

GEARE Germany: Purdue Student Advice

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Cohort Profiles

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Pre-Departure

Learning German

§ Scott Campbell '15—"Don't lie to yourself—4 semesters of German isn't enough to be anywhere near fluent, and while most Germans do speak good English, you will wish you knew more when you arrive (no matter what your level may be). Start exposing yourself as soon as possible and in as many ways as possible. Don't just take the regular grammar classes, also take a conversational course each semester. Try to find someone who's willing to practice speaking with you and go to the Kaffeestundes. Start listening to German musical artists like CRO, Thees Uhlmann, Madsen, Revolverhead, and make a German only playlist on Spotify. Download Duolingo and play daily in your spare time. Maybe even see if your favorite Netflix shows have caption or audio tracks in German."

§ Tessa Groll '15--"It is very important to speak German here. Even when you ask a question in English, a response is often times in German. Start learning the language early on and get into the necessary classes. A suggestion that may be helpful is to enroll in the conversation classes. Those usually meet for an hour a week, very easy, but the point is to work on your speaking skills. You can find those for up to three levels."

§ Bryan Routt '15 – "If you don't use it, you lose it. I encountered this first hand. I had 3 years of German in high school before I was forced into a hiatus because of scheduling. Fast forward 2 years later and I was struggling to remember everything I'd already learned. Rather than starting in the 3rd or 4th semester, I had to begin from GER 102 and work my way up again. The same goes for when you're in Germany. If you're not actively using the language, or even attempting to speak with locals, you won't be able to improve you skills. Some of the most beneficial language experience I've had was when I was the only American in a group and I had no choice but to focus and speak German with them."

§ Michael Tanner '15 – "I have mixed opinions on this topic. Yes, you probably won't ever reach the level of proficiency necessary for truly living in Germany. However, you can get fairly close. Whatever you do before you fly over will be what we'll call your 'head start.' Whatever grammar,

vocabulary, and speaking practice you have will be your foundation once you arrive. You can only practice what you KNOW, so don't expect to magically learn words and conjugations... Now, once you arrive you're in a different ballpark. If you choose, you can find language classes to take or practice on your own. This would be a good idea, but I doubt you'll do it. So, it's then up to you to practice with the people you meet. The best thing you can do is be the only English speaker in the room. Then those people will speak in the native tongue and you'll have to keep up. This can be a fun challenge or incredibly disheartening depending on your mentality. Every day and situation I had to choose whether I wanted to accept the challenge and speak German, or take it lazily and speak English. You'll probably have to do the same – so make sure you have goals for language proficiency before you arrive – and stick to them.”

Heather Macdonald '15 - Basic advice is to do as much as you can before you go abroad. Take up to at least the requirements but feel free to go beyond. What I think is more helpful than the academic classes are the speaking ones here at Purdue. They're all labeled as GER112, 212, 312. They offer you an easy 1 credit hour class that has you speaking every week all in German. The teachers are fantastic and you get to cover some topics not necessarily given in the regular academic German classes. Other than that my advice to be humble and open to any speaking experiences abroad. Whether this is in the Rathaus, with random strangers, or in the great Stammtisches with Germans in the program. Each and every experience counts and will be the hardest and best moments trying to figure out what is going on and congratulating yourself when you do.

Neeladhri Rama '16 : I did 4 semesters of German at Purdue. Before this I had no idea about German. 4 classes of German is nothing even close to enough. It does cover all the grammar you need, in fact maybe even more than what's used here. But being a person fluent in 5 languages, one thing I can tell you is that learning a language is like programming. You need experience! I had practiced my German conversation while I was working at Mercedes in Tuscaloosa. Here at Mercedes I am working in a team that's all German. And one thing I feel that is lacking in our German preparation is the technical side to the language. Most probably you won't end up in a situation like me but it's always a good idea to flip through some technical articles written in German.

Finding a Job

§ Scott Campbell '15—“My best advice here is to not commit to an internship or Co-Op only because you need a company that has German operations. More than anything else, make sure you never spend a semester working for a company that doesn't interest you. You'd be surprised how many companies are willing to send an American intern abroad, so don't rush into any big commitments.”

§ Bryan Routt '15 -- “Despite what the news says about the job market, this is not the norm for GEARE Germany students. Just by getting into the GEARE program you've proven that you are not just a face in the crowd. Companies are always interested in students that are in the program. Many recruiters that come to the job fairs are Purdue alums themselves and may have participated in the program or know people who did. Be persistent. Talk to as many companies as you can. If you are having trouble finding an international OR domestic internship, talk to the

people in the OPP. They are there to help you and often companies will contact them because they are looking specifically for GEARE students.”

§ Michael Tanner '15 – “This depends on your priorities. Like Scott says, it’s possible to end up doing something you don’t like just to get to Germany. So you have to decide if you only want to do something you like (it’s an internship – good luck) or if you really just want to get to Germany (and have some income, unlike research). My number one priority was to get to Germany with a paying job, so I did what I had to do.”

Heather Macdonald '15 - Agreed with the others. It is difficult to find a job abroad, but with the right mindset anything is possible. GEARE hosts specific career events for companies that know the program and are actively looking for these. At other career fairs even if the people you aren’t talking to don’t know the program, explain it to them. Trust me they’ll be surprised at the gusto the students have to complete the internships, study abroad, foreign language, and design projects. I even had one recruiter at Caterpillar say he was jealous of my resume.

§ Neeladhri Rama' 16 - One thing about finding your international internship is that you have to be really active. Keep talking to companies and make use of every opportunity you get. You never know what will really come through. For research vs an internship I preferred working in the industry, so getting an internship was my goal. Another thing I was looking for was a company that could do both my domestic and international experience. This was for personal reasons because I wanted to really just focus on academics during my pre departure semester as finding a job is a time consuming process. Another advice is to look for a company that has some experience with the process of sending interns abroad.

Booking the Flight

§ Scott Campbell '15—“First things first, you have to pick the general departure and return time. Do you want to leave right after Christmas to have more time to travel? Would you rather have more time at home before you leave? How early do you want to be back Stateside, be it to see family, train to be an RA, be at Purdue for BGR week or have an extra week in Europe? Answer these questions first, and be sure to book a roundtrip flight ASAP so as to save on the cost. You may need the proof of a return flight home and the costs of travel in late summer rise as many Europeans take vacation then.”

§ Tessa Groll '15--“Your flight is mainly personal preference. It depends on when you want to fly out and what airline to choose. Websites such as Expedia and Orbitz offer good deals for good airlines. Flying around a holiday tends to be very expensive, but sometimes flying on a holiday can be cheaper. I would recommend flying out a week early. Time zone changes are difficult to adjust to, especially if this is your first time abroad. The standard rule is one hour adjusted for every day there. This way if you want to be prepared for all of the other things you will have to when you get there, being adjusted from jetlag is a huge bonus. Plus it gives you time to travel and explore!”

