

Here's my Study Abroad Story

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Major: International Relations and PPE

Program: My program included a lot of excursions: we spent 10 days living with indigenous homestay families in rural southern Chile and 5 days in the Atacama Desert in Northern Chile. My host family took me to their family reunion on a farm for Fiestas Patrias, so I got to see a lot of different parts of Chile. The program itself was seminars with Chilean professors and experts for the first two months, and then we spent the last month

doing independent study projects. Mine was about income inequality and how it relates to Chile's overall economic structure and history. Writing a 25 page paper in Spanish was challenging, but something I am very proud of.



Typical Day: Seminar on politics or economics in the morning, 2 hour lunch break, then Spanish classes in another part of Santiago. After class, I explored, went shopping, or went to the various libraries in the city. I took the metro home, ate dinner with my host parents, and read or watched TV until I went to bed.

Highlights: Chile has a large variety of beautiful landscapes, so my favorite parts were hiking with my group or going to the beach with my host family. The time spent on a farm with the indigenous Chilean family was by far my favorite part of study abroad. Also, Chileans love steak, wine, and visiting. I spent a lot of time on the porch with my host family, neighbors, and friends barbecuing and hanging out.

Challenges: Language was the biggest challenge. I'd taken a lot of Spanish and was pretty confident in my abilities, but Chilean Spanish is very difficult to understand. Trying to understand Chilean Spanish is comparable to understanding Shakespeare after learning English.

Advice: Go out of your way to meet natives that are your age, and resist the urge to only spend time with other American students. Experiment with local food and travel around your host country as much as you can.

