



Thanksgiving Special Edition

BUFFS *abroad*

Office of Study Abroad

SSC 115A

wtamu.edu/studyabroad

November 2014



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THANKSGIVING ABROAD: WHAT ARE YOU THANKFUL FOR?

Kathryn English



Courtesy of Kathryn English

Sitting in orientation on my second day in Granada, Spain, I thought it was slightly humorous when the

psychotherapist, brought in to speak with us about culture shock, referred to studying abroad as “a fantastic time for therapy.” Why would going to therapy in a foreign country be considered so fantastic? I did not realize at that point the insight one gain’s being away from most everything that is familiar.

It is almost as if being abroad is a type of therapy in and of itself. Being removed physically from life in America also removes many psychological norms as well as barriers. With the turn of so many social conventions, our emotional processes also take a turn. This interchange has allowed me to evaluate my life in a way that would not have been conceivable without the new perspective I have been given during my time abroad.

In Granada I have been able to realize

many things I am thankful for back home such as long showers, air-conditioning, and the dry West Texas heat without any of the humidity all too abundant in Granada. I have a new appreciation for the people in my life. I am thankful for my family, who attentively listens to all of my drawn-out stories (ever willing to laugh and cry along with me), who are now pros at online communication - expert Skype users trained in the art of sending love through a computer screen, and who lets me see my cats. I am thankful for my brother, who keeps me connected to the U.S. as we constantly share news articles and the latest funny videos. And I am thankful for my friends, who stay up into the ungodly hours of the night (or morning, rather) to catch up with me, wish me a good morning, and detail the shenanigans they have been up to.

Living in Spain I have not only been provided a reflection on the existing aspects of my life, of which I possess a renewed appreciation, but have been introduced to a plethora of new, wonderful things I have now become thankful for.

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IMPORTANT DATES:

- **November 12:** Critical Language Scholarship application deadline
- **November 27:** Thanksgiving
- **December 4:** Dead Day
- **December 5-11:** Finals week
- **December 12:** Commencement/Graduation
- **December 25:** Christmas
- **January 1:** New Year

“The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step”

-Lao Tzu-



Churros
Courtesy of Kathryn English

(Cont. from page 1)

I am thankful for my 35 minute walk to and from school (multiple times a day) that allows me to really take in the city and contemplate my day, as well as eat all of the delicious bread at meal times.

I am thankful for the program provider, CEA, I chose to travel with whose willingness to assist me in every way and to provide the best experience possible is more than appreciated. The absolutely amazing group of friends who I have found to share in this experience, who I can exchange wacky host family stories with, who are always game for a new adventure, and who constantly lift my spirits and make me laugh when my new life seems overwhelming.

Lastly, I am thankful for the opportunity to be in Granada. I am thankful for every minute of my time here, every sight I see, every place I travel, and absolutely everything I have learned. The therapist at orientation was right when she postulated that time abroad is a fantastic time for therapy. And now I know that it is an idea proven true not by stepping into an office, but by stepping out and into something entirely new. For that, I am thankful.

We have a special dinner planned with everyone in the CEA program. I am not sure what it will entail. I have not encountered



City view from Alhambra
Courtesy of Kathryn English

any typical Thanksgiving foods in Spain; no mashed potatoes, no turkey, no green beans, pumpkin, not even a roll! Even though I don't know exactly what to expect for that evening meal, I will definitely celebrate Thanksgiving.



My class
Courtesy of Kathryn English

FACULTY-LED PROGRAMS FOR 2015

The Office of Study Abroad is excited to announce six faculty-led programs for 2015. Faculty-led programs are short term programs where students go abroad accompanied by a WTAMU professor—or two— and a group of WTAMU students. These programs are a great choice for students if they are looking for a short-term experience, normally 2 to 4 weeks. Past faculty-led programs have taken Bufs to many different countries such as: England, Turkey, Spain, Austria, France, Germany, Switzerland, and India, just to name a few. Here is a little description of what each college is offering in 2015:

College of Education and Social Sciences: the COESS is offering two “Go Global” programs in May 2015, to Costa Rica and to Dominican Republic. The first option is available to **Education** students; they will have the opportunity to go to Costa Rica, immerse themselves in the Spanish language and culture, and learn how a second language is taught. Further topics ranging from immigration, bilingualism, children’s issues, and educational policies will also be discussed within the program. On the other hand, **Social Work** students can go to Dominican Republic. The program will focus on social welfare, policy and global health. Students will gain new perspectives on the impact of policies in a global context.

