UNC Charlotte
Niner International
Country Guide

Learn more about where you'll be living from a UNC Charlotte student who has already done it.

UNC CHARLOTTE
Office of Education Abroad
Which city and country did you live in abroad?

I studied abroad for a month in Greece. The first week I was in various cities due to the Walk Across Greece program. Some of the cities were: Arachova, Spetses, Hydra, Mystras, and Nafplio. For the remaining 3 weeks I lived in Athens.

What is the climate like in that location?
(Describe the weather when you were there. What are some things students should take with them to prepare for the weather in this location?)

The weather during the months of May and June are pretty hot ranging from the 80's to upper 90's. Definetly bring light clothing and comfortable walking shoes. Also bring nice clothes when going out to eat or going on an excursion. Bring a light sweater because it can get a little chilly in places and also bring one if you plan to ride on a ferry to an island. It also rains in Athens so bring a rain jacket.

What was the city’s public transportation like?
(Describe how you got to and from the city center or the university day-to-day. Did they have a subway line, buses, could you walk most places? What were the costs of these transportation options? Were they easy to utilize? Did they have Uber/Lyft available in this city? Did you have any challenges navigating through the city?)

In order to get to the university I would walk every day. I would also walk to go the grocery store and cafes when I needed to use wifi. If I was going to the shopping districts I would take the metro. A pass for 5 days was about 9 euros and if you wanted one for only a day it was 5 euros. The metro was easy to use since there were maps in English and it resembles the subway in New York. If my friends and I were going out we would take a taxi since the metro shuts down after 9 pm. There were many taxis in the city so it was easy to hail one down. The average price for a taxi was 10 euros. Many times it was four of us in a taxi so the cost was split which made it not expensive.

Describe the types of food that are common in that city.
(What were the types of foods you could find at most restaurants? What were some delicacies of that city? What were your favorite or least favorite foods?)

The food in Greece is delicious and surprisingly very healthy. Some of the foods you can find at most restaurants are gyro, pita sandwiches, greek salad, spaghetti, chicken souvlaki, and moussaka. Some of the delicacies are baklava, moussaka, gyros, tzaziki sauce, greek salad, feta cheese, lamb, and chicken souvlaki. My all time favorite food was the chicken souvlaki.
Are there any particular restaurants you would recommend students try if they are in that city?
(If possible, list the name of the restaurant and a link to the website)

Definitely go to The Greco Project which is in both Monastaraki and Sytagma Square in Athens. Also go to the Hard Rock Cafe in Monastaraki. If you are in the Pangrati area (this is where my apartment was) go to Petit Fleur, which is a cute cafe.

Was it easy to travel to nearby cities and countries?
(If you traveled in your personal time, what modes of transportation did you use (e.g. bus, train, airplane, etc.). How did you book these travel plans? Online? Local bus station? Generally what was the cost of travelling in that region? Where did you stay (e.g. Airbnb, hostels, hotels) when you travelled?)

It was pretty simple traveling to different places. One weekend my roommates and I went to Mykonos island. We booked a ferry online for 35 euros on the deck. That Friday morning we left the apartment and took the metro all the way to the port. From the port we took the ferry which was about four hours. We then took a water taxi to the town which was 2 euros and then a taxi bus to the villa which was 40 euros but was divided between 5 people. In Mykonos we stayed in a villa that we booked online which was about 300 euros for 3 nights.

CULTURE

What are some of the differences between U.S. culture and the host country culture?
(Are there any gestures or differences in communication style that is different from the US that you noticed? (smiling, eye contact etc.))

In Greece everyone dresses nice and presentable. You never see someone "bumming" or wearing athletic clothing unless they are working out. When in Greece make sure you do not give a thumbs up because it is seen as disrespectful. People in Greece also are more relaxed and not rushed to leave a restaurant. You could sit there for two hours after eating and you would not be rushed to leave.

Generally, how would you describe the locals in the host city?
(Were the locals friendly and helpful? Would you recommend approaching the locals for help?)

