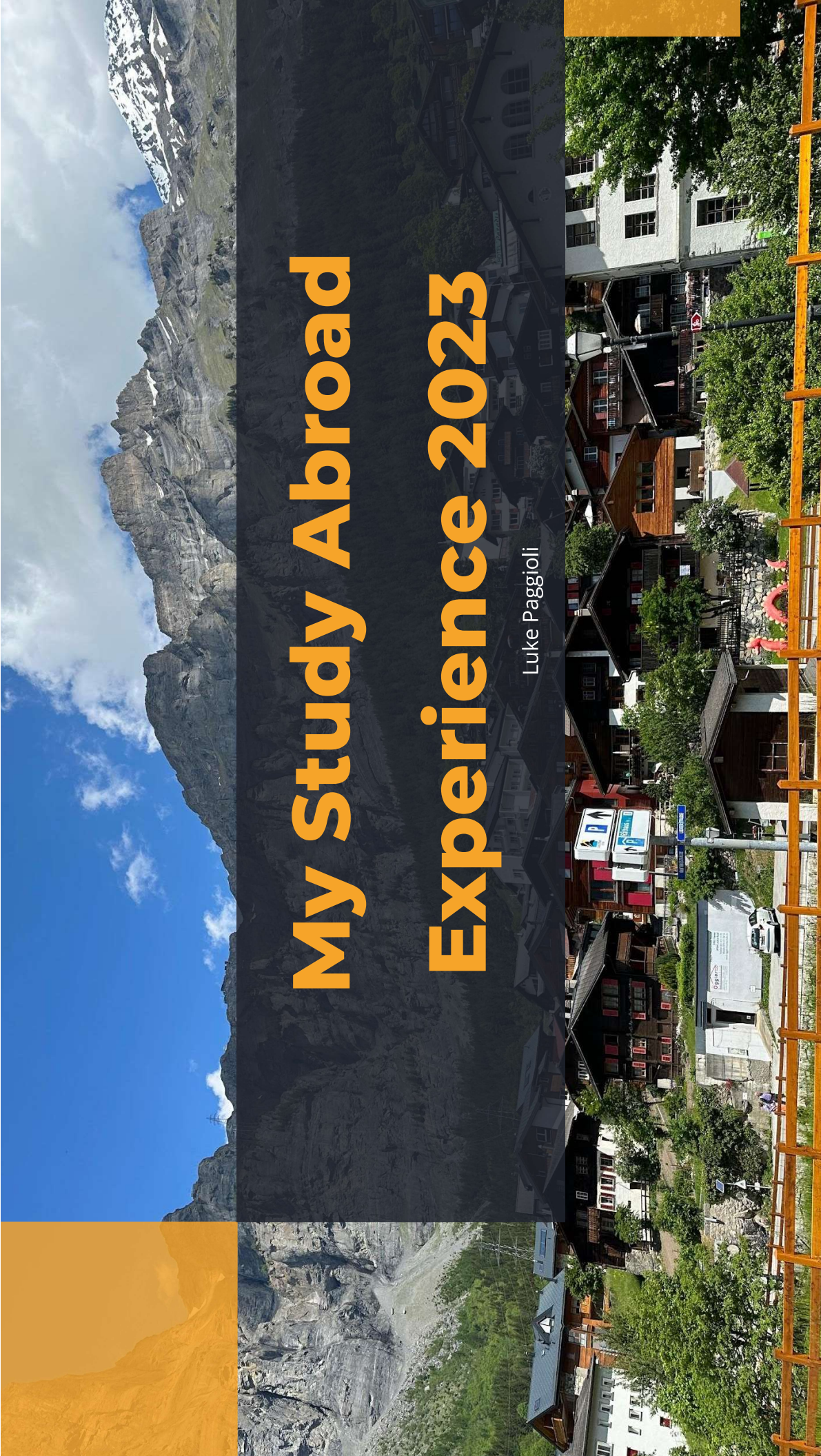


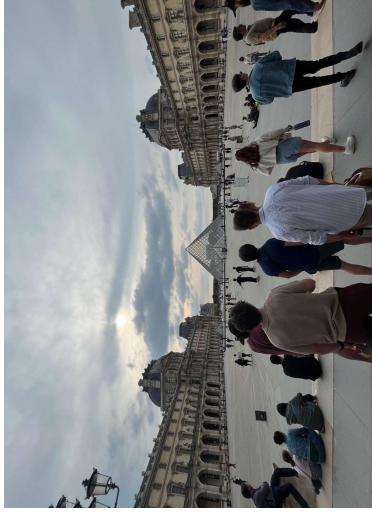
My Study Abroad Experience 2023

Luke Paggioli



Paris

From the first moment I arrived in Paris, I knew I was going to have an amazing experience. We had a very busy schedule that optimized our ability to see as much of the city as possible, ultimately making it extremely fun. We spent our first day exploring the Luxembourg gardens, Notre Dame, the Louver, the Orsay museum, and of course the Eiffel Tower. Our second day was followed by a trip to versaille which was a blast, and to finish off the day a large group of students took a river cruise where we got to see the Eiffel Tower light up while on the river. The last day was a free day in which many students continued to explore the city. We decided to visit Montparnasse which had stunning views of the Eiffel Tower, especially at night. Paris is by far one of, if not, my favorite city. Between the food, the people, the easy to use metro and the beauty, there's not much to love.

