

OCT 2022

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Take the Road Less Traveled

How can students get involved with UI's study abroad program?

From Around the World to Idaho

International students' experiences at UI

The Best Places to Visit from Moscow

Walk, bike, drive, or fly to these destinations for your next travel adventure



THE TRAVEL ISSUE

Blot Magazine

OCT 2022

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Editor's Letter

Dear Reader,

One of the most fulfilling things a person can do is go out of their comfort zone, take chances, explore, and find adventure in unexpected places. Whether you take a road trip for the first time across your home state, fly across the country, or take a leap of faith to leave that country entirely for your safety, your education, or your career opportunities, travel can be daunting, yet exhilarating, and always fulfilling. If you immerse yourself into a new culture for a few weeks or a full semester, you are bound to grow as a person, learning new skills and appreciating the diversity of different communities all around the world. Travel is the lifeblood of our world, and everything, from the largest ecosystems to a single person, can benefit from it. Our reporters have captured this beautifully in this issue, bringing you insights into the transportation options available in our community, an inside look into the migration patterns of Idaho Chinook salmon, the experiences of international students at the University of Idaho, the incredible adventure of studying abroad, and finally, a personal essay on a life-changing trip to Germany. Please enjoy the travel issue, and don't forget to always look around, above, and beyond for your next adventure.



Katarina Hockema
Editor in Chief

Cover Photo and Design By **GIA MAZZARELLA**

Cover Featuring **OLIVIA ADAMS**

Back Cover Photo By **OLIVIA ADAMS**





PHOTO COURTESY OF OLIVIA ADAMS

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Road Trip! Here's the best places to visit from Moscow

Walk, bike, drive, or fly to these destinations
for your next travel adventure

Story By **VANESSA WERNER**

Photos By **ROSE OWENS**

Design By **MEGAN SCHWARTZ**

There are endless ways to get from one place to another in the United States. People can get anywhere with some sort of transportation, whether it be to a store, another city or state, or even another country.

The most common form of transportation, especially in the United States, is to drive a car. According to usafacts.org, there are over 228 million licensed drivers in the country as of 2020 and 1.2 million licensed drivers in Idaho.

Having a driver's license is convenient because people can go wherever they want whenever they want without having to wait for a ride. This is especially nice for young people, as they tend to be more involved in different activities and driving themselves is easier and more convenient than waiting for a friend or family member to take them somewhere or paying for an Uber, taxi, or Lyft.

However, not everyone has their driver's license- particularly students. Luckily, there are many ways to get around without a car.

For example, people can ride the bus. At the University of Idaho specifically, there is the Intermodal Transit Center- or Smart Transit, located at 1006 Railroad Street in Moscow.

"Smart Transit only operates the local busses, both the fixed route busses and the Dial-a-Ride

service," said Tara LeGresley, a customer service representative at the Center. They do not operate busses that leave Moscow, and people would have to go to Northwestern Trailways or Greyhound to leave Moscow or go nationwide. "We are a ticket agent and do, however, sell tickets for Northwestern Trailways and Greyhound at our office at the Moscow Intermodal Transit Center at the UI campus."





LeGresley also mentioned that, depending on the station, students may receive a financial discount at Greyhound due to their enrollment in an educational university. Additionally, their busses are accessible for people with disabilities, and a lift bus can be requested in advance with either Northwestern Trailways or Greyhound.

Other forms of transportation include walking and riding a bike or skateboard to get around place to place. They are effective forms of exercise, and people can easily get around by walking, biking or skateboarding in smaller towns such as Moscow or neighboring Pullman.

For people wishing to travel abroad, airplanes are the best way to travel. Airplanes can travel anywhere- including over oceans, which makes it easier and faster to get to other continents and

countries. Some of the most common countries to fly to include those in Latin and southern America, Spain, France, Italy, and Thailand.

More locally on the national level, people can go on road trips in a certain state or travel interstate. According to tripadvisor.com, some of the most popular places to visit in Idaho are Boise, Coeur d'Alene, Twin Falls, and Idaho Falls. There are many outdoor activities to do such as rafting, hiking, and skiing, and there are also many museums to visit, especially in Boise.

People can also visit nearby states. Take Washington, for example; one can get a 360-degree view of Seattle from the top of the Space Needle, go on cultural tours or day trips, go to the theater, or do various outdoor activities. Except Seattle, some places to visit in Washington include Spokane, Tacoma, and Bellingham.



Next on the list of states to visit is Oregon. More specifically, one can go to Portland, Bend, Eugene, or Astoria. Like Idaho and Washington, there are many outdoor activities to do in Oregon, but people can also visit museums or shop at the Phog Antique Mall or explore the rich cultural history of the state.

Like Oregon and Washington, Montana also borders the state of Idaho. There are countless interesting places to visit in Montana, including Bozeman, Billings, Missoula and West Yellowstone. Yellowstone is a fascinating place to visit and learn about, as there are tours, shopping opportunities at one of the many fun stores in downtown Bozeman, or the American Computer and Robotics Museum or the Missoula Farmer's market.

Last on the list of road trip places is Wyoming. Like Montana, part of Yellowstone is in Wyoming, and people can also go rafting, take cultural tours such as the Buffalo Bill Center of the West and Old Town Trail, or go to Mylar Park or the Cheyenne Civic Center. Some of the most popular cities to visit in Wyoming are Cody, Jackson, Cheyenne, and Laramie.

