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Welcome to College Bound Intern Edition, we're your hosts. I'm Catherine O'Leary.

00:00:05:05 - 00:00:06:13

I'm Tajae Thompson.

00:00:06:26 - 00:00:08:09

and I'm Hailey Oppenlander.

00:00:08:20 - 00:00:11:13

And we are here to give you the student take on Notre Dame.

00:00:14:21 - 00:00:35:14

Hello. Welcome back to another episode of College Bound Intern Edition. We are your hosts. My name is Catherine and I'm joined by Hailey and Tajae. And today we're talking about South Bend, which is where Notre Dame is, I hope you know that, and all the great things you can do while you're here. And so we actually are joined by a special guest today, Indy Brown. And so, Indy, would you please introduce yourself for us?

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Yes. So my name's Indonesia Brown, but I go by Indy. I'm a junior living in Johnson Family Hall on campus. I'm from South Bend. Obviously, that's why I'm the guest star on this episode, majoring in political science and psychology with minors in journalism and Africana studies. And my fun fact, something I do on campus is I work with the football team.

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Oh, that's awesome. So, yeah, we're talking about all things South Bend today, and I'm excited for this episode because I have certainly bonded with South Bend. And it's always lovely trying new restaurants and just doing different activities, especially not being from the Midwest. I don't know how much time, you know, I might never come back here to live and I'm always going to visit. But I really wanted to embrace South Bend. And so I think we all encourage you to do the same. And so that's kind of why we're doing this episode. And so we're going to start with the most fun topic, which is obviously food.

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And so, Hailey, would you tell us about your favorite restaurants and yeah, just favorite restaurants of South Bend?

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Yeah, I'd say my favorite restaurant is Rocco's. It's a pizza place. And I went there with my freshman year humanities seminar and we just had a really great time. It was the first time I tried pineapple pizza and it was actually pretty good. But they have a lot of different pizza options and it's just a really fun environment there, too.

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So Indy, as our local, as our SBN resident here, please enlighten us on the, I know the big debate is between Bruno's Pizza and Rocco's Pizza. And I was just wondering, what are your thoughts and how do we feel about that?

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Yes, so my family is divided between Bruno's and Rocco's, I'm a Rocco's girl myself, my family's all big Bruno's fans and actually there's a big rivalry between the two restaurants because Mr. Bruno had his restaurant and Rocco, apparently worked there. And after a few years of working in his restaurant, being one of his head cooks, he left and started his own restaurant and made his own business. And they both kind of like competed over the years. I guess it had a little bit of a rivalry between them in the restaurant. So I would definitely encourage everybody to go try both pizzas and tell me what you like most.

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I mean, once again, I'm a Rocco's person, so I'm going to like the people who say Rocco's a little bit more, but I respect Bruno's as well. Bruno's is not bad, but Rocco's is where my heart's at.

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Yeah, that is Notre Dame folklore if I've ever heard it, or maybe not Notre Dame but South Bend folklore. I love that. I love that. So, OK, so besides those as a pizza debate in New York, tell us where else we need to go. Like what restaurants do you like?

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I'm a big fan of mac and cheese and grilled cheese. Maybe I just really like cheese. So Chicory Cafe is my go-to place. I went there in high school with my friends. I still go there now. Like I said, their grilled cheese is amazing and I could eat way too much of it. So I probably need to stop that. But it's really good. I really like it. Also Nick's Patio, which is not too far off campus, and some students go there after football games. That's a nice little homestyle restaurant open 24 hours a day. That's also like a family favorite. My family will always go and sit down at Nick's patio, and there's breakfast items all day.

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And I'm a big fan of pancakes even at midnight. So that's always fun to have that type of food and it's homestyle. So it's always a little bit better than just regular fast food. And then I'm a big snack person as well. So one place that I was told that people don't have everywhere else is Ben's Pretzels. There's one in the mall. It is the best soft pretzel that you will ever have in your life. We have an Auntie Anne's in the mall, too, which is fine. That's good. OK, but Ben's Pretzels is where it's at. I love it. I always go with cheese. But you can always go with, like, cinnamon sugar route too.

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It's amazing. It's like an Amish-style doughnut, so it's like from around here, kind of local to the area. So I would definitely recommend it, especially if you head out to the mall. And then I'm also a big donut fan. So like pretzels and donuts, my type of party, and Jack's Donuts opened up not too far from campus. They're really good. Nice donuts. Also Rise n' Roll, which is in Mishawaka. They have these cinnamon sugar donuts that are to die for. And my mother knows that when she brings them home for us to eat, she has, like, make sure she knows, like, you can only get three because there's four of us in the household.

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So, like, don't eat somebody else's donut because we will all be upset if you eat our donuts. So you have to share. My mom has to kind of monitor the kitchen table to make sure nobody takes a donut that doesn't belong to them because she knows that we'll all take each other's donuts if not.

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Wow. No, I totally agree. Everything you mentioned, I've tried every half of the things you mentioned, but they're all so good. So these are great recommendations. I did want to mention, you said Nick's Patio. And so we're, you know, we're here to tell you about the culture. And I think you have to mention the two nicknames that Nick's Patio has, which are the "Natio" and the more controversial one, which is the "Paschio." I'm more of a Natio girl myself, but just so you come prepared, you know, you can speak the language, but thank you Indy.