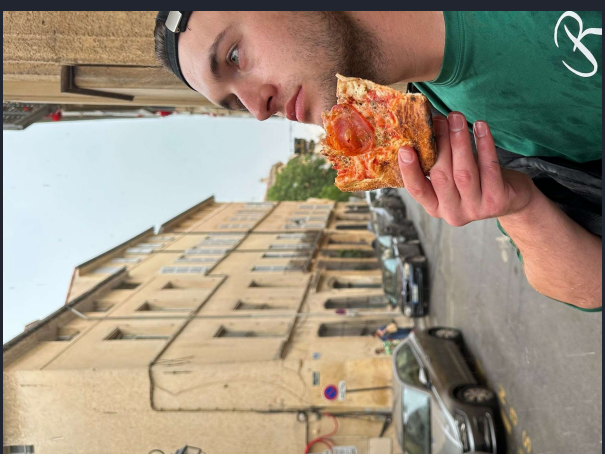
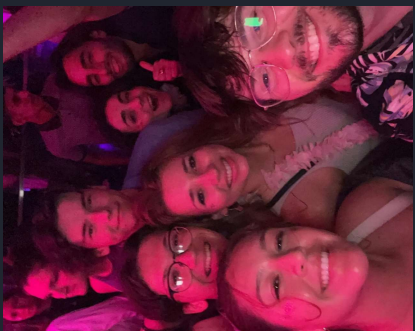
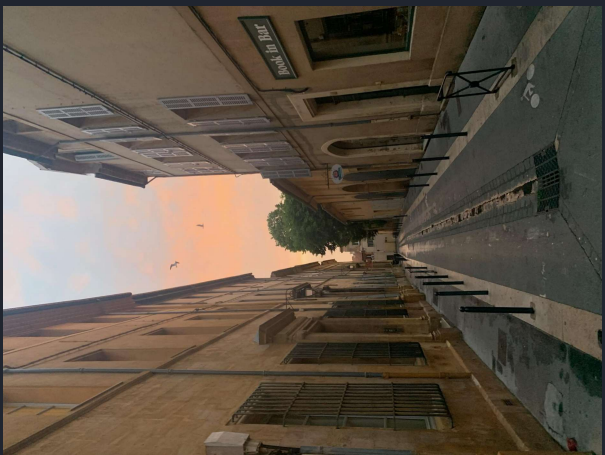


Aix-en-Provence

Not having ever traveled to the south of France, I didn't really know what to expect. However, I instantly felt at home in Aix. The city is easily walkable and includes a main street from which many small stores and restaurants reside. We spent a majority of our time in Aix because our classes were focussed out of the local university arts de metiers. On the right you'll see one of our French ambassadors named Lucas who I now call a friend. Lucas showed us what it was like to be a college student in Aix and constantly invited us places to help us explore the city. I truly loved the old architecture of the city and the colors. Lastly, I have to add that the food in Aix was second to none. Between the small bakeries with pain aux chocolate to large restaurants, my experience with French cuisine was a memory in itself.



