

Selina Preisig - Ireland

I always imagined what it would feel like to be abroad, to live with a host family and get to know people from another culture. And guess what? That's what I'm doing right now. I'm sitting on the most comfortable chair in an Irish living room, feeling the warmth from the stove next to me while I'm overthinking my last 6 months and trying to summarise it by finding the right words. I'm Selina and I'm one of the lucky 11 students, who got the chance to pause their apprenticeship and leave their home to go on a one-year journey, which consists of living and working in Ireland and Bordeaux.



Cultural discoveries

As soon as I got the news about my first destination being Ireland, I started packing everything I thought I would possibly need. But as soon as I was there for the first few weeks, it was clear that the most important thing I took with me was my umbrella. Ireland is well known for its rainy weather, and you'd think that Irish people's moods have adapted to it. But if anyone would ask me, what made the good time there, I'd say the people. I've never met such lovely, open-hearted, and humorous people. I used to think that Swiss people are the only ones, who greet strangers while walking on the street. But I found out, that that's the case with Irish people too.

Work experience

As probably everyone would do, I googled my work placement as soon as I got the information. John Dowling Shoes and Sportswear, the shop where I did my work experience over these 6 months in Ireland. Besides getting to know how to serve and advise customers, I learnt how to communicate and solve problems in English. In addition to that I got an insight into the retail industry, which was a new area for me back then. When I think about my time working there, it makes me want to smile because there was always time for funny conversations too. Like my boss tend to say, "we need a bit of a laugh". Thanks to this shop, I could discover the social media business which I really enjoyed dealing with. Every time we got new stock, I was responsible for doing the



photographs of the shoes and putting them up on the shop's website or on social media sites such as Instagram and Facebook. It made me become a lot better at photography and it was an interesting experience to do and upload social media content for a business purpose.

Host Family

I wasn't just lucky with my work placement; I got a lovely host family too. It consists of my host mom Elisabeth, my host dad David, my 7-year-old host brother Nathan and their female Dog Ella. Thanks to her, I'm not missing my dog at home too much. It's an unusual experience to live with people who seem like strangers on the first day and feel like your second family when you need to leave them. They took me on the most beautiful walks, lakes and they really made me feel like being part of their family, which I'm very thankful for.



Trips

My friends and I made a lot of trips to neighbouring towns as well as to Dublin, the capital city of Ireland. We usually organized trips over the weekend or visited other towns just for a day. Ireland has a lot of breath-taking places, thanks to the huge amount of nature. I'm sure you agree with me if you take a look at my pictures below.

Language development

When I wasn't working, going out with friends, or spending time with my host family, I had classes at language school. In the beginning, it was hard to understand what others were saying, no matter if the question was as simple as what I wanted to eat. I first had to learn that "cheers" is as well possible to mean thank you, that "I'm grand" means I'm fine, and if someone says "hi, how are you", this person doesn't always expect you to answer. After going to school twice a week for 5 months, I did the Cambridge English exam in the C1 level and passed



successfully. During this time abroad, I learnt that the most useful way to improve language skills is to not be afraid to speak, which is why I was following the motto "learning by doing". Especially in the beginning when you usually don't have a wide range of vocabulary, it's important to at least try and not to be ashamed of making mistakes. I'm very grateful that I was chosen to be part of the KV plus program, which gave me the huge opportunity to experience all this, to gain new life experience and of course a lot of self-confidence. With this experience, I am now going into the next semester with great curiosity, and I am really looking forward to the next 6 months in Bordeaux.