§ Bryan Routt '15 – “Plan ahead of time. The earlier you book your flight, the cheaper it will be and the more flexibility you’ll have with dates and seats. Once you arrive in Europe it’s easy to get around and see some sights before your internship starts. Bear in mind you’ll still have everything you packed from home with you (unless you were lucky enough to organize your housing in advance) so it may make traveling efficiently difficult. ”

§ Michael Tanner '15 – “This has been well covered by Scott and Tessa. My recommendation is to come over a week or two early. I didn't travel much at the beginning of my stay because I didn't want to have the added stress right at the beginning. Follow your heart on this one.”

§ Neeladhri Rama' 16 - A very very important thing for KIT students is that because you are flying into Germany during the holidays tickets can get really expensive. So book well ahead of time. Possible 2-3 months. Plan to reach a week ahead of your internship. You will need time to settle down.

Packing

§ Scott Campbell '15—“Packing starts with finding the right bags for your travel style. My recommendation is to have one mega suitcase (make sure it still fits the airline checked bag restrictions and keep it under 50 lbs), then add one carry on sized duffle bag for long weekend trips and a good backpack for shorter journeys. Obviously bring your school essentials (mostly electronic, with several plug adaptors) and anything that is too unique or expensive to buy abroad. Bring enough dress clothes to get through the work week without laundry, but after that, always think versatility. Don't bring anything you would only wear on a specific occasion. That being said, make sure you have warm winter clothes, rain gear, athletic attire, cool summer outfits, etc. so that every possibility is covered. In general avoid anything that screams 'tourist', but don't be afraid to bring some things that show school and/or national pride for good photos. And also don't forget an American flag—nothing better for an apartment or dorm room wall decoration.”

§ Tessa Groll '15--“Pack as light as you can. I realize 7 months is a long time and that the first desire will be to bring a lot of clothes, resist the urge! One thing to note, when you fly, you can check one item before having to pay a larger amount for another bag. Another bag to check is usually around \$100. Keep this in mind when you pack. You'll probably also buy things when you're abroad so remember, whatever you buy, has to come back somehow. Layers are the way to go. You can always add layers or reduce so that makes them versatile. You should essentially plan for 1-2 weeks of clothing per season. Germany does not get super warm in the summer so shorts and tanks may be a bit chillier. Know what you are going to be wearing to work. Some work places are a bit more casual so wearing nice jeans and an appropriate top may be enough. For your living situation, see if there are dishes. Often times, kitchens in apartments come stocked with dishes so bringing some from home is not a requirement. Think about what you are packing, ask yourself how many times can I wear this, can I wear this for multiple occasions and/or seasons? If this is a nice shirt that you have worn once in the past year and even though you really like it, may want to leave it behind. Suggestions for girls: 2 heavy sweaters, 5 long sleeve or lighter sweaters, 3 pairs of jeans, 5 t-shirts, 3 cardigans, scarves, 2 pairs of capris, 3 pairs of shorts, 5 layering tank tops, 3 fun tank tops.”

§ Michael Tanner '15 – “Scott and Tessa have covered this pretty well already, so I'll cover my angle. I knew before I came here that I was going to continue being a competitive athlete after I arrived in Germany. By competitive, I mean actively competing in a sport. I planned on powerlifting, so I brought all my gear. I also cheated the luggage issue by bringing my younger brother over at the beginning of my trip. This meant I got an extra checked bag and an extra carry on (I only used two checked bags – no carry-ons other than a backpack for each of us). Thus I had one large checked bag of clothes and shoes and another large bag of my athletic

gear, electronics, and personal items. I'm very happy with how and what I packed. I have continued to compete, though in weightlifting, so it has all been used and very much appreciated."

Cultural Study

§ Scott Campbell '15—"Don't make any assumptions about anyone, and don't believe any stereotypes you hear. Just make your own conclusions as you get to know as many people as possible, maybe even initiating culture difference discussions, which I always enjoy and so too do most others here."

§ Tessa Groll '15—"This is hard to describe and something everyone has to experience. The Germans tend to be very direct people. They will tell you what they want, what they think, and it won't bother them. The Germans also believe that when you are sick, going to work and going to school is just going to get other people sick. You will often times find a professor or a boss telling you to go home if you are ill. Germans also believe in their relaxing periods and their time off. It is not seen as a good thing to work long hours or devote a lot of time into one project. For them, it is important to balance a work and a relaxing part of life. Nothing is free here either. Water is not free, refills are not free, and sometimes public restrooms are not free. There is often times a bathroom attendant that will be sitting there. It is important to tip her. Always do, some will even require it when you want to use the restroom. When you grocery shop, bagging is not done for you. You have to bag your own groceries. Bags also cost money so you may want to either bring or invest in some reusable bags and carry them around when you grocery shop."

§ Michael Tanner '15 – "The BEST way, in my opinion, to dive deep into the culture and get to know people (who you will experience the culture through) is to get highly involved in something you would normally do back home. I think the best method for this is through sports. Personally, I found a weightlifting club. However, I've also found clubs for every other sport. You will quickly make friends, young and old, this way, whom you can then enjoy other activities since they are now your friends. You can then have the "how is my culture different than yours" conversations with these people. You will probably find that you will end up having a conversation along these lines with almost everyone. Some of these can get a little annoying, especially when you're basically comparing stereotypes. You'll have to find out for yourself, but, while stereotypes are there for a reason in the first place, they are usually broken."

Heather Macdonald '15 - Agreed with Tanner. Get involved and take advantage of the cultural events in your town and the study abroad university. Some of the best memories and learning experiences I have are from these. They not only give you an inside local view in topics but are also a fantastic way to meet people. You may even get something out of it, like me getting a free ticket to KIT's festival by merely helping with set-up. I got to practice listening in German but as well with conversing with people in a team. Another example would be me signing up for a workout class in Tai Chi. I've taken a class or two in English in the USA, but I would have never expecting the fun of learning the moves from an Indian teacher speaking in German. You never know what's going to happen at these events. I wouldn't have been able to tell you that I would've gotten a free ticket and lots of new friends, but I went anyways. Explore beyond your boundaries because this experience in GEARE only happens once; you won't regret it.

Setting Goals

§ “Failure to Plan is Planning to Fail”

§ Scott Campbell '15—“Before you are anywhere near departure make a list of goals for your experience. Start with a list of cities you want to visit, add things you want to see and do, and gradually add depth. It isn't important that you do even half of the things you write down, but rather that you start thinking about what is important to you and how to make the most of this unique opportunity.”

