

# HIGH SCHOOL



Exchange programs in 20 countries across 5 continents  
for students aged 14-18.



**"The experience has been beyond anything I ever could have dreamed! I found a new home and made new relationships for life. This is the best thing I have ever done, and I will cherish my experience for the rest of my life."**

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"This year was the best year of my life, and I can only encourage you to do the same thing. Step out of your comfort zone, try something new, and start the adventure of your lifetime."



TIKTOK



INSTAGRAM

TikTok, Instagram,  
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"Being abroad has taught me so many things, how to start a conversation with a stranger, be independent, get on a plane alone, and that taking every chance is the most important part."



"The friendships I made... my host family that I love endlessly, the connection I had with my teammates, and the people that made me feel at home in a country I didn't know before."



"I lived the most amazing year with so many adventures that I'll never forget – living with a new family, getting to know people from all over the world, trying new things, the Friday night football games, prom, and many more incredible moments."



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"Just hanging out with my friends at lunch, going for a car ride with my best friend, or being with my host mom. Those are the things that made it an amazing experience. Finding people who totally filled my heart with love, made me laugh every day, and hyped me up when I needed it. I can't say thank you enough to the people I met here for making this a perfect year."



Visit our website for more details and updated information on offers, prices, payment plans, booking details, etc.

Errors may occur, as well as changes in programs and activities.

# DISCOVER YOU



You are brave, curious, adventurous, and fascinated by everything that is new and different. You are ready to take a leap of faith, challenge your views, and change your mind. You do not need any special talents, skills, experience, or gear. All you need is a curious mind, an open heart, the desire to learn, the drive to explore, and the support of caring people.



"This year changed me and my life and I would never be the same person without it."

Going on a high school exchange is more than just visiting a new country. It is acquiring a second home. It allows you to get to know a place on an intimate level, to truly immerse yourself in a new culture, to create lasting bonds with people from faraway places, and to discover things about yourself that you would otherwise not see. Studying abroad not only gives you an international education, but it also allows you to grow as an individual and become a citizen of the world. It is a jump-start to becoming the people we truly are.

A high school exchange is not without its challenges, but the rewards that await are far greater and make every obstacle more than worth it. You will come out of the whole experience more mature, more independent, and more confident, better at communicating and problem-solving, with a better sense of yourself and a greater understanding of the world. In short, you will be ready to face the future head-on. The memories you make and the bonds you form will be with you for the rest of your life, and you will forever have a second place to call home. Going on a high school exchange is a big decision, but it is one that will transform your life in unexpected ways. So, choose your destination, apply now, and get ready for the best experience of your life.



**Only by being confronted with the unknown can you truly discover yourself. Experiencing life abroad as an exchange student is to turn every day into an unforgettable adventure!**

WELCOME TO STS HIGH SCHOOL — Discover us

# DISCOVER

## US





**We are travelers and educators. We are former international students ourselves, passionate about making the world a better place through cultural exchange. We are who we are because we have been where you are now.**

## **Mission:**

At STS, our mission is to empower young people to grow through education and cultural exchange. We are convinced that experience-based learning abroad is the best way to gain new knowledge, learn a new language, improve self-confidence, and grow as a person. Since 1958, we have provided international education in the form of youth trips and high school exchanges around the world.



*"I first chose STS because I got a good feeling when talking to them. Now, afterwards, I am extremely happy that I chose STS. They made the application process and my exchange year go very smoothly and were always quick to solve any problems that occurred."*

### **Who are we?**

We have first-hand experience studying abroad, so we know what you want from your exchange, we know what you need for it to be a success, and we know how to make it fulfilling and unforgettable from start to finish.

### **Why travel with us?**

As you will see, we offer a big selection of destinations and flexible programs, and we have tons of experience. But what really makes us special? Why should you travel with us?

**1. We are personal.** We know our students by name and follow you on your journey from start to finish. This is not a job for us – it is a passion, a lifestyle. We do this because we love it and are truly dedicated to helping you have the best possible experience abroad.

**2. We are safe.** The safety of our students is always our top priority. We will make sure you feel supported and cared for throughout your entire journey and work to ensure your well-being at every stage. We take care of the details so that you do not have to.

**3. We listen and we care.** We are constantly finding new ways to make our trips better by listening to what our customers want, adapting our products to the changing times, and meeting the demands of evermore adventurous, industrious, and discerning young travelers.

# HERE'S HOW IT WORKS

**There is a lot to think about before embarking on a high school exchange, from choosing your destination to making sure all your preparations are complete. We will guide you through each step of the process, but for now, here are some important things to know before you get started.**



## The new you

**Become more independent.** It goes without saying that you will have a strong support system throughout your exchange. But you will also be confronted with many situations that will give you the opportunity to learn to handle things on your own and be more self-reliant.

## Connections for life

You are bound to meet lots of inspiring and unforgettable people during your time abroad, from classmates, teachers, and others in the local community to other STS students and, of course, your host family. Many of these connections will last well beyond the exchange itself and will become strong enough to span continents and decades. **You are not just making friends for a year; you are forming connections for life.**



## Learn a new language

By the end of your exchange, the language is sure to be second nature. **You will be speaking, thinking, and even dreaming in a new language!**

## Tear down walls, build bridges

Studying abroad enables you to connect with people from different backgrounds and with different ways of understanding the world. You will learn to better exchange ideas, overcome differences and find common ground, opening yourself up to a whole new world of possibilities.

## STS Placement Promise

If your original destination isn't available, you choose what happens next: an alternative destination, a postponed start, or a full refund. It's your journey and you'll always have a way forward – we'll make sure it continues.

**20 countries to choose from**

There are tons of destinations for you to choose from, spread over five continents. If you want to go to an English-speaking country, you have lots of choices: the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the UK, and Ireland. You can also choose a whole range of other destinations, from Costa Rica to Japan, Spain to Norway, and Germany to Argentina.

