

Journal, Perugia 2019

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Day 1 (12/05-2019):

Today we met early in the morning in Copenhagen Airport, where we went on a plane to Rome (Italy). After a pleasant 2 hours of flight, which was the first time flying for some of us, we arrived in Rome. After waiting a good hour or so, we went by bus to Perugia. Here we had 3 hours of driving to witness the Italian country, with its mountains, landscape, cities and nature, which is an amazing and beautiful sight.

After arriving in Perugia, we had a good 1 kilometer walk to our Hostel, Little Italy, that we will be staying at during our tour to Italy. On our way there, we got a chance to witness some of the city, which is rich in beautiful Italian architecture. When we got to the hotel, we were checked in and received our rooms and keys. After having settled in, we now had the opportunity to explore the city on our own. Some went out to find supermarkets, where i went with one who got on a long detour to find an open supermarket.

In the evening we were a group who, including myself, went to an Italian restaurant to have dinner. While it was a little expensive, it was indeed a well tasting meal we got. I myself enjoyed the Spaghetti Carbonara that i ordered, which was rich in flavor and had me full after a long day.

Day 2 (13/05-2019):

After the first nights sleep in Italy and a breakfast under our belts, our plans for today was to visit the University of Perugia. So we headed out to the bus stop, and got on a bus line that stops near the university. After a bit confusion about whether or not we had gone too far, we got off the bus, which turned out to be relatively close to the university.

After arriving we were greeted by the local employees of the university, who we will also work together with during our stay in Italy. We got a little bit of a tour, showing some of the school and where they teach their regular students. We were given some information about the areas of education they offer, that includes "gelato" (or ice cream), wine, cheese, shop/marketing, chocolate, pasta, pizza and beer. The main focus on the food Italians make, is that the ingredients have to be fresh, natural and preferably including local elements. An example of this can come from the ice cream they make, which includes 3 main elements during production: water (cream/milk), sugar and air. As for specific flavors, fresh berries and natural ingredients only, for a rich and natural taste. And i can confirm the taste is delicious, after we got to taste some.

Dinner was an Italian styled Pizza, possibly one of the best i've had.

Day 3 (14/05-2019):

Today was the first real day of school, which started off with a bus tour that went as planned (unlike yesterday). We arrived at the university, where we were greeted by Chef Domenico and his assistant. We were shown to our dressing rooms which, to be honest, looked more like comfortable rooms with nice beds - though I don't complain about this at all.

We then got to the kitchen, where we were shown how a true professional Italian chef works in a kitchen. As the chef was the only one cooking today, we were meant to watch and learn - giving us a great opportunity to get inspiration and perspective. Three dishes were made, which were a 'Palente', 'Rissoto' and 'Trofie' dish - 'Palente' being a central part in a lot of the Italian kitchen.

During the process of the food being made, we got to taste some of it. Not gonna lie, Chef Domenico knows what he's doing. And to make things better, we got the dishes for lunch as well.

After a good first real day of school, we headed back to the hostel.

Day 4 (15/05-2019):

Second day in the kitchen and our first real experience of working with the Italian food. We got to work with a lot of different types of pasta, including ravioli, tagliatelle and taglierini. Chef Domenico prepared the pasta dough for us, after which we got to work towards making fresh pasta ourselves.

First off, we had to roll the dough very thin, going through the 'pasta machine' around 10 times. After this we had to determine, which type of pasta we should make with the dough ready to be shaped. We could make ravioli, which is pasta dough folded around some stuffing. Then there were tagliatelle (thick) and taglierini (thin) pasta, or lasagne plate-shaped pasta for a more lazier preference...

And the pasta we got around making was also on the menu for lunch, which we then could enjoy in the form of exceptionally well made choices of dishes.

Later in the day we had the opportunity to experience an annual event, known as the Ceri festival, in Gubbio. This is a massive event, attracting up around thousands of people, to see three teams carrying some sort of carts up a hill. While here, we also enjoyed some of what the local shops had to offer, plus some went up a cable cart in pods with only space for 2.

At the end of the day, we took the private bus back to Perugia, which also drove us from the university to Gubbio.

Day 5 (16/05-2019):

Almost at the end of the week, and we have now gone from making recipes from the north, to middle and now south of Italy. Our whole week of 'pastamania' have had another addition to the fun, well-tasting and learningfull number of days spent in Italy.

Today consisted of us working with some more pasta dough, which was leftover from yesterday. Besides from some of the previous types of pasta we utilized in recipes, native to a part of italy, we also made gnocchi today. But i honestly don't mind mixing pasta with potatoes, at least when we are supervised by a very competent and talented chef. He gave a little backstory about his career, from earlier in his life. Chef Domenico told us about where he had worked, what he did and about his schedule during these days of his life. All giving a better picture of what shaped him into the man he is today, which i honestly didn't expect him to do - though it only made me respect and like him more.

After lunch and getting back by bus, we got back in time for several events taking place in Perugia. One major one, that was hard to miss, was a car event taking place in the streets in Perugia - with police involved...

Dennis (our accompanying supervisor and contact person) was also involved in an event at the university for foreign exchange students in Perugia, focusing on tasting olive oil, food, wine and more...

So all in all another good day, ended off with a late homemade dinner.

Day 6 (17/05-2019):

Friday marks the end of our first week at work in Italy, the theme of said week being pasta.

