



Bucky Christina Barcelona

Buccaneers, where to go when you have a Trip Advisor list from the Pope himself? All of them. C'mon it's the Pope making travel recs, not the traveling gnome.



So first up – Paris. City of Lights. Flew past the Napoleon's Arc de Triomphe. Swapped out my pirate hat for a beret and walked down Avenue des Champs-Élysées. Then I headed to the Louvre. It was a medieval fortress in the 12th century but it's now home to a ton of artwork and BOOYA! offers a walking tour, no lie, that follows the footsteps of the DaVinci Code book. I was all over it. Got my culture on, admired amazing pieces of art and learned that there aren't 666 panes of glass in the pyramid. Snopes alert – there are 673. Sorry conspiracy theorists.

The tour follows the book so of course I managed a glimpse of the *Mona Lisa*. And I mean a glimpse – it's behind glass, roped off with a queue area and there were a bazillion tourists packed like sardines– the painting is kinda small so I wasn't able to ponder the smile that much.

By this time I was a bit arted out so I flew over to Notre Dame Cathedral. Spires, stained glass, the whole gothic works. South Tower was a must see for me - 400 step climb to the top. At the top we're admiring the view and ginormous parrot as I am, I went all Quasimodo *Oh-alllllll that I've everrrrrr loved!!!!* and everyone up there busted out laughing except for this one lady that screamed. I guess she never read "Hunchback of Notre Dame" by Victor Hugo. Another missed YouTube moment.

I didn't think anything could top that, but being the rockstar Buccaneer that I am with timing - it was the cathedral's 850 birthday and I was there when it got new bells. Nine of them. I met this pigeon named Jacques at the top of the Tower and he was telling me that during the French

» HOME



After going on sabbatical for two years, I'm back full of Barry University pride and "living the Barry life" in sunny South Florida!

Read all about my adventures on my blog!



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Revolution they took down all 20 of their bells and used 19 of them to make a cannon. The one remaining one is called Emmanuel - its 13 tons. All the bells they tried since then were lame and always off key. Just like Britney Spears.

The new bells are pitch perfect and for the first time since before the revolution they rang in ancient harmony. It was a perfect day to be a mascot and get a crowd psyched.

What else can I tell you about Paris? It pays to be a parrot when you want to see the Eiffel Tower. After the climb at the cathedral I wasn't about to walk up or wait for the Tower elevator. I am my own express lift. Flew up. So up at the top – amazing view. Just don't look down if you a) are skeered of heights or b) find the sight of hundreds of cigarette butts gross. Bucky is a smoke-free-zone and the ledge around the top of the tower visitor's stand looks like an ashtray.



From Paris I headed to Barcelona – felt like waking into “Alice in Wonderland” or “Once Upon a Time – Wonderland” if TVs your thing. At the top of this hilltop is Park Güell. Gaudi designed it to look like a 19th century fairground. *Übertrippy*. No other way to say it. Think giant gingerbread house, mosaic dragon fountain and multi-colored benches that look like giant sea serpents. It was the perfect place for a giant pirate parrot such as myself to blend in and chill. I could see most of Barcelona all the way out to the Mediterranean Sea. When Gaudi lived here with his niece she must've felt like Alice.



I took in other sites, like La Sagrada Familia Church, The Picasso Museum, clubs are a ton of fun – students go out even later than we do in #305. I was awake and ready to face the day (early bird worms to catch) when they were just getting home. I became a fast fan of The Ramblas. They're a bunch of tree-shaded pedestrian malls and they're full of street artists. Good thing I had my Barry jersey on. La Rambla dels Estudis is all bird and pets stalls and there were some vendors giving me the stink eye. *Hands off - this bird belongs to Barry U.* Wished I was there during fútbol (our soccer) season. When the local team Barça wins all the fans rush out to the fountain in La Rambla de Canaletes. Just loved the look and feel of the cities in Western Europe so I was stoked for the next stop. I was homeward bound. But not my home. The Pope's.

Nov 28, 2013 12:04 pm 0 Notes



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Roma Roma Roma

You know why I think they might say Gluttony is a sin? 'Cause the pasta is so amazing in Italy, you can eat yourself sick. You can. Trust me. People say I eat like a bird, but in Italy, game over. And then there are the sights. It was sensory overload. There was so much to see in Rome, I didn't know where to start. The Pantheon. The Trevi Fountain. Good luck visiting the Colosseum and not going all Russell Crowe, "My name is Maximus Decimus Meridius."