Keep reading to learn about all our destinations and see where your journey will take you. There are no wrong choices, only endless possibilities.

**Getting prepared****Application**

A good first step is to attend a webinar — an online information meeting where you can learn about our programs and destinations and ask all your questions. Also, keep your eyes open for events near you!

Once you have decided to go and chosen your destination, it is time to apply. The application process has many components, but we will guide you through every step.

**Pre-Departure Orientation****Welcome Camp**

Before you leave, you will attend a Pre-Departure Orientation meeting to meet with other STS students going on a high school exchange and to get a better picture of what to expect on the adventure ahead.

Finally, you will attend a Welcome Camp (included for most programs with fall start) where you will spend several days having workshops and activities with other exchange students to make sure you are fully prepared to start your exchange.

**Living with a host family**

Wherever you end up doing your exchange, you will live with a local host family. It may sound a bit scary to go off to a new place and live with people you have never met before. **But the host family often turns out to be the most memorable and meaningful part of the whole exchange for many students.**

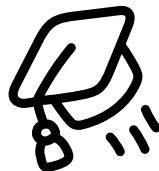
Host families offer a behind-the-scenes look at the local culture and daily life, not to mention tons of opportunities to practice the language. But most importantly, your host family will be your main support during your time abroad. They will be there to help you with anything you need, to accompany you on your experience, and to provide a place to call home during your international adventure.

**What's included?****This is included**

Round-trip airfare (your host family or local staff will meet you upon arrival), placement in an approved host family with full board, placement in a local high school, personal service and contact person in host and home countries, Pre-Departure Orientation meeting, Welcome Camp (fall departures), 24-hour phone service, preparation material for students and parents, and STS diploma.

**This is not included**

Insurance, visa costs, health check, school uniform if needed, school lunch, school bus, club fees, optional trips during the exchange year, spending money, personal expenses, and any currency supplements.

**Your local support**

Throughout your exchange your host family will be your main support, and they will be able to help you with most of your daily needs. **You will also have a local coordinator and staff in your host country who will check in with you regularly and whom you can contact anytime.**

# CLASSIC, SELECT AND MORE

If anything characterizes our programs it's flexibility: choose from 20 countries, do a full academic year or just one semester (or even just three months in some locations), combine two countries into one year, choose your specific region, state, city, or even school! **Find the program that is right for you and customize your exchange to match your dreams.**

## High School Classic

High School Classic is the traditional high school exchange program, chosen by most of our students. It is the perfect program for those who long for a genuine high school experience abroad and who are willing to embrace all the surprises it can bring. Based on your profile, a host family will choose to host you and we will find you a local high school close to your new home.

In many of our program countries, you can wish to be placed in certain regions or even cities. So, if you know where you want to go, be sure to look for these options at your destination.

## High School Select

With the High School Select program, your time abroad is entirely in your hands, as you can choose the exact school you want to attend. If you want to be able to take specialized classes (art, media, or an extra language, for example), want to play a particular sport or instrument, or even if you just want to live in a specific area, you will find what you are looking for among our large offering of Select schools.

If you already know exactly what you want from your experience abroad, then this is the right program for you. Contact us so we can help you find the school that suits you best and get ready for the experience of a lifetime.

## Two countries in one year

Do you want to go on exchange in Europe? Then you have the opportunity to experience two European countries in one year! High School 2-in-1 program gives you the unique opportunity to spend each semester of your high school exchange in a different country. You can learn an extra language, gain insight into yet another culture and make even more international friends. How about spending your first semester in Ireland and the second one in Sweden? Or try one semester in Germany and one in the UK. If you cannot decide between France and Spain? Do both!

**Your journey,  
your rules:  
choose country,  
program,  
and duration!**





<b>CHOICE</b>	<b>CLASSIC</b>	<b>SELECT</b>
Choice of country	✓	✓
Choice of language	✓	✓
Choice of region/city	✓*	✓
Choice of school by interest or subject		✓
Possibility to extend studies		✓

\* In a number of High School Classic destinations, you can wish for a specific region/city for an extra fee.

# YOUR HOME AWAY FROM HOME

**Living with a host family is more than just having a place to stay during your exchange. They will be your greatest support and your closest companions on your international adventure.**

There is no better way to experience the local culture of your host country than to join a local family in their day-to-day life. And that is exactly what you will do. You will live together, eat together, spend your free time together, and maybe even travel together. They will be your first contact with a new culture and a place to call home in your new country.

And it really is like gaining a second home. Many of our students stay in touch with their host families long after their exchange is over. They travel all around the world to visit each other, spend time together and celebrate important life events. We have had host families travel halfway around the world to attend their former exchange student's wedding, years after the exchange ended. The bonds you form with your host family are sure to be some of the strongest, most meaningful, and long-lasting connections from your whole exchange experience.

## Our fantastic host families

Our host families come in many shapes and sizes. They can be made up of couples with or without children, single parents, large families with children of all ages, same sex couples, etc. They can live in city apartments, suburban houses, or in the countryside. They come from different backgrounds, have different interests, and lead different lives.



But one very important thing unites them all: they are passionate about cultural exchange and long to welcome curious and adventurous international students into their homes. They have opened their doors and their hearts, and they are waiting for you to join them to share this unforgettable experience together.



## How does staying with a host family work?

You will live with a local family, which can be a couple or a single household, with or without children of their own. You will experience daily life with them, eat meals together, and have them as your main support system during your exchange.

"The way my host family was so proud of me and them calling me their daughter, melted my heart."



## How are host families selected?

We visit and interview each of the families to make sure they meet official regulations as well as our own requirements, guidelines, and conditions. In many cases, we have worked with our host families for several years.

## When will I find out about my host family?

This depends on which country you are going to and when you apply. The earlier we receive your application, the quicker we can start the process of finding you a suitable host family.