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Those are great recommendations. Tajae, you're up next. What you got?

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Yeah. So this might not be exactly food, but I am a hot chocolate connoisseur. I love hot chocolate. Ghirardelli store in Chicago, Ghirardelli store in Orlando. I adore it. So I had to go to the South Bend Chocolate Cafe and try their hot chocolate because they have a dark chocolate, hot chocolate, a white chocolate, hot chocolate and a milk chocolate hot chocolate. OK, say that three times fast, but I really enjoyed it. I tried the milk chocolate just kept it classic and it was really good. Great experience. I know they have ice cream there, so maybe when I, one day, I'll get back in the summer and I'll be able to try that.

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So really excited.

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I highly recommend the mint chocolate chip ice cream. I'm a big fan of mint chocolate ice cream. They call it the grasshopper ice cream at the South Bend Chocolate Cafe. Big recommend that. They have all different flavors there, though, and cheesecakes. I'm a big fan of cheesecake as well, and they have different types of cheesecake like homemade gigantic slices. Me and my friends in high school used to like to share a slice because it's so big and so rich. So maybe if you're with your roommate, go down to the South Bend Chocolate Cafe, share a slice of cheesecake or get some ice cream together.

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Oh, that's great. I love that. I got to go there too, man. I got two months left till I graduate. I got a lot to do. And for my recommendations, I think that it would be a crime for us to not mention Evil Czech, which is a very popular like, you know, your parents come to town and where are you going to take your friends out with them? You might go to Evil Czech. They're always pretty busy on the weekends, but like their fries are great. It's hearty food. And then I also wanted to speak on the coffee scene really quickly.

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So two coffee shops, I think are worth mentioning, the Zen Cafe and the General. They're kind of different vibes, but they're both good, the coffee is great. And so if you're a coffee connoisseur, I would definitely recommend. So moving on, just in terms of the things to do in South Bend, Indiana, Indy what's one of your favorite things to do in South Bend?

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So one of my favorite things to do is just go downtown, being here for my entire life, I was downtown a lot, but looking at the river lights, there's lights by the St. Joe River as it like wraps around downtown and they light them up and they'll change the colors throughout the year to match the different seasons and different holidays that are coming up. But there's also walking paths so you can kind of walk along the path, look at the river lights, and so it is a fun, like calm, serene time. Something else that I would suggest is the Japanese Gardens in Mishawaka. It's like a big garden area. Amazing place to take pictures.

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I took pictures there for prom my senior year of high school, so it's always fun, nice, pretty. So if you just need like a little photo shoot session with some of your friends, that would definitely be the place to go.

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Awesome. I, you know, you stumped me. I'd actually never heard of the Japanese gardens in Mishawaka. I know where I'm heading after this. Alright, Tajae, what do you think? Indoor activities.

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Yeah. So Indy, you actually mentioned downtown South Bend and I wanted to plug that our ID cards actually get us free transport on the South Bend buses. And the bus actually leaves from Library Circle, which is outside of Hesburgh Library. So it's really great if you don't want to spend the money on an Uber. If you don't have a car, you can just hop on the bus and get straight to downtown South Bend.

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Yeah, that's great Tajae, I'm glad you mentioned that, that's really true. Definitely an underutilized resource, which is something we talk about in one of our previous podcasts, and make sure to check it out. But, OK, for activities, honestly, I've got so many I want to mention, but I will stick to, I will say the farmers' market is an absolute must go see. They're open several days throughout the week, but a lot of people go on Saturday in the morning, and you can really get anything, you can get fresh produce and baked goods. You can get soaps and like essential oils.

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And my favorite station, this is pre-Covid times. But it was a bunch of different, like freshly baked breads and they would have cheeses and olive oils you could just dip. It was such a lovely sampling table. And so that's definitely one of them. And then another one, this is actually plugging a small business. This is not sponsored. It's this new business. I think they opened up about a year ago called the Bend Yoga. And so if you're a yogi and you're looking for an outlet, the studio is really cool. It's very small. There's just I think like one room, but the owner is great.

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And then when the weather's good, they actually do yoga outside. So that's a kind of another underutilized South Bend resource. So kind of moving on. Something we wanted to talk about is Notre Dame students getting connected in the South Bend community. And there's a lot of different ways you can do that. And so, Hailey, will you talk about one way Notre Dame students can get connected?

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Yeah, so I took a class my sophomore year called Immigrant America and we had a service learning component of the class. And so the organization that I volunteer with is called La Casa de Amistad. And they do a lot of work in the immigrant community and Hispanic or Latino community. And I was working with the citizenship program. So I got to go in once a week and tutor people who are studying for their citizenship test, which is really fun.

