

AARON'S MAJOR(S): history and Russian language & literature

YEAR/TERM ABROAD: fall 2004

REASON YOU CHOSE THIS PROGRAM: Being a Russian major, it was the program that fit my interests. I talked to people who had done it, and I received good recommendations from students and advisors.

DESCRIBE THE HOUSING SITUATION: My family was wonderful. My host mom spoke virtually no English, but it was good to come home and talk about my experiences with her. Meals were pretty typical Russian food, but my family was accommodating.

aaronhale-dorrell

St. Petersburg,
Russia



During a visit to the Hermitage art museum in St. Petersburg, Aaron Hale-Dorrell pauses in front of an exhibit. Dorrell commented that part of what made St. Petersburg so enjoyable were the numerous museums and theatres.

BEST MEMORY: Just the people in general - the students in the program rapidly became close friends. Being new to the culture and sharing similar experiences, we bonded immediately.

GREATEST CHALLENGE: Meeting Russian people in general; I was in classes with the same group of students, so we had to go outside of school to make Russian friends.

BIGGEST SURPRISE: I felt like I had a pretty good idea of what I was in for from talking to professors. If anything, it was the small cultural things, like riding the subway. In Russia, it's a contact sport; they're aggressive. Here, people don't want to get too close on a bus; there, it's 'let's see if we can get 100 people in here.'

GOING ABROAD VS. STAYING ON CAMPUS, DISCUSS: Go. You miss things but you get a wealth of experience. Everyday there is always something new, an activity or even just a word.

COMPLETE THIS SENTENCE: IF I COULD DO IT OVER, I WOULD ... stay longer, especially during the summer. Night is five or six hours long in St. Pete in August. The white nights are supposed to be beautiful. I would love to have traveled more - Russia is huge.

"I never went outside the country before I studied abroad, and I learned that I love to travel. I traveled to six different countries, and *i can't wait to go back.*"

ADVICE TO FUTURE STUDY ABROAD PARTICIPANTS: Don't be shy - always be willing to do things. Even if you feel unsure of yourself, just do it. Also, the directors of the program are your friends. If you lose your metro card, they can tell you where you need to go to replace stuff like that. They've heard it all; they'll tell you what you need to know.