

On the 26th of September I left for Berlin with five other girls and two of my teachers. I was very excited to see a new country and to meet new people.

I met my host family on the same day in the evening; we ate spaghetti together and they were super nice and patient with me. During these twenty days we talked a lot about all the differences and similarities in our cultures. I got to try new foods, I learned some german words and we even saw movies together in german and english.

Everyday I went to school with my host sister, Clara. The school system is quite different from ours, for example their class is 40 minutes long, and most of the time they have 80 minutes long lessons and then a break, so I had the first class with her, and we would do history or english or biology, and then me and the other italian girls had german lesson with our teachers.

After lunch we would take the subway to move and do planned activities. We saw the Television Tower, Brandenburg Gate and, of course, the Berlin Wall.

We went to a lot of museums and art galleries; my favourite museums were definitely the Gemäldegalerie, where I saw "Venere" by Botticelli and Museum Barberini where I got to see most of my favourite Impressionism paintings like "Water Lilies" by Monet.

We also went shopping in Alexanderplatz, in the biggest mall I had ever seen, which is called Alexa and has three floors full of so many huge shops.

On the first weekend my host family took me to Feldberg in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, a town further north from Berlin that's filled with beautiful landscapes. On the second and third weekend we went to Mauerpark, where there was a big market, places to eat and many musicians playing live.

Saturday evening we had a party at my host family's house, there was a big bonfire and we danced and sang together with all the italian girls and their host sisters.

I am very grateful for all the things I got to do and to experience.

Being able to participate in this project was a dream come true and a huge opportunity to challenge myself and my english skills; after coming home I feel more confident in speaking english with other people and I know even more about myself as an individual separate from my family and friends from Italy.

It was a very formative experience and I would definitely do it again.

Martina Bonzani