

Holiday memories in Germany

After the first four months of my volunteer service in Germany, I got a two-week holiday. Having little or no idea of how to spend the holiday, one night I sat down to look at the period of my holiday in real-time. All I thought about was sleeping, waking up late, cooking and sleeping again.

A thought came through my mind and I asked myself, “Why do most people who are on holiday go for tours?” More than 50% of the people on holiday go for tours and I didn’t know the reason why.

The next day, I decided to hit the internet and search for beautiful places in Germany that I could tour. My! I was surprised by the results! There were hundreds of places, expensive and cheap, far and nearby. That day I failed to make a choice regarding where I would like to go and what I would do.

Later, I decided to zoom my scope to Neuwied, the city where I stay. This idea seemed perfect. Google is my friend and I went direct to the search engine and looked for the best places to visit in Neuwied as well as nearby cities like Bonn, Köln and Koblenz. I wrote down the places I wanted to visit and decided to make a schedule.

Not wanting to go on tour alone, I contacted my guest family’s daughter Madeline and she agreed to tour some places with me. She came up with some ideas that we both agreed on as the best for my first week.

The first day we visited the Neuwied Zoo, where both domestic and wild animals are kept. The zoo seemed different from the one in Uganda as it had many animals I had never seen, for example penguins, cat bears and owls. I was surprised to hear that most of the animals in Germany are not dangerous and I wondered why. I fear animals and it is hard for me to believe that some of them are not dangerous. It was quite a lovely and adventurous moment in the zoo.



Madeline and I at Neuwied Zoo

The next day we went to a museum called Landschaftsmuseum Westerwald, which showcases the style of houses in Germany between 1700 and 1900. These include old schools. I was surprised to learn that some of the houses were transferred from the places where they were to the museum. The houses were in good condition and give one an idea of how life was like during the early years and how people lived.



One of the houses at Landschaftsmuseum

From this museum, I got to know the kind of jobs that the early German citizens did, like blacksmiths, cobblers, as well as the different games that children used to play. Around the museum was an old car which had been

driven by someone in the older days and a garden with a fountain and different herbs around that people like. It was a great experience for me to learn about the old German way of living.

Later that day, we took a walk through the city of Hachenburg. It also has houses and streets from long ago. This city looks different and amazing as it remained in the old way of building and living. It has houses painted different colours, streets made of bricks and small pathways, a combination that makes it look awesome.



Madeline and I in Hachenburg

Madeline and I also visited a small forest in Koblenz. Walking through the forest and enjoying its cool atmosphere, we were able to see the old houses which had been constructed by the Romans. We also saw wild pigs and deer. One can buy food for the animals and feed them, but I did not try because I fear animals.

During the holiday I also visited Geirlay, a suspension bridge in the sky, with my good friend Barbara. This bridge is in the valley between the village municipalities of Sosberg and Mösdorf. It is a key attraction for people without a fear of heights and adventures. Mösdorf has a contact point that is equipped with an information terminal, restaurants and public facilities.



Barbara and I at Geirlay suspension bridge

Being my first time on this bridge, I was a bit scared but I gathered my guts and decided to try it out. When I had reached almost halfway, I felt like turning back but on looking backwards, more people were coming behind me. This consoled me and I decided to continue. I walked with Barbara till the end and I was so proud of myself! We rested a bit and walked back along the bridge, but this time round I was not scared. I walked without any fear.

Later that day, we went to Burg Metternich, an old castle sitting on top of a hill. From its top, one gets a great view of River Mosel. The lower part of the castle has restaurants, hotels and ice cream parlours. Many tourists from around the world come to this castle for accommodation and cruising around River Mosel. I was able to reach the top of the castle and enjoy the cool breeze while learning more about Germany's history and interacting with different people.



One of the walls at Burg Metternich

In the evening we went to Cochem, a small city. This city is mainly occupied by people from the Netherlands. It has many wine shops, boutiques and old houses that look awesome. I was able to step into one wine shop and taste some different flavours of wine which come from this area. It is such good wine. We walked through the city with Barbara and got to see how people from the Netherlands dress, interact and live.



Posing on one of the streets in Cochem

Another companion on my tour was Eliana, my friend. With her I visited the city of Köln. We went to Köln Zoo which has many interesting animals.

What amazed me most was the fish aquarium. It is dark inside and it is only the fish glasses that have light. The atmosphere enables one to imagine how aqua life feels. We saw many different types of fish, big and small, colourful and beautiful. We walked through, recording videos that we have shared with our friends and family.



Fish swimming in Köln Zoo

We later went to the flower garden that has very many beautiful flowers. This place is breathtakingly beautiful with well-organised flowers that offer it a favourable ambiance. It looks spectacular and when you move around, you can just fall in love, right there, with flowers. Eliana and I sat and talked, took photos and just enjoyed the environment.



A beautiful flower garden in Köln

We then went to the Rhine Park, located at the shores of the River Rhine. I learnt about River Rhine in my high school geography class, so it was quite unreal for me to be standing so close to it. Back then, I had never imagined that I would ever see any of the European places and features that I learnt about at school. But here I was!

That day there was a fireworks festival at the park. We had some snacks and moved around, seeing displays of many different types of fireworks. This place concluded our Köln tour.



Eliana and I in Köln

I thoroughly enjoyed my holiday and plan to visit more places during my next holiday. Besides resting, I was able to learn more about Germany. I took many photographs and videos that I have shared with my friends and family, so that they can also get to know more about Germany and its people.

My gratitude goes to the sponsors of the Eirene volunteer program, Eirene organisation, my guest family, friends in Germany and the German government. The opportunity to come to Germany on a volunteer programme has not only enabled me to work with young people but also to experience and learn about this different place, its people and their different cultures.

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IFDID 2018