Woods By Bill Bryson As A Parallel To My Adventure In Mexico

Over the summer, I took a trip to Cancun, Mexico with my mom and brother. It was a 7hr flight to get there, where we stayed in an all-expenses-paid resort, GR Solaris Cancun. We spent a whole week in Mexico exploring its beaches, cenotes, learning about the Ancient Mayan civilization, as well as crossing off one of the Seven Wonders of the World off our bucket list, Chichen Itza. A Walk in the Woods by Bill Bryson is very much a parallel to my adventure in Mexico. Bryson's hike through the Appalachian Trail is similar to my tour of Chichen Itza where I experienced an amazing scenic view and learned about its history.

I wasn't just gonna be cooped up in my hotel room enjoying the pool and the beaches and say I went to Mexico. It was my first time traveling outside of the country that wasn't the Philippines and I was going to make the most of it. A very cool experience for me was swimming in Mexico's cenotes. The cenotes were these underground swimming caves/holes that I later learned were caused by collapsed limestone bedrock. We got to swim in two different cenotes, one with blue water and one with green water, both with fish. The one memory I will never forget and will cherish for life was the visit to Chichen Itza, one of the Seven Wonders of the World. It was the second to last stop of our tour where we had already visited a Mercado, or market, a small and beautiful Mexican town, saw how authentic Mexican food was cooked, as well as eating authentic Mexican food, and would later swim in a Mayan sacred cenote. When we got to Chichen Itza our tour guide, who grew up in the area, taught us about the history of the Ancient Mayan civilization and facts about the Mayan architecture that was leftover from the ancient city of Chichen Itza.

To say you've been somewhere means you've experienced the culture, the food, the music, its people, as well as bringing something back on your trip home, whether that be a souvenir or a new way of thinking. I can surely say that I have been to Mexico and I have fallen in love with the incredibly hard-working people there, the amazing food, their awesome music, and not only did I bring back souvenirs, but I brought back a new respect for the Mexican culture and the Ancient Mayan Civilization that is still alive and well today.

The book, A Walk in the Woods by Bill Bryson, mirrors many of the amazing memories I have made in Mexico. Although my travels weren't hiking the Appalachian Trail, Bryson's trip seems to portray the amazing and very informational scenic trip I had to Chichen Itza. "The Appalachians are the home of one of the world's great hardwood forests—the expansive relic of the richest, most diversified sweep of woodland ever to grace the temperate world [..]" (Bryson, Page 2). Already in just the first two pages, Bryson gives information about the most famous hiking trail. This is not the first time he does this in the book. As he goes on in the book, he talks about the history of the Appalachian Trail which is a parallel to when I went through Chichen Itza learning about its history. Bryson also states in the book, "The route led down into a wooded valley with a chuckling stream edged with brittle ice, which the path followed for perhaps half a mile before taking us steeply up into denser woods. This was, it quickly became evident, the base of the first big hill, Frosty Mountain, and it was immediately taxing. The sun was shining and the sky was a hearty blue, but everything at ground level was brown —brown trees, brown earth, frozen brown leaves—and the cold was unyielding." (Bryson, Page 25). This

is where our adventures differ. Bryson begins his hike through the Appalachian Trail during the cold which he describes as “unyielding”. My trip to Mexico was during the summer and the visit to Chichen Itza was an hour of standing in the burning in the sun admiring the ancient city.

My summer experience left me with immense love for Mexican culture. The people are beyond hard-working and the food, music, and art of Mexico is amazing. I also left Mexico with new respect for the Ancient Mayan civilization, which is still alive and well today. I never realized how advanced the Mayan civilization was. Their architecture and carvings seem to be so ahead of its time. They built their temples and buildings to line up with astronomical events and their carvings thoroughly depict what the Mayans believed.