Top 8 Reasons You Should Go to Africa…

1. You care more about things you have experienced. Now that I have lived in Africa, I care more deeply about the political, social and economic issues of people from the continent. It will become our issue instead of their issue.

2. Your money goes farther and promotes growth in Africa (Responsible Tourism). From tipping cab drivers to going to football matches; your dollar spent there can help the lives of many and you get so much out of it. If you learn to bargain well, it can even go farther.

3. A whole new kind of stress. In much of Africa you will have to learn to talk slower, walk slower, eat with others, plan less activities per day, and spend a lot of time waiting. I read more books while studying abroad in Ghana than I had any year before or after. It's awkward at first, but we remember things that were hard more than we do things that were easy.

4. Culture- history, language, people. We all know the benefits of language immersion. Equally beneficial is historical and cultural immersion. Learning about American history through an "our shared" history approach. You will be forever connected to African people and your relationships with Africans in the U.S. will strengthen. It's the second largest continent, with the fastest growth of urbanization, and is the beginning of human life. Things you touch and consume everyday come from Africa. You need to know it.

5. Food and drink. I could talk about this one for hours. Learn to eat soup with your hand (right hand only)! Vegetarianism is uncommon. Cold beverages taste better in the tropics. Liquor comes in shot sized ketchup packets. Food is cheap and the ingredients are fresh. Eat spicy completely cooked and heated thoroughly food for safety. Healthy and plentiful fruits are all over. Try mangoes, pineapple, watermelon, bananas, oranges (they are green here) and papaya.

6. Increase your job potential. You will look admirable in an interview and through a resume. You instantly gain a new amount of respect from employers.

7. Music and Sports. Africa will make a dancer and footballer out of anyone. Be connected to the world's sport. See matches and learn about players- what regions they come from and what their families are doing now. Go to funerals, church services, outdoorings (similar to baptisms) and night clubs. The music is played loud and everywhere. Learn languages through your favorite songs.

8. Learn professionalism. You will have to dress up. You will have to become a better ironer. I learned to be a lady in Africa- to sit right and speak clearly. Don't cross your legs in front of elders. You must dress to impress and earn respect from your peers and the elders. I've taken this skill with me everywhere since.