

fao Casa gazette

OCTOBER 2013



Giornata mondiale dell'alimentazione

Hunger run

FERMIAMO LA CORSA DELLA FAME LET'S STOP HUNGER IN ITS TRACKS

2013

20 ottobre Roma

Terme di Caracalla

Ritrovo ore 8.30. Partenza ore 10.00.

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10 km di corsa competitiva
e 5 km non-competitiva



Mensile - No. 10 - 2013 - Reg. Trib. N. 574 dell'8/10/1990



Athletic Village
Hunger Run, Sunday 20 October 2013
Terme di Caracalla Stadium
8.30 - 14.30 hrs
Programme

9.15 hrs Before the Start of the Race/ the **City of Rome Pipe Band** will play bagpipes outside the Stadium, then will continue inside the Athletic Village / Prima della Partenza della Gara la **City of Rome Pipe Band** suoneranno le cornamusa prima della partenza della corsa fuori dello Stadio e poi continueranno nel Villaggio Atletico

10.00 hrs Start of Hunger Run
 Partenza della Corsa contro la Fame

Athletic Village Activities

10.15 hrs Opening of **Charity Food Sale** with "Food from around the world for Food for the world" with Bar Service and Stalls selling savoury finger food, Porchetta Ciolli from Ariccia, cakes and sweets. After the Run: visit our stands with multi-ethnic food and Bar Service for a moment of relax with families, friends and colleagues.

Apertura della vendita per beneficenza di "Cibi dal mondo - per un mondo senza fame" con servizio Bar e Stands per la vendita del cibo multi-etnico, Porchetta Ciolli d'Ariccia, torte e dolci

Dopo la corsa visita i nostri stands con Cibo dal Mondo e servizio Bar per un momento di relax con famiglie, amici e colleghi.

10.30 hrs Opening of **Mercatino** – Artiques, oggettistica - vintage silver and costume jewellery - handicraft from Africa, Asia, Latin America, - household linen, 4 types of bio produced honey from Di Nicola.

Apertura del Mercatino con la vendita di antiquariato e oggettistica artigianato e souvenirs, biancheria per la tavola e cucina, 4 tipi di miele bio Di Nicola.

Handicrafts from Casa Loic Association with items in olive wood, candles, etc., notebooks and diaries Artigianato dell'Associazione Casa Loic sarà presente con oggetti in legno d'ulivo e la casa, candele, agende e libri per appunti rilegati

*A Lucky Dip with exciting prizes will be sold during the events.
 Una Pesca Fortunata con simpatici premi e regali sarà in vendita.*

Davanti alle Tribune nello Stadio

10.00 hrs **Hard Candy Gym** trainers will conduct demonstration fitness workouts for the public.

10.45 hrs **Prize-giving ceremony. Premiazione dei vincitori delle gare**

Bambini and Kiddies - Al Centro del Athletic Village

12.00 hrs *Entertainment for Children with Clown Lenny from Naples assisted by Maria Grazia*
Intrattenimento per Bambini con il Clown Lenny da Napoli assistito da Maria Grazia

fao CASA gazette

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Recipes:
Traditional Czech potato soup
Biscotti alla Fontina

OCTOBER 2013

Cover:

HUNGER RUN 2013

Typewritten electronic contributions for the FAO CASA Gazette are welcome. These can be in English, French, Italian or Spanish - articles, poems, drawings, photographs, etc. in fact anything interesting that staff members and/or their families in Rome or the field may like to contribute. No anonymous material will be accepted, and the Editor reserves the right to choose and/or reject material that is not in keeping with the ethics of the Organization. Send contributions electronically to the Editor at FAO-STAFF-Coop@fao.org or leave signed copies with the COOP Office on the ground floor of Building E. The deadline for editorial material is due on the 1st of the month preceding the date of issue.

The Editor may schedule articles according to the priorities and editorial requirements of the FAO Staff COOP.

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Tiber Island - from a bend in the river to a world class city

by Peter Steele

Sediment collected over 400 km and deposited at a bend on the River Tiber made it shallower and provided the basis for the establishment of Tiber Island. This enabled the river to be forded at times of low flow.

