



The 12 Best Spots To Grab A Cannoli In New Jersey



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One of the best pieces of cinematic advice ever offered comes from "The Godfather" when Peter Clemenza famously tells Rocco Lampono to "leave the gun, take the cannoli." Violence begets violence, after all, while cannolis only bring joy. Cannoli, like the Corleones, come from Sicily. In their home country, [they're typically made with sheep's milk ricotta](#) – cannoli, that is, not Corleones. This isn't always the case, though, as [La Gazzetta Italiana](#) says that cows' milk ricotta is the preferred alternative in eastern Sicily, so cannoli from this region aren't too dissimilar from the ones we know in the United States.

As to who makes the best cannoli, we're going to buck tradition here and say it's probably not anyone's nonna unless they have a great deal of patience and time on their hands. Cannoli shells can be a real pain in the you-know-what,



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knows to start with store-bought shells (or perhaps [microwaved pizzelle!](#)) or, better yet, outsource all cannoli-making to the professionals at an Italian bakery. And the wisest nonna would surely choose a bakery located in New Jersey, which is one of the states where the Italian-American population numbers are in the double digits, percent-wise (per the [National Italian American Foundation](#)). While it would be tough to pick the Garden State's very best cannoli, it sure is fun to try. Should you be up to the task, here's a list of our favorites to get you started.

Calandra's Bakery in Caldwell, Fairfield, and Newark



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[Calandra's Bakery](#) is very knowledgeable about its cannoli — so much so, in fact, that the website tells us this dessert was originally traditional for Carnevale (Italian Mardi Gras). Yum! We'd take cannoli over [king cake](#) any day. Calandra's can also boast of many accolades received over the years including multiple "Best of Essex" readers' choice awards as well as having its cannoli chosen as the state's best by New Jersey Monthly Magazine.



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... filling that tastes as if it might possibly have a touch of honey in there. Shells come in a choice of plain or chocolate-dipped, with the latter encasing the entire tube instead of just the ends. The bakery also makes cupcakes (both vanilla and chocolate) filled with that same cannoli filling as well as a cannoli-filled cake topped with broken cannoli shells. Another specialty is a slightly over-the-top, but undoubtedly impressive, jumbo cannoli meant to serve a crowd -- what you get here is a giant-sized cannoli shell filled with mini cannoli. In addition to cannoli, Calandra's also does typical bakery stuff like cookies, pies, cakes, and bread. More unusually (but very endearingly), the Fairfield location even offers "pupcakes" made from dog-friendly ingredients. Now if Calandra's could only do a canine cannoli ...

Cannoli World in Hammonton

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With a place named **Cannoli World**, you don't even have to ask what's on the menu. No disappointments in store here — yes, it has fresh cannoli, and plenty of them. One thing the name doesn't tell you, though, is a fun fact about the man baking the cannoli: Back in the day (the early '90s,



w w f) and faced off in the squared circle against Hall of Famer [Hacksaw Jim Duggan](#). Ricca didn't exactly have a HOF-worthy in-ring career himself as [Cagematch](#) reveals that he only wrestled sporadically in the indies for the rest of the decade, but if there was a cannoli Hall of Fame he'd be in there for sure.

The best thing about Cannoli World's cannoli is the variety. Purists will find the traditional kind here, but there are also blueberry cannoli (Hammond lays claim to being the "blueberry capital of the world," per [NJ.com](#)), banana cream pie cannoli, pumpkin pie cannoli, s'mores cannoli, and even cannoli made with beer and wine. And that's naming just a few! At the moment, the menu lists 30 different cannoli, but through the years the bakery claims to have concocted thousands of different varieties. Cookies and cakes are available, as well, but why would you ever need to stray from the cannoli? It may take a while to work through them all, but the effort will be worth it, — we promise.

Conca D'Oro Italian Pastry Shop in Union



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For and is a nickname given to Sicily. You better believe, then, that the cannoli is one of its signature pastries. As the bakery has been in business since 1935, it's had plenty of time to perfect its cannoli-making technique, and it certainly shows (and tastes) in the results. One thing we love about these pastries is that they are filled to order, which means the shell stays crunchy until the last bite. Makes for messy eating, yes, but we wouldn't have it any other way.

At Conca D'Oro, the cannoli are available either sprinkled heavily with powdered sugar or dipped in chocolate and come in both miniature and regular sized. (For St. Patrick's Day, you can even find green cannoli.) The bakery also features what it calls a "cannoli party," which is its term for a giant (16-inch long) cannoli filled with 30 mini cannoli and accompanied by extra cannoli filling and chips for dipping. If this isn't quite enough to satisfy your appetite for Italian pastry, though, Conca D'Oro has plenty more to offer. The biscotti are pretty popular, as well they should be, but the macarons and [rainbow cookies](#) are also not to be missed.

