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Dining on the Amalfi Coast

Posted by Brette in Food | Travel



Hands off veggie buffet at Aurora

Piazza Tasso, the center of the town. Aurora is more than just a pizzeria – they own two more restaurants next door, so it's a compound at this point. I was pretty excited about dinner here. You walk past the side of the restaurant and there is an open window into the pizza kitchen, where you can watch the chefs making the pizzas and baking them in the wood oven.

The restaurant has what looks like a small buffet near the front. This is a selection of vegetables for the



Pizza oven at Aurora

no" when I pointed to them. Turns out they were extra.

The vegetables were cold on the buffet (previously cooked) and stuck in the microwave once we selected them (I am not a fan of the microwave approach here). Despite this, all had interesting flavor combinations. It was a nice selection. My son started with ravioli Caprese style and my husband had stracciatelli soup, which is very similar to egg drop, and thus he loved it. For our second, we went with pizzas and calzones. My son got a Romano



1/2 pizza 1/2 calzone

"selection of vegetables" listed as a starter. My daughter and I each got this. Just when we thought we had the hang of this whole Italy thing, they showed us we did not at all. It's not a buffet in the American sense. You go up with your waiter and you tell him which items you want and he fills your plate. Now, this is hard to do when really I just wanted a tiny taste of everything, but I felt like a huge pig to ask for this. There were also cheeses on the buffet but I was told "no,



Fish at Zi'Ntonio

pizza (anchovy, mozzarella, tomato, and mushroom). He enjoyed that. My husband got four cheese pizza which we thought was a bit boring (no sauce). My daughter got a calzone Napoli (cottage cheese, ham, and mozzarella). She liked it for the most part, but again, there's no sauce, so it is kind of dry. I got the Aurora No. 4 which was supposed to be half pizza, half calzone with ham, cheese and mushroom. It ended up being a calzone with just one little flat part. I

wasn't a fan. A pizza without sauce

is like a sandwich as far as I'm concerned. I don't care if it is red or white, it needs something to make it tasty. Overall, we were disappointed by the pizzas.

Day Two

A guided tour took us to the town of Anacapri on the island of Capri where a lunch was included in our tour. Hands down the worst meal of the trip. You know you are in trouble when you are asked to choose between "fish or meat."



Unnamed fish



Wild strawberry cake

Sorry, but I need more details! Which fish, which meat, and how is it cooked? Everything here was pretty bad – cooked in huge pans and served at the table by the waiter. Just disappointing.

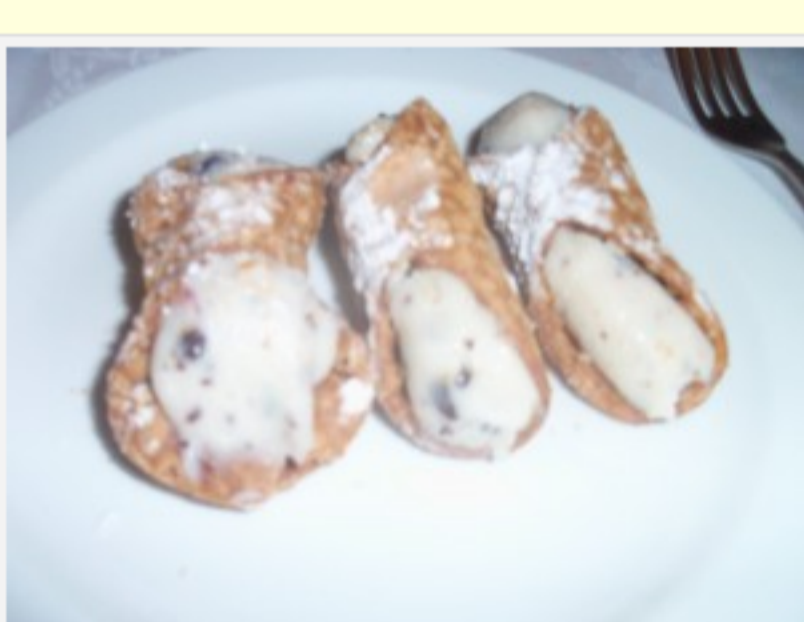
We rebounded however and dined that evening in the Marina Grande area of Sorrento (on the waterfront) at a restaurant recommended to me by my hair stylist who grew up in Naples and visits Sorrento often. Zi'Ntonio Mare was magical. It's

situated on a pier over the water, next to the sand

beach where we came and swam the next day. Mount Vesuvius is in the background. You can see the cliffs of the coast and hear the water lapping. The language barrier was heavy here, and because we ordered some specials I am not exactly certain what we had! I started with a Caprese salad which was perfect. Then I had a special which was fish. I originally ordered something else from the menu and was told they were out of it. The waiter suggested this fish instead, the name of which I could not



