

My Mobility

Students from Ca' Foscari Recount their Learning Experiences Abroad

A strange family in an even stranger adventure

Sofia del Monaco

LT Commercio Estero

Destination: Warwick University, UK

Sofia del Monaco travels 976 miles with just a toothbrush, a tent, and three changes of underwear – together with 8 international travelling companions.

It is impossible to explain what the Erasmus project is to me. I have genuinely never thought that that experience would have changed me that much, especially one incredible adventure I had during my last week there in England.

I lived in an on-campus accommodation called 'Rootes' and I shared my flat with eight other people. I have created a genuinely bond with those people coming all around the planet: there were two British people, a Norwegian, an Australian, a Thai, a Mexican, a Québécois and a Rumanian.

It was the 15th March and we have all already finished our module classes. Therefore, we decided to participate a university race by which you had 72 hours to go as far as possible from the university. The rules were simple: you must not use money and any electronic devices, cell phone included. The prize for the first place was £2000. Since we were students and, by definition, penniless, we had to give it a try. We started our race completely unprepared: three changes of underwear per person, toothbrushes, a tent and tons of food. During the competition, we had to walk a lot but, even if we were a large group to move, we managed to hitchhike many times: we took many lorries, vans and even a ferry. Indeed, we took a ferry from Folkestone to Helsingborg, in Sweden. We have been really lucky, to the point of absurd: we've met a 60-year-old Swedish man in a pub who happened to have a fishing boat. He agreed to help us since he had to go back to his hometown the morning after. We arrived to Helsingborg the morning after and, after paying the fisherman with some tacos and pasta alla carbonara, we started to walk the eastern way possible. We have slept into our tiny tent for every night and, considering that it rained almost every time and we were 8, it hasn't been very comfortable at all. When the countdown hit zero, we were in the city of Alvesta, in Sweden. We were dirty, tired for the few hours slept and starved for the rationing of food we had to do on our last day.

I would like to say that we won the majestic prize but, unfortunately, another group arrived in a town close to Guadalupe, in Spain. We have come second, though. Trust me, I am quite aware it is not the same as the first trophy, but we had a £100 prize.

Once we came back from the beautiful city of Alvesta, we went to collect our prize. We decided to spend those pounds in having a great dinner into our kitchen and, since that was my last week in United Kingdom, it was also a farewell party. We went to Waitrose supermarket because we wanted to treat ourselves as kings one last night. We bought chickens, sausages, beef, chips, pizzas, gallons of gravy sauce and some cakes. It seemed like we were the Knights of the Round Table.

As I said, it is impossible to describe what those months have been for me. Those eight people become my family, in spite different languages, cultures and religions. We managed to go for 976 miles into another country without anything but ourselves. Our knowledge to tell stories in English as proven the most important factor that made us have a wonderful dinner and an incredible experience.