Gencarelli's Bakery in Bloomfield and Wayne



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Gencarelli's Bakery first opened its Bloomfield location back in 1975 as a bread-only operation, but this family-owned enterprise soon expanded into pastries as well. The move was obviously a successful one, as the 25th anniversary year saw the opening of the Wayne location. Today both bakeries are open 364 days out of the year, open on Christmas but closed on New Year's Day. Go figure. (maybe the Gencarellis are really into the Rose Bowl Parade or something). Both locations also offer an extensive line of specialty breads, pies, donuts, danishes, cookies, specially-decorated cakes, and, of course, pastries.

While many items in the pastry case look pretty tempting (those Portuguese egg tarts, the rum babas, oh, and are those raspberry-almond tarts?) we're here for the cannoli, and these do not disappoint. They come in the standard options: small or large, sugar-sprinkled or dipped in chocolate. Whichever kind you choose, they'll be freshly filled, crunchy-sweet, and utterly delightful. There is one other item of interest to cannoli lovers we need to mention, though, and that's a cannoli cake that is not only filled with cannoli cream but is also topped off with a whole cannoli. No idea how you'd slice into that, but it would undoubtedly make for a glorious, delicious wreck once you did.

LaRosa's Pastry Shop in Shrewsbury



Salvatore, the original LaRosa, immigrated from Sicily at the age of 29 and by 1901 had set himself up as a pushcart cannoli vendor on the streets of old Manhattan (price: two cents apiece). By 1909, he was the proprietor of an actual brick-and-mortar bakery, one that's still in the family today. At some point, the LaRosas migrated across the river to Jersey, which is most definitely a win for the bridge and tunnel crowd.

LaRosa's Pastry Shop bakes all manner of cakes and cookies as well as other Italian specialties such as stuffed bread and even **the honey-drizzled fried dough balls known as struffoli**. The bakery is particularly proud of its cannoli, however, laying claim to the title of "cannoli king" of the entire U.S. Its cannoli come in several flavors — not just traditional-style and chocolate-dipped, but also ones filled with cherry or pistachio cream. Can't make it to Shrewsbury? LaRosa's can accommodate cannoli cravings by mail order, as well, offering cannoli shells, chips, and even cannoli kits complete with filling available for shipping nationwide.

L'Arte della Pasticceria in Ramsey



While many of the bakeries on this list are old-school Italian American, **L'Arte della Pasticceria** is something a bit different, and perhaps one where Food Network aficionados will feel more at home as the staff are less likely to laugh at and may even echo your Giada-style pronunciation. Rather than having roots that date back to the 20th or even 19th centuries, L'Arte della Pasticceria is a product of the 20-teens (2013, to be exact), and in keeping with its era bills presents as an artisanal (aka hipsterish) pastry shop.

L'Arte della Pasticceria 's cannoli, as might be expected, are mini works of art made with ingredients not sold at Key Food. They come in two varieties: The cannoli alla crema are filled with vanilla pastry cream, with the ends of the filling (not the shell itself) dipped in chocolate bits, while the cannoli alla ricotta are made with sheep's milk cheese in the western Sicilian style. While this type of ricotta is slightly tangier than the more familiar cow's-milk version, it gives the cannoli a slightly cheesecake-ish flavor that contrasts nicely with the chocolate chips mixed into the filling, plus we're also partial to the chopped pistachios used to adorn the ends.

Lyndhurst Pastry Shop in Lyndhurst



While the **Lyndhurst Pastry Shop** may not have a name that's overtly Italian, for the past 75 years it's been run by the Lanzerotti family using family recipes from Catania, Sicily. That being said, the bakery does offer an eclectic assortment of baked goods ranging from **Irish soda bread** to Polish chrusciki to several different types of **rugelach** as well as **New York's own black and white cookies**. Nonetheless, Italian cookies and pastries are still very much evident in the bakery's display cases.

Cannoli at Lyndhurst Pastry Shop come in plain and chocolate-covered varieties, and here you'll also find an oversized cannoli stuffed with 36 smaller ones. If you order one of these for a party (which would be an awesome idea, and you're welcome), you can choose either all plain, all chocolate, or a mixture of the two types of cannoli for the filling. The "infamous" (that's what the bakery calls it, we just call it "delicious") cannoli cream is also used to fill baba au rhum pastries as well as a cannoli cake, while if you drop by in summer, you might also like to try a cannoli cream-flavored Italian ice.

Mattarello Bakery & Cafe in Montclair



Mattarello Bakery & Cafe is three businesses in one. It's a bakery, of course, and it's also a café in the coffee house sense of the word with selections running to Italian specialties including crema di caffè (Italy's answer to **dalgona coffee**) and **affogato (espresso + gelato)**. Its third string is a market that sells a selection of Italian imported items such as olive oils, jams, and candies. The market even has several cannoli-related items including a candy bar made with cannoli cream and chips and a box of imported, shelf-stable Sicilian cannoli in an assortment of chocolate, almond, pistachio, and lemon flavors.

