

ISSUE 017

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WARKITCHEN



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So good even bees can't get enough

SELOOLIVE.COM





BEHIND EVERY GREAT MEAL IS SELO

They say a good woman is behind every successful man. Have you ever asked yourself what's behind a good meal? You can eat the best grass-fed, grass-finished steak in the world. But if you dress it with poor quality oil, you're going to be spending the rest of your night scrubbing that petroleum aftertaste out of your mouth.

You Deserve Real Oils

It's stunning. These days, we can eat the exact same meal but feel completely different after it. Not because of the chef particularly, but the type of oils these restaurants use. It's not just because they're using cheaper seed oils either. Most of them cut costs by using *cheap olive oil*, that's made with rancid olives from old harvests, or even worse

— fraudulently cutting with other oils to save costs. These poor quality oils are a silent killer that degrade your meal experience without you even knowing.

The Story of Selo

Selo, pronounced “*seh-lo*”, is Croatian for village. Our Selo is 15 minutes from the Adriatic Sea, where all our olive oil is freshly pressed. We are proud to say that for generations, Selo Olive Oil has been derived from a pure, single varietal olive, the *Oblica* – indigenous to the windswept plains of Dalmatia, Croatia, that's been harvested from the time of the Ancient Roman Empire.

We Mean Authenticity

Selo is family owned, and we pride ourselves in only selling premium,

authentic Croatian olive oils. Many brands offer poorer quality oils, but we simply refuse to. We wouldn't dare adulterate our oils, or sell a cheap, poor quality version of it. You can be assured that every bottle branded with Selo is of the highest quality Croatian oils. Anything less, and we would risk a Selo civil war.

SELO is hand-picked by Croatian grandmothers at harvest once every 12 months. Secure your bottle now before we run out of stock for 2023. Taste the tradition:
selolive.com



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This issue wouldn't have been possible without our partners.

Sponsors: Selo Olive and Dropkick Copy

Contributors: Oswald Andrews, Mark Valin, Nate Lawrence,
Alex Taghavian, Analyze & Optimize and Will Coomer

How to write emails that sell

by Nabeel Azeez

Dropkick Copy has written emails that have produced \$301,827 in 3 months for a direct-to-consumer brand and 900 sales calls in 7 months for a consulting company.

Here, with the benefit of hindsight that comes with 10s of millions of emails sent, are 46 of the things we've learned.

1. Send more emails. A lot more emails. More emails than you believe are acceptable.
2. Resend to non-buyers. Not just non-clickers/non-openers.
3. Never assume your subscriber read, opened, or even saw your email in their inbox.
4. When composing or designing an email, think mobile-first. Short sentences. Short paragraphs.
5. Ask subscribers to add your email address to their contacts, move you to the primary inbox, and mark you as important. Show them how to do it with gifs & screenshots.
6. Ask them to buy something as soon as they subscribe. Do this on the thank-you page and in your follow-up email.
7. Only use discounts to reward your best subscribers and customers.
8. Send a survey email before a big promotion. Ask your subscribers what they want.
9. Ask your subscribers to reply to emails.
10. Send *true* plain text emails from time to time. It's a plain text email if you can't hyperlink. Some email service providers offer a rich-text option that they call plain text.
11. Don't try to be clever in your subject lines. Leave puns to the brand copywriters.
12. The best subject line has: benefit + specificity + curiosity.
13. Keep your subject line under 30 characters. Impossible with every subject line, but try. That's what fits on a mobile screen.
14. Don't copy the subject line or email style of gurus or big brands.
15. Use the preview text to amplify your subject line. And always use the preview text.
16. If your email software doesn't have a field to add preview text, use the first line of your email as the preview text.
17. Don't just say click here or buy now. Re-state the benefit in your call to action. This is a CALL-TO-VALUE.
18. The first line of your email must grab the reader by his or her throat.
19. The first line of your email must grab the reader by his or her throat.
20. Delete your introduction. Start your email in the middle of the action. Movies and TV shows do this all the time.
21. Images should serve a purpose. Don't just include them to make the email look nice.
22. Resize and compress your images before adding them to your email.
23. The offer is everything. You don't need design or copy to sell 50% off storewide.
24. Embed countdown timers when you want to add urgency. You can find free timers online.
25. During a promotion, email at least twice a day. Once in the morning. Then resend that email to non-buyers in the evening.
26. On the last day of a promotion send an 18-hour and 4-hour cart-closing email to everyone.
27. Immediately ask buyers to buy again - upsell, cross-sell, or give them a discount on their next purchase. Do this in your post-purchase funnel and emails.
28. Send your email from a person rather than a brand. Nabeel Azeez > Nabeel at Dropkick Copy > Dropkick Copy.
29. Include a photo of the email sender in the sign-off. Link that image to your product/service/lead generation.
30. Don't add links too early in your email. You're wasting an opportunity to persuade them to buy.
31. List segmentation is a waste of time until you hit 10k subscribers. Use that time and energy to write and send more emails.
32. A/B testing is a waste of time until you hit 5-7k+ subscribers. Statistical significance.
33. The most likely person to buy from you is someone who has already bought from you. Treat your customers better than you treat everyone else.
34. Pay more attention to the subscribers and customers who engage with and buy from you. Don't waste your time on unengaged subscribers and non-customers.
35. Segment customers by: Recency - when did they buy last? Frequency - how often have they bought? Monetary - how much have they bought?
36. Take your best-performing email campaigns and add them to your autoresponder sequence.
37. Make your autoresponder sequences longer. 90 days > 60 days > 30 days. Nurture sequence, Post-purchase, Abandoned cart, Etc.
38. Use video landing pages as a bridge between your email and product page. Perfect for testimonials. And you control the user experience.
39. The weaker your product page (conversion rate) the longer your email needs to be and vice versa.
40. When you have a high-converting product page, sell the click over selling the product.
41. Make sure the landing page you're sending subscribers to loads in less than 3 seconds
42. When resending an email, change the: subject line/preview text, email copy or style (text vs. design,) from name (optional.) Make it look like a brand new email.
43. When emailing from a new domain, follow a warm up schedule. 100 emails day 1, 200 day 2, 400 day 3, etc.
44. Regularly prune your list of unengaged and inactive subscribers. Send a re-engagement email first, then delete with extreme prejudice.
45. When you add a Google Doc or YouTube video (or any Google Workspace product) to an email using a naked URL, it appears as an attachment in a Gmail inbox.
46. Business owners who want to slash their costs to acquire customers and boost their customer lifetime value visit dropkickcopy.com/warkitchen



A MESSAGE FROM ROCKY

Welcome ladies & gents to October's issue of the WARKITCHEN magazine! New font. Fresh cover. *We're so back.* We welcome the last quarter of the year with an introduction to wine pairings. Oswald Andrews starts us off with a perennial piece, detailing some of the most iconic wine pairings you ought to know. Mark Valin then gives us his various wine pairing tips, as well as some important book recommendations that make for good fall reading. Who knows? You might catch the wine bug and end up being a sommelier like these two.

We then move from the world of wine into that of metabolism and 'peatism'. Nate Lawrence dives into these topics, and leaves us with some crucial tips on how we can raise our own metabolism. The guys from Analyze & Optimize then explore 'peatism' and what is Dr Raymond Peat's philosophy. There's something to learn whether you're new, or an experienced peater.

Alex Taghavian spills the secrets of his iconic Persian dish (which was featured in last issue's eats of the community),

with a full recipe spread. This October, let's say goodbye to boring white rice and spice things up. The final article of Issue 017 is an exclusive travel guide by Will Coomer, that explores beautiful Italy. From giving you restaurant recommendations in Positano, to the best places to visit *when in Rome*, it's a must read if you intend to visit Italy at all in the near future. And of course, we complete the magazine with beautiful pictures from you. Take inspiration, and get in the kitchen to make healthy, beautiful food that nourishes your mind, body & soul!

Before leaving you to it, here are two announcements from us at the WARKITCHEN:

WARKITCHEN PRINT

I'm incredibly proud to say that the inaugural print issue of the WARKITCHEN magazine is almost here! At the point of writing (29th September 2023, 10:04am), we've already sent out what is the very first sample for printing. And we can't wait to receive it. We expect for it to be available for purchase somewhere late October or early November. The first

print issue encapsulates some of your favorite issues so far, in a form factor that elevates the reading experience. I know many of you have been asking for it for some time now, so I can't wait for you to have it in your hands. Just know that we are doing a *very limited first run*, so please keep your eyes peeled for the announcement. We will always give first dibs to those on the list, so make sure you're in @ warkitchen.net. And don't worry, we will continue with our digital releases every month. The plan is to release print once every quarter, to bring the best articles from our digital versions to life. Perhaps with some special extras as well!