Sorrento Lemon Cake



Cannoli

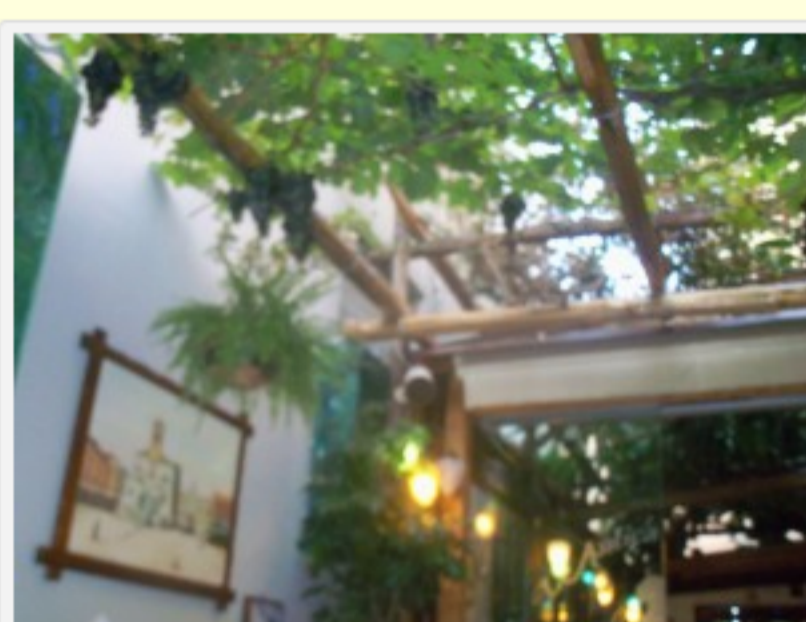
understand, but which he said was like a sea bass. It was fantastic. White, flaky, mild, but filling and full of the flavors of the sea. My daughter had linguine with scampi and these shrimp were huge and delightful. My husband had spaghetti with clams (which I think he ordered just about every other day on this trip!) and then sea bream baked in salt. The sea bream was fantastic. I've had salt-crusted meats and fish before and it is always a surprise how non-salty they

are, and how the salt crust keeps the moisture and the flavor inside. My son had ravioli and deep fried squid and

shrimp. Every item on the table was magnificent, but we weren't done yet. My daughter had cannoli and the rest of us shared a wild strawberry cake (teeny, tiny, amazingly sweet wild strawberries all over this moist cake) and a lemon cake, a specialty of the Amalfi Coast. The cake is baked inside a meringue. This is on my list to replicate.

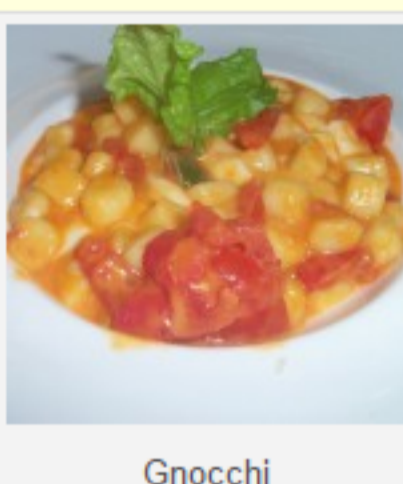
Day Three

After a morning at the beach, the



Inside L'Antica Trattoria

kids collapsed at the hotel and my husband and I did some shopping and brought sandwiches back. We also brought back



Gnocchi

a wonderful little wild strawberry cake which was just as wonderful as the one we had the previous night. Where are the Italians growing all these wild strawberries? Why can't we get them at home?

What strikes me about the sandwiches is that they only have meat and cheese

on them. You can't get lettuce or tomato or anything else, at any kind of traditional sandwich shop.

Dinner that night for our final evening in Italy was at L'Antica

Trattoria, chosen in most of my guidebooks as "the" place to eat in Sorrento. It was truly a beautiful setting. There is a small restaurant inside, but most of it is outside under an arbor. There is artwork and pottery all over and the service was quite elegant. I began with gnocchi (always



Angel hair and prawns

good no matter where we had it) then had pesce bandieri with fried prawns. The husband had angel hair pasta with prawns served in half a lemon (loved the presentation and as always, loved the prawns), then

lamb medallions with Mediterranean herbs. Unlike the lamb in Rome, this was cooked properly and was delicious. The son had ravioli and the daughter had quail. We finished our last night in



Lamb medallions

Italy with another Sorrento lemon cake I've really got to work on replicating this) and a plate of lovely cookies.

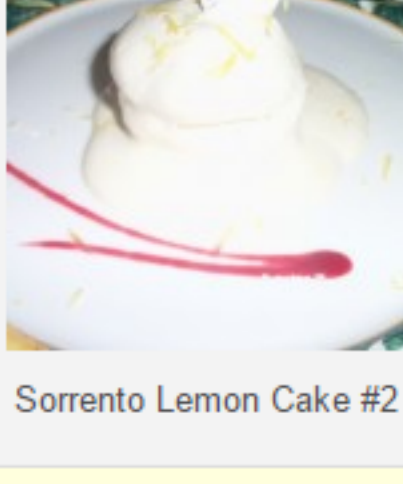
Italy was the best food I've had on a trip, hands down, anywhere to date. I would go back in a heartbeat. The

beauty of it was none of us gained a single ounce. As always on vacation, I lost weight because we are constantly moving and you just eat less when someone



Pesce bandieri with prawns

else is portioning out all of your food.



Sorrento Lemon Cake #2



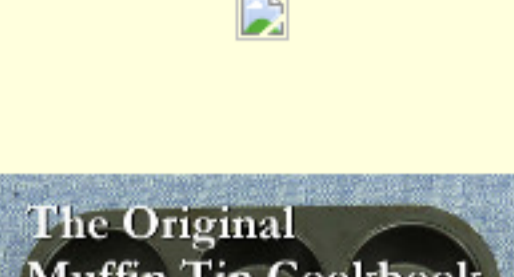
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