Buenos Aires, Argentina was the city that most reminded me of a European city. It was like the two cultures of Europe and Argentina were combined there. I still crave the empanadas and café con leche from Argentina!

In Argentina, there were flea markets with hand-made crafts, musicians playing in the streets, tango dancers performing on the sidewalks and the smell of media-lunas (croissants) in every barrio. Along with the endless culture lessons, my Spanish improved immensely. Everyone can read about a different culture, or even watch a movie based in a different country, but there is no comparison to experiencing it in real life.
Buenos Aires is a cosmopolitan city that has everything to offer; amazing food, dazzling architecture, passionate soccer fans, and a diverse culture. From trekking glaciers in Patagonia to driving a jet boat into Iguazu Falls and tasting natural fresh salt from las Salinas Grandes, Argentina is a unique country. I attended an Argentina vs. Chile soccer game and watched Messi score with my own two eyes! As an avid soccer fan, this was hands down one of the most incredible experiences of my life.

While I was in Argentina, I had the opportunity to visit the Jardín Japonés (Japanese Gardens) in Buenos Aires. Not only were they beautiful, they opened my eyes to how the world is connected in ways we might not realize. I knew I was going to learn about Argentinean culture during my two weeks abroad, but I also got to learn about and see Japanese culture as well.

Argentina is a breathtaking country riddled with diverse backgrounds from Spanish and Italian influences. Buenos Aires has forty-eight barrios (neighborhoods) which possess their own contrasting personalities. Argentina has it all, gorgeous mountains of the Patagonia, beautiful Iguazu falls, the Perito Moreno Glacier, very colorful soccer stadiums and amazingly delicious foods. Argentina’s southern top is very close to Antarctica, you can see penguins, sea lions and whales without even needing to leave the country!
Kacie Schrum
Univ. of Belgaro, Buenos Aires – AIFS
Fall 2016

While in Argentina, my host family embraced me as I arrived and let me know I was now part of their family. I went to family gatherings of over 30 people where scratch-made pizza would make its rounds, followed by a full out parilla /cook out. While there, I learned Spanish from the locals, about their public transportation system, and where to find the cheapest empanada, but more importantly, I learned more about myself.

Belize

Brianna Burris
Coastal Studies in Belize – Faculty-Led Short Term - Spring 2017

Belize is a beautiful country filled with rich wildlife and amazing opportunities. My favorite experience in Belize was snorkeling the barrier reefs. There was such rich and diverse wildlife and the reef was beautiful. It really made me appreciate the world we live in and showed me how beautiful and amazing the sea is. I learned to value the environment and wildlife in Belize, and how different their eco-system is from our own.

Sydney Burgess
Landscapes of Belize: Mtn. to Reef – Faculty-Led Short Term - Spring 2017

Belize has a rich cultural diversity, interesting people and is a relatively young country. Belize has luscious forests full of exotic tapirs and scarlet macaws and Mayan temples from long ago; Belize has something for everyone. My favorite experience was scuba diving for the first ocean dive ever; the water was crystal clear
clear, colorful coral swayed in the ocean current and the water was so warm that I did not even wear a wetsuit!

Kaitlyn Lowrance  
Belize Archaeology Field School – Faculty-Led  
Summer 2016 - 17

The Belizean culture is a rich blend of Indigenous, European and Caribbean, which can be seen in the art, architecture, and in the food. 17th century British colonizers built many of the canals that flow along the main. Belize is a smaller country, with this being said, we visited the Mayan site of Xunantunich, went zip lining, and cave tubing in just one day in central Belize.

Lynsey Sain  
Communication Studies in Belize – Faculty-Led  
Short Term - Spring 2016

The most enriching part of studying in Belize was the diversity that I and the other students were exposed to. Prior to studying abroad, I didn't realize how many cultures Belize held, but we were immediately immersed upon arrival there. My favorite place was the Maya Center. It was interesting and inspiring to see how invested the villagers were in preserving their culture by working at the Cockscomb Basin Forest Reserve and selling crafts that would help their community. We sat down and talked with members of the village to learn about their culture, history, and values, and we even learned how to make authentic Mayan tortillas!

