Where There's Will, There's Europe

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Where There's Will... There's Europe

by Marilyn Bratten, H. Jl. 2

Some girls dream of going to Europe to study; others dream of going to study Europe. Whatever your desires may be, turn them into more than subconscious thought. There are a lot of ways to get there.

Sign for Summer School

Many U. S. students take summer courses abroad—tour for a month and then study in one country for six to eight weeks. This is a good chance to survey opportunities for graduate study or for a job after college. It can also provide the chance to sight-see if after-college plans leave no room for going abroad.

European countries have in mind that Americans will be coming to study there. France alone has 35 summer schools, 17 of them in Paris. Most of them require no prerequisites, and students can register for as little as a two-week period. French pastry-making, literature, civilization (the last two taught in French at the Riviera cities of Cannes and Nice), and music and fine arts (taught in English at the Chateau de Fontainebleau) are offered.

At the University of Oslo in Norway, courses in Norwegian culture are patterned after the U. S. system of semester hours, making transfer of credits easy. The cost for a six-weeks session is $700.

British summer schools offer programs in literature and fine arts at universities in Stratford, Edinburgh, London, and Oxford. Students usually get six hours credit, pay $210 for tuition, room, and board.

Brochures on summer school in Europe can be found in modern language departments in almost every American university.

Pedal a “Bike”

Perhaps, after nine months of college, you prefer to see Europe without the homework attached. Try hosteling! It’s a wonderful way to find out just what things in life you can do without.

Hostel washbasins are often stopped up. Hot showers are rare. You may spend the night on a mattress or on straw ticking surrounded by fifty other sleepers. (You’ll have privacy only in your daydreams.) For a whole summer you live in shorts, shirts, sturdy shoes—and the one good cotton dress packed in your rucksack.

What’s more, you probably come to like your discomforts and will take pride in the physical and spiritual freedom they represent. It’s exhilarating, for a change, to be the direct opposite of a well-groomed, well-fed college girl.

However, hosteling is more than just “roughing it.” It’s a way to get a slow, close look at the countryside. Next to hitchhiking, it is the cheapest way to get around Europe. The tours that American Youth Hostels, Inc., organizes for members each summer cost from $580 for four weeks to $780 for eleven weeks (including student-ship passage and everything but incidentals). AYH will also give tips to members who want to hostel (all summer or part of it) alone or with a friend. Occasionally some people hostel on their own for as little as two dollars a day. (You can get an AYH membership card for two to five dollars, depending on your age, by writing to AYH, 14 W. 8th St., New York 11.)

An AYH tour includes a co-ed group of ten people, all 18 or over, and mostly college students or recent graduates, plus a tour leader. They “bike” an average of 30 miles

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a day—hitting the road early, stopping at a hostel in the late afternoon, or sometimes camping out overnight. Your bicycle—easy to resell—should be a European make with hand brakes and gears.

Hostels are barracks, set up in old houses and barns or even castles and movie theaters. You find them almost everywhere you want to stop in Europe. You are likely to move into a hotel or student dormitory in the larger cities since hostels have the bad habit of being located on the outskirts of town with a 10 p.m. curfew—sometimes a nuisance when you're in a city like Rome or Paris.

Don Dungarees

If you are convinced that studying or hosteling aren’t for you, then why not look into a European Work Camp?

You don’t look much like a tourist when you’re in “jeans”—or feel like one—digging ditches side by side with Yugoslavians, Germans, Frenchmen and Danes. You’re a full-time participating member of a group of ten to forty. You’re with students and teachers, office workers and laborers on vacation, and refugees because you like living and working in an international community and helping on a job that needs to be done.

The job may be building slides and swings for a playground in Bristol, a road for a tiny town in the Alps, or a refugee housing settlement in Bavaria. Whatever it is, you work on it at least seven hours a day, and lots of work-campers volunteer extra hours on weekends.

Work-camp lodgings are usually converted barracks or warehouses, often with no heat, electricity, or running water. In many camps the girls do all the cooking and housework—and find it takes a lot of talking to persuade a European male to help with the dishes. In other camps you may board with families or eat your meals in a nearby school or youth hostel.

Most camps are run by student leaders, and campers make their own regulations and plan their own activities.

In camps sponsored by church groups there are several worship services a day, plus evening discussions on Christian living. In most other camps—those sponsored by service organizations and student unions—discussions are organized for a few nights a week. Despite the language barriers, representatives of a dozen different countries tackle the same issues that their governments do—disarmament, atomic control, and the United Nations.

In your spare time you go right on discussing—or you sing to somebody’s guitar accompaniment, give parties, or stroll into town. There are generally more men than girls, and international romances flourish.

The most idealistic volunteers may be disillusioned when they find that their fellow-campers get too tired to spend every evening in high-level discussion and that the work project itself isn’t accomplishing all they’d thought it would. The happiest are the ones who enjoy the work for its own sake and imagine what the project—half-finished, perhaps, at the end of the summer—will mean to the community in another year or two.

A work-camp summer is inexpensive. The American organizations that send volunteers to Europe ask $400 to $500 for transatlantic passage, transportation in Europe, administrative fees, and, in some cases, a contribution to the maintenance of the camps. Most people find that a summer—one month in camp, another of travel—costs under $700.

For information on European work camps and how to join them, write to American Friends Service Committee, 144 E. 20th St., New York 3. They will try to send you to the country of your choice and may offer financial aid.