Mattarello's bakery, however, is where you'll find the real gems. The fresh cannoli come in regular and large (no miniatures here), with the former offering a choice of traditional or, for a slight upcharge, chocolate-dipped shells. The filling in all cases is made of ricotta with chocolate chips, but Mattarello's signature touch is a candied orange peel sliver atop each cannoli with makes for a wonderful, slightly bittersweet, contrast with the creamy filling.

Palazzone 1960 in Wayne



You know those businesses that have really enigmatic names that make you work hard to decipher the meaning, particularly if there's a seemingly random number thrown in? Well, this isn't one of them. **Palazzone 1960**, just as you'd suppose, is a bakery run by the Palazzone family that was started in 1960. The story isn't as straightforward as that, though. The first bakery opened in Clifton, New Jersey, but was sold a decade later when the family returned to Italy. In 2012, however, one of the sons returned to Jersey's shores (although not the Jersey Shore) to open this particular café/bakery and name it in honor of the original family business.

Palazzone 1960 is a café in both senses of the word, meaning that it offers coffee drinks as well as limited breakfast and lunch selections. The former menu runs primarily to pastries, while the latter includes pasta, salads, and paninis. Whether you stop in for a meal, a cup of coffee, or a very elegant birthday cake, though, it would be a shame to leave the premises without a cannoli or three. The ones at Palazzone 1960 are filled with ricotta and chocolate chips and are topped with a candied orange peel sliver. Want more cannoli cream? It's also used in Palazzone's **zeppole di San Giuseppe** (the signature dish of Italy's patron saint) as well as cannoli cake (the signature dish of everyone who loves both cannoli and cake, including us).

Randazzo's Pastry Shop in Raritan



Randazzo's Pastry Shop is pretty ecumenical in its offerings. On the deli side of the menu are sandwiches with names like "The Guido," "The Godfather," and "Rocky Balboa," each made with Italian cold cuts, but there are also all-American offerings like "Roosevelt" and "American President" made with turkey and roast beef, respectively. Over on the bakery side, the theme is even more noticeable with **hamantaschen**, crumbs with Linzer tarts, tres leches cake, and, of course, cannoli.

The cannoli at Randazzo's come in the standard range of small or large sizes with traditional or chocolate-dipped shells and have chocolate chips in the filling. If you can't get enough of this filling, well, join the club. Try it in a cannoli cup (a slightly neater way to get your fix), then go for broke and order a whole cannoli cake as well. Randazzo's actually has two different types of cannoli cake, with one being a cheesecake and the other a rum cake. Decisions, decisions.

Rispoli Pastry Shop in Emerson and Ridgefield



Rispoli Pastry Shop is yet another old-school Jersey classic, one that dates back to 1937. It's not exactly a hidden gem, though, as an episode of **Vice TV's "F****, That's Delicious"** was filmed at the Ridgefield location several years back. The takeaway for Giada fans: In Jersey, sfogliatelle is pronounced "SHFOO-yuh-dell," not "sfow-lee-uh-TEH-lay." If you've never tried it, though, you really should, as this flaky pastry stuffed with sweetened ricotta is something Action Bronson and company raved about. The FTD crew did not appear to try the cannoli, though, which is a mistake you're advised not to make.

Rispoli sticks to the basics with its cannoli: traditional-style shells sprinkled with powdered sugar and filled with cannoli cream that's a little light on the chocolate chips, which we count as a good thing because too much chocolate on a cannoli takes away from everything else that's going on. Rispoli's cannoli cream itself is perfection; not too sweet and with a little bit of tang to it, while the shells are not too thick, not too thin, and perfectly crunchy. Pretty much the platonic ideal of a cannoli, and one that will likely see the Rispoli Pastry Shop in business for another 85 years or more. (From our lips to the universe's ears, even though that's not an Italian proverb.)

Sorrento Bakery & Deli in East Hanover



Sorrento Bakery & Deli

Sorrento Bakery & Deli is a great place to go if you're feeling extra-hungry but don't want to fill up on cannoli alone. Here you can precede your pastries with an actual meal — the deli has an impressive array of sandwiches, many made with tasty Italian cold cuts like **capicola**, soppressata, **mortadella**, and **prosciutto**, but there are also a few meat-free options such as grilled eggplant with mozzarella and roasted peppers. If you want something more than a sandwich, you can also order from a small selection of entrees including chicken cacciatore and **baked ziti**.

For dessert, of course, you must have a cannoli and you should definitely pick up a box to go, as well. The shells are of the sturdy sort, so they won't get too soggy on the ride home, but even if they do soften up just a tad, it won't matter too much as Sorrento's day-old cannoli are perfectly palatable. (We can't speak to the second day, though, since no cannoli ever lasts that long around us.) Sorrento Bakery's cannoli come in standard and miniature varieties, traditional and chocolate, and yes, there's also a "Big Cannoli" stuffed with smaller ones that can even be decorated for your special occasion upon request.

RECOMMENDED
