

German food – A discovery

“Ich bin ein Berliner!”

These words, proudly announced by unfortunate President 35 J.F.K., have rang out throughout the generations since 1963. Of course, unknown to poor Mr President, “ein Berliner” is not a resident of Berlin but instead a jam doughnut. This slip-up was my first insight into German food. As I sat on a depressing Ryanair flight on a depressing Thursday afternoon, I thought about all the delicious foods which was to greet me in Germany. The food was silly-sounding but sounded superb. Sauerkraut, Schnitzel and Wurst, stereotypes of the German land.

Despite these thoughts, I was disappointed for the first days in Germany. McDonald’s. KFC. Domino’s. Come on! I expected more from this new land. I indulged in the burgers and pizzas of course, who wouldn’t after a two-hour flight. A Ryanair one at that. But this sea of fast-food was merely a facade. It was not until I could roam for myself that I could experience proper food. On our way back from the creatively named ‘Universität Bielefeld’, I noticed a stand. One lone stand in an otherwise deserted plaza. As Mrs Donald left us to our own devices, I nabbed my chance. Reading the sign placed on the stall, I was shocked at the low prices. ‘Currywurst, €1,50’. Timidly, I took my first bite, and my fears were dashed immediately. Pure bliss.

Never, not ever in my life had I tasted anything as good. Perfectly cooked Wurst, covered in a stunning curry sauce, dusted in mild powder and served with a small toasted bread roll. Bliss. Why was it so good? I will never know, but what I do know for certain is that no other tasting of Currywurst has come anywhere near the one that was presented to me at the fortress in the abandoned plaza.

Afterwards, more goodies. Entire shopping centres dedicated to the most delicious sweets were now a common sight for me. Five minutes on the Autobahn and a new fantasy land of fantasy foods met my glistening eyes. In the middle of all this, the ‘Big Day’. Sunday. Much like us on the Emerald Isle, Germans have their own tradition to top off the week. Kaffee und Kuchen, which is coffee and cake to you and me. Delicious desserts and creamed coffee paired perfectly. When I was there, the week’s serving was apple tart. I hate apple tart. Usually, I do. But this one was different. It was good. Inexplicably good. Can you explain that? I sure can’t.

I am still yet to discover what magic was used to make the food so good. But as I was whisked away on an arguably much better Aer Lingus flight, typical Northern Irish foods greeted me again. Tea and Tayto, something the Germans haven’t quite mastered yet. Christmas markets up and down the country have tried but never succeeded, in replicating the food I had on my travels. The masters still have more students to teach.