# AMAZING TIMES

"I was in Hawaii with 50 other exchange students. It was an amazing time!"

**Throughout the year you will most possibly be offered to join get-togethers, fun excursions, and longer trips together with other exchange students. This is a great way to explore your host country further and of course also to meet other international students. These trips are optional and are not included in your program.**



### **EXPLORE FURTHER★**

- If you are on exchange in the USA you will have the opportunity to join optional trips throughout the year. Examples of destinations in the USA that have been offered before are Hawaii, New York, and California.
- In Canada, you may be offered to go on various trips. In previous years trips have been offered to Vancouver, Niagara Falls, various national parks, etc.
- In Argentina, you will be offered at least two amazing trips. Make sure to visit Patagonia – an unforgettable destination and a must-see in the southernmost part of South America.
- If you are on exchange in Europe, you may be offered to join trips in your host country, but sometimes also to a neighboring country. Students in the Alpine countries may be offered to join skiing trips during the winter season.
- Students in Costa Rica will have the opportunity to join trips to national parks, volcanoes, and beautiful (surf) beaches.
- In New Zealand you will be offered amazing 11-day tours to the south and north island depending on when you are there.

\*These trips are examples of optional trips, not included in the program fee. Talk to your local coordinator about what trips are offered during your exchange.

### **Every day - a new adventure!**

There is also so much you can do in your day-to-day life to get the most out of your time abroad. We strongly recommend you take part in extracurricular activities during your exchange, either at school or at a local club or community center.

It is a great way to meet new people, integrate with the local community, and learn new skills. Many of our students have told us that they met some of their best friends at local activity clubs or sports teams even before they started school! The exchange is the perfect opportunity to challenge yourself and try something new, something you have always wanted to try. Join a sports club, play in a band, learn a new craft, or learn a local dance. Whatever you enjoy, you will surely find something to suit your interests. What matters most is that you push yourself, meet new people and make the most of this unique opportunity.



# READY, SET, GO!

**There are lots of things to think about when preparing for an exchange, from what to pack to how to apply for a visa. We will be here for you every step of the way to offer guidance and support as you prepare for your adventure.**





"The Welcome Camp was definitely a highlight and a fantastic start to my year as an exchange student. I still keep in touch with many people I got to know there. The different activities helped me feel even better prepared for the year. If I had the chance, I would definitely want to relive those days!"

#### **Webinars and events**

We host regular webinars and sometimes live events, where you can learn about all the different options you have – destinations, program types, exchange lengths, etc. It is a great chance to meet our staff, former students, and sometimes school representatives from our program countries. You get to ask questions and find out everything you want to know.

#### **Social media**

Our students who are currently on a high school exchange can be a great source of information and inspiration. They can tell you about what it's actually like to be on exchange and give tips on things that maybe had not crossed your mind. Our TikTok and Instagram are full of our student's content. Be sure to follow – you will get a great sneak peek of the exchange life!

\* Please note that the welcome camp in Japan might take place online.

#### **Pre-Departure Orientation**

Before leaving on your exchange, you and your parents will attend a Pre-Departure Orientation meeting along with other STS-students and their parents. These meetings will make sure you have everything you need to be prepared and answer any last questions you may have.

#### **Welcome Camp**

To make sure you get the perfect introduction, your exchange will start with a Welcome Camp, which is included in the program fee (for most programs with fall departure). It is a kind of "soft landing," where you will meet fellow exchange students and learn a lot about what to expect from the adventure you are about to start.

The Welcome Camp takes place over a few days in a great city, like New York, Paris, or Barcelona, depending on your destination\*. You will have interesting workshops and activities on different topics that can help you throughout your exchange: how to deal with homesickness, adapting to a new home, what to do if you need help or support, and more. But at the same time, you will also be exploring the city you are in, doing some sightseeing, and checking out some famous and iconic spots.

You will be doing all this with other STS students, all of whom are also starting their own adventures. It is a memorable experience every year, and the perfect way to get started. After the Welcome Camp, you will be ready to travel to your final destination, meet your host family, and get settled into your new life.

"The welcome camp was incredible!!! Such an amazing experience and one I will remember and cherish forever!"



#### **LANGUAGE COURSE**

##### **Get extra prepared with a language course!**

Are you going on an exchange year to an English, Spanish, German or Italian speaking country? Prepare yourself with one of our digital language courses! This will help you understand your new friends, host family, and teachers right from the start.

The courses are online and available in different levels and lengths depending on the language course you are taking. They are led by experienced teachers and will be held in small groups with other exchange students. Take the chance to socialize even before your exchange and get prepared together!

The language courses come at an additional cost.

# 20 COUNTRIES 5 CONTINENTS

Hopefully, you will find the destination of your dreams among our 20 program countries, spread over five continents. There are no wrong choices, only endless possibilities. Where will your adventure take place?



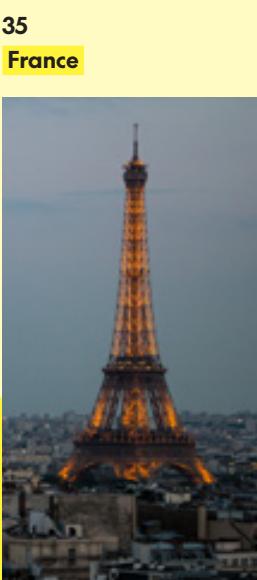
47  
Norway



20 - 23  
USA



48 - 50  
Costa Rica



35  
France



28 - 29  
New Zealand



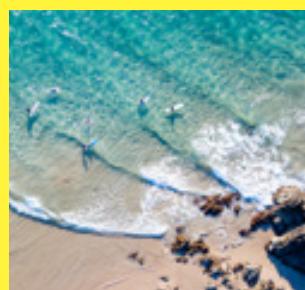
32 - 33  
UK



38 - 39  
Germany



52 - 53  
Japan



42  
Netherlands





## Explore more!

You will have the opportunity to join several trips while in the USA. The offered trips may vary but in previous years these trips have included Hawaii, New York City, Washington D.C., and California.

