

FOOD STUDIES ABROAD: IDENTITY, CONSUMPTION,
AND LEARNING IN ITALY

by

CHRISTINA GOOCH

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THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

Student: Christina Gooch

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This thesis has been accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Science degree in the Environmental Studies Program by:

Stephen Wooten	Chairperson
Sarah Wald	Member

and

Scott L. Pratt	Dean of the Graduate School
----------------	-----------------------------

Original approval signatures are on file with the University of Oregon Graduate School.

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THESIS ABSTRACT

Christina Gooch

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Food studies offers a powerful lens through which to consider the complexity of travel, given the ways in which food can bring multiple perspectives to the table. The merging of food studies with the well-established tradition of study abroad, then, provides a platform for incorporating critical thinking and fresh perspectives into the discourse surrounding study abroad. How does food studies abroad reflect the opportunities and reify the concerns posed by study abroad in general? I explore this topic through a case study of a University of Oregon food studies abroad program, *Food and Culture in Italy*, looking specifically at students' motivations, on-site experience, and perceived outcomes. I employ the lenses of identity, consumption, and experiential learning to discuss the trends that emerge from the data and conclude with a series of recommendations for moving thoughtfully and critically forward with food studies abroad programming.

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME OF AUTHOR: Christina Gooch

GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS ATTENDED:

University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon
Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts

DEGREES AWARDED:

Master of Science, Environmental Studies, 2015, University of Oregon
Bachelor of Arts, Geology, 2007, Smith College

AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST:

Food studies
Tourism studies
Food pedagogies

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Food Studies Assistant, University of Oregon, 2014-2015
Teaching Assistant, University of Oregon, 2013-2014
Wilderness Park Ranger, Sequoia National Park, 2009-2015
Environmental Educator, Everglades National Park, 2010-2012

GRANTS, AWARDS, AND HONORS:

Paul and Helen Weiser Scholarship, 2014-2015
Sue Samuelson Award, American Folklore Society, 2015
Barker Award, University of Oregon, 2014
Graduate Teaching Fellow, University of Oregon, 2013-2015

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Dedicated to Ree, Anna, and Aldo.

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CHAPTER I

FOOD STUDIES ABROAD

Introduction

Study abroad is often referred to as one of the most powerful experiences a US undergraduate student can have (Paige et al. 2009). Numerous studies suggest, for example, that studying abroad increases students' intercultural competence, global perspective, personal and intellectual growth, and academic success (Twombly et al. 2012, ix). Travel itself is a complex action, however, posing a wide range of social and environmental costs that have the potential to impact both travelers and host communities (Long, Vogelaar, and Hale 2013; Moufakkir 2012). As a form of travel, study abroad encompasses this complexity and warrants reflection and thoughtful dialogue regarding opportunities and concerns. Specific critiques of study abroad refer to problematic ways of viewing and interacting with the "other," as well as commodification of culture and experience.

Food-focused travel is a rapidly growing sector of the travel experience (World Tourism Organization 2012), and within that sector "food studies abroad" is playing an increasingly present role. Food is a particularly interesting lens through which to consider the intricacies of travel, given the interrelatedness of food with social and environmental issues both locally and globally. The value of food in connecting people and illuminating multiple perspectives is reflected in the recent rise of food studies as an academic field (Cargill 2005; Davis 2010; Flowers and Swan 2012; Hamada et al. 2015). The merging of such a rich field with the well-established tradition of study abroad, then, can provide a platform for thinking critically about travel, food and learning. How does food studies

abroad reflect the opportunities and reify the concerns posed by study abroad in general, and can it serve as a place to intervene, reconsidering and perhaps shifting some of the dynamics of study abroad?

I explore this topic through a case study of a newly developed food studies abroad program at the University of Oregon, *Food and Culture in Italy*, looking specifically at students' motivations, on-site experience, and perceived outcomes. I employ the lenses of identity, consumption, and experiential learning to discuss the trends that emerge from the data, and conclude with a series of recommendations for thoughtfully and critically moving forward with food studies abroad programming.

Background of Study Abroad

Over 300,000 US students studied abroad in 2013/2014 (Institute of International Education), and given the value that institutions, administrators, and politicians have placed on international education there are strong efforts to increase that number dramatically. Stone and Petrick (2013) note that “study abroad . . . is one of the few avenues through which educative outcomes have been comprehensively studied” (735). This research seems to fall into two broad categories: determining students' motivations to study abroad and assessing overall impact on students of the study abroad experience. A wide range of literature attributes studying abroad to increasing the (ambiguous) quality of cultural competence, identity development, intellectual and cognitive growth, and academic success (Twombly et al. 2012). Other studies have assessed the impact of study abroad on students' subsequent civic engagement. Horn and Fry (2012), for example, analyzed how participation in study abroad and factors such as type, duration, and location of the program influenced civic engagement based on subsequent

volunteerism. Tarrant and Lyons (2012) explored the effect of short-term study abroad on changes in students' environmental citizenship.

There is another, albeit smaller, body of literature that presents a cautionary set of critiques of study abroad (Bolen 2001; Breen 2012; Doerr 2014; Grünzweig and Rinehart 2002; Long, Vogelaar, and Hale 2013; Tiessen and Huish 2014; Woolf 2011; Zemach-Bersin 2007). This set of critiques suggests that the examination of critical perspectives is necessary if study abroad is going to fulfill the high expectations set for it (Twombly et al. 2012, 95). One of the main critiques presents US study abroad as a tool for cultural and economic imperialism, reinforcing unequal power dynamics and perpetuating a consumer mentality. This critique is reinforced by the fact that most research on study abroad has been done from the sending side, with little attention given to potential impacts on host communities (Doerr 73). Another critique recognizes the relative exclusivity of study abroad, and the fact that in spite of efforts to increase accessibility, it continues to cater primarily to wealthy white students. Other critiques doubt the academic rigor of study abroad, question the purpose of study abroad in an era of globalization, or remark upon the environmental costs of travel.

Many of these critiques parallel the more widely acknowledged field of critical literature in tourism. Long, Vogelaar, and Hale (2013) report, for example, that:

...an established body of literature details the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts of tourism, and has significant relevance for educational travel programs. Many of the impacts are explored critically and present serious concerns for programs striving to promote sustainability and the ideals of global citizenship. (427)

In tourism studies and study abroad literature numerous correlations are drawn between tourism and study abroad (Bolen 2001, Reilly and Senders 2009, Breen 2012,

Prins and Webster 2010, Schroeder et al. 2009). While the two activities typically maintain fundamental differences in terms of intention and organization, enough scholars recognize the similarity of approach and impact that, when relevant, I will continue to draw comparisons between the two throughout this thesis.

Food Studies Today

US study abroad programming has diversified greatly since its language- and culture-focused beginnings in the early twentieth century (Hoffa 2007), now encompassing fields as disparate as engineering, environmental sciences, and perhaps most recently, food studies. Food studies as an interdisciplinary academic field has grown significantly over the past twenty years, and is continuing to see increases in university programming and research. (Albala 2013). While some of these programs are more traditionally academic and classroom-based in nature, many are implementing experiential learning approaches to food studies through school farms and gardens (Biernbaum, Thorp, and Ngouajio 2006), hands-on courses and workshops (Parr and Van Horn 2006), and involvement in farmers markets and community supported agriculture (Barlett 2011).

The University of Oregon has recently joined over twenty other US institutions in its development of a dedicated Food Studies program in 2012. According to the program's website (www.foodstudies.uoregon.edu), "The UO Food Studies Program developed out of a growing recognition that an integrated perspective on food matters is vital to developing fuller understandings of complex food-related issues." As part of this program, which is housed within the interdisciplinary Environmental Studies program, the University has increased its number of food-focused courses, developed and

strengthened community partnerships with local farms and food organizations, and continued to strengthen on-campus food-based educational experiences (such as the UO Urban Farm). In 2013, the University began offering a graduate specialization in food studies and in 2015 it will institute an undergraduate food studies minor. The minor will be based on a core course, “Introduction to Food Studies,” which was regularized within the UO College of Arts and Sciences in 2015. In addition to these on-campus initiatives, the University has recently joined a growing number of institutions that are extending the reach of food studies into the domain of study abroad.

Food studies provides a particularly interesting lens through which to examine study abroad, given that it is still in the process of defining itself, situating itself within the academy, and in some ways “proving” itself as a valid field of study. While other interdisciplinary studies (American studies, gender studies, and cultural studies, for example) seem to have gained legitimacy within the academy through departments and professional organizations, only several institutions (New York University Steinhardt and Syracuse University, for example) currently have dedicated food studies departments, and there is widespread debate over the scope of the field and the pedagogies employed (Hamada et al. 2015). Such dynamism provides a perfect place to reexamine and make thoughtful changes in associated fields like study abroad.

Food Studies Abroad: A Case Study

Study abroad in general is full of complexity, as some of its critics place it in direct opposition to the ideals that many programs purport to embody — global citizenship, cultural competency, social and environmental awareness, and sustainability (Long, Vogelaar, and Hale, 2013). Additionally, there is an apparent juxtaposition

between studying food abroad and campus-based food studies initiatives, many of which forge and encourage connections between students and the local community through food production, community outreach, and organizational partnerships, aligning with a movement that touts local engagement as a counterpoint to globalization and a necessary force in protecting local cultures and economies (Hinrichs 2003). Here we see a commonality between study abroad and the local food movement, which are both often surrounded by rhetoric of “doing good” while not necessarily acknowledging their complexity or inherent exclusivity. These critiques and the potentially paradoxical nature of food studies abroad render it an especially fascinating and important yet little-researched field.

While there is a small body of literature on strictly horticulture-based study abroad programs (Haynes 2004; Van Der Zanden et al. 2007), little has been written about study abroad in the realm of more interdisciplinary food studies (and more specifically, the realm of food and culture). There is therefore much to be learned about the appeal, outcomes, and characteristics of such programs. This study will contribute to an understanding of the unique elements of food studies abroad and the ways in which it reflects the opportunities and reifies potential problems inherent in study abroad as a whole.

The case under evaluation for this study is the pilot trip of a short-term (ten-week) University of Oregon study abroad program entitled *Food and Culture in Italy*, which took place in the spring of 2014. The exploratory study offered an opportunity to observe an aspect of food studies as an emerging field, and to gain information that could help guide and shape future food studies and study abroad programming. As both food studies

and food studies abroad continue to grow and develop, there is an opportunity to be mindful in ways that other fields haven't, given our ever-evolving understanding of the complexities of travel. It is an opportunity to engage students and the academy in critical and self-reflective thinking about how, where, and why they operate in the world, and the impact they can have at home and abroad on students, communities, and academic discourse. Through an exploration of student experience, in this case study I seek information about aspects of the experience that can be used to inform future programming.

Research Questions

Given the emerging state of and potentially paradoxical nature of food studies abroad, this research was driven by the following question:

How does food studies abroad reflect the opportunities and reify the potential problems posed by study abroad, and how can the field move forward in a self-reflexive and critical manner?

This is a broad, complicated issue that will not be answered through a single case study; however, the information gained and connections made through this research will contribute to a larger understanding of and, perhaps more importantly, to a critical dialogue surrounding food studies and study abroad.

This overarching inquiry was approached through the following sub-questions:

1. What are the backgrounds, motivations, and expectations of students choosing a food studies abroad program?
2. What were the most salient elements of their experiences during the program?
3. What did students perceive to be the most valuable outcomes of the program?

4. How are students incorporating their food studies abroad experience into their lives after the program?
5. How, if at all, do food studies abroad student motivations and experiences reflect broader trends in study abroad as a whole?

Overview of Findings

The primary trends that emerged from student experiences in this study illuminated three major themes in food studies abroad: identity, consumption, and experiential learning. The topic of identity can be linked to identity development, expression, and maintenance in students, host communities, or cultures. Consumption is a key player in travel, higher education, and food studies, and can take the form of consumption of knowledge, culture, or, in the most literal sense, of physical material. Experiential learning is an integral part of both food studies and study abroad. I've therefore chosen to focus on these themes because of their relevance to food, travel, and to both the critiques and opportunities inherent in study abroad, so that they may provide insight for food studies abroad planning in the future.

These themes will be addressed and explored in the following three chapters. Chapter II employs the lens of culinary tourism to explore the concept of identity in study abroad and the role that food plays in defining a traveler's identity. This theme reflects to the student-centric nature of study abroad, which is particularly relevant given the identity development that often occurs during the college years. In this case study, student expectations, motivations, and reported post-trip outcomes centered on identity development through exploration, risk-taking, self-sufficiency, and increased responsibility and independence. These findings suggest that such a student-centric

approach to study abroad reinforces the *tourist gaze* (Urry 1990), deepening and reinforcing the distinction between the self and the “other” and potentially oversimplifying the players involved.

Chapter III addresses the ways in which food, education, and study abroad exhibit elements of consumption and commodification. This case study reveals how students in this program approached study abroad as a commodity and investigates the intersection of the students’ chosen consumer good and the consumption practices that took place within that experience. The chapter portrays how students’ pre- and post-trip attitudes reflect ways in which they see the program as a commodity good, and the role that consumption played in their learning experience and identity development. It concludes with a discussion of the potential problems associated with the commodification of study abroad and of food studies abroad in particular, examining the potential impacts on host communities through commodification of foodways and culture.

Chapter IV engages the topic of experiential learning and the intersection of food, travel, and learning that occurred throughout the program. First, I demonstrate that experiential learning was one of the primary motivating factors for students to choose this program. I then discuss elements of the students’ experience in the field, including sensory learning, social connections, and self-motivated learning, and how such elements of experiential learning were also reported as one of the most valuable aspects of the program. The chapter concludes with a discussion of students’ perceived outcomes to explore the unique opportunities for experiential learning in food studies abroad.

Chapter V serves as a synthesis of these three themes — identity, consumption, and experiential learning — in relation to food studies abroad, and addresses the

opportunities and potential problems posed by the field. The thesis concludes with a series of recommendations and considerations for future food studies abroad programming.

Methodology

Research Design and Rationale

This project employed a case study method which incorporated students' specific identities, backgrounds, and experiences in a qualitative attempt to capture connections between these factors and students' experiences abroad. My primary data instruments included pre- and post-trip interviews, mixed qualitative and quantitative pre- and post-trip online questionnaires, and ethnographic field notes. I recruited participants through an email disseminated to program students via the University of Oregon's Office of International Affairs. Approval from the University of Oregonians Internal Review Board was obtained before beginning the study.

The pre- and post-trip interviews were semi-structured and lasted from 20-40 minutes each. All interviews began with pre-determined questions (see Appendix), but occasionally diverted based on students responses. Pre-trip interviews were conducted either by phone during the week before the program began, or on-site in Macerata during the first three days of the program. The post-trip interviews were conducted in-person on the University of Oregon campus in November 2014, five months after the end of the program, a time period that allowed students to reintegrate somewhat into their lives back in the United States. Interview responses were transcribed, coded, and categorized by emerging themes and overall trends.

The pre- and post-trip questionnaires consisted of numeric and open-ended questions regarding previous international experience, motivations for choosing *Food and Culture in Italy* as a study abroad program, academic and career interests, food- and environmentally-related attitudes and behaviors, perceived program outcomes, and demographic information. Demographic variables included age, gender, race/ethnicity, family income, state of residence, political affiliation, and major. Given a low response rate for the questionnaires (approximately half), I relied on them only for demographic data, combining this with demographic information from interviews to form a complete data set.

Additionally, I spent two weeks of participant observation on-site with the program in Macerata during May 2014. As part of this ethnography, I observed approximately eight 90-minute class sessions, six field excursions, and several hours a day of unstructured free time with the students in the town and the surrounding region. Since much of the experiential learning in study abroad takes place during unstructured interactions and activities, spending time as a participant observer allowed me to witness some of these aspects of the program, directly witnessing student experience and gaining a deeper understanding of the program's structure and educational opportunities.

