

Pan America, Week 8

We Are Cooking!

6.10.14

For the first time in our lives, we wake up in the earliest hours of a day and think, “How soon ‘til we can get up and dive into the next (12 – 15-hour) work day?”

If we were any happier, we’d burst.

I love making up recipes inspired by customers’ feedback, my whims, and available, fresh ingredients. We both love talking with visitors from around the world.



On the last Sunday in September 20 Chilean seminarians trooped in and ordered two giant sheet pizzas – a square meter of pepperoni and cheese! Tucking in, they crooned with pleasure. It was the first day we broke 1.000 Bs! – about \$150 USD. Keep in mind that here 1.000 Bs. goes nearly as far as \$1,000 in the U.S. We were thrilled! In contrast, on our worst day we cleared 52 Bs. To date, overall sales (17,653 Bs.) minus expenses (4,879 Bs.) works out to 12,774 Bs., or about \$1,825 USD for mission projects.

As the seminarians were leaving three separate groups of Dutch travelers arrived. One couple among them told us that trekkers in Cusco, Peru, recommended they eat at Pan America when they got to Copa. Ahhh: international fame!

Three young Brazilians (who speak Portuguese) traveling outside their country for the first time, tried earnestly to communicate with us in pantomime, and scraps of Spanish, English and French. Four decades from my last class, I’m retrieving a little French and can usually understand a dialogue.

A young vendor who sells lunch from a cart near our door likes our banana bread, but never has more than 1 or 2 Bs. So I give her half a piece and cut the rest into samples. She can’t hear nor speak, but signs well enough for us to understand her. A surprise bonus of working this fabulous job is that every day we see that people yearn to communicate, connect with, and help one another and the world we all share. It is inspiring and faith affirming.

Fun, too.

Three young Franciscans from the Basilica have become regular customers.





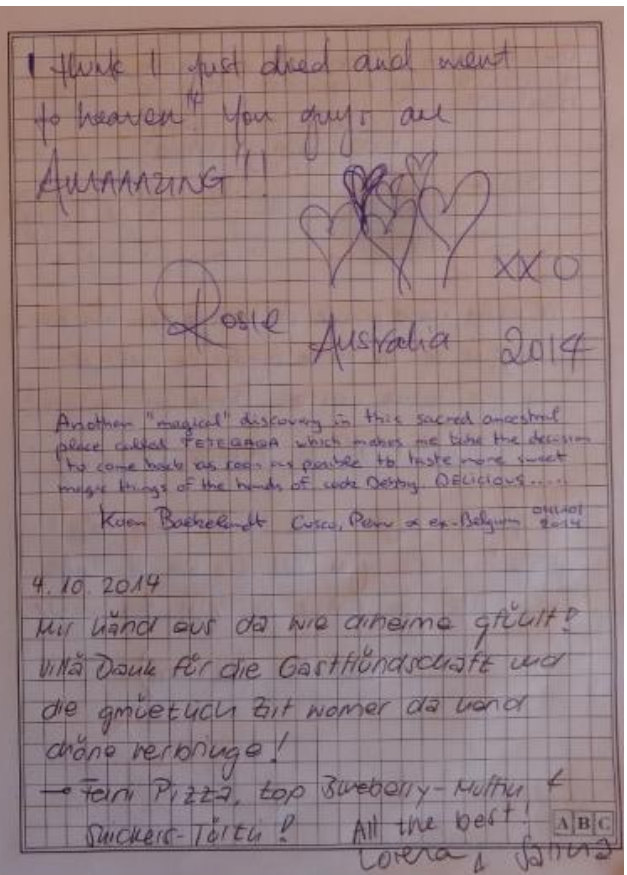
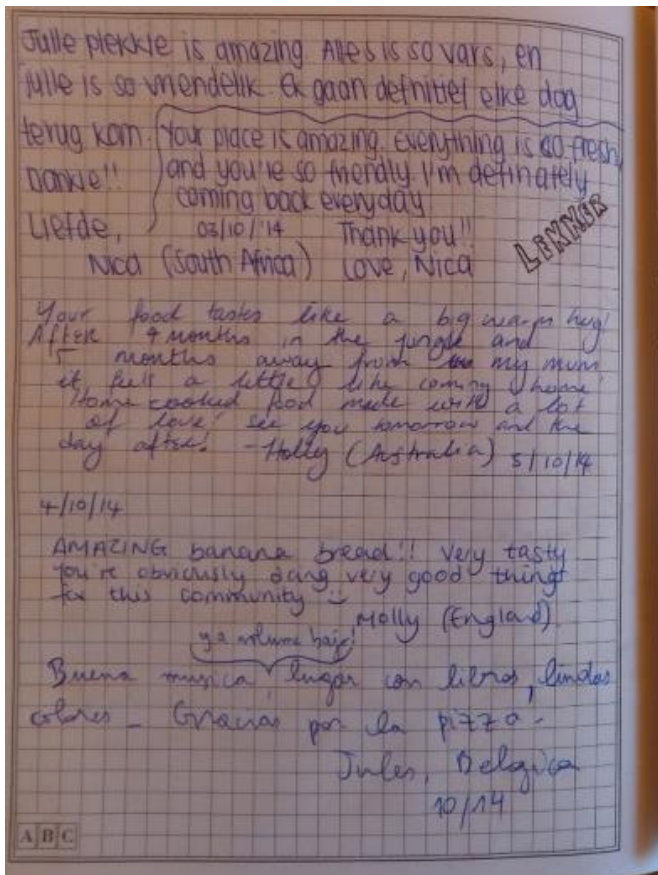
Customers have given over 1,700 Bs., about \$250, to help the mission. One American-Canadian couple handed us 1,400 Bs.

