

International Cuisines – HMT1040
Spring Break 2019 Global Trip to Rome and Bologna
Organized by Professor Merenda

Rome and Bologna Reflection Paper – Kate Spellman

Our International Cuisines hospitality management class started its culinary journey from New York to Italy on March 1, 2019. What we were about to experience was all written down on a detailed itinerary however, no words or photographs can truly express the unforgettable moments and gastronomic delight we were to experience in Rome and Bologna, Italy. Having this study abroad portion built into our class was the ‘icing on the cake’!

Our traveling guru Professor and group leader, April Merenda, secured a student group air block on Alitalia complete with assigned seating for our class. She also designed our signature trip staying at first class hotels in Rome and Bologna complete with a comprehensive breakfast daily. The global trip gave every student the perfect setting to evaluate our career goals and open our eyes to international career opportunities that we may have never considered.

Professor Merenda had a coach waiting at FCO airport upon our arrival to transfer the class to the 4 star Hotel Mascagni, Rome. Our welcome dinner was hosted at the Angola Dell’Aurora, Rome which introduced us to the first of many, 5-course meals. We started with fried artichokes, buffalo mozzarella and Parma prosciutto. There are many varieties of artichokes which are cultivated mainly in the countries bordering the Mediterranean basin, places like Sicily, dating back to the 8th century. Homemade pasta is a staple at the Italian family dinner table and Roman Saltimbocca is a very popular Italian dish made with veal, prosciutto and sage. The waiter suggested Umbrian Grechetto white wine tasting as a paring for the veal. The Grechetto grape comes from the

Umbria's Orvieto region and is primarily used as a blending grape, where it adds richness to the wines adding a herbal and nutty flavor. No Italian dinner is complete without dessert and their Tiramisu was our groups favorite. (*photos - exhibit A*)

The Mascagni Hotel Rome was home for the first 3 nights of our global trip experience. Its located in the historic center of Rome with a 12-minute walk to the Spanish Steps and the Trevi Fountain. It is so central we could walk around comfortably to reach any point in the capital. The bedrooms were bright, clean and comfortable and the breakfast bar has choices to suit everyone's taste, sweet and savory tarts, fresh whole fruits and fruit juices. The bustle in the breakfast dining room was very friendly with waiters greeting us, "Buon Giorno", every morning and a constant hissing sound came from the cappuccino machine. *Delizioso!* The hotel had free WiFi, so we were able to communicate with our friends and family in the morning and at night. (*photos - exhibit B*)

We enjoyed a guided walking tour of Rome with a lovely guide named Francesca and a comprehensive bus tour of Rome with Anna. Both gave us the lay of the land, which included stops at Palazzo Massimo/ Museo Nazionale Romano, mass at the Pantheon, *Basilica Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri* (Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels and the Martyrs) which is a titular basilica church in Rome, Italy built inside the ruined *frigidarium* of the Roman Baths of Diocletian in the Piazza della Repubblica. (*Titular* means that it is assigned to a Cardinal), the Sistine Chapel, the Vatican Museum, St. Peters Basilica, The Trevi Fountain, Spanish Steps, Roman Forum and Colosseum. We indulged in the fine art of Caravaggio, Raphael, Giotto, DaVinci, and the architecture of Michelangelo, Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Raphael, Nicola Salvi and Giuseppe Pannini, to name a few, but of course, no trip to Rome would be complete without seeing Michelangelo's 'statue of Pieta', in St. Peters and being treated to Gelato right across from the Trevi Fountain. *Bellissimo!* and *Delizioso!* Both Francesca and Anna used the audio tour guide

system known as the whisper system and this gave us a great advantage over the noise and crowds, because the guide can lead the tour without having to shout and participants needing to be in close proximity. *(photos - exhibit C)*

PARCO DEI PRINCIPI GRAND HOTEL & SPA is a 5-Star luxury hotel, offering panoramic views over the city of Rome. Thanks to Professor Merenda, our class was treated to a 'tasting dinner menu' at Parco Dei Principis' Pauline Borghese Gourmet Restaurant. The unique taste of each course was a treat to the taste buds and an unforgettable experience. The shrimp and dill risotto are a very classic Italian dish, with clean, definite seafood, herb, and rice flavors. Main course was pulled pork, rosemary potatoes and artichokes. The lightness of the artichokes was delicious with the rich pork. What are Aubergines Medallion was the big question on the menu. We here in the US call this vegetable eggplant, said to have originated from India. A delicious combination of chocolate and coconut to form a mousse for dessert was enjoyed by all. Eccellente! *(photos - exhibit D)*

