



Newman Exploration Travel Fund

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About me:

Hi! My name is Olivia and I'm currently a Junior majoring in Philosophy-Neuroscience-Psychology and Spanish on the pre-med track. Growing up in a low-income, single-parent household meant that I never had the opportunity to travel the world. Receiving the Newman Exploration Travel Fund allowed me to broaden my horizons and enhance what I had already been learning and cultivating during my education. Here are a few highlights from my backpacking trip through Europe!



Left: Jerónimos Monastery in Lisbon, Portugal. This monastery is an important example of Manueline, or Portuguese Late Gothic architecture.

Right: Within the gardens of The Palace of the Marquesses of Fronteira in Lisbon, home to the largest collection of Portuguese tiles, or azulejos.

Right: Las Meninas by Diego Velázquez in El Museo del Prado in Madrid, Spain. In the doorway, you can see the artist himself.



Below: The Porcelain Room in the Royal Palace of Madrid. The ceiling and walls are completely covered in porcelain panels.



A traditional tablao flamenco show in Barcelona, Spain, consisting of multiple female dancers, one male dancer, two singers, and two guitar players.



Above: The Picasso Museum in Barcelona, Spain contained a room dedicated to Las Meninas. Picasso's interpretations came in many different artistic styles, and he also drew portraits of individuals from the original painting.

Above: One of Gaudí's architectural works, Casa Batlló in Barcelona, Spain. Gaudí drew inspiration from natural forms. The walls and ceilings resemble a scaly animal's skin and the chandelier looks like a whirlpool.



Left: Platter of many traditional Greek foods, such as moussaka, a type of eggplant casserole; fava, made from fava beans; and tzatziki, a creamy cucumber yogurt dip.



Right: Another traditional Greek food, dolmades, or grape leaves stuffed with an herby rice mix.



Left: The Roman Forum is surrounded by the ruins of several important ancient government buildings at the center of the city of Rome. For the citizens of the ancient city, it served as a marketplace.

Right: The Colosseum in Rome, Italy. In 80 AD, the Colosseum was flooded and great reenactments, including miniature warships, were held for the audience to celebrate great naval victories. I also learned that the spectators would often decide the gladiator's fate.

What I Learned About Myself:

During my trip, I was constantly challenged, not simply to adjust to and explore new environments, but also to interact with different people and embrace adventures as they come. Staying in hostels allowed me to foster connections with new people and make lifelong friends from all over the world. Additionally, this trip forced me to be more accepting of things going wrong. In preparation for this trip, I bought all my flights and train tickets, reserved my hostels as well as a few activities I wanted to do in each destination, and made a small list of things that might be fun to do in each city. However, just a few days into my trip, I missed my first train. This was not the only thing to go wrong during my trip... I missed a total of two planes, a train, and had my phone stolen. As more challenges arose, I noticed that I was less stressed, which has been positively affecting me post-travel. It also made me realize that it's okay to have a plan, but it's unrealistic to believe that everything will go as expected.

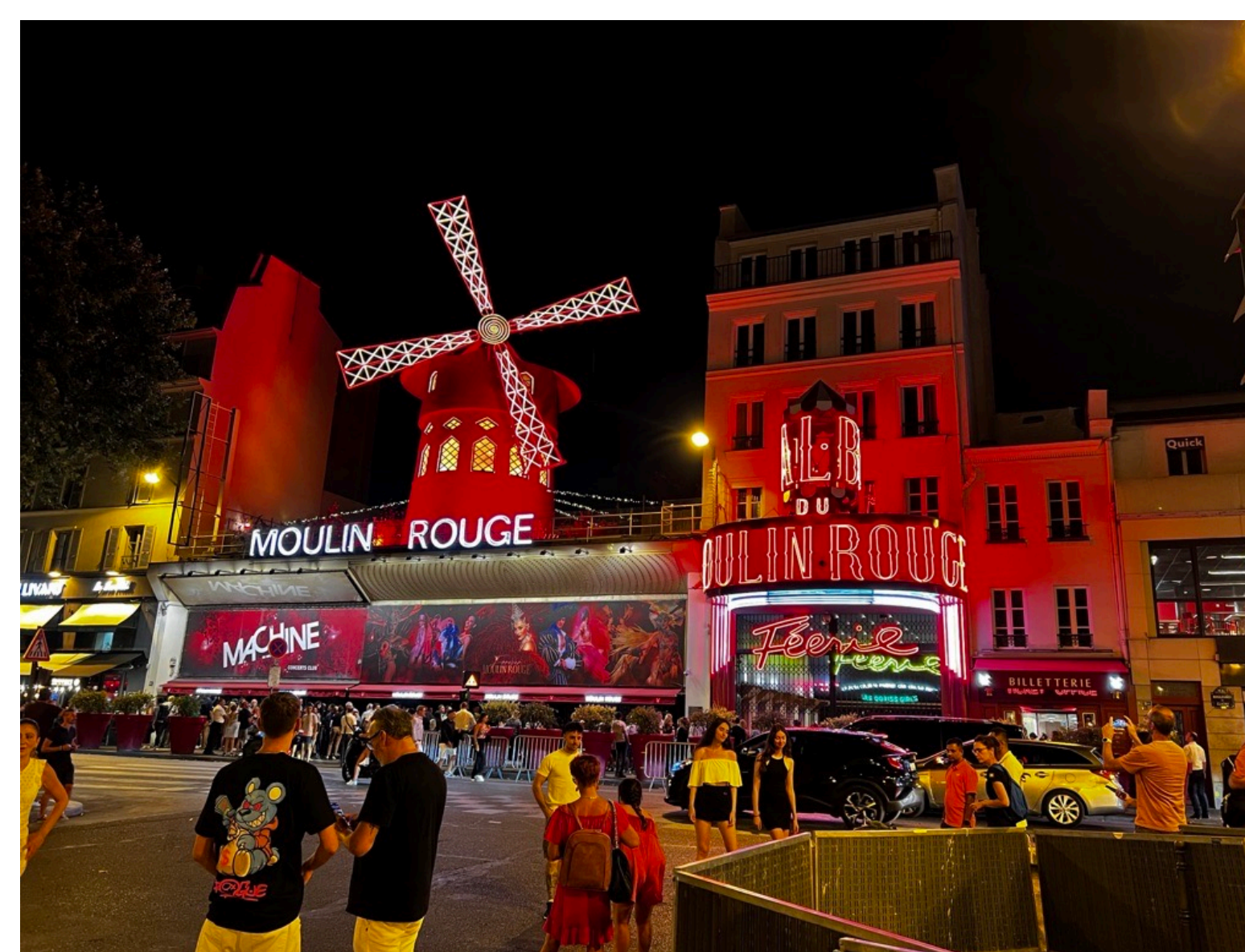
Thank You!



Left: Platter of three different types of Spanish dry-cured ham: jamón ibérico, jamón serrano, and jamón deroc.



Right: Throughout Spain, these serrano hams can be seen hanging from the ceiling, a practice that dates back more than 2,000 years.



Left: Outside the Moulin Rouge in Paris, France, which is famous for being the birthplace of the Cancan dance in 1889.



Right: The Catacombs of Paris, created because the cemeteries were overflowing and causing major health problems to those living near them. The government decided to transfer the contents to abandoned mine tunnels underneath the city.