

### Oh, the olives!

On my recent trip to Nice, I was fortunate enough to go to an open market. Oh, the colors and smells were fantastic. I strolled around just taking everything in. It was February, but the weather was wonderful. It was very sunny, and you only needed to wear a light jacket. So walking around outside was very comfortable. Because my visit there was so short, my good friend Lorraine took me to as many places as possible near the coast. The market that we went to was a photographer's paradise. There were so many colors and textures there. Thankfully, I have a digital camera, so I didn't run out of film. There were all kinds of fruits and vegetables. There was a stand loaded with salamis of all shapes and sizes. Flowers, local honies, cheeses, and finally, olives. Oh the olives! Just looking at the photo makes my mouth water! Having a mother who is a Spaniard, means that I have had a lot of olives in my life. My favorites are green olives stuffed with anchovies. Mm, mm! I think also, olives represent a lot for me. They represent my experiences in Spain, and they remind me of sights, sounds, and smells that are typically Mediterranean. It's funny to think that when I was a teenager in the North of England, a lot of kids my age weren't familiar with olives at all. Delivery pizza was not yet a big thing. And the favorite foreign dishes in England were Indian. Since then, even the small, rural towns have become more exposed to the rest of the world, and more cosmopolitan. Thank goodness. In my 'A' level Spanish class, I remember my teacher bringing in a couple of small jars of Spanish olives to pass around to the students. Most of them had never tried them before. I was amazed. One by one, they smelled the olives, and slowly put them in their mouths. And when they chewed, they were really unsure about the taste. I, on the other hand, wolfed down most of the olives quite happily. I'm sure that now, all of those people who were in that class, are a lot more familiar with olives. I think that we humans have a special connection to foods that we have been brought up with, that also have an important traditional role in our particular cultures. The food might be good in and of itself, but it is the context in which we have experienced it that makes it important and familiar. My Mexican students in High School would tell me about a soup of their culture which they absolutely loved. It's called Menudo. Finally, one day I was able to try it. It turns out to be cow's stomach soup.....Well, I just wasn't too sure about the taste, or smell, or texture...But I realize that if I had been brought up with it, I would probably love it too. That's the power of culture right there.

### Grammar notes.

Related vocabulary: to stroll, to take it in, to make your mouth water, to wolf down.

1. Instead of rushing, it's nice to stroll down a street or in a park.
2. We took in the river boat cruise with delight; there was so much to see.
3. Just thinking about the summer fruits makes my mouth water.
4. The travelers had been walking all night in a storm. When they got to the inn, they wolfed down some hot stew and went to bed.

