

Part 7: Stop and Smell the Espresso!

I wish I could pinpoint when and where the exact moment was, but there were at least seven days left in the trip, and I was drinking a cappuccino. A thought in my mind came up of how much I enjoyed this cappuccino with the rich espresso and milk foam. This led me to reflect on how much I focused on trying to figure out what this Roman Holiday was for me. Yet in doing so, I overlooked the new food I was enjoying in Italy. This is coming from someone who back in the United States hardly eats meat, gluten or dairy, let alone the fact I hadn't had caffeine in months. However when I traveled, I took myself off my normal diet to try new things. Fortunately on this trip the food wasn't



making me sick so I could experience different foods that were delicious, and in some cases, healthier than the same dishes in the U.S. Plus, I love food and how it changed my life—particularly in the U.S. where I realized how some of the toxic food I was eating was affecting my mental and physical health. I could never dream of eating the pasta I ate in Italy back at home. The wheat didn't even come from the same ground. Not to say Italian American food isn't good, but there's nothing like Italian pasta, pizza, the real tiramisu and gelato. I would say nearly half of my pictures I took on Roman Holiday were of food and beverages.



I was a huge fan of the cooking class the Bellas and I got to take in Testevere, an area of Rome. The cuisine with the wine pairing was incredible. The class wasn't just fun and delicious; it was also quite

informative, from learning eggs don't need to be refrigerated, to the real way lasagna is made (always with meat and no ricotta cheese). We had a five course meal with four wine pairings. Our first course was an appetizer of figs stuffed with goat cheese and honey and with gorgonzola cheese and walnuts. The wine was called Frascati Spumante, 2011, from the Lazio region of Italy, a bubbly wine designed to open up the stomach before eating. The next course, known as the first course of the meal, was homemade fettuccine with mushrooms and sausages sauce. This was my first experience of making pasta from scratch, which certainly gave me a new appreciation of the generations of Italian mothers who



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didn't have the benefit of technology to make the pasta for them. This pasta was amazing though, and if I had time and a pasta machine, I would make homemade pasta myself. The wine pairing was the Fiano di Avellino DOCG, 2010, a white wine from the southern Italy region of Campania. Next, we made beef carpaccio with cherry tomatoes and arugula. The wine pairing was a red wine, called Cesanese di Olevano Romano, 2010 from the Lazio region. Our side dish or fourth course was Roman style sautéed zucchini to go with the beef carpaccio. Finally, for dessert we made a lemon custard with lemon zest and seasonal peaches poached with Brandy. This yummy dessert was



paired with Cannelino, 2010 from the Lazio region. My favorite dish was the pasta, but everything on the menu was wonderful. I would highly recommend taking a cooking class with Chef Andrea if you love food, love to cook or want to get an authentic Italian experience. Personally, it was my favorite activity of the Roman Holiday.

From the moment I had the cappuccino and onward, I made it a point to enjoy the food and take in the experience. I was in Italy



enjoying great food, and I nearly missed it by being caught up in other things. We might not all be food enthusiasts, but there's no other travel staple like the local cuisine. It's a unique opportunity to connect with the culture, but also connect with ourselves, especially if we find a dish we really like. Nothing could replace my gelato experience of dark chocolate, coffee and chocolate oreo. I made the pleasant mistake of eating the treat on a cone, which created a mess all over my face. I couldn't think of the last time I enjoyed food so much I got it all over me like I was a kid again. That moment couldn't be replaced by anything, which was good because there were only a few moments left on the trip.

