



A Community Cooking School

Dear ,

Chef Camila Loew is a dear member of the 18 Reasons family, and we are sad to announce that she will be moving back to Spain at the end of July. She will be expanding her culinary travel business, Sobremesa, and we know you are as excited as we are about the prospect of sipping *café con leche* in Barcelona with Camila. We wanted to let Camila tell her story in her own words:

"In fall of 2014, I was invited by Accent International to Istanbul for a few days, to meet my colleagues from the Mediterranean Politics, Food & Culture program I now teach regularly for University of California Education Abroad Program. Overjoyed at the opportunity to get to know an exciting city in a rich culture, new to me and different from any I had ever visited, I knew however that I wouldn't be able to stay long enough to scratch the surface, and that felt frustrating. Somehow I found out about Culinary Backstreets, a small endeavor back then. The mission of their food-focused city walks, centered on the human aspect behind the food, spoke right to me.

"I joined our small group (there were 6 of us) early on a rainy fall morning, for a full day packed with eating and stories. It began with a traditional Turkish breakfast our guide pulled out of her backpack in a small side room of a picturesque old train station. What better way to introduce ourselves to each other than around the table? Our guide led us to places I never would have been able to reach on my own: the right shop within the spice market, countless small, hidden, hole-in-the-wall, family-run restaurants, tons of street food joints, and even artisans' workshops tucked away in secret city corners. It inspired me to cook and eat more Turkish food, and in fact I later put together a lovely Turkish cuisine workshop for 18 Reasons.

"This experience certainly played a role in my decision to start Sobremesa Culinary Tours, my own small business of honest culinary tourism. After over a year of research (a creative process I loved), in summer 2017 I ran Sobremesa Culinary Tours' first two offerings, a 5-day experience in the Basque Country (aka food heaven), and a 9-day food-focused immersion in Barcelona. Both tours sold out and everyone had an amazing time, filled with surprises and new, unforgettable sensory cultural experiences. Many of our guests had been to Spain before, but were able to experience it at its heart, in a new way, through its people and food.



"This year we are repeating the two Spain tours, and have added a tour to Japan in May, a culture and cuisine I am fascinated by.

"Organized travel, I now believe, is both possible and desirable in our globalized world. I hope the guests of Sobremesa Culinary Tours feel well received and empowered by the knowledge we share with them, and, with our guidance, less daunted to leave their comfort zone and venture into new cultures."

Read more about Camila's culinary tours on the [Sobremesa](#) website, or join her at our April 18th [Community Dinner](#).