

Where in the World is Kristi Kelly?

A Girl in Paris: Shopping, Fashion and Food!

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Vive la France. Okay, so I have been here for just over a month, and I have muddled my way through the awkward "tourist" phase, and am now a full-fledged foreign exchange student. I get to be the strange looking new face in a small French university... all shy and "odd looking". That's right. Thrown out of my comforts of good ol' UPEI, I now am taking courses at Groupe ESC (Ecole Superior de Commerce) Sup de Co, Amiens Picardie.

I won't get into the details of how I got here... but let's just say, I wasn't quite sure what France (or Europe for that matter) would throw at me. I mean really though, you see fancy French places and people on television, strutting their beautiful clothes down historic avenues and smoking cigarettes in quaint social cafés right? Bang on! Paris, by far, lives up to its name as one of the "most beautiful cities in the world". Around every corner there are historically elegant buildings, vast museums, symbolically bold statues, and the best of all... shopping!

Sorry to go all girlie, but hello!? Chanel, Louis Vutton (which had like 5 floors), Gucci, Prada, you name it... it can all be found here. Not that I can even afford to look in these places... but still, it is any shopper's fantasy! The best shopping in the world can be found at the Champs D'Elysee which is famous for its blend of variety, high-end, luxury fashions and products. Combined with the "chocolateries" and macaroon shops littering this area – fair warning, do not take

your Visa. Guys dress highly fashionable here (**cough- shoes that click-cough**) and for the ladies - shoes/boots, handbags and jackets are key pieces. Scarves are everywhere and on everyone! Prices are a bitch though. The Euro, as colorful as it is... just doesn't do the Canadian dollar justice. 1 Euro right now is trading 1.45

(approx) to the Canadian dollar, making it worth... about 0.65 cents. Combine this with the fact that everything is priced higher here (and that I have a rare shopping addiction)... I have a feeling that Europe should prove to be expensive. Simple things, like shampoo even (Pantene for instance) is on the

amazing. No wait, I will rephrase that – they are "gastronomique"! There are literally dozens and dozens of "boulangeries" (or bakeries) lining city streets and roadways. It's not uncommon to see line-ups of people, out the shop... waiting for fresh baguettes or gateau to be ready. Each bakery has, displayed in its windows,

restaurant before you choose to try it. "Kabab" – a Greek pita sandwich (that surprising resembles a donair but is made with a "pork like" substance) or pannis (a grilled baguette-like sandwich fille with whatever), can be found in some pretty grimey places, yet offer some of the best (and most affordable) meals.

Grocery shopping here is also an experience. Rule number one, beware of shopping carts, and those who drive them. They don't stop - especially if you are blocking the cheese aisle. You feel like you are in a different world almost, examining shelves full of colorful, exotic boxes and cartons, none of which look familiar, yet all promising various benefits and perks. Majority of the brand names are different. Imagine trying deciding between laundry detergents - when you have never seen any of the brand names before (it makes you realize quite quickly how much we are influenced by the media). Milk here, is sold warm on the shelves... in bottles that look remarkably like bleach containers (which is in fact what I thought it originally was), cheddar cheese cannot be found, and eggs are all brown and never refrigerated. Almost all breakfast cereal seems to incorporate chocolate into it some how (not that I am complaining) and things like nutella and "pain au chocolat" are staple foods for these people. Did I mention they eat horse * shudder *?

Worst of all? No peanut butter, no Kraft Dinner. To make up for this short fall... well, there are multiple aisles of cheap liquor (2 Euro bottles of wine and 4 Euro six-packs) and way too much European chocolate to choose from. Undoubtedly, as you can imagine, I am making some pretty healthy food choices.

Amazing shopping, unlimited supplies of chocolate and cheap liquor... what else could a University girl ask for??? (ummmm, a higher visa limit?)

À la prochaine!



upwards of 7 Euros – in Canadian terms, that's like \$12 – for a bottle of shampoo (which is half the size)!

Now, even more importantly – French food. Though I have learned to stay away from things like "steak tartar" and "roast beef", which came out of the kitchen barely cooked and still bleeding... the desserts here are

some of the most amazing looking flaky pastries, colorful tarts, chocolate dipped-éclairs you can imagine! My question is, how do these people control themselves!?

Note to any travelers: Some of the best food here is found in "hole in the wall" type places – just make sure there are actually people eating at the