

Brazil Summer Abroad

This summer, I had the awesome opportunity to travel abroad to the country of Brazil. Let's just say it will be a summer I will not soon forget. Brazil was amazing from the spectacular beaches in Rio de Janeiro, to the bustling city streets of Sao Paulo, and finally to the world's largest waterfall called Foz do Igazul often considered to be one of the 7 wonders of the world. With so many new friends made, and old ones reconnected or connected in person for the first time, it was truly a life-changing experience.



First, I'll start off with what the campus was like in Brazil. I was paired with a



professor from the University of Sao Paulo in a small town called Pirassununga. The campus itself was basically a enormous farm. There were cows, pigs, horses, goats, and all other kinds of animals

everywhere you looked. It was quite a different experience than your typical college campus here in the U.S. We had to take a bus for a good 10-15 minute ride just to get from the entrance of the university to the cafeteria where we ate lunch. One of the best things about the lunches, though, was that they only cost 60 cents! Granted the main part of the meal always consisted of rice and beans, I couldn't complain too much! Compare that to a meal plan at Purdue and it's pretty crazy how much we pay

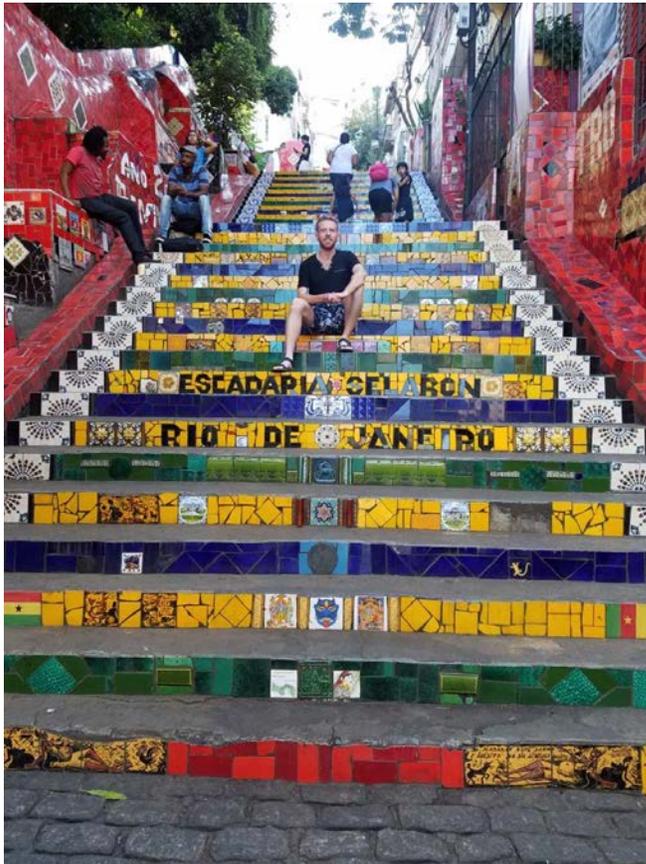


for food at a public university. One thing we also really seem to take for granted here in the U.S. is air conditioning and heat in almost every building. In Brazil, there were some air conditioning units in individual rooms, but not much more than that.

The culture was another thing that was quite different than the U.S. First off, everyone there drives small compact cars. It was rare to see a large SUV or truck that wasn't used strictly for work. Secondly, Brazilians are very friendly; it would not be uncommon for people just meeting the first time to give a kiss on the cheek. I also noticed when I would go to parties and or clubs people were definitely not afraid to get close and very touchy feely. Another thing I found really interesting was

how all the shops worked, Almost all of them just had a garage type door in front and would be open to the air. Very few had a permanent wall and door to go in, it was different, but somewhat nice to be able to walk into places with ease.

Ok, so now the exciting part: all the adventures I went on and places I got to



experience. On the first day in Brazil, I was in one of the world largest cities, Sao Paulo. I have a good friend who lived in a nice area and was kind enough to let me stay at his apartment anytime I wanted to while I was Traveling in Brazil. The first few days in the city, we went all over to see the main attractions. From downtown to the famous Paulista Avenue to all the great shops and places to eat along the way. One of my favorite weekend trips was to a big island called ilha bella right off the coast of Sao Paulo. It had beautiful,

magnificent beaches with white sand and crystal clear waters. We then ventured into the dense jungle to stumble upon one of the most beautiful waterfalls where we decided to take a swim as the mosquitos were pretty bad on the island. After a few days on the island I ventured back to Sao Paulo for my first ever Gay Pride Parade. Of course I had no idea what I was getting myself into, Sao Paulo host the worlds largest gay parade in the entire world! Over 3 million people were in attendance of this event. It was interesting even though, I didn't see lots of festive costumes and people dressed up; most people were just in their everyday clothes and ready to party. Towards the end of my trip in Brazil was when I really started to do the traveling all over the country. My first stent was spent in the wonderful city of Rio de Janeiro. If there is one place you have to visit in your lifetime, it's Rio. I spent a



week there going all over the place and barely put a dent in the amount of things I could see and do. Yet, I managed to lay on the beach in Copacabana and Ipanema, climb up the top of a mountain to have a breathtaking view of the entire city and surrounding ocean and party each night away meeting new people from so many countries staying at my hostel. The weekend after visiting Rio, I traveled to some of the most beautiful beaches I have ever seen. They were like beaches you would dream about visiting. To visit one of

them I had to climb and hike through dense brush and cacti everywhere, but the view after hiking up the treacherous trail was breathtaking. It was one of the most beautiful scenes I had ever seen. I was on top of a large cliff and below was the ocean crashing onto the rocks making a beautiful array of colors. I ventured along the trail and found a spot where I could go down the close to the ocean and see the waves crashing against the jagged rocks. Finally I saw a beach close by that looked like a perfect place to relax and catch a few waves.

Overall, Brazil was an incredible experience full of adventure where I met new people, and explored new areas of Brazil. I loved getting to try and practice speaking Portuguese as a way of survival, and getting around Brazil. I enjoyed trying



to have a conversation about food, how to get to a certain place, or just general information about the area I was visiting. It presented a big challenge since I didn't know Portuguese very well until the end of my trip after getting a little more practice with the language. I can't wait to take these experiences back with me to the U.S. and hopefully travel abroad again in the near future!