From these small beginnings Rome was built. The modern city is home to more than 4.1M people and it holds place as one of the world's great cities with a legacy to society at large that embraces justice, law & order, urban planning & civic management, architecture, design, military arts, language and much more. Engineering expertise dominates, however, and you can – if you live locally - take a bus ride into town and marvel at some of the many structures that the Ancient Romans left us.



Tiber Island. Bird's eye view showing the island in the bend of the river and hinting at its alluvial origins from soil carried down from the central Italian mountains and settling out in the slower flow around the northern bank. Note the layout of the island and its bridges, the concrete walkway that surrounds it and the position of key buildings – basilica and hospital.

Glimpses of Ancient Rome

The Ancient Romans are justifiably famous for their engineering achievements – providing the basis for an empire of the day that lasted

around 500 years (and another 1,000 years after that if you consider the Byzantine Empire based upon Constantinople). At its height it stretched from the borders of Persia to the



Pons Aemilius. Also known as the Ponte Rotto ('Broken bridge'). With just one of the original six arches remaining, it represents the oldest remnant of Ancient Roman bridge design still visible in the city. You can lean over the parapet of the Ponte Palantino with the Pons Aemilius just a few metres away and explore design, and the colonization of bird and plant life.

Atlantic Ocean and from the Red Sea to the British Isles.

In their time the Romans were the designers, builders and artisans of infrastructure that captured and controlled water, established cities, linked them into major communication networks and, where rivers created land barriers, provided the bridges to span them. Apart from the Nile and the Euphrates, all the major rivers in the Empire were bridged. The Romans provided the basis of our heritage of bridge design through to the industrial age just a couple of hundred years back. As

engineers, however, they were prompt to learn from others and were strongly influenced by the original ideas, inventions and technologies first explored by the Greeks and Etruscans. Etruscan bridges can still be found standing – but you have to look for them.

The practicality and timeless arches of those ancient Roman bridges – in Rome and elsewhere – have left today's Europe with structures that exemplified the power and influence of the Roman Empire. The engineer



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– more than the soldiers before and the administrators who followed them – provided the structures, roads and water supplies within which the Empire was created, managed and subsequently held.

Tiber Island

The modern city of Rome embraces both banks of the River Tiber and dominates the final 40-50 km stretch of the river before it discharges into the Mediterranean at Ostia. *Isola Tiberina* was at the heart of the ancient city that the Romans built; one of just two islands found in the Tiber, which rises in the Apennine Mountains of Emilia-Romagna. The island today covers an area of around two hectares.



Pons Cestius. Spanning the wider section of the River Tiber split by Tiber Island, the bridge was built as a derivative of the original Roman design. It is just over 100 years old and provides vehicular access to the island.

The island narrows the river as it approaches the coast. In practice the ease with which the river could always be crossed at this point – and has probably been forded and spanned with wooden structures for many hundreds of years pre-Rome – encouraged settlements of rural communities that eventually led to the founding of the ancient city.

Easily accessible islands have always provided sanctuary during times of strife. Roman communities quickly recognized the value of isolation and security that comes from separating the sick from the healthy; and the island was used, respectively, to isolate sick people or as a sanctuary to which the wealthier members of the community – including the city governors – could escape from plagues that occasionally swept through the region. In pre-Christian times, it led to the construction of a temple on the island dedicated to Aesculapius - the Greek god of healing.

The Temple of Aesculapius was venerated and the island re-crafted to resemble a ship in

mid-stream with walls built around the island, bow and stern added, and an obelisk erected as the mast. The temple and its replacements – subsequently re-dedicated to a host of different pre-Christian gods prior to the arrival of Christianity and then to the Christian faith – lasted through to the construction of the San Bartolomeo Basilica at the end of the first millennium. Temple and basilica were built on the eastern (or downstream) part of the island.

Five hundred years later the first dedicated hospital was built – on

the upstream part of the island. It remains in use through to the present day with medical services provided by the 'Fatebenefratelli'. Access to the island is provided by two bridges – both of which date from the time of Ancient Rome – the shorter and more original Pons Fabricus, and the longer (and substantially re-constructed) Pons Cestius.

