

Abroad in Morocco

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For the majority of the Tulane community who have never ridden a camel, know that it is a distinctly odd experience, thanks to your mount's weathered coat, ungainly proportions, and unnerving tendency to leave you hanging, nearly vertical in your saddle, on your way to a new horizontal a good 5 feet off the ground. In a figurative sense, those same sensations ? friction, awkwardness, disorientation and an eventual new point of reference ? were constant companions throughout an unpredictable and eye-opening fall semester spent abroad in Morocco.



Shadows parade on the edge of the Sahara in southeast Morocco. (Photo by Cody Wild)

From September to December 2012, I studied in Rabat, the North African country's capital city, through a Tulane-approved [IES study abroad program](#). Although “study” I certainly did, that singular verb is woefully inadequate to the task of describing my time there.

I explored, by train, bus, foot, and perilously driven taxi. I wandered ? only occasionally lost ? through the winding medina streets of Marrakesh and Fez, and along the mountainsides of Chefchaouen and Ain Leuh, peppered with homes, farms and the occasional mosque. I marveled at the tranquility and exactitude of Islamic

architecture, and was humbled by the unfamiliarly austere life of an isolated village on the Sahara's edge. I attacked steaming mountains of couscous and sampled delicacies ? like liver fresh from a lamb sacrificed on Eid al-Adha ? that I, a vegetarian while under my own steam, would certainly not have sought independently.

My days were filled with linguistic cross-pollination and a circuit of well-loved coffee shops, my nights with polyglot haggling and my host brothers' favorite Arabic cartoons, and my stomach with an unending supply of bread and sugar.

My plane touched down in Philadelphia a month ago and my daily life has segued back into the rigor and chaos of Tulane life, but my memories, expanded perspective and craving for mint tea aren't likely to fade anytime soon.

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