College of Agriculture, Science and Engineering: the Department of Engineering and Computer Science will be in Honduras during the May intersession, putting their engineering knowledge to practice.

Students will have the opportunity to conduct evaluations of the land, river, jungles and other natural resources and even participate in the construction of a school building.

College of Business: an exciting program for various Business majors, where students will visit Denmark, Norway and Sweden. This program will give students the opportunity to compare and contrast the Scandinavian culture, business, and attitudes concerning design, entrepreneurship, and innovation to those in the U.S. While traveling Denmark, Norway and Sweden students will visit companies such as: Microsoft Development Center, IKEA Headquarters, Norwegian Airlines, and many more.

College of Fine Arts and Humanities: join the Department of Communication and visit Seoul, South Korea. Through the travel writing program, students will experience professional career development in a global market. Students will also visit places such as UNESCO World Heritage sites, significant Korean landmarks, and the Demilitarized Zone between the two Koreas.

Attebury Honors Program: the spring Honors Seminar will conclude in Ireland, where Honor students will have the opportunity visit cultural and historical places including: Abbey Theatre, National Museum and much more.

For more information about these programs, please visit: wtamu.edu/study-abroad-faculty-led-programs.aspx.

FEATURED TRAVELER: DR. BUTLER CAIN

Dr. Butler Cain

I was sitting in a train car on the Trans-Mongolian Railway in late May, about to begin a 32-hour train ride from Irkutsk, Russia to Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. I had already been traveling nearly two weeks on a journey that began in Amarillo and included stops in the United Kingdom, Armenia, and Russia's Siberia region.

As I was watching two of my bunk mates – total strangers – unpack their belongings for the trip, one of them pulled out a roll of toilet tissue and placed it on a shelf. "I don't have any toilet paper," I thought to myself. "What does he know that I don't?"

Travelers ask themselves this question all of the time: What do they know that I don't?



*Trans-Mongolian Railway
Courtesy of Butler Cain*

Sometimes, the question is expansive. We might seek to discover cultural practices, foods – even a friendly face at the neighborhood coffee house – that can give us a better understanding of life in this new (to us) place. What is a typical daily routine here? Why is this particular food culturally relevant? Where should I go that isn't on the tourist map?

At other times, that question focuses on much more narrow circumstances. It's almost four o'clock in the afternoon in Taipei, and there's a large crowd gathering on the other side of the

Buddhist temple. What's going on over there? The line at a particular stall in Singapore's Maxwell Food Centre is by far the longest one. What kind of food are they serving? A train is departing Siberia for Mongolia. Why did that guy pack toilet paper?

A humbling component of travel is that it always raises more questions than it answers. As soon as I learn one thing, that experience or new piece of knowledge leads to four or five additional questions. I can't possibly discover all of the things I want to know in the amount of time I have, no matter where I go.

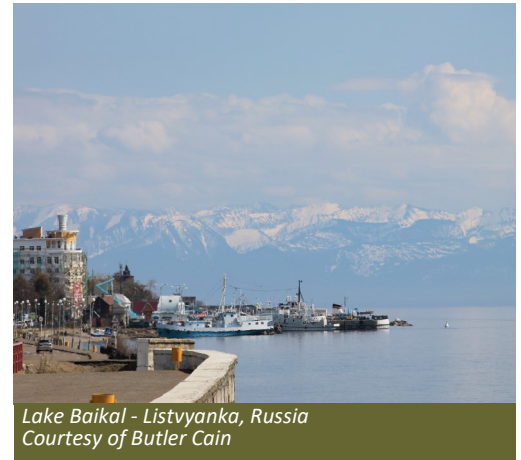
"A humbling component of travel is that it always raises more questions than it answers. As soon as I learn one thing, that experience or new piece of

Another humbling aspect of travel is the constant awareness that we are almost completely beyond our experiential knowledge. I don't speak the local language. I have no idea where the closest grocery store is. How do I get back to my apartment from here?