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That's awesome. Yeah, I also was able to volunteer at La Casa through a Spanish class as well, and I was working with freshmen in high school. And it was a great experience. The other organization I wanted to bring up is the Center for the Homeless, and I know that Notre Dame students do volunteer a lot with them. I know there's just like a lot of different things you could do with this organization. My scholarship program actually puts on a Christmas concert every year for this year for the Center for the Homeless. So I, you know, with my mediocre piano skills, and and it's always a great time.

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And Indy, I know you've mentioned that you've also worked with them as well. Right?

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Yeah, I've worked there a few times, actually, it's always such a fun time to go in and kind of see what they're doing to help out the South Bend residents and the South Bend community. And they actually have a lot of ties with Notre Dame just because Father Malloy, who was the president before Father Jenkins, there was a point in time where the Homeless Center, they were making a new building and right before Christmas time, an apartment complex burned down. And so you had a whole bunch of families who did not have anywhere to live, didn't have Christmas ready. And Father Malloy said we need to stop everything else we're doing and rebuild the center right now.

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And he worked to get the Center rebuilt. So they all had somewhere warm to go and somewhere to stay for the holidays. And he also worked on getting them presents and things for Christmas for the kids. So I know that they have a lot of Notre Dame ties. So they love having Notre Dame students go out and volunteer there as much as they can, just doing little things. I know that I volunteered working in the kitchen before, also just like other little sections and helping out as much as I can. That's always a little bit of fun.

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But I actually want to talk about one of my favorite organizations. Something that's very near and dear to me is the Robinson Community Learning Center. I went there when I was a student, when I was a kid growing up. I was from about the ages of five to about the age of 14. I was a participant at the Robinson Center. It's actually their brand new building is located right south of The Foundry, south of The Foundry Apartments on Eddy Street. You got to come in and kind of keep on walking southwards. It's going to be down there and actually going to be across the street from the new Trader Joe's. So you could go volunteer there and then also go pick up dinner or snacks from Trader Joe's.

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It's a win win for everybody. But at Robinson Community Learning Center, they, the Notre Dame students, tutor students, five year olds through 18 year olds, different courses and different things. And I just know that a lot of my tutors growing up formed great connections with me and helped me kind of grow and learn about who I was and what I was interested in and kind of challenged me even on some ideas growing up, which was always just nice to have those people who you trusted to work out some of those ideas with. And even to this day, some of my tutors that I had at the age of seven, eight, nine years old are still my friends, still check up on me.

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And when I got into Notre Dame, they were super excited for me because they were Notre Dame students here. It's always been a dream of mine to come here. So they got to kind of see my dreams come to fruition and got to see, like what dorm I'm living in. They're all kind of jealous because some of them lived in other dorms on campus. I'm in the newest dorm on campus. So, like, OK, you have AC in a working elevator actually up to working elevators. So that's definitely not fair. But we're happy for you.

So that's definitely a lot of fun to go spend like two hours a week. You go volunteer and tutor students, you have the same tutor, you tutor the same student all semester long.

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So you get to work with them and get to know them and kind of build up on that connection.

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Yeah, that's awesome. Thank you. That's a great organization. I know a lot of students tutor there and find it really fulfilling and thank you for sharing that. Yeah. Alright Tajae, round us out. What can we do in South Bend?

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Yeah. So another great service opportunity is Unity Gardens. And it's this community garden where they actually offer classes showing you how to plant your own food and even cooking classes on how to cook the food you planted. And it's just a great organization that helps to promote sustainable living as well as a healthy lifestyle. And I've been able I've had the opportunity to go once, and it was just a lot of fun. I was with my friends planting. They also have a little chicken coop there so you can get your eggs also. And then I know some dorms have service activities with Unity Gardens, and also dorms across campus just have plenty of service opportunities.

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Some partner with the Center for the Homeless. And it's just great service and the ND community is just great here.

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Thank you, Tajae. So we're going to close the episode down. But before we end it, we always ask our guests to share a piece of advice, generally episode relevant, but we'll take anything you got. You've given us some great content today. So Indy, would you care to share?

00:15:02:06 - 00:15:35:02

Yeah. So I think my biggest piece of advice is coming to South Bend, a lot of students come from bigger cities, so it's kind of hard to adjust because you're used to having, like, all these things to do. And there are a lot of things to do in South Bend. But they're not just going to be as big as being in Chicago or being in New York. And the biggest thing about South Bend is kind of finding the beauty and finding the treasures that you can and embracing them. I know growing up, one of my favorite things to do is going to like the duck park and feeding ducks, like bread and things of that nature. So it's some like smaller things, but definitely things you can get out and do with your friends.

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You kind of have to seek out those things. And obviously there's non-profits in the area that would love to have Notre Dame students come and volunteer. And this is the time of your life where you figure out what you're passionate about. So volunteering for a group that might change your trajectory and realize this is really what I want to do, I think that that's one of the biggest treasures that you have in a city like South Bend just because it's small enough that you can kind of try everything and get a little bit of taste of everything when you're here at South Bend.

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Yeah, thank you, that was totally great, I love that. Well, anyways, thank you all for joining us. Thank you indeed for joining us on the podcast. And make sure you follow us on social media @NDadmissions on basically every platform. And anyways, hope you have a great rest your week. Go Irish.