belvedere VENETIAN** Outside the big hotels, the best food on the Lido is served at the Belvedere, across from the *vaporetto* stop. It attracts a lot of locals, who come here knowing they can get some of the best fish along the Adriatic. Tables are placed outside, and there's a glass-enclosed portion for windy days. The main dining room is attractive, with cane-backed bentwood chairs and big windows. In back, reached through a separate entrance, is a busy cafe. Main dishes include the chef's special sea bass, grilled dorade (or sole), and fried scampi. You might begin with the special fish antipasti or *spaghetti en papillote* (cooked in parchment).

Piazzale Santa Maria Elisabetta 4, Lido di Venezia. ☎ **041-5260115**. Reservations recommended. Main courses 9€–17€ (\$11–\$20). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sun noon–2:30pm and 7–9:30pm. Closed Nov 4–Easter. *Vaporetto*: Lido.

## 9 The Lagoon Islands of Murano, Burano & Torcello

### ON MURANO

**Ai Vetrai VENETIAN** Ai Vetrai entertains and nourishes its guests in a large room not far from the Canale dei Vetrai. If you're looking for fish prepared in the local style, with arguably the widest selection on Murano, this is it. Most varieties of crustaceans and gilled creatures are available on the spot. However, if you phone ahead and order food for a large party, as the Venetians sometimes do, the owners will prepare what they call "a noble fish." You might begin with spaghetti in green clam sauce and follow with *griglia*

*misto di pesce*, a dish that combines all the seafood of the Adriatic or other types of grilled or baked fish accented with vegetables.

Fondamenta Manin 29. ☎ 041-739293. Reservations recommended. Main courses 10€–18€ (\$12–\$22). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 9am–4pm; Sat–Sun 6:30–10pm. Closed Jan. *Vaporetto*: 41.

## ON BURANO

**Osteria ai Pescatori** SEAFOOD This restaurant opened 200 years ago in a building that was antique even then. Today Paolo Torcellan and his wife are the gracious owners, serving a cuisine prepared with gusto by his stalwart mother, Iolanda, who is in her eighties. The place has gained a reputation as the preserver of a type of simple restaurant unique to Burano. Patrons often take the *vaporetto* from other sections of Venice (the restaurant lies close to the boat landing) to eat at the plain wooden tables set up indoors or on the small square in front. Specialties feature all the staples of the Venetian seaside diet, like fish soup, *risotto di pesce*, pasta seafarer style, tagliolini in squid ink, and a wide range of crustaceans, plus grilled, fried, and baked fish. Dishes prepared with local game are also available, but you must request them 2 or 3 days in advance. Your meal might include a bottle of fruity wine from the region.

Piazza Baldassare Galuppi 371. ☎ 041-730650. Reservations recommended. Main courses 13€–20€ (\$16–\$24); fixed-price menu 50€ (\$60). AE, DC, MC, V. Thurs–Tues noon–3pm and 6–9:30pm. Closed Jan. *Vaporetto*: Line 12 or 52.

**Trattoria de Romano** VENETIAN If you're on the island at mealtime, you may want to join a long line of people who enjoy this rather simple-looking spot around the corner from the lace school. It was founded in 1920. You can enjoy a superb dinner here, perhaps *fritto misto di pesce*, a mixed fish fry from the Adriatic with savory bits of mullet, squid, and shrimp, or *risotto nero de seppia* (flavored with squid ink).

Via Baldassare Galuppi 221, Burano. ☎ 041-730030. Reservations recommended. Main courses 13€–18€ (\$16–\$22). AE, MC, V. Wed–Mon noon–3pm and 6:30–9pm. Closed Dec 15–Jan 31. *Vaporetto*: 12 or 52.

## ON TORCELLO

**Locanda Cipriani** ★★ VENETIAN This place is operated by the same folks behind the Hotel Cipriani and Harry's Bar (actually by the very cosmopolitan Bonifacio Brass, nephew of Harry Cipriani). This artfully simple *locanda* (small inn) is deliberately rustic, light-years removed from the family's grander venues. Menu items are uncompromisingly classic, with deep roots in family tradition. A

good example is *filetto di San Pietro alla Carlina* (fillet of John Dory in the style of Carla, a late and much-revered matriarch, who made the dish for decades using tomatoes and capers). Also look for carpaccio Cipriani, *risotto alla Torcellano* (with fresh vegetables and herbs from the family's garden), fish soup, *tagliolini verdi gratinati* (pasta with ham and a creamy cheese sauce), and a traditional roster of veal, liver, fish, and beef dishes. Diners can sit on the outdoor terrace in summer.

Piazza San Fosca 29, Torcello. ☎ **041-730150**. Reservations required. Main courses 20€–30€ (\$24–\$36). AE, DC, MC, V. Wed–Mon noon–3pm; Fri–Sat 7–10pm. Closed Jan. *Vaporetto*: Line 12 and 14.