Pons Cestius

The original Pons Cestius stone bridge dated



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Pons Fabricus. A timeless arch and arguably the most original and the most aesthetically pleasing of all Roman structures in the city. Representing early bridge design, the Pons Fabricus features 'full circle' arches with the arches continuing underground. Note the rural nature of the setting on the Lungotevere – with the river contained within high wall embankments.

from around the mid-first century BC, and represented the first permanent structure joining Tiber Island to the west bank of the river. The bridge was extensively rebuilt in the 4th century AD to a design incorporating a large central arch and two smaller arches adjacent to the river banks. The new bridge spanned 50 metres.

The original Pons Cestius bridge fell victim to the high embankment walls that were constructed in the late 19th century to protect the city from flooding; the bridge was no longer wide enough for the new architecture of the river but, equally important, it was considered too light to accommodate the greater forces imposed upon the structure from the channelling of winter and spring flow.

Early photographs exist that show the bridge, the medieval buildings lining the banks and

the congested nature of the neighbourhoods over-looking the river. The spaciousness of the river, the elegant lines of plane trees and the dominance of the roads that make up the 'Lungotevere' today belie the city as it was before construction of the river embankments. The walls also eradicated most of the original ports that once serviced the ancient and medieval trans-shipment river trade from Ostia to the city.

The original materials of the defunct bridge were used for the replacement bridge. This closely followed the design of the original but with three large arches spanning more than 75 metres, and this is the bridge that you cross today.

Pons Fabricus

Constructed of stone, the Pons Fabricus is more than 60 metres long and a little less than six metres wide, the bridge was completed in 62



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BC and is the only one to survive into everyday use in original form – albeit for pedestrians only nowadays.

The name of the bridge has changed with the centuries. In the Middle Ages it was called the 'Pons Judeurum' (because of location next to the Ghetto) and later the 'Ponte Quattro Capi' (the result of adornments applied during the late 16th century).

The Pons Fabricus incorporates two main arches each more than 27 metres long. Few arches of this form, length and curvature have survived from ancient times, but the confines of the river at this point and the considerable flash flow in spring and early summer limited choice of design to a single pier.

More piers would have seriously constricted river flow, thereby imposing high loads on the structure during times of flood. Recognising the potential of this problem, the designers incorporated cutwaters into the structure in the form of a pointed spur upstream and a semi-circular platform on the downstream side; this mimics the outline of a ship with the bow pointing upstream and the stern downstream.

Each arch is built as a single unit of interlocking tufa stone, framed on each side by travertine stone. This contrasts with Roman bridges elsewhere such as the Pont du Gard (near Avignon in France) where a complete arch is made up of a series of thin parallel arches.

To reduce the spandrel wall of the central pier acting as a dam – during high water and high debris loading – a small central arch was included to encourage the river to flow through the pier as well as round it at times of flood.

The entire structure of the Pons Fabricus is relatively light when compared to the massive buildings and structures normally associated with the Ancient Romans. The challenge of spanning the distance, the experience of the river in flood and the measures taken to protect the pier bare testament to this approach; a heavier structure would not have lasted more than 2,000 years.

Pons Aemilius

The single arch of the Pons Aemilius is all that remains of the bridge that once carried the Via Aurelia over the Tiber. Originally built of timber, the bridge dates from the second century BC and comprised six stone arches with a wooden deck. Two hundred years later the bridge was re-constructed completely in stone. Located below the island where the faster flowing water in the southern channel meets the slower water in the northern channel, the structure has always been vulnerable to turbulence and to build up of flotsam and jetsam (with the Romans prompt to use the river for disposal of just about everything unwanted - including executed criminals).

The bridge was damaged and repaired on several occasions but, by the late sixteenth century when half the bridge was lost during flooding, it was abandoned. The remaining half was further lost to demolition during the 19th century leaving behind a single arch. This is close up against the more modern Ponte Palatino.

Celebrating Rome in summer

The modern Tiber screened from view for much of the year by its retaining embankment takes on a life of its own mid-summer; those unable to leave the city for the beaches or mountains tend to gravitate towards the river for the sense of openness, sound and sight of moving water, and the cooler air available. Green cover provided by the lines of plane trees provide shade for the wandering couples, fishermen (always men) and those taking time out for a siesta mid-afternoon. Clandistini also set up temporary home along the river banks.

