



ABROAD

My semester in Europe

By Andi Marthaler

Alongside 18 other students, I traveled on planes, subways, buses, ferries, trains, and trams across the biggest cities in Europe for eight weeks. We encountered seven different languages, three types of currency, walked an average of nine miles per day, and experienced weather ranging from 45 degrees and raining to 83 degrees and sunny.

Though starting the trip as strangers, we became a family by the end of the trip because of everything we experienced together. From getting caught in a thunderstorm in Venice, to hiking up a mountain while jetlagged in Scotland, to chasing after a train in London while dragging all our suitcases, it was truly the little moments that remain the most memorable.



SEPTEMBER

14-15: Edinburgh, Scotland
16-19: Dublin, Ireland
20-24: London, UK
25-29: Paris, France

OCTOBER

Sept. 30-Oct. 3: Amsterdam, Netherlands
4-8: Berlin, Germany
9-12: Prague, Czech Republic
13-15: Vienna, Austria
16-18: Munich, Germany
19-21: Venice, Italy
22-25: Florence, Italy
26-30: Rome, Italy

NOVEMBER

Oct. 31-Nov. 3: Madrid, Spain
3-7: Barcelona, Spain



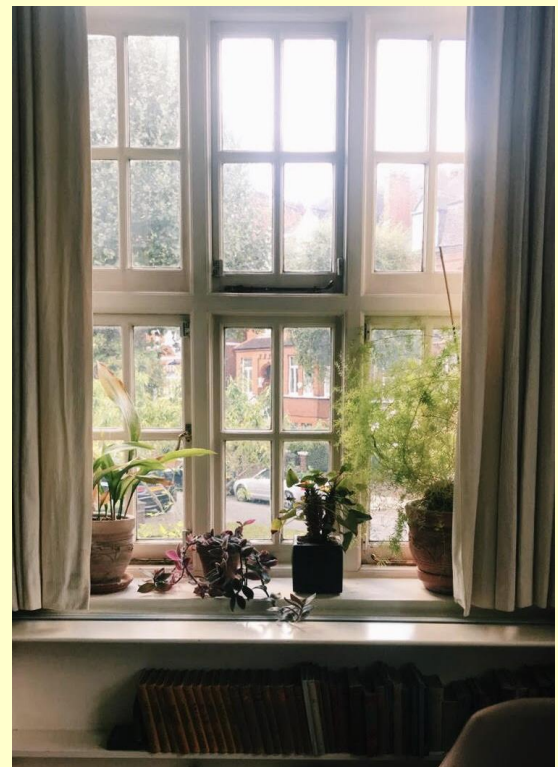
A Peek Into Everyday Life

OUR GUIDE

Jeremy, the guide that led us on our journey of thousands of miles, has been leading this Europe trip for the university for the last ten years. By the end of the trip, we all jokingly called him “Dad” and because he spent eight weeks weaving us through crowded city streets, we learned how to recognize the back of his head and his distinguished gait from a mile away. His ability to get us to a subway stop at the exact moment the subway arrived never failed to astound us, and his unwavering cheerfulness kept us in good spirits even during the early mornings and long, tiring days.

ACCOMMODATIONS

We stayed mainly in hostels, which are like hotels but cheaper and fit more people per room—generally, between six and ten people. Sometimes the only bathrooms were community facilities down the hall. There were many hostels that only had one room key for each room, which led to some creative problem solving when we all had different plans for the evening!



A Typical Day

Although no two days were exactly the same, there was a general structure to each day:

- Meet as a group, having eaten breakfast and gotten ready, at around 9am.**
- Spend the day visiting various combinations of museums, churches, and historical sites.**
- Take a break around noon at a nearby plaza or marketplace where there were lots of options for lunch.**
- Finish our day of site-seeing around 4:00pm and be free for the rest of the day to do whatever we wanted.**

We're Here for the Food

As one can expect, the food was one of the spotlights of the entire trip. We were always excited to try the local cuisine and learn about it. Even going to the nearby grocery store or market to browse through that country's version of generic grocery foods was an event. We learned that peanut butter seemingly doesn't exist in Europe (only Nutella!), and that one cannot order a basic filter coffee in a café (cappuccinos, Americanos, lattes or nothing!).

Breakfast was provided at our hostels and no matter which country we went to, the spread was about the same: deli meats, rolls, fruit cocktail, corn flakes, and cucumber slices. Some places were better than others!

The best meal I had the entire trip was in Berlin, where I had Weiner Schnitzel and white wine with two of my roommates. We sat outside on a lamp-lit porch and as we watched the night unfold in our sleepy Berlin neighborhood, we could feel the first gentle hints of autumn in the breeze and the rustling leaves.



A few times, Jeremy took whole group out to dinner together and showed us his favorite spots in the city. We had fish and chips in a London pub, goulash and mead in Prague, roasted chicken and beer in Munich, tripe soup in Florence, pasta and limoncello in Rome, and paella and wine in Barcelona. These “family dinners” were some of the best nights of the trip—18 students, Jeremy, and our professor all crowded around a huge table, talking and laughing and enjoying a meal together.





Learning On-The-Go

THE SEMESTER OF THE TRAVELING PROFESSORS

Every two weeks, a different professor flew out to travel with us and teach us their class. Our music professor, for example, was with us in Vienna, the City of Music (see photo below), and our art professor was with us in Florence, the birthplace of the Renaissance (see above photo). When not with us, they still sent us assignments to complete if we were going to be seeing something important--like the Louvre in Paris or Abbey Road Studios in London.



Classes I took

ART

VAN GOGH, RENAISSANCE
PAINTING,
CATHEDRAL/BASILICA/CHURCH
ARCHITECTURE

HISTORY

WWII AND THE HOLOCAUST

DIGITAL MEDIA

RADIO AND TELEVISION
BROADCASTING IN EUROPE

MUSIC

THE LIVES AND WORKS OF
BEETHOVEN, HANDEL, AND
MOZART

A New Perspective

WHAT I WILL TAKE HOME WITH ME



After being immersed in so many different environments, I learned something important about human nature.

While abroad, just like in the U.S, I encountered rude baristas, loud teenagers, and people that were impatient while waiting in line. But I also met warm, friendly personalities as well—people that didn't speak my language and I didn't speak theirs but we were equally as eager to find common ground and ways to communicate and connect. This is human nature, I've found—we crave human connection, no matter where we are.

Cultures, countries, and geography may change, but at the end of the day we're more similar to each other than we realize.

“The truth is that [these classes] you are taking are finite and for the purpose of evaluation. But there are larger life-altering lessons to be learned here about being present and allowing your heart to be open. My fondest wish for you—for all of us—is a life fully lived.”

**-OUR ART PROFESSOR,
BENITA, ON OUR LAST
DAY TOGETHER**

