



# BROOKLYN\_BORN

[Change Banner Image](#)

**154,974**  
SparkPoints



Info



Photos



Feed



Blogs



Awards

More



## Is it easier to maintain a healthy lifestyle in Europe?

Friday, June 20, 2014

I've just returned from 17 days in Europe(Slovakia, Vienna, London) and read TinaJane's terrific blog about cultural differences.

[www.sparkpeople.com/mypa\\_ge\\_public\\_journal\\_individual.asp?blog\\_id=5721395](http://www.sparkpeople.com/mypa_ge_public_journal_individual.asp?blog_id=5721395)

Although I don't have the perspective of a resident, we do travel to Europe several times a year. During this trip with family (3 generations), we immersed ourselves in the local culture. We ate lots of carbs, meat of the "schnitzel" variety and for those of age, a good amount of local beer and wine. Plenty of dessert ("kolach" in my native Slovak) was consumed too.

I returned at exactly the same weight at which I left. An even bigger surprise, DH (aka the junk food king) maintained his weight also.

Although we drank a lot of water as is our usual custom, the kids got to try the Coke made with sugar not HFCS and the Gatorade without the chemicals currently allowed in the USA.

Note the text on the wall!



Homemade desserts were a specialty of this place

[Add a Blog Entry](#)

See Today's Featured Member Blog Posts

### More Blogs by BROOKLYN\_BORN

[Now I can add one more event to my "Anniversary Dates" to forget - 6/7/2021](#)

[Avoiding Our Wedding Anniversary - 6/4/2021](#)

[Multitasking for Safety – Plus Remembrance and Reflection - 6/1/2021](#)

[Taps Across America – The National Moment of Remembrance - Monday 5/31/21 3PM - 5/30/2021](#)

[View All >](#)



These were made by my cousin Stefania.



This was Vienna



And then there was London.



While out sightseeing, this was a favorite stop. They're all over, even at the airport. We did hit a few pubs too.

I realize that we did a lot of walking, but it was of the strolling variety, not the intense power variety I would do at home.

Much of the landscape was similar to that here at home, but looking around at the size of the people, it was obvious that we weren't in Virginia anymore.

So I wonder, along with TinaJane, is there something about the European approach to life that makes healthy living easier?

[Edit Blog Entry](#) | [Delete Blog Entry](#)

Share This Post With Others

[Report Inappropriate Blog](#)

## Member Comments About This Blog Post



**MARYJEANSL**



I can't help but wonder whether their refusal to allow genetically modified foods, as well as a lot of the additives that are common in foods here, might have something to do with it. I once saw a link to a page that listed the ingredients in McDonald's fries here and in England. Even though fries are never going to be a healthy food, I was astonished at the nasty additives that Mickey D's considers essential in the US but somehow manages to get by without in Europe.

Granted that that isn't going to be the whole explanation, I suspect it may be a partial explanation.  
2545 days ago



**SLIMMERJESSE**



Yes, having been to many countries, I think that European living has so many healthy positives.  
2549 days ago



**MISCHAKEO**



I spent 6 months in Europe. I think people walk more. I also think they might use less processed foods. The tomatoes in Italy were the best I have ever had. The quality of food was excellent. I don't really have any answers, but they do have a healthy lifestyle and seem to be able to eat and drink their wonderful foods.  
2549 days ago



**CD13758606**



I would love to experience Europe and its tastes. My DS and DIL honeymooned all over Europe and the food looked amazing. They walked everywhere. The lifestyle is different with open markets, fresh foods. Love the desserts that did not come prepackaged! And the sizes are not "share with the whole table" single serving size that we have in the US.  
2549 days ago



**PHEBESS**



I always lose weight in Europe (and have done so while travelling in Asia as well). Yes, there's the walking everywhere, although it isn't power walking.

My theory, though - the USA over-farms the soil, plus we have all those genetically modified vegs and fruits - so I believe we actually are getting fewer nutrients in our foods than foods grown in other countries. Thus our bodies, needing those nutrients, feel hungrier in the USA and so we want to eat more. Constant struggle.

I've read some stuff about this, and there are scientists who think this is part of the weight issue in the USA.

One more reason to let nature do her thing and keep our plants natural!  
2549 days ago



**DOVESEYES**



My BIL and SIL noticed the same on their trip to Europe so it looks like its confirmed :)  
2549 days ago



**WATERMELLEN**



As a Canadian I'm always astonished in the States (especially the Southern States) by the size of the food portions. And the ubiquity of deep fried foods. That's why typically we'll rent a condo and cook for ourselves on holidays: it's healthier and it tastes better.  
2549 days ago



**DR1939**



They walk or bike. We drive  
2549 days ago

**SWEDE\_SU**

oh yes indeed - there is a difference. i have two cultures too, we spend our summers in sweden, and you know you are not in the land of fast food anymore, though the obesity you now see (and didn't when we lived there in the 70s, pre mcdonalds), is very much related to the fast food culture that is invading. thank you for sharing!

2550 days ago

**ONEKIDSMOM**

Food for thought, for sure. I liked TinaJane's blog, and yours, too. It's conversation worthy.

And it reminds me of when I spent seven weeks working in Italy, back in my pre-Spark, considerably heavy years. Even then, (think mid-1980's), I ate freely, but walked to get places. I came home slightly lighter than when I left. I ate out some, but also cooked for myself. Not much different from home.

2550 days ago

**GINIEMIE**

They walk, it is a pleasure to walk/stroll. There are safe places to walk or bike ride. It makes a difference. I know that Erik was astonished at his "extra grand" dinner. It was probably what he would eat for a 3/4 of his first serving at home.

By the time the waitress came back to see if we wanted anything else, he chose a desert rather than another dish and was satisfied. Eating slower and enjoying the food & company has something to do with eating healthier too.



2550 days ago

**HOLLYM48**

Glad you had a great trip!

2550 days ago

**IFDEEVARUNS2**

Without a doubt!

So glad you had a great time. As 'fast food' goes, pret isn't bad.

2550 days ago

**FANGFACEKITTY**

Yes! Better food, normally smaller portions, no GMOs, no or fewer chemicals & crap in the food, more walking / biking as a cultural norm...living healthy is a lot easier here in France than back home in MI.

2550 days ago

**TINAJANE76**

I think so. We're obviously still in charge of the choices we make and I did put on a lot of weight the first few years I was living here, but living healthily is actually pretty pleasurable now that I've got things down. I think it helps that restaurant portions tend to be smaller, people are naturally more active and family structures are generally stronger, which I think goes a long way in preventing people from lapsing into addictive behaviors like drug and alcohol abuse, overeating and other problems like the ones I mentioned in my blog.

Thanks so much for the shout out. Glad you had such a nice time in Europe!

2550 days ago

**PHOENIX1949**

Very interesting. Thank you for sharing.

2550 days ago

**SUZYSMOBILE**

I'll second that. If only we could do the same!

2550 days ago

**PROPMAN1**

I believe that people in other countries have a 'culture' that is much healthier than in the US. They eat but their food is not laden with sugar, preservatives, etc. like ours. If only.....we could do the same.

2550 days ago

## Add Your Comment to the Blog Post

Leave encouragement, a question, or anything else relevant to this post. All blog comments must abide by SparkPeople's [Community Guidelines](#).

☐ Subscribe to this blog

ADD AN EMOTICON

SPELL CHECK

**Post Comment**

Disclaimer: Weight loss results will vary from person to person. No individual result should be seen as a typical result of following the SparkPeople program.