

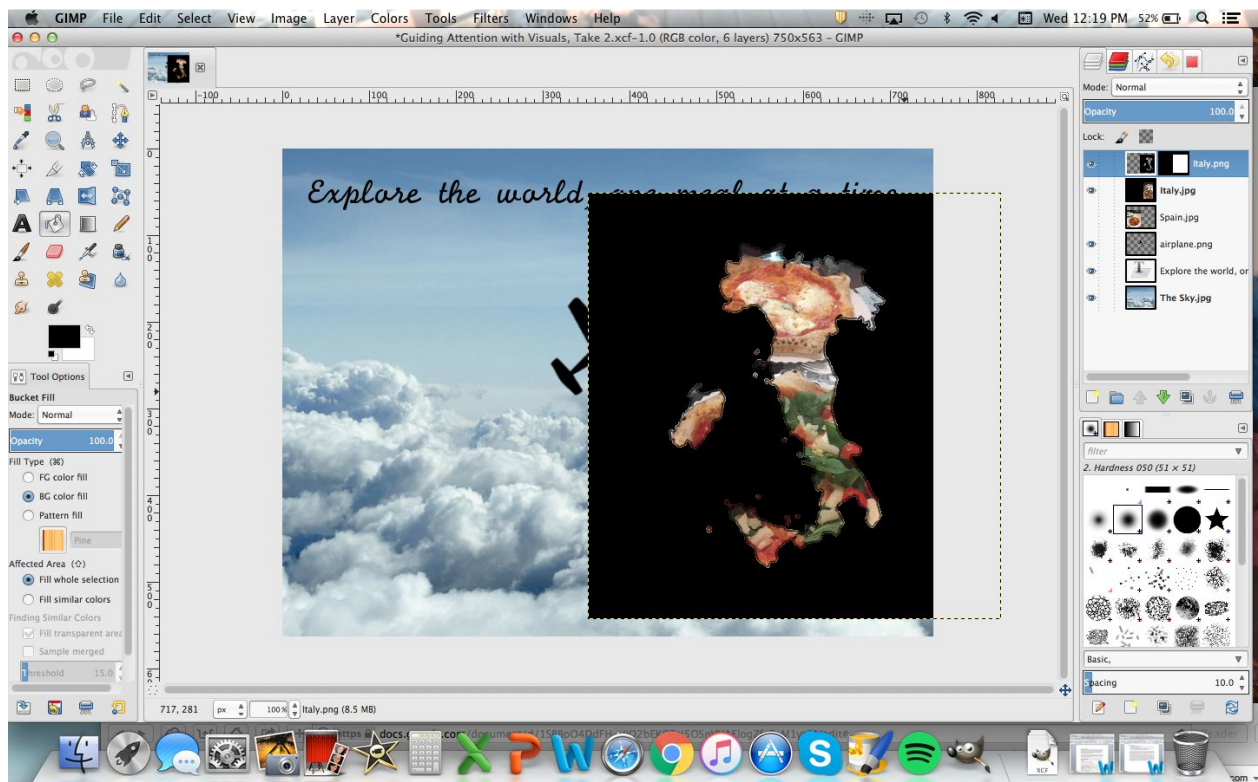
To begin, I will discuss my project in its visual entirety. My goal is to guide attention to the idea of traveling the world and exploring different cultures through food. Last spring semester, I studied abroad in Madrid, Spain, and within the five months I spent in Europe, I ate some of the best food of my life—while also learning a thing or two about various cities and their cultural history. In class, I wrote that realistically speaking, my personal aspirations for this project are to learn how to use GIMP on a beginner level and confidently edit or modify images in an appealing, attention-grabbing way. Our baseline criteria are good, because it works for both beginners and experienced GIMPers. After many drafts that I committed to GitHub and many hours trying to figure out the different settings in GIMP, I finally completed an acceptable product that features a sky background, an airplane, the outlines of Spain and Italy that I found on Google Images after using the tool “labeled for reuse with modification” in order to ensure the pictures are of fair use, my own personal pictures of patatas bravas (Spain) and pizza (Italy), and some text layers. However, I knew I could do more, so I used the aspirational criteria when I saturated and de-brightened the sky so it would not pop out so much, included “University of Pittsburgh Study Abroad Spring 2018” to target a specific audience, and changed around my text so it would be more interesting to students deciding whether study abroad is right for them.

I won’t lie, my first attempts at using GIMP and GitHub were anything but a breeze. Whether it was my uncooperative computer software that will not allow various commands on GitHub to occur or my initial inability to even download GIMP, technology is not always my best friend. Yet on a more positive note, I can say I successfully completed the “Guiding Attention With Visuals” project. This was my first time using any sort of photo-editing software (unless we count Instagram/editing apps on an iPhone), so I had a lot to learn in a short amount of time. I took to Google, searching for tutorials and other resources every time I could not figure out how to do something to an image in my design. Google often led me to videos on YouTube composed by avid GIMPers seeking to educate others, and the GIMP website itself contained great tools for both beginners and the more advanced. Seeing as this was my first time using GIMP and GitHub, everything I learned was new, but the most important and rewarding tricks I discovered include the following. In my first draft, I uploaded (in layers, of course) a map of Europe and various food pictures I took during my travels in different European countries. My goal here was to make the chosen countries transparent and in their place, insert one of my food pictures. During this process, I learned how to cut each country around their black outline—aka go to layer, transparency, alpha channel, right click to clear, add food.

Then I would hide the map to rescale the food layer in the approximate shape of the country. Finally, I clicked tools, select for cutting. After all of this, I decided this draft was too clumped and hard to understand, so I moved onto arranging and editing my final.

In reference to design choices made in creating the final visual, for my final draft, I had a big idea but little clue how to follow through. Inputting the sky background and airplane and other simple things was easy, because I had been practicing that for about two weeks—what I found most challenging was fitting the Spain and Italy food pictures to their respective outlined country. I really wanted to highlight these two countries because they were my personal favorites to visit, and I had the best quality food pictures to include for them. I also thought it would be cool to use their outlines, insert the food picture into them, and have an airplane flying between them to indicate “exploring the world” as one does while they study abroad. For help on my design strategies, I attended office hours where I learned all about inverse selection, outlining specific objects to make them stand out, correct layer-masking techniques, the fuzzy select magic wand tool and—most importantly—the value of patience. Though I may never be an expert at photo editing, I now have the ability to put what I am slowly learning into practice and creating a successful project at my own standards. I took this office hour session to heart and continued to experiment on GIMP, taking my final draft further to meet certain aspirational criteria as mentioned previously.

*Example of layer masking in an older draft:*



## Works Cited

The sky. Digital Image. Web. 17 September 2017,

<[https://static.planetminecraft.com/files/resource\\_media/screenshot/1518/background-video-poster8876651\\_lrg.jpg](https://static.planetminecraft.com/files/resource_media/screenshot/1518/background-video-poster8876651_lrg.jpg)>

Spain outline. Digital Image. Web. 17 September 2017,

<[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/2/23/Blank\\_Spain\\_Map\\_%28Provinces%29.svg/800px-Blank\\_Spain\\_Map\\_%28Provinces%29.svg.png](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/2/23/Blank_Spain_Map_%28Provinces%29.svg/800px-Blank_Spain_Map_%28Provinces%29.svg.png)>

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My own food pictures- patatas bravas in Spain, pizza in Italy