

We are all
made of stories

Americans of Tübingen: *Eric*

“I believe traveling to be a catalyst for growth. Though I was born and raised in California, I lived in Scotland and India before coming to Germany. The experience that came with putting myself in a new place, surrounded by new people and perhaps a new language is unparalleled. These novel environments both challenged me and offered me a slice of a larger world view.

The things I've learned while abroad cannot be found in books I've read or classes I've taken, that said, it is largely because of books and classes that got me to where I am today. After a study abroad stint in Scotland, I completed my bachelors degree in San Diego. In my last year, I applied and was awarded a 1-year grant as a Fulbright Scholar to conduct research in India, investigating ways to alleviate some of the symptoms from Huntington's disease.



Afterwards I found myself back in California to teach for a private school. 2 years of that and I decided to go back to University for my Masters. I read a few papers of topics that interested me at the time and reached out to one of the authors – turns out, he was a researcher in Tübingen – and long story short, that is how I ended up here. I received my Masters for working in the realm of vision restoration with something called optogenetics. Now, as a 'Doktorand', I am working on a project that combines virtual reality environments with real-time brain activity to facilitate the rehabilitation of movement post-stroke.

Tübingen in particular is quite a unique place, buzzing with life for its size. The Altstadt is truly beautiful no matter how many times one walks through it and living next to the Schönbuch isn't too bad either, especially as I am particularly drawn to the outdoors. I spend a lot of my free time with photography, building the occasional stained glass window, writing short stories, playing board games, and dabbling in carpentry as of recent. That said, sports have also always played a big role in my life. I started playing baseball when I was 4 years old, and serendipitously stumbled across the Tübingen Hawks in my 2nd year here. I have played 4 seasons with the Hawks, mostly in the 2nd Bundesliga, where we won the league the last two years in a row. Besides baseball, beach volleyball is also pulsing in my blood; I love to get out on the sand as much as possible.

My time in Germany has gone from what was planned to be a 2-year Masters program, to now almost 6 years! In that time, I've met some truly great people, and have had some amazing experiences. Some highlights were climbing to Zugspitze, Germany's highest mountain, via the Jubiläumsgrat, a high alpine 'Klettersteig'; biking through the 'Schwarzwald' and into France (and again into Switzerland); hiking and climbing in Bad Urach; and having more BBQs with friends than I can count.

Of course I miss home; the hug of my mom and sitting by the pond chatting with my dad, the sandy beaches, and the childhood friends. But I have had one great adventure of a life so far and Tübingen has become a second home to me. I live now with my girlfriend and several other friends in a house on the Wanne. We have chickens, bees, and a big garden; it's hard to complain. I'm looking forward to seeing what the future has in store, but for the time being, I live and am living in Tübingen.”