OPTIMAL FUEL

We've been working hard behind the scenes on V3.0 of Optimal Fuel, our flagship playbook. Official release date will be announced shortly!

Thank you all for your support on all our issues. Truly means the world.

Now, as always,

Enjoy The Experience





FOOD COMES FIRST

A guide to pairing food and wine by Oswald Andrews



You’ve just sat down at an upscale restaurant, gorgeous blonde sitting across the table, and been handed a leather-bound wine list twice the size of the menu – what do you order?

Man’s knowledge of wine is only as valuable as his ability to pair it seamlessly with food. As a certified sommelier, manager of a family wine cellar, and a lifelong culinary enthusiast, I’m here to guide you. Welcome to your ultimate playbook for pairing food and wine, a skill that elevates any dining experience.

The Fundamentals

First, let’s step back in time to cover the fundamentals. Long before famous vineyards had the luxury to plant grapes for wine, they were all agricultural – they grew food to survive. It was only

natural for vintners to tailor their wines to be most pleasant with their local cuisine. So, when you’re in doubt, go for a wine from the same region as your meal. But be specific. Saying

“Italy may be small, but its wine regions are as diverse as they come, each influenced by its unique climate. That’s why a Pasta Bolognese pairs so well with a Sangiovese from Bologna – it’s in the name, after all”

“I want an Italian wine with my Pasta” won’t cut it. Italy may be small, but its wine regions are as diverse as they come, each influenced by its unique climate. That’s why a Pasta Bolognese pairs so well with a Sangiovese from Bologna—it’s in the name, after all.

The role of protein in your wine pairing is often misunderstood. It’s not the meat itself that’s

the star, but how it’s seasoned – be it a rub or a sauce. When choosing a wine, focus first on how it will complement the sauce, then consider the meat’s body or heft. I recently tested how two California Chardonnays pair with white fish a la beurre Blanc: one wine was light and balanced, harmonizing beautifully with the fish, while the other was too overpowering in both body and oak, even though I used it in the sauce. This principle is true regardless of your wine’s color. Light bodied red wines can be lovely with fish, just as bold whites can handle the might of a juicy steak – it’s all a matter of body.

Finally, don’t overthink it. Food and wine are natural companions, and while there are exceptions (like the chemicals

in bell peppers that can turn a wine rancid in your mouth), most pairings will be delightful. Outliers aside, whatever you choose will probably be great. Too much effort and you're chasing diminishing returns, so just pick something and see what you think!

With that in mind, here are some suggestions for pairing food and wine commonly found on menus and wine lists.

Sancerre and Goat Cheese

Sancerre is an appellation d'origine contrôlée (AOC) on the left bank of the Loire Valley, most famous for its delicate Sauvignon Blancs. This region also produces excellent goat cheese. I recently served a soft **Florette Goat Milk Brie** and a hard **Cypress Grove Midnight Moon**, paired with a **2019 Domaine Dominique et Janine Crochet Cuvée Prestige**, for visiting family; it was the perfect way to start the evening.

Additionally, Sancerre serves as an excellent entry point for Americans looking to explore French wine — they're affordable and commonly featured on both shelves and wine lists. Pro tip: \$30/wedge a bit rich in this economy? Dig around the "ends" bucket in the cheese section at Whole Foods. Usually, you can pick up the last nubs of pre-cut cheeses at odd weights for \$2-10 a piece. Pick 3 and host a small tasting!

White Fish w/ Beurre Blanc and Chardonnay

When looking for wines to pair with fish, I cast my mind to coastal towns known for their fish, then look to their nearest wineries and often find chardonnay. (In)famous for its buttery notes, it's only natural to pair a nice chard with a fish prepared in butter. Beware: Too much oak can easily overpower your fish, so ask for something lighter on oak. Without naming names, if you see women over 50 ordering a certain chardonnay by the gallon at your local steakhouse bar, pick something else for white fish.

Chicken and (Almost) Anything

In the wise words of Mouse from the Matrix, "You take chicken, for example, maybe they couldn't figure out what to make chicken taste like, which is why chicken tastes like everything!". This logic is sound



and applies to wine pairing. Any medium-body red or white will be great, just keep the region consistent with the chicken's spicing.

Duck Confit and Pinot Noir

The last time I sipped a great pinot, I gazed into my glass and said, "This would go beautifully with duck." Pinot noir offers a wide range of tasting notes and tends to be high in acid. Duck, high in fat, is extremely decadent. The acidity from pinot noir cuts through the fat of the duck, making a beautiful pairing.

The French have mastered the art of serving duck, but you might try a Willamette Valley Pinot here. The Willamette Valley, Oregon and Bordeaux, France both sit on the 45th parallel. The similar growing climate has attracted many French vintners to open **sister wineries** in Oregon, often selling at a discount to their French counterparts.





Potato Chips and Champagne

Your Potato chips must come from the Potato region of Idaho, otherwise it's a sparkling French fry. Jokes aside, these two components complement each other despite different origins. Commonly served together at champagne bars, the sharp acidity and drying effect of champagne creates space for the chip's salt and fat to shine. While **chips designed for wine exist**, stick to a plain, salt-only chip for champagne.

Steak Florentine and Brunello Di Montalcino

Bistecca alla Fiorentina (or steak Florentine) is a traditional steak recipe from Florence, Italy. Take a tremendous, 2-inch-thick Porterhouse, grill it on open flame over smoked olive branches, and serve rare with a drizzle of cold-pressed EVOO atop a bed of lightly sauteed spinach. Brunello Di Montalcino hails from Siena, a town just south of Florence, a bit closer to the coast with steeper hills and less rainfall. The hotter climate gives these wines more power and body than other Sangioveses grown nearby. This really is a match made in heaven, also known as Tuscany. Next time you're in the mood for an unapologetic steak, ask your butcher to cut you a 2-inch-thick Porterhouse. If you don't have olive branches growing in your backyard, throw these **dried olive leaves** in a smoker box and get them smoking before you add your meat. 2015-17 were great vintages for all Italian wines, so ask your local wine merchant if they have any '15-17 Brunello and pick something within your price range (anything from \$40-100 should be great).

Crème Brûlée and Sauternes

When it comes to dessert pairings, the wine must always be sweeter than the dessert itself. The striking vanilla notes in Crème brûlée should be perfect for an Armagnac or even a Bourbon, but their lack of sweetness make them fall flat. Enter Sauternes, a beautifully complex white wine grown from intentionally rotted Semillon grapes in Bordeaux.

These wines are incredibly sweet, surpassing the 4% Residual Sugar Index (RSI) colloquially known as the Great Wall of Sugar. Ideally, one would always have a **Chateau d'Yquem** on hand, but for us mere mortals **Chateau Suduiraut** will give you the classic Sauternes experience without breaking the bank. Pro tip: Sauternes sweetness makes it very difficult to finish a full bottle, and its price makes losing a bottle to oxidation painful. Look for the 375ml format, it's a more manageable serving size.

WILD CARD: Barbecue and Amarone

This one shouldn't work, but it does. Amarone di Valpolicella is an Italian red wine that uses a similar rotting process to the Semillon grapes in Sauternes to create something sweeter than most



reds, but still below the Great Wall of Sugar, making it unsuitable as a dessert wine. It's tough finding foods that match these criteria. My Sommelier course professor suggested I try Amarone with barbecue, so I picked up some burnt ends and baked beans from my favorite local BBQ joint and poured a splash of **2016 Zenato Amarone** with a **Coravin**. I was amazed how great they taste together. Both barbecue and Amarone are sweet and smoky, and the wine's earth tones set the stage for the spices in the sauce to dance.

This article was written by Oswald Andrews. You can find him on X (Twitter).

Finding the right wine in time

MARK VALIN



You're out with friends for dinner, everyone's having a great time. The host brings you to your table. Your group takes their seats, things begin to settle down and suddenly a wine list finds its way into your hands. You turn to the first page and it's a sea of obscure towns, what you assume are grape names and a never-ending series of hard to pronounce words. You begin to panic. Surely, someone around the table knows their way around a wine list. Is that a chance you're willing to take?

Unless you have spent years working in the restaurant industry, you may have been confronted with the dreaded task of picking out the right wine. Fortunately for us, gone are the days in the 70s, 80s & 90s when the hegemony of wine taste was consolidated into the hands of the Wine Spectator or Robert Parker. The wine intelligentsia used to direct huge swaths of the industry. However, with changes in technology & social media, everyone is a critic, armchair sommelier, or an influencer. Our problem now



is the overwhelming number of options afforded to us. There are hundreds of different Barbera's, Chenin Blancs, Sancerre's, Rieslings (Austrian or German); not to mention a dizzying array of domestic Cabs, Pinots & Chardonnay. The silver lining in our current situation is that the overall quality of wine making equipment and techniques have improved wildly since the 90s. So, at a bare minimum, chances are high if you're dining at a reputable restaurant, you'll get something good. The second and more pressing task is finding a style the resonates with you.

