Lessons Learned as an Out-of-Shape American in France

January 16, 2020

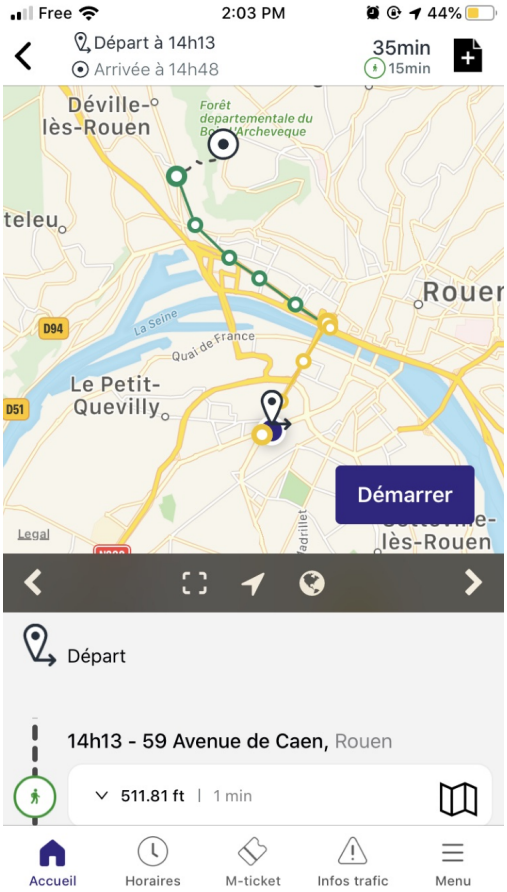


On my first day of class in Rouen, I assumed that the biggest struggle I would face would be waking up in time for my 8:30 a.m. class. I was feeling pretty confident when leaving my apartment at 7:45 (which, in theory, should have been plenty of time to get to my campus).

This is the story of how I was very wrong, and how my phone tricked me into a mile-long sunrise hike*:

*Rouen is so far north that the sun doesn't rise until 9 a.m. which makes it impossible to wake up in the morning.

7:45 a.m.: The Departure



The original directions. Doesn't it look so simple? That's what I thought, too

The Rouen transport app had predicted my route to take me 35 minutes, so I left with plenty of time for hiccups (is what I thought). I took two buses and arrived at the final bus stop at 8 a.m. The transport app tells me it's a 15 minute walk from here. Feeling good.

8 a.m.: Uncertainty Creeps In

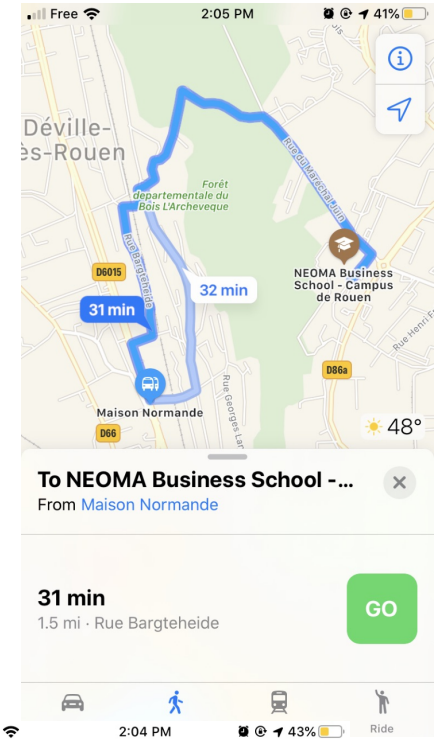
The transport app doesn't give me step-by-step walking directions, so I plug the address into my phone's app. To my right, a mountain, and sure enough, that's where that blue line was telling me to go. Except this route seemed longer, and told me it would take 30 minutes... Feeling less good in this moment.

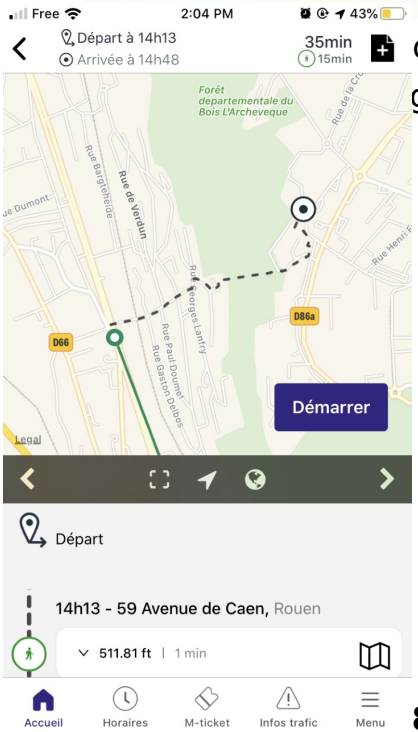
8:05 a.m.: Full-Out Panic

Five minutes into my walk and I've been on a steep incline the whole way. Praying most of this walk is flat after this.

8:20 a.m.: The Walk Is Still Not Flat

I’m realizing several things on this hike. First, my ETA did not take into account that this was a 60 degree incline and a very out of shape girl with a backpack. Second, I’m going to be not only extremely late to this class, but also extremely sweaty and out of breath. Third, I really need to start working out again.



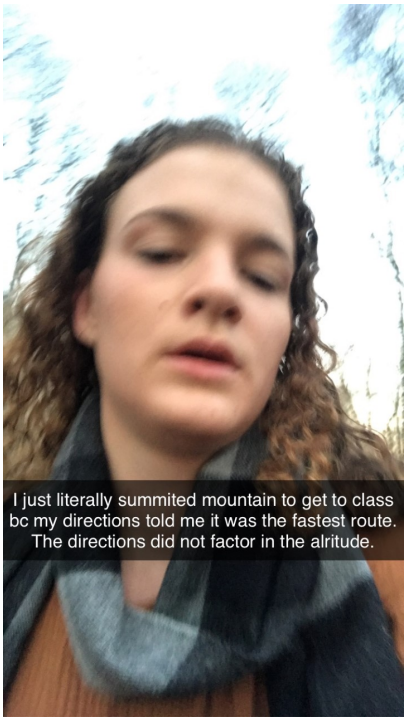


onflicting directions. Just goes to show we should gy, and robots are trying to take over the world.

8:30 a.m.: Can I Scale a 10-foot Wall?

I reach the point that the transport app said I could cross the forest (see photos). Apparently this transport app thought I could climb a 10-foot wall as well, because that was the only way to get to this shortcut. I won't lie, I actually did try to climb it but with no success. Great. Cool, it's fine, I'm fine.

8:50 a.m.: Dissociation The sun is rising, my hope is dwindling, but then suddenly, I look up, and I have reached the top of the mountain.



Please excuse spelling errors, I was in the midst of a real crisis while Snapchatting this.

9:00 a.m.: The Arrival

I'm only 30 minutes late to class (honestly wasn't sure I'd make it alive) and I'm even more sweaty and out of breath than I thought I'd be. After explaining to the professor why I was so late (which she was very apologetic and kind about), I became her go-to example for a project-gone-wrong for the rest of the class, which was really just the perfect cherry on top.

All in all, I learned several things that day. Firstly and most importantly, there is, in fact, a bus that takes you all the way up the mountain, so I will never be hiking to class again. Secondly, the professors and students at my new school are super funny and helpful as demonstrated by their reaction to my tale. Thirdly, there literally *ain't no mountain high enough to keep me from getting to [Project Management class]*.

And if I don’t get an A for that alone, I will be shocked.

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