# LIFE IN THE USA

The USA has it all: fast-paced cities, beautiful natural landscapes, world-leading universities, and a unique mixture of people and cultures. It is a dynamic and fascinating country with something for everyone.

"Someone said 'You only regret the chances you didn't take'. That's what I live by. I tried different sports, played theater, met amazing people, visited unbelievable landscapes, and indulged in the American culture."

- Lani from Switzerland

### Life in the USA

The United States is a melting pot in the true sense of the word. It spans North America from coast to coast with a huge variety of landscapes, people, and experiences. From golden beaches and scorched deserts to stunning mountains and vast green plains, there is no end to the varied sceneries you can encounter. From New Englanders to Californians to Southerners, you will find that American society is dynamic and varies greatly from one place to another. The one thing they all have in common, though, is a hard-working and friendly attitude.

### School in the USA

The American school system is divided into primary and secondary education, better known as high school. You will attend high school during your exchange and most probably be placed in grade 10, 11, or 12, depending on your age and academic results.

You are probably already familiar with American school life through movies, music, and other media. No matter where in the USA you spend your exchange year, you will learn that some of what you have seen in films and on TV is true. The school spirit, the cheerleaders, the yellow buses, and the football teams, for example. They do exist and you can experience it all in real life.

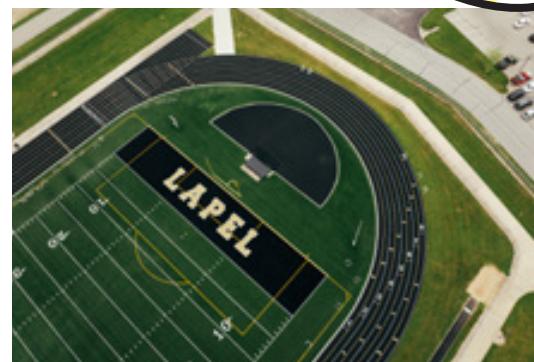
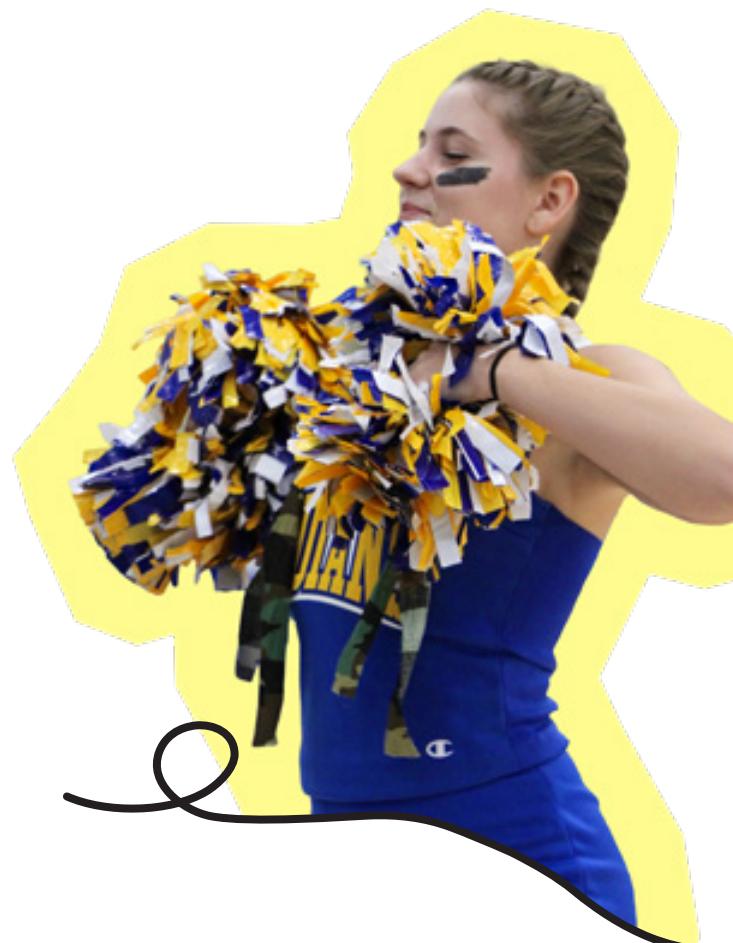
Most American schools have a wide range of subjects to choose from, but the schools here are more than just places to get an education. They are social places with tons of different activities around which community life often revolves.

### After-school activities

Students in the USA are generally very active during their leisure time, so be prepared to spend lots of time with new friends. Free-time and extracurricular activities are often connected to the schools, and you will most probably have a lot of activities to choose from like different sports; football, baseball, basketball, and cheer-leading to mention a few. There will often also be clubs, like Drama Club, Art Club, or Music Club.

"I would say I live probably the most American life possible. I've always dreamed of becoming a cheerleader and being part of the American spirit. And here I am cheering for this year's basketball season. I still can't believe it! Through cheer-leading, I did not only find new friends but I also experience the American school sport spirit in a completely new way!"

- Alina from Germany





"The best memories are the football games. I love the high school spirit, the connection between the teammates is incredible. The whole school felt like a big family."

