

Trattoria Tecolori

Valentine's Day is a day I love, and a day I expect to be taken out. I love Italian Culture and cuisine, so in finding out my date was taking me to an authentic Italian restaurant called Trattoria Tecolori on W47th St and 8th Ave, I was ecstatic. My date mentioned having made reservations two weeks in advance. He believed because it was being booked on Valentine's Day, he wanted to be sure we got a table. Reservations were done through the OpenTable app but could be done online or by calling the restaurant. When we first arrived at the restaurant, I was shocked to see 2 couples waiting outside. Although waiting in the cold, a waiter brought out a small glass of red wine for each person waiting, giving them a set time for when they could be seated. I immediately felt welcoming vibes with this action. When we walked in, I knew this restaurant had a sit-down, phones-away vibe. My date mentioned our reservations to the Hostos, and without hesitation, the hostess grabbed four menus, walked us to the back, and gave us a quick tour of what was around. The restaurant is small but cozy. The music was low, but you could hear the classical Italian music ringing through. We were seated right by a nice red brick wall. Lights were dimmed all throughout the restaurant, and candles were on each table, along with a single red rose. When seated, we were greeted no less than two minutes later by our waiter, who had a basket full of warm Focaccia bread, and glasses for our drinks. As he set them down, He showed us the four menus, one for the food, the other for the drinks. Allowing us to see our options. Before leaving, he asked if we wanted tap or sparkling. We asked for sparkling. The waiter nodded nicely, left, and in no less than two minutes again, came back and quickly

filled our glasses with sparkling water. Our plates for the bread were already laid out before we sat down. Meaning our bread was complimentary. The alcohol menu had many options of wines, and spritz, almost over 60 options, from Northern Italy reds to International Varietals. When looking through the food menu, we saw many authentic Italian dishes written in their native language, from Farafelle Primavera to Penne Arrabita, to Rigatoni. Many of these Italian dishes had names I could not pronounce like Capellini Alla Putanesca, because no one had their phones out, I was not able to search for any dishes, luckily a description of the dish was labeled at the bottom. This helped differentiate between them. My date and I were starving and skipped on appetizers, they had options such as Mitsa and Caprese, which seemed interesting. It felt like the waiter read our minds, as soon as we put our menus down, the waiter stepped in and asked us what we'd like and what drinks were on our minds. I ordered the Capellini Alla Putanesca with a Diet Coke, while my date ordered the Spaghetti Alla Carbonara and the same drink.

Cultural Differences & Five Senses

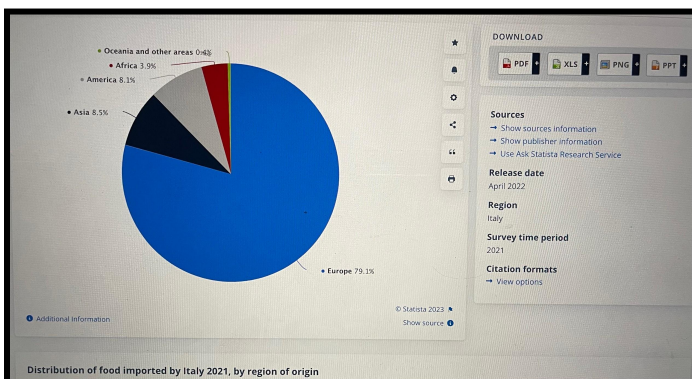
The menu alone was a huge cultural difference when it came to me *reading* and trying to understand the meals. The music, as I mentioned earlier, when *listening* to the *sound* closely, felt much more calming, it set the mood for what was going to happen. I was able to hear different conversations around me and even laughter. Not many American restaurants would have an atmosphere so inviting or welcoming liken this restaurant did. The music was a cultural difference I noticed because many All-American restaurants have Pop or R&B playing as loud as possible, the TV on, or no sound at all. As I *looked* around the restaurant, there weren't many

decorations to *look* at, the lights were dimmed and the atmosphere was very cozy, with the candles being our light source. I believe they made it this way to have a more sexy/intimate dinner for Valentine's. This cultural difference between seeing and *listening* helped open my eyes to a more calming dinner that I never was really able to experience before. Especially in NYC. Once the food arrived, I was quick to *smell* the difference between this authentic food, compared to an All-American Olive Garden for example. The food smelled amazing, with no weird smell. It was a smell that reminded you of something you would be able to do in your own kitchen. As the waiter set our food down and removed our bread basket for us, he set our forks and spoons down and said "Godere" with a smile. In return, I said "Grazie". As I *touch*ed the plate and the napkins to fold on my lap, I *felt* the silkiness of the napkin and tablecloth. In many American restaurants, the fabric would feel used and washed up, these *felt* new and warm. As I picked up my fork, I *looked* at the food, *smelt* it, and as soon as the pasta hit my tongue I *tasted* all the spices and flavors from the al dente pasta. I looked at my date and felt my hunger instantly go away. The creamy tomato paste along with the kick of spiciness filled my mouth and tastebuds.