§ Michael Tanner '15 – “Making goals is important. It's important that you make goals specific to your abroad experience. However, if you've been making goals in your life before you left (and you should be), you should continue to strive towards those too. For your abroad goals, be sure you decide which is most important to you, travelling or living. Everyone wants to travel to ALL THE COUNTRIES, but when you do that, do you really experience living abroad? You'll have to answer that question for yourself, but give it some thought. I'm more on the experience where I live side. I've become very involved in a local community and with the friends I've made I've done many things that people that actually live in the area do. I'm not saying my way is better, but it's what I've done so far.”

Heather Macdonald '15 - Mine is a bit of a different experience than the others in terms of classes. In Materials Engineering, my major, no person had ever gone to KIT nor was there information available. If you want to go to a university that has your classes you require, but is not on the GEARE approved list of universities, follow this advice. First, go to the Study Abroad website and make sure you have one that is under contract with the university. There's a bunch of liability issues if you choose one that isn't. Second, talk to the GEARE office to let them know. They are really helpful in these situations and strive to make each student's experience the best. Third, after approval talk to your GEARE and/or study abroad advisor. You may have to get the classes you want approved by showing the class schedule. Next, start early and talk with your advisor. You may have to arrange to your future semesters differently to correspond with what's available on the study abroad semester. Finally, don't give up! I worked over a year to get my classes approved because I wanted to go to KIT and it was all worth it.

§ Neeldhri Rama '16: I don't agree with “Failure to plan is planning to fail” completely and I'm sure you would not too if you tend to be a spontaneous person like me. But since that's not what we're talking about here let me jump into the topic. It's important to set your goals but I also would like to throw more light on the point that Tanner made. I came into my study abroad program with similar goals as many would have and that was to travel as much as possible. But then half way thru I realized that I was studying, living and working abroad and not travelling abroad. So yes it's cool to travel but I'd say as part of your plans also try and see how you plan to connect with the locals (students and other people) of the cities you would live in.

Budgeting

§ Scott Campbell '15—“If you think you're tempted to spend money at home, that's nothing compared to what you'll face in Europe. As with goals, make a basic outline and then add depth to project how much you can spend on certain categories. Do all this in Excel and then start an expense/income log so that you can compare and update your budget as you go. It's very important that you put thought into where and how you spend money.”

§ Tessa Groll '15--“There will be the urge to buy new things since things are different here. Recognize that and think about what you are buying. Also remember that the euro is worth more than the dollar so whatever you are paying, it's more in the dollar.”

§ Michael Tanner '15 – “I hate planning for ‘life stuff’, so I'm not a fan of budgets. However, I do recognize the advantages of one. You should be sure to at least allot (or at least look at) the money you will need for certain things and make sure you have it when you need it. I ran myself into a small crisis and actually needed one of my colleagues to bail me out and make a deposit to KIT for me. Make sure that doesn't happen to you, it's not fun. Before you make your budget, have priorities. My suggestion, EAT WELL! Don't skimp out on food because you want to save money. Enjoy the local restaurants, cook well for yourself, and make sure you're well-nourished. Your trip can quickly go from fun to suck if you aren't healthy, so start by eating right. Along those lines, buy a nicer bed if you must. I tried out a mattress that my landlord provided for a couple weeks, but it wasn't going well. So I went to IKEA and spent a couple hundred euros on a mattress and good pillow. If sleep sucks then life sucks. Don't let your time abroad suck. Lastly, travelling can be relatively cheap, but it is still money. Make sure you know how much you want to travel and be sure you can financially support it. So I guess my biggest take away is, be smart, but spend your money when you have to so that you enjoy your time.”

KIT Application & Registration

§ Scott Campbell '15—“As far as I know this is basically a formality, so don't stress over it. Just complete the online forms and be prepared to wire about €70 to KIT before departing to reserve your registration and expect your bank to charge a ridiculous fee around \$40 for the wire service.”

§ Bryan Routt '15 – “Don't fret to much about this step in the process. The application is only used to formally get all of your information into KIT's system. As far as the semester fee goes I would suggest avoiding using a normal bank. The banking system is different in Germany and it costs a lot of money to wire money from the US. I would suggest using the website Xoom.com. When you connect an American bank account to the service, it only costs \$5 to send \$2999. Compared to the fees at the bank, it's a steal. I discovered it after the fact but I ended up using it often to transfer my paychecks from my American account to my German one so that I could pay rent and withdraw cash without incurring more fees.”

§ Michael Tanner '15 – “Before you go over, you'll have to wire money. Just work with your American bank to wire the money and, yes, you have to pay a big international wiring fee. You will have to wire more money once in your country to KIT. Thus, be sure to set up a German bank account quickly upon arrival. I put it off and almost got super screwed. Don't let that happen to you!”

Heather Macdonald '15 - A clarification on the German banking system. In Germany, one of the requirements to get a residency permit, if you are there longer than 90 days, is to have a certain amount of euros per month that you'll be there to prove that you're financially stable. This has to be in a German bank account. USA account info will not be accepted. Make sure you set this up in the first week and before you go to the Rathaus to apply for the residency permit. You just have to do this within your first 90 days in Germany, but sooner the better. First things first is in the first week that you arrive in your town, go to the Citizen's office and register with the city. You need your passport and contract of where you live when you do! This is

required in the first week of every city you move to. Aka if you live in Stuttgart and then move to Karlsruhe, you have to apply at the citizens office in Stuttgart within the first week and then again in Karlsruhe after you move. No need to deregister in the city you le

Being Abroad

Mobile Phones & Plans

§ Scott Campbell '15—"Vodafone offers the best option, no question. For €10 per month on a month by month basis you can get 500 MB of data, unlimited Vodafone calling and text (so get all the other Americans on it too) plus 200 combined minutes and texts to other German carriers. You'll use WhatsApp for most all messaging anyways so the text limit shouldn't be an issue. It's the second best service coverage in Germany, it's easy to add money to the account, they offer affordable add-ons to the plan, and you can even get international packages for when you travel. The SIM card is free, so you can buy an unlocked phone in Germany (€150 for a two generation old Samsung Galaxy for example) or bring your phone from home, but first check to be sure it is unlocked, accepts SIM cards (micro and nano are ok), has the antenna internals for European networks and you can cancel the service at home."

§ Tessa Groll '15--"If you have no intention of using another phone, or don't want to deal with something that requires a lot of work, you may want to look into aldi talk. You can buy a very cheap phone at any local electronic store. Then, in aldi, you can buy a sim card that you can just keep putting money on to. You can put up to 5, 15, or 30 euros onto your sim card at any point in time. Once you have the sim card, buy the minutes for aldi talk at the cashier in aldi, a long receipt will be printed and at the top will be instructions of the number you dial to put money on the sim card, along with a 16 digit code. You can buy minutes at any aldi store."