— Joelle from Switzerland

### Select program

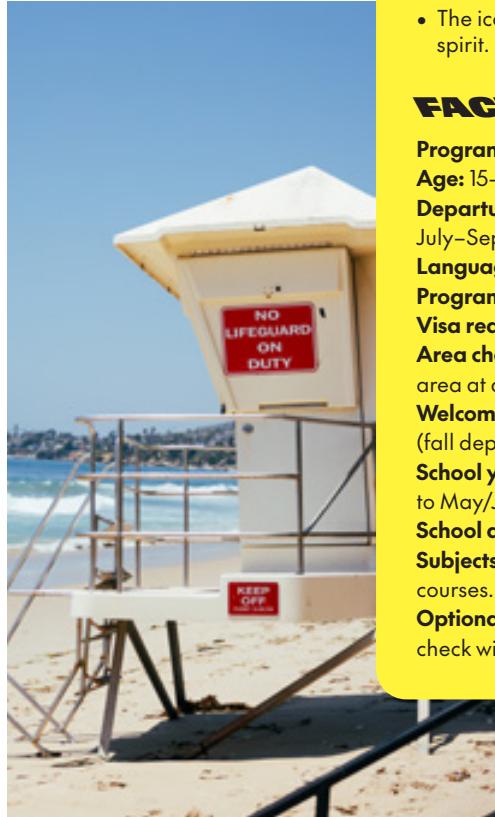
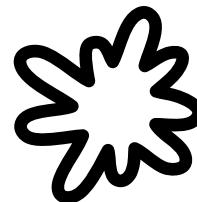
In the USA you can choose between High School Classic and High School Select. The Select program allows you to choose exactly which school you would like to attend during your exchange. We have a wide selection of schools, both public and private, from the Pacific coast to New England.

Our Select schools are known for their high academic level and athletic achievements and often have fantastic athletic programs. So, if you play a particular sport, be sure to look for a school where you will be able to keep practicing and improve your skills. You can even choose specific programs, such as the IB or advanced placement courses. Contact us and we will help you find the school and destination that suit you the best.

### Boarding Exchange

With Boarding Exchange, we are pleased to offer a high school exchange program in the USA to a lower price.

With this program you will be placed in one of the 60 different boarding schools that we work with around the USA. You will be staying at the school campus, not with a host family, and thus get that truly American boarding school experience. Tell us about your interests and preferences, and we will find a school that suits you perfectly



### **HIGHLIGHTS**

- The land of opportunity.
- Incredible natural variety – deserts, mountains, beaches, and more.
- A center for world culture and innovation.
- The iconic American high school spirit.

### **FACTS**

**Program types:** Classic and Select.

**Age:** 15-18.5 on arrival.

**Departure:** January and July-September.

**Language requirements:** Yes.

**Program length:** 5 or 10 months.

**Visa requirement:** Yes.

**Area choice:** Yes. Wish for a certain area at an extra cost (incl. with Select).

**Welcome Camp:** Included (fall departures).

**School year:** August/September to May/June.

**School day:** 8 am-4 pm.

**Subjects:** Mandatory and elective courses.

**Optional trips:** Yes, make sure to check with your local coordinator.



## SIMON'S STORY

Simon from Sweden,  
on exchange in the USA



### Why did you decide to go on a high school exchange?

It wasn't really planned, I saw a brochure in my school, and it got me right away.

### What was the best part?

My family and my friends whom I will stay in touch with long after the exchange.

### Any challenges?

At first, the culture shock was a big challenge for me because I could not really keep up with some of my hobbies and I had to get used to many things that were completely different to me. Going on an exchange is a roller coaster. I have had my ups and downs like I would normally have, but now in a different place. Last but not least, leaving. To leave a part of me behind just like that. And, also it's a challenge missing my family and friends in America.

### Your main learnings?

I have to say becoming more independent. But, that also made me develop as a person!

### Can you recommend going?

I can absolutely recommend going on an exchange. But don't expect it to be easy. Going on an exchange is an incredible experience, but it will also be a hard challenge. For me this year will be one of the best years I had. I have developed as a person and I will always have a second home that I can visit.

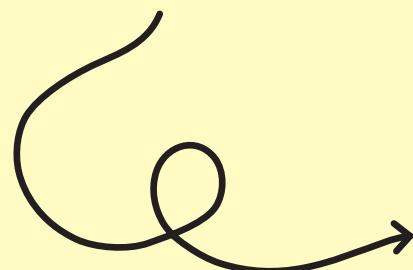
## SIMON'S TIPS

### Have the right expectations

Don't expect it to be easy. Going on an exchange is an incredible experience, but it will also be a hard challenge.

### Try new things

Dare to try new things and step out of your comfort zone. I tried baseball and it was an amazing experience.



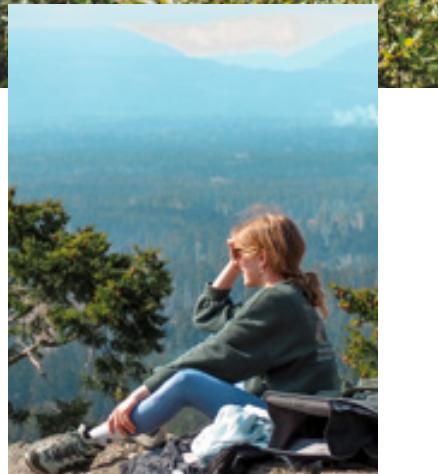
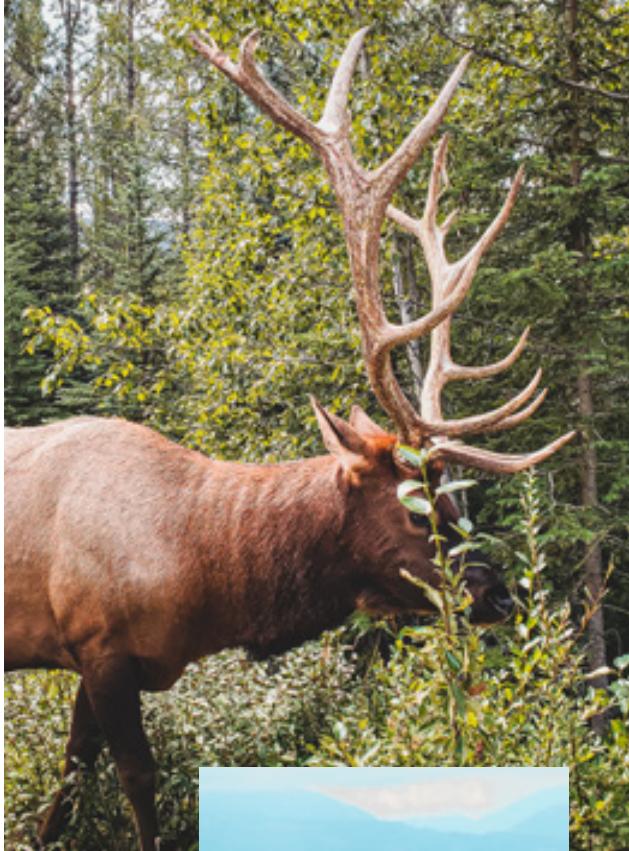


