

When you first hear about studying abroad, there are a few things that happen. First, the university displays a few students that go to very different countries. Then, these students, who all come back with a similar nostalgia, attempt, and often struggle, to describe their experience. Usually, you will hear that people had the “time of their life” and that it is “absolutely life changing.” However, you rarely hear people go in depth into how studying abroad changed their lives.



First off, studying abroad will be great no matter what. But the events and people you meet are highly subject to change depending on where you go. I studied abroad in New Zealand and had a very outdoor-oriented experience. People I know who visited certain European countries reflected on their experiences being more culturally rich, due to the nature of visiting older countries.



The places you go and the people you meet are what define your experience. The people are what surprised me the most. You meet these incredibly interesting and worldly people. What defines you as “cool” is being intelligent, worldly, and motivated. This was a bit of a refreshing diversion from my experiences here at Purdue. I have never met more people that I thought would change the world for the better than I did while studying abroad and traveling.

Studying abroad, if done right, turns you into a world traveler. This is a skill that is underrated and misunderstood. I will try to define what this means to me. In essence, the world is your oyster. When you live in another country, you learn how to adapt to

different cultures and get comfortable in what was once a foreign environment. Putting yourself in that foreign environment is the most exciting aspect. You learn about other cultures and values, get an objective perspective of your culture, and sometimes even realize how much your culture lacks in certain areas. The moment I realized that was when the travel bug set in. The travel bug is a very bitter sweet dilemma. For me, I only feel content when traveling, which inspires me to travel the world. But, I never feel as comfortable at home sitting on the couch watching tv as I did before studying abroad. Game of Thrones and Rick and Morty just don't do it anymore.



I hope that each of you have a desire to study abroad and that you find a place as incredible as New Zealand. I really do not think there are enough words in the English language to describe the beauty of that country. The place completely changed and inspired me. I have had a complete change in



the direction of my life due to my experiences from studying abroad and traveling. When you force yourself to summit mountains, dive on the Great Barrier Reef, and skii down volcanos, you have a lot of time to think about the right and important things. That is much harder to do when you have the daily stresses that come from the Purdue lifestyle. But, you will never know what studying abroad truly is like unless you take the leap of faith; study abroad and let your life forever be changed.