

Here's my Study Abroad Story

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Arcadia CGS: Victoria University of Wellington
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Major: Philosophy and Public Affairs

Program: The Arcadia program acted as a support and supplement to my academic experience in Wellington. They helped with all of the pre-departure logistics, travel, orientation week, and coordinated housing. During the semester, they organized about 5 weekend activities for the Wellington students, and had several New Zealand staff constantly available for help on any range of issues. Jane, our resident program director, is genuinely the kindest, friendliest and most caring person ever, and everyone at Arcadia was incredibly on top of things.

Typical Day: For me, a typical day in Wellington involved trekking its various hills, whether it be up Kelburn to get to campus, or down to town. Cuba St. was a frequent destination, with all of the bars and cafes you could ever hope for. I spent a lot of time walking around the city, one because it bends awkwardly around the harbor, meaning no map is sufficient for learning which streets feed into others, and two, because you find some interesting places (Parrot dog brewery was one of my favorites) that you wouldn't otherwise have found. There are also a number of cultural locations, and a TON of hikes to explore.



Challenges: New Zealand came with very few major challenges. My dorm, Everton Hall, was a bit cold and decrepit-looking, and the slew of earthquakes in the first week didn't help, but beyond that I never had a serious issue to deal with. One thing to note is that as a fairly westernized country, don't expect the cheaper prices you may find in some Asian or African countries. Also, do make sure to pack adequately, Wellington can be cold and is *always* windy, and remember you're heading into the southern hemisphere, so the seasons will be opposite.

Advice: My main piece of advice would be EXPLORE. New Zealand is relatively easy to get around, and you would be remiss not to *try* and see it all. No doubt, you won't be able to hit every spot, but do a South Island road trip, hit Queenstown (and while you're there, you must eat at Fergburger AND Ferg Bakery for a Boston Creme Donut). If you're in Wellington, check out its incredible jazz scene: Meow, Lido, Vivant, and Rogue & Vagabond are all great. Also, you MUST do at least one of the Great Walks, I would suggest the Milford Track, Abel Tasman or Tongariro Circuit. Lastly, mix with the locals. Kiwis are unbelievably friendly, and I'm still shocked at how many kids on our program clung too tightly to their American and international friends.

