Bonjour,

Now that you have officially decided to spend your first semester in Dijon, it is our turn to help you prepare for an incredible start to your college career. You are probably nervous about spending nearly four months in a foreign country before stepping onto Colby’s campus. However, we are all here to help alleviate that stress and answer ANY questions you may have!

This guidebook is meant to give you a glimpse of what life in Dijon will be like, along with some other tips so that you can prepare yourself. It was developed by former Colby students who, like you, spent their first semester in Dijon and know the ins and outs of the whole package. Many of us have stayed with the same host families, taken the same classes at the Université de Bourgogne and the Lycée Monchapet, and simply, “lived the Dijon life” as a freshman in college. We hope to cover packing tips, the homestay, homesickness, travel, and even the transition to Colby in January. However, do NOT worry about that yet; our goal is to make you feel more comfortable at the prospect of going to Dijon and get you psyched for the journey to come. When you come back to Colby in January, you will find that many of your nerves are all in your head and that the transition is a lot easier than you would think. All in all, we would not have wanted to start our Colby careers any other way, and once you are back in the USA, you will start to see why those who started their experiences on campus will be envious of you.

If you have any other questions or concerns, PLEASE feel free to contact ANY of us before you leave the States, while in Dijon, and of course, in January and throughout the spring semester. We are so excited to hear about your experiences and hope that you have an unforgettable semester!

Keep in touch,

The Dijon Group of 2015
PACKING LIST

What to bring and what to leave at home:

Packing for almost four months abroad can be a daunting task, especially when you’re limited to two big bags and X pounds of luggage. We asked fellow Global Entry Semester Students to list the items they could have lived without and those that were an ultimate necessity. Best of luck!

Clothing and Shoes:
- Hat, gloves, and scarves—Dijon gets cold!
- Swimsuit for excursions in the South of France
- Raincoat or rain jacket, rainboots, umbrella
- Athletic shoes and clothes for working out
- Dress shoes/clothes (blazers for guys)
- Slippers

In general, Europeans tend to wear nicer clothing and footwear than Americans, however jeans with a nicer top is appropriate as well!

“I would recommend a mix of nice casual clothes for daily wear and dressier clothes for hitting the night scene. However, jeans and a polo are typically fine for men.”
– Trip Smith ’12

“Bring clothes you can layer because of the freaky cold mornings and really hot afternoons.”
– Charlotte Peck ’13

“It’s good to have a ‘Feel Good Kit.’ Put your favorite movies, CDs, books, and magazines in it so that you can distract yourself if you get homesick.”
– Charlotte Wiesenberg ’13

*** Try not to over-pack because overweight bags can be very expensive at the airport, and you’ll probably do some shopping. Parents, keep in mind you can always ship cold weather clothes to your kids later because they will not need them right away. Or if you visit your kids, you can take clothes they don’t need any more home with you.

Appliances:
- Adaptors
- Camera and iPod (and chargers!)
- Headset or webcam for talking on Skype
- Travel alarm clock

School Supplies:
- Laptop!
- A French-English dictionary
- As for binders and notebooks, French ones can be really fun! Wait to buy them at Monoprix when you get there. It is easier than having to pack them.

Money:
- Jon will provide you with some money for lunch for the first few days, but try to bring some Euros with you so that you have money available for the days before you open your bank account.
- A credit or debit card. All stores in Dijon accept cards and ATMs are readily available. Keep in mind that if you plan on booking flights or hostels online you will need a credit card.
- You will get a daily allowance of about €9 for lunch. You can save a lot of money if you don’t buy extravagant lunches. (Tip: There’s a Café-like cafeteria at the Université where you can get a sandwich or burger, salad, yogurt and fruit for about €4. And later, you’ll have extra lunch money saved up you can use it for shopping or traveling!)

Autres Choses:
- Books, magazines, TV shows, and movies
- Pictures from home to show your family and decorate your room
- Housewarming gift from your city or town
- Getting medical help is easy, but if you take any medication regularly, make sure you bring enough for your entire stay
- Weekend bag for excursions (a SMALL rolling bag is better and easier than a duffel)
- A Journal to document
BEFORE YOU GO

Important things to know before you head to the airport!

