

A trip to the Baltics



All of my friends know one thing about me: I am inexplicably obsessed with the Baltic states. So let me do this 'spin-off' episode where instead of Poland, I'll tell you how my dream came true and how I finally got to the Baltics!

It started as a rather impulsive trip. I have this great friend from the last semester I have spent in Wrocław, he is an Estonian graphic designer and we realised we both have a week to get away from the schoolwork before the finals so I booked some last minute tickets and by the next blink I found myself on the bus. There was a tv screen in front of each seat, so I played a game of choosing a movie with the help of a random number generator, I put myself out of my comfort-zone with some of the movies – also with twisted sleeping positions between the movies – but eventually, after seventeen hours of traveling I finally got to Riga.

Latvia was the first Baltic state I visited, and I expected it to be similar to most European countries but still the lack of crowd in the city hit me as a cultural shock. I came from a city of two million, and these countries do not have that many inhabitants one-by-one! At Riga main square I have seen like 10 people wandering around, at first it slightly felt like I'm in a ghost town but soon I got used to it and the lack of the sea of people I am usually surrounded by was really refreshing. After I got off the bus I should have felt tired, but the thrill of this new environment gave me enough energy to just drop off my bag at the hotel room and go explore. I planned to spend the whole next day in Riga, but there was one thing that just couldn't wait: Food!

I usually cook for myself in Poland, but I have to admit during the exam period I didn't have the time to do it every day, so it was priority to remind my brain what does it feel like to taste a food which didn't come out of an instant noodle cup:D It was a bit of a challenge to choose the dish since the most important component of the Baltic cuisine is probably potato, and I'm not a big fan of it to be honest. However I carried on the search and I finally found some authentic local dish that does not have them. I ended up trying spicy home-baked dark bread, pumpkin cream soup with forest berries and cheese, more dark bread and the inevitable Baltic pink beetroot soup.



The next day I did not have a list of plans, I just wandered around town and checked out some museums and craft shops, and I was amazed by the architecture as well. Latvia's city image is somewhat similar to an average polish town but more rustic, and neither of them look anything like Hungary. As the day came to an end, I became really excited because I got on the bus to Tartu to meet my friend again and see how's Estonia.

When I arrived we just spent the night chatting to update one another about what happened since the last time we met. It is so awesome that Erasmus connects people in a way that lasts longer than just one semester! Also the following days when we walked around I was grateful for having somebody who's local as my personal tour-guide because his explanation feels so much more genuine than what one could read in a tour guide.



Tartu is a city of street art, and I had to stop like every two minutes taking a photo of the next cool graffiti and painting. I was also stunned by how green this country actually is, even though I only visited urban areas it somehow felt like I'm in a forest, always close to nature. We visited the Estonian national museum which discovers the anthropological and linguistic heritage of finno-ugrik people, and I was thrilled to find some information about Hungary, even though our nations are not as closely related as slavic people it still felt nice to belong to something bigger.

I met so many people during that weekend that it was indeed a blast, and it was absolutely worth it to sacrifice a weekend before my exam period. I recommend you to visit even if you are not as obsessed as I am:D If you are not completely convinced yet, take a look at these photos I took while being there:



