



Trieste: Italy's surprising capital of coffee

In every Italian city, the day's rhythm begins at the cafe. But in Trieste, a city on Italy's north-east coast, that rhythm comes **with a twist**. Wander into any cafe here and, in addition to the familiar **clinks** of cups and hissing of steaming milk, you'll hear people ordering "capo in b": a mini cappuccino served in a glass that's a favourite of Triestini.

With a twist : with an unexpected change

Clink (noun): a sharp ringing sound like the sound made by glasses being hit against each other.

It's one of the many reasons why this city sandwiched between Slovenia and the Adriatic in the top ruffle of the boot is unlike anywhere else in Italy.

Sandwich (verb): to fit sth/sb into a very small space between two other things or people.
I was sandwiched between two fat men on the bus.

"I thought I needed a PhD to order coffee when I first moved here!" said Maria Kochetkova, editor of In Trieste, an English-language magazine for the city's many expats. "Instead of a 'caffè' (espresso), you order a 'nero'; for a cappuccino you say 'caffelatte'." The list goes on. She and her husband, Francesco Stumpo, an Italian from Savona, happily translate Trieste's unique cafe code to help newcomers. As Kochetkova sees it, connecting with the coffee tradition in this city is one of the best ways to truly become a part of Trieste.

Cafes are a second living room for many Italians. After home, this is where social life often unfolds, as people from all generations gather with friends to share the latest gossip and pass the time. But in an already coffee-obsessed country, many people might be surprised to learn that this **far-flung** border city is commonly considered Italy's unofficial "Coffee Capital".

Far-flung: a long distance away

She has travelled to the most far-flung corners of the world.

Not only are the Triestini said to drink twice as much of the stuff per year as anywhere else in Italy – an eye-popping 10kg of coffee beans each annually – but it's also home to the Mediterranean's main coffee port and one of Italy's biggest coffee brands: Illy.

"Coffee is definitely a thing here," said Alessandra Ressa, an English teacher who moved from San Francisco to Trieste 20 years ago. "Instead of just standing at the bar and drinking a quick coffee like in other Italian cities, here we sit down and take our time, we make appointments with each other for *caffè*. And you never see anyone walking with a **to-go** cup."



Ressa added that even when she and other Triestini go caving in the limestone grottoes that surround the city, they bring along a specially designed heater, pot and cups, so they can take a break with a buon caffè (good coffee). "It's a special pleasure."

Grotto/'grɒtəʊ/ noun: a small picturesque cave

Coffee is thought to have first arrived in Italy in 1570 when physician Prospero Alpini brought coffee beans from Egypt to sell in Venetian pharmacies. Though the drink was immediately beloved, it aroused suspicion because of its unfamiliar **buzzy** effects and associations with Islam.

Buzzy /'bʌzi/ adj.: lively and exciting

Catholics called it "The Devil's drink" and rallied Pope Clement VIII to ban it. But after one sip, the Pope declared it was so good that it should not be exclusive to the "infidels". By the mid-17th Century, elegant cafes were established in Venice and Vienna, and coffee was **revered** as a luxurious drink, enjoyed by **aristocrats** and **intellectuals**.

Infidels: /'ɪnfɪd(ə)l/

Revere /rɪ'viə/ verb: to feel great respect and admiration; idolize

Aristocracy /,arɪ'stɒkrəsi/ noun: people born in the highest social class; nobility

Intellectual adj. : well educated