The schedule for today was to observe chef Domenico cook 5 different pasta dishes, native to the southern part of Italy. One of these dishes were Carbonara, which immediately brought back memories of the nice dinner earlier on the trip. Although i, amongst others on the tour, hoped for Carbonara for lunch today, we were disappointed when we found out it wasn't the case. Although i personally ended up being pleasantly surprised by the first time i got to taste Tiramisu, which was served at lunch amongst some of the pasta dishes we had for lunch.

After getting back to Perugia, a lot of us had ice cream/gelato - once again (yes, it's much better here in Italy).

For dinner i had Pizza, along four others, at a local restaurant.

Later at night, we were some people who went partying in Perugia, along with our supervisor Dennis. And of all people we could meet while out, Chef Domenico was a surprise to be sure for us - but a welcome one.

Day 7+8 (18 + 19/05-2019):

Weekend came after a good first week in Italy. Most of the time was spent relaxing and getting ready for the coming week. Some went to a shopping center on Saturday, others were just staying at home. I went out for a run, and a walk, around Perugia, buying a necklace for a souvenir on Sunday.

Day 9 (20/05-2019):

New day, new week. Monday marked the start of a new week, which started off with a new addition to the breakfast menu: Bread and cake. Nice.

Topic of the week is pizza, which we started learning about today. We got an introduction to pizza, which included history on why it became so popular and well known around the planet. As a cheap, tasty and easy to make recipe, pizza quickly became one of the most popular dishes in both Italy, and later the world. Beside that, we were also taught about how to make bread, what's unique to the types of flour, that is used in cooking.

Also, our chef teaching us this week, Matteo, showed us how to make a dough for making a pizza.

We were also shown recipes for making pizzas, with traditional pizza dough and 'torta al testo' being those we were shown. What separates them are their ingredients used for fermentation. Classic pizza dough is typically made with organic yeast, whereas torta al testo is made with chemical yeast. The two being separated by how easy they are to digest, with organic being easier and slower to digest (and the opposite goes for chemical yeast).

Day 10 (21/05-2019):

And now we got going on making pizza ourselves, getting straight to work at the beginning of our day in school.

Today, tuesday, i was among the two students who started off making pizza dough that we were going to work with today. We added in the ingredients as the chef instructed us to, and mixed them together in a machine. When all the water was absorbed, and the dough had the right consistency, it was put to rest. Then it was cut, weighed and made into pieces of dough, all rolled and shaped into round and smooth balls of dough. These were then shaped into pizza buns (after having rested during our break), where we each got to make a pizza for ourselves for lunch. Then chef Matteo made some extra pizzas, in the event some of us were still hungry.

Day 11 (22/05-2019):

Today starts off as the others had so far here in Italy, with breakfast, a bus ride to the university and introduction to the schedule for the day. We were tasked with making an alternative pizza recipe today, known as pizza alla "pala". How it's made is very similar to yeasterdays pizza:

First the flour is poured in a bowl and stirred/mixed around, so little air is left in it. Then yeast is mixed in, followed by about half of the water, which is mixed together until the water is absorbed. Then salt is mixed in, along the remaining water, which too is mixed together until the water's absorbed. Last, oil is first added in along the edges of the bowl (about half of the oil), we waited for a few seconds, then added the remaining oil in the middle. After the dough rested, we made it ready for shaping like yeasterday, though the dough became a little more elongated, due to the pizzas unusual shape.

When we were to make the actual pizzas, they had to be rectangular, unlike the classic round pizzas. When they were done, we had the one we each made, for lunch today.

For dinner, i had some of the remaining pizza that i didn't finish eating for lunch, due to the recipe resulting in a larger pizza produced.

Day 12 (23/05-2019):

Friday is the last real day of our stay here in Italy, where we got to work in the kitchen. The program for today was to make a foccanine (or foccacia) type of bread.

Today was a very good and well-planned day, as learning and our ability to utilize what we've learned so far was put to the test. Because today we were told by chef Matteo, that he had "forgotten" how to make this type of bread, and that we would have to do it mostly ourselves. Or in other words, it was Matteos way of having us show that we'd paid attention, as well as presenting us with a task, that required team-work to complete. Which to me is perhaps one of the best ways of learning, as it focuses on both learning with ones body, mind AND senses for our sorroundings.

As for the making of the dough, it was fairly similar to an ordinary pizza dough, with a few alterations to the ingredients. But it was first when we were to make the bread, that the process differed from a pizza recipe. Because when we'd shaped the dough into round, but not that flat shapes, we were to cover it with a thin layer of olive oil on top, and spray a little bit of salt on top of the dough as well. Then we would cook it on the stone oven, and when it came out, and had cooled off, cut it open with a knife, and add our desired fillings. Our finished foccanine was then our lunch for the day, with the option to make another for a later time.

We (myself included) spent time today packing for the trip home tomorrow.

Our last night in Italy was spent eating out at a restaurant (most did, not all).

Day 13 (24/05-2019):

So today, saturday, was the last we got to experience of Perugia and Italy on this trip. I must say that i was a bit split today; about whether or not i wanted to go home, because i miss my everyday life home in Denmark - or if wanted the trip to go on for a bit longer, because i liked so much...

But the program for today was fairly simple:

Get up early in the morning to go by bus to Rome, where we got on the plane back to Denmark. Same trip as the one to Italy, only the opposite way. Which meant about 6 hours of travelling, waiting and the whole thing like on our way down here again. But i'm not complaining about it, because the experience and what i can take with me from this exchange tour was worth it - without a shred of doubt..!

Note:

While i did intend on including pictures in this journal, i ultimately decided not to. The reason for this, is because i feel like enough of these are provided on our facebook page, where everyone of us who attended the tour shared something everyday. A link to said facebook page is here below:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/439634606613182/>