

Goodbye Salisbury, Ciao Italia: Lydia's Story

By Jen Roslon



There I was waiting for my class to start and just casually scrolling through my Instagram feed and I saw a picture that made me swell with jealousy. Senior Lydia Theologus, at Oktoberfest in Germany! I quickly clicked on my fellow classmate's profile and stalked the rest of her profile. Looking at her pictures made me reminisce on my own time abroad and I was curious to see how our experiences compared. I reached out to Lydia and found out that she is currently enrolled through Salisbury University's Florence, Italy exchange program.

JEN: "So what sparked your interest in studying abroad? Have you always wanted to?"

LYDIA: "The Lizzie McGuire Movie haha just kidding. My two older cousins studied abroad for a semester about ten years ago, one went to Barcelona and the

other went to Rome. I remember looking at their pictures when they returned and thinking 'Wow, they look so happy. I need to do that when I'm older!'"

JEN: "Do you think it is important for students to study abroad?"

LYDIA: "I definitely think that it's important to go out of your comfort zone and experience different cultures to realize that there is so much more out there in the world than what you grew up with. Plus, when else are you going to have the chance to just live abroad for three months, especially at this age?!"

JEN: "So true. I had a similar perspective when I decided to go abroad. Why did you choose Florence, Italy?"

LYDIA: "My CMAT internship program offered four countries

to choose from; Milan, Dublin, Barcelona, and Florence. While I would have been excited to go to any of these cities, my heart was set on Italy. I had trouble choosing between Milan and Florence, but eventually decided that Florence was the best fit for me because of the smaller size and charm."

JEN: "So many great choices, that definitely sounds like a tough decision. What kind of internship are you involved in?"

LYDIA: "One of my majors, Communication Arts with a Public Relations track requires an internship. After a mutual selection process, I was placed in a touring company called We Like Tuscany. They specialize in bike tours in Tuscany, but also do Vintage Fiat 500 Tours, Garden Tours, Hiking Tours, and Food and Wine Tours. I come in as their marketing intern, managing all of their social media accounts, taking pictures, photo-shopping, all of that other exciting stuff. I love the people that I work with, by now I'm pretty sure that they have adopted me as their clueless American child."

JEN: "Aw! That must be so exciting that you get to experience what a professional setting abroad is like! What has been the biggest culture shock for you so far?"

LYDIA: "Living here, I realize how comfortable and accessible life is back in America is. Most people here don't have cars,



romantic it sounds. The food is so fresh, I don't eat meat and surprisingly it is so easy to eat vegetarian here. I would say that I think that it's still pretty obvious that I'm an American, but I can integrate myself pretty well."

JEN: "What are the people like over there?"

LYDIA: "Florence being an international city, I see many tourists here every single day. Which means seeing lot of selfie sticks and

traveling a lot around cities in Italy. The culture here is so rich and I love seeing how different each place I go is, all with their own Italian flare. While I loved them all, my favorite place in Italy was Cinque Terre. It was beyond gorgeous with some of the most amazing views I've ever seen. Outside of Italy, I've been to Oktoberfest in Munich, Germany and Croatia. Oktoberfest was fun and the city of Munich is very clean, but I loved Croatia because it reminded me of Greece. I got to white water raft and go on a three island boat tour! I will be traveling to London in a few hours, so that might be my new favorite place!"

JEN: "No bias or anything but London is pretty amazing! I miss studying abroad there every day. Did you have any apprehensions before going abroad? I know I was a little nervous about making friends!"

dryers, or the latest and greatest iPhone. I have found most of these things refreshing because I'm just excited to be here, but one thing that I'm still getting used to is not being able to use my phone as much as I have before. I have a small amount of data that I use up the first two days of every month, and I'm just dependent on Wi-Fi wherever I go."

JEN: "Not being able to use your cell phone except for on Wi-Fi was one of my biggest adjustments as well. How are you integrating yourself into Italian culture?"

LYDIA: "I just love everything about it here. Maybe it's just because I'm so excited to be here and I know that I'll be back to whatever I'm used too in a month and a half, but I find the culture here so awesome. The language is beautiful, even when I can't understand what people are saying I just enjoy hearing how

backpacks worn across the front of chests everyday. Once past the creepy Italian men, I would say that I've really liked a majority of the people that I've met here. Everyone looks very put together all of the time, and very relaxed. Everyone is very welcoming and friendly, especially if you attempt to speak Italian to them. Even if you're wrong, which a majority of the time I am, they appreciate you trying."

JEN: "Ah yes, I noticed that too, that as long as you try to attempt the language they are so much nicer everywhere you go in a foreign country. Are you doing other traveling outside of Florence?"

LYDIA: "I've been



LYDIA: “I personally had none at all. This was something that I've always wanted to do, so when I found out that I was accepted I just wanted to get there already!”

JEN: “What is the number one thing you hope to get out of your time abroad?”

LYDIA: “Hopefully a big girl job since it'll be on my resume that I've done an international internship. Ah, this is a hard question. I'm thankful to have already gotten out of it a new language, life long friends from all over the world, more independence, and new experiences. I would say new experiences that I wouldn't

normally have at home is the number one thing.”

JEN: “Would you recommend studying abroad to future SU students? Why or why not.”

LYDIA: “Yes a thousand times over! I highly recommend studying abroad for a whole semester too, if your major allows it. To live for a long period of time and fully immerse yourself in a culture with only the responsibility of classes or an internship is a chance of a lifetime. You will learn more things about yourself than you ever thought possible. It might be scary to be away from everything that you know, but it is so worth it. Trust me, Salisbury will stay exactly the same as you

left it. Your friends and family will not forget about you, they will be patiently waiting for your return. Also, don't let a boyfriend or girlfriend be a deciding factor. If they don't support it, then who needs them anyways!”

Everything in my interview with Lydia made me remember how much I adore Europe and how happy I am that another Salisbury University student jumped on the opportunity to experience a different culture and lifestyle. I couldn't have said it any better than Lydia, don't let anything get in your way of traveling abroad! Take advantage of the programs Salisbury offers while you have the chance. You will not regret it. Arrivedirci!