Cultural & Economic Geography

According to our class lectures and what we've been taught so far in the course, "Cultural geography refers to how people live their lives in different regions around the world or country." While Economical geography is referred to as "the distribution of industrializing and wealth". (Sternquist, 2018). For Italy, it would be considered a Uni-Culture. Italy is typically treated as a monocultural and monoreligious country. Meaning they are based on one single religion and ethnicity, not having much diversity or other cultures like the U.S. This explains the authenticity

I felt as soon as I walked into the restaurant. When you think of Italy, you assume the authenticity is not influenced by other cultures. Our waiter, who did not want to give his name, mentioned that many of the meals on the menu (i.e, Linguine Nere Alla Monsignore, Linguine Alle Vongole, Carpaccio Di Manzo) all are traditional meals from the north of Italy. Culturally, Italy is known for its hearty popular pasta meals, fish dishes, and seasoned vegetables like tomatoes. Economically, many wines, food, and other resources are imported to the United States from Italy, so a lot of the Italian meals that are cooked here in NYC, you could say are genuine. I was excited to find a graph by T. Ozbun, 2022 (shown below) showing how much compared to other countries is imported from Italy to the U.S. New York City in general, is home to many Italians. In a city that is very much diverse, Italians have their own section in The Bronx and Soho called Little Italy. Many Italians live in this area and they are known to have some of the oldest italian businesses there. Me being from The Bronx, I am well-known with this community and I am proud to say, have learned from them in understanding the authenticity when it comes to their food. Economically they have benefited New York in many ways.



(T. Ozbun, “Italy: Share of Food Export Distribution 2021.”)

Dress

I decided to wear all black to this date, with my long sleeve, black, turtle neck dress, the dress *suspended* to my body nicely, *executing* my curves and allowing my figure to speak for

itself. With the neck being long, I *folded* it allowing it to not look too much and having it *bind* against my neck. My long, over-the-knee, black boots *wrapped* around my legs securing me in and allowing me to feel comfortable. I *modified* my body by doing my *makeup*, putting on light foundation, some mascara, pink rosy lipgloss, and some pink blush. My *nails* were not done but I cut them down and put a clear coat on top to keep them looking nice and simple. I added some silver *jewelery*, as I *touched* the diamond earring, putting it on my earlobe, and *opening* the two pierced holes I had on each ear. I also added a little silver necklace, that helped *transform* my look into a more *classic* look. The coldness from outside allowed me to *layer* my look by adding faux fur to, a black coat. The oversize coat felt *soft* and *warm*, feeling a little *heavy* at times. Everyone around me in the restaurant had similar attire. Either wearing all black or neutral colors. The men around me had trench coats on, black caps Toe Oxfords, and some even loafers, When it came to the staff and how the employees dressed, everyone looked professional and clean. The staff who were all men, had on white button-down collared long-sleeve shirts, with two buttons on the ends of their sleeves securely *clipped*. Ensuring a closed and fitted shirt. Their wine color long ties could be seen *wrapped* around their necks and *tucked* into the collar, *clipped* well. The tip of their ties all touched the classic silver buckle belt they had on, which all *looped* into the black trousers, allowing the pants to *adhere* nicely to their waist. The black trousers were not tight but loose, *tailored* to their height, stopping right at the beginning of their shoe heel. All have polished black dress shoes on. Their wine-colored aprons matched the color of their ties, *wrapped* around their waist tightly. I was surprised to *see* the staff who had *modified* their look by all having fresh and nicely done haircuts. My date noticed how many of the men had gel in

their hair, adding another *modification* to their look by keeping the style clean. Their *nails* were all nicely trimmed, and our waiter *smelled* of Dior Sauvage Colon.

Rating My Experience

Trattoria Telcolori, I was able to learn about the name of the restaurant from our waiter, Trattoria in Italy means “Small Restaurant”, a restaurant that serves “Simple” food. This is exactly how I would describe Telcolori. When it came to service, everyone, from the hostess to the waiters, knew exactly how to treat you. You felt welcomed with open arms into this cozy small place that was filled with authenticity. You did not feel rushed or as if The cleanliness was top-tier, I brushed my hands over the bar and along our chairs, and no dust or ink was around the wood material. It smelt of nothing but food and drink, and after excusing myself to go to the restroom, I found myself hit with lavender and a clean bathroom.

I would rate Trattoria Telecolori an A-. The overall atmosphere was incredible, even from the beginning when there were people who were waiting for a table, I felt welcomed. Not pushed away. The reason why I would not give this place a full A is for the restaurant looks, there weren't many decors to look at, no pictures or authentic images to prove it to be italian, except for the outside banner. Along with this, the restaurant itself was very dark. Valentine's day is a time for intimacy and low lighting. Which I really enjoyed but I believe, especially coming from other people around my table, that the lighting is always dark in the restaurant.

What Did I Learn?

What I learned from this experience, being able to go to a restaurant and write a report on it, I was able to learn that here in NYC, there are many Multicultural restaurants and people. These people have either immigrated or moved to America and in the process, have been able to share their own meals, and recipes for others to try and taste. Being able to eat anywhere and find authentic food is never hard here in the city. Having been able to go to this restaurant and experience food that was not Olive Garden or Applebees, was exciting. I hope to one day travel to Italy and sit down with actual locals, and be able to eat amongst them. This is a dream of mine that I will soon, hopefully, make come true.

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