§ Bryan Routt '15 – "As of December 2014, Verizon stopped locking the SIM card slot in all of their 4G LTE phones. On most other carriers you can call and request that they unlock the SIM slot. Virtually every smartphone since 2012 has been a "global" phone which means it has both a GSM and CDMA antenna. If you're unsure if your phone will work in Europe, look online and see if it has a GSM antenna. This is the signal that all European networks use. I would also suggest Vodafone's prepaid plans"

§ Michael Tanner '15 – "If you don't get Vodafone CallYa, you're wasting your time. Pick up a phone from Media Markt, usually an old one for about 80 to 100 euro outright and get the SIM separate. Taking a native speaker to this can be helpful – I did."

Recording the Experience

§ Scott Campbell '15—"Make it easy for you to work recording your travels into daily life, whether that be a daily journal, weekly video log or just pulling out some kind of camera. I personally don't care for journals, so I suggest a good smartphone camera that you know you will always have at a moment's notice."

§ Tessa Groll '15--"This is a huge time in your life! There are going to be so many memories that you won't want to forget. Make sure to document them! Whether it's by writing a weekly blog, making a scrapbook or photo album, or writing in a journal, it does not matter! Just make sure to keep a record of everything you have done. These will be memories and moments you won't want to forget."

§ Bryan Routt '15 – “As an avid photography hobbyist, I brought most of my camera equipment to capture my experience. If you do bring a big camera, be prepared to protect it. If you're only concerned with the bare minimum when it comes to taking pictures, a small point and shoot or even a decent cell phone camera can get the job done. If you really want to get creative, newer GoPros take good pictures, are completely waterproof, and can take a beating before they start to have problems. ”

§ Michael Tanner '15 – “Because I bought a shitty phone (no iPhone camera in my pocket anymore), I haven't taken very many photos. Thus, I record things through words in a blog. I like this and would very much suggest this. If you hate typing or writing, you can do it with a video log and just sit down and talk to yourself once a week. Your family and friends back home will very much appreciate being able to keep up with your experience, as well.”

Banking & Finance

§ Scott Campbell '15—“Opening a bank account is 100% necessary to live in Germany. BW Bank offers a free student account that is easy to open, free of service charges (marginal interest and other bonuses are available for the €2 per month option), and even offers good ATM access and online banking. Deutsche Bank has a relationship with Bank of America that might have some advantages, but by far the best option for accessing your US money in Europe is a Charles Schwab Debit card. The account isn't super easy to open, but the card has zero ATM fees, refunds any fees charged by ATMs themselves, and has no foreign transaction fee. It's also VISA, which is perhaps the most widely accepted option.”

§ Tessa Groll '15--“You can open a bank account at any of the local banks in your area. I opened a bank account with BW bank. It is a bit more low-key and they sign up process is very easy. They also have a student account. The bank account costs 2 euros every month and you can cancel it at any point in time. They are also linked with sparkasse, which is a very popular bank company in Germany. Therefore you have free withdrawal at any of those atms as well. The online banking at BW bank is also very easy and you can do wire transfers online as well which may be easier to pay rent. Signing up for an account took about 20 minutes. You need, your residency permit, your passport, student ID or confirmation letter stating you are a student in Germany, and your social security number.”

§ Bryan Routt '15 – “A German bank account is a must. Especially for paying rent both during your internship and the summer semester at KIT almost requires a German account. Checks are extremely uncommon in Germany and virtually all large transactions are done through SEPA Überweisung transfers. Make sure the bank you choose has branches both in Karlsruhe and the city where your internship is or else you may run into issues when you have use an ATM or change your address after the move to Karlsruhe. ”

§ Michael Tanner '15 – “The ways Germans pays for things sucks (in the eyes of an American). They often times prefer to pay with their bank cards, which acts as a debit card. Credit cards (VISA) are sometimes not accepted at all. It helps to carry a bit of cash with you. Best case, you open a bank account and pay like a true German all the time. I don't like loose ends and I really don't want to keep track of another account, so I only use my German bank when I need to pay KIT. However, there are some services that you can only pay for by directly giving the company

access to a bank account. For example, McFit (the most popular chain gym in Germany), is this way. You can't even pay them in cash. You will have to deal with this situation by situation."

§ Mert Karakaya '16 - "If you are an international student (requiring visa), you will have to open a bank account beforehand. During your visa application, you fill out a form which is then notarized by the German Consulate. You have to send the form and the necessary documents to Hamburg branch of the Deutsche Bank. In about a month or two, they send you an email and you have to deposit necessary funds to that account. Then they send you a verification which tells you that you have the necessary funds to get a visa. When you go to Germany, you cannot access your funds immediately however so I advise you to bring cash. (I mean a lot) You have to fill out several forms at any bank branch and give them your address in Germany. If the bank staff is competent enough you should receive your bank card in 15 days, if they are not, it could take more than a month. (It took more than a month in my case, but you can personally go to the bank with your passport if you really need cash)"

Communicating with Home

§ Scott Campbell '15—"Before you leave make sure all of your close friends and family get WhatsApp. Viber is another option with the added benefit of voice calling, but you can do that with Skype anyway, and WhatsApp is what all the Europeans use to communicate instead of carrier texting. You can also work in iMessage if you have Apple devices, and if you need to reach someone who doesn't prep for your departure with WhatsApp, Pinger allows you to send texts as if you have an American number from wifi devices."

§ Tessa Groll '15--"Technology is a great thing nowadays. Staying in touch is a lot easier than it was 20 years ago. Skyping is a great free way to keep in touch with friends and family. If you are looking for apps for your phone, whatsapp is very popular in Germany that has free texting for a year. Viber is also a good app that allows you to make free phone calls with wifi. The connection gets a bit touchy but so long as you have a good internet source, there should be no problem."

§ Bryan Routt '15 – "Internet based messaging services such as Whatsapp, Facebook Messenger, iMessage, and Viber are very easy to use for texting. For calls you can use Facetime (on iPhones), facebook Messenger, and Viber. With Viber you can also put some money on your account and make calls to normal phones using wifi or data for a very cheap rate."

§ Michael Tanner '15 – "To stay in touch, I use email and Skype. Do whatever you wish. My only suggestion is this: respect those you've left behind temporarily, but don't get caught up in them. Since your parents are probably paying for your experience, they deserve to hear from you. Otherwise, don't abandon your friends back home, but don't try to live in two places at once."

Obtaining Your Residency Permit

§ Scott Campbell '15—"Depending on your situation, this can be a breeze or a nightmare. If possible, bring a native speaker friend or another student with better language skills with you to the Ausländerbehörde and be prepared for an ordeal. Best case, you need proof of residency, a statement of the program from both KIT and the employer, proof of your return flight and of

financial security in the form of a bank statement with thousands of dollars, a biometric passport photo, and plenty of cash to pay for the permit when you pick it up.”