The locals in Athens were so nice and helpful. They loved talking to us and asking us where we were from in America. They also loved to hear about us studying in Greece and why we chose to study here. They also were looking out for us telling us what places not to visit and making sure our purses and book bags were in front of us.
Are there any cultural events that you attended during your stay that you would recommend to students (e.g. festivals, holidays, etc.)?
(How did you find out about these events?)

n/a

Describe any culture shock that you experienced while abroad.
(If culture shock was present what would you recommend for future students to avoid or lessen the shock?)

I did not experience culture shock.

Did you find it difficult to meet locals of the host city? Why or why not?
(In your experience were the locals open and welcoming of tourists? Where and how did you befriend the locals during your stay?)

Locals were so nice and welcoming to tourists. They loved to talk to us and ask us where we were from. They also would ask why we were in Greece and they loved to hear us attempt to speak Greek! I would talk to locals when shopping or in the taxi or metro station.

What type of housing did you live in (e.g. homestay, dorm, apartment, etc.)?
(Why did you choose this style of housing? Did you have access to a kitchen? How often/what was the process for doing laundry (in house or local laundry mat)?)

The housing that was chosen for us was an apartment in Pangrati. It was roomy and we had all amenities such as wifi, fridge, stove, washer, etc.
Describe your accommodations.
(Did you have access to hot water? Wifi? Did you live with roommates?)

There were 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, living room, kitchen, and balcony. I lived with 5 other people so at times it did feel a little crowded. We had hot water, wifi, stove, fridge, A/C, oven, and washer. We had to air dry out clothes outside.

Where was your housing located in regards to the city center or host university?
(How long did it take, using public transportation or walking, to get to classes every day? How long did it take to travel to the center of the city or any other major locations in that city?)

The university was a 15-20 minute walking distance from the apartment. To get to other districts in Athens my friends and I would take the metro closest to the apartment which was 10 minutes away walking and then ride the metro to wherever we needed to go. That would take maybe another 15 minutes.

What was the cost of living like? What ways can you keep costs low in that city?
(Compared to the cost of living in the city of Charlotte was it more or less expensive in that city? Were there any student discounts you took advantage of?)

The cost of living was about the same like it is here in America. Food was priced the same and I personally believe that transportation was cheaper in Greece than here. Students get discounts in museums so definitely bring your student ID.

Are you expected to tip servers or taxi drivers abroad?
(If so, what was the common tip rate? Was it the same rate as here in Charlotte (10-20%)?)

In Greece you do not have to tip at restaurants. If you believe the service was amazing you can leave about 2 or 3 euros.
How did you communicate when you were abroad?  
(e.g. did you use your own phone, did you only communicate if there was access to Wi-Fi, did you purchase a phone abroad, etc.)? (Would you recommend any helpful apps? Maybe whatsapp or a currency exchange app?)

The first thing you should do is check with your cell phone provider and see if there is some sort of international plan. MY cell phone provider did not so I had to get my cell phone unlocked and then I bought an international sim card that gave me data and call minutes back to the US. I recommend downloading whatsapp because it is easy to use and you can commincate with other people who have it by connecting to WiFi.

What would you recommend students bring to be able to charge their electronics?  
(Describe the electrical outlets, tips to keep in mind, etc.).

First check to see what kind of outlets are used to the place you are traveling to, as well as looking at the watt usage of the outlets. Once you figure that out you can find adaptors and converters on Amazon or IKEA for a good price.

What do you know now about the location or program that you wish you would have known before going abroad?

I wish I would have known about more cultural activites and maybe that smoking is a really big thing in Greece. I would have been more prepared to smell all that smoke.

What’s your first and last name?  
Cameron Rosas Wuotto

Which semester and year did you go abroad (e.g. fall 2016, summer 2017, etc.)?  
Summer 2018
Which program did you participate in?

Faculty-Led Program

What was your student level when you went abroad (e.g. freshman, sophomore, etc.)?
If you would be open to being contact by other UNC Charlotte students who are interested in your experience abroad, please provide your contact information (email, phone number, social medial, etc.)

I had just finished my freshman year of college when I went abroad.

If you are interest in more of my experience abroad here is some of my contact information below.
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