Gustazio: Enjoy pizza that isn’t pizza near Legazpi

When I tell my friends they have to try the *pinsa* at Gustazio, one of Legazpi’s most unique Italian restaurants, the response is always a confused stare. “Are you saying pizza?” they inevitably ask.

“No, *pinsa*.”

And just like the subtle difference between the words pizza and pinsa, it’s just as easy to mistake the physical foods, as well. The pinsa at Gustazio looks like, well, a pizza. It has a crusty bread base and most of the topping options sound familiar from any pizzeria—margherita, four cheese, vegetarian—but once someone begins to point out the differences, the pinsa begins to set itself apart.



What’s the difference between pinsa and pizza?

For starters, pinsa dough is too delicate to be tossed like its pizza cousin, so it’s stretched and squeezed by hand, resulting in an oval shape instead of the classic pizza pie circle. And while a Neapolitan pizza has a relatively smooth finish, **a defining feature of pinsa are the crackly hills and crevasses that crater the surface**.

The differences between them, however, are not just aesthetic. Traditional pizza dough is made entirely with wheat flour, while pinsa is made with a precise mix of wheat, rice, and soy flours and a lot more water, creating a **much lighter crust that’s easier on the stomach**.



Anyone who's been to a Neapolitan pizzeria is no stranger to that moment after drinking a beer or two and eating three-quarters of a pizza where you just can't go on and you want to save the rest but then you regrettably wonder… *is it even worth saving just a quarter of a pizza?*

And even though you know the answer is yes, you decide no, it's not worth it, and persevere until your plate is empty and your insides are bloated, left only with a familiar and satisfying sense of self-loathing.



But after eating an entire ***acciuga*** **pinsa topped with caramelized tomato, capers, black olives, and anchovies**, I was full but not bursting. I even had room for a **ricotta-filled and pistachio-topped cannoli dessert**, which was just the sweet ending I needed.

In the wrong hands, pinsa can easily turn into something pretentious, like when you talk about sushi with a food snob friend (oh that isn't sushi you're eating, it's *nigiri)*. Thankfully, the unassuming staff at Gustazio never cross that line.

The server Daniele, a native Roman, introduces himself and then the menu to each table with natural affability, educating

diners about pinsa without any hint that he’s done so hundreds of times before and recommending a suitable wine or craft beer, all from Italy.

Should you need a drink to whet your appetite, Daniele pours an aperol spritz that’s perfectly proportioned.



Pinsa is generally associated with Rome, but Gustazio’s owners all hail from Milan. **Luca, Fabrizio, Brunella, and Vania**

opened their pinseria in 2018 in Legazpi, which also serves home-baked focaccias and fresh pasta that's imported directly from Italy.

Even though 2020 has been just as hard on them as other restaurants, all three expressed an endearing gratitude for the neighborhood.

"This barrio is amazing," Vania professed while talking about the support they've received. **"We're really lucky to be where we are."**

We can't wait for "aperitivo" nights to return

More than anything, the neighborhood is eagerly awaiting the return of the Wednesday aperitivo, a weekly event that's on hold until further notice due to COVID restrictions. In classic Milanese fashion, customers buy a drink and then have unlimited access to a revolving selection of appetizers, with options including tostadas topped with burrata and Sicilian pistachios, roasted slices of eggplant, various Italian cold cuts, and of course, pinsa.

Until aperitivo nights return, **Gustazio is open Wednesday to Sunday for lunch and dinner to dine in or pick up, and will be available for delivery via Glovo by the end of November.**

So the next time you have a craving for pizza, don't dismiss the idea of a pinsa from Gustazio to satisfy the urge. And

since you’re choosing the “light” option, don’t feel guilty about capping off the meal with a fluffy piece of tiramisu to reward yourself.

Gustazio

- Website, Facebook & IG: gastrobargustazio
- **Hours:** Wednesday–Sunday for lunch and dinner (indoor dining and pickup); and delivery via Glovo will be available by end of November.
- **Address:** Calle Embajadores, 197
- **Metro:** Legazpi

Looking for more Italian spots in Madrid? Here’s a few of our favorites:

- **Fratelli Figurato** (Alonso Cano)
- **Nina Pasta Bar** (La Latina)
- **Retrogusto Bar** (Ópera or Sol)
- **Casa Picsa** (Rios Rosas)