

# Italy Series, Part I — From Parma to Puglia: a Culinary Journey

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In our latest 3-part travel series, we take FAJO's readers across Italy on a special food adventure.

Recently, **FAJO** was invited on a special media trip, organized by Pure Flour From Europe. This is a program promoted by **ITALMOPA** (the Italian Association of Millers) with the participation of three key producers — **Molino Casillo**, **Molino De Vita** and **Molino Grassi** — and co-funded by the European Union.

This program aims to promote the export of organic soft wheat and durum wheat flours and semolina flour made in the EU, in particular in Italy, to Canada and the USA.



ITALMOPA, founded in 1958 and based in Rome, is the most important industrial flour association of the European Union. It represents 82 flour milling companies across Italy. Member companies mill soft and durum wheat for the production of pasta, breads, pastries, pizza and more.

Join us in this series, as we go on a one-of-a-kind adventure with ITALMOPA in some of Italy's most renowned cities!

## Let the travels begin

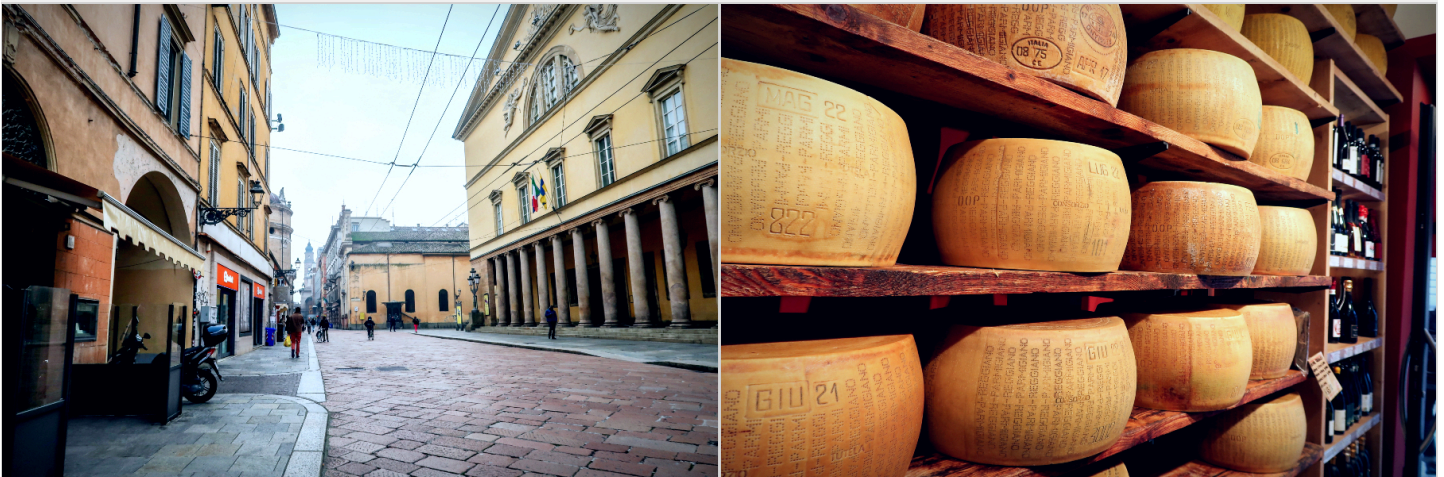
If you are planning your next trip to Italy, we strongly recommend embarking on a journey from the rolling hills and fertile farmlands of Parma to the flat plains, rocky cliffs and sandy beaches of Puglia. This route offers a food lover's paradise. Along the way, don't miss the opportunity to explore stunning cathedrals, scenic parks, historic squares and fascinating museums. But above all, come hungry — the cured meats, fresh cheeses, and delectable breads and pastas are the main attraction here!



## Parma

Nestled in the heart of Italy's Food Valley, Parma is a must-visit destination for any foodie. Renowned for Parmigiano Reggiano cheese, which originated with 12th-century monks and gained acclaim as a noble food in the 14th century, Parma boasts a wealth of culinary treasures. This includes its celebrated dry-cured hams, Parma ham and prosciutto, as well as stuffed pastas like tortelli and anolini, and torta fritta — a fried dough served with meat and cheese.

Begin your exploration in **Piazza Garibaldi**, the main square built on the site of an ancient Roman forum. From there, it's just a short walk to the city's best shops, offering everything from shoes to artisanal cheeses.



For cheese enthusiasts, a visit to **Spaccio Parmigiano Reggiano** on Via Colorno is a must. Sample meticulously aged wheels of cheese and let the knowledgeable staff help you discover your favourite flavours and textures.

Parma also offers a wealth of cultural experiences. Opera lovers will enjoy **Teatro Regio**, a neoclassical opera house popular with Verdi fans, while art aficionados should visit the **Galleria Nazionale di Parma** for its impressive Renaissance collection. The **Parma Cathedral and Baptistery**, along with the Sanctuary of Santa Maria della Steccata, are stunning examples of architectural brilliance.



When it's time for dinner, an authentic trattoria is the ideal choice. Less formal than a ristorante but more refined than an osteria, trattorias are lively spots to savour traditional dishes. Trattoria Corrieri is a local favourite with a festive vibe and a large menu. Don't miss the *tris di tortelli* (a trio of stuffed pastas with fillings like potato, herb and pumpkin), the *tagliolini with black truffle*, or the braised veal *ossobuco*, perfect for chilly evenings. Save room for dessert, too — their gelatos and sorbets are exceptional.



For a deeper understanding of Parma's culinary roots, you should absolutely visit a flour mill like Molino Grassi, known for its commitment to sustainable and organic Italian flours and semolina. Taking a guided tour there will help you learn how wheat is transformed into the flours that create Italy's iconic breads and pastas. While not confirmed, many visitors with gluten sensitivities report being able to enjoy these products, thanks to rigorous quality control standards upheld by the European Union and ITALMOPA, along with the dedication of individual mills. (Of course, always consult your doctor before making dietary decisions or changes.)



From sun-kissed beaches and enchanting caves to baroque architecture and sprawling olive groves, Puglia offers endless delights. For a longer stay, make time to visit Alberobello, a UNESCO World Heritage site famous for its trulli buildings, or the town of Lecce, renowned for its magnificent churches.

Another highlight is **Castel del Monte**, a UNESCO World Heritage site with a striking octagonal design built by Frederick II around 1240.

Known as Italy's breadbasket, Puglia is a dream destination for pasta and bread lovers. Start with a traditional lunch of cured meats, cheeses, olives and the region's iconic focaccia bread. Apulian focaccia is a round loaf that's soft inside and crispy outside, often topped with tomatoes. Its simplicity and freshness make it utterly irresistible.

Another must-try dish is **orecchiette** pasta, famously served with broccoli rabe. Shaped like tiny ears, orecchiette's cup-like design is perfect for holding sauce. For an unforgettable experience, stroll through the streets of Bari Vecchia, where local women craft fresh pasta right outside their homes.

Puglia's focus on high-quality semolina flour is evident in its culinary traditions. Regional mills like **Molino De Vita**, which specializes in sustainably produced semolina, play a key role in maintaining the region's rich food heritage.



Whether you visit for a few days or a few weeks, in spring or fall, Parma and Puglia promise unforgettable culinary adventures. Let your taste buds be your guide for the most unforgettable food trip.

*Photography by Janine Silver and Unsplash+.*

## Contributors

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