Little kids linger just beyond the doors, listening to such alien, upbeat music as zydeco, swing, or The Talking Heads. Sometimes they boogie past the door, grinning joyfully.

Walking by the cathedral just after sunrise, we trade greetings with the *adorno* vendors setting up their stands – “Buen dia,” “Kamisaki,” “Good morning!” Homebound, it’s much the same: “Hasta mañana,” “Qharürkama” or “Jikisiñkama” (Aymara for “see you tomorrow” or “see you later”).



At a customer’s suggestion, about three weeks ago we started a guest book (Gästebuch, gæstebog, knjiga bostov, livre d’or, ktuza omzubob zocmeü, libro de li hospiti). Already it bears reviews and messages in 13 languages from travelers hailing from 27 different countries.



Some excerpts:

“ ... The thoughts behind this cozy place is something we admire. A ‘hyggelig’ (Danish, pronounced ‘HUE ga lig,’ meaning cozy) place everyone visiting Copacabana should visit. Best regards, Caroline and Cecile from Denmark

“We are in love with your coffee and with your energy! It’s a very beautiful place. – Camile y Maxi, from Chile

“Got here the first time on the 20th of septembre, my mother’s birthday. Coincidence? Anyway I had the opportunity to find this delightful bakery held by two lovely people working hard to make the world a better place. I had an awesome breakfast, then the day after a wonderful lunch and passionate conversation the whole time. I came back every day to get some good vibes and good energy for the day to come. Thank you for your kindness and the time we shared together, Debbie and Jeff. ”



Benjamin, Bruno, Sam & Laura “ France – Aussie – Argentina (Editor’s note: Benjamin visited Pan America five times in three days. During their three-day stay in Copa, a French couple came by eight times.)

“ ... the pizza is delicious. Maybe we’ll be back for more. -- Filipa from Portugal / Rafaello from Italy

“Fantastic impromptu history lesson!! Thank you very much and good luck with the future and your projects. – Love, Dan & Mel from New Zealand



“Un petit moment de bonheur sucré dans la journée! Un vrai regal, de bons produits et une très bonne ambiance. – Bruno, from France

“Mmmm ... cookie ... NOM NOM NOM – Peter N. Australia

“Thank you for this little bit of heaven in the middle of South America! The best peanut butter cookies I’ve ever had ☺ -- Alice Anderson, Australia

“ ... what really hooked us was the food – the banana bread was beyond brilliant. Not to mention the huge amount of hospitality and great advice we received. – Sveja& Christofer from Germany