Apart from the states mentioned in the list, people can take road trips to Utah and Nevada (which are the last two states that border Idaho) or even California or Arizona.

As you can see, there are plenty of opportunities to travel and use in-state or interstate transportation to find a little adventure in the Northwest and beyond.



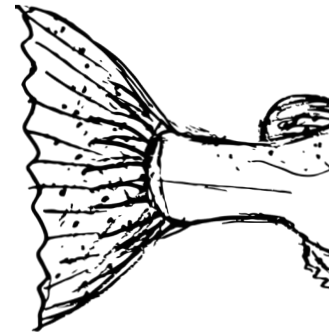
Chinook Salmon: A Traveler's Tail

How do the dams along the Lower Snake and Columbia River affect the Chinook Salmon population?

Story By **ROSE OWENS**

Photos By **ROSE OWENS**

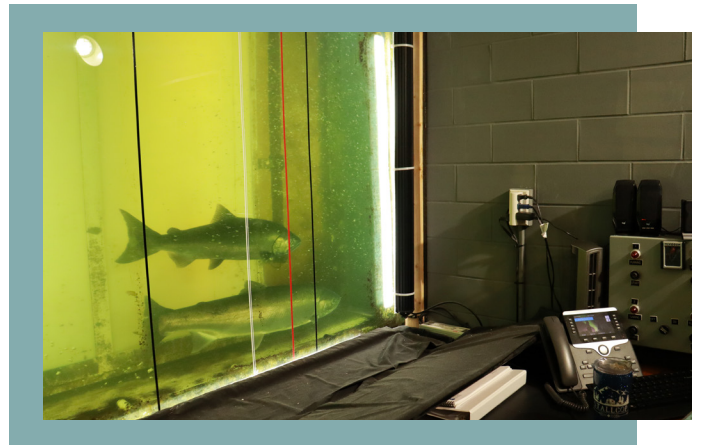
Design By **ELAINA KIEBERT**



Salmon play a hugely important role in Idaho's ecosystem. There are several different species that inhabit the rivers of Idaho, but one in particular stands out. The Chinook salmon is an anadromous species, meaning it migrates from freshwater to the ocean, returning to its breeding grounds at the end of its life. The salmon spawn at the headwaters or in the mainstems of river systems. After a year of rearing they travel to the ocean for 2-3 years, eventually returning to breed. Not all salmon make it to a year before they begin their migration- these salmon are known as sub-yearlings.

The declining trend of Chinook salmon is described in detail by the Environmental Protection Agency.

"Salish Sea Chinook salmon populations are down 60% since the Pacific Salmon Commission began tracking salmon abundance in 1984. Between 2000 and 2018, the total number of Chinook returning to the Salish Sea has shown a relative



FISH ARE COUNTED AS THEY PASS THE FISH LADDER AT THE ADULT FISH COUNT STATION.

economy of the region because of the commercial and recreational fisheries," According to the EPA. "They [salmon] play a critical role in supporting and maintaining ecological health, and in the social fabric of First Nations and tribal culture."

Currently, there are eight dams along the Lower Snake River and the Columbia River that create obstacles for the anadromous species in the area. According to lead supervisory project biologist Elizabeth Holdren, Lower Granite Lock and Dam does the most research, because it is the first dam that juvenile fish pass and the last dam that adult fish returning to spawning grounds pass.

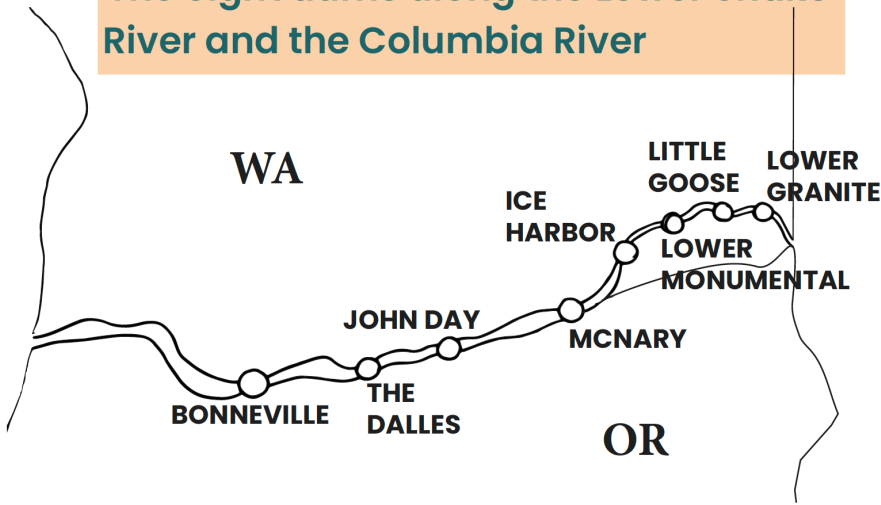
The Lower Granite Lock and Dam has several ways for juvenile fish to get past the dam. There is also one fish ladder at the dam that allows for returning adult salmon to return for spawning. The fish ladder has six different entrances that attract the fish into them with water pressure formed by varying depths of the openings.

