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## Studying Wolof

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Myrna Najera Perez

Dakar, Senegal

February 1, 2017

## Studying Wolof



I have been in Dakar, Senegal for a week now and currently it has been amazing here! I am studying Wolof, the national language of Senegal, French, Dakar in Transition, Literature, and Islam at the Baobab Center. The school schedule is drastically different in Dakar compared to the United States, but it is nice being able to get a two-hour lunch break every day. I live with a great host family who has made me feel at home since day one. They have been helping me get acclimated to the customs of Senegal, and so far everything I have eaten here has been delicious. Currently, my favorite meal has definitely been *Thiéboudienne*, the national plate of Dakar. *Thiéboudienne* consists of rice, fish, different types of vegetables such as carrots, cabbage, potatoes, cassava, and bold flavors. The beaches here are very beautiful and very close to my Senegalese home. They are a relaxing spot on hot days, and one can even take their books and study there.

Having to immerse into the Senegalese culture and having to speak solely French has been difficult and personally very challenging, but the locals and the places I have seen so far have made this the greatest experience yet. On Saturday I had the opportunity to visit L'île de Gorée, an island known for the transatlantic slave exchange. While it was very difficult to learn of the horrors that happened within the stone walls, it helped me understand the importance of this study abroad experience. It has been humbling, eye-opening, and impactful for me to have the opportunity to live through this enriching experience. It has only been a week, but I hope that within the next weeks that follow, I can learn to love and appreciate the people and the culture more.

Myrna