

Jenn Crainshaw

Study Abroad in Ghana.

Ghana is a place where you never have a dull moment. Rather if it is hearing mates yell their next destination for trotro's or hearing people sing outside your door, you are always entertained. Ghana is the type of place you go if you want to learn something about yourself. Test your patience, your ability to be independent. Studying abroad in Ghana will leave you with thousands of priceless memories that you will cherish for a lifetime.

I decided to study abroad in Ghana because I have had an interest in Africa for sometime. I had visited South Africa a few years prior to my trip. I love the culture, the people, and the general way of life. I thought Ghana would be a great place to grow, volunteer, travel, and learn. Little did I know the impact Ghana would actually have on my life. I went to Ghana through ISEP, although ISEP was good because it allows you to automatically meet other Americans, which may help with the adaptation process, I am not sure I can honestly say it is the best route to take. Going independently would be an option I would look into looking back at the situation.

The living situation for most International students is living in the international hostel called ISH. It is a community full of international students from all over the world. There are also some Ghanaian students who applied to live in that particular hostel for the cultural experience. ISH was not what we would consider a "nice" place to live in terms of the conditions, the water and electricity goes out periodically. However, if you can overlook the western standards that most people use as a comparison tool you can see the beauty in ISH. There are students all over the world chatting, eating lunch, having water fights, and just enjoying life. I had such a blast just meeting people and making friends. I never minded ISH, honestly it was little nicer than what I expected, but some students had a hard time adjusting to life without air conditioning in 100+ weather.

Classes in Ghana are very different than classes in the US. Most classes are lecture based with one long exam at the end of the semester. However, there are study guides handed out before final exams. Most American students found the classes fairly easy and passed without much of a struggle. African dance and music lessons are popular with the international students, however, are a little tricky for the international students. I took business classes, I felt lost some of the time with math related courses, but in the end I did fine on my exams. If you feel lost other students are more than happy to help you out.

Legon is a suburb of Accra, the capital city in Ghana. It is busy with hundreds of taxi's and trotro flying past you at all times. There are great markets, restaurants, beaches, shops, historical sites, and much more. Getting around by trotro is very cheap. You can go all the way to Togo for about \$4.50. Traveling is easy and safe. Don't be afraid to travel, Ghanaians are very kind and willing to help if you get lost. Some places worth seeing are Elimina Castle, Kumasi, Wli Falls, Axim beach resort, and Green turtle lodge. Also traveling to the surrounding countries is easy, cheap, and a blast!

In terms of packing, you will be told that in class you should bring nice clothes similar to church clothes; however I would not bother with that. Go with clothes that are light weight and comfortable. Boys are fine to wear shorts, t-shirts, and sandals. Girls the same but maybe a tank top or some sort of shirt rather than a plain t-shirt would be perfect. Also, it is easy to get traditional clothes made in Ghana. There is a seamstress at ISH named Jane, she is so sweet and really does a nice job. Expect to pay around 5 Ghana Cedis for a dress if you bring your own material. Just bring clothes that you don't mind ruining and that will be comfortable in very hot weather. Also, bring plenty of bug spray, sun screen, cream for cuts, etc. Toiletries are available but very expensive. Also, some students brought those crystal light packs, everyone was very jealous because sometimes you will get tired of what drinks are available for you there. Also, buy the guide book for Ghana, it was around \$20.00 when I went and well worth it. It saves you a lot of time, money, and stress later on.

Overall I had the time of my life in Ghana. I made the best friends anyone could ever ask for. Volunteered at a beautiful orphanage called BASCO near Tshum, and learned a lot about life. If you decide to study abroad in Ghana you will truly love and cherish the experience. It gives you a different perspective on life and lets you see how most of the world lives.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions regarding studying abroad in Ghana!
jcrainsh@ksu.edu