The Lower Granite Lock and Dam has four



SOME FISH THAT GO THROUGH THE BYPASSES ARE COLLECTED AND ANESTHETIZED SO THAT THEY CAN BE CHECKED FOR ANY HARM CAUSED BY THE DAM.

The eight dams along the Lower Snake River and the Columbia River



passage routes for juvenile fish to get past the dam. The first passage is a traditional spill where fish go through the dam's spillways. These spillways open from the bottom up in order for the fish to find the exit route, 53-57 feet below the surface. "We do get a lot of fish passage through those routes and the survival is very high- it's over 98 percent," Holdren stated.

There are seven spillway weirs total with the first one being removable. It sits inside the traditional spillway, allowing all of the water to go over the top. Salmonids prefer the top 10-20 feet of a water column, so collecting them at the top gives them a nice passage route that doesn't expose them to different water pressures. This route is known as the surface bypass.



CONSTRUCTION OF THE LOWER GRANITE LOCK AND DAM FINISHED IN 1975, IT WAS THE FOURTH DAM PUT ON THE LOWER SNAKE RIVER.

The third passage is the bypass system itself, which deters fish from the turbine. As fish are approaching turbine unit intake, they are coming down from the forebay, going to the tailrace, and then approaching a screen that is designed with a bar mesh. This mesh has perforated holes on the back that provide nice gradual flow for fish to surface into a gate well. They then go through a hole, and once arrived, they are reverted all the way around the dam and down to the juvenile facility.

The final passage is through the turbine unit. Very few fish actually miss the screen, successfully going through the turbine unit.

"Survival through the turbine is about 90%, and you can fit a Volkswagen bug through the blades," Holdren states. "At Ice Harbor Dam, there is a fish-friendly turbine which reduces the change in pressure so fish survival rate through that turbine is 98.3 percent."



A VIEW OF THE ADULT FISH LADDER.

Fish that go through the bypass system are collected and transported by trucks and barges. There are eight barges; the two oldest and smallest ones were used to deliver water to the U.S. military during WWII. The larger barges each hold 12,500 pounds of fish. The fish are transported to just below the Bonneville Dam and pick up fish from all of the other dams as well. There is a high amount of predation pressure that key in on salmon when they

are transported. Pelicans and sea lions are two of the predators that come and eat large amounts of fish being released, in addition to fish in estuaries and out in the ocean.

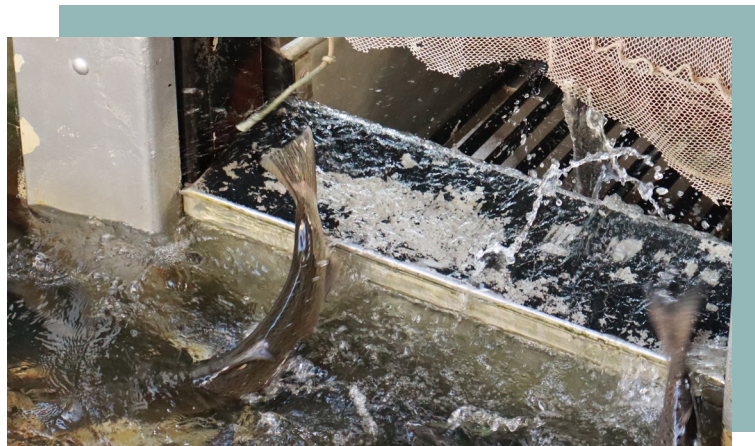
There is also one fish ladder at the dam that allows for returning adult salmon to return for spawning. The fish ladder has six different entrances that attract the fish into them with water pressure formed by varying depths of the openings.

“About 90-98% of juvenile fish survive the different passageways across the dam,” Holdren said.

Christopher Caudill is an associate professor of fish biology and aquatic ecology at the University of Idaho. Caudill believes that juvenile fish can pass these dams because of how greatly the engineering has improved over the past 20-30 years. Caudill claims that even with new technology, the dams still pose threats on the salmon.

“It takes the salmon longer to get through the ocean because they have to swim through reservoirs rather than moving through free-flowing rivers,” Caudill stated.

Other human impacts on salmon include logging. Large logs are driven down the river and simplify the stream channel, reducing the habitat. Caudill also describes how beavers influence salmon and watersheds, as well as provide habitat. The beavers were largely trapped out in the past but are starting to recover.



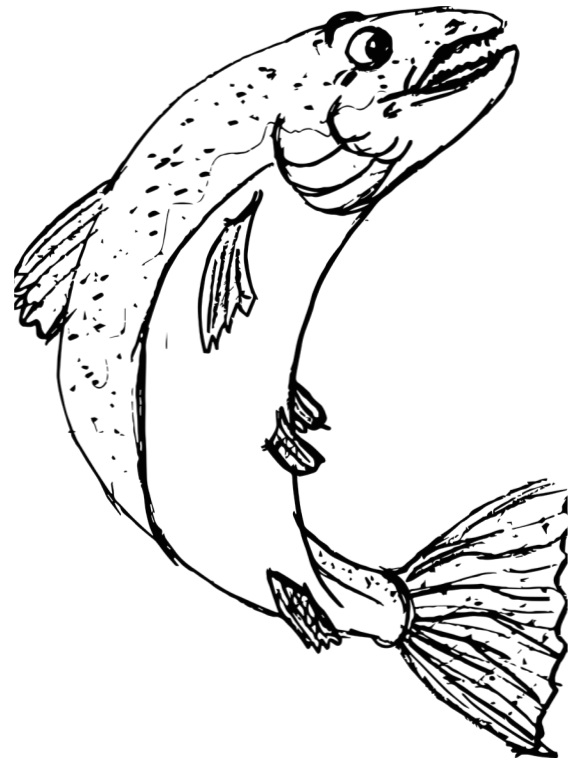
SALMON AND STEELHEAD SLIDE DOWN INTO A POOL TO BE SENT OFF TO FISHERIES.



