

## What MYO Tours Have Done For Me Amanda Sheehan, MYO Class of 2018

Hello potential future tour participants and families! My name is Amanda Sheehan. I'm a two-time MYO Tours alumni and currently a sophomore at North Carolina State University studying Biological Sciences. I joined MYO in the seventh grade and I remember being scared out of my mind going into my first rehearsal with Ms. Dominick. But over the years as I moved through the choirs, traveled around the world, and made friends to last a lifetime, I found my voice, my place, my home.

When MYO sent out information regarding the 2016 MYO Tour to Spain, I knew I had to go. Luckily, my parents were incredibly supportive and helped me figure out how to make my dream a reality. My travels to Spain completely changed my life. I made friends with people I had never met, became closer with those I already knew, immersed myself in a culture I had previously known nothing about, and experienced being truly independent from my family for the first time ever. The biggest lesson I learned from the Spain Tour was how to go with the flow. You're probably thinking "Well of course you learned how to be less of a control freak, you traveled with basically an army of people to eight different cities when almost no one spoke the language." But, in all actuality, I'm the kind of person who thought that even though I was one of the youngest students on the trip - I would still be in charge of almost everything. Luckily I woke up and learned how to truly have fun even if I couldn't walk more than three blocks from The Statue Next To The Ice Cream Stand.

Of course, since I had so much fun in 2016, I became obsessed with travel. I rewrote my bucket-list to include traveling to every country in Europe. So of course, when MYO announced its next tour would be to Germany, Austria, Hungary *AND* Czech...I nearly exploded. I *HAD* to go. But this time, I felt the need to do something to enhance my experience even further. After hearing about the opportunity to run the Tour Blog with one of my greatest friends, I knew it was exactly what I needed to bring my tour experience to the next level. Heading into MYO Tour 2018 I knew I was one of the oldest and most experienced students on the trip I knew what to expect going into the trip and quickly stepped into the position my friends had been calling me since 2016, "Mom." (Seriously though I once woke up from a nightmare that someone was out of band aids and went around the whole bus asking if someone needed a band aid.)

My time in Europe was the best way to spend the summer before freshman year of college. It gave me the confidence I needed before moving down south for college, allowed me to feel more extroverted than ever before, and reminded me of my love for writing.

Since the MYO 2018 tour, I have started my college career at NCSU in Raleigh, NC, begun my newest travel bucket-list item (travel to all of the U.S. National Parks), written for Odyssey Online, spent four weeks on a study abroad at Oxford University, traveled throughout the UK, and sang with my college's all women's choir. My biggest takeaway from traveling with MYO in 2016 and 2018 has been learning to be confident in my journey no matter what craziness it entails.

If you have any questions or concerns you would like an alumni's perspective on - feel free to email me at [amandasheehan0@gmail.com](mailto:amandasheehan0@gmail.com) OR keep an eye out for my FAQ video to be presented at one of the MYO Tour information meetings!