



Things not to miss at Torino, Italy:

Torino is a city filled with interesting museums, churches, and many scenic views. As we traveled around the city, I noticed that many of the restaurants had small tables outside where people gathered to have an aperitif, a stopping for a drink after work activity. However, for a few more Euros, they also had a choice of a dinner buffet. The bars seemed to have different personalities, offering various types of food options. We were surprised to see how many people enjoyed these dinner buffets with drinks.

Another attractive feature in Torino that makes it a delightful place to vacation or live is that they are very close to the Alps. You can reach them by driving for about only one hour. This makes it a perfect place for hiking, skiing, and even just relaxing in a cooler atmosphere on the hot day.

As we traveled around the city, we noticed that they had a popular public transportation system, which makes it easy to navigate with well marked city maps that were available.

Our tour guide introduced us to many of their rivers and parks. As you move around the city, you seem to be surrounded by nature, rather than a busy traffic. People can enjoy walking or running along the river, and they even provide places for community events.

As we toured the parks, our guide asked us if we wanted to see Borgo Medievale, an imitation medieval village. It represents an average medieval hamlet and castle from the Piemonte region in the 1400's and was originally built for the 1884 Torino expo. As we walked down the one street, you could easily imagine living there. It has different types of buildings, sturdy walls, a castle, and even a drawbridge. It makes you feel like you just stepped back in history

Of course, you will want to visit the downtown area, where you can fully appreciate the beautiful architecture and enjoy covered walkways near the city streets.

But if there is one place you need to stop, it is Porta Palazzo, one of the largest open-air markets in Europe. It has about four sections, where you can find fruits, vegetables, other food products like meat and fish, household supplies, and even clothing or shoes. Some vendors are inside and others outside.

The part that I enjoyed the most was The Farmers' Canopy, a place where local farmers sell their local products and seasonal produce. The carts of juicy fruits, fresh fragrant herbs, and picture perfect vegetables are so attractive that it's hard not to stop, sample, or buy the fresh produce. As we walked along, I saw oceans of squash blossoms, beef heart tomatoes, candy striped beans, and snipped fennel. I felt almost like an Alice in Product Wonderland.

ITALIAN VEGETABLES AND FRUITS – What I Learned

DID YOU KNOW?

Eggplant is mildly smoky and soft and meaty when cooked.

Arugula, known as **Rocket**, adds a slight bite to salad greens.

Basil: Three local types are available and actually play a starring role in recipes.

Fennel is delightful eaten raw and have a sweeter anise flavor when cooked.

Zucchini (Courgettes) are topped with orange edible flowers. Stuff them with mozzarella or ricotta with a touch of anchovy. Deep fry, sauté, add to pasta.

Carrots—the feathery tops are edible too. Carrots were purple early in their history.

Garlic: for a quick bruschetta - rub a raw peeled clove on toasted bread; drizzle with olive oil and a dash of sea salt.

Lettuce: Italians add lettuce to soups or braise it as a side dish.

Mint: In Italy, mentuccia, a wild growing variety called calamint, nepetella, or Emperor's mint, is added to braised artichokes, frittata, or tripe.

Peas- braise in butter with pancetta and shallots

Spinach – it has the shortest cooking time, 2 minutes. Also reduces in volume during cooking.

Swiss Chard: It has different colored ribs but very little difference in taste between them.

Taccole (Runner beans or Mange tout) – Italians blanch taccole and then cook them with onions and tomato sauce until tender.

Tomatoes: Many different varieties and sizes. Most pomodori have sweet yet lightly tangy flavor; great raw and cooked.

Turnip Greens – It's a slightly bitter green and has been popular in Italy. Each region calls these leafy greens in a different way. You will see them as friarielli, rapini, broccoletti, and cime di rapa. Lightly blanch them before saluting.

Apricots – Their nutrients and anti-oxidant powers remain intact even when the fruit is dried.

Blackberries – are juicy, great eaten raw from hedge but can be cooked in coulis and pies.

Cherries – Local ones are visciole, dark, sour and wild variety that can be used in tarts, pies, crumbles and sauces. Try with ricotta in a Roman delight, crostata di visciole.

Figs – a perfect addition to pizza Bianca and prosciutto sandwiches

Loquats – called nespole; grow in clusters on evergreen trees. The flavor is a mixture of peach, citrus, and mild mango. Buy the uglier ones as they taste better.

Plums –related to the peach, nectarine, and almond. Watch out if you suffer from nut allergy. Favorite Italian varieties are the oblong purple and tiny round and green ones.

Raspberries – considered to be the finest flavored 'frutti di bosco' berries; serve with cream or gelato.

Cantaloupe - Smell the blossom end for ripe aroma. Marry melon slices with prosciutto or puree and add to soft peaches for cold soup. Use as container for fruit salad.

Watermelon - Add chunks with some crumbled ricotta salata and mint.

For more information: see: Michelle Bottalico

<http://www.turinepi.com/2015/07/10-reasons-to-visit-turin.html>

<http://www.italyfoodandwinetours.com/what-fruit-and-vegetables-are-in-season-in-july-in-italy/>