SALMON AND STEELHEAD ARE ANESTHETIZED, THEN MEASURED AND CHECKED FOR TAGS BEFORE BEING SENT OFF TO FISHERIES.

Even with advanced technology, Chinook salmon’s journey to the ocean and back still has been affected by the eight dams on the lower Snake River and Columbia River. As innovation and management improves in the future, we are sure to see Idaho’s aquatic infrastructure continue to influence these fragile ecosystems.

For more information on Idaho dams and Chinook salmon conservation, visit the Lower Granite Lock and Dam website.



FROM AROUND THE

Story By **ZINNIA SHRESTHA**

Design By **LEILANEE TAYLOR**

Every year, international students from sixty different countries enroll at the University of Idaho, predominantly from Nepal, India and China. This fall alone, 627 new international Vandals joined the Moscow community. Life abroad is not easy for anyone, but the highs and lows make being an international student a bittersweet experience.

Jana Veleva is a sophomore double majoring in psychology and nutrition. She comes from the very spontaneous and fun city of Skopje, Macedonia. “Skopje is best known for its social life, during the day and night, the cafes and restaurants are always full of people. Many would say that they feel a sense of freedom in Skopje. From attending movie premiers, concerts, live band performances, traditional music taverns, to enjoying nature at the beautiful city park, or hiking on Vodno (the closest mountain), all of that can be done in Skopje and describes its spirit.” Although she misses friends and



“She enjoys spending time in the Arboretum and loves hiking, picnicking, and stargazing around Moscow.”



COURTESY OF ROSALINDA LAZANO

family from her hometown, she loves Moscow for its people. “I have had the chance to meet incredibly kind, understanding and welcoming people, which is always a good thing especially when coming to a new place.” She also finds it very easy to be in touch with nature here. She enjoys spending time in the Arboretum and loves hiking, picnicking and stargazing around Moscow.

THE WORLD TO IDAHO



COURTESY OF SAMUEL MBAH

Miguel Natividad is a freshman majoring in mechanical engineering. He's from Lima, Peru. He would describe his hometown as crowded, noisy and overpopulated. That is why he loves the small town feel of Moscow. He's only been here for a month but the quiet and peaceful ambience has already made him fall in love with the town. He loves the diversity here and enjoys talking to and learning about people from different backgrounds. He recommends that international students learn life skills like cooking and driving before moving here. They should be ready to live on their own and be their own guardian. "Look for opportunities to meet new people and get involved and don't isolate yourself."



COURTESY OF SAMUEL MBAH

Samuel Mbah is a sophomore majoring in Mechanical Engineering and minoring in Computer Science. He's from the boisterous city of Lagos, Nigeria. He describes his hometown as crazy and overpopulated but it really shaped his life and gave him valuable experiences. He is currently the president of the National Society of Black Engineers at the University of

Idaho and is also involved in the Black Student Union as well as the Robotics club. Like Miguel, he also appreciate the small town feel of Moscow. He specially enjoyed



COURTESY OF THE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS OFFICE

the spring season here when all the trees were green. Besides his family and friends,

he misses going to concerts in Nigeria and listening to African music. His main advice to any international student would be “Just ask”. “Reach out to people for advice and information, don’t be afraid to ask”.

Collectively, international students seem to enjoy the serenity in Moscow. The people here are so welcoming that they make it feel like home away from home. Although being away from family is hard, students take life in USA as

“Reach out to people, don’t be afraid to ask.”

a huge opportunity to learn and grow. It is definitely challenging moving here first, but the learning and networking opportunities make it all worth it.



COURTESY OF THE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS OFFICE



COURTESY OF ROSALINDA LAZANO



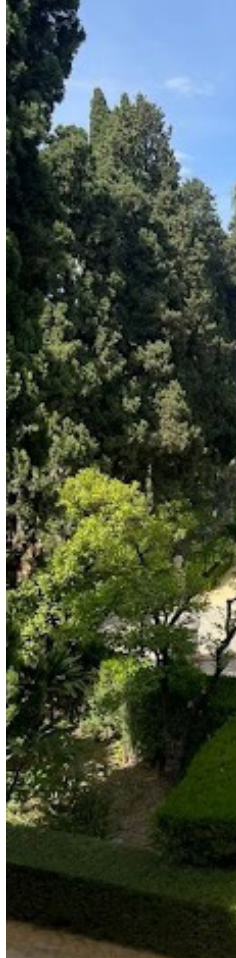


Take the Road Less Traveled

How can students get involved with
UI's Study Abroad program?

