

Lost in Travel

The moment is here. I've waited all week, all month, for this. Packing always morphs into a stress fueled process of remembering anything that could be even remotely useful. What if I need *that* shirt? What if a surprise occasion comes up and I need *those* shoes? Did I even pack the toothpaste? I have all the symptoms of overpacking with no foreseeable cure. The butterflies thrash in my stomach before I even step foot outside the house; perhaps it's because I can never sleep the night before. The prospects of leaving home and going somewhere unexpected and new are enough to keep me awake. The morning of is always a hazy rush of last minute list consultations and scoping out my room one last time. The feelings of panic and anxiety become very real as I finally arrive at the airport. There is nothing better than hearing the sounds a suitcase makes as the wheels glide against the pavement. With a ticket and passport in my hand, I am ready to begin on a journey. There is no turning back a little voice says, as I walk towards security.

Airports are one of my favorite places in the whole world. There is no feeling that comes even slightly close to the excitement of travel. Although I spend way too much time trying to plan for every possible mishap, the unfortunate situations are what I remember most from trips. I have a rather unlucky tendency to get lost, everywhere, because my sense of direction doesn't exist. It's embarrassing to admit that as a senior who has been to the same school for four years, I still have trouble locating some classrooms. This summer I had the wonderful opportunity to visit New York for the first time during a weeklong college trip.

New York is a place that has a rhythm so different from the one I was used to. The first unsettling thing was the pace of everyone who lived there. I think everyone can agree that there is nothing leisurely about New York City. In the first

day, my family and I had gotten lost several times. We had gotten off at the wrong subway stops, took the wrong turn here and there, and ended up somewhere completely different. It was frustrating because it felt like we were walking in circles most of the time. After a stroll through Central Park, we were supposed to be on our way to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. However, with some bad GPS directions, we had wandered the entire course of Central Park without finding the correct exit. Similarly finding places to eat was the most stressful part of my week in New York.

We may have gotten lost several times but because of it, we had gotten such a good picture of New York as a whole. We were forced to spend the time looking at parks and architecture that we would have otherwise overlooked. A trip isn't just a checklist of places to visit but rather taking in a city, one street at a time. Sometimes being lost is simply the best way to get to know a new place. It gives you the time, and motivation, to explore around, albeit it probably is to find a way out. I often forget to smell the roses and to stop and look around. Even if bad directional skills aren't the most desirable trait, they give me the chance to find things I never even knew existed.