I recommend starting with local wine bars to try some flights to compare aromas, acidity, texture, tannin, and sweetness. Strike up a conversation with one of the servers or sommeliers. Many of the staff in wine bars are very excited to share their perspectives and if you're honest about learning more about wine, the good wine pros can establish a general framework. Once you have an idea of what you're looking for, you may want to consider checking out wine apps like *Vivino* or *Delectable*. They provide a quick way of assessing the overall style of wine with the snap of your phone. It always helps to ask questions and experiment early on. Try not to settle too early with one grape or region. You run the risk of prematurely excluding many delicious, if not

fascinating flavors and pairings. Avoid big box stores. Visit local wine shops and ask the staff for their insights. Often, the employees of these small businesses are highly qualified.

Finally, education is the best way to really enhance your wine game. Several books I recommend starting with are: *The Wine Atlas 8th Edition* by Hugh Johnson OBE & Jancis Robinson MW, *The Wine Bible* by Karen MacNeil & Wine Folly "The Essential Guide to Wine" by Madeline Puckett & Justin Hammack. Beyond books are several organizations that specialize in wine training, notably the Wine & Spirit Education Trust (WSET) & the Court of Master Sommeliers. There's a great world of wine out there for you to try. You just need to take the first step.

Mark Valin DipWSET has been a sommelier for nearly 20 years. He has certifications from the International Sommelier Guild and WSET Diploma Program. He is a wine director, private cellar curator, wine judge, and frequent wine festival alum. In 2017 he cofounded Made by Light Wines in De Luz, California where he farms certified organic Rhone & Sicilian varieties. Connect with him on his socials below.



Life is flux.

by Nate Lawrence

Life | 8 flux.



Around 500BC, the world began to know of a philosopher by the name of Heraclitus of Ephesus. Heraclitus' core belief was that life is a constant flux, intrinsically linked to a greater 'logos', or divine principle. According to Heraclitus, every physical thing is an extension of this constant flow of energy. It's the concept that "*no man steps in the same river twice*". Striving for stasis or for unchanging conditions contradicts this natural flow of life, which Heraclitus considered divine. If life can be seen as a constant flow, then the actions that promote this flow should appropriately be seen as the highest spiritual good. We see this embodied in every life process, most notably human metabolism – which is essentially the assimilation and utilization of cosmic energy, flowing ever upwards.

Being Guided By Our Intuition

I argue that our *intuition* serves as the bridge to this understanding, facilitating the flow of energy across all dimensions. In my view, intuition is our tether to the divine. The central tenet of the metabolic perspective is that amplifying this flow of energy should be our one true goal. After all, look at nature, there's a reason for this. The flow of energy is truly what allows for the expansion of life and consciousness. For humans, this is represented through oxidative metabolism; which is essentially the conversion of glucose into energy in the presence of oxygen and thyroid hormone. This mechanism is what allows us to achieve proper hormonal balance, live a more 'natural' life, and allows for more

instinctive action. However, various stressors – be it environmental factors, dietary choices, or social interactions can disrupt this flow, severing our innate connection to the divine.

The Role of Stress

When stress is high, an organism turns inward for protection. This is the reason why many animals hibernate through winter. Why would we expend energy when resources are scarce? This is the idea of *preservation vs abundance*. Energy is conserved when the environment is stressful. On the other hand, when it's stimulating? Energy is synthesized. As William Blake aptly put it, "*the cistern contains; the fountain overflows.*" Preventing impairment and promoting the flow of energy is one of the main things I consider when thinking about the processes of life.

"If we learn to see problems in terms of a general disorder of energy metabolism, we can begin to solve them."

– Ray Peat.

Boosting Metabolism

I shall now discuss some practical steps in regards to supporting one's metabolism. One of the main places metabolism can go wrong is the conversion of inactive thyroid hormone T4, into the active form T3. Stress, estrogen excess, and polyunsaturated fats (*PUFAs, essentially seed oils*) are the main inhibitors of the

*“Everything flows and nothing stays.
Everything flows and nothing abides.
Everything gives way and nothing stays fixed.
Everything flows; nothing remains.
All is flux, nothing is stationary.
All is flux, nothing stays still.
All flows, nothing stays.*

Life is flux”
— Heraclitus



conversion of thyroid. The idea is to lower stress and promote energy.

(I) Avoiding PUFAs

The first practice to support metabolism is to avoid PUFAs. The problem with PUFA is that due to its unsaturated nature, it's easily oxidized in the bloodstream when burned for energy, breaking down into the inflammatory prostaglandins and leukotrienes. PUFA also adversely impacts thyroid metabolism in multiple ways: it hinders thyroid hormone secretion, obstructs its transport, and inhibits cellular responsiveness to the hormone.

As I'm sure many of us know, seed oils have had a significant negative impact on public health and are almost ubiquitous, found in most packaged foods and almost impossible to avoid in restaurants these days. However, the presence of PUFA in everyday foods remains a concern. Essentially when we burn fat for energy under conditions like stress, fasting or exercise, and our fat tissues are mainly unsaturated due to high PUFA consumption (mainly from

the accumulation of seed oils), glucose oxidation becomes impaired, leading to various metabolic issues. If

the food supply weren't so adulterated, avoiding PUFA today might not be as crucial. In an ideal scenario, our tissues would be completely saturated from the diet. Because saturated fat has a stable structure, they support metabolism when burned for energy; thus, they should be the preferred choice. **Coconut oil is one such source and actually possesses several other pro-metabolic qualities.**

The objective is to eliminate PUFA from our system, so that when we're under stress, our metabolism won't be impaired. But if we don't want to eat PUFA nor burn it for energy, how do we get rid of it? By limiting PUFA intake to less than 4 grams a day, we gradually expel it through our urine. It binds to albumin and can be detoxified over a period of years. This is why people don't always see immediate benefits from avoiding PUFA, but can begin to over time. Additionally, Vitamin E acts as an anti-stress agent and counteracts the effects of PUFA and estrogen.

(II) Sugar

Another thing that can help in supporting the metabolism is sugar. Sugar from fruit, juice, honey, or cane sugar can lower cortisol and provide an easily utilized form of energy. This lowering of stress can help to promote the conversion of T4 into T3.

(III) Detoxification

When the liver and GI tract are burdened with toxins, supporting detoxification/digestion is the main thing to focus on in regulating the flow of energy. **Ray's carrot salad** (1 carrot grated lengthwise, 1 tablespoon of coconut oil or extra virgin olive oil, 1 tablespoon of white vinegar or apple cider vinegar, and a pinch of salt) possesses antibiotic/antiseptic qualities and can help to bind to toxins (such as estrogen) and also promote the elimination of endotoxin (LPS). Consuming the carrot salad between meals daily can support the gut and liver, helping repair energy metabolism.



“Ray's carrot salad possesses antibiotic/antiseptic qualities and can help to bind to toxins (such as estrogen) and also promote the elimination of endotoxin (LPS). Consuming the carrot salad between meals daily can support the gut and liver, helping repair energy metabolism.”

In my opinion, improving digestion is truly the most vital component to improving metabolism. Dealing with bloating, acid reflux, constipation or endotoxin

overload, diarrhea, bacterial or fungal overgrowths, and fat malabsorption is extremely important. Here is a **comprehensive video** I made regarding digestion. If you're experiencing issues with digestion, please feel free to reach out via DM on my socials. Also, I can provide more in depth assistance via coaching.

(IV) Curating a Proper Diet

To optimize metabolism, focus on adequate protein intake from animal sources such as grass-fed red meat, gelatin, shellfish, eggs, and dairy. Complement this with easily digestible carbohydrates like simple sugars from ripe fruits, fruit juices, honey, and cane sugar. As most of us likely now know, the goal is to eat nutrient-dense, and easily digestible food. This minimizes harm and promotes the flow of energy.

Consider incorporating fat soluble vitamins such as A, D, E, and K. Coffee, aspirin as well as other pro metabolic substances are also beneficial things to explore. Consuming weekly liver and oysters (pasture-

raised eggs with uncooked yolks are also great more frequently) for their rich vitamin and mineral content with B-vitamins, fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E, K, zinc and copper are very beneficial. Ensuring adequate selenium and salt are also other things you could keep in mind.