Story By **KATARINA HOCKEMA** Design By **GIA MAZZARELLA**

PHOTO COURTESY OF ABIGAIL SPENCER



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MILDRED PAREDES

It is safe to say that at some point, the vast majority of university students have dreamt of packing their bags and uprooting their educational experience for a semester while pursuing their undergraduate degree. Whether you dream of aqua-blue water drifting on salty coastlines, emerald green forests, or to get lost in a brick-and mortar town older than the United States, UI's study abroad program has something for you.

Mildred Paredes, a junior studying business marketing with an emphasis in entrepreneurship and a minor in Spanish has already made the move to travel abroad while studying. Originally from Caldwell, ID,

Paredes came to UI for the same reason as many other students; it was far enough away from home to gain a sense of independence, while also being close enough to be near her family. However, she was always interested in the opportunity to study abroad- even though coming from a low-income family originally made her unsure of how realistic it may be to pursue those opportunities.

"I was scared I was going to have to pay a lot out of my pocket. With the help from the study abroad program, and as well as (the Trio club), they were trying as hard as they could to get a good price and pay as little as possible," Paredes said. "They introduced

me to the Gilman Scholarship and some other ones I got from here in town, which is the Mary's Catholic Church. I just thought that it was great that they were doing all they could to help, (...) they understand that for some people, it's harder for them, and they want to give everybody the opportunity to go and explore the world."

Beyond experiencing her own trip in Madrid, Spain in the summer of 2022, Paredes also aids the program through advertising and distributing information to students who may be interested in traveling.

"I want other students who are like me, coming from low-income families, to know that they



can do it as well,” Paredes said. “There’s so much out there that not a lot of people know about, and I was one of those students; I didn’t think it was possible, but with the Trio club and the

“I want other students who are like me, coming from low-income families, to know that they can do it as well,” Paredes said.

International Studies and everything, they truly helped me.”

As an ambassador for the program, Paredes visits different living groups and classrooms on campus to present information and answer questions that students may have about studying abroad. She also aids with info

sessions, meetings, and recently, the virtual Study Abroad Fair held for curious students.

For her trip, Paredes chose Spain to complement her Spanish minor and learn more about a language she already has a fair amount of experience with growing up. Travel itinerary, costs, and precautions were handled by the program and herself to

make sure the trip was as safe and guided as possible. With so much to see, making the most of the trip was certainly a priority.

“We actually got to see two different sides of Spain. We got to see the center of the city of Spain where it’s just the local people walking from day to night. We

(also) went to Seville, which is more slow pace and more (of a) town community,” Paredes said. “We actually got to go biking around Seville during the day, so it wasn’t too hot. I’m a very outdoorsy person, so that was just one of my favorite parts, bike riding.”

As for organizing the trip, this particular program is in collaboration with a history course, with future plans to switch locations from Madrid to Barcelona every other year. A large portion of the trip focuses on exploring historical sites, museums, and more that directly relate to the class’s learning objectives. Students take on academic research projects during the trip to present at the end, working on them throughout their time abroad. For Paredes’ major, she focused her project on Spain’s economy as it relates to the tourism industry.



“You will have so many new opportunities and grow in a plethora of ways that you didn’t even know about.”

PHOTOS COURTESY OF GRACE ERTEL

Grace Ertel, a senior double-majoring in psychology and filmmaking, had her travel experience at the national level as a junior at UI. Originally from Cambridge, ID, holding a population of all but 360 people, Ertel was eager to see the world from a young age. However, while discussing affordability and necessary credits for her degree with her adviser, she eventually decided to do domestic travel rather than an abroad experience, equally as exciting for someone looking to travel during their undergraduate education, but is not certain they can achieve an international trip.

In the spring of 2022, Ertel traveled to St. Croix in the Virgin Islands, a territory of the U.S., and by definition, domestic travel.

Ertel’s trip lasted from Jan. 3 to May 7, allowing her to spend 175,200 minutes abroad, engaging in fire-dancing, scuba diving, snorkeling, and more.

“There are so many opportunities I wouldn’t even have known existed,” Ertel said.

In collaboration with universities in the area, Ertel stayed at St. Thomas’s campus during her time in St. Croix, rather than with a host family.

Once again, expenses, itin-

erary and transportation was organized in collaboration with the International Programs office’s National Student Exchange for domestic and national travel.

Ertel also holds an ambassador position with her travel program, aiding her interest in travel industry promotion.

“I started getting involved with (being an) ambassador while I was abroad (...) to send in photos and videos and stuff, and then really applied over the summer and got the position this fall semester,” Ertel said. Similar to Mildred, Ertel also presents in different classrooms and living groups on



campus, informing students about the program and discussing her travel experience, promoting the trips and resources available.

As for advice for students looking to travel, Ertel passionately encourages students to give it a try, “You will have so many new opportunities and grow in a plethora of ways that you didn’t even know about. I really think anyone can make it work with their major or financial situation,” Ertel said. “There are over 500 institutions between study abroad and the National Student Exchange, so I think there’s one for everyone.”

In the first semester of her fifth year, Ertel hopes to travel internationally to Thailand, which is sure to be a world of difference from her experience in St. Croix.





Olivia Adams is a junior double-majoring in international studies and political science, minoring in Spanish.

Hailing from Coeur D'Alene, ID, Adams has been interested and involved with the Abroad program since her freshman year of college. During her second semester of her first year, she was hired for a work study at the International Program's office, creating a deeper interest in her potential with the program. This is her third consecutive year working with the office at UI.

