

My Erasmus experience in Paderborn

15/11/25-16/12/25

My host family

I consider myself very lucky because I got assigned to a really sweet and kind family.



I got close with everyone, especially with my exchange student Carolina. She always was very lovely and caring and she truly welcomed me into her life. I'm so grateful that I gained a friend like her and I'm happy that we still text daily.



From the first moment her family warmly integrated me into their routine. Her dad Gherard and her brothers Maximilian and Konstantin could speak English very fluently and her mom Sabine, even though she had some problems with the language, went out of her way just to talk to me and she made me feel very accepted and included.



The school

During my month in Paderborn I attended the Reismann Gymnasium, an highschool that we could say it's mainly sport-oriented. It is formed by many big buildings, one of which is a bit far from the others, and they are very modern.



This is the main entrance of the main building



This is the canteen where students could have lunch. Since my exchange student at the beginning of the year decided to not sign for the mensa I never went there.



This is the inside of the main building. Here students can sit in the tables during the breaks or during empty lessons.

| Stunde | Montag (GW) | (UG) | Dienstag | UG | Mittwoch | UG | Donnerstag | UG | Freitag | UG |
|---------------|--------------------------------|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1/2. | Deutsch C1.15 | Deutsch C1.15 | Pädagogik F1.54 | Pädagogik F1.54 | Englisch F1.53 | Englisch F1.53 | Russisch (mit EF) RB1.08 | Physik B1.21 | Deutsch C1.15 | Pädagogik F1.54 |
| 3/4. | Kunst (mit EF) F1.46 | Latein (mit EF) Valentino RB0.15 Technik Buddy wird benötigt | Biologie F2.50 | Biologie F2.50 | Deutsch C1.15 | Deutsch C1.15 | Sport (mit EF) E102 | Geschichte F1.54 | Geschichte F1.54 | Biologie F2.50 |
| 5. bzw. 5./6. | Englisch (mit EF) RB1.08 | Englisch RB1.08 | Sport E100 | | Mathe D1.05 | Mathe D1.05 | Erdkunde D1.05 | Erdkunde D1.05 | | Chemie F1.53 |
| 6. | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7. | Evangelische Religion F1.53 | Evangelische Religion F1.53 | | | Literatur B2.21 | Literatur B2.21 | Erdkunde D1.05 | Erdkunde D1.05 | | Chemie F1.53 |
| 8./9. | Literatur B1.21 | Literatur B1.21 | Physik B1.21 | Englisch F1.53 | Pädagogik F1.54 | Pädagogik F1.54 | Spanisch (mit EF) RB1.08 Buddy | Spanisch (mit EF) RB1.08 Buddy | Erdkunde D1.05 | Evangelische Religion F1.53 |

Esther

I also had my own timetable, which varied between even and odd weeks. I had lessons both with my exchange student and the exchange student of another italian girl who was on Erasmus in Paderborn with me. I had very different subjects than the ones I have in Italy and they were pretty hard to follow but every teacher was always respectful and kind to me, most of all the teacher who was in charge of the Erasmus program. Sometimes it happened that some lessons fell out and we could relax in school or go home earlier.

My typical day

● **MORNING:** During the week I used to wake up at 6 or 6:20 AM because we had to take the bus at 7 AM. We had school technically since 7:40 AM until 3:30 PM but it could change everyday. We used to have lunch at school: we took it from home or we bought it at a supermarket really near to the school



● **AFTERNOON:** I used to relax in my room but when Carolina wasn't busy we spent some time together by walking around her neighborhood, by watching the TV or by chatting. Sometimes we also hang out with some of her friends or we went to her cheerleading training.



● **EVENING:** We didn't have a set time for dinner but it happened that we ate all together and then we spent a lot of time talking at the table about everything. I really enjoyed those moments.



Cool activities

During my month abroad I had the opportunity of doing some very amusing and pleasant activities.

→ The first day Carolina and her parents took me around the city and to see the Paderborn Dome, that was very suggestive.



The city



The Dome



→ I often went to the Christmas market in Paderborn and once I also went to the one in Lippstadt, a town near Paderborn. They were very typical and unique.



