

Mireida Study Abroad Antofagasta, Chile Fall 2015



As I reflect on my experience abroad I realize I learned more than I expected in and out of Chile. From the beginning steps as I applied to ISEP and filled out scholarship applications, I realized that I had to make important decisions of what I wanted and needed to do to reach my goals. I learned to make use of my resources. Through the help of the study abroad office, honors faculty, and advice from my professors and advisor, I was able to get scholarships and a foreign university that turned out to be perfect for me.

Once in Chile, I lived with a host family that warmly welcomed me and helped me throughout my time abroad. Through the family, friends in the university, and professors I learned many things about Chilean culture. I learned about myself as well. I understand better who I am, which is shocking because I thought I knew myself pretty well. I was challenged academically and personally. I found classes very different from what I am accustomed to and I felt homesick at times. It was a challenge that I had never faced, but I learned to build a support system and talk to my fellow classmates that were also abroad about similar emotions. My Spanish improved and I passed my courses.



I was able to travel to Machu Picchu, Peru during spring break. Oh the journey was fun! Endless hours traveling by bus with ten foreigners is an unforgettable experience. I remember my Indonesian friend, Christine, got stopped at the border because they were not going to let her pass and the bus almost left us there at the border! The way people

drove on the mountainsides without any care of our safety was for sure a once in lifetime experience. Once in Cusco, we saw the indigenous lifestyle and bought cute souvenirs. The best part was the beautiful landscape that I hiked in for hours. Waking up early in the morning to go up 1000+ steps to see the sunrise on time was unforgettable experience.

Back in the hometown I lived in, the coast was on my left and mountains on my right. I would enjoy trotting to the sound of the waves. I was able to go explore the city with my friends who became like family to me. Sophie, a German friend living with me, baked a delicious chocolate cake and Felipe, a Mexican friend, helped me cook Mexican food when we felt home sick. It was funny to see Chileans try Mexican food. My Chilean friends would pick on my bad Spanish and I would joke about their bad English.

Finally, exams were just around the corner and I enjoyed my last weeks in Chile the best I could. My Chilean friends and I studied as much as we could. I knew I would have to pack soon. The exams passed and I enjoyed the last days I had at San Pedro de Atacama, Santiago, Valparaiso, and Vina del Mar. I was able to visit a lake where I floated (I cannot swim!) because of all the salt, visit a beautiful desert, and see impressive art in a small city. My studying abroad experience was successful and enriching! Only bad thing is, now I just want to travel more and see all those friends I made from around the world.