In the summer of 2022, Adams went on the European Politics Experience trip to Germany, organized by the office. According to Adams, for the first initial weeks, the group traveled to Berlin, Regensburg, and Munich in Germany.

"Although we did have a handful of lectures for the classes, the majority of the time was spent through field excursions. These excursions included a trip to the German Parliament -- the Bundestag -- visits to

"Take advantage of all the options UI has to offer and go see the world," Adams noted.

German think tanks, a tour of a cooperative housing facility, and tours of Germany's public transportation systems," Adams stated in an email. "We also had lectures at the University of Regensburg with German students studying North American studies.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF OLIVIA ADAMS

Thanks to careful planning by Dr. Florian Justwan and Dr. Markie McBrayer, we were able to fit in all of these incredible experiences during the summer trip. Weekends were free for independent exploring during which I was able to meet other traveling students from around the world.”

According to Adams, there were many opportunities for scholarships that helped pay for the trip’s expenses.

“UI offers international experience grants for students looking to travel abroad, and this grant can apply to summer study abroad sessions. Overall, I am so thankful to have had the opportunity to participate in this program because I was able to participate in experiences, such as visiting the German Parliament that

I would not have been able to plan and organize independently,” Adams stated.

Due to having such a positive experience with UI’s study abroad programs, Adams has also decided to spend Spring Semester 2023 in Alicante, Spain, continuing her legacy of travel with the office.

“For anyone who has even the slightest interest in studying abroad, do it! Traveling abroad is such an eye-opening, unforgettable experience. Take advantage of all the options UI has to offer and go see the world,” Adams noted.

For more information, students can contact the International Programs office through the University of Idaho’s website.

REGENSBURG, GERMANY



**ENGLISH GARDEN
MUNICH, GERMANY**

**THE BUNDESTAG BUILDING
BERLIN, GERMANY**



BERLIN, GERMANY



BERLIN, GERMANY



POTSDAM, GERMANY



In the Air of Elsewhere

Traveling and the art of learning how to breathe

Story By **DAKOTA BROWN**

Photos By **DAKOTA BROWN**

Design By **GENESIS CORTEZ**

I think I have finally found a cure for depression—the big sad, the nope zone. Obviously, this cannot be a catch-all. It is not foolproof, but it is something I have never truly appreciated before.

Good air.

I grew up in Lewiston—home of the sweet, pungent smell of the paper mill. It's even worse in the summer when the fires start circling around us. The Lewis-Clark Valley is an inverted dome. When we catch a spark, the smoke seals us in—separates us from the rest of the world. We have become accustomed to breathing in bad air. So much so, that those who grew up here probably wouldn't know anything better unless they had the privilege to be able to leave.

The first thing I noticed upon our arrival in Europe is that people do not smile a lot here. It's a tell-tale sign to the locals that you are an American. You are a visitor. Another tell-tale sign is ordering an iced coffee or a cappuccino after 10 a.m.



DOLOMITE MOUNTAINS, NORTHEAST ITALY

That is weird. Do not do it.

My grandma and I picked up our luggage and met my uncle at the airport. For the next seven hours or so, we wavered in and out of sleep on our way to the Italian Dolomites. We spent two nights at a small bed and breakfast in the middle of the mountains. During the first night, I made a comment to my family about how the setting reminded me of a fantasy book series I had been reading. After a quick search, I realized that the landscape of the fictional ‘city of stars’ in these stories was actually based on the appearance of the Alps.

It was enchanting.

I sat on our balcony and looked out at the sky. My body had yet to acclimate to our new sleeping schedule. Everyone else was tired from our journey, but my mind was focused on the castles we had passed to get here, the glacial blue water, and the beautiful dark forests. This land was a fairy tale rebuilding itself. A place that had fallen apart and over thousands of years—was growing into something new. Europe is stained with a colorful history, to say the least, but my moment alone looking out at the night sky told me a new story. It was titled—

How to Breathe.

“Europe is stained with a colorful history, to say the least, but my moment alone looking out at the night sky told me a new story.”

On our second day, we explored the dolomites. Grandma took photos of the pygmy goats trying to steal our Prosecco, our family draped against the home of yetis, giants, snow elves, and any other creature I had become attached to during Thursday night D&D sessions. She snapped shots of everything.

We traversed back through the rolling green hills of Austria, stopping only to experience shopping in a local grocery store and snacking at a small café—where I was reminded again that in the afternoon, macchiatos are the way to go. Germany was another four hours away. When we arrived, we rested a night before hopping on a train in Kaiserslautern headed to Paris. It was different from what I had imagined.

Of course, I knew it was big, but I do not think that my brain had fully comprehended just how huge and intricate the buildings would be. I felt like a small bean standing next to the Eiffel Tower. Hundreds of tourists sat on blankets with little metal trinkets to remind them of the day they were able to sit and see the most distinctive symbol of the city.

We wandered around the streets, stumbling upon the world's tastiest macarons at Ladurée. I bought three boxes. Others say this is a self-control issue, I say, when in Páree. We perused the Shakespeare and Company Bookstore, my own personal heaven. I spent over an hour gliding into room after room filled up to the ceiling with books. At the end of it, I had a stack of maybe a dozen stories piled in my hands—and they stamped each one of them for me at checkout.