§ Tessa Groll '15--“Obtaining residency is the first thing you want to do right after you have moved into your apartment and have a lease. This can also take a day or two so be sure to do that ASAP.”

§ Bryan Routt '15 – “There is no standard procedure for this step. Some people had very little trouble and others had a few difficulties. All the required documents are listed on the website for the Ausländerbehörde in the city you will be working in. Unfortunately each employee at the government office might interpret the rules differently. Some people in my cohort got their permit for the entire stay in Germany right away. I however, had to go back after my internship to extend the permit by proving that I had enough money in a German bank account to support myself for the duration of the semester. This amount is typically 600 € for each month that you will be in Germany after the completion of your internship.

Another great resource is the website of the local university in that city. I found helpful information for my visit through the University of Stuttgart’s website.”

§ Michael Tanner '15 – “This will probably be your first experience that makes you absolutely hate how much Germans love following rules. Just accept it and do what you need to do. I called my German HR representative and put her on the phone with the government official, which is the only way I was going to get everything explained. See Scott’s comment about what you need to take with you.”

§ Mert Karakaya '16 - “If you have gotten a student visa long enough to cover your stay, you don’t need residency permit or a work permit. I went to the Stadtburo, and they wrote a note on my passport saying I can work 124 days plus the duration of my internship. Also, a perk of a visa is you are not required to pay 100 Euros they want for residency permit.”

Using the Language

§ Scott Campbell '15—“Start thinking about your limitations in grammar and vocabulary, and find ways to compensate. Simplify your sentences. Make them shorter. Don’t use big words. If you try to convert English thoughts to German speaking, you will have far more difficulty than if you start forcing yourself to think in German. As you realize the gaps in your knowledge, make note and find the words and grammar that you need, and in this way build your functional use of the language.”

§ Michael Tanner '15 – “If you choose, you can find language classes to take or practice on your own. This would be a good idea, but I doubt you’ll do it. So, it’s then up to you to practice with the people you meet. The best thing you can do is be the only English speaker in the room. Then those people will speak in the native tongue and you’ll have to keep up. This can be a fun challenge or incredibly disheartening depending on your mentality. Every day and situation I had to choose whether I wanted to accept the challenge and speak German, or take it lazily and speak English. You’ll probably have to do the same – so make sure you have goals for language proficiency before you arrive – and stick to them.”

§ Neeldhri Rama '16: For me my boss at work made it a point that none of my coworkers spoke to me in English. Initially this was quite a challenge but then I slowly got used to it within the first month and was fluent working in German. Also at home with my Landlord and all the other people I met (stores, bank and offices etc..) I made it a point to speak only in German. One thing that lacks in our German classes at purdue is technical German and Engineering

vocabulary. This is going to be vastly used at your workplace. Students at Karlsruhe sometimes find it difficult to communicate technical terms such as locking nut, screw etc. in English. All homeworks and notes are translated for you from German to English at KIT. These translations could sometimes be grammatically incorrect and also sometimes completely wrong translations.

So you cannot really survive by knowing 0 German. **Meeting Locals**

§ Scott Campbell '15—"Take advantage of being a foreigner, because it instantly gives most locals a reason to want to get to know you. Wouldn't you be intrigued by a German studying at Purdue? Try to find other interns at work, groups on Facebook, clubs that interest you, and any other option that you can think of for connecting with others. Socializing can be exhausting, but it's by far better than sitting at home alone."

§ Bryan Routt '15 – "One of the easiest ways to meet locals is to meet other interns. Inquire with people at your company once you begin work if there are any weekly meet-ups or an intern email list. You are guaranteed to meet a lot of people and it also offers a great opportunity to practice German in a relaxed setting outside the office with people your age."

§ Michael Tanner '15 – "The BEST way, in my opinion, to dive deep into the culture and get to know people (who you will experience the culture through) is to get highly involved in something you would normally do back home. I think the best method for this is through sports. Personally, I found a weightlifting club. However, I've also found clubs for every other sport. You will quickly make friends, young and old, this way, whom you can then enjoy other activities since they are now your friends. Germans don't like to meet new people at clubs or bars. They go out with their friends to spend time with them. I think this is a bit different than how Americans approach night life, so keep this in mind. Don't be afraid to use the internet. There are many Facebook groups for people new to a city. There are 'New in _____' groups, Expat groups, and abroad student groups. Find them, introduce yourself, and see if there's anyone to meet up with. Often times these groups will event host weekly/monthly meet up events. This can be a great way to meet new people who are similarly new. You can also try Tinder or true online dating. However, I did this and it was totally unsuccessful, so I wouldn't recommend this. If you do try online dating I suggest making a throw-away g-mail account to use for all the site registration and contact."

§ Mert Karakaya '16 - "In my experience I got friends through Facebook before I arrived. (Thanks to Ryan McVeigh) There are groups called Stammtisch which translates to open table. Any and everyone is welcomed there and they mostly speak English. That's a really good way to meet people. Also, if you live in a WG, try to make friends with your flatmates."

§ Neeldhri Rama '16 - Begin with your floormates if you are in a WG while working and also your floormates while you are at KIT. These are people you'd spend the most time with so might as well use them to get a sense of the local culture.

Food & Drink

§ Scott Campbell '15—"If you're a baller on a budget like me, you'll very quickly learn not to order water with anymore meals. Hydrate before going to a restaurant—seriously I'm not kidding because thirst when you're out is very expensive and drinks from the supermarket that you could have at home are wayyyyyy cheaper. Expect not to know what you're ordering, but as a fallback you really can't go wrong with a normal Schnitzel (thin pan fried pork) or most Wurst. In general all the food is excellent and the prices are reasonable—after all tax and gratuity are already included in what is listed."

§ Tessa Groll '15--“The German diet is very meat and starch base. There is always a meat dish and then some kind of noodles, potatoes, bread, or some other starch item to go with it. Vegetables are perhaps not as popular, also because the Germans eat vegetables that are in season. Obviously, easy to still obtain, but it's not always the first thing you see with a meal. When going out, there are no free refills! Whatever drink you buy is all you will get. If you want another drink, you pay for it again. There is also no free water. Restaurants do not serve water from the tap.”

§ Michael Tanner '15 – “In my opinion, Germans have a rather unique food atmosphere. Everything is local, fresh, and there aren't many chain restaurants. This means most places are locally owned and operated, usually with a unique cuisine or flavor. I have my favorite Thai, Italian, burger, and German restaurants. I have chosen to allot a good amount of money in my imaginary budget to food. I love to eat. I go out a few times a week and even when I cook, I cook decent meals. Enjoy the local food, including the beer. Yes, drinks aren't free. Many times you'll pay more for a small water than for a huge beer. So get the huge beer. Personally, I continue my tipping habits. Most restaurants will somehow be able to tell that you're American, so tipping well will make them more favorable towards us. So, yeah, I tip high, but I can always tell it's much appreciated. Oh yeah, and about the 'no free refills' issue – you'll learn to make one drink last a while for a meal, so don't worry.”