Sample and Student Profiles

The study's target population included all students enrolled in *Food and Culture in Italy* at the University of Oregon in the spring of 2014. A recruitment email was sent to the students through the University's Office of International Affairs. Eighteen students enrolled and participated in the program; 15 of these students responded to the recruitment email and agreed to take part in the study. All 15 of these students completed

the pre-trip interview, and nine took part in a post-trip interview. All participants were provided an approved informed consent form and were over 18 years old.

All participants were between 18-22 years old, and represented a range of academic standings (first year through senior) and majors (business, journalism, environmental studies, social sciences, and psychology). Fourteen students identified as white, and one as Pacific Islander. Three participants identified as male, nine as female, and one as gender-fluid. In 2012/2013, 65% of study abroad students in the US identified as female and 76% as white or Caucasian, so in terms of gender this student sample was roughly proportional to national study abroad statistics while in terms of race was less diverse than the national average (Institute of International Education). Pseudonyms are used throughout this thesis.

According to reported annual family incomes, most students were spread evenly across a wide range of middle class (\$20,000 to \$99,999), with three students reporting family incomes higher than this. Participant backgrounds also varied in terms of previous international travel experience. Six students reported having traveled extensively outside of the United States, six had traveled within North America, and three had never traveled outside of the United States before.

Program Description

Food and Culture in Italy was a pilot program and the first food studies abroad program offered at the University of Oregon. Developed by the university's director of Food Studies Stephen Wooten, the program aimed to:

“...introduce students to the food of Italy's Marche region - its history, production, and linkages to society, geography, art, and the environment . . . The program allows students to develop fuller understandings of complex food-

related issues and gain new insights into the ways in which food mediates social, political, environmental, cultural, and economic processes.” (University of Oregon 2013)

Food and Culture in Italy was based in the small university town of Macerata, nestled within the agriculturally-rich Marche region in central Italy. The program took place over the ten-week academic spring term, and can therefore be classified as a short-term study abroad program. Applications were open to University of Oregon students from all majors and all academic classes and had no language requirement. Housing was in the form of apartments shared amongst the program students, with 2-4 students per unit. The courses and on-site logistics were based in facilities run by UO’s partner organization, AHA International, where has run previous study abroad programs. Courses were taught by a combination of UO and local Italian professors and engaged the topics of food systems, landscape ecology, sustainable agriculture, Italian Renaissance culture, and Italian language. The classroom-based component of the courses included traditional lecture as well as opportunities for discussion and reflection. Regular field excursions (to markets, farms, restaurants, vineyards, food producers, cultural and historic sites, etc.) in the surrounding area were a significant focus of the program.

Study Limitations

The primary limit of this study is the small sample size of 15 students, preventing the data from being generalizable to the larger population of study abroad students. Because of this small number and the fact that each student’s unique background and identity will inform their experience, the analysis is decidedly qualitative. Also, given the methodological challenges associated with determining study abroad outcomes

(Twombly et al. 68), this study is presented as fuel for reflection and conversation, not a statement of conclusions.

Researcher's Background

As someone who is passionate about local food engagement, I recognize that much of my knowledge and motivation initially grew from perspective and skills gained during opportunities to travel and volunteer abroad. I am now equally passionate about thinking critically about the motivations and actions driving food movements, and recognizing the complexities inherent in engaging in an increasingly globalized, unequal, and commodified world. I am frustrated by the lack of critical discussion around both alternative food movements and study abroad, and believe that food studies is a realm in which these conversations can happen concurrently with action and exploration.

The idea of food studies abroad tapped into my own conflicted feelings about traveling to learn about food and into what I view as an important, relevant, and timely discussion about what food studies abroad could be. These feelings persisted as I once again traveled, this time to Italy, to learn about food, or rather, in this case, to learn about learning about food.

I first heard about the program while taking the core course for the University of Oregon's newly developed graduate specialization in food studies, from the professor of the course Stephen Wooten, who also happened to be the *Food and Culture in Italy* program director and the director of Food Studies (and who would eventually serve as my advisor for the project). At this time I was grappling with my own understanding of my food interests and motivations and was just beginning to link them to past travel experiences. Initially, I was interested in exploring if and how an international experience

would influence students' engagement in their local food communities. I quickly realized, however, that such changes are difficult to measure in the time span of a Master's degree and that the issue was much more complex than I had envisioned. As the project unfolded, the various themes that emerged and that form the body of this thesis concurrently shaped my own relationship to and understanding of identity (as a white, queer, middle-class woman), consumption (as a traveler, student, and food enthusiast), and learning (through sensory and cognitive exploration, project challenges, and the embracing of multiple perspectives). This thesis is but a step in my own evolving relationship to food, travel, and the developing discourse around food studies abroad.

CHAPTER II

FOOD, TRAVEL, AND THE QUEST FOR IDENTITY

Introduction

I'm most excited about traveling, and just trying different things, maybe getting a little lost. That's what I'm really excited about, to see where all the adventures go. I have no idea what the future holds, but it looks great.

(Leah, program participant)

In his classic travel analysis *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (1976), Dean MacCannell suggests that travel provides an opportunity to seek out our “authentic selves.” Similarly, in discussing culinary tourism, Chrzan (2006) describes how traveling reveals aspects of ourselves that may be obscured within our everyday lives. Study abroad is often viewed as, and is in fact regularly advertised as, an opportunity for students to explore their identities, and a literature review by Long (2013) suggests that “personal growth” is a common theme in study abroad assessments (424). For many students this opportunity comes from the first time being away from home, the first exposure to different cultures and lifestyles, and increased independence and responsibility.

The opportunity for self exploration during study abroad is particularly powerful given that many college students are within the dynamic life stage of *emerging adulthood*, defined by Arnett (2000) as the ages of 18-25 in the US. According Arnett, most of a person's identity development takes place during this period, a time of life when “many different directions remain possible, when little about the future has been decided for certain, when the scope of independent exploration of life's possibilities is

greater for most people than it will be at any other period of the life course” (469). Stone and Petrick (2013) reference a number of studies that illustrate the role travel can play during this period, claiming that study abroad can result in a variety of identity-related outcomes including change of perspective or worldview, self-confidence, autonomy, and independence.

Food, too, has widely been linked to identity formation and in defining who we are (Bell and Valentine 1997), to the extent that one of the most commonly referenced truisms in the field of food studies is gourmand Brillat-Savarin’s famous statement, “Tell me what you eat and I’ll tell you who you are.” Bardhi, Ostberg, and Bengtsson (2010) suggest that food consumption is intimately tied to the distinctiveness of each person, stating that on “an individual level, food consumption is central since any given human individual is constructed, biologically, psychologically, and socially by the food he or she chooses to incorporate” (136). Therefore, food studies abroad is unique in its opportunity for exploring identity through food in ways that mirror the opportunities in culinary tourism. Folklorist Lucy Long (1998) defines culinary tourism as “the intentional, exploratory participation in the foodways of an other,” including the “consumption, preparation, and presentation of a food item, cuisine, meal system, or eating style considered to belong to a culinary system not one’s own” (21). This definition, which is certainly applicable to food studies abroad, refers to the ways in which travelers attempt to experience and gain a sense of *an other’s* identity through their food. An even more intriguing and potentially powerful element of both culinary tourism and food studies abroad that accompanies this exploration of the “other,” however, is how people experience their *own* identity through other cultures’ food (Chrzan 2006).

Building upon the premise that food is a powerful medium through which to explore and define identity, in this chapter I explore the role that identity played in shaping students' motivations and expectations for studying abroad, their experiences in the field, and their post-trip attitudes and behaviors. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of how the theme of individual identity suggests a student-centric approach to study abroad, an approach that reinforces what sociologist John Urry (1990) refers to as the *tourist gaze*, deepening the distinction between the self and the "other," and potentially oversimplifying the players involved.

Expectations and Motivations: Getting a Little Lost (to Find Oneself)

As travelers, study abroad students have an opportunity to explore identity through exposure to different environments and people, making encounters that provide contrast between the familiar and the out of the ordinary. This exposure to difference and the ensuing internal exploration of identity was one of the main themes that emerged from students' motivations and expectations for studying abroad. The quest for identity was centered around several primary sub-themes: exploration, taking risks, gaining perspective, and increased independence and responsibility.

Exploration

Nearly all students anticipated that their study abroad experience would offer an opportunity for exploration, most referring to geographical exploration through travel. "I've never been to Italy and wanted to add that to my list of travels," Janey said. Sarah explained, "I've always wanted to travel and thought this was a good opportunity to travel while learning about something that I'm passionate about," and Michael was "really hoping to get out and travel." Jenna mused: "It just baffles me thinking about how

big the world is, and how much of it I haven't seen, and just... I really just want to explore.”

Over half of the students also mentioned some form of culinary exploration as a motivating factor. Though not unexpected given the focus of this particular program, food is perhaps one of the most unavoidable and frequently exercised forms of exploration in any travel experience. It is interesting to note, however, that in spite of Italy's reputation as a “foodie” haven and the birthplace of the Slow Foods movement, very few students referred to any specific kind of Italian cuisine or food culture they hoped to explore — instead, they mentioned more general qualities like good taste and freshness.

Taking Risks

The next most commonly referred to identity-related motivation was a desire to be vulnerable and embrace the risks travel can present. At the time of the pre-trip interviews students were already expressing concerns about the journey, specifically in terms of being far from home or out of the United States for the first time, figuring out transportation, finding their way to Macerata to meet with the rest of the group, and navigating a language barrier. Most referred to these trepidations, however, as a positive challenge. Jenna, for example, who was nervous about communicating in Italian, mused that “it's hard to come out of that shell sometimes, but it'll be really exciting.” Four students specifically mentioned leaving their comfort zone as a high motivation for studying abroad. Leah, for example, said: “I definitely want to know that I went outside my comfort zone and did stuff that maybe made me uncomfortable but that was rewarding in the end.”

Risk and identity development can intertwine through travel, expanding the sense of self through an openness to new possibilities and freedom from everyday constraints (Graburn 2012). The vulnerability and novelty inherent in breaching one's comfort zone provided students with an opportunity to acknowledge, examine, and alter their identity.

Perspective

Eight students mentioned "gaining perspective" as a motivation for studying abroad, reflecting not only a willingness and openness to but also an expectation of rethinking identity.

Taylor, who had never been out of the United States before, was looking forward to "just learning about . . . and interacting with a different culture." Patrick thought "it was good to go out into the world and see through a different lens . . . and get other people's perspectives and then learn from that." Marnie, who had grown up in Eugene and had limited previous international travel experience, hoped to gain "a wider perspective on the world," and "to get out and see how other parts of the world operate." Naomi, who had studied abroad before for two months in Costa Rica in high school, was excited to travel again because travel "brings a whole new perspective to the table" and helps people realize that "the American way is actually really different from the rest of the world — it's not the norm, it's an exception." Janey thought study abroad offered "a wider perspective on things . . . and helps moving forward in progressive thought." Similarly, Lindsey understood study abroad as something that gives "you a broader perspective . . . and just sort of makes you realize that America's not the only or the best place in the world. There's just so much more, and the world is so big."

Since these students entered the program knowing that there would be a focus on food studies, it is not surprising that several students mentioned food as a specific area in which they hoped to gain perspective. Leah, for example, was simply looking forward to experiencing how Italy's "food systems are different than American food systems." Janey also mentioned wanting to see how Italian foodways differed from those in the US in terms of food production and distribution, while Michael was curious about different attitudes and behaviors towards cooking and eating. Taylor was interested in seeing how her perspective on food and alcohol changed, based on what she had heard about Italian consumption habits. Jenna was interested in learning more about the local emphasis she expected Italians to place on food and eating, saying that she thought "we have a lot to learn from that." Marnie was anxious to experience "the passion that they have for their food because they take it very seriously, and I think that's really, really cool." She continued, "I'm excited to see a different slice of life as far as how food is produced, on a very personal level."

Michael directly linked perspective gained to identity development. "I think that it's a really great time to just step back and look at perspective . . . and really define yourself and figure out who you are." He hoped studying abroad would provide some freedom from the social pressure college students are under to fit in and follow the crowd, serving as "a good chance to get in a different situation." Ellie was also hoping to explore and develop an identity away from the pressures of the university campus. "Especially at a school like the University of Oregon, a party school, it's easy to get caught up in drinking and going out. It's like you get caught up in this very, very small

world, and you wouldn't realize that you can enjoy yourself by traveling, or like, going to museums. There are so many different ways that I could experience college!"

Independence and Responsibility

Nine students claimed some sort of increased independence and/or responsibility as a motivating factor for studying abroad. As over half of the students had never traveled internationally on their own before, many students expected to gain independence through the mere act of traveling — living on their own, navigating through unfamiliar places, communicating in Italian, and managing finances. Patrick, who was interviewed on the first day of the program, described his journey to Italy as “kind of scary because I’ve never traveled on my own somewhere really far away before, and I’ve never been to Europe, and I don’t speak Italian.” Several students also anticipated the independence they would gain in living in an apartment on their own and being away from family for the first time.

Both Jenna and Cassidy mentioned wanting to be more comfortable and confident traveling on their own in the future and expected that studying abroad would provide that. Jenna said that “I think just knowing that I can be comfortable in any situation that’s given to me, and being able to deal with things that are unexpected and not planned, and just knowing that I can handle a situation and come out of it stronger, and know more.”

Almost half of the students expected that studying abroad would endow them with increased responsibility to family and/or community upon their return. Cassidy, for example, explained that:

I’m the first in my family to go to college, to go abroad, to do all that sort of stuff, so it’s something completely new for my family community. It’s just

something that I can bring back to them and share. I know they're freaking out right now and all that, but I'm going to come back and have like, more responsibility than ever.

Sarah assumed that when studying abroad, you “probably get a lot while you're gone, and then you bring it back and you make the University a better place, and your community a better place.”

In spite of the varied backgrounds of the program's 18 students, the above data suggest that almost all arrived in Italy with some expectation of exploring and rethinking their identity and understanding of themselves.

Explorations in the Field

While in Italy, field observations showed that students maintained and pursued their motivations to explore, take risks, gain perspective, and seek independence and responsibility, often as part of wanting to make the most of the unique experience they were having. Not surprisingly, one of the most common mediums through which students pursued these experiences was food, as they engaged in a multisensory experience with Italian food systems, attitudes, customs, and behaviors.

Exploration often took the form of venturing out and trying new foods, whether through eating at restaurants, going on excursions, cooking at home, or sharing meals with each other and local residents. Students also reported that while traveling, both within the program and on their own, food was one of the most meaningful and eye-opening aspects of that exploration. Social explorations took place through food as well, as students branched out and made connections with locals, other international students, and each other through shared cooking and eating experiences.

Students also utilized food as a medium for risk-taking, in terms of language, social interactions, and taste. One of the most accessible and necessary venues for taking language-related risks was communicating about food, as students navigated ordering meals, grocery shopping, and understanding recipes. Some of these risks led to mistakes — buying the wrong food item, not knowing market etiquette, misunderstanding a recipe, or making a cultural faux pas by, for example, eating the wrong food at the wrong time of day.

Given the program's focus on food studies, it is understandable that some of the most highly explored perspectives were related to food, as students integrated classroom learning with their experiences. The explorations and risks noted above frequently led to rich observations and discussions about such perspectives, and while many discussions took place in class and during program outings, students also regularly engaged outside of class in comparing the food habits and attitudes they were observing in Italy to those on campus or in their hometown. These comparisons often led to larger conversations about national and global food issues, as well as their own personal food behaviors.