Although packing your suitcases is half of the pre-departure planning, there are some other things that you should add to your to do list before you head off to the airport.

1. Get Your VISA: The Visa process was one of the most time-consuming parts of planning to study abroad. Read the information that Colby gives you regarding visas very carefully, and give yourself (and the consulate) plenty of time. Do not put this off!! Going to the consulate a week before will not be enough time for them to process your request. Make form checklists so you don’t forget anything.

2. Plan a Visit: Many students have their families visit during the fall break. Talk to your parents about travel plans and make a list of places to visit so that you have enough time to book flights and hotels. The earlier you make these arrangements the less money you will spend!

3. Plan to Communicate: Make arrangements with your family and friends about communication. Pick days and times to talk on the phone and set up Skype so that you can call home easily.

4. Meet Your Group: Check out the Colby Global Entry Semester Fall 2016 Facebook page!!

5. Other: Notify your bank that you will be living abroad—make sure they won’t charge you for making purchases overseas and that they know you’re traveling and should expect charges abroad.

“Make photocopies of all your important documents and everything in your wallet. Give one set to your parents to keep, and keep a set for yourself in a folder.

Language Prep: How to prepare for life in another language…

Language proficiency is what you make it. Some students arrive in Dijon with 10+ years of immersion training, while others have only completed the required few years of grammar-based instruction in high school. Ask someone in the latter group and they will tell you that despite the fact that their French was not the greatest upon arrival, they never found it too difficult to express themselves. Even if you struggled your way through oral presentations in high school, you will find yourself picking up the language very quickly if you pay attention during meals with your family and ask your teachers questions. That said, there is little expectation that you practice your French before you go. While looking over your notes and key phrases can never hurt, there is no need to stress. If you plan to make the effort to speak French while you are abroad, there is no need to make a significant effort before you leave. Most importantly, don’t be afraid to speak French while you are abroad—even if your grammar isn’t perfect, most French people won’t care and will appreciate the effort. Your host family will quickly notice your French level, but they’re more than willing to help you when you get stuck.

“Don’t be afraid to make mistakes. I was shy the first couple of days but then I realized that the only way I could progress was by talking as much as possible with my host family. They’re always happy to correct you and don’t care if you mess up.” —Harry Geldermann ’13

The academic part of studying abroad…

Although your experience studying at the Université de Bourgogne will be nothing like that of your friends at “real college,” you really have nothing to complain about. Although you are taking four classes, most of the learning that happens in Dijon takes place outside of the classroom, according to past Global Entry Semester Students and the Office of Off-Campus Study. You will have reading for Jon and a few writing assignments, but it will likely be less schoolwork than you had in high school. While the formal workload is generally light, you will be “working” on your French 24 hours a day. Make the most of it and talk as much as you can! Generally, all of your classes will be taught in French at a level that is appropriate for you, though Jon’s seminar is taught in English as well. Your Université CIEF class will be composed of students from all over the world. It is important to reach out to these students, too. You’ll learn a lot about their cultures, which can be really interesting.
For many students, living with a French family was one of the best parts about Dijon. All the host families are either previously interviewed by Jon or are his close friends and acquaintances. In general, Jon tries to match students with the best host families possible. If the arrangement doesn’t work out for one reason or another, there is always the opportunity to change.

You won’t move in with your host family right away—you get time to adjust to the time zone and get acquainted with the city first. However, there are a few things that you should know before moving in with your family. Colby guarantees that you will have your own room with a bed and a desk, and that you will be provided with breakfast and dinner during the week and meals on the weekends unless you are away. You will also have access to laundry—many of the host mothers will want to do your laundry for you. You will be given keys to the house so you can come and go as you please, but try to let them know when you are arriving or leaving, just as you would at home. Also, if you don’t plan on coming home for dinner, make sure you tell your family far enough in advance. Often they never mind, but they definitely appreciate your politeness. Privacy in the French culture is different—the home is a private space. When meeting friends, French people tend to go to a restaurant or a café instead of inviting them over to their house. In other words, if you want to invite friends over, ask your host family first. Chances are they will say yes—most would love to meet your friends and some might even urge you to invite people over for dinner—but don’t assume that it is ok. Always ask first.

