

Going global

January 11, 2016 8:45 AM Faith Dawson

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Top: Mount Fitz Roy, Patagonia, Argentina. Bottom: Student snapshots captured during study abroad, from left: Bailey Monsour in Tso Pema, India; Brielle Blatt, second from right, with her family in Amsterdam; Ian Rohr poses in Sergiev Posad, Russia; Monsour and others at a hostel in Dharamsala, India. (Top photo by Todor Boshinov)

Currin Wallis is at ease with international travel, especially when it comes to striking out on her own in Latin American countries. What qualifies as “brave” for a lot of travelers — veering well off the tourist track — is her way of finding the locals, the hidden communities, the spirit of her destination.

While in Argentina last year, Wallis — now a senior at Tulane University — and a friend made a camping trip to Patagonia in the Andes Mountains, trekking all the

way down to El Calafate.

“The entire time that we were hiking, it was cloudy, overcast. We were like, this is beautiful, but we can’t see the peaks. As soon as we got up, the clouds broke and [we could] see Fitz Roy peak, which is just incredible.”

The next day, they continued hiking at 3 a.m. to watch the sun rise over the mountains on New Year’s Day.

It was a study abroad program that made Argentina a reality for Wallis, whose hometown is Concord, Massachusetts.

During her adventures (she spent her junior year at Universidad de Buenos Aires), she attended an *asado*, an Argentine barbecue, was welcomed by a salsa-dancing community made up of many nationalities and even found her way to Brazil.

“It was hard for me to come back,” Wallis admits.

At Tulane, about a third of students take their studies to another country during their undergraduate years. They travel to destinations as close as Costa Rica and as far away as India or China. They might stay as little as four weeks or as long as a year. They go to learn and perfect language skills, to help communities in need and to have good old-fashioned adventures. And they might find themselves surprised, enlightened and emboldened by the experience. ...

This story originally appeared in the [December 2015 issue](#) of [Tulane magazine](#).

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