Specific food-related comparisons included how much fresher, healthier, more local, and less processed the food they were experiencing seemed, how much more involved people were with their food and where it came from, how much better the food tasted, and differences in growing, processing, and shopping habits. These observations and comparisons of foodways led students to reconsider their own food habits. Marnie noticed, for example, how:

. . . food is a lot more local here and how people are involved in their food, so what's on their table, for the most part, they know where it came from . . . That's

so different from when I eat at home. My food came from the grocery store, like, I don't know where it came from. I think when you're involved in the processes, you're much more aware and you care a lot more about what happens.

Both the pre-trip expectations of culinary exploration and students' perceptions of foodways during the program were probably informed by Italy's culinary reputation as a "foodie" haven and the birthplace of the Slow Foods movement. Interestingly, students did not seem to "exoticize" Italian food as is common in culinary tourism (Heldke 2003); instead, they eased into the food culture with an air of comfort and familiarity. This is perhaps because, given the range of global culinary traditions, Italian cuisine is relatively similar to the kind of food they might encounter in the US. This is particularly true in the University of Oregon's hometown of Eugene and the surrounding Willamette Valley, a cradle of local and alternative food initiatives.

Through food students also began to rethink their presumptions and judgments of others, like family or classmates, demonstrating a more open mind. Carly, for example, described how she used to judge certain family members harshly for hunting, but through class discussions and an increased understanding of the Italian food culture was now coming to respect it as a potentially sustainable and mindful way to eat. Lindsey had always teased her mother for being a proud and zealous gardener, but was now interested in helping in the garden and was starting to appreciate the way in which her mother put food on their table. Such rethinking reflected both an embracing of new perspectives, but also flickers of independence as students began to form or continued to build upon their own food-related values and ideas.

Some of the most powerful perspective shifts occurred through students' frustrations with aspects of Italian foodways, like stricter cultural norms regarding when

one eats certain foods or, for that matter, eats at all. This was particularly evident during program classes and excursions, when students found themselves unable to eat whenever they wanted to — a practice they were used to in the US. The frustrations led to conversations about their own cultural norms and often turned into an exercise of identity exploration as they debated the value of certain customs. Similarly, issues of convenience arose often as students encountered unfamiliar practices — stores closing in the middle of the day, slower service, and the limited availability of certain food products. Lindsey found herself complaining one afternoon about wanting a break from Italian food, before amusedly identifying her frustration as a product of being accustomed to immense choice and variety in the US.

Students' experiences with food also led to the unfolding of their emerging independence and responsibility. As is the case with many study abroad programs, most students found themselves making more decisions for themselves and living on their own for the first time, many miles away from the guidance and supervision of parents, family, dorms, or sorority/fraternity houses. Many of the students expressed that one of the most significant aspects of this newfound responsibility was the need to cook and shop for themselves, tasks which served as an opportunity for both identity exploration and expression. Vibrant discussions of a new favorite pizzeria, challenging recipes they had attempted to cook the night before, or experiences at the various markets and shops permeated the atmosphere outside of class and in class as well, as students related these challenges and discoveries to the concepts they were studying. They shared stories of failed cooking ventures, newfound understanding of different food items and where they

came from, and of doing something for the first time — making pasta, buying a bottle of wine, hosting a dinner party.

While all study abroad programs and travel in general necessarily involve some degree of exploration through food, the program's academic focus on food studies rendered the avenue even more powerful and accessible in this program. There existed opportunities for depth that would not have been present in another kind of program, as integral time for discussion, reflection, and analysis of the food experience accompanied structured excursions and connections with local people. The unique aspect of food as a means of literally consuming and embodying an experience will be elaborated on in Chapter III and the value of the integration of food, classroom reflection, and field experience will be discussed in Chapter IV.

Perceived Outcomes

Upon their return, students expressed through various memories and realizations that their food studies abroad experience fulfilled their expectations in terms of identity development. Two specific themes emerged when students discussed their perceived identity-related outcomes. First, most of these outcomes were inwardly focused and strongly linked to the student's sense of self. The primary outcomes included increased self-sufficiency, independence, responsibility, and perspective. Michael observed that:

Looking back on it I think that I got a lot more out of small town Italy than I thought I did when I was there. It really helped me fix some things about myself I didn't particularly like. I think that going abroad, kind of removing yourself from your life, really helps you to kind of think about you and yourself, and what you want to do and where you are back home. Now that I'm coming back with a whole new perspective and whatnot, I want to just be able to make choices for me and do things for me.

Janey embraced a similar self-sufficiency and independence, stating that “I’m a lot better just finding my own happiness, just going out and doing stuff for myself.” Taylor described being “way more independent now,” and Ellie expressed that she felt more open and was more willing to try new things. In the same vein, one of the most valuable program outcomes for Leah was “probably realizing that I’m the one that makes or breaks my experience.”

Naomi expressed that: “I think I learned how to be really comfortable with myself. And, kind of cheesy, but how to be just genuinely happy and appreciative, and have gratitude.” She continued:

I mean it just pushes you out of your comfort zone, and that’s when you grow the most — not to sound cliché or anything, but it’s the truth. I grew so much as a person, and in my world perspective. You become very independent, trying to maneuver your way around without speaking the language, and like, you grow so close with the people you’re there with, and. . . It just pushes you.

Students also seemed to carry over a general appreciation for the perspective gained while abroad. Sarah described that thanks to this newfound perspective, “I’ve just become more aware of . . . how I would like to live my life in the future.” Cassidy mentioned: “I feel more cultured and like it gave me a wider perspective. Even though these people are oceans away, they have some of the same and some different problems.” Patrick realized “that not everything is as you see it, you know? You have to understand where other people are coming from. And sometimes it makes it a lot more interesting if you approach things or try and view them differently, too.”

It is interesting to note that although quite a few students expected an increase in responsibility to their families or communities after studying abroad, in the post-trip interviews all of the references to increased responsibility related to managing students’

own individual lives. For example, Janey described the experience of moving into an apartment after returning from Italy, and how her time abroad left her more confident about living on her own, taking on responsibilities like managing money and buying food. For no student was there any mention of a new sense of responsibility to others. As is shown below, several students expressed a motivation to support certain food choices in the spirit of responsibility to larger food-related values, but the choices themselves were very individualistic and consumer-oriented, a trend which will be further explored in Chapter III.

Such changes in food consumption practices reflect the second theme that emerged from post-trip interviews — many of the students' perceived gains manifested themselves through shifts in food-related attitudes and behaviors. In describing how her food habits had changed, Ellie explained that “it was definitely the way of life and the culture that made me rethink food.” Similarly, Janey stated that:

I love all the farm to table stuff and slow food movement, and it's like, changed my whole philosophy . . . kind of opened up my mind to a lot this stuff. And just seeing that different culture and perspective with food and how they interact with it has really changed me as a cook and person, and how I live with trying to eat local and in season, and buying from certain places.

Cassidy described how her newfound independence and responsibility manifested itself through food behaviors:

I've never before Italy had my own apartment, had to cook my own food, buy my own groceries, ever in my life. It's literally been my mom, or living in the dorms, dorm food, and then my sophomore year I lived in my sorority house, so we have like, cooks and chefs, so we never had to do anything ourselves . . . So living in Italy was actually the first time ever living on my own and having to go to the grocery store, and . . . cooking for myself.

Sarah noticed a change in her attitudes and relationship to food. She described how rigid she used to be about her eating habits, but that in Italy she started to embrace the idea of moderation and to question the strict set of rules that had been determining her diet. “I think I'm more open, and I think I enjoy eating more now than I did before. Which is definitely a healthier way to view food.” Leah expressed discomfort in eating by herself once she had returned home, having come to value the social emphasis on eating she experienced in Italy.

Leah also described being more concerned about sustainability and where food comes from and more conscious about where she shopped, trying to buy from the farmers market and local natural foods store when she could afford it. “It definitely changed my views,” she said, “and I was more conscious. I tried really hard this summer to go [to the farmers market] every week.” Likewise, Patrick claimed that his study abroad experience “definitely changed my perspective” on food. He now aspired to support local food when he could afford it, but expressed how difficult it was to do financially as a college student, saying “I just haven’t acted on that yet.”

Michael confidently asserted that studying abroad “changed my relationship with food,” and regretted that in the US he didn’t have access to many of the foods he appreciated in Italy. He also described how experiencing Italian foodways had influenced his ideas of health, motivating him to change his diet and exercise habits when he returned home. Janey also expressed frustration with food quality and availability in her home community and with not being able to find the right ingredients to make the recipes she had learned in Italy. Cassidy was the only student interviewed post-trip that said she hadn’t made any food-related changes, but that food was something she was thinking

about more. “I still eat the same things I eat, I still do things the same way, I don't shop any differently. Yeah, I feel like it hasn't changed my habits or behaviors, but it's kind of made me more aware of what could be.”

As the above data show, in addition to the general outcomes of personal growth and identity development, much of the change occurred through food as a medium for perceiving difference, questioning personal attitudes and behaviors, and defining values. Once back in the US, the result of these explorations manifested themselves through shifts in food-related attitudes and behaviors or, at the very least, through shifts in thinking about food. Such findings underscore the power food has as a symbol of identity, particularly for “emerging adults,” and in acting as both an outward display and internal embodiment of our values and how we see ourselves.

As students in Macerata engaged with the foodways of the place — connecting with the host culture, perceiving difference, and exploring their own identity through the foodways of the “other” — they were in effect culinary tourists.

Students as Culinary Tourists

While being there, I felt more as like an observer of a community that was going on, especially since we were there during Easter, one of their biggest holidays. Their entire community gathers together and goes to all these different ceremonies for the whole week and everything. We were in Perugia on Palm Sunday, so seeing everyone walk around with the palms and singing songs. . . We were looking out our window, you know, watching all this stuff happen so. . . Yeah, when I was there, I felt more like an observer, and more of like an individual than a community.

(Cassidy, program participant)

One of the most interesting elements of the “student as culinary tourist” is the adoption of the *tourist gaze*, a term John Urry (1990) defines as the way in which travelers “organize the encounters of visitors with the ‘other’” (145). At its most extreme,

the tourist gaze is interpreted as another form of colonialism or imperialism (Robinson 2001) or as a situation in which power belongs to the one who possesses the gaze while the “other” is completely defined as the object of the gaze (MacCannell 1976). Others scholars take a more benign but still critical interpretation, recognizing the tourist gaze as an often uni-directional way of seeing that seeks separation and difference instead of interconnectedness (Dolby 2003). It is this interpretation that best suits the context of this study, since during study abroad the tourist gaze can enmesh with the search for identity, often ignoring the bi-directionality of travel while deepening and reinforcing the distinction between the self and the “other” and potentially oversimplifying the players involved.

This chapter has illustrated how student motivations and perceived outcomes reflect an individualistic approach to study abroad. Several students alluded to more community-oriented goals, motivations and expectations, but this was by far the exception, and as mentioned in the previous section, no students mentioned (host or home) community-oriented outcomes in the post-trip interviews. Given the field’s marketing and outreach, which shine with opportunities for personal growth, it is understandable that study abroad participants would be motivated by and expect deeply personal gains. Therefore such findings in this study are not particularly surprising. The discourse on study abroad often fails to address, however, the bi-directionality of travel and the potential drawbacks to placing such a heavy focus on the individual student without a concurrent discussion of the host community’s role. Such a focus reinforces the outward peering yet inward focused tourist gaze, and detracts from the opportunity for

students to reflect holistically on their experience, in which they are just one of many players.

Instead, in this study the students' focus on identity seemed to emphasize that line between self and other, as they sought differences by which they could define themselves. Conversations often revolved around "we" and "they," an overly simplistic and generalized "Americans" and "Italians." This could be seen in the way students spoke of the food they were encountering in Italy. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, students did not seem to view Italian food culture as symbolic of the "exotic other," which Heldke (2003) theorizes as a common way for tourists to separate themselves from the host. However, the students did end up drawing a different dividing line. The qualities of Italian food systems that students most often referred to — local, fresh, organic, unprocessed, tasty, and community-supported — are not uncommon aspirations in parts of the US (and Eugene, in particular) food scene. Before the trip and during the first part of the program students appeared to idealize and romanticize the Italian way of doing things, placing Italy on a pedestal for "doing it right" and "having it all together." This outward looking gaze of the tourist is not that different from the exoticising that Heldke describes, in its attribution of a kind of mysterious and unattainable quality to, and gross oversimplification of, the group being gazed upon. While students did delve rather deeply into the complexities of the Italian culture and food systems, even warning each other in one class period to be wary of romanticizing the food and culture they were encountering, they continued throughout and after the program to maintain an element of idealizing and only rarely acknowledged their presence within this "ideal" system.

In describing a food-focused study abroad trip to Spain, Stowe and Johnston (2012) suggest that Urry “sees the subject, or in our case, the student, as the meaning maker, particularly when it comes to making sense of the ways in which their travel experience is framed by their socially constructed understanding of race, class, gender, and other components of identity and community” (466). The authors continue to describe how their predominantly white, middle-class, and Canadian sample group often fell into the trap of describing the “other” in broad, umbrella terms, failing to acknowledge the regional differences within the country and assuming that they as Canadians were all sharing a very similar experience. The students in *Food and Culture in Italy* exhibited similar behaviors in their sweeping references to “Italian food” and “Italian culture.” Also as a group of predominantly white and middle-class students, the understanding of how race, class, and gender played into defining their experience as travelers and their interactions with the “other” seemed to be brushed away under these broad generalizations.

While elements of idealizing and oversimplification never disappeared, as the trip progressed the thinking about and understanding of the “other” did become more complex. Classroom material and discussions provided useful tools for bringing a critical lens to students’ experiences outside of class, undermining their notions of simplicity and sameness. They, for example, began to recognize the colonial roots of the “authentic Italian dishes” they were eating. They started to discern culinary and cultural differences between the Marche and Tuscany. They began to recognize some of the ways environmental mismanagement had shaped the seemingly idyllic countryside landscapes.

And as Cassidy's quote at the beginning of this section reflects, they began to take notice of their presence and position as food travelers in Italy.

Multiple students also expressed a newfound appreciation for such critical thinking. In her post-trip interview, Naomi said that she thought study abroad "makes you more thoughtful. And critical. Which is really important now, to be able to think critically." She explained how she specifically appreciated the ways in which the program instructors made her think more critically, in part by presenting a wide variety of sources from multiple perspectives. "Especially in food studies," she continued, "when it's like, kind of ambiguous. There's no black or white kind of answer to anything.

Naomi's comment may illuminate an aspect of studying food that can help dismantle the uni-directional tourist gaze and exoticizing of the "other" in food studies abroad. Throughout the program students were encouraged to appreciate and utilize the way in which food brings multiple perspectives to the table. It is something that everyone has a relationship to regardless of background and identity, yet that is deeply linked to these backgrounds and identities. It is therefore a perfect place to begin recognizing both difference and interconnectedness, the ways in which our identities inform how we interpret the world, and how these identities are linked to and interact with the identities of others.

Given the richness of food studies and its nascent position in the field of study abroad, there is great opportunity to be deliberate and persistent about incorporating critical reflection and discussion into the experience of food studies abroad, and as these students' comments show, such efforts are potentially very valuable. It is also important to acknowledge openly *how and why* such discussion and reflection is needed, especially

in terms of students' recognizing that, by simply being there, they are not just passive observers but are dynamic actors in the system.

CHAPTER III

CONSUMING EXPERIENCE

Introduction

At first, the idea of studying food and culture in Italy may sound reminiscent of the escapades embarked upon by wealthy young Englishmen in the eighteenth century Grand Tour, a social rite of passage that provided British aristocracy with an opportunity to become educated in art, culture, and history while mingling with other elites. While this exclusive tradition declined as the growth of large-scale rail transport in the mid nineteenth century made travel more accessible, some view the Grand Tour as the first appearance of modern formal study abroad programming (Hoffa 2007).