By night the river is transformed by lights and music, with the rush of water providing a backdrop to those filling the open bars, kiosks and restaurants that line the Trastevere river embankment. Tiber Island hosts the L'Isola del Cinema for those with a couple of hours and love of film. By September the mass tourists have gone and the island and the stretch of river have succumbed to the autumn rains and wind-blown leaves that herald the approach of winter ■

Community Trekking in the Wolo Highlands in Ethiopia

by Stephen Rudgard



My wife and I took a short holiday in Ethiopia in May 2013 that combined a blend of breathtaking scenery, wildlife, and insights onto Ethiopian rural life in the Wolo Highlands near Lalibela. We decided to visit a country that had always fascinated us, but we wanted to get away from the standard tourist “beaten track”. Based on the excellent advice of friends who live in Ethiopia, we contacted Tesfa Tours in Addis Ababa, who discussed possible options for trekking itineraries which ranged from gruelling 10 hour slogs to 4 hour gentle ambles, and varied in altitude from 3000 to 4500 metres above sea level. We opted for a three day itinerary, with two days walking along the edge of the main escarpment at about 3500 metres, looking over a 500 meter drop to the plain below, and then a longer walk across a major valley in the highlands across two rivers to a village with a rock-hewn church.



Apart from the spectacular views, we were able to watch the wildlife on the cliffs which included large family groups of gelada baboons, klipspringer, and rock hyrax, as well as numerous birds with highlights such as the lammergeier and Verreaux's Eagle. The botanical prospects were poor as we were there at the very beginning of the rainy season. Our guide was able to provide fascinating insights into various aspects of the villages' livelihoods and agricultural systems, including their local laws and tenure systems. The visit to 900 year-old rock-hewn church at Genata Mariam was the cultural focus of the trek, during which we were allowed to visit a cave chamber alongside the church to see a special ceremony for the blessing of a priest who was about to get married. The day after the trek we spent a day in Lalibela visiting the unique area of fifteen rock-hewn churches, and then enjoying having a much-appreciated shower.

A very positive and special aspect of our trek was that we were on our own with our English-speaking guide, and the donkey that carried our main luggage together with its two minders. We slept every night in special tukul

guesthouses, which were co-managed by the communities and Tesfa Tours. The guesthouses were simple and comfortable, but without electricity and running water. The tasty meals were prepared especially by villagers from locally-grown produce, with menus somewhat adapted to northern tastes, and we opted to be vegetarian.

The Tesfa Tours treks cost approximately \$60 per person per day all inclusive. The business model is arranged so the communities which host walkers every night receive the large majority of the fees paid. The guide receives a proportion, and a small amount goes to the office in Addis Ababa. Our travel costs to get there were low because Ethiopian Airlines offer good value direct flights to Addis Ababa, and it was much cheaper to book the local flights to Lalibela through Tesfa Tours than buy them directly. In short, we recommend that you contact Tesfa Tours for a great experience of Ethiopian rural life ■

Contact Mark Chapman (mark@tesfatours.com) and visit www.tesfatours.com





Piña-Abaca-Banana Go to Rome

From the Philippines, a 3-day Exhibition and Fashion Show to showcase Philippine artistic creativity using Piña, Abaca and Banana fibers in haute couture fashion, ready-to-wear, fashion accessories, table linens, handkerchiefs, doilies, bags, table napkins and other industrial uses.

The show aims to open investment opportunities for Fil-Italians in growing the production of Pina-Abaca-Banana fibers in the homeland. And, assist Filipino farmers increase production of the natural fibers while encouraging the use of "green" farming methods.

Additionally, it also challenges the 2nd generation Fil-Italians fashion and industrial designers to apply Philippine fabric in western modalities, giving new look to the use of the fiber not seen before.

And finally, the event targets to inspire Italian textile and fashion establishments in using Filipino natural fibers for local use.

**Where: Aranciera di San Sisto
Via Valle delle Camene 11, ROME**

**Admission free. Daily raffle will be held during the exhibition days.
Nightly special events.**

**When: 18 – 20 October 2013
8:30 to 21:00 hrs**



Oriso
JAN MICHAEL ORISO

Contact:
FAO STAFF COOP Philippine Cultural
Susana.Siar@fao.org
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Dulcie.Mendoza@yahoo.com



Piña-Abaca-Banana a Roma

Dalle Filippine, una Mostra di 3 giorni e una Sfilata di Moda che presentano la creatività artistica nell'utilizzo di fibre come Piña, Abaca e Banana in moda haute couture, prêt-à-porter, accessori di moda, tovaglie, fazzoletti, centrini, borse, tovaglioli ed altri usi industriali.

