



ERIC IN GRAZ AND PARIS

Anna H.

A few weeks ago our family was host to an exchange student from, well I don't really know where he was from but it was a very interesting and totally new experience for me and my family! Let me tell you about it:

The week Eric would arrive, my mother was in hospital so Eric and me stayed with my grandma the entire week. Everyone was very excited and asked me how he was going to be, but I didn't know it myself.

The day before Eric's arrival, my grandma and I went shopping like crazy, she wanted to show Eric everything that he might not have known. So she bought lots of Styrian and Austrian specialties.

When Eric first came to our house, he seemed quite surprised and interested. Why I know that? He asked lots of questions, which I though wasn't meant seriously. He told me that he had never seen such a big house, anywhere, or he even asked what this big blue thing in our garden was, I told him that this was a pool and I also had to explain to him what that was.



The next day we went to school.

We had to with the train for very long and he asked why we even bothered taking something like a bus or a train, he said something about that where he came from, they never use transportation. I couldn't understand the rest he was saying and I didn't bother to ask again.

When we were nearly there, he saw our school and asked whether that was a prison, I just had to laugh out loud as I had to explain that that was actually our school.

I showed him around and he had never seen a cafeteria, of course I immediately introduced him to Gerti.

He was so fascinated by our school, his eyes were wide open all the time and he didn't stop asking, what's this and what's that. I wasn't used to being asked so many questions about such simple things, maybe where he came from things that are normal for us are not part of their routine.

The best thing for him though were all the padlocks on the bridge over the Mur, which we saw when I showed him the lovely city of Graz. I believe he liked it pretty much.



He was fascinated that there was so much green space in our city, he told me that he wasn't acquainted to so much nature and that he had never seen so many trees or plants. I found it very interesting that wherever he came from, he didn't have lots of the things we are used to in this part of the world.

His eating habits were very different to ours. He didn't really try anything that my grandma had cooked for him.

We told him that he at least had to try the Sachertorte and the salad with the styrian "Kernöl".

Apparently his parents gave him a little extra suitcase with snacks and food for his voyage. When I asked him why he didn't want to eat from our food, he told me that he didn't want to be impolite. I assumed that that was too, a cultural thing.

Eric didn't really talk much and when I would meet with my friends after school he would just simply stay in school or go home all by himself.

I was kind of worried that he would get lost like this, all by himself but he had remembered all the way and new how to buy a ticket so I agreed.



When it was time to say good bye we left him in the guestroom so that he could pack all his things, and when it was time to leave for the airport and I opened the door to the room...he was already gone. Not all was like it was before, he had left little gifts on the bed and on all the shelves, small glowing flower-like objects. I thought it was the cutest way to say thank you.

Still today I am wondering how he left. When we talked about the trains and busses, he mentioned something about not having to transport. Maybe that's how he disappeared.





Eric in Paris

Anna Juliana Heidinger 5c

A few weeks ago Eric and his class made a class trip to Switzerland and France. It was the most enchanting time of his life.

The night of the departure was very exciting for Eric, he had never been to another country. "What will it be like?" He wondered.

His class traveled the entire trip just by train. At first they had to take a 12-hour night train to Switzerland.



When they finally arrived at the train station in Switzerland, they didn't know that they wouldn't see their host families until this very evening.

They wandered around Zurich all day, they saw churches and restaurants, places, little boutiques and lots of artsy stuff their teacher knew everything about.

They saw lots of sweet cakes and even the macarons. Everyone was fascinated and wanted to know what they would taste like so everyone ran into the little shop.

It was their first time in Switzerland, so they didn't know that everything was about three times the price they were used to.





In the afternoon, when all the class was already so exhausted, they took the train to a small village near the Lac Léman where all the host families and other students lived.

Eric lived with a family that was probably the nicest he had ever met. He stayed with a girl, she had two little brothers and her mother was just too nice.

Eric noticed that they had very different eating habits here in Switzerland. In the morning they had coffee and bread and lots of cheese, Eric got to make him a little sandwich for the school day, it turned out that literally every house had the same mustard cream for the sandwich, Eric hated it but didn't want to say anything.

The next day Eric had to get up very early in order to catch the train and bus for school because his host family lived somewhere out of the town on some hill behind some village. The Swiss have trains going literally everywhere, they are the masters of public transport. Eric was so fascinated by that, he didn't have this in his home town.

When he and his exchange student arrived at school bus-stop Eric didn't know where they were. He couldn't see anything but the street and bushes. But then his exchange student showed him a street going into the bushes behind that was a huge parking lot with hundreds of motorcycles, Eric knew that the Swiss were very rich, but still he was fascinated. Then...the school. Eric just saw a huge place in front of this breathtaking building. This school, his exchange student explained to him, included three gyms, three cafeterias, a huge library which was bigger than the first floor in Eric's school. All his friends and Eric were so stunned. Every class had an apple computer and the entire school was equipped with the best material and the architecture was amazing.



Eric and his class stayed in Switzerland for nine days, they visited most of the big and important cities, which was very interesting. As in Zurich they saw lots of churches and antique monuments and visited lots of museums.

The goodbye was very sad everyone cried, even Eric, but they had to catch the train for Paris.



Paris- when the train arrived in Paris everyone was flipping out. The whole class was so excited to finally be in Paris. This was the very first time that Eric had ever been to a different country.

Everything was different about Paris, the way the people dress, what they eat, like baguette, coffee, tartes and much more.

Eric and his class went to the Louvre, visited the Centre Pompidou, the musée d'Orsay and of course, the Eiffel Tower.



Everyone wanted to go on a ride on the famous carousel near the Eiffel Tower, Eric almost had to throw up because it was too fast for him, the only place he had ever seen a carousel, was on a small town party at home.

The days in Paris went by so fast, and when the last day was here, no one wanted to leave. Eric had finally found the city of his dreams, he felt like he belonged here.

They went back by night train again, which took them 16 hours. It was a fantastic experience for Eric and his class and he is looking forward to coming back here.

