



Lombardy

AMBIVERE (Bergamo Province)

\$\$\$ **Trattoria Visconti**, just seven miles from Bergamo and 28 miles from Milan, is your dream of a northern Italian country restaurant made real. Fiorella Visconti is the granddaughter of Ida Visconti, who opened her *trattoria* in 1932—drawing fruit, vegetables, herbs, eggs, and poultry from the garden out back, as well as rare varieties of corn for polenta. And so it remains today. You eat food picked an hour before, prepared with wisdom and respect for ingredients, and served with a smile of genuine hospitality. Don't miss *casoncelli della Nonna Ida*, the transcendent folded pasta with a jealously guarded recipe. *Lasagne ai tre ragù* is fresh sheets of pasta containing beef, chicken, and rabbit. *Tortelli di lago* are ravioli filled with four types of fish from nearby lakes. The *antipasti* are subtle and delicate, and the *secondi* are of exquisite local meats or lake fish with mountain mushrooms. These valleys produce some of Italy's best cheese—well worth savoring—including the unpronounceable *strachitunt*. The wine list is outstanding, too (Via Alcide De Gasperi 12, +39 035 908 153, www.trattoriavisconti.it).

ISOLA DOVARESE

(Cremona Province)

\$\$\$ **Caffè La Crepa** occupies one corner of the town's surprisingly large and impressive piazza—much grander than you'd expect in a small agricultural town close to the Po River. Most dining tables are indoors, and the popular local bar in the front room sells local delicacies in jars and boxes (worth taking home). The province of Cremona is known for its beloved cows that provide superb meat, milk, butter, and

cheeses. Those are honored at this restaurant, of course, but a unique specialty is the *storione* (fresh sturgeon from the Po) as well as eels and other river fish. Their folded pasta is divine: Local *marubini* in sumptuous broth are a must, as are the pumpkin *tortelli* and ravioli filled with herbs. For dessert, the home-made *gelati* are marvelous (Piazza Giacomo Matteotti 14, +39 0375 396 161, caffelacrepa.net).

MORTARA (Pavia Province)

\$\$ **Trattoria Guallina** showcases this town's distinct local cuisine: Because Mortara was historically Jewish, goose (*oca*) took the place of pork in foods such as *salumi*. Goose liver is prepared in different ways, and a real star of the menu are the ravioli filled with goose. Soups are delicious, and unusual local specialties include snails and fried frogs (Via Molino Faenza 19, +39 038 491 962, www.trattoriaguallina.it).

Trentino-Alto Adige

BRIXEN/BRESSANONE

(Bolzano Province)

\$\$\$ **Finsterwirt** assiduously sources the best ingredients from local farms and respects seasonality not only of fruit and vegetables, but also meats—such as lamb in the spring and game in the fall. They have a superb list of local wines, especially whites. At the same location is the Vitis wine bar, with a small, carefully selected menu of more modern preparations (Vicolo Duomo 3, +39 0472 835 343, www.finsterwirt.com).

WEISSENBACH/RIO BIANCO

(Bolzano Province)

\$\$ **Mösenhof** offers specialties centered on one local product: *Graukäse* (gray cheese, described on page 175), which works well in soup,



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Experience the best of Italy through the timeless pleasures of its cuisine, from tantalizing *antipasti* and saucy pastas to luxurious gelato; from its coffee culture to its *dolce vita* wine scene. With this fun and practical handbook to eating well in Italy, you'll learn how to appreciate good food the way Italians do.

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Rick Steves and Fred Plotkin have devoted decades to traveling through Italy, enjoying its culinary delights. In this book, they pass along those lessons to you.

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