

Spring Break Solace
By Genevieve Vahl

Spring break is the time of year that companies and resorts look forward to. Like Valentine's Day, spring break has become another capitalistic holiday season companies can exploit travelers far and wide. As long as there is time-off and a destination, the act of spring break-ing will prevail.

Rightfully so, most students look forward to spring break. A quick relief from the semester, a chance to travel somewhere, a time to relax. I always await spring break with great anticipation. My break was spent seeking solace away from the dreadful Midwest winter. Even if it meant going out west to the mountains, at least there is real snow and skiing. I was privileged enough to always have an opportunity to get away for spring break. I never considered just staying at home for break, until this year.

This semester has given me a new appreciation for my home. I have been worked harder than ever before. Being a full time student, having a job, getting involved in leadership positions, finding internships, researching study abroad, developing your professional persona, all while trying to maintain a relationship and friendships is a feat. Wanting to put 100 percent into each seems almost impossible when all are building intensity as the semester progresses. Work ethics get compromised, shortcuts are taken, and final products do not turn out as well as you hoped when spread so thin. This semester was all of this and more. I honestly have never been more challenged academically, socially and mentally.

By the time spring break came around, I was so exhausted from the semester that traveling seemed like more work than not. I realized going home to my mom in Milwaukee, to lay on my couch and take a breath was really what I needed. I needed to take a step back, time to regroup after the semester of chaos.

I had a hard time coming to terms with this idea initially: *not* wanting to go on a vacation for once. I did not know how to articulate this feeling until I really allowed myself come to terms with not wanting to go anywhere *but* my home. The social pressure of going on a luxurious vacation got to my head before I could listen to what my body and mind really needed.

I am extremely privileged to say that I have the *option* to travel or not. Taking the liberty and self-awareness to know when you just need a break can give spring break a whole new outlet to the ultimate relaxation. Instead of viewing staying at home as mundane, see it as a time for a mental reframe, a meditation for a week. Allowing myself to articulate a taboo liberated the standards I had on spring break. I have learned accepting what is best for myself mentally and physically will bring me most peace, even if that just entails the comfort of my own bed.