### Explore more!

Take the opportunity to discover all of Canada's charms and natural wonders throughout your exchange. Organized trips vary depending on the region you are in.

# LIFE IN CANADA

Canadians take as much pride in their diverse cultural heritage as they do in their country's breathtaking natural beauty. They come from diverse backgrounds, different religions, and even speak different languages. They are friendly, welcoming, and open-minded, always ready to help with a smile.



"In Canada, I exposed myself to a totally different culture and learned a lot! If you are thinking about it – just do it. It's the chance of a lifetime."

— Elin from Sweden



"After school I really like to go skiing. Last weekend I went with some friends to a hockey game of the Vancouver Canucks. It was an incredible experience and the atmosphere in the arena was amazing! I also love to just hang out with friends and explore the city. I'm so thankful for the whole experience here in Vancouver."

— Tobias from Austria



### Life in Canada

This enormous country, the second largest by area, is characterized by diversity. With the longest coastline in the world and more lakes than all other countries combined, water is everywhere. The majestic Rocky Mountains and rugged wilderness of Canada's far north are also emblematic of the country's spectacular beauty, which Canadians cherish and protect with as many as 46 national parks. Banff and Jasper are the most famous, but wherever you go in Canada you will find protected natural areas full of exotic wildlife and unreal vistas.

Urban life in Canada is just as varied, with small farming towns, mid-sized cities, and cosmopolitan metropolises like Toronto and Vancouver. These towns and cities are home to famously warm and kind people from all walks of life, who combine their different ethnicities and backgrounds into a country that is at once multicultural and uniquely Canadian, where hockey is life, politeness is the national sport, and everyone has a bit of a sweet tooth.

The first thing you need to think about when considering a high school exchange in Canada is whether you want to go to an English or French-speaking region. Both languages share equal status in the country, so whichever you choose, you will likely be able to study both, but you can decide which language you would like to speak in daily life.

### School in Canada

As an exchange student in Canada, you will most probably be placed in grade 10, 11, or 12, depending on your age and academic results. After arriving, you will meet with a counselor to set up your timetable and register for classes, usually 4 classes per semester.

Canadian high schools are globally recognized for providing high-quality education and are great for students with a variety of interests. They provide a wide range of course options in both academic and vocational subject areas, ranging from traditional course options in sciences, math, social sciences, languages, and humanities to electives that include the performing arts, culinary arts, entrepreneurial studies, outdoor education, and more.

### After-school activities

Canadian schools provide a warm and welcoming environment for students that encourages inclusivity and student involvement. Generally many different extracurricular activities are offered, ranging from drama, robotics, and debate clubs to a wide selection of sports. Most schools also arrange dances, carnivals, and other events for students throughout the year.

### Select program

In Canada, you will attend the High School Select program allowing you to choose exactly which school you would like to attend during your exchange. The Select program offers several great schools in fantastic locations around the country, of which all have a proud history of welcoming international students. Contact us and we will help you find the school and destination that suit you the best!



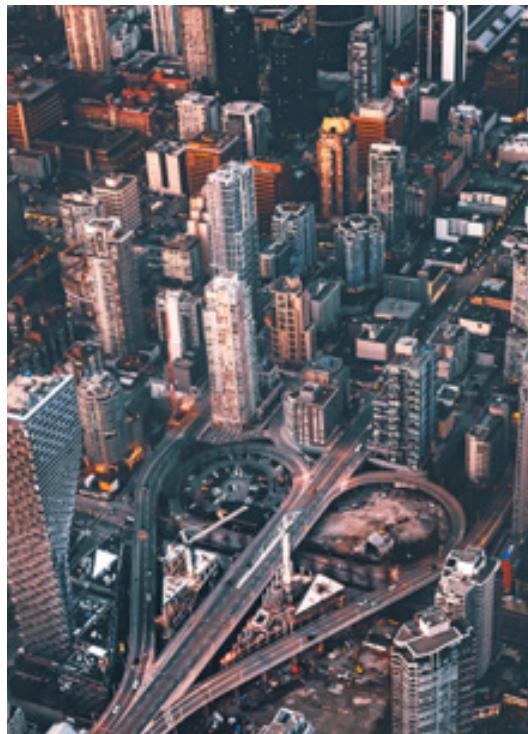
"The things I love to do here? Playing hockey with my friends for my high school team. I also love to take long walks in the nice nature here!"

— Thijs from the Netherlands



"I'm so happy that I made these friendships and found people who are always there for me."

— Nora from Germany



### HIGHLIGHTS

- Amazing natural landscapes and outdoor activities.
- World's longest coastline and highest number of lakes.
- Two national languages: English and French.
- Famously friendly people

### FACTS

**Program types:** Select.

**Age:** 14–18 on arrival.

**Departure:** January, August/September.

**Language requirements:** In some French speaking school districts, basic French can be required.

**Program length:** 3, 5, or 10 months.

**Visa requirement:** Yes.

**Area choice:** Yes, included with Select.

**Welcome Camp:** Included (fall and some spring departures).

**School year:** August to June.

**School day:** 9 am–3 pm.

**Subjects:** Mandatory and elective courses.

**Optional trips:** Yes, make sure to check with your local coordinator.



## CEDRIC'S STORY

Cedric from Switzerland,  
on exchange in Canada

### Why did you decide to go?

I wanted to experience more of what the world has to offer while still young, and also to improve my English.

