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THE VIEWS



After returning from a trip to visit my sister, who is studying abroad in Italy, the most prominent memories I have are all about the views. We spent most of our time on the Amalfi Coast — a straight drop from our room window to the aqua-

marine sea. On our second day we stopped at a chateau and my sister and I shared a gelato while looking over the town of Revello and the surrounding landscape.

I hate flying, and this was my first time in Europe. But one of the reasons I knew I had to go was to see my sister. Katie is studying abroad in Parma, Italy and despite never taking Italian classes before proved an invaluable translator and guide for our adventures.

Naples is the birthplace of pizza, and everyone seems to agree they still do it best. I hadn't slept on the flight in and wasn't hungry when we grabbed lunch, but I ended up eating more than half a pizza. My sister also took us to her favorite pizza place in Rome, and we shared a margherita pizza and another with arugula, corn and mozzarella. If you go to Italy and look for arugula on the menu you won't find it: For some reason they call it "rocket."

Not far off the coast sits the island of Capri.

We took a rowboat through an unreasonably small opening in the rock cliffs. The water inside glows a vibrant blue, brighter even than the characters in *Avatar*.

We spent all but one night staying in an old castle along a tight, winding mountain road on the Amalfi Coast. When I say old, I mean it was built in 1024, and I'm told it's still owned by a prince. We drove to a neighboring town and splurged for dinner, eating in a castle spire sticking out into the sea. Both were relatively small but nonetheless majestic and impressive.

With Mount Vesuvius looming in the background, we wandered the stone streets of Pompeii in the midday heat attempting to make sense of our guide maps. My dad almost missed the three bodies preserved near the entrance as he charged towards the impressively maintained bathhouse. The carcasses of building after building lined the streets in every direction, but I was most amazed by how well two amphitheaters held their form.

I managed to eat a number of caprese salads while I was there and wish I could still enjoy them with such regularity. The fresh tomato slices paired with basil and local buffalo milk mozzarella was an unbeatable combo, enjoyable both as a starter salad and in a sandwich on a sub roll. The salads were helped by the quality of olive oil they were served with and my mouth is watering just thinking about it.

This was vacation. While I wanted to explore, I also wanted to relax. The pool may not have been filled for the season yet, but we sat by it anyway. I plowed through two books, *Barrel Fever* by David Sedaris and *The Country Under My Skin* by Gioconda Belli. I managed to watch seven movies on my flights too, including *The King's Speech* and *Conviction*. Don't waste your time with *The Social Network*, however.

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