**Living Abroad in Paris as a Student**

Vicki Fletcher

**1** Arriving in Paris, most foreigners dream of living the Parisian life and blending into the local crowd: sipping bad coffee, smoking strong cigarettes, complaining about anything and everything in perfect slang French. Paris is the city of dreams; the city of lights; the city of love — a city of clichés for a reason. But it’s not all quaint passageways and luring Frenchmen. If you are thinking of heading to Paris for a study period, then perhaps a little reality check is in order. But what the hell, my experience was — despite a few low points involving grades, red wine, and dirty kitchens — a romantic one.

**2** I paved my path to Paris through an exchange program with the Australian National University. In Canberra I study linguistics, majoring in French and Spanish, which lead to my language exchange for one semester at Sciences Po University on Paris’ left bank. The application process was a lengthy one. First I was required to complete an application for the Australian National University, and then another for Sciences Po. Once accepted, and having survived the intense online course registration at 3 a.m. my local time, I was on my way across the globe.

**3** On arrival in Paris I was constantly reminded of the ever-present bureaucratic processes I was required to complete. Forms to be filled in, meetings to attend, bank accounts to open, the list seemed endless. Perhaps it was due to my slightly obsessive organizational habits, perhaps it was because I was expecting the worst, but somehow this endless list of to-do’s was completed in little more than a week. There was one glitch in this smooth sailing though — the medical check-up I was required to attend in order to obtain my *Carte de Séjour* (residency permit). This didn’t take place until a good two months into my stay. I was still one of the lucky ones it would seem, some other students were not called for the appointment until a mere month before they returned home!

**4** Then the real work began.

**5** Once classes were underway, I found myself volunteering to do oral presentations and assignments first, rather than last. This tactic turned out to be very helpful because:

* 1. I was fresh and keen at the start of the semester when I was pumping out most of my work.
  2. By the time mid-semester exams came around I had plenty of time to study.
  3. When everyone else was panicking at the end of the semester, I could frolic around the city in the warm spring sunshine.

**6** Once I had finished class for the week, I had an ever-increasing list of museums to visit, neighborhoods to explore, cafes to sit in, parks to run around, and bars to frequent. Read as many books about Paris as you can. Talk to as many locals and other foreigners living there as you can. You will soon realize that everyone has different experiences and different favorite places in the city, which in turn provides you with a plethora of new places to discover.

**7** The one thing that reading a book or talking to someone cannot do is to provide you with the experience of wandering Paris by foot. I cannot explain the serene moments I had walking to school each day along the river, or aimlessly winding through narrow streets lined with bookshops and galleries. I discovered some of my favorite places in Paris by wandering. The people watching, the sounds of the city, the colors as the seasons change, they all add to the ecstasy that is experiencing Paris as a local — a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for most students.

**8** After spending five months frolicking through the enchanting neighborhoods, I fell in love with the atmosphere that oozed from every open door, and with every spoken word. There is something comforting about walking to the market each Sunday to be faced with the most vibrant array of fruits, vegetables and dairy products imaginable. There is warmth in saying *bonjour* to the man across the hall. There is calm in returning home from a day out in the city and looking out the window at the timeless cityscape. There really is something special about living in Paris, and getting to know places you know you would never have discovered as a tourist. Yet there is also excitement in knowing that you will never truly know Paris, there will be something new to see, something you never knew existed before.

**9** On my last day in Paris, I confidently said, “*Bonjour Monsieur*,” as I passed the little store down the street, constantly overflowing with dusty vegetables and overripe fruit. “*Bonjour Mademoiselle! C’est notre petite touriste*,” he bellowed back from behind a crate of cereal boxes. I guess no matter how hard I tried I was always going to be an outsider, a tourist. Only now, I could understand what was being said to me.

**10** The best part about going on exchange in Paris is falling in love with the city in your own unique way. Everyone’s experience of Paris is different. I know mine is unique and special to me, my own little pieces of Paris.

