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2010-11 Postcards

Postcards from Abroad

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## Travel in Europe

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# **Journals from France, Angers**

## **2010-10-27 Travel in Europe**

Travelling is my favorite part in Europe, for it is easy to plan and fulfill. Until now I have completed three trips with my friends. In September, we went to Tours, another town in France, and Brussels, and in the beginning of November, we went to Santorini, a small island in Greece. It's unbelievable that I can travel around Europe just with a French visa.

Tours is located to the east of Angers, and you can get there in one hour by train. Tours is famous for its wines and the alleged perfection of its local spoken French. We three girls went there one Sunday, and our one-day-trip plan is no plan, just randomly walking around. Fortunately, Tours is a quite small town, and we finally managed to get all places, which we expected to. The first one is St. Gatien Cathedral with hundreds of years of history. Needless to say, it is extremely gorgeous and rich in decorative detail. Then we ran into the Sunday market, where peddlers sell delicious bread, fresh fruit, tempting candy, country style clothes, second-hand bags, cups... My friend Sam got a French novel by spending one euro! It's indeed a good price. Afterwards, we crossed the oldest bridge in Tours, Pont Wilson, and then we came to the old part of this town. Old European architecture is fancy, and natives sit in a cafe around this old place. Personally, I consider Tours to be perfect for a one-day trip.

In mid-September, we came to Brussels, which is the capital city of the European Union, and the largest urban area in Belgium. My first impression of Brussels is its international atmosphere. People of different colors can be seen everywhere, and you are overwhelmed by different languages like English, French, Spanish and German. Additionally, there are so many attractions you must visit: first, the Grand Place, with the Gothic town hall in the old centre, then the St. Michael Cathedral with its large greenhouses. By the way, just beside the Grand Place there is a street named Galeries St. Hubert, which is the oldest commercial street. If you have time, take a break there, and I felt that I touched history at that moment. Moreover, The Manneken Pis, a small peeing boy who is a famous tourist attraction and symbol of the city; however, this naked boy is a little bit hard to find, for he is sited in a small corner. What's more, the Atomium is a symbolic structure, which was built for the 1958 World's Fair. It consists of nine steel spheres connected by tubes, and forms a model of an iron crystal. Other interests include the Cinquantenaire Park, the Royal Places, the King Gardens and so on. If you don't want to miss any of them, take the tourist bus for an hour and a half, and it saves gobs of time. Now, here comes my favorite part in Brussels, the great food! Brussels is known for its local waffles, its chocolate, its fries and beers. Does it sound amazing? My friend Shanyun and I, we love waffles, and during the three days there, we had 5 different waffles, and we still wanted more!!! Brussels is a special city in Europe--we had great fun there.

In the beginning of November, the moment that I will never ever forget, I arrived in Santorini, the most beautiful place that I have ever seen in my life. It is a volcanic island located in the southern Aegean Sea, southeast from Greece's mainland. Buildings are all in white with blue doors and blue windows, and the scene is exactly the same as I have seen before on television

and in film. In addition, the Aegean Sea is incredibly blue and clear. To be honest, there are not many interests to see, but to rest forever...At least, we did two things there. The first was that we found that famous blue roof church, the one shot by National Geographic, and placed in every postcard and travel book. The second was that we saw the most beautiful sunsets in the world over the sea, and this must be the premier romantic thing I've done with my dear friends. I love Santorini, and staying here for three days is like a dream come true; I firmly believe Santorini will become a paradise for each and every one of you!

This is my experience of traveling in Europe, and the only suggestion I want to share with you is to plan early, book a hotel early, and buy tickets early. Hope you can enjoy all of this as much as I do.

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