The most important thing to remember when living with a host family is to BE FLEXIBLE. Try to let them know of your plans—it is simply a nice thing to do.

La Nourriture Française: croissants, frog legs, and everything in between!

Families might ask students what they would prefer to eat for breakfast when they arrive. If you don’t like something they offer for breakfast, don’t just say yes for the sake of it, because they may stick with it for your entire stay. Most students will get cereal for breakfast—if you think you’ll get sick of it, don’t worry. French cereal is REALLY GOOD. French food has a reputation of being nothing less than absolutely delicious. However, if you are going to be living there for an extended period of time, there may be some things that take getting used to. For example, some meals may consist of more meat than you are used to. The French also tend to really like ham, though for sandwiches, there are usually other options. A cheese plate after dinner is also common—try as many cheeses as you can! (The cheese covered in mustard seeds is particularly good.) If you absolutely cannot eat something, write it in the form that you send to Colby AND tell your host family when you arrive. However, definitely try to at least taste everything that is offered to you. If you don’t know what something is, try it anyways! If you don’t like something, be honest. They won’t mind. It’s all part of the experience!

Fun Fact: when eating bread with their meals, the French place it on the table, to the side of their plate.
Homesickness

Advice from former Global Entry Semester Students on how to deal with it if you do experience

Although life in Dijon may seem like an adventure to some, there are times when one may find themselves thinking about and maybe even missing home. Just as the transition to college is harder for some than others, adjusting to life abroad can be equally challenging. Homesickness, when you're far away from your friends and family and trying to speak a different language, can be very real and difficult to deal with. We've asked past Global Entry Semester Students how to avoid homesickness and what to do when and if it hits you.

1. Practice: Students who have rarely been away from home generally have a harder time with homesickness. Try to spend some time away from your family over the summer, even if it's just for a few days or nights.

2. Bring Mementos: Just like you would hang in your dorm, pictures of family and friends make great decorations. Photo albums don't take up a lot of weight and are also a great way of breaking the ice with your host family.

3. Prepare for Down Time: Pack for down time; movies and TV shows are great to watch when you have time to relax. Books in English are also really nice, especially if you need a break from total French immersion.

4. Make it Through Week Two: The most common response we got to the homesick question was that after the first couple weeks, being away from home gets much easier. Give yourself time to adjust to your new home.

5. Keep in Touch: Plan to talk to your friends and family. “Try to write letters—getting mail is always fun and stamps aren’t hard to get” – Catherine Stewart ’11. Long group emails are also a fun way to stay in touch.

6. Make New Friends: In the past, groups that have gone to both Dijon and Salamanca have come back as very close friends. Although this is not always the case, finding people in your group that you enjoy spending time with is a great way of combating homesickness.

7. Stay Busy: “Being busy is a really good way to forget about your homesickness. There are lots of museums to go to—check them out, or go to the movies” – Simone Goldstein ’11. Make plans to meet friends at a café, explore the marché, or go for a run around Lac Kir. Getting out of the house and being active is usually a sufficiently pleasant distraction with the bonus of endorphins. Before you know it, you will be back on the TGV to Paris for the flight home and even if you didn’t expect it, you might not be ready to go home. Time flies when you’re having fun, so seize the day—go out and have fun with friends and embrace the French experience, because soon enough, you’ll be in the U.S. looking east across the ocean and wishing you were back on the other side.

“Stay positive! Try not to lose sight of the fact that you’re in Europe and there's so much to see and do. Keep busy, make plans with friends to explore Dijon, etc. and focus on getting the most out of this unique and wonderful experience.” – Lexi DeConti ’13

“I think the best way to deal with homesickness is to be social with the other people in your group and finding a convenient way to contact friends and family. Since everyone is going through the same things, they are your best outlet or support for getting over homesickness.” – Michael Herriman ’12

“Try to contact different people every couple of days so you’re not talking to the same ones all the time... that just makes you even more homesick” – Eliza Appleton ’13

“Some feelings of homesickness are totally normal, and I found that talking about it with my fellow Dijon family (host & other FSAs) was helpful because it reminded me that any feelings that I had of homesickness were shared and understood by my new friends. Your Dijon family is always there to appreciate pictures of your beloved and greatly missed dog, or brother, or house.” – Sarah Backstrand ’18
**INSIDE DIJON:** Places to visit, things to do, and restaurants to check out in Dijon!