US students have been studying abroad since the first institution-sponsored programs were offered in the 1920s, typically in the name of goals and intentions that have morphed along with institutional and international climate (Twombly et al. 2012). US study abroad, like the Grand Tour, has historically required significant financial means, and with just ten percent of US undergraduates currently studying abroad each year today (Institute of International Education) still remains relatively exclusive.

Participation has increased significantly in recent years, however, with the most dramatic increases beginning in the 1990s as the result of federal financial aid, government initiatives, and numerous calls to action from politicians, scholars, and educational associations. Notable landmarks such as President Clinton's executive memorandum (2000), the Lincoln Commission (2005), and the Senator Paul Simon Act (2005) publicly heralded the importance of study abroad and set ambitious goals for

increasing the number of US students studying abroad each year (Twombly et al. 2012). The lofty rhetoric of these initiatives and the resulting increase in awareness of and support for international education has initiated a push towards the democratization of study abroad, making the opportunity more widely accessible than in the past. Now most institutions of higher education offer study abroad opportunities, and over 300,000 US students studied abroad in 2013/2014 (Institute of International Education). Efforts at increasing this number continue with fervor, and the Institute of International Education's *Generation Study Abroad* initiative aims to double the number of US students studying abroad by the year 2019. *Food and Culture in Italy* is a product of this new era in study abroad, and some might argue contributing to it — unlike the high art and culture of the Grand Tour, food studies inherently has the potential to be an accessible, democratized subject that all people can relate to.

In her account of the history of leisure travel, Withey (1997) describes the mass tourism that often follows the wealthy's tracks, accompanied by the rise of package tours, budget transportation options, and clever advertising. Similarly, along with its democratization has come an increase in the commodification of study abroad as an educational experience, a process that has paralleled in many ways the commercialization of higher education that took place throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Schumar (1997) describes education as a product that is now packaged and sold to student consumers, while other literature refers to marketing materials, government and professional association documents, and institutional rhetoric to represent the ways in which study abroad has been commodified (Engle and Engle 2002; Skelly 2009; Tarrant et al. 2014; Bolen 2001; Zemach-Bersin 2009).

This shift towards a more market-oriented mindset has an impact on how a wide range of stakeholders engage with study abroad programs, as “attitudes of students, parents, practitioners, and government officials toward education have been shaped by a view of programs as commodities” (Bolen 2001, 196). Given the striking increase in the number and variety of programs available, students with the time and financial means to do so are now able to sift through options and choose a program from a catalog or website like a product on a shelf. Students then pay tuition to receive a “packaged experience” including food, housing, academic credits, activities, and according to many advertisements, a life-changing experience. It is indeed perhaps this consumer demand for study abroad programs that opens the door for the niche-marketing that allows for programs in emerging fields like food studies, which seems a positive by-product of commodification. However, as will be discussed later in this chapter, there are unique implications for both students and host communities in a consumer-driven study abroad market.

It is also worth noting that consumerism can seem counter to many of study abroad’s purported ideals. Zemach-Bersin (2009) asserts that the ways in which study abroad is marketed to students undermines many of the field’s more noble goals of global citizenship and cross-cultural understanding in its promotion of consumerism, entitlement, privilege, and individualism. She argues that such commercial rhetoric can have far-reaching implications, influencing how “students approach international education, the quality of education they are prepared to engage, and, ultimately, the political and social foundations of our future” (303).

In this chapter I look at how student attitudes both pre- and post-trip reflect ways in which they see the program as a commodity good, and how regardless of their specific motivations or reasons for enrolling in the program, they expect the program to meet their expectations. I then explore the intersection of the students' chosen consumer good and the consumption practices that take place within that experience, and how those practices carry-over into their identities as consumers after the program. In the final section, I consider problematic aspects of the commodification of study abroad and how they can relate to food studies abroad in particular, examining the potential impacts on host communities through ensuing commodification of foodways and culture.

Study Abroad as a Commodity Good

In both the pre- and post-trip interviews, students displayed apparent consumer attitudes towards the program. This was particularly evident in their discussions about how and why they decided to study abroad and chose this program specifically, as well as in their attitudes towards program expectations.

One of the most striking themes in students' approach to choosing a study abroad program was the nature with which they "shopped" for their experience. As Engle and Engle (2003) note, students seeking a study abroad program today are presented with a huge array of choices in program focus, destination, duration, student preparation, and intended outcome. Leah seemed pleased with the range of options, laughing that her first understanding of study abroad was, "You get to pick any country? This sounds awesome!" Taylor knew she wanted to go somewhere in Europe, so she "just started looking at the programs and . . . narrowed it down to just a few countries." Having such a plethora of programs available means students have the luxury of being very specific

about what they want out of a program, or are so overwhelmed with variety that they end up choosing a program somewhat at random. Anna was initially intrigued by Macerata but had no strong background or defined interest in food or environmental studies. “I searched online for other programs to see what else was out there,” she said, “but there was nothing that I liked, or that intrigued me so, I stuck with this one. And I’m so happy I did!”

In addition to having a wide range of study abroad options, students are subject to the marketing schemes of these programs, all vying for their attention and competing with one another. The “shopping” approach makes sense, then, as a mechanism for sifting through information and making a decision. It also reflects an attitude towards programs as pre-packaged experiences, planned out and ready to be consumed. Bolen (2001) suggests that this sort of consumer passivity is common in study abroad participants, and that program advertising feeds this attitude by giving the impression of “serving them the foreign culture on a plate” (186).

Several students adopted an element of passivity not just in their approach to the program itself and what it would offer, but also to the “shopping” process, letting the marketing find them. Alex for example, looked at a few programs, but *Food and Culture in Italy* was advertised in his classes. “It looked interesting so I figured I’d take it.” Marnie had been mulling over the possibility of study abroad on the day the program coordinator came to her class to advertise the program, and she decided on the spot that “this is what I need to do, right here.”

Considering students’ at times random approach to studying abroad, many of them attached rather grand expectations to the experience. In pondering the purpose of

study abroad, Leah summed up a common attitude expressed by the students: “Mm... Just to play a greater part in the advancement of our lives.” As mentioned in Chapter II, individual goals and personal advancement were two of the most widely mentioned motivations for studying abroad. In addition to visions of profound self-growth, college students today are indeed bombarded with the message that an international experience is crucial to becoming a competitive player in the global marketplace, presenting study abroad as a product that will satisfy these needs. Allan Goodman, the President and CEO of the Institute of International Education, for example, states on the organization’s website that: “International experience is one of the most important components of a 21st century resume.” In this way, purchasing a study abroad experience can be seen as making an investment, the returns upon which will be cashed in later in the form of resume building and career opportunities. Thus in consumer-like fashion students were highly focused on what they would gain from their chosen product, a focus which, as mentioned in the previous chapter, was not necessarily balanced by a concern for how they might impact, either positively or negatively, the host community.

Other students had a more strategic approach to choosing a study abroad program. Given students’ wide range of study abroad options, it is perhaps not surprising that one of the main responses to why they ended up choosing *Food and Culture in Italy* was simply convenience. This is another way in which study abroad has become both more commercialized and more accessible, as students are able to identify specific elements that suit their needs and quite possibly find a program that encompasses those elements. In choosing this program, the most commonly mentioned conveniences were scheduling, program duration, lack of language requirement, and the fact that the program was open

to students of all academic standing. For Cassidy, it just “fit perfectly into my schedule . . . since it was just one quarter, just Spring term and not a whole semester. That really appealed to me.” Michael also only wanted to be away from campus for one quarter, so this program worked out “logistically and practically.” Taylor was looking for a program that didn’t have a language requirement, and out of those she found, “this one just seemed the most interesting.” Lindsay was also drawn to the lack of language requirement, as well as the fact that the program accepted first-year students, so she decided to apply even though, she admitted, “it’s completely irrelevant to what I’m studying.”

Students also mentioned being motivated to choose *Food and Culture in Italy* because they could use it to satisfy specific academic requirements. Both Cassidy and Patrick, for example, chose the program in part because they saw that the credits would count towards their Environmental Studies majors, while several other students noted that it would fulfill the business degree’s multicultural requirement. In an approach analogous to buying academic credits on campus, this act of “purchasing education” fits into the larger discourse of the commodification of higher education. While linking study abroad with that discourse, however, it is worth considering how buying credits as part of a study abroad program differs from buying on-campus credits, a difference that students seem to perceive. Patrick remarked that, compared to on-campus classes, “you just get so many benefits from it. You get credits for it, but it’s a totally different experience and a really exciting experience, too.” The pervasive focus on credits that arose in this study may be linked in part to the fact that the University of Oregon, unlike many other colleges and universities, charges tuition per credit. Given the high cost of education and widespread

student debt, such a system encourages students to be very strategic about each credit hour that they take and reinforces a consumer mindset.

Lastly, interviews revealed that in viewing study abroad as a commodity to be purchased, students expected to have their expectations met and to be satisfied with the product they received. Before the trip, Leah expressed that “I definitely want to . . . be satisfied with my experience.” In a few instances specific expectations were not met, and in the post-trip interviews several students expressed frustration with the administration or the staff in the field. Michael, a business major, overtly displayed his view of study abroad as a producer-consumer relationship. “The U of O faculty needs to say, this is a priority for our students, because we’re charging a lot of money. Everyone who’s invested wants it to be, you know, looked at more as if we’re customers.” He continued, “I think towards the end they just figured it out, just kind of what we wanted out of the program. The first seven weeks of the program were all about . . . what they wanted us to have, and it was not about what we wanted.”

Many previous studies suggest that along with the consumer attitude, students often treat study abroad “as a right and an entitlement, but not one that entails responsibility” (Reilly and Senders 2009, 257). It is worth noting that most of the participants in this case study did not fit this model. Only one student referred to having “always known they would study abroad,” while others had been uncertain whether or not they’d be able to, due to expenses, academic obligations, or family support, and viewed their study abroad experience as a unique opportunity. As Leah expressed, “I’m not going to be able to study abroad again. This is my one opportunity, so I really hope

it's a good one.” Such an attitude may have contributed to students’ rigid desire for the program to meet their expectations.

Many of the studies that illuminate the tendency of today’s students to approach study abroad with a consumer attitude do so with a mildly disparaging twinge, suggesting that the attitude is coming from a place of privilege and entitlement. As Leah’s comment shows, however, a fixation with satisfaction reflects not necessarily privilege and entitlement, but perhaps instead concern for the often outrageous financial burden of higher education and of study abroad. As study abroad becomes a possibility for more students from a wider variety of backgrounds, the stakes and sacrifices for participating will become more diverse as well. A thorough critical discourse on study abroad should include an acknowledgement of that diversity

In the Field: Experiencing Consumption

. . . Food represents more than purely an economic commodity, it is a multidimensional cultural artifact capable of linking issues regarding the relationships between place and identity, and the material and symbolic. (Everett 2009, 337)

While any study abroad program is subject to being shaped into and marketed as a consumer good, food studies abroad is unique in that its primary focus can quite literally be consumed. Since *Food and Culture in Italy* applied the academic lens of food studies to an already powerful combination of food and travel, the complexity and relevance of Everett’s statement was incorporated into the daily act of consuming. All travelers must of course eat out of necessity, but “food is never just about eating and eating is never just a biological process” (Bardhi, Ostberg, and Bengtsson 2010, 135). Indeed, much more was wrapped up in the acts of eating and drinking for these students than economic

consumption or simple bodily nourishment. Throughout formal classes, excursions, and discussions and during independent explorations, students *consumed* (food, information, experiences), and through this consumption *created* (identities, social ties, elements of responsibility and independence), ultimately carrying their journey back with them in their minds as well as their physical bodies.

Much of the program's academic material, even those topics not directly related to food, could be and often was explored through the consumption of food. This occurred, for example, through impromptu outings to the town markets, tastings organized by the program staff at the end of the day, formal dinners, gatherings with local growers and producers, and cooking demonstrations. All of these events included consumption as a critical component, allowing students to digest and transfer the more abstract information they had been absorbing into something tangible. The ability to experience such knowledge on a multi-sensory level heightened its meaning and significance, as students quite literally consumed the information they had paid to receive.

Bardhi, Ostberg, and Bengtsson (2010) suggest that food consumption while traveling is an important aspect of identity development, as it contributes to the boundary between the self and "other," a line which can actively be either crossed or maintained (134). As discussed in Chapter II, consumption habits did contribute to shaping students' identities while in Italy, as they noticed differences in patterns between themselves and the locals, particularly related to food and alcohol. These differences were also noted in terms of consumption of environmental resources, but given the ubiquity and prominence of daily interactions with food, this was more often the focal point in conversations.

Through food consumption students explored and built upon various aspects of their identities, from the collective national, as many began to associate the US with over-consumption, deeming it “one of the most wasteful countries” and North Americans “huge consumers,” to the individual, as they reflected on their own food choices and habits. It is interesting to note that though students exhibited an increased awareness of national and personal consumption habits, no one at any point acknowledged the significant consumption inherent in the act of travel.

The consumption of food and drink was also instrumental in forging social bonds. It is through consuming *together* that students connected with each other, professors and instructors, other travelers, and local community members. The ability of shared consumption to increase comfort and rapport was evident in the ease with which most students warmed up to this study’s interviews, which generally took place over coffee and pastries. Breaking down barriers and fostering personal connections through consuming together was a common theme in students’ post-trip interviews. Sarah, for example, remarked that sharing meals was one of the most valuable aspects of the program for her. “Obviously we all know that food builds social bonds, and that's kind of how you can get to know someone and see their culture.” But until her experience in Italy, she continued, “. . . I don't think I ever really truly realized that.” It was clear that sharing food was one of the unifying experiences of the group of students themselves. At the beginning of the program, they got to know each other through exploratory outings to local pizzarias between classes, commiserating about the undesirable food at the university *mensa* (student cafeteria), and engaging in the tastes of the Marche for the first time together in class outings and organized dinners. By the end of the program the bonds

had grown such that shared consumption included elaborate dinner parties hosted by and for one another, picnics on the train as they ventured outside of Macerata together for the weekend, and festive wine and cheese tastings. As Sarah pointed out, yes, we all know food builds social bonds. There is something specific about the act of consuming, however, that unifies those partaking in the experience and incorporates an element of the shared exterior space into themselves.

Notable aspects of students consumption were not limited to the physical intake of food, but also to the monetary consumption of purchasing food. For most students this was their first time being wholly responsible for living independently and supplying their own groceries, a significant learning experience which catered to their motivations of increased independence and responsibility (as discussed in Chapter II). Students struggled at times with monitoring and moderating this consumption, a challenge that offered skills and experience that carried over to their habits when they returned home.

For many travelers, the experience of traveling often dissipates upon the return home, or at most lingers intangibly in memory and anecdotes. The experience of food studies abroad and other forms of culinary tourism, however, has a unique potential to persist and become more entwined with the traveler's life post-trip given the prominence of food in each of our everyday lives. Travelers are in effect able to continue consuming their experience once they have returned home, as they carry the information, values, and skills that they absorbed into their identity back to their ordinary lives.

As mentioned in Chapter II, many of the changes in attitudes and behavior that took place after students returned home were manifested in shifts in consumption, both literal (what they ate) and monetary (what they bought). The shifts in eating that students

described were often very specifically related to Italian food and culture. Taylor mentioned that when cooking now she often found herself saying, “Well, this is how they did it in Italy,” explaining that “it’s definitely something that I brought back with me.”

Leah claimed that:

I can’t really eat Italian food without thinking of Italy. I made pasta the other day and I was like, why am I not making this from scratch? Oh yeah, I only have twenty minutes... Mostly Italian food will spark it. Or the farmers market this summer reminded me a little bit of the markets in Italy. Not totally, but just the aspect of talking to the farmer, tell me where this is coming from . . . kind of the same aspect.

