

# AMERICAN EUROPEAN EDUCATION

## **European Food Education Season**

### **Spring School Brasov, Romania, 23-28 April 2018**

#### **AHA Team**

- 15 students (year 1, 2 and 3)
- 1 project manager
- 1 lecturer
- 1 chef

The students from American Hotel Academy were selected respecting the following criteria.

All 1<sup>st</sup> year students that had a passion for gastronomy and culinary arts were invited to create an assignment where their appreciation towards this domain was formulated in an essay. Besides that, they had to describe a traditional game meat recipe from Romania.

Besides the 1<sup>st</sup> year students, we were interested in engaging the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year students due to their previous experience (in Tour as well in Torun). They were considered to be a great asset for this Erasmus project because they were assigned to coordinate and oversee all activities specially designed for this specific Spring School.

#### **Benefits for students**

Before the Spring School began, together with the Project Manger weekly meetings were held in order to cover all aspects of this event. Students were very cooperative, implicated and ready to deliver the best version of themselves. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year students were assigned to organize, lead and control all the tasks the 1<sup>st</sup> year students had to accomplish. They really felt empowered and they embraced the opportunity to use their experience together with all the theoretical knowledge gained throughout the academic years. They better developed their organizational and leadership skills showing a lot of interest in making this Spring School a total success.

In preparation for the practical sessions of the Springschool students attended training sessions in order to gain additional kitchen skills.

At the debrief after the Spring school, the students noted the great exchange of ideas and valued the opportunity of meeting other students from another culture. They also enjoyed being involved in organizing a real life event and felt empowered. Unfortunately they were disappointed by some of their colleagues, as they felt that some of them got more involved than others.

#### **Benefits for American European Education**

The Association had the pleasure to organize the last Spring School of this Erasmus + Project and it was a great honor to be able to deliver a high quality week to all participants. Other than that, it

was really easy to communicate with all staff involved (from France and from Poland) because during three years we had the chance to know each other quite well and to develop strong relationships. The lecturers as well as other non participating staff of the Association were very excited and all believed that this has been a great opportunity to share best practice but also for the Association to organize an international event onsite. The team also valued the students involvement and were pleasantly surprised by their commitment.

The highlights of the activities for the spring school is as follows:

### **1. Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 2018**

The French (24 participants) and the Polish (2 participants) partners arrived in Bucharest. American Hotel Academy managed to provide transportation from Bucharest to Brasov and all participants were accommodated to their designated hotels. Because they arrived in Brasov late in the evening, they were offered diner in a traditional Romanian restaurant located in the proximity of their hotels. All participants were welcomed by AHA students, who were pleased to assist them with whatever was needed.

### **2. Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> of April 2018**

After breakfast, American hotel Academy organized a **press conference** where media was invited to participate for a better understanding of the project and also for exposure. The content of the conference was available throughout the week on several TV and radio stations, local and national. After the conference, AHA was pleased to present a culinary demonstration related to forest fruits, mushrooms and a tasting session was available to all participants. The chef (Horia Simon) in charge with the culinary demonstration created a unique and engaging atmosphere and it offered a great opportunity for all participants to get to know each other much better, especially because later that afternoon, the student competition was scheduled.

Several other interested external parties, such as hoteliers and highschool students attended the demonstration, interacted with both Romanian and French students and got to know the project and its objectives better.

The **student competition** was an instant success and all students interacted very well and they stated that it was a wonderful opportunity to use their gastronomical skills and to enjoy themselves doing whatever they love the most. They were divided in 5 mixed teams and with some specialty lecturers' support they had to respect the rules of the organizers and deliver the proper dishes within the allotted time. Soon after the student competition lunch was provided in the same traditional Romanian restaurant where all participants were invited.

The **lunch** provided daily for all participants added value to the experience and improved our communication and established stronger relationships. It gave us the chance to bond in an informal environment.

After lunch, all coordinators of the project attended the **MOOC session** while all the other participants were given time off to explore the city. The transnational meeting that followed was interesting and detail-oriented, where Aude Sivigny, explained in a professional manner everything we needed to take in consideration while answering to all questions we had

Later that evening a **coordinators' dinner** was provided to all coordinators as part of the meeting, extending the conversations regarding the project outcomes, deliverables and possible future collaborations.

### **Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> of April 2018**

Early in the morning, at school premises a **seminar** was organized having as main topic the forest fruits and other additional wild forest local products. We created a panel which included professionals from this domain, local producers, restaurant owners and of course members of the project.

As a logical extension to the seminar, the **student's presentation** was scheduled and several recipes were introduced to the public in which, different traditional wild forest products and dishes were presented.

**A trip to Halewood vineyards** was planned in order to discover how the sparkling wine is produced and most important, how this type of wine is combined with the wild forest products. The trip to the vineyards was a nice and pleasant experience because all participants were very much interested in wine and food pairing and the tasting sessions conducted by professionals caught their attention.

Later that evening, no other activities were scheduled and all participants took their time to discover the beauty of a medieval city like Brasov. During the Spring School, the Romanian students have shown the willingness to be the guides for the French students and they connected in a very beneficial way.

### **Thursday, 26<sup>th</sup> of April 2018**

In order to enhance the Spring School experience for all those involved in the project, American Hotel Academy organized a **trip to Bran**, a small village, with impressive culinary traditions quite popular due to the local cheese and cold meats producers. The theme of the Spring School organized in Brasov pinpointed to the wild forest products including game meat, berries, mushrooms and so on. In Bran, the first stop was the famous Bran Castle, where participants found out about medieval way of living in the area and how that connected to the way they ate and cooked. The visit included a guest speaker – the Chef of the high class restaurant on the Castle premises, who gave a short lecture on the medieval royalty food preferences, the cooking methods and the impact of foreign influences on the Romanian food and wine market of that time.

After visiting the world famous Bran's Castle, all students, lecturers and coordinators were invited to a farm to see how traditional Romanian cheeses and cold meats are made, respecting all the technological procedure and the Romanian public health rules and regulations. Everyone interested could taste and purchase any of the goods presented.

Lunch was considered a very "intriguing yet absolutely delicious" experience because all participants were served only with Romanian homemade products, which were found appealing by all students, lecturers and coordinators.

## **Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> of April 2018**

The last day of the Spring School proposed exciting activities such as: **a round table** where specialists from the hunting field (hunters, restaurant owners, lawyers, specialists and lecturers) gathered to discuss about hunting: legal and ethical aspects. It turned out to be an interesting and challenging topic and everyone present was actively involved, especially because it was an open discussion. The seminar was followed by a **culinary demonstration** performed by a famous chef from Romania (Liviu Preda). Game meat was the number one priority and the chef managed to create and to dazzle all participants with the unique recipes he presented. A tasting session was available for those interested in wild boar and deer.

After the demonstration, lunch was attended by everyone and whoever was interested in taking a **city tour**, was invited by our special local guide for 2 amazing hours, sightseeing the medieval town of Brasov.

American Hotel Academy planned and organized an **awarding ceremony** where the awarded students (from the student competition) received their prizes as well as all students receiving an attendance certification.

## **Conclusions**

For American European Education it was a great honor to be the last partner that organized the Spring School and we worked to make it as good as possible. We were delighted to host this event and we do appreciate the opportunities we had to meet, understand and to accept different cultures, values and beliefs. This project meant a lot for us because of the challenges, excitements and core values. We are looking forward to using all the material used in all three spring Schools, to disseminate the information and to keep our strong relationships. We hope that even though the project will end at the end of August, other projects will follow.

**Report prepared by Ioana Turcas**

**Coordinating lecturer of the Romanian team**