

says Stefania Giannuzzi, the deputy mayor behind the initiative. “We wanted to value and recognise this aspect of the city.”

Vegetarian visitors wandering the streets of the northern Italian city won't take long to stumble across one of the growing number of new vegetarian delis and cafés. Despite the reputation of the Piedmont region for hearty Alpine fare (one of the most famous local dishes is bollito misto, a stew made from boiled veal, beef and chicken) the choice on offer is impressive.



“Turin has always been at the forefront of things,” says Claudio Viano, who opened the city’s first vegetarian restaurant, [Mezzaluna](#), with his partner Daniela 20 years ago. “Turin and maybe Milan are now the best places in Italy to visit for vegan food,” he says, praising the [Slow Food Movement](#) which was set up in the nearby town of Bra.

At [L'Articiocc](#), a café in central Turin specialising in meat-free Ligurian food, a set menu offers three dishes from a selection behind the counter. I go for gnocchi tossed in a delicious red pesto made with ground nuts instead of parmesan, a courgette and quinoa bake and a vegetable focaccia. The dairy-free chocolate and almond torte is less impressive, but Giannuzzi recommends the desserts at another nearby vegan restaurant, [Soul Kitchen](#), instead.

Elsewhere, it's easy to steer clear of lazy vegan fallbacks tofu and falafel, and try creative adaptations of Italian classics instead. The garlicky mushroom lasagne at studenty café [Il Gusto di Carmilla](#) works without its usual heavy white sauce. Even dairy-free pistachio gelato, made with rice milk at an ice-cream shop called [Mondello](#), is surprisingly moreish.

Giannuzzi insists that she is not trying to clash with the city’s meat producers and agricultural associations, who in May organised a barbecue in protest against falling sales and health scares using the hashtag “pork chops to the rescue”. She instead emphasises the environmental benefits of turning vegetarian, citing UN guidelines and the Paris climate agreement as good reasons to cut down on the city’s meat consumption.