I had always planned on visiting Vatican City, checking out the Sistine Chapel and meeting the Pope – though I admit, I wasn't sure I'd actually get in to see him. Being a Mascot at Barry University does have its perks though – got hooked up with an early morning VIP ticket into the Sistine Chapel. I was able to walk at my own pace and really take it all in. And being a bird, I have phenomenal vision, so I could see detail like in "The Creation of Adam." Mind Blown.



So I am wandering around admiring pretty much everything and next thing I know a man comes up to me and quietly asks if I'm Bucky, the Mascot from Barry University. It's pretty hard to play my identity down given the pirate hat, sports jersey, boots and well, I am a parrot. A giant parrot. So I say, "Yes, that's me," and he asks me to follow him.



Suddenly I am in a different room, far away from any other tourists and there are a bunch of priests surrounding another priest. I. Just. Froze. It was Pope Francis. In person. He was new to the job, but I recognized him from the news. Bird brain jokes aside, Bucky doesn't forget a face. I broke out in a cold sweat, my feathers were sticking together and I kept looking around trying to find someone to pinch me because I didn't know if this was really happening or if maybe I tripped on the marble steps of the chapel, knocked myself unconscious and was dreaming. Nope, I was awake.

Apparently my Barry University VIP pass was for more than the Sistine Chapel. Waaaaayyyy more. I had heard of Papal Audiences but this was different. This was just me and the Pope. No one else. I, Bucky the Buccaneer of Barry University, received a special Blessing of the Animals by Pope Francis – he is after all named after St. Francis, my patron saint. And hang on to your pirate cap, the blessing wasn't just for me. He sent out blessings to all the Barry teams, the professors, the student body, the employees – all of us. He asked if we had soccer and said he's a big sports fan and wished everyone a great season.



I was so pumped and inspired and flattered and honored after the blessing, I think I might've

yelled, "Go Barry Go!" and I invited him to come visit and catch some of our games. You never know. I was on Cloud Nine, but that's also when it hit me – I had a serious case of homesick and I just knew right then and there, it was time to start heading back to Barry to cheer on my Buccaneers. *Especially since I had just invited the Pope to come to our games and I had blessings to deliver.*

Before parting ways (he had work to do) he wished me safe travels and suggested a few cities I might want to visit. Travel tips from the Pope. #GodReallyIsMyCo-pilot. The rest of the afternoon was a complete and totally amazing blur.

Nov 26, 2013 12:04 pm 0 Notes

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Adventures in Africa



Victoria Falls. What a paradise! And not just because it was warm. Gorgeous from either side in Zimbabwe or Zambia, but on the Zambia side I was an adrenaline junkie and went white water rafting – anaconda are not as big as in the movie but they're big enough. In Zambia, I also rode the Zambezi Swing in the Batoka Gorge. Best. Day. Ever. I met these recent graduates from Japan who were on gap year (when you take off a year after graduation before you start working – must be nice) while I was in Romania and they told me all about it. Yo, so you get strapped into a harness which is connected to a long cable and that cable is attached to another long cable that stretches across the entire gorge. Then you creep onto this ledge and choose a) forward, b) backward or c) death drop – I did death drop – and you stand with your feet up to the edge of this ledge and then lean back out into the gorge while some dude holds onto your harness. THEN–



PHOTO BY WHATLEYDUDE/FLICKR.COM

— they let go of the harness and you
 BUUUUUCCCCAAAANNNNNNNEEEEEEEERRRRRRSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS!!!!!!! plummet on your back 160
 feet straight down at 112/mph in free fall with the sky and gorge walls and life passing you by
 until the cable snaps hard and you pendulum swing across the whole gorge and above the tree
 tops, laughing your butt silly. Pure awesome. And that's coming from someone who can fly. It's
 about a 20-minute hike back out the gorge to the top. Don't even get me started on the abseiling
 and rap jumping.



