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Linfield College: Study Abroad in France

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I have been a tour guide, a wine harvest worker, a tutor, an assistant to a national sales manager, a travel organizer, a teacher, a story-teller, a tasting room pourer, a traveler, and a mentor. I have lived and worked in offices, castles, country homes, school rooms, vineyards, and fortified cities. All this because as a courageous but clueless sophomore in college I was confronted with some words on a page of a book. We're all familiar with these words, though they change from time to time. "If you choose to stay and study, turn to page 34. If you choose to take a risk, turn to page 14." In the "choose your own adventure" book, I opted to live in France and give page 14 a try. I was never really certain why I decided to go; it had never been a goal. Fortunately, I rapidly discovered that some of the most valuable experiences are not planned, pre-meditated, or sometimes even fully understood. Aside from the obvious language outcomes, I learned strength, I developed compassion, I grew in curiosity, I cultivated relationships that I maintain today, and I acquired perspective. These are skills that are never depleted, they never get rusty, and they still serve me well 14 years later.

Erica Zimmerman