Maintaining a calcium-to-phosphate ratio of approximately 2:1 is another key consideration. Elevated phosphate levels can trigger inflammation and stimulate the release of parathyroid hormone (PTH), which in turn floods cells with calcium and contributes to cell death. Stress, insufficient dietary calcium, and electromagnetic fields (EMFs) are primary factors that elevate PTH levels. To mitigate this, consider supplementing with magnesium, vitamin D, and vitamin K, which can help regulate PTH. For calcium intake, opt for easily digestible dairy products or alternative sources like calcium carbonate from eggshells, oyster shells, or coral calcium. If you're having issues consuming dairy or you're just uncertain of what type of dairy you should consume, **I made a video regarding dairy that may be of some help.**

(V) Carbon Dioxide

Another thing worth consideration is carbon dioxide. CO₂ is thought to be a waste product of energy metabolism, but once understanding the bioenergetic framework, it can be seen an absolute vital part of stimulating energy further. Put simply, carbon dioxide's main role is to help to utilize oxygen. Since hemoglobin (iron) likes to hold on to oxygen, this prevents oxygen from being utilized by cells. Carbon dioxide is able to dissociate oxygen from hemoglobin through the Bohr effect, thus promoting proper blood flow and oxygenation. Eating carbohydrates, improving thyroid function and practicing breathing exercises (such as Buteyko, breath holds, 4-7-8) are the main ways to increase CO₂. Carbon dioxide can also be increased more immediately from:

- Carbonated water
- Bag breathing (1-2 min)
- Coffee
- Vitamin B1
- Baking soda
- Methylene blue

(VI) Intentional Supplementation

Taurine, pregnenolone, and progesterone can promote bile acid synthesis, which activates deiodinase enzyme 1 that converts T₄ into active T₃. Supplementing

with any of these can be beneficial. Additionally, B-vitamins, especially B₃, can support glucose oxidation, inhibit PUFA release, and boost the NAD/NADH ratio while counteracting serotonin.

On top of curating your diet and filling in the gaps with supplementation, lifestyle choices play a crucial role. Getting adequate sunlight, spending time in nature, and living in a quality, stimulating environment are some of the most important things, and ultimately the hardest to achieve. These are some basic interventions I hope can help, but the experimentation goes ever onward! My picture is that anything to keep the flow of life going, whatever this means, in all realms, is what to look towards; guided by intuition. Whether this is facing a difficult task or conversation, focusing on your physical state, taking a walk in nature, going in the sun, spending time with genuine people; the goal is ultimately just striving towards stimulating life.

This article, along with the Marshmallow recipe on the next page is written by Nate Lawrence. Connect with him on his socials below.



THE ULTIMATE LIFE SUPPORTING SNACK: *MARSHMALLOWS*

What you need:

- 4 tablespoons of gelatin
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of raw honey or sugar
- (Can use more or less)
- 1 cup of filtered water
- Small saucepan
- Kitchen mixer
- Large bowl
- Glass tray

Method:

1. To start, pour 4 tablespoons of gelatin into a large bowl. Then, pour in half a cup of water and stir until the gelatin is fully soaked. Allow the gelatin to bloom.

2. Next, add half a cup of water and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of honey or white sugar into a small saucepan and heat on medium-high for 5-10 minutes. Stir occasionally and turn off the heat right before it starts boiling a bit. (Heated honey can be allergenic for some people so be aware of this)

3. Then once taken off the heat, slowly pour the honey/water mixture into the gelatin bowl. Go very slowly and add the honey/water mixture in increments. (It's good to have two people for this if possible)

4. While pouring the honey/water mixture, begin stirring on low speed with the kitchen mixer. As you add more of the honey/water mixture to the gelatin, you can increase the speed to high. You'll know when to turn off the mixer when the mixture starts to get very thick.

Once ready, it can be poured into a tray to set. The mixture can stick to the glass tray so I like to rub a bit of coconut oil or butter on the tray to stop it from sticking. It takes about 30 minutes to set, in a fridge, or on a countertop. (Sometimes I'll just start eating it now since it's so good.)

5. Next, you can cut it up into small pieces. (or just chomp bites off like a menace) I like to cut it into 16 squares and the macros will break down to this, one serving being 2 squares.

One serving (two squares):

Calories: 110 cal

Carbohydrates: 25.5g

Fat: 0g

Protein: 5.5g



I hope you enjoy as much as I do, it's so good!



Many of you loved this Persian Saffron Rice that was featured in the last WARKITCHEN issue, so we're blessed to have Alex share his treasured family recipe with all of us. Enjoy!

Persian Saffron Rice (*Tahdig*)

ALEX TAGHAVIAN

Igrew up in a household with a dad from Iran (Mashhad) and a mom from Jersey (Italian, Irish). We didn't have Persian food often, but when we did my dad would make saffron rice to accompany lamb kababs and other accessories. It took me several years to replicate Persian rice to match my childhood memory. One of the most important elements is the rice pot. I purchased a 5 Quart ceramic pot from Caraway, which prevents the rice from sticking without the Teflon toxin concern. It was a game-changer.

How to Make Persian Rice

Ingredients

- 4 cups of extra-long grain organic Basmati rice (purchased from a Middle Eastern store – no compromises)
- 10 cups of spring water or filtered water
- 1/4 cup of kosher salt (e.g. Vera salt)
- 4 cardamom pods, crushed (or 1 tsp whole cardamom)
- 1 Tbsp rosewater
- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1/2 cup melted pastured butter
- 1 tsp ground saffron, dissolved in 4 Tbsp of hot rosewater
- 1/3 cup plain whole fat Greek yogurt (e.g. Fage 5%)
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 3 raw egg yolks
- 1 Bay leaf
- 1 cinnamon stick

Method

1. The ideal process starts a day before you want to serve. Rinse rice with warm water in a colander until the water runs clear, about 30 seconds. Drain. Soak the rice for up to 24 hours in 8 cups of water that has been salted with 1/4 cup of quality salt.
2. When you're ready to cook, drain the salted water. On the stove, bring another 8 cups of fresh water to a boil. Add cardamom, cinnamon stick, bay leaf, 1 Tbsp rosewater, and 1/4 cup of salt. Add rice and boil until the rice starts to float at the surface (6 – 8 minutes).
3. Drain the rice again in a fine mesh colander and rice with 2 – 3 cups of cold water to stop the cooking process. Remove the bay leaf and cinnamon stick.
4. While the rice is boiling, heat the oven to 400 degrees.
5. Meanwhile, heat the rosewater and grind up the saffron pedals using a mortar and pestle. I like to use either a tsp of sugar or salt to help grind up the saffron. Add the heated rosewater directly to the mortar and allow the ground saffron to steep a bit.

To make the golden crust (tahdig), do the following:

1. In a mixing bowl, add yogurt, oil, eggs, melted butter, cumin seeds, and some of the saffron-rosewater mixture. Add about 1/4 of your parboiled rice to the mixture and combine.
2. Spread some olive oil around the pot to ensure that the rice doesn't stick. Take the tahdig prepared rice and spread it around the bottom of the pot. Then, carefully add the rest of your rice in a pyramid shape on top of the bottom layer. Add another 1/2 cup of olive oil and 1/2 cup of hot water on top of the pyramid to provide enough moisture during the cooking process. If you have any remaining saffron-rosewater, spread that around the pyramid. Finally, cover the pot and place it on the bottom rack of the oven. Cook for 60 – 80 minutes depending on how you prefer the doneness of the crust.
3. Once it's finished, remove from the oven and allow 10 minutes for resting. Remove the lid and carefully flip the pot onto a large serving platter. Serve with your favorite Persian food such as leg of lamb or kebabs. I like to sprinkle sumac on top of the rice when serving.

This recipe was written by Alex Taghavian. Connect with him on X (Twitter), where he posts about food and nutrition.



*ART IS NOT A LUXURY,
IT IS A NECESSITY*



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WHAT IT MEANS TO BE PEATARIAN

*“The key idea was that energy and structure are interdependent, at every level.”
– Dr. Raymond Peat*



It's a simply reality of our universe: *systems tend towards disorder, unless energy is applied to the system, which can maintain or increase order.* While this basic first principle is well understood in engineering, chemistry, physics, and even in other medical cultures, allopathic medicine and western health ideologies operate

outside of this observation. Instead, biology today is taught and practiced as a hodgepodge of loosely connected models, with no fundamental grounding principle. Dr. Raymond Peat, and the many great scientists who have inspired him (though, Peat would be offended if I referred to him as a scientist, as he hated what that word stood for,

he preferred to be known as a painter) attempt to bridge this gap, postulating that disease is driven by the disordered system of an organism, and health is driven by the organism's ability to generate energy. This energy production is inhibited by stress, a unifying idea of health and disease that seeks out environmental drivers of

stress as causative agents, rather than bad luck. It also explains the nonspecificity that is observed in life. You can get stressed from starving, from an argument with your spouse, from an infection, or from a meaningless life. While divergent in origin, these causative factors converge on one common pathway, that they impede the

energy production process in some way, shape or form. From there, precisely how severe, where, and in what context the energy production is impaired, determines the outcome, whether it is simply being in a bad mood for a bit, or getting cancer.