PHOTO BY CALLE V H/FLICKR.COM

There were plenty of choice opps to go on safari in Africa but as soon as I neared a game park in

Kenya I realized a giant parrot looks like an all-you-can-eat buffet to lions and hippos and basically every carnivore in the “Lion King” and I had no intention of being part of the circle of life right then and there. So Hakuna Matata my safari knowledge is limited to Animal Planet and Nat Geo. I did fly past Kilimanjaro though – could even see people climbing. But the altitude made me dizzy so I didn’t reach the peak and stake a Barry flag. Sorry guys. As soon as I was rested enough, I headed back north. It was touch and go flying over Northern Africa so I pretended to be a parrot from Morocco. Before you know it I was sitting on a train in Brindisi, Italy heading to Roma. And what happened next was epic.

Nov 22, 2013 10:16 am 0 Notes

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Bucky in the Baltics

So as I was saying, Russia might have the world’s largest art collection, but it wasn’t the world’s best. I knew where I could find that but it was going to take some time before I got there. There were places to see, people to meet, games to catch. I took off from Russia and flew down to the Baltics – Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. So Estonia, y’ever see the video when that guy Skele made that insane back-handed hoop-unseen bucket shot on the court just to keep the ball in play? Not saying my cheering converted to nothing but net, but yeah, Bucky was there.



Pretty cool church in Tallin, Estonia. St. Olav’s is the unluckiest church in the world –was built by the Danish in the 1300s. Tallin was called Taani linn which is Danish for – wait for it — Danish Town (yeah, not very creative). So the church has been struck by lightning like 10 times and totally burned down three times. The KGB used the spire for radio surveillance until the fall of Communism. It rained the whole time I was in Latvia, so I stayed in bed at the youth hostel and read *Enders Game*. Met a lady riding a cart pulled by a donkey in Lithuania. Parts of the country reminded me of Borat but the place really is a hidden jewel.



I took a train and then a bus north and visited the Hill of Crosses in Šiauliai, which lemme tell you was pretty freaky. Picture it, two huge hills filled with around 200,000 crosses all different sizes and made of different materials. For centuries people made pilgrimage there pleading for miracles and left their crosses behind. Then after an uprising against some Tsar in 1831 people left crosses in memory of the rebels that were killed. The place looks like a cemetery for crosses, but there are no bodies there.



From there I headed to Romania – skipped the drab architecture of Bucharest and went straight to Transylvania and Dracula's castle – dude was real and called Vlad the Impaler. He might not

have been a real vampire but when you line the exterior wall of your castle with the heads of your enemies, it's close enough. It puts a chill up your spine. But that could also have been the weather. It was freezing! I had to make a choice at this point – stay in Europe, head to the Middle East or take a leap of faith and go south. And when I say leap. I mean a real leap. I was Africa bound – to the Victoria Falls.

Nov 12, 2013 12:50 pm 0 Notes



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To Russia, With Love

Before they went communist, the country knew how to mandate luxury. St. Petersburg (Russia, not Florida) is full of palaces. Back in the days of Peter the Great, they banned building in stone (meaning palaces) in every region except St Petersburg. That's how the czar made sure all the aristocracy's money stayed close by. There are more than 30 palaces in St. Pete. And they make Vizcaya look like a McMansion.

I had two sites I wanted to see – thanks Trip Advisor. Winter Palace/Hermitage Museum and Spas na Kravi - The Church of Our Savior on Spilled Blood. Checkity check both of those from my Buck(et)y list.



So the Winter Palace/ Hermitage Museum. 1,786 doors, 1,945 windows, 1,500 rooms and 117 staircases. G'head, Wiki it – It's just over-the-top crazy. Oh, to have been a bird during Catherine's (and later Nicholas's) time and seen the place before the massive fire of 1837. I mean seen for real – they used to have rare exotic birds flying around in heated courtyards. In the dead of winter. And I don't mean some brisk Miami toss-on-ur-Barry-U-hoodie winter. I mean dead of winter where you drop dead from exposure. Nearly all of the palace was destroyed in the fire and Nicholas had it all rebuilt – in under a year. 6,000 workmen working day and night. Whip cracking

czar.

The Palace is also the site of the famous Sunday Massacre of 1905. The Sunday Massacre in Russia was the beginning of the end for Imperial rule. A peaceful workers protest ended w/ massive casualties. Years later during the war, the palace was turned into a hospital. Then came the Bolsheviks and then anarchy and the palace was looted.



Fortunately the looting didn't make it to the Hermitage. The Hermitage was/is the three adjoining palaces to the Winter Palace. That's how much space Catherine the Great needed for one seriously huge shopping addiction.

