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My four years in Michigan was a search for courage and inspiration. The most important experiences were the times I went abroad. During my journeys, I have found not only confidence but also passion for photography, video, and food. These revelations only became clearer to me while I was abroad.

While abroad, I took photos and videos with documentary purposes in mind, however they changed meanings for me upon my return home. I began seeing food as more than just nutrition but as something greater and meaningful. My relationship and perspective of food changed when I began taking into account the history, culture, and personal reverence that comes with food. I now see myself as a food artist. I'm still figuring out what it means to me and what I tell people, but as of now I see food art as a way of storytelling, the preservation of my culture and identity, and creating immersive ways your participants can eat the food you create.

These three experiences taught me three valuable totems to my practice. The first was the courage to tell my stories about food. The second was inspiration of presentation of ideas and food. And the third was the knowledge and communication between different cultures. What this allowed me to do was put me in a position of success with my thesis. I knew coming into my senior year that I wanted to make food. Even with my doubts, I had the confidence and infrastructure to go forward with my lofty ideas. I know for certain though, that I couldn't have arrived here had I not studied abroad.

Images:

My first experience abroad was the summer of '14 in Tanzania and the following summer in Denmark. Not only was I in these two countries, I was also able to go to Sweden, Spain, and the Netherlands. I can't give justice to all the experiences, but I had an amazing array of experiences. From eating gnarly street food and carmine-red hot dogs in Denmark, helped slaughter and cook a goat in Tanzania, I even got to try a Michelin star restaurant along the way.



Two photos I took of the Maasai village. Top: An elder woman and a teenager work together to ground corn seeds. Bottom: Our home-stay host makes a herbal-root medicine for a newborn baby.



This is the Michelin star meal I had in Denmark. I have difficulty describing what it is I actually ate. But what stuck with me was the staff professionalism and the plating of the food. The chefs essentially hold your hand, explain each meal, and serve the food at the pace you're going. This is a meal—no an experience I won't forget.



Here are a few memorable meals from Spain. The drink is from Malaga with a turrón ice cream. The foie gras pincho is from Bilbao. And the leeks are from Madrid. What these meals showed me, was the diverse variety of cultures and cuisines within even Spain itself. People have a hard time speaking about a national cuisine in Spain, and I can see why. The influence of the French cooking in the north of Spain is unmistakable, while southern Spain is embedded into Mediterranean culture and Arabic influence.



This project is titled, *Dogmeat Kimchi & Gaucho Soup* and was performance I held for one night in the Argus Building. I served five meals of my childhood and the meals were composed a mix of Korean food, Hispanic-Latino dishes, and American diner food. The presentation of the performance was inspired by my Michelin experience in Denmark. And research on the Hispanic-Latino food was supplemented by my journey through Spain and help from Spanish friends I made along the way.