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Major: Business Administration | **Minors:** French & Spanish

I studied abroad because...

I wanted to explore and experience a completely different culture and way of life. I wanted to be challenged and taken outside of my comfort zone. I also wanted to practice my French by being completely immersed by it.

One of my biggest challenges before studying abroad was...

figuring out the logistics. There was a lot of administrative paperwork, the university I was going to had a very outdated system that was difficult to work with, finding housing was very unclear and confusing, and lastly, saving enough money to make sure I'd be able to comfortably live there for four months.

A typical meal I had while studying abroad:

I ate a lot of croissants and *pain au chocolat*, but I probably ate the freshly made baguette sandwiches from local bakeries the most. Either chicken pesto or a ham, cheese, lettuce, tomato on a fresh French baguette was amazing especially since they usually weren't more than 4 Euros. Also the mayo there is different and way better.

My favorite spot in my host city:

My group of friends found a cute, rustic bakery/cafe in the downtown old part of the Grenoble called Pain & Cie that had free wifi, 1.75 Euro pastries, and 2 Euro coffee that was to die for.

One cool event I got to experience while abroad:

It was the 50th anniversary of when Grenoble hosted the Winter Olympics which they celebrated while the 2018 Winter Olympics were going on with cool events all around the city like free ice skating, a torch lighting, street concerts and live music that was really cool. Also the Grenoble hockey team was really good this season so we went to one of their playoff games and to hear the French chants and see the game was very interesting.

The most memorable experience for me while abroad:

I accidentally bought cow intestines when I got lunch while snowboarding at one of the ski resorts right outside of Grenoble. It just looks like a sausage and it was a self-serve restaurant, and with the language barrier I just pointed at them thinking they were probably normal sausages. I remember the French servers asking if I was sure and I nodded my head thinking "I'm not a picky eater; it's probably fine". We brought the food back to the table, and I was starving after snowboarding all morning that I immediately took a bite of the sausage. Then the smell and taste hit me. It was disgusting. Then I realized the inside of the sausage was meat that was all folded and started to realize that I had just ate intestines. My appetite was completely shot for the rest of the day and couldn't eat anything else. I can still remember the smell and it still haunts me. A couple months later I became a vegetarian (for different reasons, but I think there might be a slight connection there in my subconscious).

A habit I picked up while abroad:

I was able to snowboard a lot there since is a skiing town with a lot of resorts nearby. I also went hiking a lot on a trail they had in an old fort or *bastille* on a small mountain besides the town. A habit I picked up was using the reusable bags at the grocery store since they charge you for plastic bags. Also, I started going grocery shopping every other day like the locals do because the food is very fresh with no preservatives so it goes bad quickly especially the baguettes. I also still have to stop myself from saying *bonjour* or *bonsoir* whenever I walk into a restaurant or store. I also started cooking more once I realized eating out is very expensive in France and was running out of money. Picked up a few slang words from some Australian friends I made like "keen", "brekkie", and "avo". I also hate tipping now in US since I didn't have to worry about that there.

What I found most challenging while abroad:

The French administration and organization of businesses is very laid back and bureaucratic. Many things were very unorganized, hard to find, and unclear with instructions. All government agencies, banks, and the like and even most stores were only open Monday through Friday from 9am-1pm and then 3pm-6pm, which would be difficult sometimes if you needed to get something but had classes most of the day and only a lunch break. French restaurants would open for lunch time from 11-3 and then wouldn't open again until 7pm for dinner. So if you missed lunch time, the only places open would be Arab kebab places. Lastly, everything was closed on Sundays; the town would shut down - no restaurants, no grocery stores, so if you didn't have food at your place it would be a rough Sunday. Lastly, the language barrier was difficult at times when dealing with important situations. I managed it with just learning to adapt, eating at the times of the French, making sure to do grocery shopping during the week, learning the important phrases to use to get by with important issues, etc.

What surprised me most about study abroad was...

what I learned about myself and what I was capable of. It brought a different side of me I was a lot more adventurous, tried a lot of new things, met a lot of cool people and was a lot more independent than I usually am. I did two solo trips one to Germany, and one to Netherlands/Belgium that I absolutely loved. I also really enjoyed my classes since they were a lot different than what I was used to at UF. They were more application based and I had to write two business reports and give presentations in every class. I also had one of my favorite classes ever, Digital Marketing, with a really interesting British professor. The class made me realize that Digital Marketing is something I would want to pursue in my career.

My last bit of advice:

Take chances. Don't be afraid to do something alone; you never know who you might meet or what you'll learn. Don't buy souvenirs; make memories and take photos instead and use that money for a really good local dish. Be open-minded; just because it's not your normal doesn't mean it's wrong, it's just different. You are always more capable than you think, so don't second guess yourself, and it's okay to be afraid.