

# theolutz

Athens, Greece



— Theo Lutz stops for a photo with Meteora in the background. Seeing Meteora, a set of monasteries in the mountains, was one of Lutz's best memories of his experience, along with visiting rural villages ("and seeing the traditional lifestyle") and going to Crete for a week.

**THEO'S MAJOR(S):** history and political science

**YEAR/TERM ABROAD:** fall 2004

**REASON YOU CHOSE THIS PROGRAM:** I wanted to go for a semester and my French wasn't strong enough, so I wanted an English-speaking program that worked schedule-wise. Athens appealed to me because it was a little more out of the way and not a common choice.

**DESCRIBE THE HOUSING SITUATION:** I lived in an apartment in Athens with another American student. Most of the apartments were close to each other, so it was easy to interact with other students in the program.

**BIGGEST SURPRISE:** The unique juxtapositions that I encountered: having Thanksgiving dinner with a Greek Orthodox priest; eating at a McDonald's in the middle of an old square and being able to get a Heineken with a Happy Meal; and seeing a common culture among those who lived in the rural area versus those who lived in Athens, although their ways of life are very different.

**WHAT I WISH I KNEW BEFORE I LEFT:** I had a positive experience overall. I did some research and read guidebooks, but there were still a few things: don't ever give a high five in public (it's the equivalent to flicking someone off), and the Euro and how things in Greece became more expensive as the semester went on.

**EXPERIENCES WITH CULTURE SHOCK OR REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK:** Reverse was the biggest. I've heard the better time you have there, the harder it is coming back. I still can't eat before 9 p.m., and I miss the food. I miss the lifestyle of walking everywhere and of staying up late and taking an afternoon nap.

**GOING ABROAD VS. STAYING ON CAMPUS, DISCUSS:** I'm not sure I ever heard of anyone who said that studying abroad wasn't the best experience of their college years. Going away for one semester is, really, a very short period of time.

"Almost any major of any financial background can study abroad. The investment of *living in a foreign place for three months is a unique experience* that you can't match by just traveling."

**WHAT YOU KNOW NOW THAT YOU DIDN'T KNOW BEFORE GOING ABROAD:** Obviously, a lot more about Greece and that I actually like Greek food. I also know that the Greeks are a very distinct group of people that had a lot of influence on our society. I also now think, where in the world can I find a job? Not just: where in the Midwest? It's not just a dream.