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Destination focus: Milan

By [Damien Gabet](#)

It's best known as the fashion and financial capital of Italy, but behind the braggadocio Milan takes food and high culture just as seriously.



Stay

Dominating the Piazza della Repubblica, the five-star Hotel Principe di Savoia (pictured) has a tradition of combining business with luxury. Its classic opulence is quick to impress and there's event space galore. Over on suitably fashionable Via Manzoni, the Armani Hotel's trademark minimal luxe shows off the other side of Milan's character.



The name carries its own cachet and the location, bang in the middle of town, is hard to beat. Floor-to-ceiling windows offer knockout views of the city too. Popular with young fashionistas, the 66-room Hotel Straf mixes contemporary art with a sustainable attitude, calling on blank-canvas steel and concrete. There are two small event spaces (suitable for up to 40 delegates) and it's metres from the Duomo.

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The chic, see-and-be-seen Il Salumaio di Montenapoleone in the courtyard at the Museo Bagatti Valsecchi looks like a set from The Borgias and is an exemplary example of simple Italian cooking.



The whole outdoor space can be hired for 100 diners. Dolce & Gabbana's Gold is where one captures the pomp and ceremony of Milan's main attraction: fashion. Slick, minimal and covered in the shiny stuff, there's an event space for 100 guests or a PDR for 12. At Solferino is a restaurant with modest surrounds and more exceptional Italian classics. There's no PDR, but groups looking for lively atmosphere in 'real' Milan can book into the main dining room. Handmade pasta comes in huge portions.



Meet

Already a firm favourite with the major fashion houses, Progetto Calabiana opened at the start of the year, offering big event space in central Milan. Stripped-bare architecture contrasts with the Art Deco furniture, and the lower-ground floor will seat up to 1,500 meet delegates. For a slice of historic Milan, see the Museo Bagatti Valsecchi. The Renaissance-style mansion remains perfectly preserved and its main salone will hold 80 guests theatre-style. The 122-capacity Marco Polo room at the Hotel Principe di Savoia makes a grand statement for meetings. For larger events there's a vast event space – which can be partitioned – on the ground floor, with space for more than 1,000 guests.

Play

Under no circumstance miss Leonardo Da Vinci's stunning The Last Supper mural at the Santa Maria delle Grazie. For reasons of preservation, you're only allowed 15 minutes to see it, but you can tie in a trip to the Sforza Castle or the Triennale Design Museum – both short cab rides away – as part of a half-day tour. Acanto, the Hotel Principe di Savoia's restaurant, offers a pasta-making cookery class from chef Fabrizio Cadei, which lasts around two hours.



High-brow groups will be impressed with tickets to Teatro alla Scala – one of the most famous opera houses in the world. If you organise it through a local DMC (try Incoming Partners), a show can be combined with a private dinner and backstage tour.

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