Staying Active

§ Bryan Routt '15 – “No one will blame you if you disappear for a weekend when the new season of House of Cards comes out.”

§ Tessa Groll '15 - “I highly recommend staying active. It is easy to stay in your room and get bored during the day. Plus, you just kind of go stir crazy, at least, I do. I have been horseback riding for a number of years now so when I got to Karlsruhe, I started horse lessons. They are my favorite part of the week and it is fun to talk to the other people in my lesson and hang out.”

§ Michael Tanner '15 – “So I've made this a huge priority in my time abroad, perhaps my number one priority. I, personally, wouldn't be able to enjoy life otherwise. That being said, you can find a club for any sport. So long as the sport isn't season specific (i.e. surfing or skiing), you can do it. There is always a system of clubs. For example, where I live in Stuttgart, there is the VfL named organization. VfL has a club for every sport, from Aikido to Volleyball (literally, alphabetically that's the range). The best part is that these clubs will usually have what translates as a 'trial period,' which lasts around three months. Thus, you can go in and sign up for the trial period for the sport club of your choice (and as many as you want – since they are all run independently within the main organization). I had to pay 10 euros for this, which is pretty good if you ask me. This will almost cover your whole stay, unless you stay in the same place the whole time. You'll have to work with the owner individually. Usually they are nice about it, but they have to like you, haha. I've continued to train and competed in strength sports during my stay, so don't let someone tell you that you can't remain active during your time abroad. If you're only interested in finding a simple gym, and not a sport club as I've described, your best bet will be to look for McFit, Fitness Express, or MaxxSports (in my experience). These are the best chain gyms, but you might have to pay by German bank account. If you don't want to join a sport club or a chain gym, but still want to do things every now and then, there are pickup soccer groups (and I'm sure for other sports) on Facebook. Find the one for your city and go join

in. Many times, groups of interns at work will also do things like this, so make sure to be on the lookout, especially through Facebook. You can also find, for example, tennis/squash courts to go with a friend and play on. Stuff like this is more about making a reservation for a one-time event.”

Nightlife

§ Mert Karakaya '16 - “Be on the lookout for Facebook events in your area. They are usually entertaining. Also, if you are in a college town, there are plenty of house parties if you make some friends. If you don't like smoking avoid, Rauchenkneipes at all costs, because you will suffocate.”

Work Specific

Housing

- Scott Campbell '15—“I found my housing when someone saw my ad on WG gesucht, so my first tip is to write an excellent ad (IN ENGLISH perhaps with a german component also) for any area you would consider. English is important because poor grammar is often a sign of scammers, which one must be very wary of when looking at ads and offer emails. Also look for related Facebook groups and similar WG search sites, and if all else fails, call in a middleman agent and pay their fees—you can't afford to be picky in the seller friendly German markets.”

- Tessa Groll '15--“Finding housing in Germany can be extremely challenging. Most of the time, apartments would like you to see the apartment beforehand, which for your case is a bit challenging. Often times, people will recommend wg-gesucht. Which does have great options, but I did not find a lot of luck using it. I found luck in a company called HomeCompany. They have different departments all over in Germany and the staff was very friendly and eager to help me. The downside in using them is there is a commission fee that has to be paid to the company for using them to find your housing. I paid a 55% commission fee for my three month lease. The commission fee comes from a percentage of one month's rent. Therefore if your monthly rent is 400 euros, at a 55% commission fee, you would be paying 220 euros. You only pay this once, but it does have to be paid. Like I said, I had great luck, they helped me with all of things I needed and I ended up with a great apartment.”

- Michael Tanner '15 – “Start praying now. You need to already know someone in the area, be willing to pay boatloads of money, or strike absolute gold with luck. I had to find housing around Stuttgart, which is known to Germans as the most difficult housing market in Germany for tenants. You'll need to explore all the online housing sites as well as Facebook. Be prepared to sink a lot of time into this. Be willing to be a little unconventional, but do be cautious. I almost ended up in a horribly negative situation with housing, and was even threatened at the end. Also pay attention for scams on the internet. Never send a copy of your passport or money to anyone in advance, period. If it comes down to it, you'll always be able to find a place through HomeCompany, though for exorbitant rates.”

Heather Macdonald '15 - For me was quite easy, fortunately. Because in a sense I did a double semester Co-Op back-to-back, I was able to be connected through a contact in my current department. From there they set me up with a great studio. If you're Co-Oping, definitely ask as

many people as possible while you're there to get you connected with the right people. There are always some people offering up bedrooms or rentals to traveling people within the company.

Mert Karakaya '16 - "I emailed about 20 people in the WG websites, got only 2 replies which were both negative. As my last resort, I posted on Couchsurfing and Facebook. Luckily, I found a WG since the tenant was going to Iceland for a job. This was pure luck. I had to stay in a hostel for a week however."

Commuting

· Bryan Routt '15 – "Public transportation is your friend. When you're working it will probably still be too cold to feasibly ride a bike around town and to and from work (although many locals still do). Students can get good rates on public transportation with proof of student status. Just go to the travel center in the local Hauptbahnhof and inquire about a "Pass für Schuler und Studenten." Depending on the city you may have to pay monthly (about 110 € in Stuttgart) or just pay once for the length of your stay in the city. If you have to pay monthly, make sure you keep the tickets in you pass updated or else you'll have to pay a fine of 40 or 50€ if they do a ticket check."

· Michael Tanner '15 – "If you're lucky enough to be in the same area as work or school, get a bike (and a helmet). Germans are much more friendly to bikers, who usually have their own lane or area on the sidewalk. If you can't get a bike, find out which local train/bus pass is right for you and you'll be fine with mass transit and walking."

Business Culture

· Scott Campbell '15—"Make sure you know the principles of a good handshake, because living and especially working in Germany you'll be shaking a lot of hands. Whenever someone comes into the office in the morning they shake hands with everyone already there, and saying hello with colleagues outside the office throughout the day usually comes with a handshake.

· Michael Tanner '15 – "There are a few things I've picked up on in German business culture to pass on. Firstly, you shake everyone's hand. The first time you see a person that day, you shake their hand and say hello. Secondly, you offer salutations to every room. When you enter the room, you either greet everyone as a whole (if there are many people) or shake their hand (unless you've already shaken their hand that day, in which case you only greet them). When you leave the room, you say goodbye to everyone as a group. This applies to work, but I've also found it applies to the weightlifting club I go to, so it's more of an overall cultural thing. Lastly, everyone is relaxed, about how you dress, what times you work, stuff like that. Don't take advantage of this in a negative way, but don't insist on American business practices."