L'obiettivo della mostra è di promuovere l'investimento per gli Italo-Filippini per ampliare la produzione delle fibre Piña, Abaca e Banana in patria. Inoltre, di sostenere i contadini Filippini per l'incremento della produzione delle fibre naturali, incoraggiando l'uso di metodi di coltivazione sostenibile.

Per di più, essa mira anche a stimolare la seconda generazione di designer di moda Italo-Filippini ed industriali di utilizzare fibre filippine nei metodi occidentali, dando un aspetto nuovo all'uso della fibra mai vista prima.

E finalmente, l'evento punta a ispirare le imprese di tessuti e di moda ad utilizzare le fibre naturali filippine per uso locale.

**Dove: Aranciera di San Sisto
Via Valle delle Camene 11, ROMA**

Ingresso libero. Si terrà una lotteria giornaliera nei giorni delle esposizioni. Eventi speciali serali.

Quando: 18 - 20 ottobre 2013
ORE: 8:30 - 21:00

Contatti:
FAO STAFF COOP Philippine Cultural
Susana.Siar@fao.org
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Oliso
JAN MICHAEL OBISO

FAO Staff Coop Ikebana Workshop Held on Tuesday 24 September -2013

Room E-021 – 12.00 to 14.00 hrs

Programme

- 11.50** *Welcome drink (juice soft drinks, water and pastries)*
12.5 *Brief welcome address by Edith Mahabi, Coordinator*
12.10 *Introduction to ikebana by Bhawna Maru*
12.20 *Practical demonstration of ikebana by Bhawna Maru*
12.45 *Participants practised doing an ikebana with step by step instructions and guidance from Bhawna.*
13.10 *Final question answer session and closure*

The Ikebana Workshop was attended by 14 persons interested in this floral art form. In the introduction Bhawna gave information on the origins, different schools and techniques of Ikebana (Ohara, Ikenobu, etc). She simultaneously prepared several different styles of ikebana which can be seen in the following pictures.

Apart from two persons who had to leave early the others were able to experience the art by doing their own creation under her guidance and explanation of the basic concepts to be followed. The general feeling was that of great relaxation and inspiration.

Those interested were also able to enrol for the new series of the course which begins on 1 October 2013 at a reduced price for the lessons during the month of October. All floral material is included in the price (€15.00 per lesson), kenzans, bowls, vases and recipients are provided by the teacher for each lesson. Participants take away the flowers to repeat and practise what they learn at home.

Membership or associate membership in the FAO Staff Coop (FSC) is essential, lessons must be booked and paid for in advance to the FSC Office. The FSC must be informed of non attendance of the lessons booked on Monday mornings – to avoid purchase of flowers and wastage due to non-attendance without advance notice.

Ikebana courses and venues:

Mondays at 17.30 hrs in Room E-014

Tuesdays 12.00 to 14.00 hrs in Room E-021









Caribbean Cultural Group

presents:

Paintings exhibition by Someshwarananda



**Venue: The Staff Lounge, FAO
From Monday 14 to Friday 18 October 2013**

**Proceeds from sales will be donated to
Shanti House Family for orphans in Rishikesh, India
and to the charity fund of the Caribbean Cultural Group.**



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PRAGUE – The Golden City

by Jill Stevenson



"Prague Castle and Cathedral"

The origin of Prague goes back to the Seventh century and the legendary Slavic princess Libuše, a woman of great beauty and wisdom who possessed prophetic powers. Libuše and her husband, prince Pemysl, ruled peacefully over the Czech lands from the hill of Vyšehrad. A legend says that one day Libuše had a vision. She stood on a cliff overlooking the Vltava River, pointed to a forested hill across the river, and proclaimed: "I see a great city whose glory will touch the stars."

She instructed her people to go and build a castle where a man was building the threshold (in Czech *práh*) of a house. "And because even the great noblemen must bow low before a threshold, you shall give it the name Praha".

