

My trip to Dresden was the most rewarding and thoroughly enjoyable trip I have ever been on. From my first day in the amazing city I was welcomed into my host family and felt comfortable asking them for anything. They were really excited to make sure I experienced every aspect of German life and as proud Dresdners they also ensured I was exploring their home city too. I visited a wide range of Museums including ones about World War Two, an art museum and the German Hygiene Museum. My host family also took me to Leipzig where the parents had gone to university and we went for a family hike in the breath taking Sächsische Schweiz.

Not only was my family lovely, but I felt very welcome in St-Benno, too. The students were all used to exchange students and I made friends in my class immediately – the photograph below shows me with some of my classmates. One weekend we went camping together in the outskirts of Dresden and we also went out for lunch one day after our school lessons. I enjoyed discovering the differences between English and German schools and although I found eight lessons a day quite tiring, I had already learnt the lesson content in my GCSEs so could focus on improving my language skills instead.

I found Dresden to be an amazing city. The history of the city makes Dresden a big tourist attraction as the architecture in the Alt Stadt is very striking. Not to mention buildings such as the Frauenkirche and Semper Oper have their own fascinating history to discover. The Neu Stadt is also an amazing place to experience. The Kunsthofpassage is a quirky side street full of artsy shops and cafes and the surrounding streets are full of Asian street food restaurants where we bought some great falafel. I also went to a German Poetry Slam in the Neu Stadt and a socially distanced performance of Thomas Mann's 'Der Zauberberg' in the Alt Stadt. The Elbe is an important feature of Dresden too - its banks are a popular place to relax with a drink after work or school and I loved spending time there with my host family and friends.

I can't wait to return to Dresden and hopefully to see my host sister in England next year. I can't recommend this experience enough as the benefits it has had for me have been immeasurable.

Amelie