Before you finish your semester in Dijon, make sure you visit these places for nights out, cultural adventures, or afternoon ambles with friends! These are all suggestions from former students, so you can be sure it will be worth it!

**À Visiter:** Take the time to check out the amazing museums in Dijon whether it’s during one of the Journées du Patrimoine in September or just a free afternoon during the week! Recommendations: Musée de Beaux-Arts, Palais des Ducs, Musée Magnin (by the Place de la Libération), and the Jardin de l’Arquebuse (a botanical garden and museum).

**À Manger:** There are many delicious restaurants and cafés in Dijon that you should try for lunch, hot chocolate, or even random dinners out.

--**For lunch:** Get sandwiches and pastries at La Mie Câline, La Maison des Pains, or grab a kebab at Darcy Kebab! Anything and everything is always good at Paul, which is the perfect place to get an inexpensive but delicious lunch.

--**For dinner:** Try Marco Polo in Place Bossuet for pizza and Le Gril Laure next to St. Benigne! Au Domino has the best crêpes in Dijon!

--**Cafés:** You can get great (yet pricey) hot chocolate at Comptoir des Colonies, or try Le Café des Grands Ducs in the Place de la Libération!

**Pour les nuits en ville:** For those inevitable nights on the town, you can head down Rue Berbisey for the lines of bars and cafés like the Colby favorites Byron Bay, Flannery’s, and Shooters, or if you like dancing, check out the salsa bar in Place de la République or the night clubs, l’Atmosphère (Atmo), Hit Club, and Le Chat Noir.

**Le Marché:** The Dijon market is open on Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday mornings until the early afternoon. It’s a great place to get presents for your family and friends! **Le Marché** is also a good place to get an inexpensive bite to eat for lunch!

**À Faire:** Like the outdoors and need to take a break from city life? Walk or run next to the canal to Lac Kir, find a few bikes and go for a long ride with friends out into the nearby countryside, or buy baguettes, cheese, and fruit from a boulangerie, fromagerie, and Monoprix and have a picnic in nice weather at the fountain behind the Palais des Ducs!

“For a cheaper option, my friends and I often went to Monoprix, the grocery store near Jon’s apartment. You can buy baguettes, Nutella, cheese, yogurt, fruit, and dessert as a group, and spend almost no money for a ton of food! We did this multiple times a week.”

-Jessica Russo ’12

**Advice about International Travel**

Planning to go jetting around Europe during your breaks can be either stressful or a piece of cake, depending on how you do it. Having the opportunity to see Europe in a long weekend or over Fall break is not something to pass up, but make sure you plan carefully. Here are some things to keep in mind!

**Getting Train Tickets or Booking Flights:** Since there is no airport in Dijon, traveling by train is by far the easiest way to get places—La Gare is just a short walk from Place Darcy. If you plan to travel often, the 12-25 card (for €50) can save you quite a bit of money with discounts! No matter whether you are booking a flight to somewhere a little farther away or just taking the train, getting your tickets early is essential in order to save money.

**Lodging:** Hotels are often very expensive in Europe—many students choose to stay in youth hostels instead. These hostels are usually a great way to meet people from all over the world!

**DO NOT FORGET YOUR PASSPORT!**

**Top Places to Visit:** (France) Strasbourg (for the Christmas market!), Paris, Lyon, Aix en Provence. (International) Prague, Amsterdam, London, Barcelona, Florence, Switzerland, Germany and MANY MANY MORE!

“I wish somebody had told me to avoid getting in a rut. There are so many good and inexpensive places to eat lunch in Dijon, and it is really fun to try new places when you can, because 4 months goes by fast, and you never know what you’ll miss out on if you go to the same place every day!”

