

# Capital Coffee – Gaia Deli

**A highly popular eatery for a number of years, Gaia Deli on Leith Walk is also the number one destination in the city for authentic Italian coffee.**

In specialty coffee circles, Italian coffee is often denigrated. Italian coffee production is dominated by the big multinational brands (Lavazza, Illy etc). This commoditised model doesn't fit the artisanal mould of the specialty scene. Further, many believe that the dark Italian roasts remove some of the subtleties of coffee and create a rather uniform flavour. Also, the presence of a percentage of robusta beans (which can assist in producing a better crema) in many Italian blends is seen as evidence of their inferior quality.

However, when made well, Italian coffee has a distinctive character. At best, it has a rich bitterness balanced with chocolatey notes. Sadly, it's rare to find Italian style coffee made well in the UK. All too often it's seen as a cheaper alternative by cafes who are not particularly serious about what they serve and lack skilled baristas. There are some exceptions, with Gaia an outstanding example.

Run by three generations of the Dragotta family (originally from Sicily), Gaia serves superb food in a wonderfully welcoming and bustling environment. The place has a lovely communal feel and the décor is unpretentious. The range of languages and accents you hear in Gaia shows that it's in the heart of cosmopolitan Leith, while the number of Italian customers is a testament to the quality and authenticity of

the food.

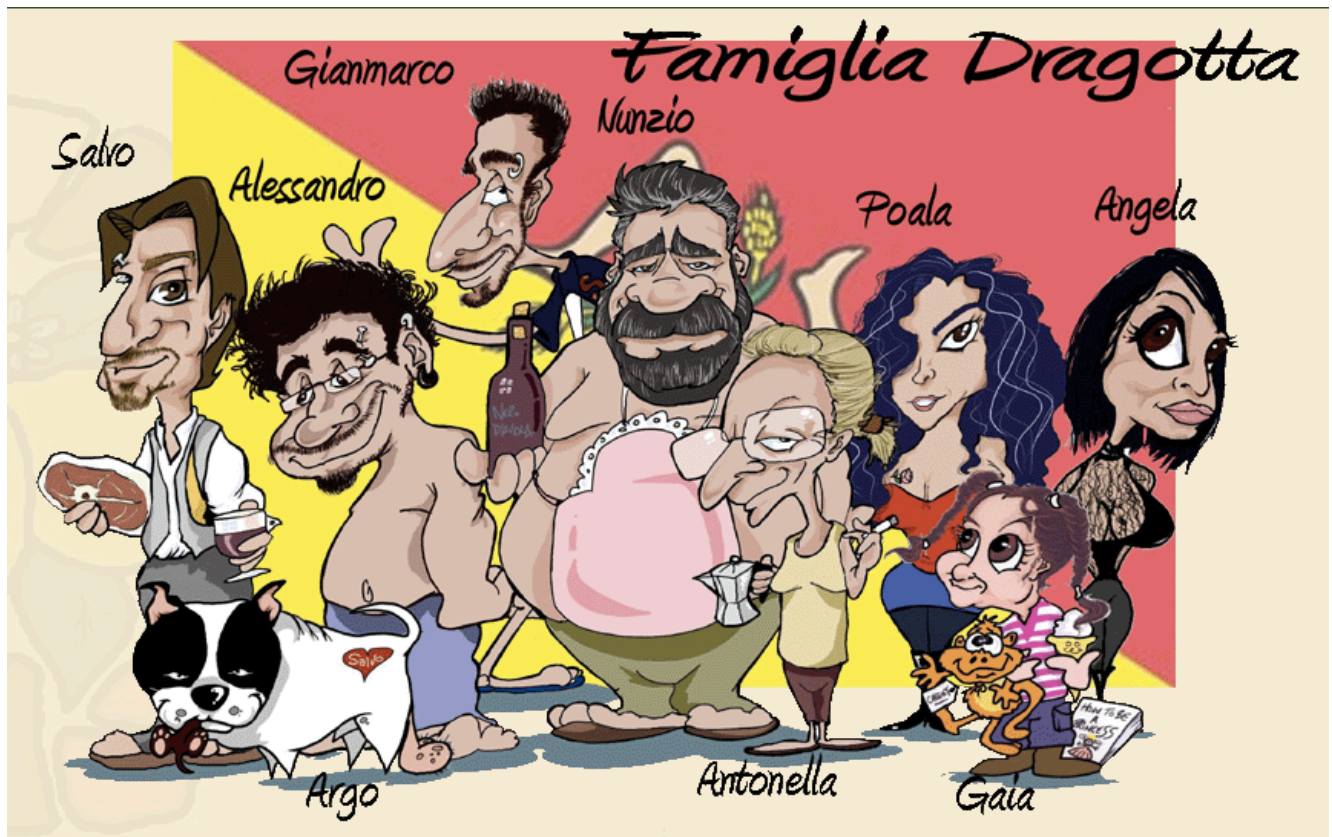


Their supremely tasty paninis.

Their daily pasta specials are consistently delicious with their Parmigiana of aubergines particularly recommended. They also serve a good range of salads, paninis and soups; something for every type of weather! Their deli counter offers imported Italian hams, cheeses, sausages, and cured meats (Parma Ham etc). They also stock essential Italian provisions, including pasta, jars of tomatoes, high quality olive oils, biscuits and coffee. During the warmer months of the year Gaia also serves some excellent, refreshing fruit smoothies.

The coffee (using Kimbo beans) is consistently superb; rich, smooth and strong with an enjoyable long finish. Their double macchiatos balance the potent espresso shot with a dollop of frothy steamed milk, creating a wonderfully forceful but smooth drink. One of these will revitalise you on the

gloomiest, dreichest Edinburgh days! Gaia is a true gem of a food and coffee destination and certainly Edinburgh's best place for *true* Italian espresso.



The Dragotta family.

Gaia Deli.

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