

Cream in Your Coffee?

TRENDLET

Whether you call it a drink or a dessert, the affogato al caffè—a cup of gelato, typically vanilla, “drowned” in hot espresso—is a summer staple in Italy and, increasingly, in New York, where pastry chefs have started taking all sorts of creative liberties with the classic combination. There are many things to love about it: its sophisticated, grown-up taste, its ease of service, and the way it takes the edge off a badly brewed espresso, rendering something that started out bitter into a bracing, creamy coffee shake. Here are some of the best, from the traditional to the outré.

R.R. & R.P.



Barbuto

775 Washington St., at W. 12th St.
212-924-9700

There are few more carefree ways to spend a summer afternoon than lingering over an affogato at Barbuto. If they've got it, they'll let you swap in hazelnut for the standard Il Laboratorio del Gelato vanilla.



P*Ong

150 W. 10th St., nr. Waverly Pl.
212-929-0898

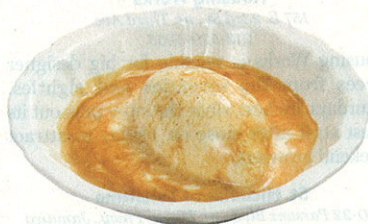
Pichet Ong's version, inspired by the proximity of Little Italy and Chinatown, combines tapioca pearls, mango purée, avocado ice cream, and Vietnamese coffee.



Fiamma

206 Spring St., nr. Sixth Ave.; 212-653-0100

As radically loose an interpretation as you'll ever find: a warm chocolate crostata, a scoop of gianduja gelato, a smattering of smoked hazelnuts, and a tiny pitcher of rum-and-cinnamon-flavored espresso that your server wouldn't dare allow you to pour yourself.



I Sodi

105 Christopher St., nr. Bleecker St.
212-414-5774

Like everything else at Rita Sodi's elegant Tuscan restaurant, the affogato is authentic: a bountiful scoop of Capogiro vanilla gelato drowned in Danesi espresso.



Otto Enoteca Pizzeria

1 Fifth Ave., at 8th St; 212-995-9559

You figure if you take the best vanilla gelato in town and pour a little espresso over it, you're going to have something pretty great. And that you do in pastry chef Meredith Kurtzman's whipped-cream-topped version.



Wakiya

2 Lexington Ave., at 21st St.; 212-995-1330

A sweet story: Milanese pastry chef Gabriele Riva concocted this East-meets-West affogato for his Vietnamese girlfriend. The gelato, the Vietnamese-coffee cream, and the cookie crumble are made in-house; the Vietnamese coffee filters, Riva found in Chinatown.

The New Gelato in Town



THE LAST TIME AN ICE-CREAM upstart infiltrated the local restaurant-supply market, it was Il Laboratorio del Gelato cutting into Ciao Bella's near-monopoly. This time, it's the Philadelphia-based Capogiro, a six-year-old boutique brand that has been making recent inroads onto the dessert menus of some of New York's most popular restaurants, from Williamsburg's Aurora to the West Village's Dell'anima—and into some of our favorite affogatos (see I Sodi, above). Previously available only by the pint at groceries like

Whole Foods and Balducci's, Capogiro gelati and sorbetti are being scooped this summer at a stand situated on the skating-rink steps at Rockefeller Center. Three flavors are available by the \$5 cup, from noon to eight daily, and include pineapple-mint, lemon, and bacio, or chocolate with caramelized hazelnuts. Now all we need is someone to make an affogato with Capogiro gelato and La Colombe coffee, another arrivee from the City of Brotherly Love, for a hot-weather Philly special.

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