Catherine was a royal shopaholic. She bought furniture and collected art like she was shopping at Costco. After she died and Nicholas I took over, he turned the Hermitage into a public art gallery. It was Russia's first art museum and it's where I feasted my eyes on the largest collection of paintings in the world. More than three million pieces of artwork. It took me two days to view and I really have no idea if I saw everything. But being a Buccaneer, I'm partial to the Treasure Gallery. *I kept my wings to myself and left empty-handed, I promise.*



Next up, Spas na Kravi - The Church of Our Savior on Spilled Blood – it's the one you see in photos - you know, with the multi-colored painted onion looking things on the roof – you can see it from everywhere in the city. Even sticking out from the Palace/Hermitage. They built it smack on the spot where Alexander II was assassinated, ergo the name (he was the Liberator that set the peasants free ending serfdom for all you history buffs). The church, which is more like a memorial chapel to me, is full of mosaics – 23,000 feet of mosaics- so if you aren't into mosaics, you might be more impressed with the outside than the inside.

Nov 8, 2013 11:57 am 0 Notes

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A Buccaneer in Beijing. That's one Great Wall.

Hey ho all you Buccaneers, or as they say in China – Ni hao! You might remember when we last left the Adventures of Bucky I was in Australia and the dive master at the Barrier Reef was talking about the wonders of the world and when I heard about the Great Wall I flittered me timbers and was Seven Wonder bound.

Well on the flight over I learned a thing or two. Or seven. There are more than seven wonders in the world. More like, 28. Plus a bunch of runner-ups. Did you know that? Cause I didn't. The Barrier Reef is one of the Seven Natural wonders. The Great Wall of China is one of the Seven Wonders from the Middle Ages. There are Seven Wonders in the Natural, Ancient, Modern and Middle Age world. So when you hear someone say something is a seven wonder asked them which kind. You'll look smart.



I was flying along wondering about this wonder - how it was built and rebuilt over centuries and how it protected the empire. What a wall! At one point in time it was more than 1,300 miles long. That's Miami to New York *as the parrot flies*. I was flying along wondering about this wonder and how it was built and rebuilt over centuries and how it protected the empire.



China made me kick myself for not getting a smart phone with an international plan so I could share in real time. I would have posted me at Tiananmen Square - where that student stood in front of a tank during a protest. And The Forbidden City where the emperor once lived - you couldn't enter without an invite from him and his palace had 8,700 rooms. Eighty seven hundred. That's almost one room for every student at Barry - undergrad and graduate combined.

I also visited the Beijing Zoo - that was crazy scary. First thing I did was head over to the pandas. Don't be a panda hater, I'm man enough to say I like me the pandas. But seriously, I almost didn't make it out of there. This guy from the zoo started running after me yelling (no clue what he was saying) and I think he must've thought I was an escapee. I was flying at top speed yelling, "I'm an American mascot! I'm an American Mascot! Look at my pirate hat! Call the embassy!" but he just looked at me with this expression like "Yeah, that's what the panda said." Note to self - avoid ZOOS.

When it came time to rest my wiped out parrot head and catch some zzzs I thought I had it all under control - what better place to stay than in a place called the Bird's Nest, right? I mean, I am a bird. Except, it wasn't really a nest. The Bird's Nest is what they call the Olympic Stadium. I'm a big #FF of @AiWeiWei, the artist you see in documentaries who does these crazy cool installations and gets in trouble for criticizing the government and speaking his mind. He helped design The Bird's Nest and in theory it had my name written all over it. But the nest was just exposed metal around the top of the stadium. And well, how do I say this delicately... It wasn't comfortable and Beijing is polluted. Seriously polluted. No wonder people wear masks.



I wound up spending a few days in the 798 Art Zone and it was brilliant. Military factories turned into artist galleries, with fashion designers and hipster hotels and phenom restaurants – reminded me of Wynwood Walls and Art Walk.

I didn't last very long in China. I followed the wall for a bit, made my way to Mongolia –hopped a Trans-Siberian train and next thing I knew, I was in Russia.

