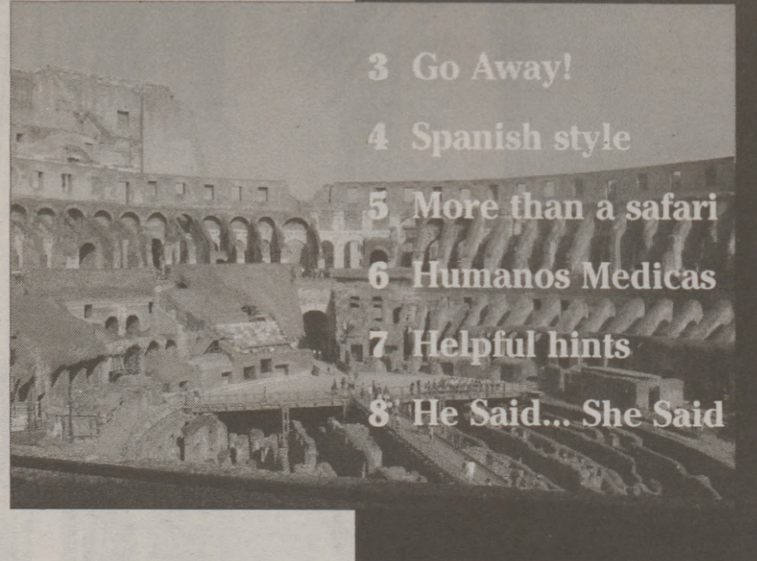


**On the Cover:**  
Battalion photographer Randal Ford studied abroad in Italy during the summer of 2003. On the cover, Ford captures a Venetian canal. Top right, Ford focuses on a masked Italian; right, a view of The Coliseum in Rome; a pedestrian navigates a small street in Venice during a summer rainstorm. For more photos of Ford's Italy, visit [www.randalford.com](http://www.randalford.com).



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### ABC's of Study Abroad

#### Applications

- Application deadlines vary, but are usually about 6-8 months in advance.
- Program requirements vary, but a minimum 2.0 GPR is required.
- Sign up for an interest list or list serv online and be among the first to find out about applications, scholarships and deadlines.
- Independent study abroad programs are also available.

#### Benefits

- Global opportunities in more than 43 countries with 100 programs.
- Enhanced job opportunities in today's global market.
- Learning a foreign language.
- All faculty-led programs offer Texas A&M credit. Ask an academic adviser to determine how courses completed can be applied towards degree plans.

#### Cost

- Program costs vary per program. In general, costs fall between \$2,500 and \$6,000.
- More than \$300,000 available in scholarships. 50 percent of applicants receive financial assistance.
- Study Abroad Fellowships offer up to \$1,000.
- International Education Fee Scholarships offer up to \$2,000.

### From the Editor

As a student who has studied abroad twice in her college career at Texas A&M, I cannot stress enough how important it is to learn about other countries and cultures. In producing Passport for a magazine editing and production class in the Fall 2003 semester, the staff and I hope to make it easier to understand what studying abroad encompasses. When you start planning to study in a different country, the details may be overwhelming. We filled Passport with suggestions and personal experiences about being in an unfamiliar country to help prepare you for your journey.

After reading our magazine, we hope you have been encouraged to expand your horizons, pick a destination and go abroad. You won't regret the decision.

— Angelique Montes

### Passport Staff

- Angelique Montes — Editor
- Christy Havel — Managing Editor
- Abigail Woller — Copy Editor
- Jennifer Vasquez — Photo Editor
- Crystal Dobson — Design Editor

# Thinking about studying abroad?

## Students offer tips for a successful international experience

### Why study abroad?

Learning and living in another country is incentive to learn a foreign language and completely immerse oneself in culture. Studying abroad also provides the opportunity to meet new people and make life-long friendships.

Alicia Gamble, a senior speech communications major, studied abroad in Spain for six weeks last summer. She said the group she went with became like family.