-Sarah Backstrand ’18
One of the hardest things to imagine as you are getting ready to travel overseas is making your way to Colby come January. However, if you’ve thought about it already that is perfectly reasonable, too. Worrying about making the transition during JanPlan is a rational but easily negated fear. Making the transition to Colby, just like making the transition to France, is all about effort. You will meet plenty of people if you avoid hibernation from the cold weather and introduce yourself! Get to know your classmates and the people in your dorm, and join clubs and teams. During the month of January, you will have both a mid-year orientation and Iced COOT®. Both of these opportunities will give you the chance to meet new people—including many students who did not go abroad who volunteer to go simply because they are interested in meeting you! It is also during January that you will get to know your LINK leaders: the former Global Entry Semester Students who have been working together to make this booklet. We will do our best to take you around town, carpool up to Sugarloaf and make our own crude versions of French crêpes for a welcome dinner or two. If you are having a hard time meeting people during JanPlan, keep in mind that once the semester starts up (and the weather gets warmer) you will have no shortage of things to do and people to do them with!

Choosing Classes: How to fill your JanPlan

JanPlan at Colby has a dual reputation. The month-long semi-semester is a perfect way to get rid of distribution requirements but also a perfect time slot if you’re looking to enjoy the snow and take a non-credit class—for example photography—that you may not have the time to take otherwise. Most Global Entry Semester Students are advised to take English 115 if they haven’t tested out of it already. There are various sections to choose from, some with more work than others, so read the course book carefully. If you are not a science person, you might want to consider taking a lab course during JanPlan. These classes are generally geared towards non-science majors and are an excellent way to satisfy the requirement. You many want to consider the kinds of students that are going to be in your class. Do you want to be in a class with more non-Global Entry Semester Students or would you rather get a requirement like EN115 out of the way? Although course selection may sound daunting at the moment, do not stress about it. Jon is a more than capable advisor if you ever have any questions about the process.

Housing: FYI’s about choosing your roommates

In the end of November you will be asked to fill out a housing form. The form is the same one that all Colby freshmen receive before they head to campus in the fall. You will have the opportunity to room with someone who has either been on campus since the first semester or someone who, like you, went abroad the first semester of their freshman year. Colby’s Campus Life office cannot guarantee that roommate requests will be honored—there is simply not enough housing on campus to do so. However, rooming with someone who was not on your trip has a lot of benefits; it’s a great way to introduce your Dijon friends to either Salamanca students or existing Colby students. Your roommate and all the people living in your dorm become a great support system—and an instant new group of friends!—for your transition onto campus.

“I suggest choosing a roommate who is already on campus. You will be pushed to meet more people at school as opposed to spending all your time with friends from abroad.” – Stefan Merriam ’13
The LINK program was created by Susannah Hatch ’11 and Alea Starr ’11 to facilitate your transition into life at Colby. We hope that this guidebook will help prepare you for your exciting semester abroad. All of the information is based on feedback from Global Entry Semester students who have spent time in Dijon. The guidebook was created with assistance from the Off-Campus Studies, Admissions, and Student Life Offices. Contact any of us with questions you may have. You are about to have the time of your life, embrace every moment! We are thrilled that you have chosen Dijon as your next adventure, and we can’t wait to meet you in January when you return to Colby!

Bonne chance,
Sara Pipernos ’19

What to expect from LINK…

The LINK program was designed to help you and other Global Entry Semester students feel connected to Colby before and while you’re abroad and also once you arrive at Colby. The purpose of this guidebook is only part of the first half, and we hope that you’ll find it helpful. You will also soon be in contact with former Global Entry Semester students. They will continue to be in touch with you while you’re in Dijon and also at Colby. We’re here for you and are more than willing to answer questions about Dijon or Colby.

In January, when you come to campus, you will meet everyone running the LINK program. We have already begun planning your Iced COOT, along with LINK broomball, dinners, and other LINK sponsored activities. We’re so excited for you and can’t wait to hear about your amazing adventure. Contact us with any questions. Have a wonderful time and enjoy every moment. Before you know it, you’ll be packing for Maine!

Good luck!

Sara Pipernos
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Dijon LINK Leader 2016

http://www.colby.edu/academics_cs/ocs/dijon/dijon-program-information-for-freshmen.cfm