

Our first impressions - by Jade, Sacha, Gaïtane:



JADE: The biggest change in Finland is the temperature. It's really very cold compared to Réunion Island. The families are very nice, I live with my two host sisters and their parents. It is a bit weird because they don't have fixed times for meals, sometimes we eat dinner at 4H30 sometimes at 22H but you get used to it.

So we arrived on the 2nd of January, that day we didn't do much it was calm. 3rd January: We all met at Svenska school, then we visited the city, did a bit of shopping, we walked in the park and we went to the museum. And I also did sledging it was fun! 4th of January : visiting the university with everyone. 5th JAN. : We saw the « Toripolliisi » the policeman statue. We played bowling with the teachers and we went to the gym with Armi. 6th JAN : I saw Santa Claus !! In Rovaniemi it is the beginning of the Arctic Circle.

And Sunday we took the boat and we went to a small Island, we made a fire and we made smoked sausages. It was very cold but fun.



SACHA: During my first days in Finland, I was welcomed by very good people, from my first day, I made a long trip to Lapland, there the day really started from 11-12am, where we had breakfast, during our day we did snowmobiling, we fished, we occupied ourselves and went to the sauna, we played in the snow. I also met Jamie's father (Jamie is my pen pal) as well as his mother, mother-in-law, sister-in-law, grandparents and 2 best friends. These people integrated me very well, and helped me to integrate into their family. For me, the cold wasn't really a problem and I didn't encounter any problems.

GAÏTANE: After our arrival in Finland after a long journey we met the host families. I saw my correspondent Aino again and I met her father Yasko. But it was extremely cold at that time -30 °C which is considered extreme



even for Finland. I later had the opportunity to meet his grandparents and his sisters. They are a very welcoming family despite communication difficulties because the adults speak very little English. There are a lot of differences with France, particularly with eating habits. In Finland it is normal to drink milk with meals (it tastes more like water than French milk). And their meal times are random. These are for the moment the major differences that I have been able to observe thus as of course the weather. During our first week here the temperatures remained very low around -30°C but fortunately it is starting to warm up. But the cold didn't stop us from doing things. We attended different activities such as visiting the retirement home or the art museum with Jade and Gaëtan.

Rose's first impressions :

Hello everyone! The purpose of this section is to share my experience by exploring the themes of Finnish culture, food and landscapes.

Let's go back to the beginning if you don't mind..... So it was at the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year that I had the chance to be offered this trip..... after long reflections I obviously jumped at the opportunity and welcomed my great Finnish correspondent Saana, who had honoured us with an interview in one of our podcasts. Spending a whole month with her was a pleasant experience as she allowed me to rediscover the island and meet a great person.

Finally, it was on January 1, 2024 that our turn arrived to take 3 planes.... And to reunite with our buddies in the country of Santa Claus!

It's a long journey..... arrived in Helsinki, the capital, I could have a slight glimpse of Finland: there is sun finally...4 hours a day! And yes, it's very white too, the airport is all frozen, covered with snow!

Then, with a little delay, at 7pm we arrived in Oulu... the city of our correspondents and the 4th largest city here, as well as our host families that we met for the first time! But no question of hanging out outside since a voice on the plane announces an outside temperature of -31°C.

As it is the time of the meal here, as soon as we arrive at the house, after about 15min by car, we taste a superb fish soup or Lohikeitto with carrot and oat breads that we accompany with butter, Finnish cheese and cucumber! All followed by chocolates. Following a shower break and preparations for the departure of the next day, we continue with the «Iltapala», ie the afternoon snack.... I eat some sweets filled with meat and rice and sip a hot chocolate around the sharing of some lechis and passion fruits that I could bring in my suitcase. During the first week, it is still the holidays and Saana and her family take me to stay in their cottage, even higher in the north! After a busy day, it's time to go to bed...



1st alarm clock and 1st breakfast at the same time.... On the program: Delicious carrot/oat bread, rye bread and oatmeal wholemeal bread, all accompanied by butter, cucumber and carrot cheese and scrambled eggs. I drink coffee with milk while looking out the window. Outside, it is still dark, the snow mountains have not disappeared and the temperature is -21°C. Afterwards, we jump in the car and head to the chalet of «Rukka»!! We have a little more than 2 hours drive but it is so beautiful outside, you can see thousands of trees and houses buried under layers of snow! It's really magical. Everything is calm and quiet, it's a relaxing landscape. During the trip, I was offered to scratch the ice on the glass with a kind of blade.... It's quite unexpected!!

At the chalet, the activities are rich and varied: I experience snow motorcycling, sledging, snow angels, sauna followed by a jump in a swimsuit in the snow, cross-country skiing, dog sledging, sledging car, shopping. It's really great to discover the Finnish daily life!!

