

Sweets You Can't Refuse

Natasha Lardera (December 17, 2014)



Below you'll find our fourteen city's titans of sweetness, dishing out desserts we can't say no to. From tiramisu to rum baba to millefoglie, each dessert has a hidden link to the regions of Italy, where every family covets its own recipe. Pastry chefs the world over have brought their own twists on old standards to the best restaurants with creativity and passion. Who can refuse a little sweet during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday? Below are our recommendations. If you have a recommendation of your own, send us an email or visit our Facebook page and we'll publish it online.

Per Lei

1347 2nd Avenue
(212) 439-9200
www.perleinc.com [2]

In Italian, [panna cotta](#) [3] literally means "cooked cream", and it is simply the perfect dessert. The dessert appears on restaurant menus much more frequently than it does on people's dinner tables, yet this dish is actually very easy to make. Blend thick cream, egg white and honey, then bake the mix in a bain-marie at a low temperature. It is generally believed to have originated in Piedmont but is consumed throughout Italy, where it can be served with wild berries, chocolate, nuts and creams. Per Lei's to-die-for panna cotta is prepared the traditional way (it really does feel and taste like



cooked cream) and served with pistachios. It alone is reason to make the trip uptown!

Barbetta

321 W 46th Street

(212) 246-9171

www.barbettarestaurant.com [4]

● Founded in 1906 by [Sebastiano Maioglio](#) [5], Barbetta is the oldest Italian restaurant in New York and, on top of that, it is still owned by the same family. Barbetta has been serving Piedmont cuisine since its inception and the regional influence can be glimpsed in their dessert menu. Among its beloved classics is Monte Bianco, a staple at the restaurant since 1962. [Monte Bianco](#) [6] is a decadent dessert of puréed, sweetened chestnuts topped with whipped cream. The name comes from the mountain Mont Blanc, given the peak of delicious chestnuts' resemblance to the snow-capped mountain. While its roots lie in the region of Piedmont, the dessert has now spread throughout Northern Italy.

Del Posto

85 10th Avenue

(212) 497-8090

▶ www.delposto.com [7]

Four-star cuisine calls for four-star desserts, and that's just what you get at Del Posto, the most elegant creation of [Mario Batali](#) [8], Joe and [Lidia Bastianich](#) [9] and partner/Executive [Chef Mark Ladner](#) [10]. Chocolate lovers will swoon over cioccolato, a selection of four chocolates and four rums (Amadei Cioccolato al Latte 32% Toscana, La Molina "con Mandorle di Avola" 60% Toscana, Domori Cacao Sambirano 70% Piemonte, and Dolceria Bonajuto "Modica" 90% Sicilia). Modica chocolate, for example, is a specialty chocolate made only in the Sicilian city of the same name following an ancient recipe that gives the chocolate a peculiar grainy texture and aromatic flavor. Those feeling more adventurous should try Pecorino Romano cake served with honey gelato and roasted pears.

SD26

19 E 26th Street

(212) 265-5959

▶ www.sd26ny.com [11]

How does babà au rhum with whipped cream & orange sauce and limoncello granita sound? More to the point, how does it taste? The only way to find out is to head to Tony and Marisa May's SD26. Babà au rhum is a small yeast cake similar to brioche, soaked in a rum-and-sugar syrup. Sometimes it is filled with whipped cream or pastry cream. Baba au rhum is a dessert commonly found in Italy, particularly Naples and the South. And what's more Neapolitan than limoncello? At SD26 they serve limoncello granita, Italian ice made with water and syrup.

Ribalta

48 E 12th Street

(212) 777-7781

▶ www.ribaltapizzarestaurant.com [12]

Who hasn't heard of tiramisu? Italy's most famous coffee-flavored dessert is made with savoiardi (ladyfingers) dipped in coffee, covered with whipped eggs, sugar and mascarpone cheese, and sprinkled with cocoa. The original recipe does not call for liquor, but one of the most common twists is the addition of Marsala. At Ribalta they substitute Marsala with rum. Tiramisu is not the only delicious dessert you can taste in this popular pizzeria. Mascarpone and strawberries come with flaky homemade biscuits and fresh berries are served with vanilla gelato in a baked biscuit shell. (And don't forget the big screen where in special occasions you can watch Italian soccer!)

**Forcella**

334 Bowery

(212) 466-3300

▶ www.forcellaeatery.com [13]

Forcella is located in one of NYC's most lively neighborhoods, in close proximity to NYU and Washington Square Park, so it's always bustling with young fun people. Fans of Nutella (the famous hazelnut chocolate spread by Ferrero) have two delicious Nutella-based desserts to feast on at this favorite lower Manhattan spot: Pizza alla Nutella (pizza dough stuffed with the sultry spread and almonds) and Angioletti, or little angels, alla Nutella (fried pizza dough strips with Nutella and powdered sugar). Those who want to try something different should dive into the millefoglie. But forget about asking the chef for the recipe...it's his secret.

