

Slow Food and Slow Travel: The Burchiello

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During our trip touring some of the major cities in Italy, we enjoyed an 8-hour Burchiello boat ride from Padua to Venice, focused on slow food and slow travel. We rode along the Brenta and Piovego Canals, soaking up the fresh air and beautiful views of houses, historical villas, and greenery. If we had taken a high-speed train from Padua to Venice, it would have only taken an average of 25 minutes. Even though high-speed trains are energy efficient and save time while traveling from one destination to another, they still disturb the environment by attracting thousands of people and producing large amounts of waste. The construction of the train tracks and the train stations also calls for the destruction of land full inhabited by wildlife. Trains have improved over time by becoming cleaner and faster, but they still harm the environment.

Another part of the Burchiello boat ride that I enjoyed was the local, healthy, and fresh snacks that we had while aboard. The day before, we visited a tiny, local store owned by a friend of my professor. After looking at all of the colorful produce, we bought pears, bread, cheese, cherries, tomatoes, and peach jam. My fellow students and I were raving about the delicious snacks as we enjoying the leisurely boat ride and gorgeous scenery. Having such healthy and Italian-style food to eat while traveling on the boat from Padua to Venice really enhanced my experience of slow travel in Italy. Being able to get off the boat and tour some historical villas also added to such a unique experience. Slow travel, combined with the slow food, allowed us to engage with the environment, sites, and culture throughout the trip, as well as feel good about doing it.

During our time here in Italy, we have taken two separate day trips to Venice, one trip to experience the Burchiello and the other to see an opera at Teatro La Fenice. Comparing our first trip to Venice by boat to our second trip by fast-train, I enjoyed the first trip much more. I felt like I experienced more and was able to soak in more of the beautiful scenery than when the train was zooming past it. Furthermore, since traveling by boat from one city to another is uncommon in the United States, riding on the Burchiello made the slow travel experience even more special to have taken place in Italy. Yet, when we arrived in Venice, it was disturbing to see the large number of yachts and cruise ships, producing tons of waste and bringing lots of tourists. Although we were also tourists, being aware of the impact that we were having on our environment and trying to lessen that impact by utilizing slow travel put us one step closer to supporting sustainability.

I am glad to have had this experience in order to compare and contrast different modes of travel and ways of eating. We were able to appreciate the environment and the places we visited, while also knowing that we were trying to work with nature, instead of harming it.