

ALYSSA'S MAJOR: business-marketing with a French minor

YEAR/TERM ABROAD: fall 2002

REASON YOU CHOSE THIS PROGRAM: It's always been a goal of mine to fluently learn a foreign language, and this is one of the few business programs where I could take classes taught in French.

FAVORITE CLASSES: French literature and linguistics, images, and publicity (LIP)

alyssamurphy

Rouen, France



On a weekend trip, Nikki Zuchetto, Alyssa Murphy, Ashley Otto, and Sarah Hoyt take a break from their travels in a place overlooking Monaco. Murphy met these three Canadians through the Rouen program.

GREATEST CHALLENGE: When I first arrived, these people refused to speak English to me. I felt so out of place and alone. I quickly found out that I had to force myself to speak French, but that was the best thing to come out of it—I gained confidence from knowing I could do this, to be on my own. It's just an incredible feeling.

BIGGEST SURPRISE: People say everyone speaks English in Europe, but that really wasn't the case for me. It just wasn't true.

EXPERIENCES WITH CULTURE SHOCK OR REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK: When I got there, I had a little bit of culture shock. The first two weeks were miserable, but we bonded together and got through it. However, coming back to the US was the worst feeling I ever felt. Everything felt so excessive, so big. Everyone is always on the go here. In France they live to live life. Here it seems as if we're always preparing to live.

GOING ABROAD VS. STAYING ON CAMPUS, DISCUSS: There is nothing like it. I tried to bring back what I learned over there. I'm not the same person that I was; my whole mentality of life and what I want has changed. It's something that cannot be taught; you have to experience it. It's the best decision I have ever made.

WHAT YOU KNOW NOW THAT YOU DIDN'T KNOW BEFORE GOING ABROAD: That America is a wonderful place to live and is filled with opportunities, but it is not everything. You won't necessarily be happy with those opportunities. I have found a new sense of happiness.

"When you first get there, keep an open mind. Just realize where you are; take it all in and savor it. It is just the most phenomenal time of your life and **you need to embrace every second of it.**"

FACT ABOUT YOUR HOST COUNTRY THAT YOU THINK PEOPLE WOULD BE SURPRISED TO LEARN: The French aren't anti-American. The animosity stems from the media, politics, the government.