Bar Eolo

190 7th Avenue

(646) 225-6606

▶ www.eolonewyork.com [14]

Bar Eolo serves Sicilian-inspired contemporary fare and offers an award-winning selection of Sicilian wines. Over the course of history, the island of Sicily has been a cultural crossroads traversed by the Greeks, Arabs, Romans, Jews and Normans, just to name a few. This cultural amalgam is especially evident in Sicilian cuisine. The dessert list features traditional sfinci, ricotta doughnuts filled with a vanilla-orange pastry cream and served with a dark chocolate dipping sauce, and cannoli "millefoglie," crispy layers of cannoli shell topped with chocolate-laced ricotta, with pistachio flour and a candied orange puree.

Da Silvano

260 Avenue of the Americas

(212) 982-2343

▶ www.dasilvano.com [15]

Silvano Marchetto is credited with introducing New Yorkers to Tuscan cuisine back in the mid 1970s. Since then, the amazing food, the fashionable and famous customers, and the entertaining environment make Da Silvano a favorite in the city that never sleeps. The classic dessert menu features simple yet scrumptious sweets. One Tuscan classic that can't be passed up is Cantucci con Vin Santo. Cantucci are small, crunchy biscotti made with almonds. Today you can find them in all kinds of flavors, including chocolate, pistachio and raisin. When preparing cantucci, the dough is baked twice, which explains why the deliciously sweet has such a hard texture. Most people find it too hard, which is why they dip cantucci into a small glass of Vin Santo.

Sant Ambroeus

259 W 4th Street

(212) 604-9254

▶ www.santambroeus.com [16]

Among other specialties, Sant Ambroeus's guests can enjoy the kind of exceptional desserts this refined restaurant is known for. From the classic profiterole, chocolate bignè of espresso-soaked vanilla sponge cake filled with chantilly cream and pistachios, to the traditional millefoglie, a layered puff pastry with vanilla bean cream, to the signature Sant Ambroeus, a chocolate mousse cake with a chocolate custard center. The cafe also offers a wide range of ice creams, like coppa paciugo, pear sorbet with ..paciugo, pear sorbet with a pear eau-de-vie, and coppa colibri, fresh fruit salad with fruit sorbet.

Gnocco

337 E 10th Street

(212) 677-1913

▶ www.gnocco.com [17]

If you can't decide which dessert to pick, don't panic. At Gnocco you can find a dessert tasting plate featuring cantucci di Prato (homemade almond cookies), torta di ricotta (Italian cheese cake served



with whipped cream, wild berries) and torta al cioccolato e caffè (chocolate mousse topped with a coffee biscuit and served with almonds and Bavarian coffee). The dish should satisfy 3-4 sweet teeth. For something a little lighter and better for digestion, try the semifreddo al limone e menta, lemon and mint parfait with peach.

La Giara

501 3rd Avenue
(212) 726-9855

► www.lagiara.com [18]

Named after Luigi Pirandello's short story La Giara (The Oil Jar), the restaurant has been a fixture in Murray Hill since 1997. La Giara is a cylindrical earthenware container and alludes to the rustic fare that the restaurant serves...with a twist. The menu list sports something for everybody. Traditionally eaten on St. Joseph's Day, zeppole are a favorite of many and here you can find them year round. Zeppole are deep fried balls of dough topped with powdered sugar and filled with custard, jelly, pastry creams or honey.

Marco Polo

345 Court Street, Brooklyn
(718) 852-5015

► www.marcopoloristorante.com [19]

Famous for its mix of northern and southern Italian cuisine, Marco Polo Ristorante is one of the most celebrated Italian eateries in all of Brooklyn. The dessert menu features quite a few custards, including zabaione freddo, a common Italian dessert made with egg yolks, sugar and sweet wine (usually Marsala). The light custard is whipped to incorporate a large amount of air. Generally it can be enjoyed hot or cold and served with strawberries, blueberries, peaches, other fruit or light cookies. Another classic custard on the menu is crème brûlée, also known as "burnt cream," a dessert consisting of a rich custard base with a hard caramel glaze.

Fabbrica

40 N 6th Street, Brooklyn
(718) 218-7045

► www.fabbricanyc.com [20]

Fabbrica, Italian for factory, has become a favored destination for those seeking contemporary Italian cuisine and extraordinary boutique wines. The sweet ending to a perfect meal is affogato, vanilla gelato served with a double shot of espresso and cacao crumble. Affogato, meaning "drowned," refers to the gelato's being drenched with a shot of hot coffee. If that doesn't whet your appetite, try the Fabbrica Sundae, an Italian-style sundae made with ricotta and hazelnut gelato and topped with amarena cherries, cannoli crumble and chocolate syrup. Now that's a dessert nobody can resist.

Pasticceria Bruno

1650 Hylan Blvd
(718) 987-5859

► www.pasticceriabruno.com [21]

In 2008 Chef Biagio, his son Chef Salvatore and Chef Gianfranco Franzese opened a new location in Staten Island. Pasticceria Bruno has become very popular thanks to the large selection of goodies on their breakfast, lunch and dinner menu created by our world-renowned chefs, and of course thanks to their delicious Italian desserts, like cannoli, tiramisu and cassata. Around Christmas time, Chef Biagio makes his special panettone, a loaf of sweet bread with candied fruit originally from Milan and usually enjoyed on Christmas and New Year's in Italy. Kids and big kids alike go nuts for it during the holidays.



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