Travel allows us to ask questions, both big and small, and then seek the answers to those questions. In that sense, it is akin to higher education.

Travel enables us to acquire knowledge through our experiences. It helps us challenge our assumptions and reexamine our core beliefs. It gives us a better understanding of our place in this world.

On a train track somewhere in Siberia, I learned that my bunk mates were traveling back home to Mongolia. They spoke very little English, and I spoke no Mongolian, but based on their passport stamps, I learned they had



*Lake Baikal - Listvyanka, Russia
Courtesy of Butler Cain*

traveled this route numerous times as they went back and forth to Russia for continuing education classes. They had experiential knowledge that I didn't have.

I learned the answer to my toilet paper question soon enough. The bathrooms on the train car didn't have any. And that, of course, led to a new set of questions.



*The Cascade - Yerevan, Armenia
Courtesy of Butler Cain*

Would you like to be our next **Featured Traveler**? Send us your story and photos at studyabroad@wtamu.edu

“BUFFS ABROAD” PHOTO CONTEST

We would like to thank all of the students who submitted photos for the 2014 Bufs Abroad photo contest! Our judges had a very difficult decision to make, but after much deliberation, we are proud to announce the winners for each category! Remember that first places will receive \$50 in buff cash, and second and third places will get \$25!

Category: Natural and Urban Landscape

1st Places (yes, there is a tie!): Casey Watson and Yesenia Rodriguez

2nd Place: Valeria Rodriguez

3rd Place: Kassie Mullins



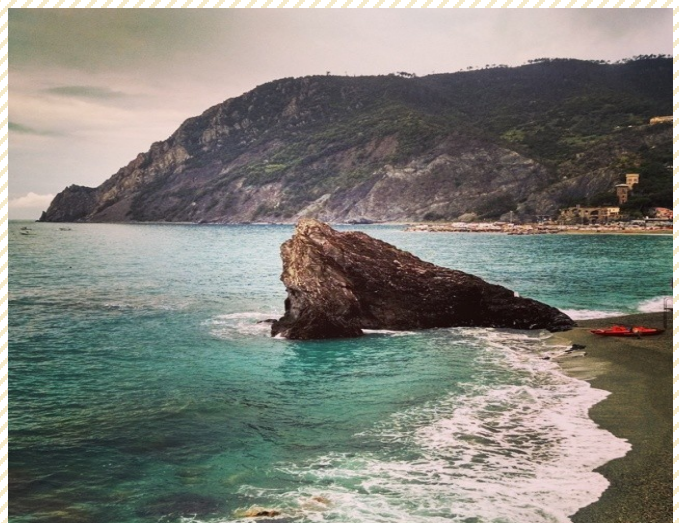
A Family Homestead
By Casey Watson, Uganda



The End of the World for some, the Beginning for others
By Yesenia Rodriguez, Portugal



3 Peaks Island—A Korean Love Triangle
By Valeria Rodriguez, South Korea



Monterosso Mornings
By Kassie Mullins, Italy

Category: People, Culture and Society



Bubbles at Notre Dame
By Alyssa McElroy, France

- 1st Place: Alyssa McElroy
- 2nd Place: Marisela Teran
- 3rd Place: Madison Heston



Strong Warriors
By Marisela Teran, Costa Rica



Changing of the Guards
By Madison Heston, England

Category: Send me there



Sanchiri
By Marisela Teran, Costa Rica

- 1st Place: Marisela Teran
- 2nd Place: Lucia Gandara
- 3rd Place: Casey Watson



Beach = Peace
By Lucia Gandara, Costa Rica



Nile River Expedition
By Casey Watson, Uganda

Postcard project

Winner: Lucia Gandara



#buffsabroad Photo Contest

The finalists of the Instagram photo contest were displayed at the JBK on October 20th, where students had the opportunity to vote for their favorite photo!

Congratulations to the winner of this category, Yoselin Rueda.

Thanks again to all who participated and those who helped us with their votes!

