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## My Introduction to the Great Barrier Reef

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Thursday, May 14, 2015

# My Introduction to the Great Barrier Reef

Lea Dolimier, 2016 Cohort

In the belief that we can bring groups of people together around something as essentially simple and common as water, the wonders of the Ocean in Whitsunday definitely proved so. Whitsundays is the lower extent of the Great Barrier Reef in Australia. This past weekend 23 other water adventures and I, along with our three incredible crew members, boarded a catamaran and took off for the outer reef for two nights. Having known no one before embarking, we all quickly began to chat like old friends as the excitement of the coming weekend mounted.



Over the next few days I was able to do three snorkels and my FIRST dive ever. There is certainly something magical about the first moment when you look under the water. A whole colorful, chaotic world, unlike any that can be found on land, opens up in front of you. An everlasting scene of colorful corals and fish of all sizes going about their daily routine as you, a guest in their world, can do nothing but gape at the wonders below.

The whole trip was beautiful. After hours spent in the water and exploring the world renowned Whitehaven beach, nights were then spent with cups of tea and sunsets, followed by long twilight conversations below a star filled sky. This is where we built our community and grew as a group. All world travelers, we shared adventure stories and swapped facts about the various countries we came from. The fun lasted long into the night. After a short nap we woke early to watch the sunrise over the horizon and did it all over again.

I learned so much about the world from people from many different places and with so many different perspectives. And the more I heard the more I needed to see.

Then, as most things do in Australia, the excursion ended with a party on land later that night. After a few drinks and lots of dancing we said our farewells and good lucks and went our separate ways. My time with these two dozen people may have been brief, but their stories have touched and inspired me nonetheless.

I will say that at first I was nervous about traveling this trip on my own, but having done it

I would highly recommend it. It forces you to meet and really get to know new people and you will see that many people are wandering too on their own.



Lastly to anyone who has not had the chance to explore the depths of that magical thing we call water - which makes up our world and allows us to live- DO IT! The ocean is one amazing place that will really open your eyes to the unbelievably unimaginable things that our planet is capable of creating.