Christmas market in Paderborn



Christmas market in Lippstadt

Cool activities

→ Once I went iceskating with Carolina, her friend Merle and Margherita, the other Italian girl who was on Erasmus with me. It was very funny and I had a really great time.



→ The school once organized an activity to reunite every exchange student who was on Erasmus in that period in the school: we baked some cookies with German and Slovak student and it was awesome.



→ I also went out with Carolina's friends and I loved every second with them: they were very kind and sweet and they included me the whole time by talking in English even if some of them had some difficulty.



→ Once I went bowling with Carolina, her parents and Margherita and we had so much fun.

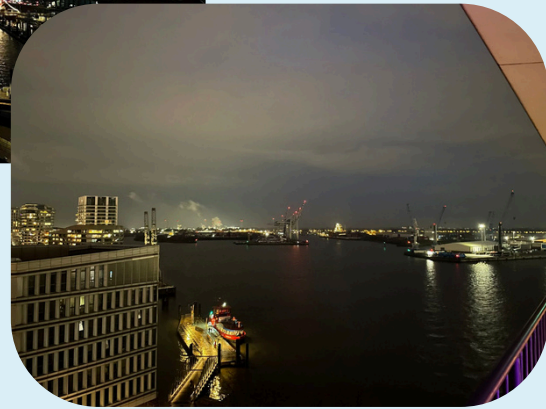


Cool activities

→ On the 6th and the 7th of December I went to Hamburg with Carolina and her parents and we visited the Miniatur Wunderland, the Christmas market and the Elbphilharmonie. Everything was stunning and I can't wait to go back there.



The view from the Elbphilharmonie



Hamburg city hall



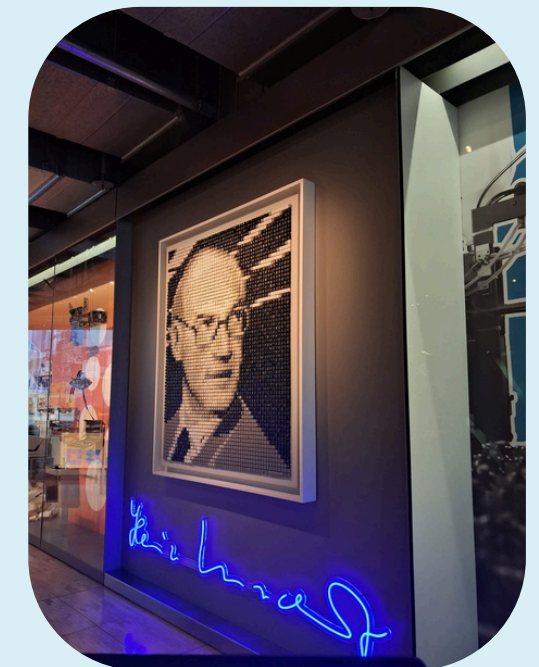
The Miniatur Wunderland



→ The school took us to watch "A Christmas Carol" at the Paderborn theater which was presented in English.



