

## A LANGUAGE AND HOW TO COOK - THE SICILIAN WAY

in the kitchen fascinating and stayed well beyond the hours the course suggested. I'd never been in a professional kitchen before and Casa Grugna is one of the top three restaurants in Sicily.

Austrian chef, Andreas Zangerl who has cooked for Donald Trump and US president Gerald Ford as well as being executive chef on the QE2, left me in the hands of his second-in-command Giuseppe Fucile.

Giuseppe, who comes from Catania, worked for a year in a French restaurant in London and as a result speaks excellent English but he used a mixture of English and Italian to teach me the secrets of making scrumptious tortino alle mandorle, a variety of bread and a delicious looking gratin of fish.

Taormina is a beautiful, ancient hill top town which attracts a plague of tourists at weekends. And with the main thoroughfare jammed with visitors, that was the time for me to get out and about and practise my new found language skills.

Mount Etna beckons from all viewpoints and a visit to its slopes as a school activity was a highlight of the course. Instead of the tourist route, nine of us went off in a mini bus with Peppè, a geologist and volcanologist,

who introduced us to lava flows as well as the wildlife of the smouldering mountain.

My second weekend turned into another kind of adventure as I walked to a seaside village about six miles away to stay overnight in a coastal hotel. En route I met a little boy who gabbled something at me very rapidly. As I obviously didn't understand, his sisters playing near by came to the rescue and asked me the time. I realised my two weeks hadn't been entirely wasted after all - their brother had spoken in Sicilian.

So much was learnt and so many friends made during the two weeks that there were a few tears shed as we said our fond farewells.

For some this will be their only visit to Babilonia, but I'll be back.

### FACT FILE

FOR more information on courses and prices write to Babilonia, Centro di Lingua & Cultura Italiana, Via del Ginnasio 20, 98039 Taormina, Sicily Italy. Tel: 00 39 0942 23441 or look up the website at: [www.babilonia.it](http://www.babilonia.it)



Welcome break: The view from Babilonia's terrace



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