"Now that we are back at school we still hang out two or three times a week," she said.

Study abroad is a great way to get credit hours without sitting in a classroom, said Grant Speer, a senior rangeland ecology and management major who went to South Africa last summer.

"You get to learn by experiencing new things and not just reading about them in a book," he said.

Tina Oggero, a senior psychology major, said her experience in Mexico two summers ago was the chance of a lifetime.

"It was a great opportunity to get close to people that I may not otherwise have met," she said. "Studying abroad is a priceless experience, one that will stay with me forever."

Rachel Coleman, who graduated in August of 2003, said visiting Italy gave her a different perspective on life.

"Being in a foreign country takes you out of your comfort zone," Coleman said. "You get to see the American culture from the outside and look at it from a different perspective.

Seeing the way people from America act in a foreign country is quite different from how we would act at home in the United States."

**"You get to learn by experiencing new things and not just reading about them in a book."**



### What should you pack?

Some students recommend making room in one's suitcase for two thermoses. Always fill a bottle of water before heading out the door, because it's good to stay hydrated. Study abroad students will be walking a lot and not having to stop for water will help the journey.

Another suggestion is that if one will be switching beds often, it is good to bring a cover for the mattress.

"Someone on my trip sewed two sheets together and used it as a slip cover to put

over the mattress," Coleman said. "It made it easy to take it on and off, and it packed well too."

Another item not to forget is Febreze, Gamble said.

"I didn't have anywhere to wash my clothes for 10 days, so I had to wear several things over again. As far as clothes go," she said, "I really only needed a couple pairs of jeans, a T-shirt to wear each day of the week, and a few outfits for going out at night."

Packing will also be influenced by the climate one will encounter, so students advise knowing weather conditions and average temperatures to help guide clothes selection.

Coleman said students will wear the same things over and over again so she suggests packing light and choosing one's most comfortable and versatile

clothing.

Over-packing can be a problem, so that once students get to their destination they may regret bringing too much along.

"I had to leave clothes in Spain because I didn't have enough room in my suitcase for all of the new stuff I bought while I was there," Gamble said.

Speer also wanted to bring home more than he could fit in his suitcase. "I wish I had packed another bag so I could have brought home more things from South Africa," he said.

**"I had to leave clothes in Spain because I didn't have enough room in my suitcase...."**

### When should you start saving?

Studying abroad can put a dent in a bank account. But don't be discouraged, because many scholarships and grants are offered, and students can also receive loans. To find out more about funding opportunities, visit the study abroad office on campus or the study abroad Web site at <http://studyabroad.tamu.edu>. More than 50 percent of applicants who apply for scholarships at Texas A&M receive financial assistance.

Students suggest bringing more money than one thinks he will need. There are ATMs almost everywhere, making it convenient to withdraw needed cash, though an exchange rate and a possible bank fee are charged. Ask the local bank which is the cheapest way to withdraw money abroad.

Also, be familiar with the exchange rate for traveler's checks.

"At first, you tend to spend more money until you kind of get used to everything,"

Coleman said. "Then you start to slow down on the spending and budget your money so that it will last you the whole trip." Count on spending some money, especially if it's in the plan to buy souvenirs and do a little shopping in the markets of the world.

### Who should you talk to?

You're not in College Station anymore. Saying "howdy" to someone on the street in Spain may not go over as well as it does at Texas A&M. For the most part though, the same basic rules apply: If one

**"Most people were willing to help us when we got lost."**



is nice to foreigners, they usually return the favor.

Coleman remembers Italians being quite helpful when she and her friends were lost.

"When you are the one who is lost in a foreign country you really learn to appreciate them helping you find your way," she said. "It made me realize how much more I should try to help people who are visiting the United States and are not familiar with the area."

Gamble said the people of Spain accept and aid tourists.

"Most people were willing to help us when we got lost," she said. "The only time I had a problem was when I tried to order french fries at a restaurant. I said the wrong word for 'potato' and the waiter went off on me."

— Stories by Sara Bezner