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Students Experience Flavors of France, Germany

Six students from the Journalism and Media Studies program at USF St. Petersburg are getting their hands dirty this summer. But unlike those enrolled in other courses, these students are eager to lick their fingers clean.

Four undergraduate and two graduate students in the Food and Travel Writing in France and Germany course left St. Petersburg on a 10-day trip to France on July 12. The group will stay in Strasbourg for six nights and Paris for four. Day trips also take the students to the Black Forest region of Germany. The course aims to introduce students to popular genres of publication writing and enhance their written communication skills about culinary and travel experiences.

“It’s an experience of a lifetime,” said Janet Keeler, visiting assistant professor and coordinator of the Food Writing and Photography graduate certificate program. “This is one of the world’s great food regions, and being here lets the students learn how to communicate those stories to others.”

She said the students have been able to sample many different foods and see how they are created during their visit.

“We have eaten a lot,” said Keeler, who formerly served as Food Editor at the Tampa Bay Times. “And that is needed to write about food. The same is true for travel writing. The students must go places and take it all in.”

The feedback received from the students has been very positive.

“So far, they are really enjoying all the behind-the-scenes tours,” she said. Throughout the trip, Keeler has been posting comments and pictures showcasing the progress of the class via social media. Students have baked quiches at the Chateau de Pourtales, worked with French chocolatier Christophe Meyer, and visited a Black Forest ham production plant, a farm that grows cherries, strawberries and apples, and a four-star hotel in the Black Forest region.

“We are still to visit a cheesemaker and the Alsace wine region,” said Keeler, emphasizing that there is still much left for the students to see and do in France. “In Paris, we will help feed the hungry at a church facility and visit a lifestyle magazine.”

The Food and Travel Writing in France and Germany course will be offered again in May 2016.
USF St. Petersburg students baked quiche made of bacon and shallots, and red pepper, zucchini and shallots during a cooking class in Strasbourg, France.
USF St. Petersburg students prepare quiche during a cooking class at the Chateau de Pourtales in Strasbourg, France.
USFSP students sampled a number of chocolates at Patisserie Christian in Strasbourg, France.