



The Daily Meal

All the food that's fit to eat

EAT/DINE

A 24-Hour Foodcation in Orange County

Jun 19, 2017 | 3:33 pm | By Kristie Hang

How to eat your way through a day at the beach

Just because you don't have time or funds to take a **cross-country trip** doesn't mean you can't discover a whole new world just beyond your backyard. Today's ~~staycation~~ foodcation spotlight focuses on some newer gems and old goodies that are must-visits in Orange County, California. The OC has really become a foodie destination in the last few years. There's been an explosion of tasty food trends in the area, so let's explore what you should eat!



EMMA Y. HANG

Stop #1: Pizzeria Saponi

Sal Maniaci, the owner and chef of **Saponi Ristorante**, has served authentic Italian food in Newport Beach for more than 25 years. Sal and his staff are so passionate about pizza that they can talk about it for hours! But don't worry, it's not all talk at Saponi. It all comes down to the pizza, which is *delicious*. I tried five different pies (all for research, of course) and I can honestly say that Saponi is the best **Neapolitan pizza** I've had on the West Coast. The dough is fermented for 72 hours and ingredients (including the tomatoes) are imported directly from Italy. Even the wood-fired oven was imported from Naples. Any of the pizzas at Saponi will impress — even a simple marinara will change what you thought you knew about pizza, and the Neapolitan is delightfully thin and crispy along the edges. Each bite is bursting with flavor, but the dough does not expand in your stomach the way lower-quality pizza does.

Signature must-order **pizzas** include: Capricciosa with San Marzano tomato, artichokes, mushrooms, prosciutto cotto, house-made mozzarella, pecorino romano, basil, and extra virgin olive oil; Saponi with grape tomatoes, homemade mozzarella, grilled eggplant and zucchini, pecorino romano, and extra virgin olive oil; and Casertana with sausage, Italian rapini, and smoked mozzarella di bufala. Don't forget the Nutella dessert pie topped with chocolate, whipped cream, and strawberries.