

I'm Nisâ and I've been in Ireland since September. I am doing the Transition Year (4<sup>th</sup> Year) in Kinsale Community School, and I enjoy every second of it. The last 8 months have been the best of my life and I wish that everyone could have/will use the opportunity to do an exchange year.

I'm staying in Kinsale, a lovely town in County Cork, from which it only takes around 30/45 minutes to get to Cork. Kinsale only has around 6000 inhabitants and is quite a small town, which makes it possible to know your way around it after the first few weeks. It's at the very South Coast from Ireland and located directly next to the water. With its colorful houses and friendly people, it's a place you'll never want to leave and even though it's quite small, there's dozens of small cafés and even a library.

Kinsale is also close to a lot of cool Places and so you can quickly and easily take a train from Cork almost anywhere you want. Me and my friends for example went to Cobh, Killarney, Fota (wildlife park), Whale Watching, Dublin, Blarney Castle, Surfing, etc.

The Kinsale Community School is one of the main schools in the area and most of the people from the adjacent towns also visit it, so there are a lot of students. You'll have to wear a school uniform, which I think is such a fun and handy experience on itself especially as an exchange student, because you'll have to bring way less clothes and you feel like you belong right away. Most of the teachers are so nice, and they really get that the first few days/weeks can be hard for the exchange students and support you in settling in well at the school.

It can sometimes be intimidating to have to speak to native speakers in a language you are not completely fluent in or try to become friends with students who already have their friend groups, but me and the other exchange students fortunately made the experience that the Irish students are really welcoming, open hearted and interested in your stories as a foreign student. If the local students shouldn't be as nice, I can assure you that you'll find the best friends in the other exchange students. Now I've got friends all over Europe, who I probably would've never met if it wasn't for Ireland.

I chose to do the Transition Year which is a year for the Irish students to gain new experiences, learn more about themselves and get a better idea of what they would like to do for a living. There are a lot of activities, trips and work experiences and less homework, test, and exams so you won't have to waste your exchange year with studying.

I for example, took part in the annual school show (as a dancer), joined the basketball team, and got to try out lots of different water sports (which are very popular here), which all are things I have never done before but where I have found great joy in.

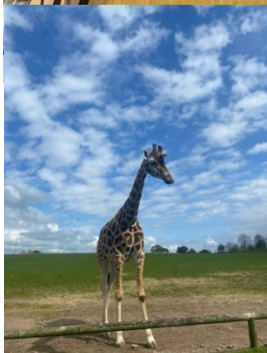
I am staying with a lovely host family that lives about 5 minutes from Kinsale and next to the water. I have three younger Irish host sisters and one other international sister, and we love doing stuff together and get on really well. My host family is like a second family for me and I'm so thankful for everything they did for me.

I've met so many great people, gained countless new experiences and learned so much about myself during my stay here that I can't recommend it enough. If you're interested in other cultures, meeting new people, seeing new things, gaining experiences you can't even think of right now or simply want to escape the monotony of everyday life, please consider going on an exchange year. You won't regret it and it's more than worth it.

Nisâ Hofmann 28/04/2024

(I've put some pictures on the next page😊)





Ireland 23/24