



Erik

from
Burlington Central
to
Poland

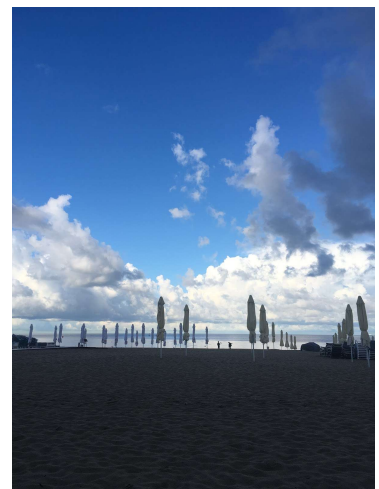
“no dobrze”

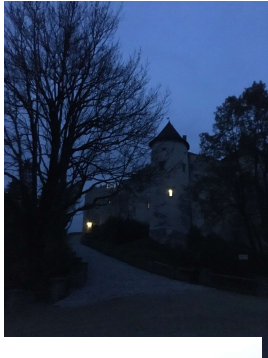
In February I was not expecting that I would be assigned Poland I thought maybe I would get a South American or Asian country, and although those would be great places to go I am glad I got to come to Poland. I left Canada on the 17th of August from the Toronto airport where I met my first foreign exchange student. Now that I think about it I wouldn't say I met her, we just sort of noticed each other. Also she wasn't that foreign, her name is Gina and she is from sunny Florida, U.S.A. Then at around 4:00pm I boarded and the eight hour plane trip began.

Strangely enough no one asked me about my jacket till we landed and it was the flight attendant. We talked about my Rotary exchange for a bit and then I was off. I went through customs, got to the baggage claim and then I talked with Gina about how slow the baggage claim was. After, I met my host parents who gave me a welcome sign, whacky balloons that looked like a beaver and a worm, and took some pictures. Then we left on the 2 hour drive from the airport to my new home. That night I went to a barbeque where I met my new friends Pablo from Mexico and Yasmin from Brazil. That was the start of the creation of way more friendships than I could have imagined.

The next day we picked up my temporary “exchange brother” Roberto from Brazil, from the airport. We had a good night and were off the next day to see some of Poland. We drove up to the north of Poland to Gdansk, Sopot and Gdynia and more.

Sopot Beach





We saw a festival, a battle field, a old castle and it was amazing.



Niedzica Castle

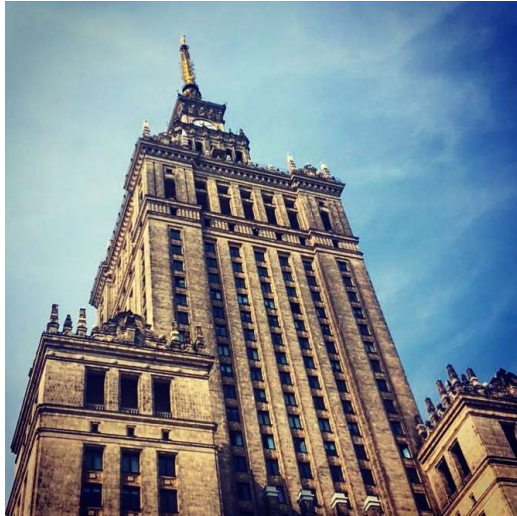
From there we went to Bydgoszcz to Polish language camp. Where I met over Seventy students from Mexico, the U.S.A., Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela, Taiwan, Japan, Thailand and the rest of the CANADIANS! This is where I gave out at least two hundred pins, and I still have too many!

At the end of my week in Bydgoszcz I had tons of new exchange student friends.



I had placed 4th in our mini Polish exam with a 96%. I had met the mayor of Bydgoszcz or as they call him the president of Bydgoszcz. Then after 9 days of bonding it was over and I went home with the exchange students of my city Łódź, which include those from before, Gina, Pablo, Yasmin, and Roberto. As well as some new ones, Andreas from Venezuela, Andreas (or Andreas Jr. or Adreasito) from Mexico and Carli from the U.S.A.

After Bydgoszcz Roberto went to his actual host family and I started school which is great. Although I don't quite understand what they are saying in most of the classes, I have a great time in gym and English. I like my English class because they learn British English so I hear words I have never heard before and I can help teach my classmates.



Throughout the last two months the exchange student have met in Warsaw and Torun which were both great.

Old communist building in Warsaw.

My host family took me on a trip into the mountains which felt like home. We climbed a ski hill racing the exchange student Roberto and we slept in a castle next to Slovakia. I have had an amazing time so far.

The food in Poland is interesting, I have tried so many new things. I had the best pierogis in Poland and therefore arguably the best in the world. I ate two goose livers in Katowice; it was an "experience." I have tried even more foods than I can remember some I liked some I did not but I had a good time eating them. In Poland they are obsessed with potatoes, mushrooms, cabbage, and breaded foods and more so make sure if you come to Poland you try these things and what ever else you can.

Tips: Tak is yes. Nie is No Jak się masz is how are you. A W in Polish sounds like a V. A Ł sounds like a W. and much more. There are many ways of say one thing. If a Polish person says "no dobrze" to you it doesn't mean "no good" it means "ya good" or "ok."

Dziękuję i do widzenia

Erik