



Internship Experience & Study Abroad - Student Speaks

1.) Tell me a little about yourself? How old are you? Where were you born? Have you travelled outside the US before?

My name is Jeremiah Rivera and I am 22 years old and I was born and raised in Miami Florida. I am currently a rising senior studying Entertainment Management at the UCF Rosen College. I am a transfer student from Miami-Dade College where I graduated with an associates degree in Digital Media. My drive stems from my desire to one day make an impact in the International Experience Economy. I have been fortunate enough to study abroad in China and Costa Rica.



2.) What made you choose this internship program?

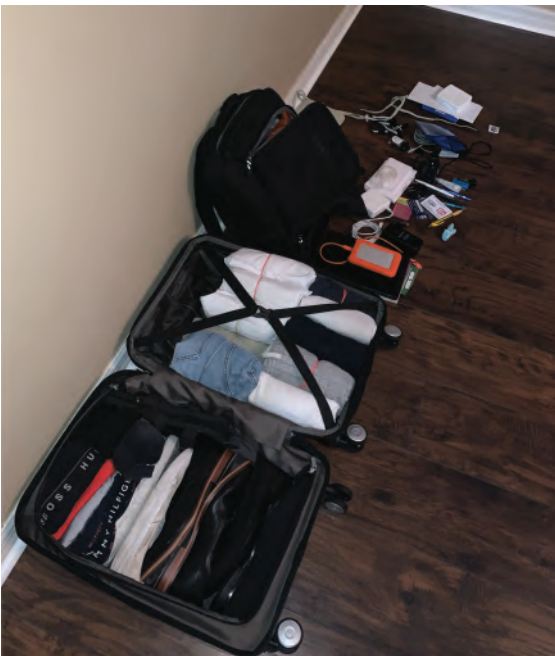
During my freshman year of college, I made it my mission to go abroad every year of my college career. When I transferred to UCF, I knew I wanted to my standards a little high and go for something where I can apply my skillsets as well as build upon them. My first two study abroad experiences were faculty lead programs. I wanted to take part in something that would get me out of my comfort zone and force me to be independent while being immersed in another country. My first week in class at Rosen Jessica Wickey came to one of my classes to present the Japan Internships. The moment she talked about the JTAST program I knew that is what I wanted to go for because I confidently felt that I was a suitable candidate for the position.



3.) What was your family's reaction?

My family and friends know that I am passionate about travelling so they were really happy that I was able to find an opportunity such as this one. My mom tends to get nervous and always looks for negative news associated with whatever country I'm going to but was still extremely supportive of my decision. Her and my dad did everything they could to help me in preparing for the trip. I am also grateful for my roommates being so helpful leading to the trip. They were the first ones to hear about my decision to apply so they witnessed the everything go down from the beginning. They never fail to tell me how happy they are for me. The support of my family and friends is honestly what pushes me to go beyond my limits.

4.) What did you pack that was helpful? What didn't you pack that you could have used?



I was told to pack light, so I bought 1 suitcase and a new backpack. I was able to keep my wardrobe simple and think as minimalistic as possible. I prepared for the heat because everyone warned me about Japans summer time weather, and they were right (it's bad). I think my best investment was buying a new pair of running shoes from Fit 2 Run. They were not the cheapest shoe, but they are built for my foot and ankle type which gave me the most comfort of any shoe I've ever had. That allowed me to explore for miles and miles and climb many mountains without feeling any pain. The only thing I wish I would've brought with me was a nice outfit for fancier night outings. Even that is not too necessary.

5.) What was your first impression when you arrived?

I was most surprised to find that I never experienced any type of culture shock in Tokyo. There is something about the city that feels very homey to me which made the adjustment process fairly easy. I was initially more interested in the internship than I was with the thought of being in Japan. Prior to coming I was not as obsessed with Japanese culture as a lot of my peers are but a week in, I easily fell in love. What surprised was the efficiency in Tokyo. Even with knowing a little bit of Japanese I was still able to understand everything and had no issues navigating around town. There are things here that I did not even know I need until Japan introduced it to me.



6.) Best Experience? Worst Experience?



The best experience I had was climbing Mount Nokogiri in the Chiba Prefecture. It was one of the most introspective journeys I have ever had. I climb 90 minutes up a mountain by myself with just a backpack and headphones. It was also drizzling the whole time, but it was all worth it when I made it to the Nihon-ji Diabutsu at the top. One of the most beautiful Buddha statues I have ever seen. It was carved out of the mountain and I did not want to leave its presence, but I had to catch a ferry back across the Tokyo bay. I have had no bad experiences so far. Maybe just dealing with the insane heat beaming down on me in slacks and a button down. I would say there has been some difficulties because of the language barrier but it has never been a significant issue.

7.) Did you ever get homesick/or miss anything about home and if you did what did you do about it?

I don't know if this is wrong of me, but I never get homesick when abroad. I typically dread coming home. There is just too much to discover and explore in this world for me to miss my home. My mind is so occupied on the present moment that I do not think about the things I miss or if I should be missing anything at all. The only thing that trouble my mind when abroad is wishing my friends and family could be with me to witness everything the world has to offer.

8.) What's the biggest lesson you learned?

The biggest lesson I learned is that there is no single way of doing anything. It sounds broad and basic, but I think it is a lesson that goes a long way for young adult. It is a lesson that is best learned when being immersed in a different culture. To think that everything you know and do is the best alternative is wrongful and toxic for yourself. However, when you go abroad you see the ways in which other cultures go about life whether it is in their jobs, hobby, and everyday activities. In my experience I have been able to gain an understanding of the Japanese way of being and have made many comparisons to the way I was raised in America. There are many approaches that I found in the Japanese culture that suite me more. I can then go back to America and apply those approaches to my own life, which will, in turn, help me improve a student and individual. I like to think of it as the post impact of going abroad.



9.) If you had the opportunity to do this again, would you? Why or Why Not?

I would do it a million times over. This opportunity seems so surreal to me, I could not be more grateful. Japan has left me in awe and I really hope to come back many more times in the future. I applied for an internship in the Tokyo 2020 Olympics with NBC Universal. I hope that I will get accepted and return to Japan next Year.

10.) Do you think this internship will help you get the job and career you want? Why or why Not?

Yes, I do think this job will help me get closer to my desired career, however, I do not like to think of the initial internship or work experience as catalyst to other job opportunities. I think what is most important is the skills I got to build upon that will lead me in a direction that will suit me most. I dream to be a professional within the experience economy, but I have not figured out what specific Job I want to assume.

11.) If you could design the perfect internship, what would it look like?

First, and foremost, it will be an international internship. Second, I personally think that creative freedom goes a long way for myself. If I am given too many guidelines and constraints, I feel bored with my work. I love to bring new ideas to any workplace. Third, I think independency is also important. I really enjoy being put in situations where I have to face obstacle alone and learn to do things on my own. That, to me, is the best way to gain skills and then teach others those very same skills.

