

# Profile: Lauren Johnson



## Hometown:

Tauranga, New Zealand

## Program:

Work Britain

## Tell us about where you lived and what you got up to in Britain?

For the first week I stayed at the hostel in London that IEP setup for me. There was a pub crawl the first night, which was an awesome way to see some of the traditional English pubs and meet some new people.

After that I moved into a flat in one of the kiwi areas of London, Acton. I met heaps of new people and 5 years later I am still close friends with most of them.

Most of the time I worked in office roles, my first role was based in Tower Hill, at lunchtimes I would walk along the Thames river and take in the London sights. At that stage I still couldn't believe I was living and working in London!!

After I came back from a three month trip around Europe I moved to another suburb of London, Hammersmith.

## What are some of the experiences that you had which made an impact on you?

Meeting all different types of people and experiencing different cultures. Learning to not just expect the locals to be able to speak English, you need to remember that you are visiting their country.

The amazing friends I have made for life!

## Were there any times that were hard?

At the start it was hard, I didn't find a job for about five weeks. Living off the pound is hard when you aren't earning the pound, so make sure you have a decent amount of money before you leave.

## Top 3 experiences so far?

1. Hogmanay New Years celebration in Edinburgh (twice!)
2. Waitangi Day Pub Crawl around the circle tube line (twice!)
3. Buying a van with my four closest girlfriends and setting off on a three month adventure around Europe.

## How did you find employment?

My first role was found through the resources available at the BUNAC office in London. After that my flatmate told me to sign up with the temping agency he was signed up with and they placed me in office roles close to where I lived. It was great because I could work, save some money, travel and then come back and they would place me in another role.

## What is something unexpected/different/strange about the UK compared with other places you have lived?

How many different accents there can be and not being able to understand them even though they are speaking English!



Did you find the UK a good base to travel throughout the rest of Europe? Where did you go and what bargains did you find?

It was a great place to be based - Europe is on your doorstep. You can easily get a cheap flight to many Europe destinations. My first trip was a weekend away in Paris, it was amazing to be able to fly only an hour and be in a completely different country.

In my second year my friends and I brought a van and did "van tour". We were away for three months and got to see around 16 countries. Along the way we went to running of the bulls, Greek Islands and Oktoberfest in Munich (the best festival in the world!!).

Do you have any advice for someone who wants a UK adventure?

Take the leap and go with it, you won't regret it. Make sure you do everything you want to do while you are over there. Mingle with the locals so you can experience all the different cultures.

Make sure you have enough money when you head over to cover you incase you don't find work straight away. The initial cost to get into a flat is quite a lot once you convert it to New Zealand dollars.

Did you have a good experience abroad with IEP and did you feel supported by them?

Yes, IEP gave me the confidence to travel, knowing that you have that support once you get there was great!

What did you find valuable in going to Britain on an IEP program?

Back when I went there was a group flight trip, so meeting others that were travelling to the UK gave you a good start for making friends. We stopped over in Bangkok, Thailand so it really gave me a taster for the country and I went back on my way home.

The help with setting up the tax number and bank account was good because the bank needs you to have an address before the issue you with a bank account so being able to use the BUNAC office addressed helped.

What is next for you?

I'm now working for IEP and helping others experience the amazing adventure of a working holiday!



WORKING ADVENTURES WORLDWIDE