### What was the best part?

All of the friends I made! I'm still in contact with them and am going to visit them this summer.

### How was it to live with a host family?

It was a pretty cool experience! If you're close to your host family, it's like living in a house with your best friends. I did miss my Swiss family though.

### How was school?

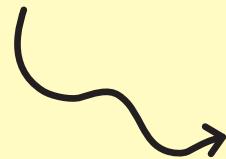
School was very interesting. It's way easier than in Switzerland and you get to create your own schedule to suit your interests. The tests aren't as hard and you have more free time, which allows you to explore the country and its culture.

### How will your exchange affect your future?

In a couple of ways. I've improved my English, which is really important for the future. I've made friends that I will probably keep for life. It has made me a lot more mature.



## CEDRIC'S TIPS

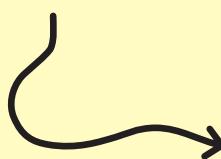


### Don't get into a relationship

Don't try to get a girlfriend, since it's going to be over as soon as you leave, which is inevitable.



### Never say no to new experiences!



### Get off your phone!

Spend as much time as possible with your friends and host family.



### Remember: goodbyes don't last forever!



## Explore more!

During your exchange, you will get the chance to join optional trips. The South Island Tour takes place in the spring and gives you a taste of New Zealand's exciting wilderness with glaciers, whales, and sea lions. The North Island Tour takes place in the fall and will take you to Auckland and the beautiful coastline. Both trips are 11 days long.

**Platino**  
SURF

# LIFE IN NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand is more than Lord of the Rings, of course, but there's a reason it was chosen as the location and spiritual home of the legendary fantasy film: it's simply one of the most beautiful places on earth.

## Life in New Zealand

New Zealand is an expert in extreme sports (it was here that bungee jumping was born), but it's also a country that everyone can enjoy at their own pace. Kiwi families (named after the famous Kiwi bird) often spend time in nature and are often out and about doing various activities like for example hiking, known locally as "tramping". The country's magnificent scenery is an adventurer's paradise. Jagged mountains and deep fjords, remote beaches, and rugged forests – New Zealand has it all. But there are also vibrant cities, friendly, down-to-earth people, and a unique culture to explore. From food to art and language, the Maori tradition has had a huge impact on life in New Zealand and you will for sure come across the traditional haka, a ceremonial war dance used for expressing pride, strength, and unit.

## School in New Zealand

New Zealand boasts a fantastic education system, where students receive focused personal attention and are encouraged to think creatively, independently, and analytically. The schools offer excellent academic standards and a wide range of available subjects, electives, and extracurricular activities. Technology is often used in the classroom, but outdoor activities are also an important part of school life and are considered essential for a complete and balanced education for all ages.

## After-school activities

Schools often have fantastic extra-curricular programs, with an incredible range of elective activities, from anime and writers' clubs to theatre, robotics, and gardening. Of course, also sports like the national sport rugby, football or volleyball, and the more unique and adventurous variants, like underwater hockey and mountain biking.

## Select program

In New Zealand, you can choose between High School Classic and High School Select. The Select program allows you to choose exactly which school you would like to attend during your exchange. Select schools are located all over the country, from Kerikeri in the north all the way down to the southern tip of the South Island. So it's up to you to choose North Island or South Island, urban or rural, residential or boarding school, academic excellence, or high-level sports programs. Contact us and we will help you find the school and destination that suit you the best.



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Unique, dazzling nature.
- Fascinating Maori culture.
- Lord of the Ring's homeland.
- Friendly people.

## FACTS

**Program types:** Classic and Select.

**Age:** 15–18 years on arrival.

**Departure:** January/February, April, July, September/October.

**Language requirements:** 3 years of English.

**Program length:** 10 months (Classic), 3, 6, 9, or 12 months (Select).

**Visa requirement:** Yes.

**Area choice:** Yes, included with Select.

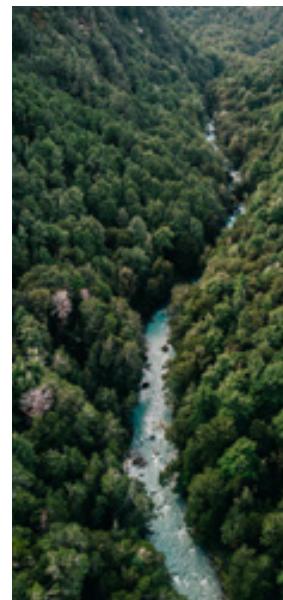
**Welcome Camp:** Included.

**School year:** January/February to November/December.

**School day:** 08.30–15.30.

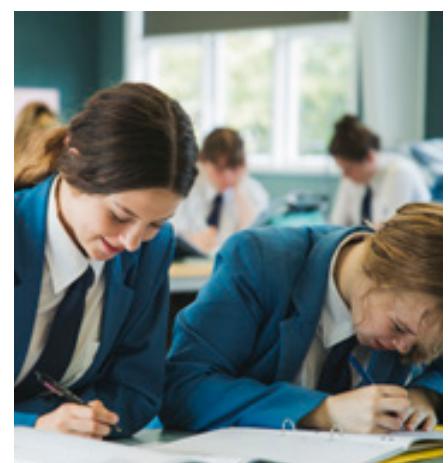
**Subjects:** Compulsory and elective courses.

**Optional trips:** Yes, make sure to check with your local coordinator.



"I have become more open, more independent, less shy, and more confident. Leaving my comfort zone and spending a year as a 'kiwi' was the best decision of my life."

— Nele from Germany





"My host sister and I walk to school together in the mornings, we go bouldering together, and every evening we do a diary entry together! She will be like my sister for the rest of my life!"