CHILE

Gabriella Hernandez  
Chile Summer Study Abroad – Faculty-Led  
Summer 2016

After vowing to myself in middle school that I would never ride a horse again, I was definitely set back when I found out that our first group activity was an all day horseback riding excursion. Unexpectedly, this 5 hour trip turned out to be one of my favorite experiences in Chile. This opportunity forced me to step out of
my comfort zone, and by doing so, I was able to truly enjoy the beautiful scenery of Chile as well as conquer one of my fears.

Tina Le  
Chile Summer Study Abroad – Faculty-Led Summer 2016

Studying abroad in Chile is the perfect place to strengthen your Spanish skills. Between living with a host family, public transportation, and day to day activities, your Spanish skills are constantly being improved. The excursions, lifestyle, and classes while abroad in Chile are so fun and educational at the same time. There isn’t a moment that is wasted, you will constantly be learning and having a great time exploring the country.

Melissa Piechowiak  
PUCV Summer Program – Direct Partner Fall 2016

Chile is incredible. It has everything from the Atacama Desert, thousands of miles of Pacific coastline and mountains, and of course, beautiful Patagonia. There is something for everyone in this country. The city of Valparaiso is very enchanting with all of its bright colored murals and the nice people that live within it. It is hard to become bored living in Chile because of everything there is to see and experience.

Calla Worley  
PUCV – Direct Partner Spring 2017

Studying abroad in Chile, there were thousands of opportunities to practice and learn Spanish. Chile is great because there is such a wide variety of cultures, atmospheres and climates. The program I was in at PUCV makes it very easy to meet people and the teachers are great with handling all levels of Spanish and catering to your experience.

Living in Vina Del Mar, near Valparaiso, right on the ocean was beautiful. The Chilean people, especially my host family, were so nice and accepting of foreigners. I cannot wait to go back and visit!!!
Living in Costa Rica is a cultural immersion in a gorgeous country where we swam in waterfalls and hiked in rainforests, but honestly getting to know my host mother was my favorite experience. Once I got past the language barrier, I learned about her country's amazing culture. Living with a host family and the relationships you build with your new family, will shape your experience and your life forever.

Katherine (Katie) Billig
Capturing Costa Rica – Faculty-Led Short Term – Spring 2015

Students that study abroad in Costa Rica should embrace the experience through trying new foods, speaking the Spanish language, seeing monkeys and sloths in their natural habitats, or simply interacting with native Costa Ricans. You will be able to explore a variety of settings including: beautiful beaches, mountains, rainforests, and cities, while embarking on many excursions, national park tours, and ziplining opportunities.

I believe that going abroad is an opportunity that everyone should take advantage of. Not only did I get to learn about the values, traditions, beliefs and language of new cultures, but I also learned a lot about myself. Tamarindo, Costa Rica is now one of my favorite beaches in the world. I was lucky enough to snorkel, watch the sunset behind a jungle, dance on a catamaran with locals, and witness bioluminescence all in one day - with people that I will never forget!
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Brittany Gallagher
Santiago Service-Learning – ISA
Summer 2016 - 17

Santiago was my host city, but I was able to travel around the country on the weekends. My favorite place was Puerto Plata along the northern coastline where my roommate and I took a cable car to the top of a nearby mountain, then went to the beach! There are plenty of spontaneous adventures waiting for you in the DR... you should go!

ECUADOR

Haley Mattice
Univ. San Francisco de Quito – Direct Partner
Fall 2016

Quito is a great place to study abroad because within a few hours, for very little money, you can travel to the 4 different regions of Ecuador. The Amazon, the Andes, the coast, and the Galapagos Islands. Each of these places are completely unique and incredible to see. For people whose Spanish is not perfect, Ecuador is a good place because their accent is a little easier to understand. I found it to be a great place to practice and improve my Spanish language skills.

PERU

Kayli Hiban
Universidad de Salamanca Cusco - ISA
Summer 2016 - 17

Peru provided a different experience than what I was used to in the U.S. because it is still a developing nation. I learned that other cultures are beautiful and that not everyone grows up with as many luxuries as we have in the U.S.
My favorite experience in Peru was hiking up to Lake Humantay and seeing the natural turquoise waters reflecting the snow covered Andes Mountains.

Jade Oakes
Universidad de Salamanca Cusco - ISA
Spring 2016

Machu Picchu, indigenous cultures, llamas - Peru has all of that and more. If you're looking for a more exotic place to study and work on your Spanish, Peru is for you. Peru has environmental diversity as well as a diverse culture. From the mountains to the coast to the desert to the jungle, you can find different indigenous people and city dwellers.