

# matt's top 10



Matt Preston has scoured the country for Australia's best Italian restaurants – here are just a few of his favourites.

WORDS **MATT PRESTON** PHOTOGRAPHY **JEREMY SIMONS** STYLING **DAVID MORGAN**

If the Australian food scene is a glorious tapestry, then the contribution from the waves of Italian migration is the golden thread woven through it. We boast Italian restaurants that would make a homesick Sicilian weep for their *mamma*, a Milanese dream wistfully of Roberto Baggio, and even the least musical son or daughter of Garibaldi start humming 'Fratelli d'Italia'. While this Italian national anthem is a song of unity for the once fractured nation of city

states and warring regions, part of the strength of Italian cuisine is precisely this lack of unity. For both there and here, the vast regional variations in the cuisine helps make Italian food not just a golden thread, but one that shimmers with a rich and varied opalescence. Sorry, I just let some of my Italian heritage bubble out past my usual British restraint. It won't happen again.

I would love you to share your favourite place to eat Italian with me on twitter. Let me know at @mattscravat and use the hashtag #deliciousitalian so that everyone can join in.

## australian flavours.



## Bar Idda

If Carlton started out as the heart of Melbourne's Italian community, then Lygon Street with its famous Italian butcher, *provedores* and restaurants was its major artery. Alfredo and Lisa La Spina's Sicilian eatery is where you'll find southern classics, including these *zeppole* – moreish savoury doughnuts. 132 Lygon St, Brunswick East, Vic, (03) 9380 5339.

### zeppole (sicilian savoury doughnuts)

#### Makes about 30 doughnuts

You'll need a potato ricer for this recipe, available from kitchenware shops.

2 large (about 500g) desiree potatoes (skin on)

40g anchovy fillets in oil, drained, chopped

1 egg, lightly beaten

7g sachet dry instant yeast

2 cups (300g) plain flour

1 tbs finely chopped flat-leaf parsley

Sunflower oil, to deep-fry

#### Yoghurt mayonnaise (makes 200g)

2 egg yolks

1 tbs Dijon mustard

2 tbs natural yoghurt

1 cup (250ml) sunflower oil

Place the potatoes in a saucepan of cold, salted water over medium-high heat and bring to the boil. Reduce heat to medium

and simmer for 30-40 minutes until potatoes are very tender and the skins are just starting to come away from the flesh. Drain, cool slightly, then peel. Pass potato through a potato ricer into a bowl and set aside to cool for 20 minutes.

Add anchovy, egg, yeast, flour and parsley to the potato and mix well with your hands, adding a little more flour if the dough is sticky. Season, then cover bowl with plastic wrap. Stand in a warm spot for 1 hour or until slightly risen.

Meanwhile, for the yoghurt mayonnaise, whiz yolks, mustard and yoghurt in a food processor until well combined. With the motor running, add the oil in a slow, steady stream until mixture is thick and emulsified. Season and chill until needed.

Half-fill a deep-fryer or large saucepan with oil and heat to 170°C.

Using slightly damp hands, roll dough into walnut-sized balls. In 4 batches, deep-fry the zeppole for 2-3 minutes until golden. Drain on paper towel.

Season zeppole with sea salt and serve immediately with yoghurt mayonnaise.

