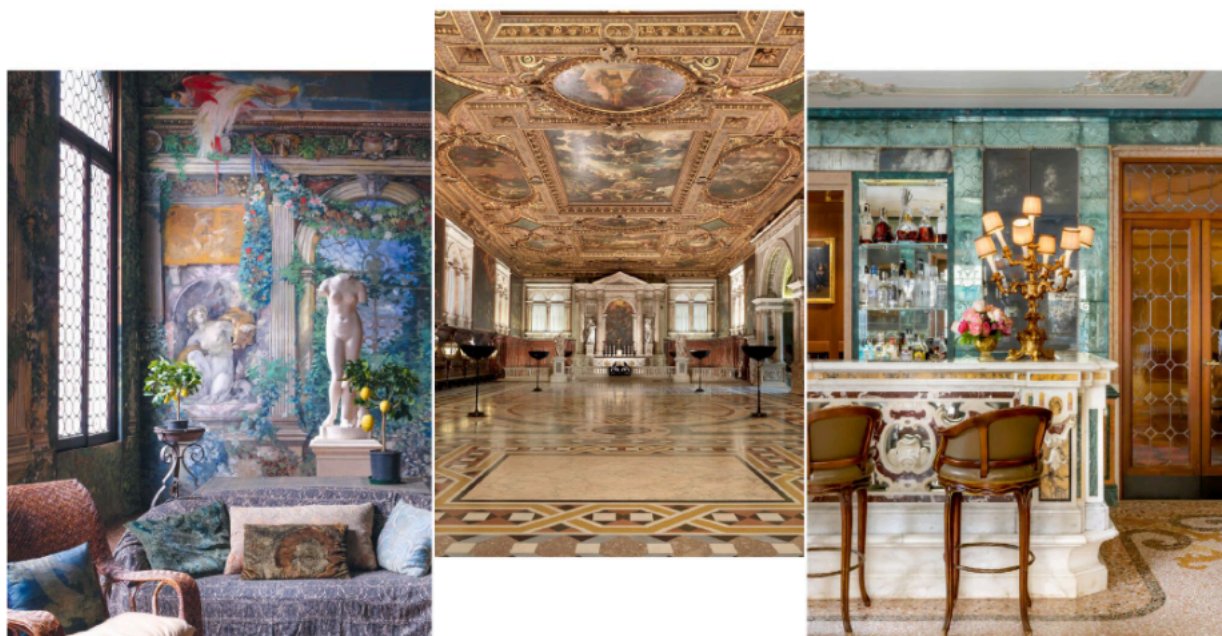


## LIFESTYLE



# A love letter to...

Cookery writer Skye McAlpine explains why Venice serves up a daily slice of la dolce vita

**BEGUILED** by 'the floating city' since I first moved there from the UK as a child, I've been returning time and again over the last 30 years and now have an apartment in a palazzo in Santa Croce. It's an impractical city but I love it, especially as I'm a romantic at heart.

■ This is a beautiful place to visit in the winter, as it's less crowded. I love the Castello neighbourhood, where I grew up and where my mother still lives. It's quiet and residential. The historical ghetto, the city's Jewish quarter in the Cannaregio district, is also special – the oldest ghetto in the world, it's a vibrant area.

■ With its many waterways, this car-free city is perfect for walking. The pace of life is slower and I enjoy seeing the changing colours of the buildings at sunrise or sunset. I like to visit the Scuola Grande di San Rocco (above centre), a guild known for its Tintoretto paintings, or the Palazzo Fortuny (above left) for its beautiful tapestries and fabric collections. I recommend skipping the crowds at St Mark's and heading to the bell tower at San Giorgio on the island of San Giorgio Maggiore instead, which has incredible city views.

■ Venice is a haven for foodies if you know where to go. I love Al Covo, a small, family-run restaurant that

serves unpretentious dishes. Try the pasta e fagioli in winter. On the Rialto, head to All'Arco for a spritz and cicchetti – it's standing room only for a true Venetian vibe. For good pizza, I like Oke Zattere with its water views, while Pasticceria Rizzardini is a treat for cakes and pastries, including Krapfen – a kind of doughnut.

■ For me, shopping for gifts in Venice revolves around food or textiles. Chiarastella Cattana makes beautiful linens, from tea towels to napkins. Near the Rialto Market, Casa del Parmigiano offers cheeses, hams, fresh pasta and pickled vegetables; nearby, Mascari is perfect for spices, marzipan, glacé fruit, honey and jam.

■ At Christmas, we buy at least three different panettoni – from Rosa Salva (there are four branches in the city) and from Dal Nono Colussi close to Campo San Barnaba – they make beautiful gifts, too. I also recommend Caffè Florian for a hot chocolate. We do enjoy midnight mass – often at Basilica dei Frari.

■ For a decadent stay, I recommend The Gritti Palace (above right), located in a 15th-century palazzo. Our visiting friends also enjoy Hotel Flora near St Mark's Square and Cima Rosa on the Grand Canal. 📍

■ [skymcalpinetavola.com](http://skymcalpinetavola.com)

