
German Exchange 2018

Parth Mahendru- June 22, 2018



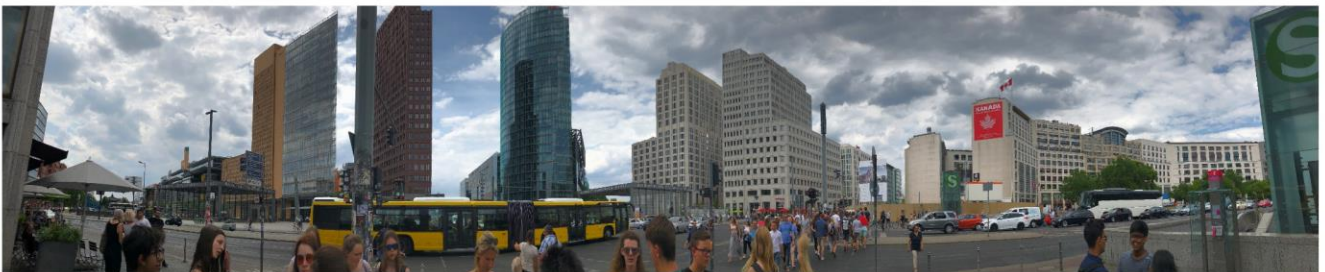
Introduction

It was 11 p.m. at night on 6 June, the time had finally come. We were going to a trip to Germany for fourteen days! Little did we realize this trip would last a lifetime. After an exhausting twelve hour flight to Münster, we finally met with our partner families. We then went to their home to unwind and unpack. When I reached my partner, Lara's home I was greeted by their dog Ollie and was instantly reminded of my dog Cratos back home. We then sat outside in their garden and had strawberry shortcake with the entire family. This was followed by the introductions of the whole Steinheider family. In the next few days we had a great deal of fun and learnt a lot about the German culture. We visited many German cities, ate traditional German food and even dressed in German clothing. Living with our partner families for even a short span of time like fourteen days seems like a lifetime but gets over in an instant. To make the most of this limited time we have, one must learn to have fun but also be responsible at the same time. Some aspects of Germany I found interesting are given below.



Environment and Surroundings

The first thing I noticed after I landed in Münster was that the air was very clean and after spending only a little time in Germany, I felt rejuvenated. The town I lived in, Ostbevern was a small town and had a very homely feeling to it. It was very clean and also very well maintained. Ostbevern was also very quiet and peaceful. The houses in Ostbevern were a lot bigger than the houses in India. The partner school, Die Loburg was located at a distance of about 2 kilometers from our house. So Lara and I rode our bicycles to school. The feeling of the cold wind on my face on a chilly morning was a relief from the intense heat in Delhi. Another interesting thing I noticed was that Germans drive on the right side of the road unlike India where one drives on the left side of the road. The same applied for bicycles and pedestrians. At first it was a little tough for me to get used to this system, but once I did, I no longer had any problems. The thing that I liked the most was the functioning of the pedestrian crossing, I was impressed by the law and order followed by the Germans even when there was nobody looking or waiting at the light as a matter of fact.



Food

During our stay in Germany, I got the chance to eat traditional German food. On the first day itself, we had strawberry shortcakes and had a typical barbecue. In Berlin my friends and I tried the famous Currywurst and afterwards, fresh Berliners. Back home in Ostbevern, we tried a German speciality; Asparagus with potatoes and sauce. Most Indians didn't like it a lot, but I enjoyed the subtle taste of the asparagus and the engaging umami of the sauce. On our visit to Tecklenburg, I had a crêpe with cinnamon and sugar. I didn't quite like the flavor of cinnamon in a dessert, but it was still a nice experience. We also had a lot of ice creams to eat both in Berlin as well as in Ostbevern. Over the weekend, I cooked Indian food for the Steinheider family. I cooked Chicken curry(Hähnchen), Dal Makhani(Bohnen mit Soße) and Malai Paneer(Hüttenkäse mit Soße). The food took two hours to prepare but everyone liked it a lot although they found it a little spicy.



People

People in German are very pleasant and friendly. The Lara's mother was very caring and always took care of me to the best of her abilities. and so did her father. Both even tried to talk in English for me, even though they were not at all comfortable speaking the language. Another thing that impressed me was how two people always greet or smile, even if they don't know each other. I also went to the band practice of Lara's Mom's band where even I tried to play an instrument and had fun with the other band members. By chance, I met a band member at the supermarket on the last day of my trip and we said talked for a while. I really loved the welcoming attitude of the Germans as they tried to create a friendly atmosphere for their Indian guests.

Another such incident of the welcoming attitude of the Germans happened with me in Berlin. At the hostel while having breakfast, an elderly man saw me sitting alone and decided to join me. His name was Franz and he was a religious archaeologist. Upon talking to him, he told me about his time in India, Varanasi. He also mentioned that that the biggest exhibit of a huge cross in the Bodemuseum was excavated by him in Italy. This goes on to prove the Germans' kindness towards their guests.