→ I went to the Heinz Nixdorf Museums Forum with Margherita

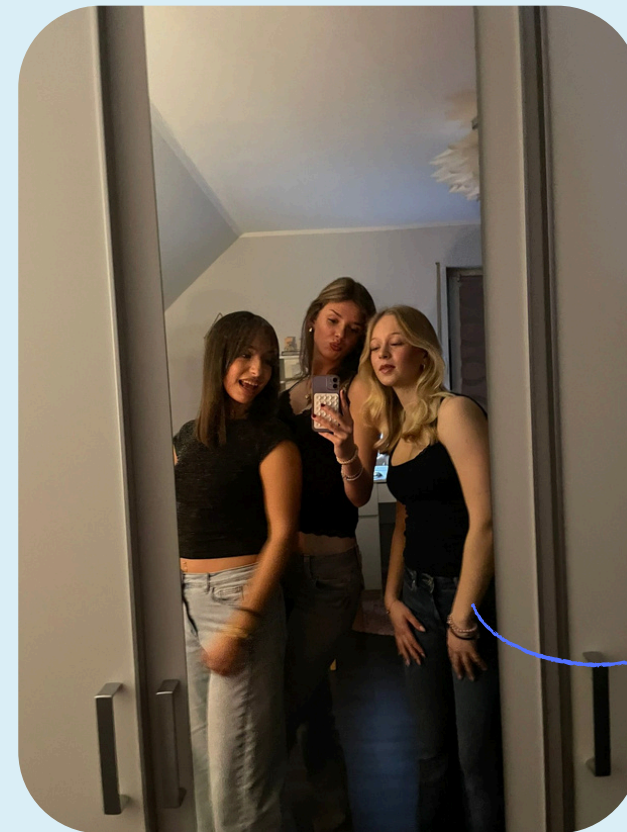


My new friends

I got close with some girls in Germany and also with Margherita and I'm really grateful because they are wonderful people.



Ilona



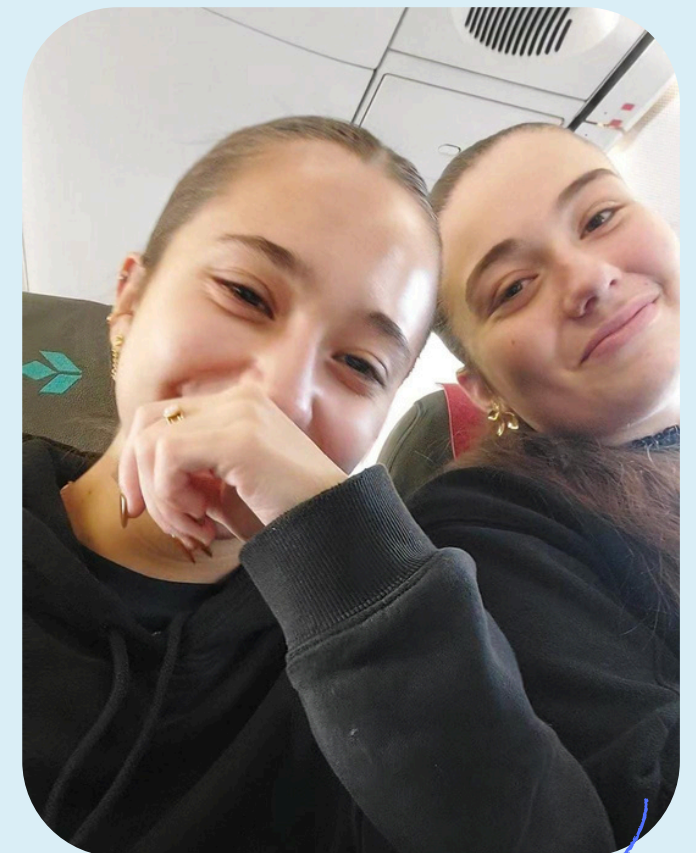
Finja

I also got close with Mia but we don't have pictures together unfortunately

Kiara



Somi



Margherita

Differences with Siena

THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

The school system is very different than the Italian one:

- in Germany students stay in school from 7.40 until 15.30
- students switch class every lesson, not teachers
- the school path is not divided in middle school and high school like ours in fact my exchange student was in the "12th year"
- the way professors and students interact with each other it's more similar to the way our university teachers do
- the grading system is based on numbers but the range goes from 1 (the best grade) to 6 (the worst grade)

THE CULTURE

Concerning the culture we could say that the main differences consist in:

- the food: not just the dishes are different but also the mealtimes
- the religion: I noticed that in Paderborn the religion fervor is stronger than it is in Siena

THE CITYSCAPE

While Siena it's a typical medieval city, Paderborn it's mainly renaissance so the way they look is very different.

Would I recommend it? Would I do it again?

When I signed up for Erasmus I couldn't hide that I was scared because I knew that it would've been a hard challenge for me. But my curiosity took over and I am very glad it did.

This experience has been life changing for me: it didn't just improve my skills in English but also my confidence and it really helped me with my social anxiety. Even during the hard days, because it isn't always easy to live a month abroad, I was encouraged to make the most of every moment because no matter how many times I travel abroad in the future, this experience is one of a kind and that's why I made sure to live it 100%.

I will for sure recommend it to everyone and I would do it again now if I were asked.

