

Gabe Wilson's Semester in New Zealand

For about 5 months I decided to leave all that was familiar to me, in order to experience a once in a lifetime opportunity to study abroad at Otago University in New Zealand. I am so glad that I did. I had always wanted to study abroad, but after my sophomore year I thought to myself there was no way it was going to happen. All of my friends who had previously studied abroad or planned to were either business, or foreign language major/minors. Universities and the various programs they could attend were abundant, but in my research there were almost none for Food Science majors like myself. One day in class Dr. Golden mentioned studying Food Science abroad in New Zealand. I was sold when I heard of the idea.

February 14th

I arrived in Auckland, NZ. I had been told that most of New Zealand's population lived on the north island, but I had no idea how big Auckland actually was. I checked in my hostel and took off to the streets, doing what a tourist does best. The city was huge, but surprisingly very clean. Some nice couple on the plane had previously told me about a place called Mt. Eden which was an old volcano that looks over all of Auckland. After I did the whole city thing (big cities are not really my thing) I headed out to see the grand view from Mt. Eden. It was amazing. While I was up there I watched a storm roll in and back out to the sea. It was a great start to my journey.



March 31st

This past weekend some friends and I decided to rent a car and drive to Wanaka, NZ; a small town that thrives in the winter as a ski town. We set our tents and hammocks up at a Department of Conservation campground and headed to hike Rob's Peak. The hike was about 3 hours all uphill switchback after switchback, and very tiring, but definitely worth every ache. As we reached the summit, we were all taken aback from the outstanding view- by far the best view I have ever hiked (tramped as the kiwis call it) to. From the top we saw a 360 degree view and every direction was as beautiful as the next. The next day we hiked to see Rob Roy glacier. The rain was pouring the



entire hike, but we didn't care. It actually made the hike more enjoyable, despite us being soaked to the bone! Because of the rain, the cliffs below the glacier were covered with, no kidding, about 100 waterfalls. It looked like a scene from the movie Avatar. To finish the trip, we got some fish and chips and my friend, Evan, and I jumped into a freezing lake, because we had lost a bet. That weekend was probably the best weekend I had in NZ.

April 21st

Some climbing buddies and I spent the past weekend at Castle Hill, which is one of the world's best places to go bouldering. We had always heard of Castle Hill and seen it in videos, but I never thought I would actually climb there. When we walked up to the boulders one of my buds said, "This is a climber's Disney World." I couldn't agree more. The place was unbelievable! We spent three days climbing at Castle Hill and met some really nice locals who showed us around, telling us the best problems to climb. I am no geologist, but Castle Hill has to be one of the coolest rock formations on the planet.



May 19th



May 16th-19th a group of my friends and I took a weekend getaway trip to Queenstown, NZ. Queenstown is considered to be the outdoor's capital of the world, and it deserves every bit of that title. The town is a water sports/ mountain biking community during the summer and a winter wonderland during the snow season. The first thing we did when we got there was ride the gondola up to see the view of Queenstown from above (an absolute stunning view). That night we went on bar crawl and visited the Minus 5 Ice Bar, which was very cool (pun intended). Although we did not mountain bike while we were there, we did play a fun game of Frisbee golf on the peninsula and got to enjoy

the sunset above the Southern Alps.

By the way, I did attend Otago University and took four classes: Food Chemistry, Food Policy, Food Marketing, and Food Processing and Technology II, all of which will count toward my food science

degree. Of the four courses, I enjoyed Food Processing the most. We discussed many interesting technologies and newer methods to process foods, including Pulse Electric Field, Ohmic Heating, High Pressure Processing, UV and many more. At first it was semi difficult to understand the professors and peers, but after about a month I too was joining in on the NZ slang. The classes were weighed differently in terms of final exams, for example my Food Chemistry Final was worth 70% of my grade. Otago University has a fantastic Food Science and Technology program. My experience overall was awesome! Life changing, and I enjoyed every minute of it. I would absolutely recommend a semester at Otago in New Zealand.