On our second day in Paris, we found ourselves at the entrance of the Musée d'Orsay. My aunt and grandma told me to stand by them as we moved through the exhibits, but I found it easy to lose myself in the building. What can I say? I am a really good wanderer. We had these headphones and media devices that let us type in the number of certain images in the museum to hear about their history. I think I played the recording for Dante and Virgil half a dozen times before they found me. For those unfamiliar, this is an 1850 painting done by William-Adolphe Bouguereau, depicting the divine comedy of Dante journeying his way through hell. It was my favorite one in the entire building, and I found it interesting that my second favorite—which was in an entirely separate section of the museum, was also partially inspired by this story. *L'Enigme*, or, *The Riddle*, by Gustave Doré.



**WILLIAM ADOLPHE BOUGUEREAU,
DANTE AND VIRGIL (1850)**

My grandma preferred the lighter, more scenic paintings. The ones less focused on making a statement about history and more arranged to strike their viewers with simple beauty. On the upper floors, we witnessed a herd of cattle-like people sticking arms out in front of each other to capture a personal photograph of the Monets and the Van Goghs.

It was harder to breathe again. I spent maybe six seconds in front of *The Starry Night* before needing to ply myself away from the crowd and into a nice corner with hardly any others. The older I get, the harder it is for me to be in loud places.

Last year, my body hosted a bilateral ear infection. For months after the rupture of my right ear, I could barely hear anything. I notified all my professors, who were kind enough to either let me sit obnoxiously close to the front or graciously turned on the closed captioning for me to read during lectures. Half the time I felt like I was underwater.

“What can I say? I am a really good wanderer.”

I have always had issues with my ears. In my lifetime, I have had over four sets of tubes, at least a dozen ear infections, and ruptures. My friends and I make jokes about my hearing loss, it comes and it goes based on how frequently I have been swimming or traveling. Any change in air pressure is a risk. I sometimes can't even touch the bottom of a pool without falling apart.

This has had an impact on most if not all of my traveling experiences. It is now a routine to buy a pack of mint gum, non-drowsy flavored Dramamine (the original instantly makes me sick, don't ask me why; I do not know), and earbuds before hopping on any flight. Similarly, being around large groups of people has this nauseating effect. Of course, it is for different reasons.



PARIS, FRANCE

Where were we? Ah yes, the Monets and the Van Goghs. They were exquisite, but that is contingent on if you are a connoisseur of the arts. If you do not have a lot of love in your heart for paintings, sculptures, architecture, and the like—Paris might not be for you. It is a place infected by romance even in design—the very railings of each building are curled with care and invite warm intentions.

When we boarded the train to reach our home base in Germany, I told myself I would return again one day. Maybe after the apocalypse ensues and there are fewer people to run into.

I am mostly kidding.

We arrived at my aunt and uncle's house in Queidersbach, a small village encased by lush greenery. It was my cousin's homecoming week—and her dress was beautiful. A long viridian gown dotted with small sparkles; a human-fashioned dark forest.

I got the opportunity to meet her date and his family at the school football game, and I was reminded how much I hate watching football unless I am on the field with a camera. My uncle and aunt are very active in the booster club at the school—so grandma and I braved the cold for a bit on the bleachers before retreating to the inside of a pickup at halftime.

A tip for when you travel, you will likely not have access to your phone data if you are from the United States. I recommend you become an avid book reader or download things accordingly.



Earlier in the week, my family set up a chance for me to talk with the staff at Kaiserslautern High School. I was able to speak with a wonderful AP English teacher, the principal, and the vice. KHS is a DoDEA school. This program (DoDEA) employs some of the best educators to work with military families across the globe. Needless to say, I was nervous about talking with these people. It is one of the dream placements for someone who loves education. Kelly, the English teacher I spoke with—graciously allowed me to watch part of her class while visiting. She introduced me to thematic study, which, funny enough, we are covering currently in my Secondary English Methods class at the University of Idaho. She gave me insight into her journey to becoming a DoDEA teacher, and some valuable advice to consider for my next steps after graduation.

“Find the place where it is easier to breathe.”

If you have anxiety, you know that without a plan—life occasionally feels daunting. I am not a good vacationist. Most of my time in high school and college has been scheduled away into any activity other than free time. I have always felt that without a plan, a goal, or a purpose, there is no need for myself or others.

Free time has been the enemy, always.

If you could imagine, think of a small bedroom rising with smoke. As each moment passes without a plan of action, a resolution, a conclusion, or some semblance of a solution it gets harder and harder to breathe. Living in a town where smoke is ever-present both metaphorically and physically affects you in ways nobody imagines until they are older.

I am learning to love vacations.

After returning from Europe—I quit one of my jobs and scaled back on activities significantly. I have decided that I need to devote more time to myself. Maybe read a little bit more for fun, not have to choose between sleep and homework, and get back to the basics. I think I have conditioned myself to need a high-stress environment and frankly, that’s not good for anyone. I, fortunately, could afford a break for myself because I worked so much over the past few years. If you are not in the same position, look at the other areas of your life you might be able to fall back from, even if only for a moment.

