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Around the World in 80 Plates



Once upon a time in a small town nestled between rolling hills and meandering rivers, there lived a young chef named Mia. She had a passion for cooking that was as fiery as the hottest chili pepper, and a dream that was as vast as the endless sky. Mia had always dreamed of attending the prestigious Culinary Institute of Excellence, but her family's modest income made that dream seem as distant as a star in the night sky.

One bright and sunny morning, Mia's life took an unexpected turn when she received a letter in the mail. It was an invitation to participate in the most prestigious culinary scholarship competition in the world, the "Around the World in 80 Plates" competition. The grand prize was a full scholarship to the Culinary Institute of Excellence, and Mia knew that this was her chance to make her dream come true.

With excitement bubbling in her heart and a determination that could rival the fieriest of kitchen flames, Mia packed her bags and set off on her culinary adventure. Little did she know that this journey would take her to far-flung corners of the globe, where she would explore diverse cuisines and cultures like never before.

Chapter 1: The French Connection

Mia's first stop was Paris, France, the culinary capital of the world. As she stepped off the plane, the aroma of freshly baked baguettes and pastries enveloped her. Mia's taste buds tingled with anticipation. In Paris, she attended cooking classes at a renowned culinary school and learned the art of making delicate croissants, rich sauces, and exquisite desserts. She also discovered the importance of fresh ingredients and precision in French cuisine.

One evening, Mia wandered the charming streets of Montmartre, where she stumbled upon a small bistro with a sign that read "Chez Pierre." Inside, she was welcomed by the warm smiles of the staff. Mia ordered a classic French onion soup and a perfectly cooked coq au vin. She savored every bite, understanding why French cuisine was renowned worldwide.

Chapter 2: The Sizzling Streets of Bangkok

Mia's next destination was the bustling streets of Bangkok, Thailand. The vibrant colors of the street markets, the spicy aroma of Thai spices, and the rhythmic sounds of sizzling woks were a sensory explosion. Mia was eager to dive into the world of Thai cuisine.

In Bangkok, Mia joined a cooking class led by a local chef named Nong. With a mortar and pestle in hand, Mia learned to create the perfect green curry paste and master the art of stir-frying. She even tried her hand at making the ever-elusive pad Thai. Nong taught her that balance was the key to Thai cuisine - the perfect harmony of sweet, sour, salty, and spicy flavors.



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One evening, Mia ventured into a street food market. She tried exotic dishes like mango sticky rice and fiery papaya salad. The street vendors, with their infectious smiles, showed her that food could be a universal language, uniting people from all walks of life.

Chapter 3: A Tango in Buenos Aires

From the vibrant streets of Bangkok, Mia's culinary journey took her to the sultry rhythms of Buenos Aires, Argentina. Here, the tango and the love of beef were central to the culture. Mia couldn't wait to explore the world of Argentine cuisine.

Mia attended an Argentine barbecue, known as an "asado," where she watched skilled grill masters sizzle up succulent steaks and sausages. The art of grilling and the love for chimichurri sauce were revelations to Mia. She also learned the art of making empanadas, filled with savory ingredients like beef, olives, and spices.

One night, Mia joined a tango club and found herself swept away by the passionate dance. She realized that food and dance were intertwined in the Argentine soul, both expressing the same intense emotions and love for life.

Chapter 4: Sushi and Sakura in Tokyo

Mia's journey then took her to Tokyo, Japan, a place where tradition and innovation coexisted seamlessly. Here, she delved into the world of sushi and the art of Japanese cuisine.

In Tokyo, Mia trained under a sushi master named Hiroshi. She learned the delicate art of slicing fish, the precise seasoning of rice, and the importance of presentation. Mia marveled at the simplicity and perfection of sushi.

During cherry blossom season, Mia had the chance to enjoy a traditional hanami picnic beneath a canopy of sakura trees. She tasted exquisite bento boxes filled with sushi, tempura, and pickled vegetables. The beauty of the cherry blossoms mirrored the delicacy of Japanese cuisine.

Chapter 5: A Taste of India in Jaipur

Mia's culinary adventure continued to India, where she landed in Jaipur, a city known for its rich history and flavorsome cuisine. She embraced the aromatic spices, vibrant colors, and exotic flavors of Indian food.

In Jaipur, Mia learned to cook traditional Indian dishes like butter chicken, vegetable biryani, and samosas. She marveled at the way spices were used to create layers of flavor and heat. Mia also visited local spice markets, where the aroma of cardamom, cinnamon, and cumin filled the air.

One evening, Mia was invited to a traditional Rajasthani feast, where she enjoyed a royal spread of dal baati churma, aloo pyaaz kachori, and gatte ki sabzi. The hospitality and generosity of her hosts touched her heart, proving that food had the power to bring people together.



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Chapter 6: Paella and Flamenco in Barcelona

Mia's journey brought her to the sunny streets of Barcelona, Spain, where she was captivated by the lively culture, passionate music, and delicious cuisine. Here, she learned to cook the iconic Spanish dish, paella.

Under the guidance of a local chef, Mia prepared paella with saffron-infused rice, fresh seafood, and chorizo. The sizzling aroma of the dish filled the kitchen, and Mia couldn't help but dance to the rhythm of the sizzling pan.

One evening, Mia attended a flamenco show in a cozy tablao. The passionate dance and soulful music resonated with her, reminding her that cooking was not just about ingredients but also about expressing oneself.

Chapter 7: A Gourmet Odyssey in New York City

Mia's journey came full circle as she returned to New York City, where she had started her culinary adventure. However, she now saw the city with fresh eyes, enriched by the culinary knowledge and cultural experiences from around the world.

Back in New York, Mia met with a renowned chef who introduced her to the world of gourmet cuisine. She learned the art of plating, molecular gastronomy, and the use of unusual ingredients. Mia's culinary repertoire expanded, and she felt more confident than ever.

Finally, the day of the "Around the World in 80 Plates" competition arrived. The competition was fierce, with talented chefs from all corners of the globe showcasing their skills and creativity. Mia's journey had prepared her well, and she presented dishes inspired by her travels: a French onion soup, Thai green curry, Argentine empanadas, Japanese sushi, Indian butter chicken, Spanish paella, and a modern New York dessert.

When the judges tasted Mia's dishes, their taste buds embarked on their own journey, experiencing the flavors of the world in each bite. Mia's passion, dedication, and the lessons she had learned from her global adventure shone through her creations.

Epilogue: A Dream Realized

The moment of truth arrived as the judges announced the winner of the competition. Mia stood among the finalists, her heart pounding. When her name was called as the winner, tears of joy filled her eyes. She had not only won the scholarship but also gained a wealth of knowledge and a love for the world's diverse cuisines.

Mia's culinary journey had taken her around the world in 80 plates, and in the process, she had discovered the magic of food as a universal language that bridged cultures and connected people. With her scholarship to the Culinary Institute of Excellence, Mia knew that her dream was no longer a distant star but a reality within reach. And so, her culinary adventure continued, as she set out to create dishes that would bring people together, one plate at a time.

