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I studied abroad because...
I had always traveled with my family when I was younger and loved the idea of being able to immerse myself in a new culture while taking classes and pursuing an internship. I knew it was a once in a lifetime opportunity that I would have regretted not taking advantage of while I was in college.

One of my biggest challenges before studying abroad:
I was very intimidated by my own expectations for studying abroad. I put a lot of pressure on myself to pack everything perfectly, plan all of my trips perfectly, and complete every task at my internship perfectly. This turned into an anxiety that almost made me talk myself out of studying abroad entirely. However, forcing myself to let go of this perfectionist viewpoint has helped me grow so much personally and allowed for a much better summer than I could have perfectly planned for.

A typical meal I had while studying abroad:
Before class or my internship, I would get an iced coffee and a croissant at a local cafe. Then, I would either prepare my own meal or buy lunch from Pret A Manger or another local spot. My flatmates and I would try to cook dinner together as both a bonding and money saving technique. If we were treating ourselves to dinner out, I was almost always ordering fish and chips.

My favorite spot in my host city was...
Covent Garden! While you do have to fight against tourism at times, it is the perfect place for those who love shopping and finding unique food spots. At night, the borough comes to life with West End productions that I highly recommend you check out!

One cool event I got to experience while abroad:
After my internship one night, I met my friends at Wimbledon where we got grounds passes for the night. We saw the semi-final doubles match with Serena Williams and Andy Murray, as well as the female doubles semi-finals with the eventual winners of the title.

The most memorable experience for me while abroad:
I decided to go on the Wales Adventure Weekend designed by FIE, where we participated in all sorts of activities. Most memorably, I decided to go coasteering, which involved cliff jumping, swimming, and rock climbing. Although I initially didn’t think I could handle such crazy physical activity, it was the most fun experience I had the whole summer.

A habit I picked up while abroad is...
drinking much smaller and stronger coffee. Even with my normal order, the cafes and chain coffee shops in London make much stronger coffee than I was used to at home. I have had to change my coffee order significantly now that I am home.

What I found most challenging while abroad:
As I am very close with my family, spending three months away from them was extremely hard. Although they came to visit me during the program, it was still difficult to not see them every day during the summer. With Facetime and WhatsApp calls, I quickly learned the balance for keeping my family updated on my daily life while also not neglecting my new friends. This made me much more independent and made me appreciate the calls and visits I had with them even more.

What surprised me most about study abroad:
I had no idea it was possible to become so close to people in such a short period of time. Not only did I make incredible friendships, but I also felt very connected to both my professors and my coworkers. I am leaving with a much larger network than I could have ever imagined.

My last bit of advice:
Look forward to the unexpected twists that studying abroad will throw your way, don’t shy away from them! As someone who loves being in control of everything I do, I was always worried about things going wrong and ruining my planned schedule. I can honestly say that the best moments of my summer came from when I let go and allowed getting lost to help me find things I never would have seen before.