Patrick expressed an increased appreciation for the quality of the food he consumed. “I think that it’s been really hard to eat some of the foods that I ate every single day over there again, because here they’re so much worse...”

Almost all students expressed some sort of change in their consumer habits — where they shopped (more often at farmers markets and natural foods stores) and what they bought (more of a focus on high quality, local, and organic items). Naomi for example, described her new Saturday ritual:

Now that I’m out of the dorms and cooking my own food I’ve been going to the farmers market every weekend, and it’s like my favorite outing. I wake up really late after my closing shift and then get my butt over to the farmers market and . . . go and get a bunch of chanterelle mushrooms, which I’ve been cooking a lot. The guy does two bags for five bucks! They’re so good, so good. Yeah, I’ve been cooking those in like, butter, thyme and garlic. And it’s so good. And then, tomatoes are running out so I’ve been buying a lot of tomatoes lately. Because that’s hands down my favorite food. Is the tomato.

Some of the students were frustrated that they couldn’t make the purchases they wanted to because they were constrained financially. Leah, for example, noted that “I definitely notice it when I go to supermarkets and farmers markets, and I hope one day I can make enough money where I can buy all local.” But, she continued, there’s “nothing

I can do about it at this moment with my income, but definitely I think about it more and it's something I want to do in the future.”

It is interesting to note that students’ shifts in behavior after the trip were more often manifested in consumer choices than in more pro-active, community-oriented ways, such as volunteering or starting a garden. This kind of default to “consumer activism” is prevalent in some alternative food movements, and is intertwined with the sense of individual responsibility and action mentioned in Chapter II. DeLind describes, for example, how the *locavore* movement privileges the individual:

Locavores and would-be locavores (theoretically the public-at-large) are told repeatedly. . . (through popular media) that they — as individuals — can effect change one vegetable, one meal, and one family at a time. It suggests that what is wrong with the world (from monocultural practices, to obesity, to global warming) can be addressed through altered personal behavior. But . . . individualizing social (or environmental) issues in this manner, effectively displaces or deflects responsibility. It suggests that we still can have it all. We can individually eat our way to health and happiness. . . Ultimately, such rhetoric does more to comfort and accommodate the individual eater (i.e., the locavore) than it does to challenge inequity and existing power structures. (276)

The way in which we choose to consume is indeed one of the most personal choices we can make, and one of the most accessible avenues for expressing identity, responsibility, and support for our values. It is not surprising that students would gravitate toward using food-related consumption to enact and embody shifts in knowledge and values after studying abroad, particularly when the focus of their experience — food — provided them with ample medium to do so. While not an inherent problem in food studies, given the propensity of study abroad rhetoric to spotlight the individual food studies abroad is a perfect place to contemplate and discuss this issue.

These experiences reflect the benefits of consuming, as students fully engaged with each other and the people around them, and literally embodied elements of Italian

culture and the generosity of community members who welcomed them into their lives. It is clear that their study abroad experience encouraged students to think more critically about consumption in terms of what they put into their bodies and on what they as economic consumers spent money. The value of this sort of engagement and its educative benefits will be further explored in Chapter IV. The following section will investigate the risk of consumption abroad extending beyond simply experiencing a culture's foodway to metaphorically commodifying and consuming that culture itself.

Consumption of Culture

The students' perspectives in this study strongly suggest that consumption while traveling has a unique capacity to benefit the traveler through multi-sensory engagement, exploration and expression of identity, social connections, and learning opportunities. Other significant findings discussed in this chapter are that students approached study abroad as a consumer good, that they experienced and literally consumed Italian culture through food, and that this experience influenced their consumptive patterns once they returned home. These findings, while not fully embodying, provide a space to explore the potential for the commodification of study abroad to bleed over into the commodification of the host culture itself.

As can be seen throughout this thesis, through structured and unstructured experiences in Italy students took on elements of Long's (1998) definition of the culinary tourist, engaging in "the intentional, exploratory participation in the foodways of an other" (21). While travel of any kind has the potential to impact the host community in a variety of ways, culinary tourism in particular interacts with and affects host cultures in a unique way. Long admits that the study of culinary tourism does not "ignore the fact that

tourism turns culinary traditions into commodities to be bought and sold” (45), as consumers travel with expectations of having a certain kind of experience. Since foodways are often strongly linked to a region and/or a culture’s identity (Everett 2012), the commodification of culinary traditions is in effect a commodification of the culture as well.

It is true that the host community may have agency in such a situation, depending on their social, economic and political situation and relationship with the sending community, all of which would affect the hosts’ ability to influence and respond to consumer demands. Some argue that there are in fact positive aspects to such a commodification in terms of economic development and cultural preservation. Food tourism, as a relatively new form of travel, could play an important role in increasing tourist spending, strengthening regional identity, sustaining cultural heritage, and warding off global food homogenization (Everett and Aitchison 2008, 150). The welcome that *Food and Culture in Italy* received in Macerata reflected such a positive attitude towards tourism. Many community members seemed excited to have the students there and to share and promote their culinary heritage, a warmth that was likely fueled in part by economic and commercial motivations. This is especially relevant in light of the economic crisis of 2008, by which Italy was severely impacted (Mucelli et al. 2015). In fact, the pilot program reached Macerata just as the province was engaging in efforts to develop a regional brand for both export and tourism, with a focus on high-quality, gourmet food items. The town *enoteca*, or wine shop, hosted a gathering for the students one evening during the first week of the program, introducing several local producers and showcasing some of the region’s specialties. It seems then, the partnerships between a

thoughtfully developed and administered study abroad program and the local community could be mutually beneficial — bringing economic gain for the host community and, in an era of foodways globalization, preserving regional foodways while providing an educational opportunity for students.

Such culinary preservation may be more complicated than this, though. Explicitly exploring the foodways of a place has the potential to affect that place and that community in a specific way, as host communities respond to program participants' expectations and preconceived ideas about authentic foodways. Long (1998) explains:

Producers of instances and artifacts of culinary tourism will likewise adapt their presentations to their understanding of their audience's culinary aesthetics and experiences. Studies of culinary tourism, therefore, need to address instances of such tourism as interactive, communicative events within a larger conceptual symbolic system. (32)

Both tourism and study abroad are instrumental in influencing and creating local industry by introducing new demands not present in local customs or supplies (Johnson 2009). As communities respond to the tourist demand for authentic culinary experiences, they may be pressured to alter and exaggerate foodways in order to meet visitors' expectations and maintain a strong brand identity. Lin, Pearson, and Cai (2011) discuss the significance of branding in encouraging tourism through raising awareness and creating positive ideas of a place in travelers' minds, and the importance of food as an element in the branding process. However, they point to the fact that in their study of food identity in relation to Taiwan as a tourist destination, “the core and extended identity of food in Taiwan is inconsistent to some extent, in terms of the type of food that best attracts international tourists.” As the field of food studies abroad becomes larger, destinations may end up feeling pressure to brand their foodways. Thus, as Everett (2009)

writes, “Although food tourism sites are promoted as places offering authentic and embodied, multi-sensual experiences of local food, they are increasingly becoming ‘themed’ spaces undergoing perpetual re-imagining and manipulation” (342).

Such a commodification of culture becomes particularly problematic when there is already a power imbalance between sender and host (not uncommon in many tourism and study abroad locations), as it can reinforce and amplify unequal power dynamics, potentially feeding into the expectations and entitlement that accompany some students’ views of study abroad as a right and a consumer product. Though power and entitlement were not prominent themes in this case study, they have appeared in numerous other studies and are often reinforced by study abroad’s promotional rhetoric.

What relates such a risk to this case study is the *absence* of such themes in students’ perspectives. Of those that mentioned food at all as a motivating factor in choosing the program, only several students mentioned Italian food specifically. Only one used the word “authentic.” Most students mentioned much more vague food-related motivations and expectations, referring to elements of food that are not necessarily exclusive to Italy — words like “fresh,” “sustainable,” “delicious,” “organic,” and simply: “good food.” I am interested in considering why this might be. As touched upon in Chapter II, perhaps in the students’ eyes the Italian food they were expecting and that they experienced mirrored, in some ways, food values they were used to being exposed to in Eugene and the Willamette Valley. Yes, they gained perspective and noticed differences, but for them Italy and the Marche did not embody the “exotic other.”

I have little doubt that students’ attitudes towards the foodways of the “other” would have been different in an area with foodways drastically unlike those of their home

communities. I also believe their expectations and preconceptions may have been more specific had they been traveling to a place with a more prominent tourist image such as Tuscany. The fact that Macerata is not yet an established tourist destination also means that students didn't necessarily have a widely accepted image of what to expect, and didn't have a strong network on-site reinforcing what the "Marche image" was supposed to be.

If the Marche brand becomes more established and the region turns into more of a tourist (and study abroad) destination, and as these travelers bring with them specific expectations of what they will encounter, the foodways risk shifting to cater to this demand. This shift could also influence the nature of the interactions between students and community members, one of the things students found most valuable about their experience. As has been seen in other rising study abroad destinations, "a particular place can only support so many programs before it becomes so saturated with American students as to alter the cultural interactions of these students" (Bolen 2001, 190). While shifts in foodways and community relations are neither inherently positive or negative, it is something to be aware of, particularly when the foodways are what the program came to engage with in the first place.

Michael, as a business major, was keen to understand the motivations of the producers he encountered. He uncovered that in spite of the ambitions of growth demonstrated by the Macerata Chamber of Commerce, growth was far from the forefront of the minds of the producers in the field. He routinely asked people he met about their plans to "grow their business." To his surprise, the response was often, "I only care about the quality and helping my people and feeding my town, and living in my house with my

family.” That offered a refreshing perspective for Michael, a perspective “that all kind of started with people and why they were there. They why for them.” If this “why” changes, a whole lot else could change, too.

What this story also illustrates, however, is how students as culinary tourists differ from leisure culinary tourists. Michael began his experience with certain ideas about business, producer motivations, and food. Throughout the program though, he was constantly exposed to new perspectives, which he was then able to approach with a critical lens in the classroom discussions that ultimately disrupted his understanding of consumption (among other concepts). The intention of approaching the experience with a critical lens differentiates educational culinary tourists from those pursuing culinary tourism as a leisure activity. While Urry’s (1990) *tourist gaze* is still in place, it can be reflected back to the gazer through such critical thinking.

Reflection is an integral part of experiential learning (as will be discussed in Chapter IV), and I would argue that *critical* reflection is crucial for both shifting perspective and acknowledging one’s position in a given system. Through critical reflection, students began to rethink their ideas about consumption — not only about what they ate and bought, but the way in which they were consuming their food studies abroad experience. If food studies abroad continues to grow and engage with different culinary systems around the world, I maintain that an emphasis on critical thinking and reflection is necessary for acknowledging and understanding the complexity of such interactions.

CHAPTER IV

FEEDING THE MIND THROUGH FOOD AND TRAVEL

Introduction

Whenever anybody asks, "What did you learn?" I talk about going to the fish auction, to the orchards, to all the delis and dairy shops. You know, when I'm relaying to people all the things that I learned and experienced, I don't talk necessarily about being in the classroom and the articles that we read. It was definitely the excursions, when we actually met the people that owned these different farms and local meat productions... Meeting all those people, having them be so welcoming, letting us tour around their [homes and workplaces] . . .
(Cassidy, program participant)

The experience of being in the field and approaching the subject matter through personal relationships and bodily engagement emerged clearly as a valuable learning asset for the *Food and Culture in Italy* students. Cassidy's description above exhibits elements of experiential learning, which is a fundamental component of food studies abroad.

The theory of experiential learning was first popularized by philosopher John Dewey in his classic work, *Experience and Education* (1938), in which he posits that the most effective method of education is "learning by doing" (Francis et al. 2011). Dewey criticized formal education as being too passive and encouraged more active participation in the learning process, advocating a focus on problem solving and critical thinking instead of rote memorization. He proposed that the knowledge and skills someone learns in one situation can help them to understand and react to subsequent experiences, claiming that learning is based on incorporating prior knowledge and building upon past experiences. Reflection on experience, Dewey argued, is another important aspect of the process, and is integral to understanding and attributing meaning to learning and how it

relates to past experiences. The theory of experiential learning was further defined by educational theorist David Kolb (1984), who emphasized the value of concrete learning experiences and the interplay between experience, perception, cognition, and behavior in the learning process. Kolb, like Dewey, also stressed the importance of reflection in the learning process.

Today, the Association for Experiential Education (AEE) identifies primary principles of the experiential learning process, several of which (the most relevant to this case study) are as follows :

- Experiences are followed by reflection, critical analysis, and synthesis.
- The process is learner-centric, meaning that learners take initiative, make decisions, and are accountable for the results.
- Learners take an active role in asking questions, exploring, problem-solving, and constructing meaning.
- Learners are engaged on intellectual, emotional, social, soulful, and/or physical levels.
- Results of learning are personal and will inform future experiences and learning.
- Learners develop and nurture relationships with the self, others, and the greater world.
- The process may include successes, failures, risk-taking, and uncertainty, as the outcomes are not entirely predictable.
- The educator serves as a facilitator for the learning process.
- The educator supports and enables spontaneous opportunities for learning.

To build on these principles proposed by the AEE, Itin (1999) defines experiential learning as “the change in an individual that results from reflection on direct experience and results in new abstractions and applications” (92). This definition includes what Itin

identifies as four main steps of the experiential learning process: 1) *action*, through which experience occurs, 2) *reflection* on that action and experience, 3) *abstraction* drawn from that reflection, and 4) *application* of that abstraction to a new experience. It is the stages of reflecting, abstracting and applying that differentiate experiential learning from simple “hands-on learning.”

The effects of experiential learning have been well studied, and have proven to be a powerful way to expose students to social and environmental issues (Garrett 1997). In addition to making students more aware of the world around them, these active learning experiences engage them both emotionally and intellectually, allowing them in turn to more fully grasp complex issues.

Such active learning and reflection can take place in many ways, such as hands-on participation, group work, discussion, and application of information outside of the classroom. Many educational institutions are implementing elements of experiential learning through outdoor education, school farms, and community service projects, for example. Such learning experiences do not need to take the place of more traditional academic learning, but can instead complement and balance it, resulting in more well-rounded and integrated educational experiences.

Many studies of educational programs focus on transformative learning (Mezirow 1990), which in some ways is very similar to experiential learning as both theories involve experience, reflection, and application. In transformative learning, however, it is necessary for a change in belief, attitude, or perspective to occur (Bass 2012, 388). Experiential learning guides the overall process of deepening and enhancing learning through experience, while transformative learning guides towards deeper critical analysis

and reflection (Roholt and Fisher 2013, 61). While this study does investigate changes in student attitude, belief, and behavior, I have chosen to employ experiential learning as a framework for exploring program outcomes, as there was not enough time between the end of the program and the post-trip evaluations to discern whether long-standing transformation had occurred.

There is much literature related to the organization and impact of college and university campus- and community-based experiential food studies initiatives like school farms and gardens (Birnbaum, Thorp, and Ngouajio 2006), hands-on courses and workshops (Parr and Van Horn 2006), and involvement in farmers markets and community supported agriculture (Barlett 2011). There are also several university horticulture programs that incorporate food studies into study abroad programs, connecting students with farmers, producers, and agricultural practices as well as the culture and natural environment outside of the United States (Van Der Zanden et al., 2007). In doing this, such programs are innovatively linking two of the longest-standing platforms for experiential learning, and the two most relevant to this case study: travel and food.

