

School exchange: Sweden

With our school, in spring 2010, with the help of our English teacher and our Maths teacher we took part in a school exchange with a Swedish school, which is in Nässjö, in the south part of Sweden.

In March a group of students came to Verona from Sweden and in May it was our turn to go there. Since about a month before the arrival of the Swedish group, we started to organize what we should do in the week in which the Swedish guys were hosted here. For example, we planned a small tour around the main monuments of Verona, giving some details as tourist guides do, a daily trip to Venice, a daily tour in the main towns of Lake Garda.

When they finally came here we felt excited, we tried to put all the people at their ease but I'm sure it was quite difficult for them to totally change their habits. We succeeded in doing about everything we had planned in that week. It was interesting both for us and for our new friends. At the beginning I think they felt like foreigners in a different country but at the end of that week I don't think they were as homesick as when they came here. In May we would go to Sweden and between March and May we spent plenty of time talking about the experience and wondering about our future week there. In May it was our turn to fly there. It is difficult to explain how we felt before the take off, but I'm sure everyone was, on one hand, scared because of this new experience we were going to go through, but, on the other hand, it is still now one of the most thrilling moments I can remember. We took off from Bergamo airport all wondering how we could manage to speak only English, how to live one week with unknown people, in a totally different family. We can say we were a bit scared and worried, of course. And all these emotions mixed together grew dramatically when we reached the small town. I clearly remember that the first two days were very difficult. Even if our hosting family tried to make us feel at home, I felt homesick. But after we had familiarized with the place we immediately felt better. We became a happy group and built strong friendships. The last day is still in our memory: people crying, people hugging each other. It was hard to say goodbye to them, after only two weeks of life together. What was the hardest thing to get used to? Certainly the food: it is very common for them to eat dishes from other countries (such as Indian rice) but sometimes they mix dishes from different countries: I'm talking about pizza-kebab, which is pizza with kebab sauce and kebab meat on it. Never in Italy. What do I remember with more pleasure? The way they take care of their city. It was clean, not crowded, not polluted, with a lot of green areas. It is an aspect of civilization that we are losing in Italy. What about going there again? I think I would do it again, with pleasure. When now someone asks me about this exchange I'm always happy of talking about it, because it will be one of my memories for a long time. It has been a way of learning a different way of living. We sometimes write to our Swedish friends to keep in touch with them. Last summer some Swedish guys came to Italy again to spend some time with some of us, as we did during our school exchange, but this time with no teachers and no school, just to keep on with our friendship.

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