After World War I which ended with the defeat of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the creation of Czechoslovakia, Prague was chosen as its capital, until Czechoslovakia's peaceful dissolution into the Czech Republic and Slovakia on 1 January 1993

My friend and I went for a 4 day trip; what a beautiful city. On our first



"Medieval tavern"

evening we went to a medieval tavern (Stredoveka Krema), which had been recommended to us, and it felt as if we were in the dungeons. Very old, the food was delicious and there was also entertainment including dancing and fire eaters which was very good.

The following day we took the 'Hop on Hop off' bus and went to see the castle and the cathedral.

While we were in the Old Town Square we saw the Sixteenth century Astronomical Clock which was built onto the Fifteenth century Old Town Hall. The four figures flanking the clock are set in motion on the hour and represent four things that were despised at the time of the clock's making. First is Vanity, represented by a figure admiring himself in a mirror. Next, the miser holding a bag of gold who represents greed or usury. Across the clock stands Death, a skeleton that strikes the time upon the hour. Finally, the Turk tells pleasure and entertainment.

There is also a presentation of statues of the Apostles at the doorways above the clock, with all twelve presented every hour.

Our guide, Tomáš, was exceptionally good and made the visit really



"Astronomical Clock"

interesting. The castle is one of the largest fortresses in the world, founded in the second half of the Nineteenth century and added to over the centuries. We didn't actually enter inside any of the castle buildings, only the first courtyard. The castle is really spread out and in its centre is the Cathedral of St. Vitus. This we visited. It was founded in 929 when the first part was built and only finished in 1929. The monumental interior is enormous, 124m long, 33m high and 60m wide. The beautiful stained glass windows are Twentieth century, one of them by Mucha, a famous Czech artist. The crypt contains the tombs of the Bohemian Royals, Charles IV, Wenceslas

IV, Rudolph II, only to name a few. Unfortunately we were not able to see this. Going down from the Castle we passed through 'the golden lane'. The little cottages were built at the end of the Sixteenth century to house Rudolph II's guards. It was only later that the goldsmiths established themselves here, where the lane takes its name. Today most of these little cottages are shops selling souvenirs or local arts and crafts.

The second day we went on a boat trip with a guide, Kristina, down the River Vltava, for a visit to the Prague Zoo. The day started cloudy and chilly, but finished warm and sunny. The Prague zoo was exceptionally



"Golden Lane"

good, with lots of room for the animals. It is vast so we walked our feet into the ground and were pleased to catch the bus back to our hotel. In 2002 Prague was hit by the worst flooding in more than a century and, in spite of enormous efforts to evacuate and relocate many animals in the zoo, not all could be saved. A 12-year-old seal named Gaston made international headlines when he escaped from the zoo during the floods and swam about 120 kilometres in five days, before being recaptured north of Dresden in Germany. Unfortunately, the seal died while being transported back to Prague, evidently from shock and exhaustion.

That evening we went on a special 'Czech Folk Night Excursion' being held in a renovated barn outside Prague. We were collected from our hotel in a mini van and taken back afterwards. It was packed with people, the food was wonderful, the music singing and dancing show made the evening a very special and happy one. The music was very good, one of them was playing a very unusual instrument which looked like a piano but was played with mallet hammers, it was called a dulcimer, very fascinating.

The third day in the morning we decided to visit the famous 'Vysehrad Citadel' cemetery. This was originally a medieval cemetery adjoining the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, it was transformed into a memorial of Czech art and culture in the Nineteenth century. We saw the tombs of Dvorak and Kafta and many others, all very monumental.



"Polar Bear"

In the afternoon we went to Wenceslas Square which was originally a horse market, it got its



"Tomb of Dvorak"

present name in the mid-Nineteenth century. This square is the centre of modern Prague surrounded by shops, cinemas, office blocks, hotels, restaurants and cafés. In the middle of the square is a monument of St. Wenceslas. Coming from London I was (pleasantly) surprised to find shops like, Marks & Spencers, Debenhams, Tescos and many other shops that one would find in an English High Road.