Experiential Learning in Travel

Many learning outcomes have been recorded from traveling (Stone and Petrick 2013, Falk et al. 2012), and the travel experience of study abroad specifically has consistently proven to be a meaningful educational experience for its participants. Such results are perhaps not surprising given the many ways that travel can serve as experiential learning, with the act of travel and the day-to-day events while abroad providing the experience that travelers can then reflect upon, abstract, and apply. There

are plentiful opportunities for students to take an active role in the learning, by asking questions, exploring, taking risks, problem-solving, and making decisions. Travel also often provides the opportunity for both self-reflection and building relationships with others, and for engaging with the experience intellectually, emotionally, and physically. Study abroad in particular, given the typically structured and facilitated nature of programs, lends itself to experiential learning, as there are educators to help guide the process, facilitate learning opportunities, and make time for meaningful reflection.

Such a structured time for and focus on reflection is an integral part of the learning process and an important responsibility of the educator. Roholt and Fisher (2013) take a critical stance on simply assuming international travel will be educative, and ask instead what specific practices and pedagogies support educative potential. Joplin (1981) asserts that “experience alone is insufficient to be called experiential education, and it is the reflection process which turns experience into experiential education” (17). Travel by itself, therefore, without the remaining elements of reflection, abstraction, and application, does not ensure any kind of learning.

Food as Experiential Learning

Murphy (2012) notes that a “concentration on food reveals imperative connections between individual identity, physical health, cultural engagement, environmental conditions, teaching practice, learning experience, ethical commitment, and political action. It all begins though, with a sensual awareness of food.” The value of food in learning is becoming more widely appreciated, with academic interest and attention continuing to grow. This is evidenced by the continued increase in food studies programs and departments, as well as the large number of academic articles concerning

the pedagogy of food and the nature of food studies as an interdisciplinary field.

Accompanying this growth is a rise in hands-on learning venues like campus farms and classroom kitchens, a trend that speaks to how well food lends itself to being a medium for experiential learning.

Part of the power that food has as such a medium lies in the fact that it reaches an element of sensory engagement that almost nothing else can. Indeed, our body's sensory interactions with an environment is one key way in which we fundamentally experience something. Sensory engagement with food leads to *embodied knowledge*, a kind of knowing that transgresses the duality of mind and body (Longhurst 2009, 429) and that is gained through understanding and making sense of the world and oneself via the body and the senses. In this way, sensory learning can facilitate and enhance cognitive learning. Powell (2007) argues that:

Our predilection for theories of teaching and learning that treat the mind and body as discrete entities ignores the ways in which mind is always embodied through interanimation with the world, in which eye, hands, ears, and nose enable us to make meaning — embodied knowledge in which body-mind dualism becomes bodymind unity. (1083)

Oddly enough, in this statement Powell leaves out one of the most powerful senses — that of taste. While the literature on embodied knowledge is fairly well established, food and taste have made less of an appearance in the discourse than the other senses. “Little so far has been understood about how the metabolic, material and fleshy connections consumers make with foodstuff inform their embodied knowledges” (Roe 2006, 107). Food studies as an academic discipline, in its interdisciplinarity and emerging stages, is a perfect arena in which to question such dualities and more conventional ways of viewing what constitutes knowledge.

The concept of embodied knowledge and sensory learning can be applied to experiential learning through the theories of sensory pedagogies and the pedagogies of food studies. Sensory pedagogy emphasizes how taste, touch, and smell are critical to learning about food and culture (Sutton 2001). Food is an especially powerful tool for meaning-making as the sensory experience elicits certain bodily and emotional responses, while also being the object of a very specific, personal experience in space and time (Stowe and Johnston 2012). Food pedagogies, as defined by Flowers and Swan (2012), are “a congeries of education, teaching and learning about how to grow, shop for, prepare, cook, display, taste, eat, and dispose of food by a range of agencies, actors, and media...” (425)

In this way, through food we are capable of connecting to and moving towards an understanding of a wide range of human experiences, and of making personal meaning of these experiences. Such meaning-making is an integral and intimate element of experiential learning — how we as individuals with different backgrounds make sense of the world around us, develop a frame of reference, and relate our current situation to past experiences. As Stowe and Johnston (2012) describe in the case study of a study abroad trip to Spain, food can also open the door for critically examining power dynamics through the lens of consumption, authenticity, and the “other.”

One of the tenants of experiential learning is that students hold a personal stake in the subject, and are therefore more motivated to learn and to apply what they have learned to future situations. This represents another way in which food can be a strong venue for learning, as there are few subjects that are more personal and that reach us on a more intimate level than food.

These two intriguing branches of experiential learning, travel and food, come together in the field of food studies abroad, opening the door for particularly meaningful learning experiences. This chapter will examine how students engaged in experiential learning in *Food and Culture Italy*, and how food and travel interwove to shape and foster that learning. First, I show that experiential learning was one of the primary motivating factors for students choosing the program. I then discuss elements of the students' experiences in the field, including sensory learning, personal connections, and self-directed learning, and how such elements of experiential learning were also reported as one of the most valuable aspects of the program. I conclude by using students' perceived outcomes to demonstrate some of the unique ways food studies abroad serves as form of experiential learning.

Motivations and Expectations

The most widely expressed motivation for studying abroad and for choosing this program in particular was the desire for a break from cerebral, detached classroom learning that students often experienced on campus. When asked during the pre-trip interviews what they were most looking forward to about the program, over half of the students responded with "excursions" or "field trips," and four mentioned "hands-on learning." Several students gave specific examples, including wanting to "meet the local people who are making food," "to meet the actual food producers," and to experience "craft food production." This motivation was unique in that it was also, unlike any of the motivations referred to in the previous chapters, specifically related to this focus of the program; nearly all of the other motivations students mentioned could have been applied to study abroad in general. Even students that did not mention a personal interest in food

or food studies expressed enthusiasm for experiencing food-related activities in the field, suggesting that the aspect of learning through experience drew them to a topic they may not have otherwise been interested in academically.

The motivation for learning through experience was often mentioned in conjunction with a frustration with classroom-based learning. Jenna mentioned that “it’s really nice to get a break from all these business classes and stuff, because they’re, you know, so straight to the book . . . I don’t think you can learn everything in a classroom or out of a book. It’s hard to pay attention that much, you know?” Even at the very start of the program, before students had engaged in any of the hands-on learning they were so excited about, they expressed an appreciation for the value of such learning and viewed it as an opportunity that they could not have on campus. In discussing Italian food and culture, Lindsay explained “. . . you can learn about it . . . when you’re in the United States, but to experience it is a whole new thing, you know? Instead of just reading about, or getting lectured about it, you experience it and you see it and you involve yourself in it, and you’d never be able to get that at home.” For some, an experiential learning approach catered more to what they identified as their personal learning style. Naomi was most excited about the field trips and hands-on learning because, she claimed, “that’s how I learn.” She continued to explain that she was frustrated with the rote style of learning she experienced in high school, and just wanted to “get more excited for school and learning. . . To get excited or passionate about something.” This excitement to learn was sometimes associated with traditionally non-academic activities. Michael expressed: “I want to learn. I’m really excited to just, go to these little markets and grab fresh veggies and make a huge salad!”

These motivations reflect the power of food studies to bridge cognitive and experiential learning through a rich and accessible medium.

In the Field: Mangiamo (Let's Eat!)

We went down to the fisherman's auction really, really early in the morning, and then the fishermen, despite us being in all our groggy state — we were with them for a long time and went on their boats afterwards — they absolutely loved us. So, what happened was, they invited us back for a lunch. This was completely off schedule, we had no idea. It was great, because it was completely spontaneous. So. . . we went.

(Janey, program participant)

Janey continued to describe the lunch that the fishermen of Civitenova prepared for their newly befriended study abroad students. She recounted how after each course the responsible fisherman, his catch, and the name of his boat were announced as the fisherman rose, nodding and smiling proudly at his contribution to the meal. She gleefully reminisced about the freshness of the prawns and the fish, the merriment instilled by the wine and artisanal spirits, and the music and dancing that followed the meal. This meal was one of the most talked about events among the program participants, and the story illuminates four main themes that stood out as students engaged in experiential learning while in Italy, each of which was in some way linked to food: the importance of sensory learning, learning through personal connections, an openness to spontaneity, and a motivation to learn independently..

Long (1998) suggests that “The materiality of food allows an individual to experience an other on a sensory level, not just an intellectual one” (45). Some of the most powerful aspects of the students’ learning occurred through such explorations, as they ventured into a multi-sensory engagement with their surroundings and integrated the intellectual material they had been learning in class into a form of embodied knowledge.

A focus on food added an even more powerful element, through its specific connections with smell and taste, senses that are often overlooked and under-appreciated in the realm of experiential learning.

This kind of sensory learning was never more evident than during the first week of the program, when the students, instructors, and program staff participated in an organized dinner at a tiny *osteria* tucked inside the narrow cobblestone street of the Old Town. This was the students' first structured introduction to a wide array of regional foods — cheeses, olives, salami, pasta with duck sauce, tiramisu, local liqueur, and espresso all greeted students in a sensory journey of history and tastes, as running commentary emerged from the kitchen. This dinner served as a jumping off point for continued culinary explorations, and was often revisited during class discussions and excursions as students gained a deeper understanding of the history, practices, and processes surrounding the Marche foodways. This also marked the beginning of a developing appreciation for the regional differences in Italy, as students engaged in discussions and a sensory understanding of how certain tastes are specific to a given area. In this way, their senses helped them shift away from the oversimplified concept of “Italy” and “Italian food” discussed in Chapter II.

These observations underscore the role that senses can play in student learning. So many classrooms today are dominated by auditory and visual teaching methods, and even those that branch out into other more active and participatory methods rarely engage all five senses in the way that experiences with food can. Also, since taste and smell contribute to both a bodily and cognitive understanding of information, through this

sensory connection to physical environment and to food in particular students developed a *personal* understanding and meaning of their experience.

Sensory exploration of food not only seems to heighten the experience of learning in situ, but may also contribute to the ways in which students remember the experience.

Heldke (2007) notes that:

Though it would be hyperbolic and unverifiable to assert that gustatory encounters with the unfamiliar are the most profound perceptual experiences the traveller can have, anecdotal evidence suggests the terrors and delights of the tongue affect so dramatically that their memories remain sharp even years later. (386)

This power of memory is important for integrating the critical act of reflection into the learning process.

As was briefly mentioned in Chapter III, students' sensory stimulation was enhanced by the interpersonal connections developed in the field, connections that helped them integrate classroom knowledge into the experiential learning process. Often these connections involved both the sharing food and sharing of thoughts, allowing the barrier between internal and external, cerebral and sensory, to dissipate in a simultaneously personal and collective experience.

Many of these connections were made with community members, as students actively (and at times unintentionally) engaged in learning. I witnessed students becoming friends with bakers, pizza makers, gelatieres and cafe owners, connecting at first through discussion of their products — the quality, the nuances of taste and smell, the provenance of their ingredients — and then often through deeper conversations about life, family, and culinary history. Michael considered the “people that we met” to be the most valuable aspect of the program. Students were impressed by the way food connected

people in the community, as they witnessed shop owners greet customers by name and unprompted delivery of their favorite item. Cassidy described getting to know her neighbor in the apartment was sharing with two other students. “She would come down and help us cook, and if we were doing the wrong thing, she’d tell us the right thing.” These encounters represent a coalescence of cerebral understanding of food and culture into a vivid sensory and social experience.

Students also connected with each other as part of the learning process, extending the classroom learning into contemplative conversations over picnics, cappuccinos, and dinner gatherings. Sarah noted that “for me, that whole program was basically about food. Even outside of the classes, that's how we would get together, is we would have meals and that's how I got to know my fellow program members . . . I don't think I ever truly realized just how important food is in that aspect.” Even though these were shared experiences, however, the sensory element of consuming imbued these moments with personal meaning and associations, intertwining the external social aspect with internal perception, memory, and understanding.

An openness to the kind of spontaneity that led the group to the fishermen’s lunch was evident in both the students’ and instructors’ attitudes towards the learning process throughout the program. Additionally, students regularly showed motivation to continue learning independently, eagerly seeking opportunities to connect with food, people, and place outside of structured class time and excursions. During these self-directed experiences, it is clear that learning continued. Many students traveled independently outside of Macerata to other regions in Italy, which Leah described as “fun . . . but still a learning process” in terms of recognizing the regional cultural and culinary differences

that the students had been discussing in class. She continued, “the most valuable part, definitely . . . was the excursions. And also the time outside the classroom interacting with food producers on my own, I think that was probably most valuable.” Janey described spending Easter with another student who had family in Tuscany, and how honored she was by the family’s willingness to share so much about their vineyard and olive orchard. “I learned so much about Italian culture and food . . . and was asking so many questions.”

These elements added to the foundation of the “doing,” part of the learning process, the experience upon which students could reflect, abstract, and eventually apply. Food played an important role as a medium for the “doing,” but also contributed to the students making meaning out of their experiences. Through eating, cooking, preparing, sharing, and exploring food, students became intimately and involved with what they were learning, imbuing the experience and resulting knowledge with very personal meaning that related to their past experiences and their unique sensory understanding of the process. Through food they seemed to recognize how critical analysis and intentional reflection can be applied to the most quotidian events.

Perceived Outcomes

When asked during the post-trip interviews to identify the most valuable aspect of their experience abroad, each of the nine students who participated in the post-trip interviews answered without hesitation, “the excursions.” Leah lauded the opportunity to “get out of the classroom,” explaining that: “Every Friday we went to a different producer, or jam maker, so that was . . . the most valuable because you really got that hands on experience” of interacting directly with people and food. She compared this to

classroom learning, saying “I think that's how I learn the most, and that's the parts I remember. Like yeah, I read all of these chapters in these books, but...I can't tell you what I learned about, honestly. I can't remember any of it.” Patrick described how he had learned about many food-related concepts before in his Environmental Studies classes on campus, but that studying in Italy made them much more tangible and real. When discussing during the post-trip interviews what they had learned in Italy, no students mentioned course readings or lectures. Instead, they referenced sights and smells and tastes that engrained the more cerebral information into something relatable and memorable.

Almost all of the students interviewed after the trip also recognized the value of integrating the classroom learning into their lives in Macerata. While observing classes on site, I witnessed on several occasions the program instructors lecture about a specific concept in class, such as food production, land use, or culinary history, and then prompt students to venture out into the town to investigate the idea on their own, in groups, or in a semi-structured outing. For example, after a lesson on wheat, students were sent out into the town to locate as many wheat products as they could, to talk to bakers and pasta makers, and gain a deeper understanding of the economic and cultural significance of the crop.

The integration of this information with their experience was heightened by curiosity and the desire to explore, which, as mentioned in Chapter II, was a strong motivating factor for many students. For Patrick, it was important to be “able to go out and put the classroom into the outer world so much . . . I learned so much more than just in the classroom when I was out in the actual world . . . Having the teachings, but then

also being able to apply it to when I was going out was just really great for me. Because you end up actually living it.”

Leah recounted:

I remember one class we actually went to this new agriculture place . . . as part of class, and that was really fun because we got to listen to her talk and that was part of the class. I thought that was awesome, how we actually got to go out and talk with someone. So I think it's a given balance, but definitely I wished there were more going out, even just to the local grocery store, having a class outside, or doing something interactive. I think that really helps.

Naomi also didn't feel that she grew much academically, but that study abroad “makes you worldly and educated in ways that are more life-oriented than academically. Like, out of Italy I didn't grow much academically at all.” Several of the students expressed that they didn't think they retained much of the more cerebral information, but their discussions of food during my post-trip encounters with them speaks otherwise — as students gracefully alluded to the ways in which culture revolves around food, how food defines and informs personal and national identities, the nuances of taste, and the history in which various cuisines are rooted.

