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April 29, 2019

A Day in the Life in the South of France



The beauty of studying abroad is that every day is a new day and you learn something unique by the end of it. Even if it is just a regular school day, being in a new culture means you will see and experience something interesting or novel in your routine.

I want to walk you through an average day in a typical week for me. I hope this allows future students studying abroad in France to have realistic expectations of what their life abroad will look like.

From Monday to Friday I wake up between 8:30 and 9 am (I love getting the opportunity to sleep in a little). Each morning I like to get a jumpstart on my chores that my host mother requests of me. Those are to make my bed and open my window to air out my room. We usually air out the apartment for 30 minutes to an hour in the morning.

Host families have to provide us with typical French breakfast materials every morning. Every morning I have hot lemon or mint tea, fruit and toast with Nutella available for me to prepare for breakfast.

After that I review my homework and study in preparation for class. I usually have a reading quiz each class, sometimes three in a row. If it's nice out, and it usually is, I go for a run in the nearby park.

Then it is lunch with friends in a cafe or taken to the park if it is sunny. As you might be able to tell, park life is the best life.

Wednesdays I meet with my conversation partner and practice conversational French for about two hours. It is easy to connect with a conversation partner if you are interested. Many IAU professors also teach at University Aix Marseille, and they often connect their French students with their American ones.

I have class all afternoon into the evening. Classes are taught in a fairly similar manner as they are at Linfield. You might find, though, that they are more lecture-based, and less focused on seminar. Typically, on Wednesday nights, there are lectures put on by professors or professor fellows.

After class I come home for a traditional French dinner made by my host mother at about 7:30. This is later than many American meals, and some students here even have it later.

I've covered some of my weekend adventures in earlier posts, but will reiterate them a little here. Like many IAU students, I do not have any classes on Friday (lucky us). This means that as soon as homework is complete, it's time to hit the train station. I've really enjoyed the ability to visit other cities in the French Riviera and exploring the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region. In my opinion this is one of the best regions in France because it really has it all: cultural hubs, beaches and the Alps. Closer to home, climbing Mt. St. Victoire can easily be done in an afternoon with the bus stopping right at the base of the trail. Class excursions can also take up most of the weekend. In the past I have attended field trips to Marseille, Brussels, art exhibits and the local mosque.

Until next time,

Elin