**留学巴黎**

薇琪·弗莱彻

1 绝大多数外国人一到巴黎就想和本地人打成一片，过上巴黎式的生活：抿着难喝的咖啡，抽着带劲的香烟，用地道的法式俚语抱怨生活。巴黎是梦想之都，霓虹之都，爱恋之都，一座拥有各种耳熟能详的美名的城市。但是，古雅的廊道和魅惑的法国人并不是这座城市的全部。如果准备去巴黎留学，或许你应该脚踏实地一点。不过，尽管也会为学习成绩、红酒和脏乱的厨房发愁，我的巴黎留学之旅还是可以用浪漫一词来总结。

2 我是通过澳大利亚国立大学的交流项目去巴黎留学的。在堪培拉，我的专业是语言学，主修法语和西班牙语。藉此，位于巴黎左岸的巴黎政治大学同意我前往进行为期一学期的语言学习。整个申请过程无比漫长。先是澳大利亚国立大学的申请，再是巴黎政治大学的申请。直到申请获批，并赶在半夜三点完成了繁琐的在线课程注册之后，我终于踏上了横跨地球的留学之旅。

3 一到巴黎就有人不断地提醒我要注意那些一成不变的繁琐程序：填写表格、参加会议、去银行开账户，好像没完没了。但也许是缘于我有点组织计划强迫症，又或许是我已经做好了最坏的打算，总之八九天之后诸多该办的事就办完了。只有一件办得不是那么顺利：要拿到居住许可证必须做一个身体检查，可是直到我在巴黎待了足足两个月后，这个检查才安排下来。不过我还算是幸运的，有些学生直到离开前的一个月才拿到检查的预约通知！

4 这之后真正的留学生活就开始了。

5 开始上课之后，我主动要求第一个完成课堂展示和其他作业，而不是把这些留到最后。事实证明我的这个小策略很有用。这是因为：

* 1. 把大部分学习任务放到开学阶段，我能精力充沛、满怀热情地投入其中。
  2. 等到期中考试的时候我有足够的时间复习功课。
  3. 学期快结束的时候其他人诚惶诚恐，而我可以在城市四处闲逛，享受春天和煦的阳光。

6 每周学习之余，我有看不尽的博物馆，逛不尽的街区，吃不尽的餐馆，游不尽的公园和泡不尽的酒吧。在巴黎，你应该尽量多阅读关于这座城市的书籍，多和本地人还有外来客交谈。每个人都有着不一样的经历，各自喜欢的去处也不尽相同。这样一来，很快你就会发现，等着你去发掘的好地方简直数不胜数。

7 有一种东西是阅读和交谈中无法获得的——漫步巴黎街头的感觉。每天当我沿着河岸走向学校，抑或在布满各类书店和画廊的小街上漫无目的地闲逛时，时光未央，岁月静好，其美妙之处无以言表。游走于巴黎街头，我发现了一些心向往之的地方。观光的人群，城市的喧嚣，随着季节变化的斑斓色彩，这一切的一切让我愈发真切地体验到了巴黎本地人才会有的如醉如痴。而对大多数留学生来说，这真是人生难得几回有。

8 巴黎的街头令人流连忘返，漫步其中，轻松愉快，就这样过了五个月后，我爱上了这里每扇门里飘出来的气息，每句话中传递的神韵。每次周日去市场，看到琳琅满目、鲜嫩诱人的瓜果蔬菜和应有尽有的乳制品，我都心情舒畅。每次和门厅里的人道声早安，我都倍感温暖。每次外出一天，回到家中看到窗外恒久美好的城市风光，我都心绪宁静。生活在巴黎是那么的特别，你会慢慢发现那些游人体会不到的妙处。然而，你将发现你永远不可能真正地了解巴黎：这里有太多你从未见过甚至从未知晓的事物，不过，这个发现也足以让人雀跃不已。

9 那是我留在巴黎的最后一天，当我路过街边的那个小店，那个永远摆着脏兮兮的蔬菜和熟过了头的水果的小店时，我信心满满地用法语向店主打了个招呼：“先生，您好！”“我的游客小姐，您好！”他站在装满了麦片圈的箱子后面大声地回应着我。原来，不管我怎么努力，对于巴黎来说我依然只是个外来客。直到这个时刻，我才真正明白了他为何如此回应。

10 在巴黎交流学习最棒的地方就是你会以自己的方式爱上这座城市。每个人在巴黎的感受都不一样。在我的心里留下的是属于我的、独一无二的巴黎的记忆。