

Messina, restaurants, the sea. A short guide to the city on the Strait

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It might seem a bit paradoxical, but even though Messina enjoys 50 kilometers (30 miles) of coastline, there are virtually no restaurants along the coast, to count them the fingers of one hand are quite sufficient.

To eat a bite in the center of the city with a view of the sea there is one sole choice, the restaurant of **Marina del Nettuno**. This pleasure port is right in front of the Prefecture, I go there frequently for an aperitif, from this spot there is a special panoramic view of Messina and, even on the hottest days, there is always a light breeze off the sea. Behind the counter there is Sebastiano, a very capable barman who can offer you both classics and the newest trends in mixed drinks.

Remaining in the center, right next to the Teatro Vittorio Emanuele in a quiet area with little traffic, there is the restaurant of **Alvise Ruggeri – I Ruggieri**, small, cozy, two rooms decorated with taste and simplicity and a cuisine which ranges from reworked classics to creative dishes which are never eccentric and are, in any case, closely tied to the surrounding territory and the seasons. The Ruggeri also have a good wine card which continually offers new choices and reasonable prices. As is the case with the final bill, here customers can eat and drink well at very fair prices.

Moving towards Via Garibaldi, you run into **Urban Lescà**, a brasserie specializing in meat where a well made pizza is also available; the wine card indicates only the bottles which are most often ordered. But for a greater choice it is sufficient to stand up and select a bottle from the shelves of the next door wine shop with the same ownership and consume it at no extra charge on the table.

The **Trattoria del Popolo** is located under the arcades of Piazza Francesco Lo Sardo (but don't ask one of the local residents where it is, he knows it by its former name, Piazza del Popolo). This bistrot was once known as a "putia", a spot where one drank the house wine and ate a limited number of offerings which included "pescestocco a ghiotta", a dish based on dried cod or stockfish. It has now become a good trattoria where the well prepared and tasty plates of the local tradition are served, cooked by the women of the family of Enzo Ugliera, who runs the restaurant. There is little to drink beyond the house wine and the prices are very reasonable indeed.

Colapesce, just a few steps from Piazza Lo Sardo, is a unique locale in Messina, a bookshop with a wine bar on the premises. Nicola, who works behind the counter, can serve you either a good glass of wine or one of the well made cocktails he prepares. If you have a bit of hunger, don't worry, a slice of salami or a piece of cheese are always available. You go to Colapesce to read as many tables are available, to listen to music, often performed live during the evening or for one of the many cultural events organized by Nicola.

Changing direction towards the northern coast of the city, you arrive at the **Osteria Muricello** in Largo Corte Cailler, situated on the corner with Via Cicala, once a "putia" as well which was named- if I recall properly – "Very Nice" and was owned by a certain Don Nino. Now it is an attractive small restaurant, tastefully decorated in whiter tones. The dishes are well prepared and well presented and include, in addition to the great classic of the city's cuisine, first and foremost "*pescestocco a ghiotta*", other more creative offerings inspired by the fantasy of the chef but always with a territorial and seasonal character. A wine card, once again, which could easily be improved, but there are some good choices, praiseworthy and smiling service at the table, and good value for the prices charged.

To reach the northern coast of the city you need to pass Ganzirri before encountering the first locale on the sea, **Bellavista** ("beautiful view") to be precise, and never was a name more suitable. We are, in fact, on the shore of the Straits of Messina, Calabria appears to be just a stone's throw away and during the warm season customers can take their place directly on the sea, virtually on the water. The dishes offered are solely fish, don't worry excessively about the menu you will find, choose the raw fish appetizers, pasta with sea urchins, and finally a fish you can select from the refrigerated showcase, to be prepared as you prefer, Marcello, the owner, will advise you properly. The wine card is a good one with many Italian bottles and some French ones as well. The bill obviously includes the pleasure of the spot but also offers a good rapport between quality and price.

Calasole is located beyond Torre Faro and Cape Peloro where you pass from the Ionian to the Tyrrhenian sea just past the Torre degli Inglesi, a tower which, for centuries, has been there to stand guard over the Straits of Messina. It is a lovely locale decorated with taste and endowed with a large terrace from which it is possible to enjoy a panorama, one particularly beautiful at sunset (Calasole, in fact, means, literally, the sinking of the sun) which extends from Calabria to the distant islands of Stromboli and Panarea. Here, too, obviously, this restaurant privileges fish, and it is good advice to go take a look at the refrigerated showcase and its fresh catch and let yourself be guided by Giovanni, the owner. The choice is always quite vast and varied. Once the fish has been chosen you can take a look at the wine card, a truly extensive one, with many Italian and French choices, not to speak of the Austrian and German wines as well. A check at the end of meal which seems entirely reasonable in terms of the spot, the food, and the wines.

Addresses:

Marina del Nettuno – Molo Marullo – Messina – tel 090 9281180, www.marinadelnettuno.it

I Ruggeri – Via Pozzo Leone 21 – Messina – tel 090 343938, www.iruggeri.it

'A Cucchiara – Strada San Giacomo 19 – Messina tel 090 711023, [pagina Facebook](#)

Urban Lescà, pizza e polpette – via Garibaldi 66 – Messina, tel. 090.671950, [pagina Facebook](#)

Trattoria del Popolo – Piazza Lo Sardo 30 – Messina tel 090 671148 (non ha internet)

Colapesce – Libri, Gusti, Idee – via Mario Giurba 8 – Messina, tel. 090 9431121 [pagina Facebook](#)

Osteria Muricello – Via Cicala 7 – Messina – tel 090 9034061, www.osteriamuricello.it

Bellavista – Via Circuito, Torre Faro – Messina – tel 090 326682, www.bellavistaristorante.info

Calasole – Via Torre Bianca, Torre Faro – Messina tel 090 326619, www.calasolemessina.com