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Final Thoughts

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Final Thoughts

It is official; after five classes, eight countries, three piercings, roughly twenty-two bus rides, one new Linfield family, two volleyball tournaments, twelve volunteer hours, seven flights, three pub crawls, and countless new memories, I will be heading home. In January when I was getting ready to leave on this experience, I was an absolute hot mess. I couldn't think about luggage without bursting into tears, and I had multiple plans for how I was going to get myself out of leaving. I was absolutely convinced that I was going to hate it. Luckily, I could not have been more wrong. This has been the best experience of my life, and I am so proud of myself for being able to step out of my comfort zone to make the most of my short time abroad.

I have learned:

- How to book flights, hostels, buses, etc.
- How to embrace change (for the most part)
- How to be assertive
- How to ask for help when I need it
- How to deal with homesickness
- That I can survive being in a situation where I do not know anybody
- How to make the most of a situation when plans change
- It is okay to miss home as long as I still appreciate where I am
- When to take charge, and when to let others take the lead
- How to find the best restaurants in any city
- How to be the fastest person through airport security
- How to be more independent

I am going to miss:

- Brown bread
- People calling me "love"
- Hearing "you are most welcome" when I enter a store or tell people I am not from Ireland
- Being able to travel to a new country every weekend
- Cheap airplane tickets
- Irish accents
- Dairy products. Ireland has the best dairy products ever
- Reading "mind your step" on signs
- Irish pubs
- All of the street performers on Shop Street
- Not having any assignments besides a few papers
- Having an eleven person Linfield family surrounding me at all times
- How relaxed everyone is
- Having something exciting to do every week
- How friendly everyone is (I met an Irish man in a pub the other night and we chatted for 45 minutes about Irish music and about how he is a chem professor at NUIG)
- Delicious, fresh seafood at every restaurant
- Meeting new people from all over the world
- Having a bunch of new experiences

I am excited to come home to:

- My family and friends
- Having food with flavor
- Being able to drive
- Instant Breakfast
- All of the clothes that I left at home
- Sun and warm weather
- Familiar things

On Sunday night I went with my friends for one last night out, and it was nice to be able to say goodbye to the Irish nightlife. After two more sleeps and one final, I will be on my way to the airport! Aaaaaand I still haven't even packed yet :)

-Emily Culley