“Merci! J’ai aimé beaucoup. – Marie J. de Canada (age 11)

Partnering with the Bolivian FBI

Because we've lived in Bolivia for more than three years, we must get *permanencia*, which is close to dual citizenship and will last our lifetimes. It's been a maddening process, requiring several trips to La Paz; stamped, sealed, certified letters from two neighbors asserting that we live where we live; another Interpol background check; an official inspection of our home by the equivalent of the U.S. FBI, known as *FELC-C* (*Fuerza Especial Luchando Crimen*, Special Force Fighting Crime); and about \$2,000. The requisites changed daily, sometimes hourly. Thank heavens we're nearly done.

The local FELC-C guys dropped by the shop in early September. They ordered a ham and cheese pizza, asked if I'd teach them English so they could better communicate with foreigners, and wondered if we'd partner with them on a special project. During our local background checks they'd learned that most town folk and all our neighbors know us and think well of us. We're trusted and respected, especially now that we're members of the business community.

Police officers, and particularly FELC-C, don't enjoy such a reputation. They're mistrusted, often hated, and presumed to be corrupt. (That has never been our experience. FELC officers even offered to drive us to La Paz to iron out confusion about our documents in the national office.)



In light of their reputation the FELC-C officers wanted to know if we'd help them teach kids and parents about human trafficking and how to protect against it. William, the boss, confirmed our observations that after breakfast many parents turn their young children out of their homes until sunset, trusting that the community will look out for the youngsters.

We're four miles from the Peru border. Though it's never in the news, children and incapacitated adults *do* go missing, William assured us. It might be a month or two before a family reports the

incident, he said. Sometimes that's because they mistrust FELC-C. Sometimes it's because poor parents believed a stranger was offering a child a legitimate job, and that the child would return, with money. Sometimes it's because poor parents fear being accused of selling their child. And sometimes it's because parents actually did sell their child. Victims are often forced into the sex trade.

Wanna Borrow our Boots?

Between mission work and the high cost of travel, we've not been back to the States in nearly two years. But -- hooray! -- we plan to fly home on or near Christmas day and stay through January.

However, now that Pan America promotional material is in local hotels and hostels, and online, and the place is growing a good reputation, we cringe to think of having to close it for a full month, and risk getting bad reviews.



Vegetable vendor and good friend, Brigida at her stand in the central market.

If you've ever fantasized about doing a little international mission work, and/or running a bakery/pizzeria, we've got a great opportunity for two people to step into our shoes for five weeks. We'd spend a week or ten days with you, introducing you to our friends and neighbors as well as local vendors, walking you through routines such as how to catch precious water in the morning, how to bash open the front door, when and where to buy produce, and how transportation systems work.

You'd stay in our house, and we'd look to you to feed two dogs and two hens. And make pizzas, sandwiches and baked goods for Pan America four or five days a week.

The rest of the time you could explore this gorgeous, historic, mystic place: sail out to Isla del Sol, home of the Aymara's creation story; visit the floating Uros Islands off the shore of Puno, Peru; take a lovely train ride to Cusco, eat a fried cuy (guinea pig), and see ancient Machu Picchu; hike



pre-Columbian trails; visit La Paz and its cosmopolitan restaurants, ride the new teleferico (suspended cable car), and shop the funky Witches' Market.



Having some Spanish would be helpful, but not essential. A flair for baking and pizza making would be helpful; rest assured, our recipes are simple, and have been adjusted for baking at high altitude. Having a taste for connecting with people from around the world (most of who speak English) is pretty important.

If this fascinating, gratifying, benefit-rich, salary-free opportunity to help us, the restaurant, and the mission appeals to you, please email us right away at jeffandeb@gmail.com. Thank you!



Left: Holly (Australia) and Nica (South Africa) teaching Wawita how to be a shop dog.



Right: Wawita provides a canine cuddle to Eric (Calgary, Canada) who was missing his own dog.



Travelers from Paris and Grenoble, France, enjoy four pizzas. The guy in the denim shirt is a chef...he gave us a rave review.

Love and hugs,

Deb and Jeff.....and Wawita

