I was bitten by the travel bug when I was quite young, and enjoyed taking trips with friends and family all over the United States, eager to see new places. The chance to travel across the Atlantic and see something entirely different from home while earning English credits was the trip of a lifetime, and I knew it throughout the entire process of applying up to the moment that I stepped onto the plane that carried my Study Abroad family over to our month-long adventure in Great Britain. We didn’t know it yet, but we would share laughter over warm tea, heart-pounding anxiety about missing our next train, and memories that will last for the rest of our lives.

It was a little scary at first, leaving friends and family a continent away, and that certainly became a reality after we landed in London with little sleep and heavy luggage. The saying “pack light” was an absolute understatement, and I wish I had only brought about half of what I did. Adjusting to the new time zone was an interesting experience as well. Just down the street from our hostel was a pub, a real pub in which we could have a real English dinner, and our group flocked there. We were probably obvious as Americans at that point. With sleep and time, adjustment to the burdens of travel would come within a couple of days, and the adventure began in haste.

London is such a culturally full city, with ancient history and futuristic architecture right next to each other. With every corner turned, one smells delicious food and hears talented street performers of all natures. To me, comparing it to New York City or any of America’s larger places is like comparing apples and oranges. Sure, they might both be fruit, each sweet and beautiful in its own way, but that is about where the similarities end.

As our group ventured out of London by train into the countryside, we stayed in hostels and had class discussions in various places that related to what we were reading. We read pastoral poetry in Salisbury, ate dinner in the Eagle and Child where Tolkien frequented while writing *The Hobbit*, visited J.K. Rowling’s favorite café, and blended the magic of literature with reality right in front of us. We saw ancient castles, sleepy villages, cute cottages, breathtaking lake views, and many, many sheep. Britain has an undercurrent of history, adventure, and strength in the unlikeliest of places. We learned the local lingo and tasted all kinds of new food, including the gross things (blood pudding and haggis) and the delicious (scones, potato-and-meat pasties, and many, many more). My favorite place we stayed was Salisbury, where Stonehenge looms in the hills and Salisbury Cathedral towers above the cobblestone village.

By the end of our journey, we found ourselves back in London. Experienced and familiar with the London Tube’s routes and strolling confidently on the streets, on our final day in London I was actually photographed by a bus of tourists who thought they had caught a native in her natural habitat. At the end of the month, when it was time to return home, I wished for just a little more time to see, learn, and do. The time passed so quickly, but it was an amazing journey, and I left a piece of my heart in Britain. Someday maybe I’ll go retrieve it.