Then it was time for our hands-on cooking class at the Eataly Rome. Once inside Aula Dominici we popped on our chef's hat and apron and followed the chef's instructions to make fresh pasta. This was a hands-on experience, and group participation where we got to make tagliatelle and ravioli, stuffed with cheese and herbs. There was flour everywhere and the stuffed ravioli had difficulty staying stuffed and now we have a new appreciation for chefs. The group was involved in cooking our labors and making a simple tomato sauce under the direction of the Eataly chefs. We served ourselves straight from the pan on the stove and as we all sat together, we had a good laugh at our efforts and what we would do different the next time. We had salami and Parma with fresh mozzarella to start and a variety of Italian pastries to finish. Chianti was a good choice to taste with this meal as it pairs well with tomato sauces. Buon appetite! *(photos - exhibit E)*

In a little over two hours by train we found ourselves in Bologna, the food capital of the world! We checked into the 4-star Tre Vecchi Hotel located in the center of Bologna, a great location from which to explore the old city and just a few minutes from Piazza Maggiore. The breakfast buffet offered a variety of sweet and savory dishes, fresh breads and an assortment of cheeses, cereals of all sorts, fresh fruits and yogurts. Probably the most interesting food displayed was a condiment, that of the very large honeycomb which could be added to most of the buffet offerings. This is a very walkable city and attracts thousands of tourists every year. Walking along the ancient streets you will find the Neptune Fountain, the medieval towers and the never-ending porticoes. Buon Viaggi! (*photos - exhibit F*)

We make our way to Eataly Bologna for another sumptuous 4-course dinner at Osteria Stagioni. Once we were seated, the baskets of bread arrive with olive oil and balsamic vinegar. The vinegar comes from Modena, a small town outside Bologna, also known as Italian Food Valley. Modena is also known for Parmigiano Reggiano, the Parma Ham, and the Lambrusco grapes used for red and white wine making. The Maccia d'Agliastru olive oil is made with cold-pressed olives and comes from the agricultural producer Fratelli Pinna, from Ittiri in Sardinia, Italy. To start we had meats and cheeses, followed by a pasta with ragout sauce. Bolognese ragout is a classic sauce for tagliatelle. It is a meat- and tomato-based pasta sauce originating in Bologna, Italy. Chicken chasseur with backed potato wedges was the main course. The chicken was on the bone and smothered in a tomato sauce. We had tiramisu for dessert. This meal was paired with a local organic red wine, Merlo Corte d'Aibo, from the vineyard located in Monte Morello, Bologna and has ICEA certification. ICEA is an Italian certification body approved by the Italian Ministry of Agriculture and the European Union. ICEA is authorized to certify organic food, cosmetics,

cleaning products, and textiles according to various standards, including the standards of the USDA, Bio Suisse, Naturland, Demeter, and GOTS. (*photos - exhibit G*)

In Bologna, we visited Fabbrica Italiana Contadina, FICO EATALY WORLD. Oscar Farinetti, is the CEO & Founder of EATALY and FICO Eataly World, the largest food park in the world! He was at FICO the day we arrived, greeting hundreds of hospitality students visiting during Spring break. We had a full day to explore Eataly World and I could have stayed a week or more. This park has 20,000 sqm of Italian biodiversity in Bologna, where you can discover the world's largest agri-food farm! It has 40 farming factories where you can watch the food production process. FICO offers 'from field to fork', simple recipes at over 45 eateries, 3 of which are Michelin star restaurants. FICO has over 9,000 sqm dedicated to Italian products in its markets and hold 50 classes and 30 events per day in their classrooms, theaters and learning facilities. I was lucky to join our Professor and have the opportunity of a guided tour of the facility by the Director of FICO, Enrico Cimador, who shared his knowledge and expertise about Italian meats, cheese, pasta, oil, vinegar and chocolate, and we sampled some along the way.

(*photos – exhibit H*)

Our Professor contracted Simona, a knowledgeable guide for a walking/bus tour of Bologna, pointing out many historical buildings including the Basilica of San Petronio dedicated to the patron saint of Bologna, Saint Petronius. Her love for the city was expressed with her knowledge of the cultural life and the intriguing historical legacy. Among Bologna's most important symbols are its famous porticoes, those covered sidewalks lined by porches that unite the streets. We also got to visit the halls of the Law Library of the University of Bologna, which is considered to be the oldest university in the Western world. It all began in Bologna in the late 11th century with Law and Medicine and has evolved to currently 33 departments. Simona guided us down some

narrow streets where she pointed out local markets selling fresh fruit and vegetables. The scent of fresh cut flowers at the florist tried to outdo the fish monger, who was easy to find and just as easy to leave behind. We popped our heads into Osteria Del Sole, the oldest bar in Bologna. When it opened in the 1400's it only served omelets and now it doesn't serve food at all, instead it encourages customers to buy lunch at the local market and eat in the bar, where they only serve wine. We passed plenty of little café's with outdoor seating and the aroma of coffee trying to draw us in, but we were on a tight schedule to get ready for dinner. (*photos – exhibit I*)

Our 'Farewell to Bologna Dinner' was at the Saraceno Ristorante where the staff greeted us with open arms and lots of 'Cibo fatto con amore' (lots of food made with love)! Bruschetta and cold meats to start followed by risotto with asparagus. The pasta dish was gramigna with a sausage sauce. The main course was meat stuffed with spinach and Parmigiano cheese, oven roasted potatoes, green peas and carrots. We had Italian Cheesecake for dessert and Professor Merenda was served a special dolce. (*photos - Exhibit J*). Montepulciano d'Abruzzo was paired with these meaty dishes because of its full body, aromatic and low acidity.

