



Studying Abroad: The myths debunked

MONEESHA R KALAMDER

I'm a big nerd, I like to do my research and prepare for whatever is coming my way. I was fairly confident that I was ready as I travelled to faraway lands to get my undergrad degree. Alas, I soon realised my confidence was misplaced as my beliefs began to shatter.

DINING OUT

I had a limited budget like most students, so I wasn't expecting gourmet food three times a day. However, I had been led to believe that I would have a variety of cuisines to choose from, a departure from the regular Bengali food I had grown up eating every day. Dun dun dun, the biggest difference between the food I had at home and the food I had at university was that food at home actually tasted like food, and here I was stuck eating sandwiches that tasted like paper, I kid you not. I know what paper tastes like because I had actually chewed paper once to find

out how it tasted, it tasted like the sandwiches around here.

After a few weeks of cheap sandwiches however, you discover some shawarma place that you can actually afford. As a bonus, the shawarma tastes great. As a bigger bonus, you end up with constipation because you had too much meat and not enough veggies.

FREE TIME

You think you'll use your free time to party, go clubbing, and maybe travel. None of that is true. Most of your free time will be spent doing chores. It's like a wormhole that you get sucked into. You start vacuuming your carpet after getting up on a Saturday morning and suddenly it's Monday. But then the Monday doesn't seem to end.

AESTHETIC SURROUNDINGS

Did you let Instagram posts from your elders fool you into believing that all campuses are beautiful? There's probably one place on the entire campus that's pretty so

everyone is taking photos from different angles of the same place. The small university town you live in will be very ugly for most of the year, so you'll end up taking all your photos during short-lived summer months then post them throughout the year to fool everyone you left behind.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

It is undeniably great compared to public buses we have in Bangladesh, but nothing would ever compare to rickshaws. Especially if you don't live in a huge metropolitan city, it takes you eons to get anywhere because bus routes are so labyrinthine. And if it's a distance which would normally take you BDT 20 on a rickshaw, you're probably walking. There's just no other viable option. It's cold, it's hot, it's raining, you're walking, you're crying.

PEOPLE COMPLIMENTING YOUR ENGLISH

I've heard it. You've heard it. You go to an English speaking land, natives of said

country are surprised at how good your English is. "Oh my God! Your English is flawless! How did you achieve such levels of perfection?" they ask. "Colonialism," you answer. Everyone claps.

What I wasn't expecting, however, was another Bangladeshi international student complimenting me on my English because apparently it's so good he couldn't tell I went to a Bangla medium school. Thanks, I guess? Also, no one cares about your accent except deeply elitist teens with colonised minds from your homeland.

Now that I've shared my hard-earned wisdom, I hope you'll be slightly less shocked when you arrive in these fabled lands yourself.

Moneesha R Kalamder is a former Hogwarts student and celebrity Quidditch player. She is looking to live a quiet life in the Muggle world but struggling to find her place. You can talk to her about magic and other things at mkalamder9.75@gmail.com

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