

Jeff Around Town – May 13th, 2025

Jeff: Joining me on Jeff Around Town is none other than KVNO's resident foodie, Diane Watson. This is not Dish Omaha, it's maybe Dish Around Town or Diane Around Town, whatever it is. Diane, thanks for joining me.

Diane: It's a pleasure.

Jeff: Well, we were talking about your recent trip. You had a trip to Italy.

Diane: Italy, Greece, Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro. It was glorious.

Jeff: Yeah, so you mentioned something to me which kind of blew me away. You are from Omaha, from the cathedral area.

Diane: Yes. Yes, grew up here.

Jeff: And what did you say?

Diane: Well, one of my favorite experiences on this trip was a farm immersion experience, where we went and gathered eggs and picked lemons and watched how olive oil is made. And I said to you, I had never been on a farm before.

Jeff: (laughter) And I was thinking, never on a farm in Greece.

Diane: Well true. Never ever.

Jeff: Ever.

Diane: Right.

Jeff: How? How is that?

Diane: I guess I, you know, I'm a city girl, like my parents didn't grow up on farms. I just didn't have that experience. I know that's stunning. And my friend that I was with from Missouri grew up on a farm and she was just stupefied. Like, she's like, surely you visited relatives. No, had never been on a farm.

Jeff: My mom grew up on a farm near David City Dwight.

Diane: Okay.

Jeff: And so, I've spent a little time on farms there and elsewhere.

Diane: I may be the only person in my circle from the Midwest who's never been on a farm.

Jeff: So, the question for you, then, when you're on this farm in Greece, and are you thinking at all about Nebraska

Diane: Oh, yes!

Jeff: ...and Iowa and what it must be like to be on a Nebraska farm?

Diane: And I felt a kinship, even though I'm not a farmer and I didn't, again, hadn't spent any time. But I thought, you know, this farmer here, this guy who lives in this beautiful mountainside looking over the Ionic Sea, he is the same as the guy who lives outside of Fremont that has chickens that lay eggs. They're no different. You know, the chickens don't speak Greek... (laughter)

Jeff: That's hilarious.

Diane: ...or English.

Jeff: Well...How do you know?

Diane: Well, that's true. (laughter) But there's so much connection to the earth, no matter what part of the earth you're on. And, you know, other than, you know, we don't grow olives here. I'd love it if I could grow lemons in my yard. But other than crops, it's a commonality of we're here making our own food from the resources we have in front of us. And I felt very humbled by that.

Jeff: I love that. So now that you're back from your trip, how do you see... Now, you haven't been on a farm here yet.

Diane: No, but now I really want to. I want to see, you know, this farm didn't have cattle or... there were goats, you know, they made goat cheese. But I thought, I want to go see how it's done here, how people tend to the soil. And, you know, I've done a little gardening at my house that's not the same as making a living from the earth and from growing food and feeding people and taking care of animals. It was very overwhelming. And I didn't expect that.

Jeff: There's something, too, about the earth, like, you know, getting your hands dirty and sinking your... even if you're gardening. There's something very organic, of course, or very tactile about it.

Diane: Right! I agree. And one of the things we did after we looked at this farm and we gathered eggs and picked these things and snipped herbs is we brought all this food to this beautiful outdoor kitchen space. And my friend and I did all the food preparation, the chopping and the mixing. And then the farmer and his father, it was a family farm, we spent the day with them, prepared it all in an outdoor wooden oven. So, you know, again, to your point, having food that you just pulled from the earth or cut from a tree and put into a fire or a bowl or however it's prepared is glorious. And just thinking about all of this food that we have here in Nebraska that, you know, I buy local things from the farmer's market all the time, but just that connection to the people who make that happen for you, it's beautiful.

Jeff: Oh, and especially if you go to a farmer's market and you get to talk to the people who are actually growing those things.

Diane: Right, or bringing you the bacon or the eggs. I try to buy eggs in the summer from farmer's markets because they're just amazing.

Jeff: There is something incredible about a farm fresh egg.

Diane: I couldn't agree more.

Jeff: When I was growing up in South Omaha, we called her the egg lady.

Diane: Oh, I'm sure.

Jeff: And she came by once a week, drove in in her old jalopy, I think is how you heard, you know, from Iowa someplace. But those eggs were just incredible.

Diane: My experience in Greece makes me want to learn more about the local farms here.

Jeff: Ah, Diane. Well, hey, thanks for joining me...

Diane: Thanks for having me!

Jeff: ...on Jeff Around Town.