“Just as there are many remote causes of plague, insects, rats-but only one common cause, the plague bacillus, there are a great many remote causes of cancer - tar, rays, arsenic, pressure, urethane-but there is only one common cause into which all other causes of cancer merge, the irreversible injuring of respiration” – Otto Warburg

Modern allopathic medicine, driven by the endless pursuit of new pharmaceutical targets, focuses on receptors, protein interactions and confirmation changes, cell membranes, and ultimately the action of genes. It is a good way to define “drug targets.” A drug can target a receptor or an enzyme in isolation, and it can maybe have a positive impact on that one pathway that it intends to target, a perfect outcome for academia and industry. They can do this indefinitely, for the hundreds of thousands of enzymes, receptors and genes for the many different diseases.

While these are important components to the system, they are secondary or tertiary modifiers of it in the bioenergetic paradigm. Modifying the metabolism, or energy generation, of the organism, is the primary modifier of which all other systems are governed by. Treating health and disease in this manner is antithetical to the Rockefeller medicine model, as it proposes that a handful of interventions that can powerfully modulate energy and stress could be therapeutic for anything.

The ability to produce energy defines life. When a cell cannot produce sufficient energy for whatever reason, it will die. It is still a cell, it’s still made of the same stuff. Look at it under the microscope, it doesn’t look too different. Energy is the difference between it being a salty bag of water and protein, and a life form. The same goes for an organism. When someone dies, they still have a brain, flesh and blood, they still have proteins and genes. What they have lost is sufficient energy. Without that,

eventually, they will become so disordered that every piece of them will become a part of the environment once again. But what has made them human to begin with, was energy.

“What could be more important to understand than biological energy? Thought, growth, movement, every philosophical and practical issue involves the nature of biological energy.”

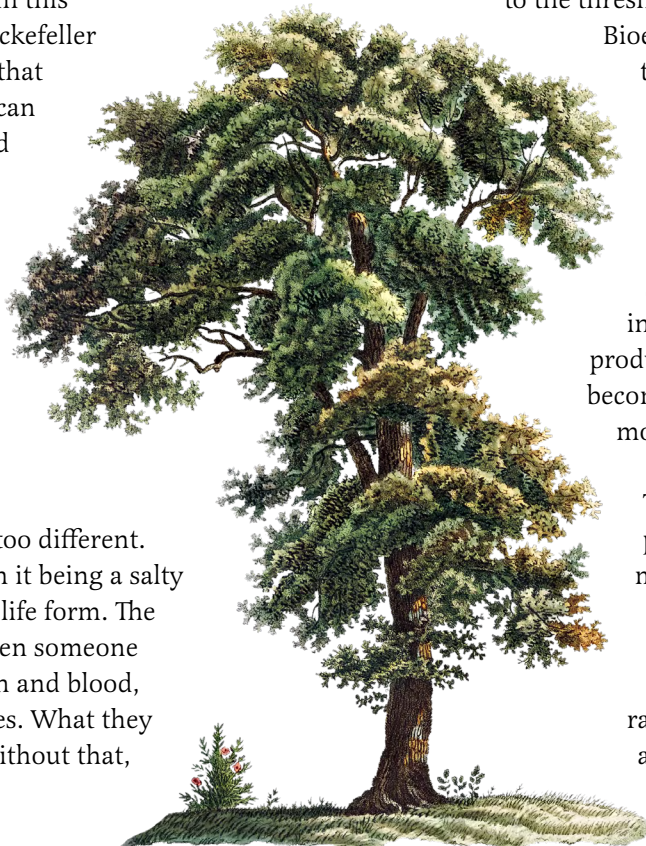
– Ray Peat

This way of framing things downstream starts to question the foundation of not only healthcare, but society at large. If we think of a more advanced and intelligent organism as one that is more ordered, and thus has a more sophisticated metabolism, it becomes silly to think that we evolved through random chance, survival of the fittest and competition, and that we should continue to uphold those values. Rather, it proposes that we are meant to be in highly nourishing, uplifting and supporting environments with our fellow people. This is why Peat often spoke about culture, language and authoritarianism. Not only do they modify the narratives around biology, but they directly pose stressors on the individual that contribute to the energetic status of the organism.

The higher energy production is represented by the young and healthy, those who are happy, who live, think and perform extraordinarily well. When you think of someone that is full of life, you are really envisioning someone with a robust energy flow. The lower energy states are represented by the tired, old and sick, closer to the threshold of energy that we call death.

Bioenergetics seeks to push you towards the higher energy state, the living state, the youthful state, which is as far away from the sick and dead state as possible. In doing so, not only does your objective health increase, but so does your subjective quality of life. As you increase the capacity for energy production, you become more alive, you become more conscious, you become more yourself.

This is in stark contrast to many popular ideas about health and medicine. While conventional wisdom is based on restriction and discipline, and on interventions that shift biomarkers to “healthy” ranges, bioenergetics is based on abundance and intuition, and on



interventions that make you feel healthier, make you feel younger. So when people say things like “a milk and orange juice diet sounds like a diet for a child,” well, that’s kind of the point!



With this, a key idea of bioenergetics is listening to your body, understanding that doing something

you don’t want to is a stressor in and of itself. When you do something, does it make you feel more or less alive? That is the ultimate guiding principle, and why I think Ray’s most iconic book is so perfectly titled *Generative Energy: Restoring the Wholeness of Life*.

“Authoritarians talk about protocols, but the only valid ‘protocol’ would be something like ‘perceive, think, act’” – Ray Peat

On a more practical level, the bioenergetic view of health, or as some would call “the Ray Peat diet,” (another thing he was not a fan of, and I am not either), differs from other more conventional health or dietary schools of thought. That is, bioenergetics is output based, while other ideologies are input based. Vegetable oils aren’t carnivore because they are plants, but they aren’t aligned with bioenergetics because they slow the metabolic rate and drive stress and inflammation. Most drugs are not used by paleo or primal communities because they are unnatural, but most drugs are not used by the bioenergetic community because they impair metabolic function or impose stress, while other drugs that protect against them are used.

More specifically, there are a few key biological mediators of stress and metabolic suppression. These include, but are not limited to:

- Most (all?) pituitary and hypothalamic hormones
- Adrenaline and noradrenaline
- Cortisol
- Parathyroid hormone
- Serotonin
- Intestinal bacteria, especially those that contain endotoxin
- The Renin-Angiotensin-Aldosterone system
- Estrogens

- Polyunsaturated fatty acids
- Nitric Oxide
- Lactic Acid

The classical “Peatarian” dietary interventions and supplements are all targeted protecting against these mediators. Something like orange juice is a staple because it has a large proportion of B vitamins, minerals, sugars, and

phytoprogestogens.

The simple sugars are easily digested, meaning they are less likely to contribute to bacterial endotoxin and serotonin production in the

gut, and subsequent nitric oxide, lactic acid, and associated inflammation. The phytoprogestogens have some anti-estrogenic effects, and also can relieve inflammation. The raw carrot is so popular because it helps to keep the bowels moving, helping in the elimination of bacterial endotoxin and estrogen from the colon. If you don’t want to eat it, that doesn’t make you a “fake Peater” (which has affectionately become a meme and an insult in the community due to this fact).

“Keeping the metabolic rate up is the main thing, and there are lots of ways to do it.” – Ray Peat

Due to this, the bioenergetic paradigm is infinitely evolving. New foods with unique properties, methods of cooking to increase digestibility and nutrition, herbs and supplements with pro metabolic properties, new metabolic pathways and regulation of familiar ones, it’s all being uncovered and discussed constantly. It has no hard rules, only one primary set of outcomes, and thus people are less concerned with defending certain foods or supplements, and more concerned with adding to the ever growing arsenal, the body of knowledge and application in the community. Pieces to the existing puzzle, and new parts of it we hadn’t yet considered, or even knew about. It’s hard for something like that to be considered a fad, especially when we are following in a (at least) century old tradition, trying to push the theory and its philosophical implications forward. With enough energy, that will always be possible.

