

2016

# Eric

By Rosa



## Eric in Graz

Two weeks ago we had an exchange student called Eric visiting. I was looking forward to his visit and had already planned a number of things for us to do. My friends Sara and Nicole had an exchange student visiting too, so we could do a lot of things together. I wanted to tell him all about Austria and Styria and show him all the different curiosities in the city as well as introduce him to traditional Austrian culture.



When he first arrived at our house I showed him around, especially the garden and our livestock. He loved the baby sheep that were just a couple of days old and was very interested when I told him all about them, like their age and diet. He liked the house too, but he pointed out several things that were different from where he lives, for instance the decorations.

Afterwards we had our first meal together. Of course I wanted to provide him with some typical Styrian food and served him cheese, pumpkin seed oil, apple juice and other specialties. I also explained to him where it came from, since we get all of our food from our own animals or local farmers. He didn't know most of the things that I offered him, but he tried and enjoyed them nevertheless. What seemed to put him off a little was the brown bread. Eric explained to me that in his country the bread is usually a light color.

The next day I took him to Graz, because I had to go to school and to show him the city. At first he was really confused when he saw that everybody in the school was just wearing normal clothes instead of uniforms. He told me that where he lives, even primary school children have to wear uniforms. He tried to keep up with the lessons but was struggling with the language. This was why most of the time he was just sitting there and waiting for the lesson to be over or chatted with the other exchange students. Something that pleasantly surprised him was how much free time we have in the afternoon because his school usually lasts until 4 or 5pm, while our school is already over at around 2pm.



After school, we all went to the inner city together and showed our exchange students around. They loved the "Schlossbergbahn" and also enjoyed just walking around in the city, visiting all kinds of shops and booths and eating ice cream. They were shocked how cheap everything was and spent ridiculous amount of money on sweets and souvenirs. Afterwards

they explained to us that for them, what they had spent was completely normal. Before I knew it, the week was over and Eric had gone back to his home but I was already looking forward to visiting him soon.



## Eric in France & Switzerland



Last week, Eric visited France and Switzerland together with his class. On the first day, Eric and his group visited Zürich which is a very iconic and important city in Switzerland. He visited many churches and also the Museum of Art which he found very interesting. In the evening, the group travelled to Morges by train, where they were already expected by their exchange students, but unfortunately the train had a problem and the group arrived in Morges a few hours later than planned. Luckily, the exchange family wasn't upset about this but greeted him very warmly and nicely and immediately started telling him all about Morges and the school.

The next two days were off, so Eric spent his time on the exchange family's farm which he absolutely loved. Together with his exchange student Laura, he even rode out in the beautiful forests of Switzerland.

They also went to a climbing park and Eric was surprised at how modern and advanced everything was, compared to his home country. There were special keys for the climbing ropes and the equipment was a lot fancier too.

The first day of school was a really new experience for Eric too. The school was absolutely gigantic and everything seemed so clean and modern. The school library was bigger than the library of the city he lived in and there were hundreds of rooms and pathways, it was almost like a maze. Together with another student from his group, Eric would have actually had English class but it took them some time to find the right room. In the end they arrived about 20 minutes late but when they were *finally* there, the lesson was great fun.

In the next few days Eric's group visited Lausanne and Geneva, two other cities in

Switzerland. Every city seemed to have a long and interesting history as well as several impressive churches or museums. In the evening, the group went bowling together and once again, Eric was stunned. The bowling areas weren't just lanes and chalkboards like in his city, but they had electronic counting systems that automatically calculated statistics and presented graphs.

The week in Switzerland was over way too quickly and the class traveled on to Paris. When they first arrived in France, Eric was completely overwhelmed. There were masses of people moving around and despite everything being so big and confusing, everybody seemed to know where they were going. The metro system was especially stunning. The metros were driverless-and it seemed like Paris had a whole second layer underneath the surface. In the next three days, the group visited a big number of different curiosities including the Eiffel Tower, the Centre Pompidou, the Champs-Élysées, the Museum of Louvre, the Arc de Triomphe and of course many churches. They were all really impressive and it was interesting to learn about the history of each one as well as experiencing it as they are today. But what stood out to him most weren't the big buildings and historic places but the small details of the city. Often, when you looked a little closer, you could see that behind the façade for the tourists, there were a lot of dirt and problems, like poverty and homelessness. It was also interesting for Eris to see the differences between a relatively small city and a gigantic one like Paris as well as the cultural diversity of food. What especially stood out to him was that with every meal, no matter what it was, you got a piece of baguette.

The three days went by way too quickly and before he knew it, Eric was on the train back to his own country but he knew that some day, he will be back.

