My experience in ‘The Floating City’

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The city boasted the usual, tourusty delights – a picturesque gondola ride along the Grand Canal, a midnight stroll through Piazza San Marco, and a view from the Rialto Bridge amongst the tourist shops and market stalls that lined the strade – but the real pleasure of living in such a unique space was in the discovery of its best kept secrets. The Libreria Acqua Alta for example, would excite anyone with a remote interest in literature; gondolas and bathtubs overflow with books ranging from the art of the quattrocento through to modern-day cookbooks, old catalogues are stacked high and photographic prints and postcards from as early as the 1800s layer the counter.

In addition, despite the rumours that Venetian cuisine falls far behind that of Naples and Rome, the food at ‘La Zucca’ and ‘Paradiso Perduto’ suggest otherwise. Fresh platters of mixed seafood, plates of pumpkin and ricotta tart and bowls of Cacio e Pepe were in abundance, not to mention the Aperol Spritz, Vin Brulé and Prosecco that was on offer at the end of every narrow strada.

Venice was, in retrospect, the best place possible to study the history of art. Immersed in a living culture that still prided itself on its history and authenticity, I was not only exposed to a new language but a new way of life, where the art and architecture of the past not only lined the pages of books, but the strade of my second home.