Heather Macdonald '15 - Agreed with Michael and Scott above. The practice in the workplace is definitely to handshake and offer a formal greeting, dependent on the day, at least once per day. These greetings could differ from the normal 'Guten Tag' in different regions of Germany, but a good 'Guten Tag' will always suffice. Don't forget who you've said hello to either. I was sufficiently embarrassed when I forgot and then proceeded to complete the morning ritual again, only to have the coworker look at me weirdly and say we have already greeted. After the initial greeting, a simple hello or conversation is normal. During mealtimes, expect 'Mahlzeit' instead of 'Hallo' for example. It's pretty much said to anyone you know and see during the time. It translates to meal time and pretty much wishes people to have a good lunch. When leaving,

make sure to say goodbye to everyone. No handshaking required but a good saying I've found is, 'Schoenen Tag noch'. Also I cannot stress this but DO NOT forget that Germany has a formal and informal tone! Use formal with everyone you meet, especially mentors. They'll tell you if it's okay to use the informal. Some clues are they'll introduce themselves by their first name. This almost always means 'du' form. In case of confusion, don't be afraid to ask! It's hard to tell even for Germans sometimes.

This might have been my situation, but I've found that Germans tend to have a team lunch experience. By this I mean walking with coworkers to and from the cafeteria, wishing each other a good meal 'Guten Appetit', waiting till everyone is finished, and then walking back together. Lastly, I wanted to note the strict 10-hour work day rule. In Germany it is not allowed for the employee to work more than 10 hours per day. If you get close, your mentor or supervisor may remind you to leave. I had this once or twice. This is not only because they have the stigmatism that people who lead better lives are better workers, but also that the employer must pay out of pocket for each hour past the 10th that the worker works.

Mert Karakaya '16 - "Despite the above two comments, I haven't shaken hand that often. I only shook people's hands when I first met them, after that it was public greeting for the entire room. About the dress code, even the managers at my firm come with jeans and a hoodie. I don't know if it applies to everywhere but it is pretty casual. For me, work times are flexible as well, as long as you are not behind work and complete hours required."

KIT Specific

Housing

Classes

Traveling

Transportation

Flights

- Scott Campbell '15—"Two names: Germanwings and Ryan Air. In the case of the former, look into blind booking. That is all."

- Michael Tanner '15 – "Yeah, Germanwings and Ryan Air. They are each better for different locations, so you'll have to check both. Also, definitely look into Holiday Pirate, it's unbelievably amazing."

§ Neeldhri Rama '16 - Use Google flights also as it gives a comparative pricing of all options. I use it all the time for my international travel. Sometimes standard airlines such as Air Berlin could be cheaper than Ryan Air. Easyjet is also a very cheap option to get to London.

Trains

- Scott Campbell '15--"First day you can, take your KIT information to a DB center and buy the BahnCard 50 at the student half price. €127 may seem like a lot, but that will be paid for and then some after one trip to Berlin. Yeah the 25 card also lets you use Savers, but that only comes out in your favor if you find a saver option of over 33% (not likely unless you plan well in

advance) and saver options come with their own limitations. In my opinion, it's well worth the investment, because you'll never find a super saver with no normal price that isn't competitive at half off, but especially last minute and on desirable travel times & destinations there won't be savers. Trains also offer unbelievable group rates if you get friends to come along, and the convenience within Germany is unmatched."

- Tessa Groll '15—"This is where the Germans will really pull through for you, the trains are fantastic. They are also super easy and fast. The only problem is they are a bit pricey. You can buy a bahn card though which can help a lot. The 25% and 50% off the train prices are really good deals. I opted for the 25% because I didn't know how often I would use the trains since some of the places I want to go were a bit far by train, such as Spain and the southern parts of Italy. 100% a personal preference. The 25% off card can be applied for any of the train deals, even the super saver options. For one year, the only other option is 3 months which may end up being pricier than just buying a one year card, as a student I paid 40 euros. I made that up with the first train ticket I bought. The 50% may end up saving you more, but you can't use it on any super saver options. This may be a helpful tidbit as well: super saver is great for direct trains to where you want to go. However, if you are traveling to a place that has multiple connections, you are taking a risk with the super saver because if you miss a connection, you have to buy a new ticket. Not hating on the super saver because it can save you a ton of money. Another thing to look into are Rail passes, which can save you a lot of money as well. You can buy a German Rail Pass and travel anywhere in Germany on a given day on any train. There are different types so do some research, but I have easily saved a couple hundred euros using those instead of buying individual tickets."

- Michael Tanner '15 – "I listened to Scott on this one, and I'm glad I did. Definitely check out the Bahn 50."

§ Neeldhri Rama '16 - I go the Bahn Card 50. It's available at a discount price at 69 euros for students. And don't worry coz one trip to Berlin you'll make your money worth. Beware the 50 percent discount is only in Germany.

Buses

- Scott Campbell '15—"Busses are the cheapest option, but don't be fooled, they are neither as direct, comfortable, timely, or reliable as trains. That being said they do offer more routes, and they remain an excellent option if you have the time."

- Tessa Groll '15—"Another great form of transportation that is becoming quite popular is the bus. The busses can take you all over Germany for great deals. Meinfarnbus and Flixbus are great options. Usually no more than 20 euros one way when using a bus. When I traveled to Munich via bus, I paid 13 euros there and 18 euros on the way back. There were different time options though, and some of those were only 8 euros. I think they are also great for getting to an airport. Definitely a lot cheaper than using the train, especially for those living in Karlsruhe where you will want to get to a main airport (probably Stuttgart or Frankfurt). It all depends, but if you have time, the bus is a great option. Granted, the bus can also be quite quick."

Cars

- Bryan Routt '15 – "Sometimes renting a car is more feasible than trying to fly or take the train especially for some skiing locations. However you must make sure that it is legal for you to drive in Germany. Depending on the state where you received your license in the US, you may

be able to drive right away or you might have to take a small test. The US embassy website outlines all the requirements: http://germany.usembassy.gov/acs/drivers_license/.

It is also a good idea to familiarize yourself with the rules and regulations of the road in Germany. There are some small things that we do in the US that are illegal in Germany. All rental cars come with insurance standard but you must make sure that they have winter tires if it is winter. Winter tires are required by law and some rental companies won't put them on. If it's winter never accept a car without winter tires."

§ Neeldhri Rama '16 - Renting a car is cheap if you are a group. But remember most car's are manual. Also if you rent a car always get the Full insurance that cover glass, body, collision damage and theft (not sure if I'm forgetting something). But go for the highest protection that the renter is offering. We had a bad experience with this. Our car got broken into in Nice and we had to pay for the full replacement of the glass. If we had insurance it would have been waayy cheaper.

