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## Authentic Roman Pizza and Gelato Lands in Montreal

BY DUSTIN GILMAN



Photo: FCO serves up Pizza al Metro (photo by Dustin Gilman)

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For food lovers, there's no place like Italy, and Rome is one of my top dining destinations in the world. One of my favourite foodie highlights from my Italian travels took place in a pizzeria on a small street between the Pantheon and the Fontana di Trevi (The Trevi Fountain). It was the first time I ever saw pizza that wasn't round or rectangular as if it was cooked on a baking sheet. This unusual looking pizza was long and wide, and is known as pizza al metro, or pizza by the meter.

One of my other favourite Italian eats is gelato. There's nothing like a bowl of Italian ice cream to cool the body down under the sun. Montreal boasts a couple of places for good gelato, but nobody was cooking pizza al metro...until now.

A new pizzeria in the financial district of Old Montreal is officially serving up pizza al metro. FCO di Fiumicino (the name stands for the flight code for Rome) is reproducing the authentic Roman-style pizza, including the thin crispy crust, the freshest ingredients, and most importantly, the metre long shape. As luck would have it, they're also dishing up delicious gelato that rivals any in the city.

The restaurant itself caters more to the lunch crowd than dinner. As you walk in to the spacious room, the large brown pizza oven at the back and the display of 8 long, freshly made pizzas immediately catch the eye. To the left is a large communal table where business people and a few tourists are munching away at their slices, or cooling off with a bowl of gelato. Apart from a few select drinks, pizza al metro and gelato are the only things you can eat here, which works since they make them both very well.

I tasted two slices on a recent lunchtime visit. The first was a classic margherita, topped with tomato sauce, fresh mozzarella, and basil. FCO achieves the perfect balance between the thin layer of sauce and just the right amount of cheese and basil, giving off wonderful herb and tomato aromas as well as offering lightly charred cheesy flavours. The second slice consisted of moist spicy Italian sausage, meaty mushrooms, and just the right amount of mozzarella to compliment the crispy crust. Speaking of the which, FCO produces a really nice and thin crust, with just a little bit of the chew and crispness that can only be achieved using their very hot oven imported from Italy (of course), reaching temperatures upwards of 900 degrees! Hot stuff! Each slice was around \$4, and was worth every bite.

I finished off with the phenomenal gelato, made right in-house in their little kitchen. With choices like tiramisu, rich dark chocolate, and strawberry (made with fresh Quebec strawberries), it's very difficult to pick just one since they all look so good. But how do they taste? I combined two varieties in one cup: cheesecake, and ricotta-cinnamon. The cheesecake tasted like I was eating a colder version of a delicious slice with hints of a graham cracker crust mixed in to the sweet gelato. The ricotta cinnamon was more refreshing, with specks of fragrant cinnamon mixed in with light cheesy notes, complementing the gelato's sweetness and silky texture. Luckily for me, these two flavors worked very well in one bowl. Dare I say it, this gelato is just as good, and probably better than the many scoops I had in Italy. It left me speechless, and was worth the \$5 price tag.

For years, I've been waiting to taste Rome the way I remember. After finally being able to relive the experiences of eating this delicious pizza al metro and gelato from my travels, FCO makes me want return to Rome, but why bother when I can get the flavour of Italy right here?

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