This article was written by Analyze & Optimize. Subscribe to their YouTube channel and reach out on their socials.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WARKITCHEN

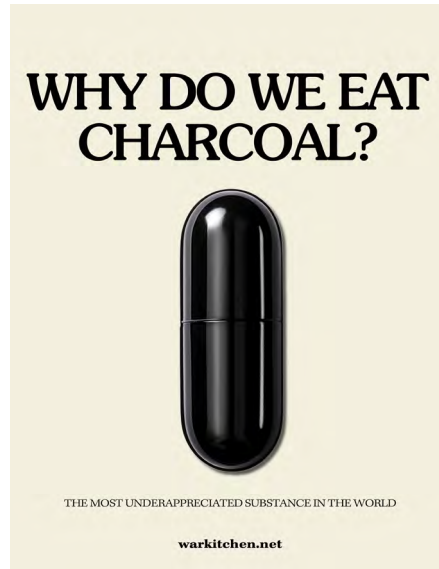
Every image is clickable, taking you right to the relevant post



You're consuming this.

SEP 01

*You're consuming this.
The plastic problem is insane.*



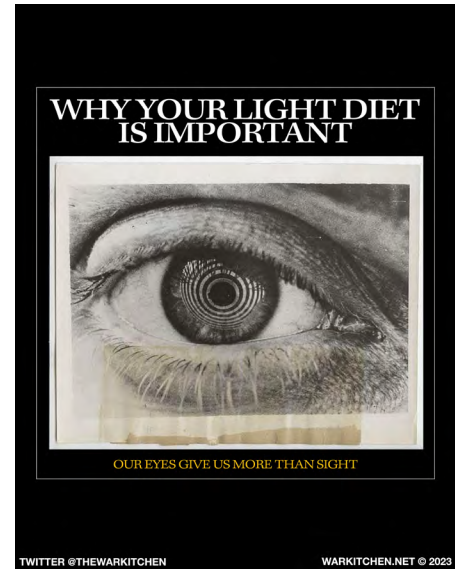
WHY DO WE EAT CHARCOAL?

THE MOST UNDERAPPRECIATED SUBSTANCE IN THE WORLD

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WHY YOUR LIGHT DIET IS IMPORTANT

OUR EYES GIVE US MORE THAN SIGHT

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SEP 09

*Why your light diet
is important*



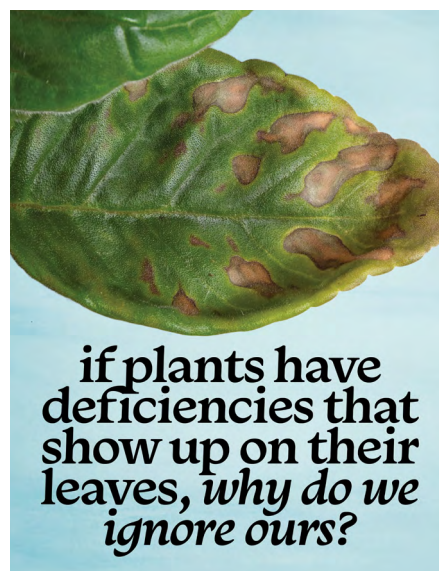
WHY DO WE USE HONEY DIPPERS?

Because it was born for one reason only — to dispense raw, unfiltered honey. God's Nectar.

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SEP 12

*Why do we use
honey dippers?*



if plants have deficiencies that show up on their leaves, why do we ignore ours?

SEP 19

*How we can learn from the
deficiencies of plants*



COOL KITCHEN ACCESSORIES YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT

EPISODE ONE

SEP 24

*Cool kitchen accessories you
didn't know about (episode 1)*

YOUR GUIDE TO ITALY

by Will Coomer





Oh, beautiful Italy...

Italy. For many, a country so ripe with culture, romance, and elegance it has become the perceived pinnacle of travel & leisure. In my native US, even mentioning you're traveling there can evoke dramatic sighs of pleasure & imagined perfection. Something along the lines of, *"Oh you're going to Italy? Ohhh, how incredible. I've always dreamed of Italy."* The best thing is, when done properly – Italy really can deliver all you ask of it. And I must admit, I too was one of those people who longed for the perfect elegance of a country I'd seen for years on television and social media. While I most certainly found what I was looking for, this is the guide I wish I had before visiting – so let's dive in.

Note: To preface and make known any bias: though I've traveled all over Italy, I haven't been everywhere yet, (notably Sicily & Sardinia), so that is why not all places will be mentioned in this guide.

The Coverall Approach

With a land mass more than double that of Florida and coming in as the 8th largest nation in Europe, Italy presents a challenge to someone like myself, who wants to deeply know a place and explore it all. If you're like me, or you just want to see as much of Italy's best in an efficient & effective way, here's the route north-to-south I recommend.

MILAN

Start in the north with Milan: one of Italy's most vibrant cities, an economic powerhouse, and a fashion hub for not only Europe, but the world. Like the majority of Europe, Milan is very walkable, so I recommend staying near the city center and walking to as many places as possible.

Sights to See

- The Piazza del Duomo
- Milan's premier cathedral
- Da Vinci's Last Supper
- Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, the world's oldest mall and an architectural beauty (still in operation)

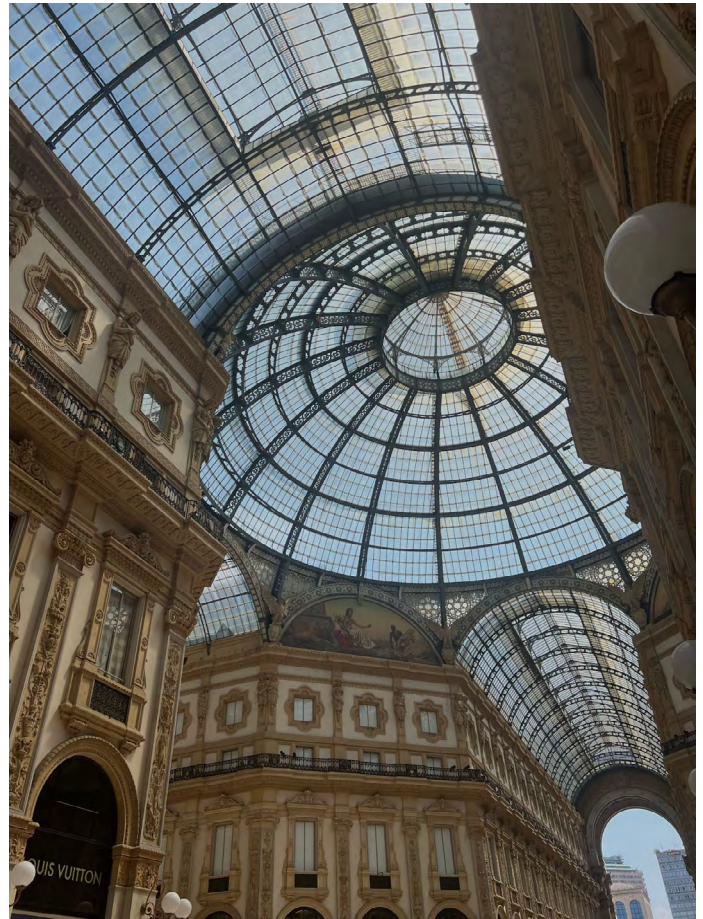
Things to Do

- Visit city center, get a gelato at Caffè Dante
- Relax in the spas and baths at QC Terme, an elegant wellness center that blends historic architecture with prime relaxation. I'd recommend going in the morning or later evening to avoid the crowds
- Shop in one of the world's most famous fashion hubs
- Walk and eat along the canal in the Navigli District

Food to Eat

- Each area of Italy has its own unique cuisine, and Milan is known for its Risotto alla Milanese & Ossobuco (anything "alla Milanese" will be a specialty of the region)

Special Note: If you fly into Milan, the main airport is a ways outside the city, so you can choose to take the train (the cheaper option) or Uber/Taxi to your accommodation. Normally, I prefer the convenience of Uber and am happy to pay more, but found in this case the train to be highly effective and easier to travel from the main station than hauling all the way into the city.



Will's Take: Milan is a great European city, but once you're past the history and major to-do's, it's still a big city (a la NYC, London, Chicago, etc). If the city's your thing, you may fall in love and spend a long time here, but for me, I'd never visit for more than 3-5 days. But, it is a good base to travel from due to its close proximity to several of Italy's popular lakes, Verona, and Venice.



Will's Take: While there are other worthwhile lakes in Italy, Como is the must-see. Como's my second favorite place to visit in Italy and a place I will continually return to throughout my life. Would recommend staying in Bellagio, there are plenty of great airbnb's available, but you can also stay in Hotel Belvedere or Tremezzo. I would recommend renting a car, but just know parking can be limited and driving is tight but fun!

LAKE COMO

One of the premier locales for elegance and romance, Lago di Como is an Italian classic. If you're looking for incredible vistas, timeless architecture, and the Italy you've always dreamt about – it's here.

