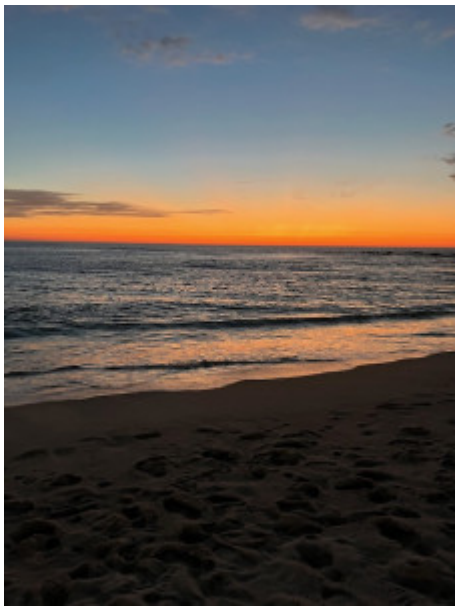
My week in Portugal

It’s been almost a month since the exchange in Portugal, and I still miss it.
I miss that feeling of stepping away from my everyday life and meeting new people with different habits and ways of living. The moments that left the biggest mark on me were definitely the ones I spent with my host family.

I had never taken part in this kind of exchange before, so during the two weeks before leaving I was always a bit on edge and unsure about what to expect.
About a week before the trip, I met the girl who would host me, her name is Catarina. She texted me first to introduce herself. I did the same, and we started getting to know each other, first talking about our schools, then our daily routines, and finally some more personal stuff, like what we like doing in our free time. Turns out we actually have a lot in common, not only now but even from our childhood.
On the day of the departure, I wasn’t too nervous because I already had a little idea of who my host was, and she seemed really kind and calm.

When we arrived in Póvoa de Varzim, the town where the school is, we met the Portuguese group in the main square, right in front of the town hall. I think it was a bit awkward for everyone, since it was the first time we saw each other in person.
The teachers, on the other hand, seemed to know each other already, and after chatting for a bit they started calling out the pairs. When they called my name, I stepped forward and finally met Catarina in person, she was small and spoke softly, just like I imagined.

That evening, I also met her parents. Once we got home, we had dinner together and talked a little. Except for a couple of days, she didn’t come with us on the group trips, so we mostly spent time together in the evenings after I got back.
Those were actually the moments I enjoyed the most, because we were in a relaxed environment, just talking about random things.
She showed me her collections and told me the stories behind the objects she keeps in her room.
Some evenings we played cards or video games together, it really felt like having a new sister.



Unfortunately, that week also came to an end.
Saying goodbye to her and to the other Portuguese students was pretty sad, but all the happy moments we shared throughout the week made up for the sadness of the last day.
I’m really happy with how it all went and grateful I took part in it. Even if it only lasted a short time, having a different routine, especially in another country, makes you curious about more things and teaches you to be open-minded.

I can’t wait to host them here in Italy and show them my city. It was a trip that made me grow and that I’ll never forget

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