

Katie Kabana, Universite D'Angers, France, Study Abroad, Spring 2010

Why did you choose this particular experience?

I was encouraged to learn more about the program by my older sister, who regretted never studying abroad during her college years. I became even more interested when I met a fellow Rosen College student in my Accounting class who had just returned from Angers. Hearing about her experiences made me decide studying abroad was something I absolutely wanted to do. It didn't hurt that I'd studied French previously and have always been interested in French culture.

What were your initial thoughts on the internship/study abroad?

Initially, I was a bit scared and a little nervous. I had never traveled abroad let alone by myself. However, it was a good, exciting kind of fear that kept me feeling good about my choice. I knew that this experience would help me grow as a person by taking me out of my comfort zone, and that's just what it did.

What was typical day like during your Study Abroad?

A typical day at the Universite D'Angers usually started with me biking (free for students) to the university from our dorm building. My classes were a mixture of students from UCF, University of Houston, Finland, Sweden, China, Indonesia and Ireland. We'd typically all bike together in small groups and then spend the day studying Loire Valley Castles, wine, French history and tourism, and a few other subjects which, unfortunately, included accounting as well. We also took a beginners French class which was very helpful. Our lunch break was fairly generous, so we'd either walk to a nearby cafe or eat lunch in the courtyard on campus. After class we'd sometimes bike to a nearby castle, the English library, or just around the city center where we would find a nice spot to work on homework. Most nights we would all meet in the dorm kitchens to eat dinner together, sometimes each group of students from around the world would take turns cooking native meals from home for everyone. Many of these nights also included a lot of local wine tastings, and planning out our next European weekend adventure. Overall, I'd say a typical day in Angers was better than most good days at home.

What was the hardest part of the experience and why?

As with any experience, there were a few difficult days and challenging aspects. The most obvious was being away from friends and family for six months and becoming a little homesick. However, if I'm being honest, those days were few and far between because I was so busy during the entire experience that they seemed to really fly by. The most difficult situation I encountered was getting injured during my stay. I suffered a pretty bad burn to one of my feet which then became infected. However, the university had a free clinic for students where I was able to receive medical attention and my foot healed quickly. Overall, my time in Angers was almost always happy and exciting.

What did you find easy about the experience and why?

I was pleasantly surprised with how easy the study abroad experience was. From the very start, Rosen College was extremely supportive and helpful with any questions or concerns I had. They made sure I was really prepared and knowledgeable about the program, and that gave me confidence going into it. Once we arrived in Angers, the university there was also very eager to help international students feel at home. Between my professors, the dormitory staff, and my classmates, I never felt like I was alone at any point. Finding this comfort so far from home really helped me thrive and fully enjoy my experience.

If you had the choice would you do this again? Why/Why not?

Given the choice, I would 100% choose to study abroad again. If I could have chosen to study abroad over multiple semesters in different countries around the world I would have done so in a heartbeat. It gave me a brand new perspective of the world and different cultures I had yet to experience. It helped me to become more independent and braver when it comes to taking risks as well.

How has the experience shaped your life?

My study abroad experience shaped my future in a pretty big way. While I was living in France, I was able to travel to 13 countries throughout Europe. I developed a strong passion for continued travel. Upon my graduation from UCF in 2010, I applied to be a flight attendant. I now happily work for United Airlines and have traveled to 40 countries. It has been the best job I could have hoped for, allowing me to combine my passions for the hospitality industry and traveling. Without my time studying abroad, I'm not sure I would have discovered this important part of my life and ended up where I am today.

Why would you recommend internships/study abroad to Rosen College students?

I would highly recommend the study abroad program to any Rosen College student who is considering it. It was, hands down, the greatest experience of my years in college. And who knows, you may just discover something about yourself during this experience that will lead you to your future career! Bonne chance!



The UCF girls on a weekend trip to Milan



Our international class in the dorm kitchen



One of our class "field trips"



One of many weekend trips to Paris



The town of Angers and its castle

