



Roman-Style Pizza with Roasted Cherry Tomatoes



A slice to go from Forno Campo de' Fiori.

MY wife and I have dragged our kids on food-centric trips in the past, and it hasn't always been pretty. They've been attacked by wasps while I grilled pompano in Baja, cut by lava rocks as I hunted wild boar in Hawaii, suffered nettle stings in England, and been glared at by maître d's in Paris. Determined to take a family vacation that was truly kid- and food-friendly, I decided to try a different approach: to go not with my gut, but with theirs. We'd visit a place that (a) serves their favorite foods—pasta, pizza, and ice cream—and (b) adores children. All signs pointed to Italy, but where, exactly? Again, I looked to my family. Six-year-old Desmond and nine-year-old Violet were going through a gladiator phase; my wife, Aimee, had embraced gladiator sandals the previous summer; and me? Well, I was a fan of *Gladiator* the movie. So we packed our bags and headed for Rome.

Our mission: Eat the Eternal City's best dishes, visit one cultural monument each day, and come home happy and in one piece. **The chic Fortyseven**

Hotel would serve as home base; it's within walking distance of the bustling Trastevere neighborhood, the Jewish Ghetto, and Rome's iconic ruins. We would sweep through the city center and into trattorias, pizzerias, and gelaterias, all situated within short walks of our cultural destinations: the Colosseum (gladiators!), the Campo de' Fiori market, the Capuchin bone crypt, and the Borghese Gardens. Other tourist meccas like the Spanish Steps and Trevi Fountain would take a backseat. For logistical support, our friends Dave and Becky agreed to add a Rome stop to their European summer vacation. We'd enlist their daughter, Cleo, as a playmate and the grown-ups as babysitters so Aimee and I could have at least one *Roman Holiday*-style date night.

AFTER A 12-HOUR FLIGHT, we checked into the hotel in the early afternoon. With a dangled promise of gelato, we wandered to Trastevere, which was having its annual neighborhood festival. Our initiation into Rome's culinary treasures began at Ditta Trinchetti, a funky snack bar open for dinner at the very un-Roman time of 6:00 p.m. Aimee and I split a dish of

FIVE RULES FOR (RELATIVELY) STRESS-FREE FAMILY TRAVEL

RULE 1 DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR HELP

Reclaim some of your freedom by bringing another family along for the ride. Having friends travel with you, even if they're not in the same hotel, makes the trip more fun. Your kids will have playmates, leaving the grown-ups more time for museums—or a glass of vino. Even better: Babysitting trades mean an Adults' Night Out is possible.