



## New Journey Guide published on [www.travel.163.com](http://www.travel.163.com) (17-12-2006)

*There is a legend about truffles. It says that a truffle is the daughter of Light. Ancient Greeks and Romans thought that truffles had a magic effect as an aphrodisiac. Until today, truffles are honoured as “kings of food” and they are still treated as the utmost delicacy of Western food. This mushroom has very tempting fragrance and is as expensive as gold. Nowadays, it is the superior ingredient that top chefs use in the best hotels and restaurants all over the world.*

The truffle company “Angellozzi Tartuficoltura” established by brothers Emidio and Zenobio Angellozzi, is located in a village called Roccafluvione, located in the Piceno area, central-eastern Italy, at an altitude between 300 and 600 metres above sea-level. The mountains and sea surrounding the area, soft soils, and the typical Mediterranean climate are all suitable factors for truffle growth.

Truffles are really sensitive during their growth in the natural environment. With little changes of sunshine, moisture, soil pH level, truffles cannot survive. This is the reason why truffles are rare. The hyphae of truffles normally live on the new born roots of an oak tree. Emidio thinks that truffles face challenges throughout their journey, from growing, harvesting, sales, and use on dishes. As a descendant of a family who lived on truffles, Emidio inherited and created his legendary 100% pure and natural truffle company, with no addition of artificial flavours of any kind.

Every year, when the harvest season comes, in consideration of weather conditions and soils, Emidio chooses among his 16 dogs to look for the three most precious truffles: Black Périgord Truffle, Summer Black Truffle, and White Truffle. The growth cycle of truffles is only once per year. Périgord truffles are characterized by protuberances, and their flesh is grey and white. So far, white truffles have been found only in Italy and Croatia. Even in good harvesting years, the biggest white truffle harvest does not exceed three tons. You can imagine how precious white truffles are. As a producer of top truffles, the Angelozzi family exports truffles all over the world every year. In Italy, truffle trade still follows the traditional way on the market. Big buyers normally are truffle dealers. They discuss prices in hushed whispers. Only professional buyers can distinguish the quality of a good over a bad truffle by its smell.

Every year, Emidio Angelozzi flies everywhere in order to introduce and sell his truffles in ritzy hotels and restaurants all over the world. When it is time to harvest truffles, our domestic gourmets can enjoy classic truffle dishes created by Marco Mazzei himself at the elegant Danieli's restaurant, which is on the second floor of St. Regis Hotel Beijing.

Since truffles are precious ingredients of small production, they have been honoured as a delicacy on the table, like diamonds. The French writer Vaudoyer once ironically wrote that there are two kinds of people who are addicted to truffles. One kind is the one with people who cannot resist the seduction of a truffle fragrance, meanwhile they would not care for its expensive price. The other kind is the one with people who only know that a truffle is a luxury product, if you spend on something extravagantly, then it must be something good.



Italy and France are the major truffle production areas, where fresh truffle prices can reach up to € 2,000 – 7,000 per kg. The biggest white truffle in history weighed four pounds, found in 1951, sold for \$ 5,000 at that time, definitely a large amount of money for people who had just been through World War II. Big and good-quality truffles are stars at food auctions. A white truffle auction held in America has currently set a 1 kg white

truffle record. The owner of a New York restaurant, who beat all other buyers at the fierce competition, got the white truffle as he wished at the price of US\$ 41,000.00. A piece of news came out at a later time, a mysterious gourmet bought the white truffle at the price of more than \$ 50,000.00 from the restaurant owner.

Truffles are produced everywhere in the world. There are dozens of truffle species mainly produced in France, Italy, Spain, and Croatia. Among them, the Périgord Truffle called the “black diamond” produced in France and the white truffle called “the white diamond” produced in Italy are the highest quality truffles and, at the same time, the most expensive ones. Italy is the only country that produces the three most expensive truffles, i.e. Winter Black Périgord Truffles, Summer Black Truffles, and White Truffles.

## The marriage of truffles and cuisine

Regarding the way of cooking truffles, Marco Mazzei, the Head Chef of the Italian restaurant Danieli's, says: keep it fresh. Besides their fragrance, the taste of truffles is also very special. It tastes smooth and crispy with a hint of sweetness when eaten uncooked. If truffles are cooked with the heat for a long time, it is a disaster just like “a beauty that fades away”. In order to contain the fragrance of truffles themselves, chefs usually cut truffles into thin pieces by using a special truffle slicer. Then they put them right on top of spaghetti, seafood, eggs, bacon etc... The main course will make truffles warm and promote the fragrance itself to spread it better. The wine that goes with truffles cannot be too strong. A moderate and tasteful wine or liquor is a good choice so that truffle fragrance perfectly matches with the wine.



Truffles are usually sold fresh, frozen, canned, and in brine on the market. Truffles seduce people with their own fragrance when it is the harvest season. Eating fresh truffles is definitely a wonderful enjoyment and let your taste buds feel them! When it is not possible to taste fresh truffles, truffles canned and in brine are great substitutes of fresh products.

Preserving fresh truffles is not an easy job. A soft brush is used to clean them and brush away any trace of dirt on their skin. Then clean truffles are packed with some absorbent paper and kept refrigerated. The freshness of truffles is very limited, it is recommended finishing them off before getting too soft and reaching their final ripening stage.

## Profile of the Executive Chef Marco Mazzei

Marco Mazzei has worked in Japan, Korea, Singapore, Australia, Switzerland, Germany, and the Caribbean. He has worked for five years as an Executive Chef in St. Regis Hotel Beijing. Danieli's, the Italian restaurant he is in charge of, has received many awards.

## Profile of Emidio Angellozzi

The truffle company "Angellozzi Tartuficoltura" established by brothers Emidio and Zenobio Angellozzi, is located in a village called Roccafluvione, located in the Piceno area, central-eastern Italy, at an altitude between 300 and 600 metres above sea-level. When the harvest season comes, in consideration of weather conditions and soils, Emidio chooses among his 16 dogs to look for the three most precious truffles: Black Périgord Truffle, Summer Black Truffle, and White Truffle. The Angellozzi family only sells 100% natural and pure truffles, with no addition of artificial flavours of any kind.

There is a museum dedicated to truffles in Tuscany, Italy, and located in a 13th century Castle. Multimedia technology, exhibitions, videos, and interactive games are used to introduce the history of truffles and their harvest. The sensorial experience is quite creative, and visitors can smell the fragrance of dozens of truffle species, each of which is unique

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