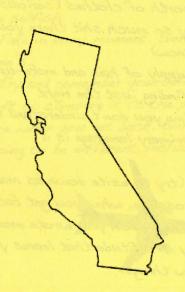
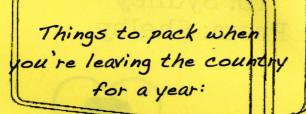
To: Sydney From: Shelby







-Underwear, socks, and lots of them. (when you're traveling, the chances of finding a place to do laundry is slim at best)

-A weeks worth of clothes (seriously, you will buy so much shit there you don't even know)

-A year's supply of hair and make-up products (finding just the right product when you don't understand the country's primary language is a nightmare)

-A journal (try to write down as many things as possible, when you get back you will always wish you wrote more)
-And finally an attitude that leaves you open to new things

## Things to remember when you're leaving the country for

a year:

-Don't study too hard. You're not there to get straight A's.

-Always be open to new things. This is the time to take a leap of faith and open yourself up to new possibilities.

-Don't worry too much about the people back home. This is your time to be selfish.

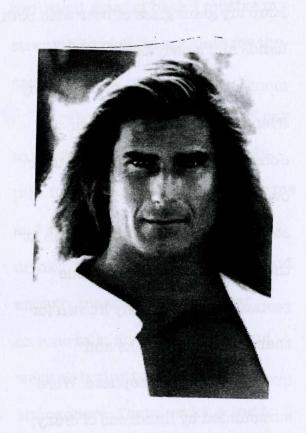
-Take in every moment. Even the bad one's.

-Try and remember yourself before you left to compare it to the person you are when you get back. Everything is going to be different, including you.



Just one of the crazy stories that you'll be able to tell when you get back:

"German Fabio"



I cup my giant glass of beer with both hands and slowly bring it to my mouth. On either side of me are my friend Megan and my cousin Johannes, each of them with their own giant mug of beer. Were stationed at a picnic style bench at the Haufbrau House, a famous restaurant in Germany known for their enormous drinks and overwhelming atmosphere. Were surrounded by hundreds of crazy, loud Germans and throngs of eager tourists each waiting to receive their

own giant glass of beer. I muster my strength to pick up my glass for the second time.

"This is freaking heavy," I say
to my friend Megan, "I can barely
pick it up." She seems not to hear me
and continues to gulp down her
drink. The music is playing just loud
enough, making it hard to hear
anyone talk. So instead of talking
were all trying to take in the
atmosphere. There's a lot going on.
There's the band that spontaneously
begins to play every so often, each of

Bavarian outfit, the pretzel girls
walking around in their own
interesting outfits, and the hundreds
of people, each trying to shout over
one another in order to be heard. It's
all a little overwhelming. Both Megan
and Johannes finish their drinks.

"Another round," Johannes shouts. Actually it wasn't really shouting. It was just the way he talked. Loud and in charge.

"I think I'm good," I said quietly. I hadn't even finished my first one yet and I knew if I got another one at this point I would be running to the bathroom to go pee every five minutes. But Megan didn't seem to be on the same wavelength as I was and soon her and Johannes were finishing their second massive glass before I had even finished my first. After their second beer Johannes suggested going to another bar to watch the German soccer team play their anticipated semi-final match. Megan and I gladly went along with the newly formed plan.

The bar was packed with more loud and crazy Germans each trying to out drink the other. Johannes started to look around for a seat when a group of boys waved us over and told us to sit with them. We went to sit down as Johannes brought us over our first round of drinks. We all clinked our glasses together to begin our night.

Johannes gulped down the beer like it was nothing. One, two, three and it was gone. He was the epitome of what you would picture a

stereotypical German to be. Big and manly, with a handshake that would crush you if you held on long enough. He slammed the beer glass on the table.

"Ready for another," he asked.

I let out a laugh, "not right

now," I said. Then I saw Megan finish

"I'll take another," she said.

Johannes got up quickly to get

Megan and him another round. I

looked around the table to get a

better sense of who my drinking

her own glass.

buddies for the night were going to be. At my table was the German version of Fabio (If he just had a fan in front of him, blowing his luscious locks, he would look like we belonged on the cover of a romance novel), Fabio's friend (who for the rest of the night would continually complain that no one ever finds him attractive, but let's face it, he's friends with Fabio, what did he expect), Megan (who was looking more dazed and confused by the second), and two

guys who just drank and occasionally let out a couple of grunts.

"So where are you girls from?"
The German Fabio asked.

"California," we both said in unison. We had both figured out that it is way better to say that you're from California then the United States. People automatically think your cool and that you hang out with movie stars all the time.

