Guide to Eating Kosher in an Italian Restaurant

Intro

This guide is for people who keep kosher but still want to enjoy eating out — especially in places like Italian restaurants that offer many vegetarian and fish-based options.

It is based on practical, halachically sound standards:

- Meat must be kosher, but fish with fins and scales is permitted, even in a non-kosher restaurant.
- Cheese is permitted if vegetarian (i.e., made without animal rennet).
- Anchovies are allowed.
- Gelatin, emulsifiers, and stabilizers are permitted, since they are inedible in original form.
- Sweet pastries are always allowed, even if there is some trace meat ingredient, due to noten taam lifgam.
- Alcoholic drinks are fine, except for wine, which may not be kosher unless labeled.
- Standard grills, ovens, and utensils are not an issue, as long as the food is clean and not cooked with forbidden ingredients.

This guide is not about relying on hope or leniencies — it's about knowing what matters, asking the right questions, and eating confidently.

Antipasti (Appetizers)

☑ Bruschetta al Pomodoro

Toasted bread with tomatoes, garlic, olive oil, and basil.

Ask: If cheese or anchovies are added, confirm the cheese is vegetarian.

Caprese Salad

Fresh mozzarella, tomatoes, and basil.

Ask: Confirm the mozzarella is vegetarian.

X Prosciutto e Melone

Cured ham is not kosher.

A Arancini

Fried rice balls.

Ask: Confirm they are vegetarian and not fried in oil used for meat or seafood — otherwise not permitted.

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Zuppe e Insalate (Soups and Salads)

Minestrone

Vegetable-based soup.

Ask: Confirm no meat stock is used and any cheese is vegetarian.

✓ Insalata Mista

Mixed greens, tomatoes, cucumbers, onions.

Tip: Use olive oil and lemon or vinegar. Avoid creamy dressings unless ingredients are known.

✓ Caesar Salad

Anchovy-based dressing is permitted.

Ask: Confirm cheese is vegetarian.

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Primi Piatti (Pasta & Risotto)

✓ Pasta al Pomodoro / Penne Arrabbiata

Tomato-based sauces.

Ask: Confirm there's no meat or meat stock.

✓ Gnocchi al Pesto

Ask: Confirm the cheese in the pesto is vegetarian.

✓ Pasta Aglio e Olio

Garlic, olive oil, and chili — no issues.

X Lasagna

Usually contains meat and cheese together — not acceptable.

X Carbonara

Contains pancetta (pork) and cheese — not acceptable.

✓ Fettuccine Alfredo

Cream, butter, and cheese.

Ask: Confirm cheese is vegetarian and it was not cooked in a meat pan.

✓ Risotto (vegetarian varieties)

Ask: Confirm no meat or seafood stock is used, and cheese is vegetarian. • • • • • Secondi Piatti (Main Courses) X Chicken or Veal Dishes Meat is not kosher. **✓** Fish Entrées (e.g., Branzino, Salmon) Ask: Confirm the fish has fins and scales (e.g., no catfish). Clean restaurant grills, pots, or pans are not an issue. 🗸 Melanzane alla Parmigiana Eggplant with tomato and cheese. Ask: Confirm cheese is vegetarian and it's not fried in shared meat or seafood oil. Vegetarian Dishes (e.g., grilled vegetables, stuffed peppers) Ask: Confirm no meat or seafood, and that cheese (if any) is vegetarian. • • • • • Pizza Margherita Pizza Ask: Confirm cheese is vegetarian. Vegetable Pizza

Ask: Confirm cheese is vegetarian and no meat is added.

White Pizza / Cheese Pizza / Anchovy Pizza

Anchovies are allowed.

Ask: Confirm cheese is vegetarian.

X Meat Pizza

Toppings like sausage, pepperoni, chicken — not kosher.

▼ Four Cheese or Specialty Pizzas

Ask: Confirm all cheeses are vegetarian.

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Contorni (Side Dishes)

Roasted Potatoes / Spinach / Grilled Vegetables

Ask: For spinach, confirm it wasn't cooked in meat broth. Grilled vegetables are fine — the grill burns off residue.

✓ Risotto Bianco (Plain Risotto)

Ask: Confirm no meat stock and cheese is vegetarian.

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Dolci (Desserts)

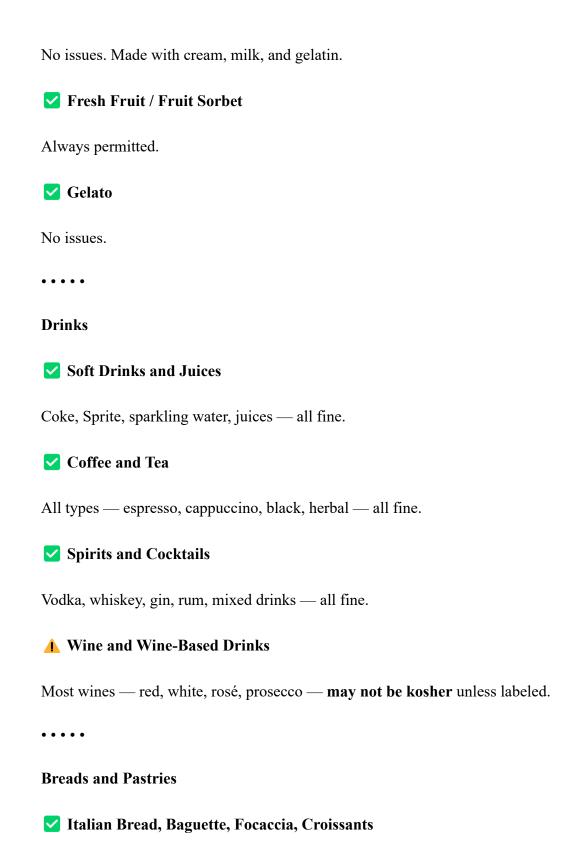
✓ Tiramisù

Ask: Confirm mascarpone is vegetarian.

Cannoli

Ask: Confirm shell is not fried in lard or meat oil, and ricotta is vegetarian.

🗸 Panna Cotta



No concerns — always permitted.

⚠ Other Breads (rolls, garlic bread, etc.)

Ask: Confirm no lard or meat-based ingredients.

✓ Vinegar and Olive Oil (served with bread)

All types are fine — including red wine and balsamic vinegar.

Sweet Pastries

Cakes, cookies, tarts, biscotti, etc. — all permitted.

Even if meat were added by mistake, it would be noten taam lifgam and not an issue.

Bon Apetit!