

Week 1

sunday

sunday starts off at 3:30 am with getting ready to go to the airport. during the ride to the airport my mind is racing, i'm thinking off all the subjects we are going to cover, the people im going to meet, how we'll get along and most notably i'm preparing myself for 7 hours of sitting down and doing nothing.

It doesn't take long for people to get along, a bunch of us decide to go shopping for dinner and necessities very shortly after our arrival at our hostel, what we quickly discovered is that most shops in Italy are closed on sundays, so what was supposed to be a brisk walk to the nearest shop became 2 hours of walking up and down the hilly terrain of perugia. After that it was off to bed to be ready for our first day of school.

Monday

monday starts off at 7 am, with a walk to the bus which we will be taking to school for the rest of our stay. When we arrived at the school we were taken on a brief tour of the university. On the tour we were introduced to some of the classes they provide such as the classic shopkeeper, and most importantly, the art of making gelato. after the tour we it was time for our first lesson, the history and culture of italian cuisine. where the different dishes originate from and why Italy has such diverse food in their countries.

Tuesday

Tuesday was the day where we learned about the cuisine of northern Italy, the dishes mainly revolve around polenta and rice, because of the way Italy was divided into kingdoms the food of different regions varies a lot, and in the north these are the most popular ingredients in northern Italy, and we mostly covered the very classic ones.

Wednesday

Today we start our introduction to fresh pastas, which are the most common in the center of Italy, this is because there used to be many farmers in the center of italy, and the fresh pasta was easy to make, and very cheap so it made it easy to feed your entire family with very little produce. and it's used for dishes like lasagna and and pasta bolognese, these are very simple yet very tasty dishes, and we were all pretty surprised at how so few ingredients can create such rich flavours.

Also Wednesday ended up having a bit more to do than just learn about food, because our teacher told us that there is an annual one day festival in a nearby city named Gubbio, where the young adults of the city run through the city in a race between been prophets. however this in all honesty is probably the most pointless race, since the result is predetermined, we found out. Apparently it is tradition, that it is one certain prophet that wins the race no matter who finishes the race first. Nevertheless it was very interesting to see how so many people stop whatever they were supposed to do that day to gather in the cities streets and cheer for their prophet, almost everyone was dressed in their prophets colours, and the town was buzzing with positive energy and and a sense of community. it was truly a spectacle and something worth experiencing if you get the chance

Thursday

Today is the second lesson in the fresh pastas, so we get some more practice in producing fresh pastas and get some more knowledge about how different pastas are suited best for certain dishes. But most interestingly we were taught about the potato based pasta, the gnocchi. Gnocchi is a very simple and very versatile pasta, our teacher did not go in to many specifics about what dishes you use them in.

Friday

Friday is the day many were waiting for, today we learn about the dry pastas, the pasta that every student knows, its cheap, it's easy to make and most importantly it's tasty and versatile, in this lesson the focus was mostly on finesse. This was very apparent when we were taught how to make the famous pasta carbonara, because unlike the way the rest of the world makes it, the original carbonara does not contain cream, the sauce is merely made with eggs and cheese, so you have to be highly aware of the temperature of the pan you use to mix your sauce with your pasta, because if the pan is too hot you will end up with an omelette with pasta filling. Also our teacher made it very clear that the true Italian way to mix your pasta and your sauce is in a pan not in a tray, not in a pot, and you definitely do not just put it on top of a clump of pasta. This was also sadly the end of our time with our "pasta teacher" Mimo, but this only meant that we could look forward to our second week and the topic of the most popular dish in the world the infamous pizza.

The weekend

After an introduction to Italian cuisine and a walkthrough of many different pasta dishes it was time to relax and use our free time to explore the city, Perugia is an amazing old city filled with medieval buildings hidden in underground tunnels and tucked away between stores. And of course the ones of us who were of age had to get a taste of the nightlife but that's less important

week 2**Monday**

Today is the first day of our pizza lessons, just like with pasta we start from scratch. So what better way than to teach us about the produce that goes into the dough, most importantly the flour that we use. The Italians use 5 different types of flour, these are called tipo 00, tipo 0, tipo 1, tipo 2 and wholegrain, the major difference between these flours are how finely they are grounded and therefore how much of the grains outer shells remain in the final product, where tipo 00 is the most finely grounded and whole like its named contains almost the entire grain. This is a major part of getting a good dough, because what type of flour or combination thereof is what decides how much water and oil and so on the flour can contain. We were also taught that another major factor in making a good pizza dough is temperature and time. All good pizza doughs should rest for at least 24 hours before it is portioned and formed.

Tuesday

Today the focus is on the classic pizza napoletana this is the pizza that most people know, unlike the classic turkish style pizza we eat in denmark this pizza has a very thin crust, and the focus is mostly on the toppings and what kind of exquisite tastes they can create in combination with each other, our teacher matteo had the ingredients lined up on the table and he picked out small groups of us who in turn had to come to center and help create the dough. It was very interesting to see how the process was set up in a very structured manner with plenty of time for the dough to rest and expand, and for the ingredients to slowly work their magic. as Matteo explained to us, the dough needs ample time to rest because it contains very little yeast, this makes the dough very light and easy to digest. And the best part of the day is of course to see and taste the fruits of our labour, which comes in the form of our lunch, homemade pizza. This concluded our first lesson of making the actual pizza

Wednesday

Today the lesson revolves around the rectangular pizza alla pala, this type of pizza has slightly more dough. The pizza alla pala as we were taught is traditionally served as a pizza bianca, this means that there is no tomato sauce on the pizza, this goes hand in hand with the highest focus on the dough, which like all italian pizza is very light and airy, but also incredibly tasteful. The pizza alla pala is a perfect example of how the italians have a tendency to make their dishes contain few ingredients but a very rich flavour. Matteo also suggested me to try the classic pizza alla pala with only sausage and onion for lunch and it was probably one of the best pizzas I have ever had.

Thursday

Thursdays lesson was on an old umbrian type of bread named Torta al testo. This bread is very heavy and was commonly consumed by the farmers who needed cheap food that could keep them full for hours on end while they were out working. the torta al testo did this very well, since it is such a heavy bread. Classically the torta al testo is baked on top of the fireplace and the cut and filled with cold cuts, this makes a simple yet very tasty meal that requires very little time and resources to produce. like the trend had become this was also our lunch that day and it like all the other dishes is incredibly tasty.

Friday

Today turned out to have a bit of a twist in store for us. Like the rest of the week we come to class and on the whiteboard there is a recipe prepared, most of us begin with writing it down while Matteo explains a bit about it. He then flips the page over and says that's he's got a problem, he has a dinner reservation for tomorrow evening but he has somehow forgot how to make the pizza dough, so he needs our help to make it. This meant that we in groups had to create the classic pizza napoletana dough from scratch, which of course begins with writing a recipe, thankfully most of us had notes to help each other out, and the dough turned out the way it was supposed to. this kind of testing was very peculiar to me but also a welcome change of pace since you don't feel you are being judged as harshly and you have to suddenly remember the things you have been taught throughout the week. then it's time for lunch Matteo had prepared some of the focaccina dough that he had talked about at the beginning of the lesson, which we then got to bake and fill with all kinds of toppings of our choosing. but because this was our last day at the school it was also time to say goodbye to our teacher and the school's principal Marilena, this was done with a diploma ceremony similar to the american high school graduation, where we one by one were named and

received our diploma for completing the student exchange program. after school everyone needed some time to wind down and prepare them self for our trip home

Below there will be some pictures:

