

## My Study Abroad Experience in Wales

Ever since I was little, I have loved to travel, and it had been my ultimate dream for years to go live in the UK, I had even found an old journal I had written in describing how I wanted to go visit Cardiff because I was a huge Doctor Who fan and it was filmed there, so when I was given the opportunity to go to Cardiff Metropolitan University in Cardiff, Wales my dreams had literally come true. My long time boyfriend Donovan, who had never been out of the country, was also accepted to Cardiff Met with me and I was so excited to see what he thought of travelling and the UK. We also had saved up money over many years to be able to do some backpacking in Europe, and we arrived early and started our adventure.

We stayed in hostels throughout our trip, some of which were incredible, others ... less so, and we saw and experienced some insane things I had never dreamed we'd do. We rode on a train through the Alps, we saw the Leaning Tower of Pisa and had a "Piece of Pisa Pizza", which was a must do for me. We saw canals, Van Gogh paintings, and almost got hit by a bike in Amsterdam. But the definite highlight of the trip was when he proposed to me on a quiet bridge in Venice, like we were in a movie. That two week trip we took was the most stressful, incredible, unbelievable thing I have ever done, and we would not have been able to do any of it if we hadn't been able to study abroad.

We then made our way to Cardiff and looked forward to settling into our new home for the next few months. We met a ton of new friends from all over the world, like Rafaella from Switzerland who told us about movie prices back home, which were around \$35, and Hosi and Vince from Germany who loved to hike. We also met some "UK experts" in Rory and Áine, who were from Ireland and could answer the questions we had about our new home. We saw the most amazing things even while we were close to our home base. We took a train over to Bath and saw the Roman ruins, we even went over to Stonehenge since we were so close to it. My absolute favorite things to see, however, were the castles. We went to Cardiff Castle, which is right in the middle of town, Castell Coch, which was a little bit of a hike, but definitely worth it, and Caerphilly Castle, which was right outside of the city, and you can wander through the steep staircases and huge halls like you're in a fantasy novel. We even recognized it while re-watching my old favorite TV show, Doctor Who, once we got back home.

Studying abroad was one of the best things I have ever done in my life. Now that I'm back, I have rethought my life goals and am currently planning to get a good job in the UK after graduation with my now husband. When anyone asks me how it went, I always say two things. First, if I could hop on a plane tomorrow and go back, I would do it, no questions asked. And secondly, if you can go, definitely go. You will not regret it.



Us in front of Stonehenge



A fireplace in Caerphilly Castle



Our Bridge in Venice



The Business Building at Cardiff Met