

My family and I were in Dallas, Texas, preparing to fly out to the Caribbean for spring break when we got the news. Covid-19 was spreading across the world, and countries were shutting down. Worried over my family's health and the possibility of not being able to reenter the country, we canceled the trip. This was the first in a long list of cancellations. The pandemic started my senior year of high school, so there were several events I was looking forward to. I was in Latin since my Freshman year, and each year they had International Food Day, where all foreign language classes would gather and share food from different cultures. I would make a bread recipe recovered from Pompeii; a rounded loaf similar in taste to sourdough. It was my favorite day of the year, because it was a day that I got to relax, talk to friends, and try food I might not otherwise get the chance to eat. Canceled. This was the first year I planned to attend prom. I had spent hours searching for the perfect dress. Purple, floor length, with long angel sleeves. I was so excited to have a night where I could relax and see my friends. Canceled. I Had worked hard all four years of high school. Honor roll, Honor's Society, all As. And then it was time for graduation. Canceled. Then rescheduled. Graduation was hundreds of chairs six-feet apart, multi-colored masks in a sea of black robes, and handshakes in the form of nods and passed degrees. Unfortunately, this continued into college. The college I attend has the largest homecoming in the world. People come from all over to see the parade and experience the celebration, waves of orange and the smell of barbecue. Canceled. I was ready to meet new people and make friends through clubs and classes. Classes were spaced six feet apart and most were online, clubs weren't meeting, and it was impossible to recognize everyone with the mask. Canceled. While I recognize the importance of these cancellations, and I agree that they needed to happen, I miss what could have been. Warm bread, fresh tamales, and sweet baklava. Swirling dresses, loud laughter, and even louder music. Crowded auditorium, handshakes, and flying caps. Orange shirts, Garth Brooks, and smoked ribs. Smiling faces, first conversations, and long nights.