As mentioned in the previous section, interactions with people seemed to contribute significantly to the students' learning experience. Patrick appreciated “just getting to meet these people and see how enthusiastic they were about what they were doing.” Sarah observed that “there is more stress on community and building relationships instead of like, getting ahead yourself, and career, and making money . . . I've just become more aware of it, and how I would like to live my life in the future.” For Leah, “talking to people that are *doing* what you're learning about” was incredibly meaningful. She continued:

There's only so much you can learn in class before that gets boring and tedious . . . Actually going out and interacting with producers and farmers and Italians was really probably my favorite part, and most memorable. When I look back, that's what I think of. And where I learned the most, because I think when you're actually talking to someone it helps reinforce what you're learning, and you're like oh, ok, so that actually happened to you, you use this type of practices. I think that was really valuable.

Several students suggested that there was actually still too much class time during the program, and that having more time to be out in the town and interact with community members would have been welcome. The fact that most of the most valuable encounters took place over, through, or because of food highlights the interconnectedness of food, personal connections, and learning.

The Power of Experiencing Food

While on site in Italy, students performed the *doing*, the individual and collective experiences that formed the basis of their experiential learning process. Here they also performed *reflection*, integrating their experiences in the field into the classroom discussions, sharing stories, observations, and reactions with their peers and program instructors. In these moments students were able to process their experiences, connecting them with past events, and to make these connections available for use in future learning opportunities, and to *abstract* — connecting the experiences with broader life and world situations. It is back home or on campus that students in the post-trip interviews expressed taking part in the *application* step of the learning process, in which the student applies what they have learned to new experiences, ideally taking ownership in some way of their learning.

A wide variety of student benefits has been demonstrated in literature on experiential learning programs. What this study showed specifically is the ease with

which students were able to apply what they learned to their everyday lives, with food serving as a ubiquitous medium for continuing the learning process. Though it is difficult to determine what long-lasting effects the program will have, it is clear that students were incorporating aspects of what they learned into their lives at the time of the post-trip interviews, five months after they returned home.

Many of these aspects were discussed in Chapters II and III, and can be categorized as shifts in food-related attitudes and behaviors, and an increased sense of independence and responsibility that they attributed in some part to their experience abroad. The social aspect of food also encouraged continued use of the knowledge and skills gained in Italy. Students were able to revisit material through meals with fellow program participants, and to share their knowledge and skills by cooking, eating, and working for and with others. It is likely that new learning continued as students ventured into new spaces (farmers markets, restaurants, community gardens), talking and connecting with people and creating new sensory associations through taste. Many students also complemented this self-directed learning with more formal food-related experiences through classes, internships, and jobs.

While these shifts in behavior were certainly the result of many factors, it seems likely that the element of experiential learning played a role in some way. The memory involved with taste and smell, the social relationships developed through and over food, the kinesthetic memory of cooking and preparing food, and the reflection and discussion that helped integrate these external experiences with cognitive understanding provided tools that, while site-relevant, were still readily transferable to life back in the US.

I would argue that experiential learning, particularly food-based experiential learning, is valuable not just because it offers a powerful way to learn and understand, but also because it lends itself particularly well to being applied elsewhere in the world. The detached and abstract learning often emphasized in traditional classrooms is harder to apply in the more physical and sensory realm of everyday life. This attribute combined with the experiential aspect of travel renders food studies abroad a useful field for shaping knowledge and developing mindful behaviors. For these reasons, and since it is an emerging field with room to evolve, there is an chance to combine powerful learning opportunities with critical and conscious program planning.

CHAPTER V

FACING FORWARD: TURNING GAZES INTO CONVERSATIONS

On a chilly February evening a dozen folks gather in a warm and crowded kitchen. The bustle of conversation and activity adds to the coziness of the room, as hands fly, arms reach, and puffs of flour drift to the floor. Eight months after returning from Italy, a group of the program's students and faculty have convened at one of the instructors' home for a reunion and Italian dinner of hand-made pasta. The laughter permeating the room makes it feel as though no time has passed, even though these students have moved on with their lives back at school and rarely see each other amidst the bustle. The lived experience of learning in Italy has, at least for now, remained a part of these students' minds and bodies, and I am struck once again by the ability of food to bring people together, to inspire collaboration, and to access memories through sensory engagement.

In reflecting upon that reunion, I realize that this gathering represented so much more than the creation of a meal culminating in the shared consumption of the group's efforts. The meal was representative of a journey, embodying a larger process of collaboration, consideration, problem solving, and sharing. At the end of this thesis, I pause to acknowledge this understanding: What is important is that we keep an open dialogue, and to keep moving forward. This was but a beginning, the first group of students on a pilot program. Where do we go from here? With these students, who will go out into the world and bring their experience from Italy and from the University of

Oregon with them? With me as a researcher, and the way this study and experience has shaped my own identity, understanding of learning, and future questions? With food studies and food studies abroad, as these fields become defined within the academy and various pedagogies?

As food studies grapples with its own identity, bridging disciplines and intermingling with study abroad, it is a perfect time to think critically about study abroad and food studies not only as educational frameworks but also as complex movements of bodies influencing a wide network of people. Given that the field of food studies is one of the most rapidly expanding academic fields today, it provides a unique venue for exploring the common practices and ideologies of study abroad, and for moving forward in mindful, creative ways. Since food is something we interact with every day, it is a useful place to develop critical thinking and paradigm shifts.

There is a growing body of literature that not only engages openly with critiques and complexity of study abroad, but also provides thoughtful alternative models. I am inspired by Reilly and Senders (2009) for example, both study abroad administrators, and their call for what they refer to as Critical Study Abroad, “based on shared risk and responsibility” (250). In discussing various major global crises, they claim that “Study abroad . . . has been no less implicated in our crisis than any other area of study. We have been part of the problem — can we also be part of the solution?” I also look to Schroeder et al. (2009), who employ literature reviews, research, and discussion with a wide range of stakeholders in short-term study abroad programs to investigate the impact of such programs on host communities. They have integrated this information into a series of

important questions for evaluating a program's potential effect, and offer recommendations for mitigating or avoiding negative impacts.

Summary of Overall Findings: Potential Concerns and Opportunities

While the initial focus of this research was on the unique aspects of food studies abroad, it was through these aspects that more widespread trends were revealed, serving as a springboard for thinking critically about the costs and benefits associated with study abroad in general.

This study showed that students were motivated by a desire to develop their identity through exploration, risk-taking, gaining perspective, and increased independence and responsibility. Students acted on these motivations in the field, with food often serving as the medium for exploration, and after the program many of their perceived identity-related outcomes were manifested in food-related behaviors and attitudes. I argue that the pervasive student-centric focus in study abroad can lead to a tourist gaze that fails to recognize the bi-directionality of travel, deepening and reinforcing the distinction between the self and the "other." This study corroborates the presence of such a focus, as almost all student responses to interview questions referred to the effect of study abroad on the individual while only several mentioned home communities and not a single one referred to impacts on the host community. This is not necessarily a reflection of students being egocentric, but of the way in which study abroad is presented to them through advertising and institutional rhetoric. I also do not mean to imply that all impacts on host communities are negative, but that they should be acknowledged and considered.

Students in this study approached their study abroad experience as a commodity good, with expectations that they as a consumer expected to have met. Once in the field, the theme of consumption continued to surface as students literally and metaphorically consumed elements (food, information, experiences) of their chosen product. Through this consumption students created and built upon identity, social ties, and independence, which they carried back with them in their minds as well as their physical bodies. These findings back up the more general idea that study abroad has followed the trend of higher education in becoming commodified. This commodification is potentially problematic in that it risks bleeding beyond the product itself to the people and places the product encompasses, perhaps in situations of complex agency and power dynamics. Food studies abroad, like culinary tourism, specifically risks commodifying the foodways and other cultural elements of the places it occupies.

The results of this study also highlight the important role of experiential learning in drawing students to a food studies abroad program, and in contributing to sensory experience, social connections, and self-directed learning in the field. These elements, which students reported as being some of the most valuable aspects of the program, carried over into their lives in the US in a way that allowed learning to continue after the program had ended. These unique, tangible aspects of food and travel are inherent in food studies abroad, and in conjunction with critical reflection, form the basis of a powerful learning platform. Even more importantly, food-based experiential learning provides a foundation upon which further learning can build, as the quotidian and ubiquitous nature of food renders such learning applicable to so many life situations.

Recommendations for Future Food Studies Abroad Programming

It is a commitment to forward thinking that has driven this research, and informs how I will conclude this study: with an offering of considerations for those who, like me, are drawn to and have been influenced by food and travel, but who are invested in facing the complexities inherent in both.

Though they include several food studies-specific notes, the following recommendations can be applicable to all study abroad programs. The information gathered here is of course, however, specific to the context in which this study occurred. All study abroad programs will have a different set of students with different backgrounds returning to a different university setting. All programs will take place in unique locations, with diverse host communities and varying power dynamics. A food and culture program in Italy, for example, will attract a different group of students and impact the host community in a different way than say, a community development program in Ghana. Any recommendation, or planning of any kind for that matter, should be tailored to fit each program through an acknowledgement of and respect for the intricacies of each specific situation.

Acknowledge the Complexity. One of the first steps in moving forward with mindful study abroad programming is to simply acknowledge the complexity of the act. It is clear that study abroad offers many benefits to students, and can offer mutually beneficial cultural and economic exchange between sender and host. These benefits and opportunities are hard to miss as they are widely and openly celebrated in the public and institutional discourse surrounding study abroad. It is also clear that there are risks, complications, and considerations inherent in study abroad that are not so openly

acknowledged. I suggest that we embrace the whole picture with frank discussions about both the positive and negative elements of the field, so that we can more fully understand the impacts of our actions and approach studying abroad (as administrators, faculty, and students) with awareness. This recognition of complexity should not be confined to thinking inwardly about program planning, but outwardly to the intricacies and uniqueness of people, cultures, identities, and locations as well.

In discussing the economic realities of study abroad and resulting consumer attitudes, Johnson (2009) suggests: “Instead of denying these realities or endlessly wishing the student would approach study abroad with noble altruism, more can be done to require them to engage with the privilege they inherently have as study abroad students . . . educators might do better to engage the understood stereotype of the tourist as an educative tool” (184). Such an approach could be applied to all critiques of study abroad, interwoven with acknowledgement of the benefits in a critical and reflective dialogue.

Food studies is the perfect place to acknowledge such complexity, as complexity is fundamental to the field itself — the blending of cognitive and sensory learning to create embodied knowledge, the indistinct line between guided and independent learning, the interconnectedness of local and global, the field’s inherent interdisciplinarity.

Engage in Critical Reflection. As previously mentioned, the findings of this study strongly suggest that critical reflection is a useful, accessible tool for addressing and responding to potentially problematic aspects of food-related travel. Critical reflection can raise students’ awareness of the bi-directionality of travel, of the privilege inherent in studying abroad and their position within its underlying power structure, of the environmental costs associated with travel, and of the overall complexity of the field.

Such an awareness might not only lead to a more powerful learning experience, but may also foster expectations that extend beyond consumerism and personal gains and render students more likely to play an active role in considering the impacts — both positive and negative — of studying abroad and.

Shift the Pre-trip Focus. Pre-trip conversations can have a significant influence on how students approach the study abroad experience. Johnson, for example, suggests that “. . . the conversations a student has pre-departure will likely reinforce the idea that this is ‘their’ experience to have and that transformation is the commodity implicitly agreed to be provided” (182). Alternatively, we could shape pre-trip conversation to de-center the student from being the primary actor in study abroad, to consider motivations and impacts, and to instill a critical and reflective lens that can be carried over into the field. Get the reflection process, which is so important in experiential learning and critical thinking, started early! Due to logistics and time constraints it can be difficult to engage in such in-depth pre-trip conversation with students, but small, visible efforts may ignite profound independent reflection. Study abroad offices could even engage in a more general dialogue early on in the advising process while students are still considering program options.

Involve the Community. Schroedr et al. (2009) working with students before departure to build a strong knowledge base about the host destination, analyzing the ways in which outsiders can affect communities, examining vulnerabilities and power dynamics, making a shared commitment to respect and mutual exchange, and engaging in consultation with the community. Along the same lines, in reflection upon their personal experience working with undergraduates leading service learning programs abroad, Hui

(2009) points to the importance of including community voice when developing and implementing programs abroad in order to create stronger reciprocal relationships. While already present to some degree in the literature on service learning (Stoecker and Tryon 2009), this kind of relationship building should be a priority in all study abroad sites. Even when the program is not explicitly linked to community engagement like service learning is, it is important to recognize that the mere presence of a program will affect the community in some way. Schroeder et al. (2009) reason that the host community should ultimately be the one who decides if and how students should be there.

Consider Alternatives. This case study and other literature related to food studies, study abroad, and experiential learning, suggest that food studies abroad can be a rich learning experience for students intellectually, personally, and socially. Many would argue that these gains carry over to the greater world post-trip as students become more informed actors in society. This does not, however, mean that food studies abroad (or study abroad in general) should happen all the time, everywhere. There are some places in which potential detrimental impacts on host communities are clear. There are many students who do not have access to the still costly experience of studying abroad. There are situations in which connection with on-campus communities and food systems could provide equally meaningful engagement and benefit to all involved. Program developers and administrators have the opportunity to consider potential new programs critically and to weigh the unique costs and benefits of each. In doing this, people may be challenged to find footing amidst the rush of consumer-mentality, which pressures for *more* — more students, more programs, more studies presenting more quantifiable outcomes. It is time however, for institutions and administrators to apply the ethical aspirations of being a

“global citizen” to our own practices. It is important to continue studying and understanding student learning outcomes, seeing which can be obtained in less resource-intensive ways. Instead of a sole focus on increasing numbers, initiatives like Institute of International Education’s *Generation Study Abroad* can also include a focus on program quality. This does not mean that study abroad should become even more costly and exclusive — simultaneously, work should continue to make study abroad more accessible through scholarships, mindful programming, and appropriate outreach.

Thanks to the nature of food as a ubiquitous and accessible medium for learning, I recommend exploring on-campus and community-centered opportunities for food-focused education. Such programming does not have to be a replacement for food studies abroad, but can provide a more accessible and less resource-intensive alternative. A global mindset is a valuable thing, but is even more so if it compliments an understanding of the community outside the student’s front door.

Practice Radical Food Pedagogy. The term “radical food pedagogy” was mentioned briefly by food scholar Julie Guthman in a 2009 interview. Simply put, such an approach to food studies questions what it is about food that makes us study it and what privilege is inherent in our ability to do so, and goes “beyond self-satisfying food choices” and has “students reflect on potential levers of transformation.” I believe one could apply a similar approach to study abroad, and that such an approach is especially appropriate for, perhaps even necessary, for mindful food studies abroad planning.

While there are many other factors to consider when approaching study abroad programming, the above recommendations are the most salient based on this particular

case study and/or the potential connections to food studies in particular.

Recommendations from other critical discussions about study abroad should be taken into account as well, and much can be gained from reviewing the literature on sustainable tourism. As the field of food studies abroad continues to expand, it will be important to stand up to the powerful forces of institutional expectations, alluring rhetoric, and a consumer-oriented culture and to fully embrace the complexities of the field — the relationships, the interconnectedness, the discomfort, the vibrancy, and the opportunities — these elements that drew so many of us to the world of food studies in the first place. I add this study to the voices calling for an engaged and self-reflexive approach, which can perhaps serve as a model for future emerging fields.

In discussing the role of cultural studies in study abroad, Breen (2012) points out the privilege associated with travel and how at one extreme study abroad can operate as academic tourism, reveling in excess, consumption, and a celebration of US exceptionalism. “Academic tourism is travel that occasions connections with academic programmes whose intended outcomes are the reproduction of existing perspectives on the state of things, against claims for the creation of critical thinking” (84). He continues, however, with a more optimistic alternative: “Conversely, temporary relocation for education offers an opportunity to undo the assumptions of US higher education institutions and the unchallenged conceits of academic tourism.” Cultural studies, Breen suggests, could be “uniquely positioned to contribute to unmasking US academic assumptions.”