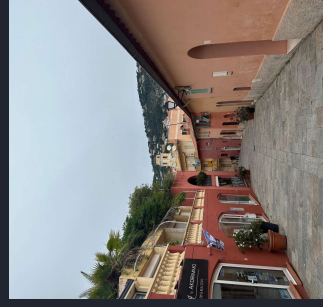
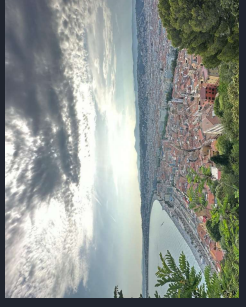
More of Aix!



Nice

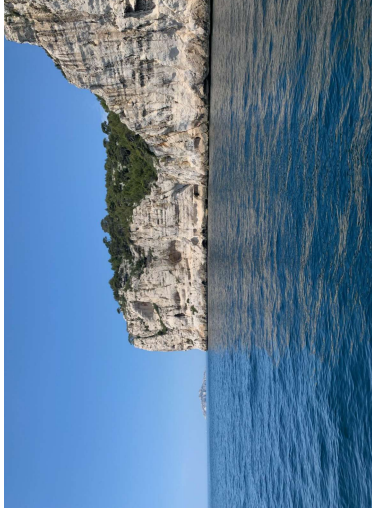
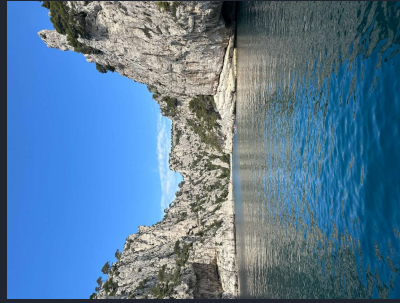
The first free weekend we had, a group of us decided to take a bus to Nice. The transportation there was easy enough and we had a great time! To start the day, we ate lunch at a restaurant sitting right next to the beach. We then spent the rest of the weekend at the beach and hiking a nearby mountain, which had a waterfall that overlooks the city. The food in the city, just like

Aix, was absolutely amazing and the atmosphere at the beach was incredible. They had multiple beach volleyball courts setup on the beach and hundreds of shops making it easy to take a break and go walk around. To end the second day, we got gelato in the town and caught a train back.



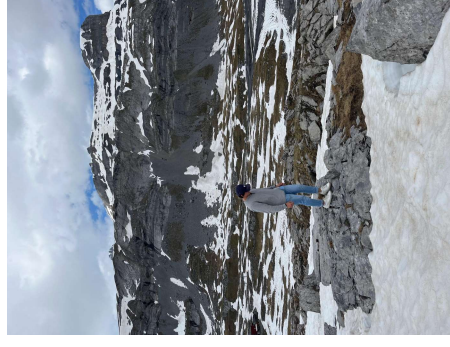
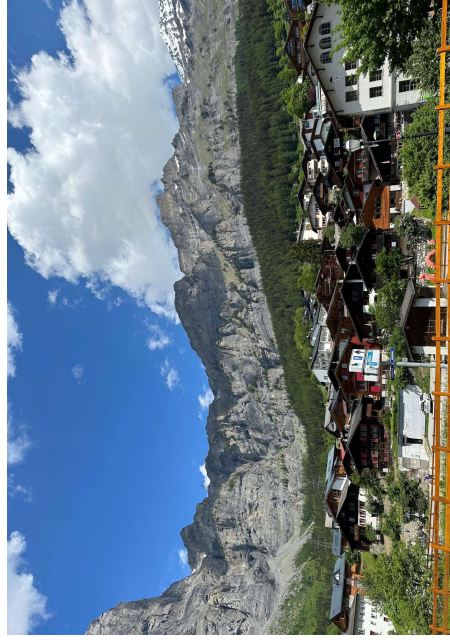
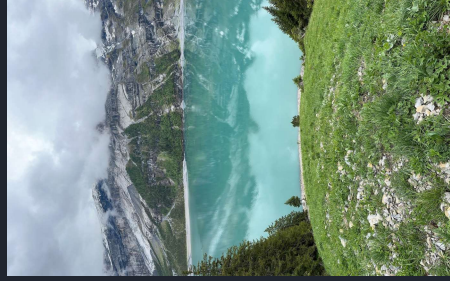
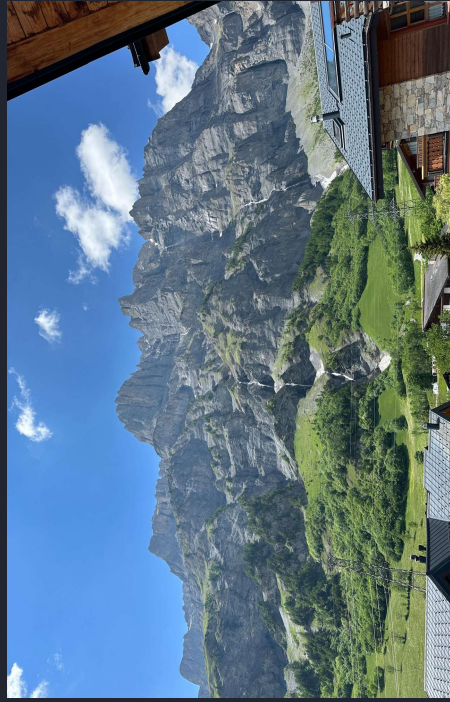
Calanques