Nov 4, 2013 12:04 pm 0 Notes



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Bucky Down Under

Hey yo Barry Buddies – I know, I know, I've been MIA from MIA and people have been wondering what I've been up to for the past two years. Was I kicked off campus? Was I kidnapped by aliens? Did I get into a cock fight somewhere and wind up breaded and fried next to a side of fries? No. No. And No. As some of you might remember, I literally lost my head, so I asked Sister Linda for a sabbatical and I went out and about. Seeing the world. Meeting new people. Catching the sites and recharging my batteries so I can cheer my fellow Buccaneers on and show that school spirit like I mean it. Over the next couple of weeks I'll share some of my adventures with you if you're interested. I got around, that's for sure. Ready? Steady? Off we go!

So it all started with my Cousin Colin (King Parrot from my mom's side) tweeting me about how great life was in his hometown of Sydney. That's Australia. #SurfsUp #UrMissingOut

#OurBeachesAreBetterThanYours. Life was awesome at Barry, but I was getting itchy wings and felt like I needed to stretch my feathers. And I thought Down Under, why not? Gorgeous weather, beautiful sites, and maybe I'd finally learn how to surf.



So I grabbed my pirate hat and left the machete behind (it would never clear TSA and I figured at some point during my travels I'd want to let someone else to do the flying) and set out for the open yonder. It took days to get there and boy were my arms tired. *Yeah, that's not so funny when you're actually doing the flying. I should've hitched a ride with the cargo ship when I had the chance.* Colin wanted to make sure we'd find each other – so we met up on the **Sydney Opera House**- as one of the first sites I saw it was pretty stellar – I couldn't decide if it looks like a bunch of sideways birds beaks or like ship sails – I'm a bird and a Buccaneer so either way it made me feel right at home. They had great performances lined up but I was travelling on a budget and promised Sister Linda back home it would be a piracy free trip – no plundering to pay for things.



Colin said backpackers like to climb to the top of **Sydney Harbor Bridge** so we flew over and sure enough there was a group of university students hooked in and climbing. They wanted to get a bird's eye view of the city and I thought *Rock on, birds eye view is where it's all at*. From what I could tell, they were loving it—except for this one guy that dropped his phone into the Harbor when he was taking a selfie. Good on ya' mate! – *just so you know Australians really get annoyed when you say that over and over and over – like... a... parrot. It's kinda like saying "howyoudoooooin" and "fuggedaboutit" to every person you meet from New York.*

OK, so making the dream come true - **Bondi Beach** – Surf Lesson Day 1. SMH! #UberFAIL. Colin's board is painted like a tree so it looks like he standing on a perch, it's pretty sweet – he can ride waves like no bird's business and even walk up and down the board. As much as I'd like to say that I took to it and was ready to grace the covers of Surfer magazine, the one time I managed to stand up I was too freaked out about all the sharks and I kept flying off instead of riding. So I kinda just hung out on the beach and chatted up these birds visiting from England and promised them I'd stay in touch and visit. If you ever get to Australia, Safety First – put on a ton of sunscreen. Tourists are easy to spot – they look like lobsters. The sun is way stronger there than Miami.

Colin was bar none the best tour guide – we saw **Ayers Rock in the Red Center** – a seriously mystical place for the Aborigine. Australia really does have some amazing food and bonus – we found a couple of Cuban restaurants back in Sydney and I was able to get a *cortadito*. Sweet relief, I really thought I was going to go through withdrawal.



I was reading some travel blogs one night and everyone kept saying the **Great Barrier Reef** was a must see. It's the world's largest living coral reef with more than 3000 individual reef systems and bonus they had parrotfish and I thought *parrotfish? I'm all over this*. So we flew over. Guess what?



A **parrotfish** is not a parrot that can swim. It's a fish that looks like a parrot. D'oh. Learned that the hard way. Parrots don't scuba dive. Enough said. But the dive instructor on our catamaran said the Great Barrier Reef was one of the Wonders of the world, like the Great Wall of China... and I thought... China? See 'ya, Colin! This Buccaneer has gotta fly.

🕒 Oct 30, 2013 10:07 am ✎ 0 Notes



📍 AUSTRALIA SYDNEY DOWNUNDER BARRYUNIVERSITY COLLEGELIFE WORLD TRAVEL
WANDERLUST BONDIBEACH AYERS ROCK GREAT BARRIER REEF PARROTFISH

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I'm making my rounds throughout South Florida in anticipation for my triumphant return to Barry University! Follow my adventures around as I make my way back to Barry University!

Oct 29, 2013 6:07 pm 2 Notes



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