

I ate the whole thing. I sat there on the floor of the tiny apartment. I stared at the remnants of what used to be a baguette, once wrapped innocently in paper. I wiped the crumbs from my mouth. How could I have just eaten the whole thing, by myself?

Now, I'm no stranger to a baguette. Give me a loaf of bread, a baguette, or whatever bread is on hand, add some cheese, and I have a meal. Knowing me, I will probably add a side salad just to fend off the guilt. But really, I have my limitations. I know when to stop. It's just not politically correct in the food world, or to my waistline, to eat an entire baguette in one sitting, by myself.

It's not like I hadn't already eaten my share of baguettes. We were on the final leg of a three week vacation. I had already eaten my way through Paris and the South of France. By time we reached Barcelona, I hoped that I didn't need to get a second seat for the plane ride home. So what was it? What was so spectacular about this baguette?

Let me take you back to the scene of the crime. It was just before 10pm. It had been a long, hot day and my other half was already fast asleep. Over the buzz of the air-conditioning, I could hear the sounds of the city come alive. Dinner in Barcelona starts at 10pm, and even then you'd be an early bird. I was starting to feel a slight pang of hunger but knew I didn't want a big meal. I remembered seeing a

little corner store just down the street earlier that day. Or was it down the street and around the corner? Well, either way, I knew it wasn't too far.

I managed to make it to the store with only a wrong turn or two. I wandered around, what did I want? Cheese? Yes, that sounded good. Wine? Yes, that sounded even better. I needed one more item to complete the meal. Bread. Yes, there it was – I spotted a full basket at the end of the cashier stand.

Satisfied with my meal choice, I grabbed a loaf from the basket on my way out. It took me only a few steps before I realized this was no ordinary baguette. This bread was warm. No, this bread was hot. Piping hot.

I couldn't believe it - hot, fresh bread at 10pm, from this little corner store? I felt a flutter of excitement and picked up the pace. It suddenly became urgent to get to back the apartment as soon as possible. Sure, I guess I could have dove into that bag right there, tore off a piece and stuffed it in my mouth. But a girl has to keep some integrity, even if in a foreign country.

Finally, I made it back to the apartment, and baguette was still hot. Suddenly, I couldn't wait any longer I had to taste this bread. As I ripped off a piece, steam escaped from the bag, the smell of yeast permeated the air. I bit into the bread and instantly I knew - no other bread would ever be as good as this. It tasted as if every

pore had been stuffed with butter. I tore off another chunk. And another. And another. Before long, there was no more.

When it was over, I stared down at the empty bag that has once housed that buttery baguette. Next to it lay an unopened bottle of wine and an unopened package of cheese, waiting patiently for their turn to join the party. They never had a chance.

It's been two years since that baguette. My love for that bread hasn't waivered. Oh I've tried to forget, tried to move on, but nothing compares to that one. Maybe someday we'll meet again, but I am happy that I my chance when I did, for that baguette will not be forgotten.