

Samantha Baker is spending a Semester Abroad in Leicester, England.



View Samantha's blog

<http://samisstudyabroad.blogspot.com/>

Check out Samantha's photo album

<http://samisstudyabroad.shutterfly.com/>

Watch her video about England's first snow in over a decade

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nA6hrqt9BQU>

When you first go away during your study abroad, the first question everyone asks is, "is it all you ever dreamed it would be?" To be honest, I still don't know how to answer that question. For me, studying abroad was partly about learning about a new culture and seeing the places published in National Geographic, but it was also, just a tiny bit, about running away. I wanted to see what it was like to go to a place I knew nothing about and didn't know anyone, to see if I could make it.

I've been in Leicester, UK for a month now, so I know I can make it (despite my reservations the first day). I am studying at the University of Leicester, one of two schools in the city of Leicester, studying art history and media communications. I live in a house that is over 100 years old with locks that fall off the windows and sinks that have a faucet for hot water and a separate one for cold water.

While here, I am a member of the Modern Dance Society and the International Student Association. With the ISA, I am able to take trips around England almost every weekend - some of these I sign up for, others, like going to Oxford to punt down the river or see where Harry Potter scenes were shot, I plan by myself.

School is much different here than at CSU. Instead of weekly assignment I have to turn in, or a pop quiz to check if I've done my reading since last class, "uni" (as they call it, school usually refers to the thing kids go to, and college is a completely different entity all together) is more or an independent study set-up. Therefore, I have seven papers and two presentations to give. However, I'm not actually at school for that much time. From March 28-May 3, I am literally kicked out of my house for Easter Break and I will be traveling around Europe. In five weeks I plan to go to: London, Paris, Rome, Florence, Barcelona, Madrid, Brussels, Berlin, Munich, Vienna, Venice, and Athens.

So far, my study abroad has been "all I ever dreamed it would be." I am meeting a ton of new people and learning about things I would have never thought to think about. Mostly though, my study abroad has reinforced how much home means to me. My friends, my family, CSU, and Chipotle are the things I took for granted while at home, and I cannot wait to come back. I will be different, but different in a good way.