"That's awesome," said Fabio's friend, a little too enthusiastically. "I have always wanted to go there." "Well then you should," I said with a smile. Conversations like this almost always go the same. I have learned to plaster on a smile and nod attentively while whomever I'm with tells me all about their California dreams. And then at the end of their spiel I always make sure to say that it's really not as great as they think it is.

We all continued to drink as
the soccer match progressed. Every
time Germany would get close to
scoring we would all let out a scream.

Anytime the other team got close to scoring we would all loudly let out our frustrations. But there were so many people in the bar that the celebrations and the anger just sounded like one big noise blob. In between booing and cheering we would to talk to our tablemates about California, Germany, and poor Fabio's friend's insecurities.

I finished my third beer and
put it down on the table. I looked up
for a second to talk to Fabio's friend
about how he shouldn't be so self-

conscious and when I looked back down, like magic there was a full beer in front of me where the empty one used to be. What the fuck? I thought to myself. I hadn't even looked away for more then a couple of minutes yet here was a fresh new beer where the old one used to be. I finished the new beer as I fast as I could to see if another one would appear when I was done. Once again, as soon as I had taken the last sip a new glass was in front of me. I guess being the only Americans in a bar full of

Germans meant that there was an unlimited supply of alcohol all night long. With this in mind I decided to slow down. Megan and I had an early train to catch in the morning and having to take a six-hour train ride while hung-over did not sound like the best time to me.

I turned to whisper something
to Megan and realized that she was
nowhere near slowing down. There
were already five empty glasses in
front of her and she was continuing
to drink it like it was water. After a

while I realized that she was trying to keep up with Johannes. This was particularly hilarious because Johannes is a 6 foot, two-hundred and fifty pound man, while Megan is just five feet tall and barely tips the scale at one hundred pounds. Not to mention the fact that Johannes is German. I tried to give Megan a secret look to tell her to slow down but she wasn't having it. Apparently this was her night to go wild, and she was going to do it.

After another half hour of drinking Germany won their soccer match. All of us celebrated by cheering at the top of our lungs. Of course this called for another round and more celebration.

Megan was beginning to look a little out of it and left to go to the bathroom. Frankly I'm surprised she lasted as long as she did. A half hour later I started to get worried and went to check on her. I knocked on the door.

"Megan, are you alright in there?" I swear it was about a minute before I heard her muffled response through the bathroom door.

"I'm fine," she lied. I knocked again.

"We have to go soon. Our train leaves at six in the morning. Can you please come out now?"

"Ya. I'll be there in a sec." I think I heard the faint sound of puking but decided to ignore it and rejoin the group still celebrating at our table.

After another twenty minutes

Megan still wasn't out of the

bathroom. Even German Fabio was

starting to look worried. Apparently

Megan and him had bonded over

their love for liquor. Or maybe he just

though she was hot.

"What happened to Megan?"
he asked, seeming genuinely
concerned.

"I think she's sick and I can't get her outta the bathroom," I said kind of annoyed. I knew from previous experiences that getting Megan out of the bathroom after she had been drinking was nearly impossible. But we really needed to leave if there was any hope of us catching that train in the morning.

All of a sudden German Fabio's face got really determined.

"Which stall is she in?"

"The middle one," I said really confused. What did he think he was going to do? Run into the girl's bathroom and rescue the puking damsel in distress?

"I'll be back," and then without a second to waste German Fabio leapt up from the table and charged into the bathroom like the romantic hero that I pictured him to be. His dark brown locks were blowing behind him as he ran towards the door. Once inside he kicked down the door to the stall in one swift motion with his almighty strength.

With the deepest voice he could muster he said, "were leaving," and scooped Megan off the floor and carried her in his arms like a true

hero. The rest of us continued to sit at the table, staring in amazement at the awesomeness of German Fabio.

When he arrived at our table,
with Megan safely in his arms, looked
at us and said, "lets go." He started to
leave and the rest of us followed
behind him. Leading a small
procession to praise the great
German Fabio.

## Things to do when you get home from your adventure:

-Hug your friends and family and let them know how much you missed them. -Go to all your favorite food places (you have no idea how good an in n out burger will taste after not having it for a year)

-Keep in contact with your friends abroad and never ever lose contact with them.

-Make a photo album (Your pictures belong somewhere other than facebook)
-Only tell your stories to people who care because honestly, most people won't want to hear them.

## Things to remember when you get back from your adventure:

-Things will never be the same after your year away, but that's not necessarily a bad thing.

-No matter where you are you're going to be missing someone. Even though it hurts sometimes always remember how lucky you are to have so many people you love.

-Share your story with people who have a genuine interest in study abroad. Helping someone else take the first step on their own journey is unbelievably rewarding.





Things to remember when you get back from your adventure:



on their own journey is unbettevably