Our bus driver picked us up at the Tre Vecchi Hotel to transfer to the Bologna Centrale Train Station. We arrived at the station only to learn the Italian Railways were on strike! Luckily our Professor had booked a high speed train, not affected by many cancelled trains. We waved goodbye to Bologna and looked forward to our 2 hour train ride back to Rome, where we planned to tour the SJU Rome Campus.

SJU Rome was established in 1995 mainly for a graduate degree program but now it also supports the undergraduate study-abroad program. The tour didn't take long as the campus residential and administrative space is only four floors. The lovely courtyard is where the Graduation Commencement exercises take place in June each year and it has a lemon tree growing. (A lemon

tree grows in SJURome) (*See photos Exhibit K*). Our last supper took place steps from the campus at L'isola della Pizza Restaurant. This meal was served family style and the food just kept coming. Bowls of vegetables hot and cold and bowls of pasta. Of course, there was Pizza, with a variety of vegetables, and tiramisu for dessert. Buon appetite!

We said, “addio”, to Rome as the bus whisked us away to Fiumicino Airport, leaving us with a mouthful of flavors and a mind full of memories.

The cultural influence on Italian Cuisine.

The Italian cuisine is a combination of influences from many different cultures dating back thousands of years. The Italian peninsula is situated in the Mediterranean Sea between the Iberian Peninsula and the Balkan Peninsula, and so has served as a natural location for trade over the centuries. The Italian cuisine can be traced back to the Roman Empire days, which spread its influence across southern Europe, northern Africa and into the Middle East and the ingredients and spices of these areas were incorporated into Italian recipes. We associate pasta with the Italian cuisine but in fact the early influences came from the Greeks and also the Arabs. The Greeks introduced breadmaking and fermentation of grapes to the Romans. One of the oldest known cookbooks from the 1st century AD has a collection of ancient Roman recipes. After the fall of the Roman Empire, Sicily was occupied by Arab Muslims and so many different fruits and spices were introduced to the area. It is believed that the Arabs introduced sugar to Sicily, where most of the well-known pastries are made, like cannoli.

Scandinavia, England and parts of France invaded southern Italy around AD 1000 and it was during that time that the baccala (salt cod) was introduced to the Italians. The Italians liked the salt cod because it was inexpensive and well preserved. Salt cod is found in many classic Italian recipes today.

The Renaissance greatly influenced the cuisine in Italy, with communication between neighboring countries in Europe. During this time, the tomato was introduced to Italy by the Spanish, who was ruling Naples. Tomatoes were native to Peru, but it did not take long for tomatoes to become a staple of the Italian cuisine. Other foods from “the New World” include zucchini, peppers, squash, beans, corn, and chocolate. These foods revolutionize the Italian cuisine and it would be hard to imagine Italian food without them.

(photos exhibit A) Angola Dell'Aurora, Rome.



(photos exhibit B) Mascagni Hotel Rome.



(photos exhibit C) Walking tour of Rome







(photos exhibit D) Parco Dei Principis' Grand Hotel (5-star)



(photos exhibit E) Eataly Rome, Italy





(photos exhibit F) Tre Vecchi Hotel



(photos exhibit G) Eataly Bologna





(photos – exhibit H) FICO







TARTUFO BIANCHETTO
€1,20/GRAMMO







(photos – Exhibit J) Farewell to Bologna Dinner





(photos exhibit K) St John's University, Rome



Resources

<https://www.alitalia.com/>

<https://www.hotelmascagnirome.com/>

<https://www.parcodprincipi.com/>

<https://zanhoteltrevecchi-bologna.h-rez.com>

<https://youtu.be/5fmlfID9YpM>

Eataly Bologna and FICO <https://www.eatalyworld.it/en/>

OSCAR FARINETTI, CEO & Founder of EATALY | An Exclusive Interview with yoox.com

<https://youtu.be/CT7ImvKgjf4>

Eataly Bologna Ambasciatori

Via degli Orefici, 19 · +39 051 095 2820

https://www.eataly.net/it_it/negozi/bologna

FICO World Eataly

Via Paolo Canali, 8 · +39 051 002 9001

<https://www.eatalyworld.it/en/>

https://www.eataly.net/it_it/negozi/roma

Vocabulary

Addio..... Goodbye

Bellissimo! Very Beautiful

Buon appetite!..... Good Appetite

Buon Giorno!..... Good morning

Buon viaggi!..... Happy Travels

Delizioso!..... Delicious

Eccellente!..... Excellent