Sights to See

- The lake's many towns, notables include: Bellagio, Tremezzo, Nesso, Varenna, Lenno, and Como
- Grand Hotel Tremezzo
- Nesso Bridge and waterfall
- The famous villas by water: The Star Wars/James Bond Villa, George Clooney's Villa, among others
- Mandarin Oriental Hotel

Things to Do

- Villas to visit: Villa Melzi (Bellagio), Villa Calotta (Tremezzo), Villa Cipressi and Villa Monastero (both Varenna)
- Take a boat out on the lake: you can either rent from one of the numerous rental companies and drive yourself (Cernobbio has quite a few), but the best boats for the ultimate Como experience are private rentals with captain (beautifully aesthetic mahogany boats, but also the most expensive)
- Jump from Nesso bridge and swim to the waterfall

Food to Eat

- The Grand Tremezzo Hotel has a beautiful terraza restaurant on the water as well as a few other options
- Al Prato and Bar Il Molo (Varenna)
- La Locanda (Tremezzo)
- Risto Forma e Gusto, La Dolcevita (sit outside), Mistral, Ristorante la Punta (Bellagio)

VERONA

Famous for being the setting of Romeo and Juliet, Verona has the familiar feeling of a smaller town, but still features a great many choices for food & activity. Verona also acts as a nice cool-down from the rush of the city in Milan and grandeur of Como.

Sights to See

- Sanctuary of Madonna di Corona, beautiful church cut into the side of a mountain
- Arena di Verona, mini colosseum
- Ponte Pietra
- Castel San Pietro
- Teatro Romano
- Piazza delle Erbe, dei Signori, and Dante

Things to Do

- Visit the piazzas, explore their markets and food
- Walk, scooter, and bike the city

Food to Eat

- La Taverna di Via Stella, try the traditional food: Bigoli all'anatra, risotto all'amarone, filetto di scottona all'amarone
- Trattoria alla Greppia
- Verona is known for eating horse meat as a part of its cuisine (not too bad, a taste similar to beef)
- da Zeno is the local favorite gelato spot, the fruit flavors were my favorite
- Dolce Locanda, a bakery started by a 2-star Michelin is home to one of my favorite desserts in the world, a cake known as Millefoglie Perbellini



Will's Take: Truth be told, Verona is definitely optional, but I greatly enjoyed the city and used it as a relaxing cooldown after an aggressive start to Italy with Milan and Como. Perfect as a quick 1 or 2 day stay, but let's put it this way — you won't die if you don't see it. If you do go however, don't miss the Millefoglie Perbellini cake from Dolce Locanda.

VENICE

Internationally known as the city of love, Venice is even more renowned for its canals. Rich in experience and romance, there's much to do and explore in the sinking city.

Sights to See

- Teatro la Fenice
- La Salute church
- San Marco, especially Piazza San Marco and Palazzo Ducale
- Fontego of the Germans, reserve the terrace for a great view if possible
- Cinema Italia, once a stunning cinema and theater but since converted into a grocery

Things to Do

- Take a gondola, more expensive if you do it anywhere (80+ euros), but if you cross with a traghetto gondola at the Grand Canal (in Rialto), it's only 2 euro per person
- Visit the San Rocco School
- Take the Vaporetto to San Marco and around the island (easy to start from the train station or other stops)
- Walk to Rialto
- Walk Piazza San Marco and visit the Basilica

Food to Eat

- Cafe Florian, the oldest coffee house in Italy
- Gelato di Natura
- Riviera alla Zattere, for Venetian specialties and seafood
- Nico ice cream parlor, the Gianduiotto for walking is a local favorite
- Cantine Sociali

Special Note: It's best to allocate around 3 days minimum in Venice. Rushing around the relative maze of canals trying to do everything can certainly dull the experience if you're frustrated with navigation troubles.



Will's Take: Venice has a ton to offer, but can sometimes be frustrating due to the logistics of a city connected only by canals and bridges. To avoid a first-day annoyance, I would recommend staying close to the train station, that way you'll only have to cross over one bridge with your luggage and won't need to figure out the vaporettos (water taxi) right away. Of course you can pay for a porter, but with the addition of Google Maps not functioning in Venice (Apple Maps does alright) it can be frustrating to find what you need efficiently, especially if you're weary from travel. While all of Italy would be well-complemented with a woman you love, I found Venice to be one of the appealing cities for that dynamic (aka I plan to come back with a significant other and not my brother). Pro tip: Don't eat at a restaurant where they try to get you to eat off the streets, the food will be unnecessarily more expensive and more than likely much lower quality. Also, don't order pizza in Venice, as pizza ovens are banned and so the pizza offered may be disappointing compared to elsewhere in Italy.

FLORENCE

Also known as Firenze, Florence is a magnificent city nestled in the heart of the iconic Tuscany region. While Italy is universally celebrated for its art, culture, and history, Florence takes it up a notch as the birthplace of the Renaissance, making it even more special and globally renowned for these treasures.

Sights to See

- Florence Cathedral
- San Lorenzo Market, known for its leather goods
- The Historic City Center, a UNESCO World Heritage Site
- See Michelangelo's "David," more of a check-off item but up to you

Things to Do

- Rent a car or scooter (motorcycle is my personal favorite) and drive around Tuscany (Pienza & Siena are great towns also in Tuscany)
- Visit museums and see the works of Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, and Botticelli
- Do a wine tasting at a vineyard, there are many options on Airbnb & you can verify with the reviews, alternatively ask your airbnb host or hotel concierge for recommendations (note: some of the best require reservations in advance, so if you're looking for a special experience, check early)

Food to Eat

- La Giostra, definitely make sure you have a reservation beforehand, possibly even before you leave for your trip
- Mercato Centrale, a large food court with much to offer and selections that satisfy all
- Gilli, the oldest cafe in Firenze
- Zaza, popular with both the locals & tourists with an expansive menu



Will's Take: Florence is incredibly beautiful, but make sure you don't miss out on the rest of Tuscany. Yes, the driving can be quite wild, but I found traversing the region by motorcycle to be my favorite part of the stay (alternatively you can rent a vintage car for the experience or hire a driver). Don't miss out on the wine and olive oil here as well, as Tuscany and especially the Chianti region within is world famous for its taste and quality.



ROME

Yes, I too think of the Roman Empire almost daily, & in a 2500 year-old city built by them, whether you're a man or woman – it's nearly impossible not to think about it here. Rome is the capital of Italy and not just one of its most iconic cities but perhaps among the most historically significant cities in the world.

Sights to See

- The Colosseum
- The Pantheon
- The Roman Forum
- The Vatican City and its many offerings (St. Peter's Basilica, the Sistine Chapel, and its many museums)
- The Spanish Steps
- The Trevi Fountain

Things to Do

- Visit your favorites from the above, and I'd recommend walking to as many as possible
- Near the Colosseum is a beautiful park and neighborhood. If you face the colosseum from the front, turn around and walk back – it's impossible to miss on your left. The neighborhood features beautiful nature, housing, and ruins
- If you're looking for a hidden gem, check out the Doria Pamphili Gallery, a large art collection not many know about
- Visit Les Étoiles, a panoramic restaurant with breathtaking views of Vatican City and the surrounding areas
- Porta Portese Roma is a more local vintage market on the outskirts of the city that's open on Sundays, and is especially great for buying unique gifts

Food to Eat

- Pasta Carbonara & Cacio e Pepe are two of Rome's most popular and authentic dishes
- Alfredo e Ada, only 6 tables once frequented by Sophia Loren & Fellini, offers a unique and extremely authentic experience
- Da Felice e Testaccio, for a great cacio e pepe
- Pompi, recommended by Roman's for the best tiramisu in all of Rome
- Zaza, popular with both the locals & tourists with an expansive menu

Special Note: Though we spent 4 days there, Rome may require a return visit or even longer stay to cover all your bases. Also, if you fly out of Rome ever, would recommend staying near the airport (Fiumicino has some solid options) for an easier time leaving – if you stay in the city, traffic and time spent getting to the airport can be an annoyance.



“ALL ROADS LEAD TO ROME”

Will’s Take: With the abundance of historical sites and tourist spots, Rome can be a lot to handle. Be clear on what you’re looking for and be respectful of your energy and time, especially if you’ve been traveling around Italy for a while. Go to tourist spots early in the morning to avoid crowds, and for anything that requires tickets, try to book in advance. Rome was my favorite “big city” experience in Italy, and feels authentic all the way through.

NAPLES & CAPRI

Known as “Napoli,” Naples is a historically & culturally diverse city founded by the Greeks and conquered by the Romans, featuring heritage from an array of different cultures. I’ve also included the island of Capri here. Similar to Lake Como, Capri also provides much of the Italy you’ve dreamt about. Additionally, it’s an easy and incredibly well worth it trip for a one or two-day stay from Naples.

