

A Year Abroad: Salzburg, Austria
By Kenza Banoza

Going abroad was an easy decision for me to make. Since my college is only twenty minutes away from my hometown I felt that I needed a big change in order to gain the life experiences that would make me ready for the real world awaiting me after graduation. I was tempted to transfer to a university that was at least a few hours away but my father encouraged me to look into studying in Austria where he was raised and still has family. I simply went to my school's Study Abroad department and found a program that was most suitable for my major and me and I was set to move to Salzburg for two semesters. Though I had never even heard of the place I was intrigued by the bountiful amount of history and beautiful scenery I learned that it had in my research of it. The most difficult part in the process of deciding to leave for a whole ten months was, of course, leaving behind friends and family. I tried to flush this feeling away with hopes of making many new friends and gaining a lot more life insight than I had been while living so close to home.

The experiences I have had so far have been, to say the least, incredible. Many people warned me that the European way of life is much different from that in the United States and I definitely see and understand that difference at this point in my stay. It is undeniable that the first encounter with the sudden change of atmosphere was a shock for many of my colleagues and myself. The food, the people, the culture, the language, the weather, among many other things were all completely different to anything I have ever known-but I loved it! It was a complete rush to learn a whole new method of living. What heightens this experience even more in Europe is the ability to take a few hour train ride and arrive somewhere that provides for a whole new experience.

During the semester my study abroad program offered several opportunities to visit different countries in Europe. The trips included city tours and admission to museums and other cultural sites. Upon our departure from the United States we flew directly into London, England where we saw many famous sites like the Big Ben clock tower and Buckingham Palace. We also visited Munich, Germany; Vienna and Innsbruck, Austria; and Prague in the Czech Republic. Some highlights from these travels include the Dachau concentration camp memorial in Munich. Though walking through the place was emotionally tolling, I found that it was a quite interesting and valuable experience. During our visit to Vienna I enjoyed many artistic events and sites. We went to the Art History museum, the Leopold museum (which exhibits a plethora of modern art), and MUMOK, a contemporary art museum in Vienna. I thoroughly enjoyed the historical interests in Prague but the nightlife there was what was most memorable for me.

Though the trips that my program had planned were convenient and quite fun, I felt that it was important to do some independent traveling as well. In this way, I got to see the cities in the way that I wanted to, visiting the sites and events that I

thought were worthwhile. It was also, in a way, character building to have to plan transportation, lodging, etc. on my own. One event that some colleagues and I decided to attend was Oktoberfest in Munich. This was a cultural event that brought people from all over the world together for an immense celebration. During the course of the day there I had met people from at least five different countries. I have also traveled to Vienna several times by myself to visit family and again found many interests in the arts, as the city seems to be a beacon for it. I attended several concerts of contemporary bands and artists. Another independent trip I took with some friends was a weekend in Switzerland. In the small town of Interlaken the scenery was impeccable. We even took a lift to a summit in the Swiss Alps.

The availability for travel in Europe is something that I am so thrilled to take advantage of and I would certainly recommend for others to do the same. From having visited so many different places I have learned so much about the history and culture of Europe. I have gained some experiences that I will definitely recall for the rest of my life and I have only been here for five months! During the remainder of my stay in Europe I plan to do a lot more traveling. Some countries I still hope to visit include: Sweden, Ireland, Scotland, France, Italy and Spain. Of course, the possibilities for new places to see are endless in Europe so I may add many more countries to the list. It will be a busy semester!



