

GABRIELA'S MAJOR(S): Spanish and French

YEAR/TERM ABROAD: summer 2004

REASON YOU CHOSE THIS PROGRAM: I really wanted to visit a French-speaking country where I could practice my French, get to know its people, customs and culture. I wanted to do this without having to go so far away. So, what a better place than Quebec!

FAVORITE CLASSES: Oral Expression—I had the opportunity to know and explain many of Quebec's idioms.

gabrielatirado

Quebec, Canada



Gabriela Tirado takes a moment for a photograph while strolling through the streets of Quebec. "I had no idea that Quebec was so beautiful, and the people so friendly," she said. "Everywhere I went, I saw amazing views that many times left me speechless."

DESCRIBE THE HOUSING SITUATION: I lived in a house with a host mother and with two other students. Each of us had our own room, and we had breakfast and dinner together. My host mom was very kind, funny and reliable. It was always a pleasure to be around her.

BEST MEMORY: Rafting! I went rafting for the first time with other students and it was wonderful. It was an experience I will never forget, especially the magnificent views from the river.

GREATEST CHALLENGE: Losing my fear of speaking French to others because I thought that they were not going to understand me or vice versa.

GOING ABROAD VS. STAYING ON CAMPUS: It is definitely much better to go abroad when it comes to learning a language than to simply stay on campus. On campus you can only practice your new language in the classroom and learn about its culture only through books. Yet, this is not enough. You need to experience the culture and speak the language in real life situations. This way you will have a much better understanding about both language and culture.

FACT ABOUT YOUR HOST COUNTRY THAT YOU THINK PEOPLE WOULD BE SURPRISED TO LEARN: The Quebecois are very proud of their culture and of their French language. Also, the Frontenac Castle (Chateau Frontenac) is not an actual castle. It is a very fancy hotel.

"Being happy to be in Quebec and getting used to its lifestyle and its beauty, I felt sad and somewhat foreign when I was back on U.S. soil. *Although this feeling only lasted a week, I still miss Quebec.*"

ADVICE TO FUTURE STUDY ABROAD PARTICIPANTS: Know a little bit about the history and culture of the country beforehand. Once there, be involved as much as possible in extracurricular activities and visit as many places as you can. Remember to speak your new language **all** the time.