

Hello everyone, my name is Greta and I was one of the “chosen” students for the Erasmus experience in my school! I started my Erasmus journey in France with other six students of my school and two teachers. When I got chosen for the Erasmus I was so happy because I didn’t expect getting this enormous opportunity right in front of me. I was thrilled for this journey and I couldn’t wait to start it. We left on the 7th of April from Bari’s airport and we arrived in Bordeaux, where we stayed for the night. We slept in a hotel and the next morning, after a big breakfast, we took the bus that in two and a half hours took us to Niort, the city where there was the corresponding school.

When we arrived in Niort, the teacher Gregoire welcomed us with his wife and took us to the school, le Lycée de la Venise Verte. The high school was extremely big and totally different from my school (it was almost the opposite and I couldn’t believe my eyes because of how big it was); after a little break some students took us on a tour of the whole school and I was completely speechless. Everyone was very friendly and hospitable! Something I loved about that high school is the system, because compared to the Italian school, in France it seems that everything is done calmly and quietly, without stress.

After a little immersion in a chemistry and biology lesson everyone went home. I was welcomed by my host sister Eloïse and her mom Christine and they took me home with their car. The little town where they live is called Vallans and it’s in the country side. We had dinner all together and I met Christophe, Elo’s dad, who unfortunately spoke zero English. I appreciated the fact that Christine every day tried so hard to cook vegetarian meals so I could eat without problems.

I and Eloïse sometimes before or after dinner did something together, like we played the piano and sang, she played the violin for me, we played cards and we even started to make a 1000 pieces puzzle.

Every day we went to different places and cities and everything was new to me because I realized that in France the culture is different from the Italian one. During this magical week I had so much fun during the excursions and trips we did in Niort, La Rochelle, La Garrette and so much more: we went on a ferris wheel, to a boat museum, we paddled, we did treasure hunts, we went shopping, we went to the trampoline park...

I think most of the things are cooler in France (they’re better organized with “social” stuff like transportation or shops). The food wasn’t the best but I discovered a love for the “pain au chocolat” and I wish I had eaten more. In France there’s this interesting debate between *pain au chocolat* and *chocolatine* and we found out that it’s similar to the *arancino-arancina* debate in Italy, where some regions or towns prefer one to the other (I personally prefer *pain au chocolat* because I think it’s cuter and describes better the sweet itself).

My favorite day of all week was Friday, the Journée Deguisée, where students and teachers had to dress up, and since I’m a cosplayer and cosplaying is one of my biggest passions, I dressed up as Puppet (a character from Five Nights at Freddy’s), with all makeup and dress; I was so proud of my cosplay and I was even prouder when some French students recognized the character, giving me lots of compliments. On that day we had lessons and then we danced because the school had a big party (it was the last day of school before two weeks of spring

holidays), and me and Giovanni Paolo played two songs in front of the school. There were lots of cool and unique costumes and some of them were very creative (creativity in French is beautiful).

For the last night me and Leonardo, one of the Italian students, went to Gregoire's house because our host families couldn't host us anymore. The teacher's house was in a small town of circa 600 residents and that evening me and Leonardo did so many things: we went to see a handball match because Gregoire's son played it, we played table tennis, we had dinner with a typical French recipe with cheese and potatoes (another food that I loved), and after dinner I practiced piano and we sang and played till 10:40pm. Gregoire's family was very solar and funny, there were so many happy vibes in that house and I wish I had stayed more.

On our last morning in Niort, on the 14th, we went to the bus station to go to Bordeaux again to take the airplane and there was this sweet guy called Nolan that brought some croissants and pain au chocolat for everyone for our journey back home; he was a cutie pie and he was honestly the coolest there (we had so much in common by the way). It was hard to leave all of the friendships we made during that week and I hope they'll come to Italy and we'll meet again soon!

This experience has been the most beautiful I've ever been to, it's not something you do every day, it's a once in a lifetime experience, and I think everyone deserve at least one Erasmus experience during their school life.