Big Ben in London



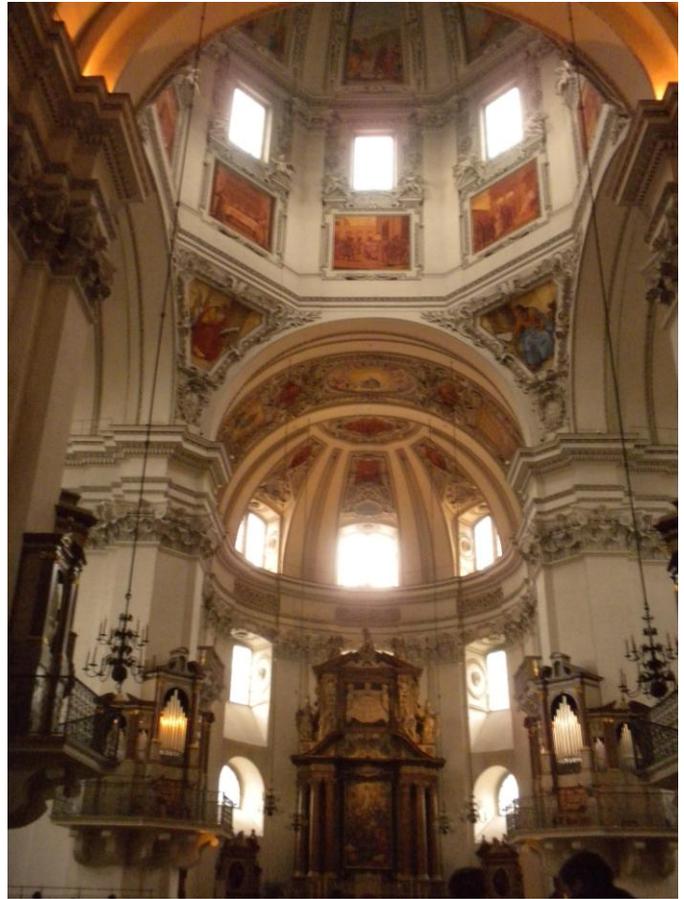
Hohensalzburg-The Fortress in Salzburg



My roommate and I in the first snow in Salzburg



Austrian sweets



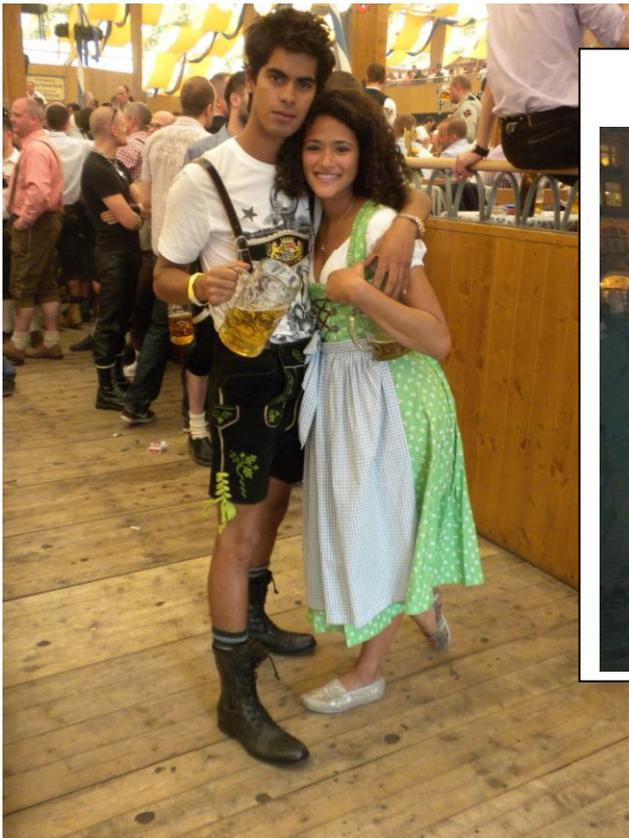
The Dome Cathedral in Salzburg



The Art History Museum in Vienna



The Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial

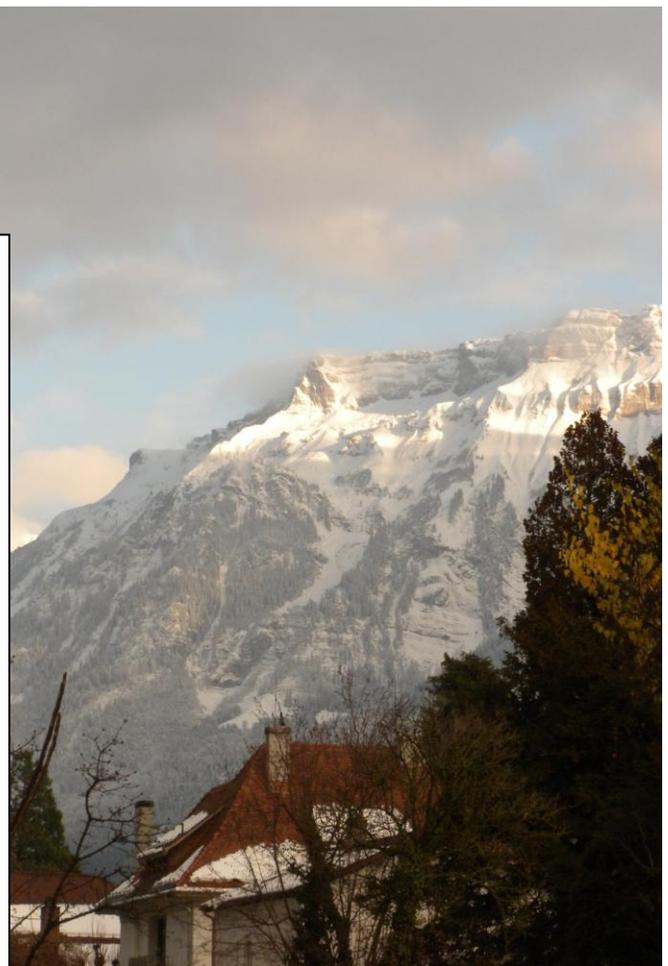


Oktoberfest

A Night out in Prague



Interlaken, Switzerland



The Swiss Alps