The Calanques was probably the most interesting day for myself on the trip. We started the day with a bus to Cassis, where we had a two hour boat tour visiting the Calanques. When we were done, we had the remainder of the day to explore the town, so most of us went to the beach. Long story short I ended up in the ER to get stitches. The good news was that our French ambassador Lucas was amazing and was able to get me in and out of the hospital within a couple hours and back to Cassis. The Calanques are not somewhere I would have visited having traveled to France on my own, however I am thoroughly glad that I got to see the beauty of the southern shoreline in Cassis.

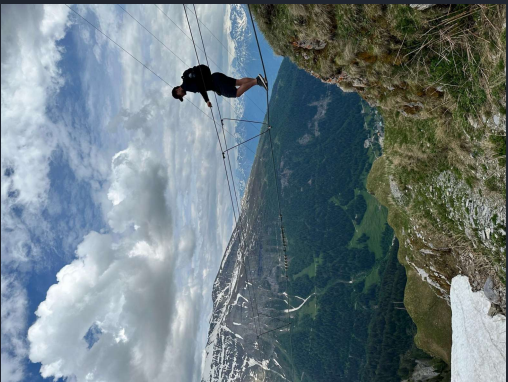
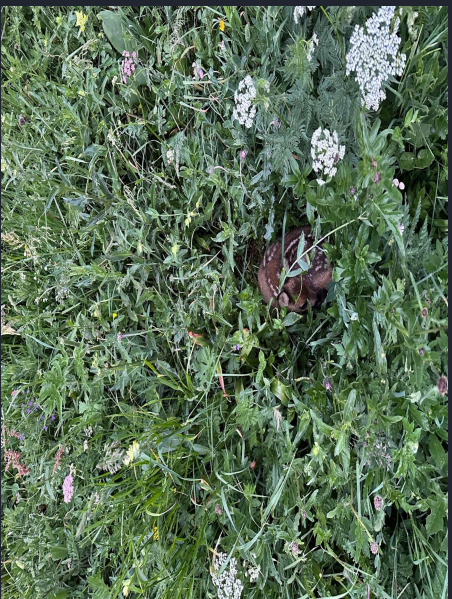


Switzerland

On the long weekend, a group of 11 of us traveled to Switzerland via high speed train through Geneva. Upon arrival, we then took another train to Leuk and then a bus north to Leukerbad, our home for 6 days. The views were absolutely amazing and once in a lifetime. All of us thoroughly enjoyed being in Switzerland (besides Enzo if you know) and doing a ton of hiking. Our first day we took the gondola to the top of the mountain and explored the lake and restaurants. We also took a one day trip in Switzerland north towards Kandersteg where we hiked up a mountain a couple hours to the lake. We eventually decided to hop in the lake despite the cold weather. If you have the opportunity to travel to Switzerland I would 100% recommend it as we had an absolute blast. The only downside to the area we were in is that it was on the more expensive side, but we made it work.