"Golden Lane"

That evening we went to another Czech restaurant very near the ancient Charles Bridge which commenced being built during the latter half of the



"Musicians"

Fourteenth century and was completed in the early Fifteenth century under the reign of Wenceslas IV. It is a pedestrian bridge and is 516m long (very long when you are crossing it in the rain and wind). It has beautiful Gothic towers at each end and has about 30 statues along its sides. The Towers are considered to represent some of the finest examples of Gothic sculptures in Bohemia.



"Ponte"

On our last day we visited the two churches not far from our Hotel, Lady Victorious and St. Nicholas. Very impressive. We had lunch at a typical Czech pub where I had the famous potato soup served in a crisp bread roll. It was so good I have attached a copy of the recipe.

That afternoon we just wandered about the old town looking at the shops and the beautiful Czech buildings, and again in the evening eating in a Czech restaurant not far from the hotel.



"Tram stop"

Early the next morning we were picked up from the Hotel and taken to the airport.

What a wonderful few days. Prague is very small but seems a lot bigger when one is walking everywhere...until we discovered the trams...they were cheap and passed every few minutes – brilliant.

Also, apart from being beautiful, it's also an orderly, clean city and is well worth a visit ■

TRADITIONAL CZECH POTATO SOUP

For the Soup

2.1/2 lbs baby red potatoes
 1 large yellow onion, diced
 1/2 lb raw bacon, diced
 3 stalks celery, diced
 1 quart water
 1/4 cup chicken base
 1 quart milk
 1 teaspoon salt
 1 teaspoon black pepper
 3/4 cup butter
 1/4 cup chopped parsley
 1/2 cup whipping cream
For Garnish:
 Shredded Colby cheese (or Gouda)
 Fried bacon bits
 Chopped green onion

For the Breadbowl

2 cups hot water
 2 egg whites
 1 ounce sugar
 3.3/4 lbs flour
 2 cups of cold water
 2.1/2 tablespoons lard
 1 tablespoon yeast



Method for Soup

Boil potatoes in water to cover for 10 minutes. Drain; set aside. In large heavy pot, sauté bacon, onions and celery over medium-high heat until celery is tender. Drain bacon grease and return bacon, onions and celery to pot. Add milk, water, chicken base, salt and pepper. Heat over a medium-high heat until very hot but do not let soup boil. Melt margarine/butter in heavy, large saucepan over low heat. Stir in flour to make a roux (white sauce). Mix well and allow to bubble, stirring 1 minute. If desired, a larger amount of roux can be made to produce a thicker soup. Gradually add roux to soup, stirring constantly. Continue to cook, stirring, until thick and creamy. Stir in potatoes, parsley and cream. Serve hot, garnished with cheese, bacon bits and/or onions. Serve in bread bowl.

Method for Bowl

Mix ingredients together until a soft dough forms. (the dough should be slightly firm to the touch and form a ball, if it is too sticky add a little more flour or if it seems too dry add a little more water). Place dough in a lightly oiled bowl, cover and set aside until double in size, then punch down. Scale into 4 inch balls, roll around and place in a warm place until they double in size. Bake in 350° oven for 18-20 minutes. Let cool. Slice off top of bread and hollow out the inside to form a bowl, careful not to make the 'walls' too thin, they should be about 1 inch to 1.1/2 inches thick.

Biscotti alla Fontina

Ingredients

250 gr di farina

250 gr fontina grattugiata

175 gr burro

1 cucchiaino lievito in polvere

1 uovo

1 cucchiaino senape in polvere

1 cucchiaino timo in polvere

sale, pepe

farina per la spianatoia

Metodo

Impastate la farina insieme con il burro freddo tagliato a pezzetti, il formaggio, il lievito, l'uovo e la senape, sale e pepe, infine unite il timo.

Stendete la pasta sulla spianatoia leggermente infarinata in una sfoglia dello spessore di 1 cm circa, e ricavate 24 dischetti del diametro di 2-3 cm. Disponeteli sulla placca del forno foderata di carta da forno, ben distanziati fra loro; e mettete a riposare in luogo asciutto e tiepido per almeno 30 minuti.

Cuocete in forno caldo a 180°C per circa 10 minuti, fino a quando saranno uniformemente dorati, sfornateli, lasciateli intiepidire e serviteli. Sono buoni anche freddi e se tenuti chiusi in recipiente chiuso ermeticamente si conservano fino a 15 giorni.

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