During the stay I was able to taste the typical dishes: the cheese grating cooked in the oven.... and served with jam... ; the different breads, brioches à la cannelles or Korvapusti; the same brioches but filled with cottage cheese and scented with cardamon, Finnish donuts, giant and sprinkled with sugar, fried perch; smoked reindeer meat, karjalampirakat..... It is so good!! And the glogi: sweet drink with spices that I savored for the first time in front of the barbecue accompanied by kinds of speculoos.

We cannot thank enough the ERASMUS+ program for giving us the opportunity as a student to discover the world and new people!

Rose: version française!

Bonjour, je m'appelle Rose et suis en ce moment en classe de 1ère, au lycée Réunionnais des Avirons, Antoine de Saint Exupéry. Mon but aujourd'hui est de vous faire part de la fantastique expérience qu'est mon voyage en Finlande !

Reprenons depuis le début si vous le voulez bien... C'est donc en ce début d'année scolaire 2023-2024 que j'ai eu la chance de me voir proposer ce voyage.....après longues réflexions j'ai évidemment sauté sur l'occasion et accueilli ma super correspondante Finlandaise Saana...c'est une chance d'être tombée sur quelqu'un d'aussi formidable !! Enfin, c'est le 1^{er} janvier 2024 que notre tour est arrivé de prendre 3 avions.... Et de retrouver nos correspondants au pays du père Noël !

C'est un long périple.....arrivée à Helsinki, la capitale, j'ai pu avoir un léger aperçu de la Finlande : Y'a du soleil finalement...4h par jour !! Et oui, c'est très blanc aussi, l'aéroport est tout congelé, recouvert de neige !!

Puis, avec un peu de retard, à 19h on arrive à Oulu... la ville de nos correspondants et la 4ème plus grande ville d'ici, ainsi que nos familles d'accueil que nous rencontrons pour la 1ère fois !!

Mais pas question de traîner à l'extérieur puisque la voix dans l'avion nous annonce une température extérieure de -31°C.



Comme c'est l'heure du repas là-bas, dès notre arrivée à la maison, après environ 15min en voiture, on déguste une superbe soupe de poisson ou Lohikeitto avec des pains de carotte et d'avoine que l'on accompagne de beurre, de fromage Finlandais et de concombre !! Le tout suivi de chocolats. Suite à une pause douche et préparatifs au départ du lendemain, on enchaîne avec le «Iltapala», c'est à dire le goûter du soir....je mange quelques friands fourrés de viande et de riz et sirote un chocolat chaud autour du partage de quelques letchis et fruits de la passion que j'ai pu ramener. Durant la 1ère semaine, c'est encore les vacances et Saana et sa famille m'emmènent séjourner dans leur chalet, encore plus haut dans le nord !! Finalement suite à cette journée chargée, c'est le moment d'aller se coucher...

1^{er} réveil et 1^{er} petit déjeuner par la même occasion....au programme : Du délicieux pain carotte/avoine, du pain de seigle et du pain complet d'avoine, le tout accompagné de beurre, de fromage de concombre et de carotte ainsi

que d'oeufs brouillés. Je bois du café au lait tout en observant par la fenêtre. Dehors, il fait encore nuit, les montagnes de neige n'ont pas disparues et la température est de -21°C. Par la suite, on saute dans la voiture et direction le chalet de «Rukka» !! Nous en avons pour un peu plus de 2h de route mais c'est tellement beau à l'extérieur, on peut apercevoir des milliers de sapins et de maisons enfouis sous des couches de neige !! C'est vraiment magique. Tout est calme et tranquille, c'est un paysage reposant. Pendant le trajet, on me propose de gratter le gel sur la vitre avec une sorte de lame....c'est assez inattendu !!

Au chalet, les activités sont riches et variées : j'expérimente la moto neige, la luge, les anges de neige, le sauna suivi par un saut en maillot de bain dans la neige, le ski de fond, le chien de traîneau, la voiture luge, le shopping, c'est vraiment génial de découvrir le quotidien Finlandais !!

Durant le séjour j'ai pu goûter aux plats typiques : le fromage grinçant cuit au four....et servi avec de la confiture...; les différents pains, les brioches à la cannelle ou Korvapusti; ces mêmes brioches mais fourrées au fromage blanc et parfumées à la cardamome, les donuts Finlandais, géants et saupoudrés de sucre, de la perche frite; de la viande de renne fumée, les karjalampirakat.....c'est tellement bon !!! Ainsi qu'au glogi : boisson sucrée aux épices que j'ai savouré pour la 1ère fois devant le barbecue accompagné de sortes de speculoos.

On ne remerciera jamais assez le programme ERASMUS+ de nous offrir l'opportunité en tant qu'élève de pouvoir découvrir le monde et de nouvelles personnes !