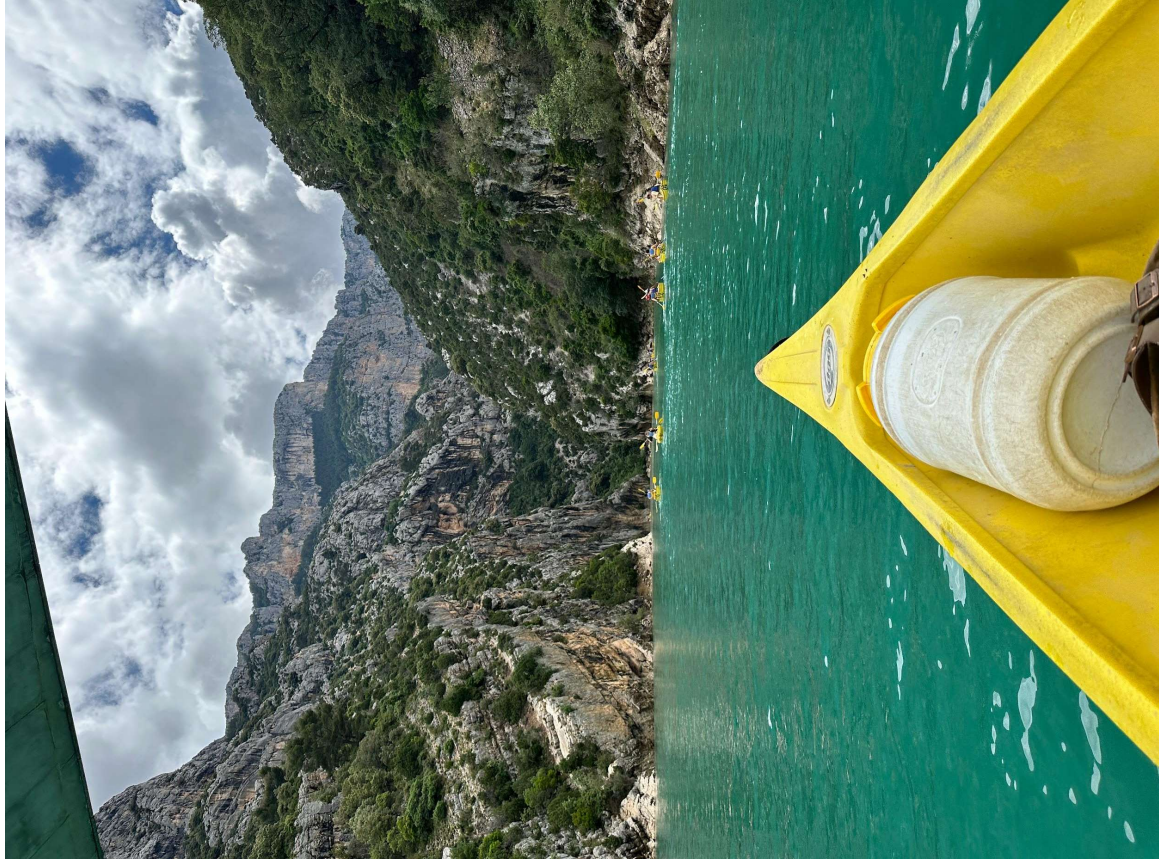
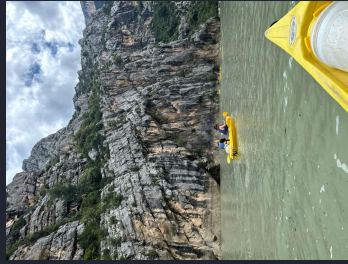
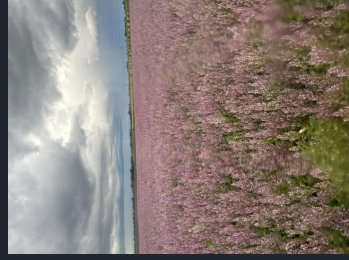
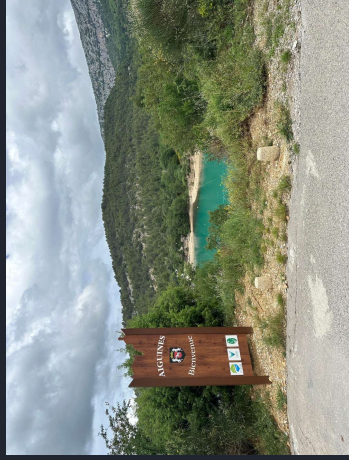
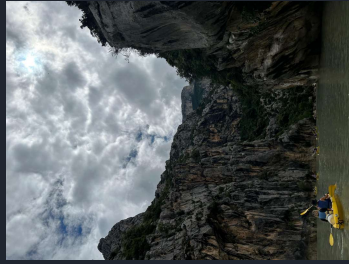


