

'burg Blogs »

Lost in Translation: Liège, Belgium

Posted October 14, 2013 at 1:59 pm by [Carmela Zabala '14](#)

Studying abroad is one of the best experiences you can have in college, and probably also one of the toughest.

I'm currently one of two students doing the Belgium Exchange program for [Graphic Design](#) majors, and being the first two students to ever participate in this program, the learning curve has come fast and hard.

What we were told to expect was nothing like what we have experienced so far, but regardless the past three weeks have been absolutely fantastic.

The language comes quickly out of necessity, and while the first couple of weeks are shocking and slightly overwhelming, soon you find yourself understanding what the previous week sounded like the teacher on Charlie Brown, except 100 times faster.



My bedroom view of Liège

If you can, try to take a language course (or several, preferably conversation based) in the language that you'll be speaking, because it will really help you. But keep in mind that people in

the real world shorten words, speak in slang, have weird accents, and speak FAST. Try not to get frustrated. It will come with time.

I have six tips so far:

1. As the woman that I'm staying with told me (while we left her house 5 minutes before school started on the first day of class, when the drive would take at least 10), "Be cool."
2. Ask the locals (duh).
3. Learn how to eat with only one tiny napkin, because you'll be lucky to even get one.
4. Learn to accept Comic Sans (Designers, you know what I'm talking about). It is everywhere.
5. Embrace public transportation, because it is wonderful. Also, remember that the bus often doesn't come, and at peak hours it comes full. LEAVE EARLY.
6. MOST IMPORTANTLY, always look around, and always look UP.



Pumpkin soup at a house party



Always look up



"La Frite", a delicious burger joint



Always look around



Bridge leading to Saint-Paul Cathedral



Cultural expo in Liège



Fireworks over Liège



Sunday morning market along the river



Third floor of Graphic Design building at Saint-Luc



Bridge leading to City Hall



Pedestrian bridge



Place Saint-Lambert at night



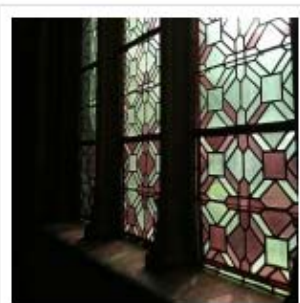
Party at the "officially" closed Theatre de la Place



Chocolate "gauffre" at Pollux, best waffle place in town



Saint-Paul Cathedral



Saint-Paul Cathedral



Result of a long bus wait

About the blogger



I'm an undergrad Graphic Design student, planning on graduating in Spring '14, and currently doing a semester in Belgium. A bit of a nomad, I was born in Argentina, moved to FL in 2001, and have been an avid traveler ever since. I love anything related to design, singing, and coffee.