

My experience – exchange year United Kingdom

Hey, I'm Laura and lived for 8 months as an exchange student in an English host family close to London.

My exchange year – A short summary



An exchange year is an adventure and goes like a rollercoaster up and down. There is no „How to do“ list and no master plan to follow so that everything runs perfectly.

You jump into cold water and will have to fight with new problems, e.g. that you can't see your family and friends at home for a long time.

We laughed, we cried and we grew with every new experience but I enjoyed every second of my time in England and came home with a new way to see things.

A long way

My exchange year started when my neighbours decided to host an exchange student from America. This was something unusual but exciting in our little village close to Cologne and I was really interested in the stories she told me.

When she left after half a year I realized how boring it is to live all my life on one place in the suburbs and wanted to travel, to meet new people and see new places.

This was the first step on the long way to plan my exchange year and in the following months I started to prepare myself for my dreamland UK.

I had a goodbye party with all my friends and started to read books in English and on the 1st September 2014 I hugged my family on the airport for the last time in 8 Months.

Arrival in England

On time for my very first College-day I arrived at the Airport Gatwick in London. It was the first time for me that I flew completely alone but I met Silvia my Italian host sister there, who will live with me in the same family. Together we took a cab to “Royal Tunbridge Wells”, a town with a really long name and the place, which we'll call home the next time.

When we rang on the doorbell of number 38 in a street where every house looked similar, two really friendly people hugged and kissed us. To be honest, that was a bit much for the start and I suddenly forgot every English word I've ever learned but both were really kind and guided us to the kitchen where we met our other host sister Larissa from Switzerland.



My life in the host family



My host family is quite huge and the members are my host dad and my host mum, their oldest daughter and son who both don't live at home anymore, their youngest daughter who is 21 and is sometimes at home but most of the time in London to study and of course the two most important persons in my whole exchange year: My host sisters from abroad Silvia and Larissa who are now like real sisters for me.

Both are in my age and do an exchange year like me but luckily we were all three hosted by the same family because their home is really huge and they have enough time and space for us.

I spend my free time with my host sisters and we go to London to see Concerts and go shopping or relax on the beach in Brighton. But most of the time I'm in College or on school trips but more about this in the next chapter.



My College

The English school system is a bit different from the German and in my opinion at the beginning a bit strange.



But I got used to it after a while and chose four subjects in Hugh Christie Technology College. Biology, Geography, History and English for Internationals are my choices and I'm in school from 8.30 – 17.00 o'clock. That's a long day and when I'm home at 6, we eat dinner with the family and watch some TV after.

Between our lessons or during lunch break we hang around in the common room and go to the shops or to study in the library.

All in all, I'm quite happy with the College and all people are friendly and welcoming. We also have the chance to go on trips: for example, I went to London University and we were part of a lecture. Or we drove on the coasts of Dorset and saw many cities like Bournemouth and Swanage.



The best thing comes last

I can just say that an exchange year is absolutely worth it for everybody who is brave and wants to try something new.

It is not only good to learn a language fluent, it's also perfect to get to know what it means to be independent and responsible for everything you do.

You meet so many amazing new people and will have friends all over the world after the year.

Laura Jungbluth, from Germany, in UK 2014-15