I contend that food studies has the potential to offer the same kind of contribution. As mentioned in Chapter IV, I believe food serves as a useful tool for experiential

learning because it provides an accessible reference point for exploring almost any issue or perspective. Perhaps it can also serve as a space for thinking about how we approach study abroad and the field of food studies, and for employing the critical thinking so often encouraged in students to our own processes as educators and administrators. In this way, the emerging field of food studies abroad can move forward in an engaged and responsible manner.

As responsibility can be a vague and subjective term, I will define it by referring to a conversation that occurred in the introductory Food Matters class in Macerata during a discussion of the privilege related to food and travel. Students were considering how privilege is connected to responsibility and use of knowledge within the food system, and questioning what our — as travelers, students, food studies scholars, culinary tourists — role was in the system. The program director, who was leading the two-week introductory course, pointed out that it was privilege that made it possible for us to sit there in that room analyzing food studies. He posed: “Think about it. We are the most privileged people in the system. What will you do? Responsibility. What is responsibility? Meeting one’s obligation to others.”

I argue that those of us involved with studying food and studying abroad have an obligation to host communities, to our home communities on campus and beyond, and to students. We have an obligation to critically examine the privilege that allows us the freedom to take part in these endeavors, to fully engage the critical lens of interdisciplinary studies, to mindfully enter the space of communities abroad if we are invited to enter at all, and to examine our positionality and how it effects our relationship to others. As bell hooks (1994) has offered, “The engaged voice must never be fixed and

absolute but always changing, always evolving in dialogue with a world beyond itself.”

In this way, a responsible approach to food studies abroad will be constantly evaluating its purposes and impacts, and striving to turn gazes into conversations.

APPENDIX A PRE-TRIP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Introductory Statement:

Thanks for taking the time to talk with me today. I would like to chat about a few different aspects of your upcoming study abroad experience in Macerata. So I can have an accurate record of your responses, I would like to record our conversation and take some notes as we talk. Is that alright with you? (If so, gain and record verbal consent.)

Part One: First I'm going to ask you some general questions about study abroad.

1. Can you tell me why you decided to study abroad this spring?
2. What drew you to the "Food and Culture in Italy" program?
3. Did you consider other study abroad programs? If so, which ones?
4. Can you describe your motivations for choosing this program?
5. Can you tell me what you're most looking forward to about the program?
6. Is there anything specific you expect to take away from this program?
7. What do you see as the most valuable aspects of study abroad in general, if any?

Part Two: Now I'm going to ask you about your general interests and activities.

1. Can you describe your academic interests?
2. Are you interested in taking food-related classes at the University? Environmental studies classes? International studies classes?
3. What extra-curricular activities are you involved in at home or at the University?
4. Can you describe any past work, volunteer, or internship experiences you have had?
5. Can you describe your career interests?
6. Do you feel engaged with the University of Oregon community? With the Eugene community? Your community at home? If so, in what ways?
7. In the future, how do you see yourself interacting with your local community, if at all?
8. Have you traveled abroad before? If so, where and for how long? What did you do?

Part Three: Next, I'd like to know more about your attitudes towards environmental studies.

1. Can you tell me about your interest in environmental studies?
2. Can you describe your feelings about environmental issues?
3. Do you think international experience has a role in environmental studies?
4. Do environmental concerns drive any of your everyday decisions?
5. What do you consider to be the greatest environmental challenges today?
6. Do you feel engaged in your local environmental issues?

Part Four: Finally, I'd like to know more about your attitudes towards food studies.

1. Can you tell me about your interest in food studies?
2. What values drive your personal food choices?
3. How connected do you feel to your local food system?
4. How do food issues play into your everyday life?
5. What do you consider to be the greatest problems with our food system today?
6. Do you think international experience has a role in food studies?

Part Five: Before we wrap up our chat, I have just a few final questions.

1. Do you have any feedback about the program thus far?
2. How did you find the pre-trip experience?
3. Are there things we didn't discuss that you think are important for me to know regarding your feelings about the upcoming term here in Macerata?

Closing Statement:

That's it. I want to thank you for your participation. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to ask. I look forward to spending the next few weeks in Macerata with you. Thanks again!

APPENDIX B
PRE-TRIP QUESTIONNAIRE

This survey is intended to gain insight into students' backgrounds and academic interests. Please answer as truthfully and accurately as possible, interpreting the questions as you see fit. There is no right answer!

General

1. Age: _____
2. Gender: Do you identify as:
 Male Female Other _____
3. Would you describe yourself as: (Check all that apply)
 Alaska Native
 American Indian
 Asian
 Black or African American Hispanic
 Latino/a
 Native Hawaiian
 Pacific Islander
 White
 White, non-Hispanic
 Other _____
4. Major (if undeclared, what majors are you considering?): _____
5. Academic Standing: (select one)
 First year Sophomore Junior Senior Grad
6. Annual income of family: (select one)
 \$Less than \$10,000
 \$10,000 to \$19,999
 \$20,000 to \$29,999
 \$30,000 to \$39,999
 \$40,000 to \$49,999
 \$50,000 to \$59,999
 \$60,000 to \$69,999
 \$70,000 to \$79,999

- \$80,000 to \$89,999
- \$90,000 to \$99,999
- \$100,000 to \$149,999
- \$150,000 or more

7. How are you funding your college experience? (select all that apply)

- Family
- Scholarship
- Financial aid
- Personal savings
- Full-time employment
- Part-time employment
- Other _____

8. How are you funding your study-abroad experience? (select all that apply)

- Family
- Scholarship
- Financial aid
- Personal savings
- Full-time employment
- Part-time employment
- Other _____

9. Living situation on campus: (select one)

- Dorm
- Apartment with roommates
- Apartment alone
- House with roommates
- House alone
- With family
- Other: _____

10. Political affiliation: _____

11. State or country (if not US) of residence: _____

Previous International Experience

1. Have you previously: (check all that apply)
Studied abroad? If yes, for how long? _____
Lived abroad? If yes, for how long? _____
Vacationed abroad? If yes, for how long? _____
Other? For how long? _____
2. Are you fluent in a language other than English? _____
3. How important were the following factors in choosing Food and Culture in Italy as a study abroad experience? (Rank 1-10)
Location _____
Academic Interest (please specify which) _____
Price _____
Faculty _____
Courses Offered _____
Language _____
Culture _____
Other (please specify) _____
4. What drew you to Food and Culture in Italy as a study abroad program? (Check all that apply)
 Advertising on campus
 Website
 Word of mouth
 Your department
 Friends
 Faculty
 Informational sessions
 Other _____

Academic and Career Interests

1. How interested are you in Environmental Studies? (Rank 1-10) _____
2. How many classes have you taken in Environmental Studies? _____
3. How many classes do you plan to take in Environmental Studies? _____
4. How would you rate your interest in International Studies? (Rank 1-10) _____
5. How many classes have you taken in International Studies? _____
6. How many classes do you plan to take in International Studies? _____
7. How would you rate your interest in Food Studies? (Rank 1-10) _____
8. How many classes have you taken in Food Studies? _____
9. How many classes do you plan to take in Food Studies? _____

10. How likely are you to pursue a career in environmental studies? (Rank Highly unlikely – Very Likely) _____
11. How likely are you to pursue a career in international studies? (Rank Highly unlikely – Very Likely) _____
12. How likely are you to pursue a career related to food? (Rank Highly unlikely – Very Likely) _____
13. Have you taken a class and/or volunteered at the Urban Farm? (yes/no)
14. How interested are you in taking a class and/or volunteering at the Urban Farm? (Rank 1-10) _____

Food, Environment, and Community Engagement

1. How often do you cook at home? _____
2. How often do you eat out? _____
3. Where do you purchase most of your groceries (supermarket, small grocery store, food co-op, etc)? _____
4. Do you grow any of your own food? If so, where? (Personal garden, community garden, etc) _____
5. How important is it for you personally to purchase organically grown food? (Rank Not At All Important – Very Important) _____
6. How important is it for you personally to purchase locally grown food? (Rank Not At All Important – Very Important) _____

APPENDIX C POST-TRIP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Introductory Statement:

Thanks for taking the time to talk with me today. I'd like to chat about a few different aspects of your study abroad experience in Macerata this past spring. As with our previous interviews, I'd like to record our conversation and take some notes as we talk. Is that alright with you? *(If so, gain and record verbal consent.)*

Part One: First I'm going to ask you some general questions about your experience.

1. Can you tell me what you thought about the study abroad experience as a whole?
2. What do you think was the most valuable aspect of the program?
3. Do you have any suggestions for making the program stronger in the future?

Part Two: Now I'd like to ask about your current interests and activities.

1. What have you been up to since you returned?
2. Could you describe your current academic and career interests?
3. Do you have any current or future job or internship plans?

Part Three: It's been almost 5 months since we returned from Italy and you've had some time to reflect on the experience. I'd like to understand how the experience affected your food-related attitudes and behaviors, so please consider your attitudes and behaviors at the beginning of the program and now.

1. How does your attitude toward food now compare to before the program and at the end of the program? (Possible probes: What has changed? What prompted this change? Has something since the end of the program influenced your attitude? Can you describe a specific activity or experience that might have impacted your thoughts or feelings toward food issues?)
2. How connected do you feel to your local food system?
3. How (if at all) did you engage in food issues before the program?
4. How (if at all) do you engage in food issues now?
5. How do the things you do now compare to what you did before you studied abroad in Italy? (Possible probe: Tell me about anything else you've done differently since you returned home from the program.)
6. How do you think a study abroad experience can affect students' interest or engagement in food issues?

Part Four: I'd also like to understand how the experience affected your environmental attitudes and behaviors, so please consider your attitudes and behaviors at the beginning of the program and now.

1. How does your attitude toward environmental issues now compare to before the program and at the end of the program? (Possible probes: What has changed? What prompted this change? Has something since the end of the program influenced your attitude? Can you describe a specific activity or experience that might have impacted your thoughts or feelings toward environmental issues?)
2. How connected do you feel to your local environmental issues?
3. How (if at all) did you engage in environmental issues before the program?
4. How (if at all) do you engage in environmental issues now?
5. How do the things you do now compare to what you did before you studied abroad in Italy? (Possible probe: Tell me about anything else you've done differently since you returned home from the program.)
6. How do you think a study abroad experience can affect students' interest or engagement in environmental issues?

Part Five: Before we wrap up our chat, I'd like to ask just a few final questions.

1. Now that you're back from the trip, having almost completed another full term, what suggestions do you have for helping future students better understand issues related to environmental and/or food issues?
2. To be sure I have a clear picture of your experience, would you please summarize what studying abroad in Italy meant to you?
3. Are there things we didn't discuss that you think are important for me to know regarding your study abroad experience, your attitudes toward environmental studies and/or food studies, or your environmental- and/or food-related behaviors? (Possible probe: Is there anything else that I should be sure to understand?)

Closing Statement:

That's it. Thank you so much for your participation. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to ask. You have my email address and phone number if you'd like to get in touch. Thanks again!

APPENDIX D
POST-TRIP QUESTIONNAIRE

This survey is intended to gain insight into students' academic and community interests. Please answer as truthfully and accurately as possible, interpreting the questions as you see fit. There is no right answer!

General

1. Age _____
2. Academic Standing: (select one)
 First year Sophomore Junior Senior Grad
3. Major (if undeclared, what majors are you considering?): _____
4. How are you funding your college experience? (select all that apply)
 Family
 Scholarship
 Financial aid
 Personal savings
 Full-time employment
 Part-time employment
 Other _____
5. Living situation on campus: (select one)
 Dorm
 Apartment with roommates
 Apartment alone
 House with roommates
 House alone
 With family
 Other: _____
6. Political affiliation: _____
7. State or country (if not US) of residence: _____

Study Abroad Experience

1. Which aspects of the *Food and Culture in Italy* program were the most valuable to you? (Please rate)

	Not Valuable	Somewhat Valuable	Very Valuable
Location	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Faculty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
New Friendships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excursions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Food Matters Course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sustainable Landscapes Course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Food, Ethics, & Agriculture in Italy Course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Italian Culture Course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Italian Language Course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gaining Credits Needed for Major	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Culture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. What was the most valuable part of your experience in Italy?

Academic and Career Interests

1. At this time, how would you rate your interest in: (Rank Low-High)

Environmental Studies? _____

International Studies? _____

Food Studies? _____

2. How many on-campus, college-level classes do you plan to take in: (please include classes you are currently taking this term)

Environmental Studies? _____

International Studies? _____

Food Studies? _____

3. How likely are you to pursue a career in:

Environmental Studies? _____

International Studies? _____

Food Studies? _____

Farming/Agriculture? _____

Education? _____

Other? (Please specify) _____

4. Are you currently taking a class and/or volunteering at the UO Urban Farm?

5. How would you rate your interest in taking a class and/or volunteering at the UO Urban Farm? (Rank Low-High)

Personal Interests

1. Approximately how many times per week do you:
Cook at home? _____
Eat out (at restaurants, food carts, etc.)? _____
Eat in a dining hall (dorm, sorority/fraternity, etc.)? _____
2. Where do you purchase most of your groceries? (supermarket, small grocery store, food co-op, etc.) If you live in a setting where meals are provided (dorm, sorority/fraternity, etc.), please specify this. _____
3. Do you grow any of your own food? If so, where? (Personal garden, community garden, etc.) _____
4. When purchasing food, how important is it to you to purchase:
Organically-grown food? (Rank Not Important-Extremely Important)
Locally-grown food? (Rank Not Important-Extremely Important)
5. In your opinion, is it more important to support:
 Locally grown/produced food
 Organically grown/produced food
 Both are equally important
6. Have you visited, worked on, or volunteered at a local farm/garden/food co-op in your local community (home or school)? If so, approximately how many total hours have you spent performing these activities? _____
7. How often do you visit farmers markets (when in season)? _____
8. In the future, how likely are you to: (Rank Not Likely-Extremely Likely)
Visit, work on, or volunteer at a local farm/garden/food co-op?
Visit a farmers markets?
Be part of a CSA?
Work or volunteer with an environmental organization?
9. Have you ever been part of a CSA (community supported agriculture)?
 Yes
 No

10. Please rate your interest in: (Rate Not Interested-Very Interested)
- Learning more about social issues surrounding food
 - Learning more about social issues related to the environment
 - Understanding issues of race, class, and privilege in your community
 - Making a difference in your community in terms of food and environmental issues
11. In your opinion, how connected is food with issues of race, class, and privilege? (Rate Not Connected-Very Strongly Connected)
12. In your opinion, how connected are environmental issues with race, class, and privilege? (Rate Not Connected-Very Strongly Connected)
13. How much do you value knowledge about your local food systems? (Rate Not At All-Very Much)
14. How involved would you consider yourself to be in your local food system? (Rate Not Involved-Highly Involved)
15. How much do you value knowledge about your local environmental issues? (Rate Not At All-Very Much)
16. How involved would you consider yourself to be in your local environmental issues? (Rate Not Involved-Highly Involved)
17. Please rate the degree with which you agree or disagree with the following statements. (Rate Strongly Disagree-Strongly Agree)
- Food issues and environmental issues are strongly interrelated.
 - Food issues are strongly related to issues of social justice.
 - Environmental issues are strongly related to issues of social justice.
 - An international perspective is important in engaging meaningfully in local food issues.
 - An international perspective is important in engaging meaningfully in local environmental issues.
 - An international perspective is important in engaging meaningfully in one's local community.

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