More of Switz!



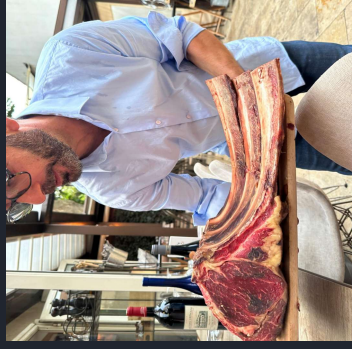
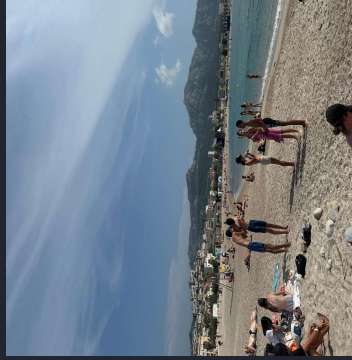
Verdon Gorge

The entire day trip to Verdon Gorge was an eventful one, where we kayaked through the Gorge, were able to visit the lavender fields, and eventually stopped at a local town on the way back where we were soaked in rain. We were able to paddle up the river for about an hour until we eventually decided to stop and eat lunch. There were multiple waterfalls on the way up that many of us decided to paddle and swim through.



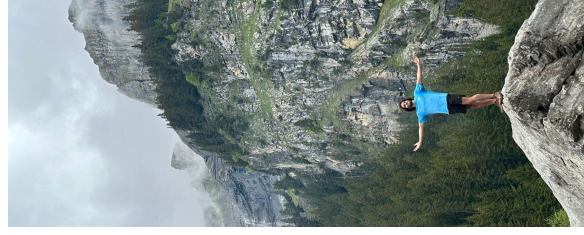
Marseille

Our last stop of the trip was a 3 day adventure to Marseille. Marseille had some of the best restaurants and people, some of which we became friends with. The coast and town of Marseille close to the water made for a great experience with amazing beaches, restaurants, and of course the ferris wheel. We were able to get a tour of the city on the first day and tried the well-known seafood local to the city (it was amazing). On our last night, many of us had dinner with our instructor Dr. Oliveira (Paco) where we were treated to multiple tomahawk steaks at a reduced cost due to our phenomenal server. Ending the trip in Marseille made it easy for many of us to travel out the next day via train to Paris or plane across the world. Although the trip was a long 5 weeks, the time flew by, and I can gladly say I made so many lifelong friends who I gladly spent my time with over the trip.



Things I learned:

1. The stereotype of French being rude is not true. Many of the people we meet in fact loved us (especially the Texans).
1. Life moves fast, and it's important to slow down at times and truly embrace the moments you are experiencing and to live in the present.
1. There are limited bathrooms on the street ... self-explanatory
1. The water glasses in France are incredibly small. So much in fact we even joke with the locals that they are dehydrated all the time.
1. Different parts of Switzerland speak different languages, so be prepared to possibly be speaking German.
1. "Life like this sure is sweet ... it most definitely is"



CONTACT ME

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THANK YOU

