

Rome

In May, I had the opportunity to do a short-term study abroad trip with Dr. David Rosch to Rome. My 8-day study abroad trip in Rome was incredible and provided me with a deep appreciation for the rich history, culture, and leadership styles of this magnificent city. Rome, is often referred to as being like “lasagna.” While this may seem strange at first, it was fun to discover the multiple interpretations that this phrase had. Some say that it is because of the ‘layers’ of history that are in the city, which took so many incredible meanings. Words cannot truly express my experience in Rome and how truly grateful I am to have gotten to visit such a beautiful city.

Upon our arrival in Rome, we were greeted with a sense of excitement and anticipation. The city's vibrant streets were filled with locals and tourists alike, instantly immersing me in its dynamic atmosphere and a new language. We were all so incredibly tired, however the thought of getting to experience this new place with a great group of other University of Illinois students was keeping all of our adrenaline pumping. From seeing the Spanish Steps, walking on ancient streets, and seeing incredible structures the first day was filled with incredible history and leadership lessons.

As the trip continued, we only got more immersed in the food, culture, and surroundings. The day we got to go to the Vatican City and see St. Peter’s Basilica was one of the most spiritual and incredible things I have ever experienced. Growing up in the catholic church, I always dreamed of going to a place so rooted in history and that had seen so many incredible things. Seeing where the Pope delivers mass—just hours after he did so, walking through the gardens, and viewing the collections that each Pope had was something that I will never forget. The true masterpiece of architecture that exists in this city was incredible.

Another notable thing from our trip was the food. Nothing prepares you for the wonderful taste of a true Italian dish. Being a pasta lover, this city truly wrapped up everything I love food, culture, and friends. The best part of the day was when we were deciding where to eat and what to eat. Their dishes never disappointed and I learned that I actually do like some of the vegetables I was unwilling to try in the United States.

My study abroad trip to Rome was an unforgettable experience that broadened my horizons, enriched my cultural understanding, and left me with a deep appreciation for the city's historical significance. Rome's timeless beauty and rich heritage continue to inspire me, and I hope to return one day to further explore the depths of this enchanting city and maybe even share it with a few more friends. This trip has reinforced my belief in the value of experiential learning and the importance of immersing oneself in different cultures to gain a deeper appreciation for the world we inhabit. Rome will forever hold a special place in my heart as a city of endless wonder and discovery.