So please if you take anything away from this story let it be this—

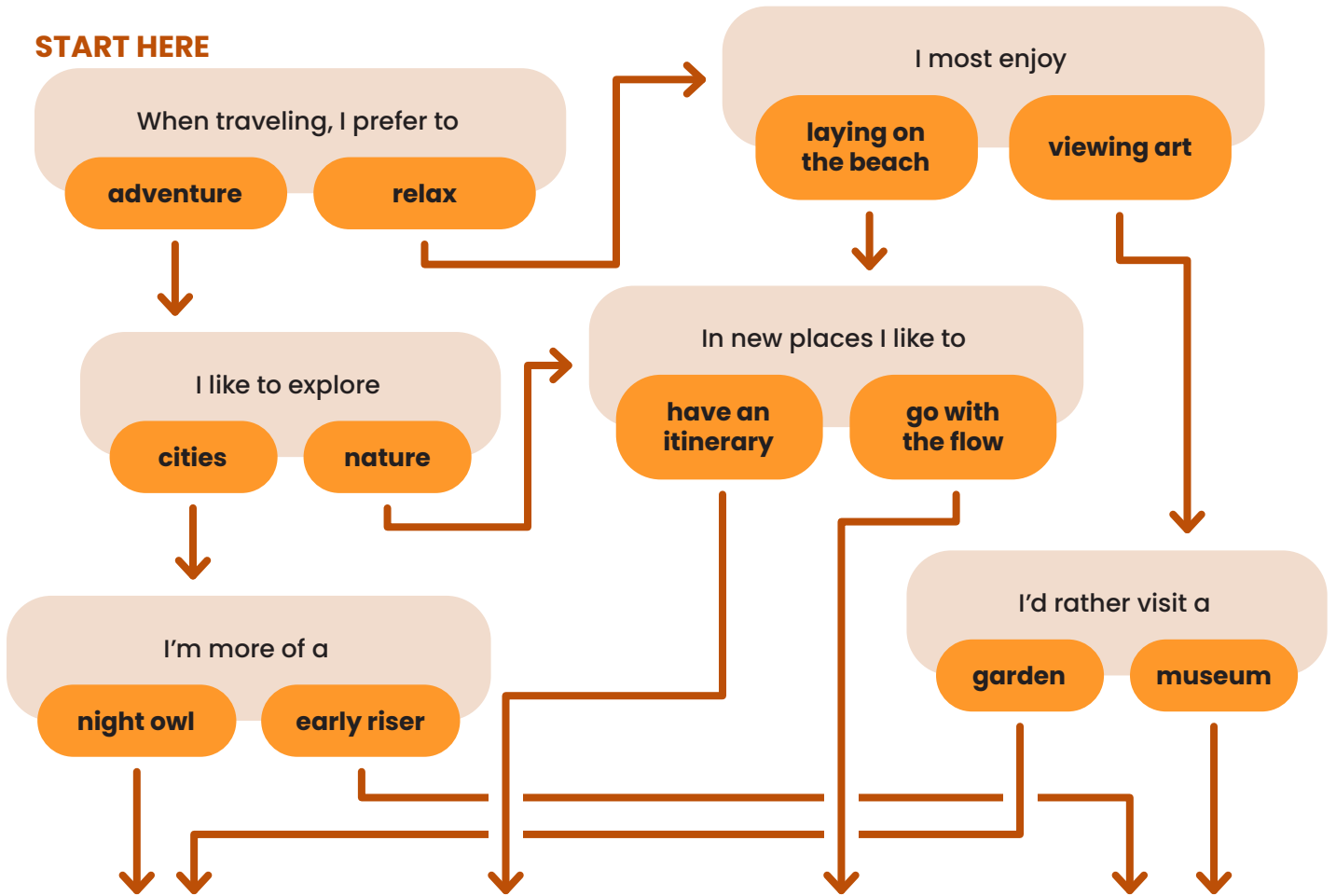
Find your place of peace—whether it is in your own backyard or somewhere in the alps. Maybe it’s floating down the Snake River or exploring the Spokane Valley Mall. It could look like a spa day or a rock concert.

Find the place where it is easier to breathe.

Which Travel Destination Suits You Best?

Take this quiz to find out!

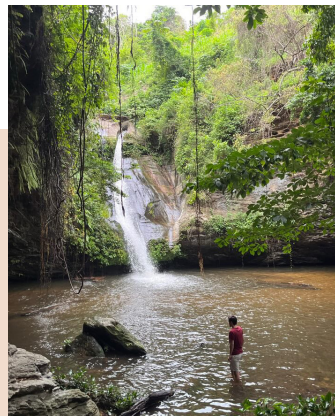
Quiz and Design By **GIA MAZZARELLA**



South Korea

This country of rich Asian culture has so much to offer. Visit a peaceful garden or enjoy the nightlife in the city.

PHOTO COURTESY OF NATALIE MESPLAY



Togo

There is no shortage of things to do in Togo. Hike to a waterfall, relax on the beach, or explore local villages.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MARSHALL MCMILLAN



U.S. Virgin Islands

Your next adventure lies in this Caribbean paradise. Go snorkeling, hike through nature, or lay on the beach.

PHOTO COURTESY OF GRACE ERTEL



Italy

You will never run out of things to enjoy in the country of Italy. Spend the day shopping, viewing historic sites, or, of course, eating!

PHOTO COURTESY OF OLIVIA ADAMS



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