Lodging

Hostels

- Scott Campbell '15—"Some hostels are amazing, some in a good way and others not so much. Look up reviews and remember to bring your own lock and towel, but don't rule out other options. If you can match the size of your group to the hostel room number of beds, then you have a fairly safe scenario regardless of the quality."

- Tessa Groll '15--"Booking.com has great deals. I have used this now for many trips and have found great luck with them and have found great savings with them. I highly recommend checking them out. I'm sure before you leave, you will hear a lot about hostels. Hostels are great and it is very easy to make friends, but when staying in a hostel, be sure to bring a lock to keep your personal belongings safe. Most hostels come with a locker of some sort in the room that you can lock up your personal belongings in."

Hotels

- Michael Tanner '15 – "I've used booking.com to find hotels and was very happy with the quality – I'd suggest starting there."

AirBnB

Tessa Groll '15 - "AirBnB is awesome! I have used them a few times now, I wasn't really aware of them until a bit later, but had I known about them earlier I would have definitely used them. Be cautious, because sometimes it is cheaper to get a hotel, that being said, visiting large towns, you can get a really nice apartment in the center of the city and save some money by going grocery shopping and cooking. I definitely recommend!

Couch Surfing

Country & City Guides

Austria

Vienna

Salzburg

Belgium

Brussels, Ghent, Bruges

__§ Neeladhri Rama '16—_ A city not a lot of people make their way to but I highly recommend this. Given the proximity to Karlsruhe it's totally worth a weekend visit. Me and my friend drove up there, however there are trains that are about 4 hours from Karlsruhe to Brussels. Driving always makes things faster and also helps you go to many places. But beware of only manual transmission cars in Europe. You will have to make sure while reserving the car to state that you need an automatic transmission. Brussels takes about a day to walk around to the various tourist sites. The night life is pretty cool. Both the cities of Ghent and Bruges take a day. I strongly recommend a boat tour through the canals of Bruges. And yes I don't need to talk too much about Belgium chocolates and fries I guess....

Czech Republic

Prague

France

Paris

Germany

Berlin

· Scott Campbell '15—"Easily my favorite city in Germany. If you like history, shopping or nightlife, Berlin has it all. It's not terribly expensive either for that matter. Hostel Alletto is a gem, and be sure to reserve a Reichstag visit in advance of going. The train is a bit expensive if you don't book as a group, but flights are abundant. My favorite stops are Potsdamer Platz, Alexanderplatz, walking the wall, Checkpoint Charlie, the Holocaust memorial, the Brandenburg Gate, Olympiastadion and the Deutsche Geschichte Museum."

Cologne

Attend the Faschung Karneval here. But if you are interested in visiting some of the tourist spots beware that most of the stuff is closed during this time.

Frankfurt

· Scott Campbell '15—"Frankfurt struck me as more of a modern business than a pleasure or cultural city, but it's still worth a look. Hit the Alte Oper, check out the central shopping mall (with the longest escalator in Europe), and maybe stop by the only Chipotle in Germany for a taste of home."

· Michael Tanner '15 – "I visited a friend of mine who lives in Frankfurt and he showed me around and explained all the history of the city. It was rather fascinating. He also took me to a couple of his favorite restaurants there, which were delicious. I cheated because I went with a local, but this is my favorite way to visit cities, and one I would highly recommend."

Munich

· Scott Campbell '15—"Munich is a great place to spend a weekend for culture and fun. The Biergartens are abundant and a unique way to spend the night with friends that you can't quite match in other cities. The architecture adds plenty to see to an already long list with the Residence and Treasury, the old city hall clock tower, and the Maypole square. If you like science and technology plan to spend a day or at the very least a long afternoon in the Deutsche Museum, which is a bit like a more detailed and slightly less fun (English is only on about a third of the info plaques) version of Science and Industry in Chicago but is a marvel in itself. Dachau is also a short ride outside the city, and if you're interested in WWII history it's a can't miss memorial where the audio tour or live guided tour is highly recommended."

Stuttgart

I lived here so from a tourist standpoint I would say it doesn't have a lot to offer. It takes about a day. Walking on Konigstrasse, Mercedes Museum, Porsche Museum, Eigensplatz and going to the viewing deck of the Train station. Fruhlings fest is supposed to be a very good attraction so you may want to visit during that time.

Tuebingen

· Michael Tanner '15 – "If you live in southern Germany, Tuebingen is worth a visit. It's a university city, so it's mainly young people and young people places. I went with 7 students that attend university there, so we had a great time exploring the nightlife (well, I was the only one exploring – they knew where they were)."

Hungary

Budapest

§ Neeldhri Rama '16 - This was my favourite city until I visited Rome. Stay at the Avenue hostel as it is very close to the city center and it is on the main Broadway Andrssy ut. It's a fantastic city to spend 2- 3 days.

Italy

Florence

Tessa Groll '15 - Florence is so beautiful! I had a great time when I went there. I think the top things to do are see the Duomo, the Accademia, and San Lorenzo which has an amazing leather market. You can buy a really nice handmade leather bag for less than 20 euros. My advice would be to buy tickets ahead of time for the Duomo and the Accademia because lines can get really long. For those who are big art fans I would also check out the Uffizi museum.

Milan

§ Neeldhri Rama '16 - It's the fashion capital and not a lot of historical things to see except for the cathedral. But it's a fantastic city and I had the best pizza of my life here. Also the best gelato too. Try this place called Cioletto Italiani . Trust me Gelato's don't get better. Also lake Como is in proximity of Milan so I'd recommend a day trip here. Another thing I'd say is to do Milan, Venice and Verona as they are very close to each other.

Rome

§ Neeldhri Rama '16 - The only thing I'd say for Rome is that this is no city or place but it is its own thing called Rome. It's a fantastic city with great people. Just make sure you buy the tickets

for Colosseum, Roman Forum and Vatican Museums + Sistine Chapel online in advance. The rest I'll let you explore yourself :)

Netherlands

Amsterdam

Spain

Barcelona

Madrid

Switzerland

Geneva

· Bryan Routt '15 – “Geneva is a beautiful yet expensive city. There are expensive watch stores lining every street. There are some very interesting sights in the vicinity. The Salève in nearby France offers a great view of the city and lake stretching off to the east and a light hike to the top gives plenty of other views along the way. Right in the center of the city is the “Jet d'Eau” which is a 140 meter high jet of water that is on almost every day. You can even walk out to the jet on a skinny pier if you don't mind getting a little wet. CERN, the world's largest particle accelerator, is located just outside the city and can be easily accessed by the tram. At CERN there is a very interesting museum as well as an interesting tour that goes through the control room for the ATLAS experiment chamber. ”

Zurich

United Kingdom

London