Sights to See

- The Bay of Naples
- The vibrant city & street life: good to visit Mercato di Porta Nolana, Spanish Quarter Neighborhood, Via Toledo
- Visit Galleria Umberto I, an outdoor shopping center similar to Milan’s, walk around & explore all near it

Things to Do

- With Napoli as the birthplace of opera, Teatro di San Carlo is one of the world’s oldest opera houses that still holds performances
- Very easy to take a day trip to Pompeii & Herculaneum, both destroyed by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius
- Talk to locals, with some of the most passionate and proud residents, Naples is known for its warm welcome to visitors
- Visit the National Archaeological Museum, that is, if you’re not tired of museums by now
- Take the ferry to Capri or another city in the Amalfi Coast, go to Porto Molo da Beverello and take the hydrofoil (it’s faster) to your preferred destination

Food to Eat

- Napoli is famously known as the birthplace of pizza, and so you must try pizza Margherita
- L’Antica Pizzeria da Michele is one of the oldest & best pizzerias in Napoli, founded in 1870
- Also for pizza, Trattoria Medina & Ristorante Europeo Mattozi are local recommendations
- If you’re looking to break up the Italian, Hachi Ristorante Giapponese is a good sushi option

Capri To See, Do & Eat

- Tour the island: similar to Lake Como, Capri also provides much of the Italy you’ve dreamt about
- The best way to tour the island is unquestionably by boat, you can do a private or shared rental through Airbnb or other tour services (whether you’d like a more classic vintage boat or a yacht)
- Go to a beach club: La Fontelina is the most famous, Il Riccio the most luxurious, and more. Check out several beforehand and visit your favorites.
- Visit Upper Capri, “Anacapri,” a walk or taxi/scooter ride up from the main city center lies another part of the island situated on top of its cliffs
- Visit Villa Rufolo
- If you must, go visit the Blue Grotto: though it’s a cool cave and an extremely popular tourist experience, I wouldn’t feel the need to bring my family there; there are better options where one can swim, snorkel, or just see the beautiful water
- To Eat: Ziquè Restaurant & Terrace, Ristorante da Gemma, La Palette (beautiful view and terrace from Upper Capri)

Will’s Take: Naples felt like the most vibrant & authentically Italian from my American perspective, but I’m sure there will be plenty to tell me otherwise. I enjoyed Naples, but I loved Capri – but the two of them paired make for a great one-two trip you can customize to your liking. I found two days perfectly suitable in Naples, and probably could’ve been happy with one, but just like Como – Capri warrants perhaps a yearly return. To note though, I think it may be best to spend only 1 or 2 days there max at a time, in order to get the perfect dosage. I would happily return to Napoli, but mostly to use it as a jumping point to the Amalfi Coast. Also to note: Naples does not have Uber, so you’ll have to hail taxis – so make sure you have cash just in case.

POSITANO

The term 'breathtaking' is frequently overused, but in the case of Positano, it's entirely fitting. One of the most popular locations for a romantic getaway, Positano is a stunning village on the coast with the panache to satisfy any world traveler. Whatever area of "beauty" you would choose to categorize it as, Positano sits near the top.

Sights to See

- Spiaggia Grande, in a place famous for its beaches this is the main (note: make sure to have sandals as it's a pebble beach)
- Le Sirenuse Hotel & its restaurants
- The main village and its shops, accessible by walking down closer to the water

Things to Do

- Walk/climb everywhere, the city is navigable almost exclusively by walking and climbing the steps
- La Tagliata, a cooking class in Positano. Make sure to reserve in advance, their Instagram is [@fattorialatagliata](#)
- Have aperitif (drinks and a light snack) at Franco's Bar & Hotel Poseidon
- Go to a beach club: The most well known is Arienzo Beach Club, but Pupetto is another great option at a lower price point
- Shop at the many beautiful stores & boutiques, ceramics and handmade leather sandals are some of Positano's specialties
- Path of the Gods Hike
- Can charter a boat to Capri as well as other villages on the Amalfi Coast

Food to Eat

- La Scalinatella
- Ristorante Mirage
- Adamo ed Eva, make sure to sit on the terraza
- The restaurants at Le Sirenuse: if you'd like the best views, make sure to reserve in advance
- Ristorante Saraceno D'Oro, a great vibe with happy, energetic staff

Special Note: All locals recommend coming in September — July and August are the most popular months for Positano, but if you travel there later, the weather is still great and all the restaurants and shops are still open (many close for the season after October). There are many great options for accommodations, but if you're looking for the ultimate experience, I couldn't recommend staying in a boutique hotel (Le Sirenuse is my favorite) or a Historic Villa (Villa dei Fisici is incredible) more.



Will's Take: If it wasn't already clear, Positano is one of my favorite spots in Italy, and in fact the world. Out of 10+ countries in Europe this past summer, Positano was my favorite place of all. If you're traveling with older family members or unhealthy individuals, be aware the amount of walking can be rigorous to someone not accustomed to it.





Will's Final Thoughts

While we've covered a lot of ground here, there are some helpful details still left to note. On the topic of navigation, I'd highly recommend traveling by train through Italy — you can get a multi day pass or just buy everything through the trenitalia app. Business class and above is rather nice, but if you're just doing a quick visit without bringing luggage, anything works. Yes, you can get tickets the day of (which I almost exclusively did), but you'll definitely save money and have more options if you book in advance. The number one area I'd recommend actually driving around is Tuscany, but everywhere else you can take the train to & walk/uber/taxi in the city. Always check beforehand whether a city has Uber or not. Other Uber alternatives like Glovo or Bolt are

available in some, but not all areas. In general, it's always good to have cash in hand, in case you need to take a taxi.

On the matter of cuisine — avoid eating near any heavy tourist areas or famous landmarks, as the food will be more expensive and of lower quality. Ask the locals, use tripadvisor, or message me on [**Instagram!**](#)

Something I would highly recommend is trying a variety of food quickly in the beginning and to then decide on your favorite dishes to order. Of course, try the special dishes unique to each region, but just know that I found restaurants to be more hit or miss than anywhere elsewhere in Europe/US. So you might as well lower the variability for dissatisfaction and

have something you enjoy at a lower quality instead of a new dish that leaves you unsatisfied. I believe in doing your best to make every meal an experience, and after a few disappointments this is the method that worked for me! If you've ever seen the meme "*sometimes maybe good, sometimes maybe shit*," I found that to be somewhat appropriate for the Italian restaurant options — so it always helps to ask locals, use tripadvisor, or do some research beforehand if that's a concern of yours.

Finally, I want to address the expectations in visiting Italy. By all means — I love the country and one can have an absolutely incredible trip there, and I am blessed to have experienced what most would call "once-in-a-lifetime" things. But transparently, I experienced a bit of "Paris Syndrome" initially in Italy. This phenomenon is named as such after the (often extreme) disappointment visitors to Paris feel when they realize the city falls short of their expectations. While it certainly wasn't extreme disappointment, it was noticeable. Part of this is due to the extremely romantic and dramatized perception of Italy (which Americans have in general), with the other part coming from the perfect image of the country shown on social media. Just understanding this effect is possible (and even likely) beforehand will likely help with expectations, but even more so, I've now structured this recommendation to have a great balance of the Italian experience. If you're looking for the Italian experience you've dreamt about: I've specifically highlighted Lake Como, Capri/The Amalfi Coast, and Positano because they truly reached the standard set beforehand in my mind for elegance, experience, adventure.

And once again as a disclaimer — though I've traveled all over Italy, I'm still very eager to explore Sicily, Sardinia, more lakes in the north, and all the other villages on the Amalfi Coast!

So to all, thanks for reading!

This piece was written by Will Coomer. Feel free to share your comments and any questions you have by reaching out on Instagram.



EATS OF THE COMMUNITY

As usual, every WARKITCHEN magazine is only complete with what the community has made the past month — and it's only getting more beautiful each month! Take some inspiration from these creations and start cooking more beautiful food that nourishes not just our eyes, but the mind, body & soul. **Bon Appetit ladies & gents!**

*A special thank you to all of you who sent your pictures:
Gibau, Alexander Ketterer, MR & Brad Cano.*





THANK YOU FOR READING

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If you received this magazine from someone else, welcome! We're glad to have you here. To receive our next issue, get on the list @ [warkitchen.net](#). You'll also receive our flagship newsletter "WARKITCHEN WEEKLY" that's delivered every Sunday & best enjoyed with a flaky pain au chocolat. Till then, have a fabulous day wherever you are in the world!

*Godspeed,
Rocky*

**Optimal Fuel is currently sold out at the time of publishing. V3.0 is imminent, and an official release date will be announced shortly. Watch this space.*