

# **Getting around Italy Vegan-style**

Stacie and Lenny Blandino  
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Italy is a great country to visit, lots of culture, history and great food! Being vegan is not that difficult, in fact, Italy is one of the countries where it is actually *easier* to be vegan! You just have to know what to ask for in restaurants and know what to look for in your food labels.

### *Food labels*

Navigating the supermarket, in general, is not difficult. In Italy you will find the *fruttivendolo*, which is like a small stand to buy fruits and vegetables, *supermercati*, small markets and also natural food stores. Supermarkets range from small to large and just like anywhere else, you have your large chains and your smaller mom and pop places.



Larger chains are starting to carry more health food, such as gluten-free, special flours, different milks such as soy and rice milk and large selections of fruits and vegetables. As long as you stay away from processed foods, you should be OK. Not all processed foods in Italy are as chemically saturated compared to what you may find in the US, although they still have some degree of chemical manipulation to conserve the food. However, there may still be animal derivatives in them.

If you have the urge to check out processed breads or baked goods, however, you should know a few different words to watch out for on labels.

Let's have a look at a basic food label you would see in a supermarket.

Do you know what is in this??

*Farina di frumento, zucchero, grasso vegetale non idrogenato, uova fresche pastorizzate 5%, agenti lievitanti (carbonato acido di sodio, carbonato acido di ammonio, tartrato monopotassico), latte fresco intero pastorizzato, sciroppo di glucosio, sale, proteine derivate dal latte, miele.*

*Prodotto in uno stabilimento che utilizza anche arachidi, frutta a guscio, sesamo, soia.*

This is your basic shortbread cookie, full of milk, eggs, sugar and honey!

*Wheat flour, sugar, non-hydrogenated vegetable oil, fresh pasteurized eggs, baking soda (sodium carbonate, ammonium carbonate, monopotassium tartar), whole pasteurized milk, glucose syrup, salt, milk protein, honey.*

*Produced on equipment shared with peanuts, nuts, sesame, soy.*

Most breads are OK, you just have to watch out for milk, butter, mono and diglycerides (which are animal based) and/or honey. The bread you want to buy should have only



*Farina, acqua, sale, lievito.* Flour, water, salt, yeast.

Also, watch out also for processed sauces, such as pesto.

Here is a walnut pesto sauce you can find at the supermarket:

*Olio vegetale, acqua, granella di noci 17%, olio extra vergine d'oliva 10,3%, siero di latte in polvere, Grana Padano 6% (latte, sale, caglio, conservante lisozima -da uovo-), panna, latte scremato in polvere, formaggio pecorino, sale, correttore d'acidità acido lattico. Può contenere tracce di altra frutta a guscio.*

*Vegetable oil, water, ground walnuts 17%, extra virgin olive oil 10,3%, powdered milk, Grana Padano (a cheese) made with milk, salt, rennet (calf stomach), egg preservative, cream, powdered skim milk, sheep cheese, salt, lactic acid (animal product). It may contain fragments of nut shells.*

Pasta, especially fresh, can also be tricky. Most of the fresh ones are made with eggs. Just make sure to check the label: *Pasta con l'uovo* means it's made with egg.



A quick start guide on what to look for while shopping in your local supermarket or what to say while you're eating out.

### ***Milk products to avoid***

***Latticini*** are any type of milk products. In Italian, if you see these words on any food labels, they are animal derived.

Latte: Milk

Burro: Butter

Yogurt: Yogurt

Formaggio: cheese

Caseina: casein

Panna: cream

Latte scremato in polvere: powdered skimmed milk

Il Caglio (animale): rennet (calf stomach)

Margarina: margarine, can be from animal

In polvere: in powder form

Mono e digliceridi: mono and diglycerides

### ***Meat products to avoid***

Carne: meat

Brodo di pollo: chicken stock

Brodo di maiale: pork stock

Brodo di carne: meat stock

Lardo: pork fat/lard

Strutto: pork fat/lard

Sugna: pork fat/lard

Sego: ground cow bone remains

Pancetta: meat from pig stomach/ribs

Oli marini: fish oil

Grasso animale: Animal fat

Pesce: fish

Gelatina: gelatin (could be animal derived, unless specified)

Bresaola: Horse meat

Uova: eggs

Miele: honey

## ***Restaurants***

Simply knowing some Italian words and phrases will help you immensely. If you don't know the language very well, I would personally recommend avoiding restaurants, unless they specifically cater to vegans and/or vegetarians. Some restaurants will use butter in the pasta or rice dishes EVEN if the dish is meat free. Watch your steamed veggies too! If they are frozen, prepackaged, they could have a butter sauce already in the veggies! It is the sauces that you really have to pay attention to. (refer to ingredients in sauce above!)



(Was there maybe a bit of grated cheese added? Or a pat of butter?)

*Risotto*, for example. It's a very common dish, you can find it anywhere. It is rice with usually a sauce, vegetable and sometimes meat, but even though it may be *risotto allo zafferano* (rice with saffron) there may be milk or butter in it! And unless the chef makes FRESH dishes and sauces every day, the sauces could be prepackaged and/or frozen, meaning that they cannot remake sauces specially catered to vegans. It all depends on the restaurant and the cook.



You can ask if the *salsa*: (sauce) is *preconfezionata*: (prepackaged) or *surgelata*: (frozen) and if it contains



*prodotti animali* (animal products). I would advise specifically asking if there are animal products instead of saying you are [vegan](#), because unless the chef or waitstaff understands what [vegan](#) means, they may not be able to fulfill your request.

Also be careful because a lot of sauces are made with chicken stock or animal stock. Always ask. If you are eating in a Chinese or Japanese restaurant, some ginger sauces contain fish oil/fish sauce/fish broth. Unless you ask questions, you have no idea what is in your food when you eat at a restaurant.

### ***Phrases***

Going around Italy, you will need to be armed with basic knowledge of how to express your food requests.

Also, you have to be careful in restaurants, so it's crucial you know how to say certain phrases. Let's begin!

Senza carne: without meat

Senza latte: without milk

Senza latticini: without milk products

Senza formaggio: without cheese

Senza uova: without eggs

Senza prodotti animali: without animal products

Senza glutine: gluten-free

Io non mangio carne: I don't eat meat.

Io non bevo latte: I don't drink milk.

Io sono vegano/a: I am vegan.

Io sono vegetariano/a: I am vegetarian.

C'e' (your choice of word) in questo?:

C'e' **burro** in questo?: Is there butter in this?

C'e' **latte** in questo?: Is there milk in this?

C'e' **formaggio** in questo?: Is there cheese in this?

Ci sono **uova** in questo?: Are there eggs in this?

These are the basics of what you will need to survive in Italy being vegan! Hope it helps!! Grazie mille! – Stacie and Lenny

Complete e-book will be available soon!

