

Study and Go Abroad Fairs

Editorial #3:

Study Abroad In One European City, Travel The Entire Continent While You're There

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If you were going to study abroad and you had to choose either Vienna, Austria, or Rome, Italy, which city would you pick?

How about both? Simon Fraser University business student Janice Quan recently spent a semester studying at the Vienna University of Economics and Business, but her most memorable experience was travelling to Rome with her Italian roommate. "I got to see Rome the Italian way," she says.



The great thing about studying in Europe is that you can have a home city, like Janice did in Vienna, but you can also travel around the continent and experience many different countries and cultures.

"I've always thought Vienna was a beautiful city with so much history, and it's always been ranked quite high on liveability standards," she says. "Another reason I chose Vienna is because the Vienna University of Economics and Business is a top business school in Europe and they offered courses in English."

To prepare for her exchange, Janice took a few German classes to learn the basics. She also did some research about Austria and the rest of Europe so she had a good idea of where she wanted to travel from there. “I didn’t book any of my travels until I got to Europe, though, because plans always change; you meet new people and you’re never sure how much school and homework you will have.”

When she arrived in Vienna in September 2011, she was grateful she took the time to learn some German. Although she found that almost everyone in Vienna speaks English, they really appreciated it when she tried to speak the language. “Some people were not very receptive if you only spoke English,” she says. “As well, most signs were in German.”

For the duration of the exchange, Janice stayed in a dorm provided by a company that handles housing for most incoming exchange students. The rent was a little higher than what you would find if you rented a flat on your own, but she says it was a lot less stressful to arrive knowing you have somewhere to stay.

At school, things were very different from what she was used to in Canada. For one thing, classes don’t usually last through a whole semester as they do in Canada.

“For example, in Canada, I might take a business class that is every Monday from 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. for the whole semester,” she explains. “In Vienna, that class might be every day for one week in November and then the class is done, while another might be every few days for a few weeks and will finish in the middle of the semester.”

She found this type of schedule to be very useful because it meant she had a lot of time to travel!

So, now that she’s back at SFU, would she recommend studying abroad to other students?

“Absolutely. When you study abroad, you not only get to live in a completely different city and really get to know it, but you get to learn in a different way. You also meet people from all over the world and develop some really great relationships and lifelong friendships,” she says.

“Studying abroad opens your eyes to the world; it challenges you and makes you more responsible and independent. I would recommend studying abroad to everyone.”

Janice’s Top 3 tips for studying abroad:

- Do a lot of research on the school, city and country you’re travelling to
- Learn the language *before* you leave

- Prepare yourself mentally for being away from home for an extended period of time – one of the other exchange students in Vienna went home after only 2 weeks because she was too homesick

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