— Natalie from Austria

## Explore more!

During your exchange, you may get the chance to join optional trips. The offered trips may vary but in previous years these trips have included the Great Barrier Reef, Uluru (Ayers Rock), and Sydney.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Over 10,000 beaches.
- Unique wildlife: koala, kangaroo, Tasmanian devil, and more.
- Friendly people and a relaxed lifestyle.
- A surfer's paradise.

### FACTS

**Program types:** Classic and Select.

**Age:** 15–18 years on arrival.

**Departure:** January, April, July, October.

**Language requirements:** 2 years of English.

**Program length:** 3, 6, 9, or 12 months.

**Visa requirement:** Yes.

**Area choice:** Yes. Wish for a certain area at an extra cost (incl. with Select).

**Welcome Camp:** Included (July departures).

**School year:** January/February to November/December.

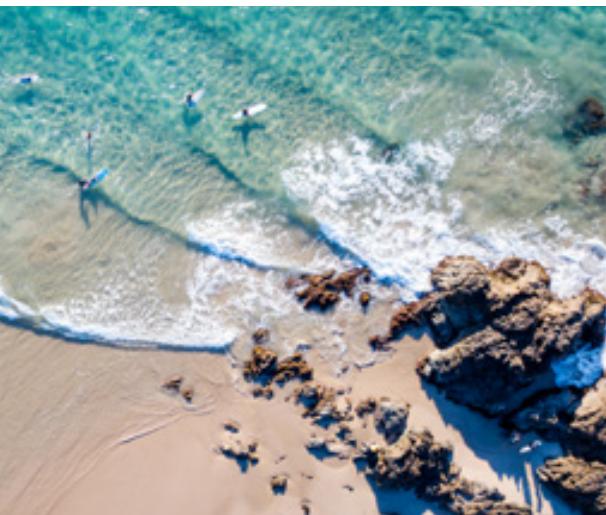
**School day:** 09.00–15.30.

**Subjects:** Compulsory and elective courses.

**Optional trips:** Yes, make sure to check with your local coordinator.



There are many countries where you can go on a high school exchange, but none of them are quite as cool as Australia. Here you find pleasant weather, vibrant cities, stunning scenery, and an incredibly friendly and welcoming population. It's no wonder that more and more students choose Australia as their high school exchange destination.



### Life in Australia

Australia is a country of enormous diversity, both in terms of nature and people. Cultures from around the world come together in vibrant cities, while millions of visitors enjoy the country's beautiful scenery. The wilderness (known as 'the outback'), outstanding wildlife, the Aboriginal heritage, amazing beaches, and the Great Barrier Reef are just some of the things waiting to be explored in this unique country, known for its relaxed atmosphere and social and friendly people.

### School in Australia

The Australian educational system is considered one of the most innovative in the world. The schools offer fantastic opportunities, with huge varieties of subjects and leisure programs.

### After-school activities

One word: surfing. Want more? Then you can enjoy the outdoors and great weather the way Australians do. Don't miss the chance to explore the incredible environments and unique wildlife.

### Select program

In Australia, you can choose between High School Classic and High School Select. With the Select program, you get to choose exactly which school you would like to attend based on your preferred region, how long you want to stay, and which subjects and activities you wish to take at school. Certain schools are great for a specific sport or hobby. Others offer subjects that you might find interesting, such as outdoor education, surfing, marine biology, drama, or art. Some are just located in amazing surroundings. We will help you find the school that suits you the best.

"I love the lifestyle here and spend most of my days on the beach."

- Amanda from Finland



## AMANDA'S STORY

Amanda from Finland, on exchange in Australia



### How is Australia as an exchange destination?

Australia is the perfect destination, life never gets boring here. I'm living in the Sunshine Coast and living here has been better than I had ever imagined. I see kangaroos on the streets and it feels like a dream. I love waking up early during weekends to go for a walk, a surf, a morning swim, have an Australian brekkie, and go to a market for some shopping and yummy food. I have fallen in love with the Australian laid-back lifestyle and I'm living my dream!

### How is your everyday life?

My everyday life consists of getting dressed in a uniform for school and then a bikini in the afternoons when going to the beach. I spend most of my days with friends at the beach, having BBQs, going hiking, going on markets or weekend day trips, and best of all, watching sunrises and sunsets as often as possible.

### Your main learnings?

An exchange year makes you grow and changes your mindset on life in so many ways. It changes you a lot as a person and makes you become more independent. I used to be very focused on school, but living in Australia made me realize that school is just one part of life and that what actually matters is seeing new places, making memories, and spending time with people you love.



## AMANDA'S TIPS

### Appreciate the small things

An exchange year will not be 100% perfect all the time. Appreciating and being grateful for all the small and positive things in the everyday life is very important.

### Anyone can do it

You don't have to be very outgoing or know yourself perfectly.

### Don't compare

Everyone has a unique experience and whatever happens, it will change you as a person a lot, you will become more independent, and make memories and friends for life.



UNITED KINGDOM

# LIFE ON THE UK

In the UK, old meets new in ways that never fail to impress. This small nation is home to a surprising wealth of beautiful landscapes, exciting cities, unique cultural offerings, and warm and friendly people.





Few places fuse new and old quite like the UK. With a fascinating historical legacy dating back thousands of years, it is a country that manages to always remain on the cutting edge in fields ranging from technology and innovation to the arts, fashion, and education. It also manages to balance a multicultural population with an unmistakably British identity and boasts natural landscapes as varied as its people. **A world-class travel destination and a land of rewarding educational opportunities, the UK is a place of tremendous possibilities.**

Fans of Harry Potter will have images of Hogwarts when thinking of going to high school in the UK. And although it is a magical school from a fantasy world, it realistically depicts many aspects of traditional British education, from the school uniforms to the housing system. Choose the UK as your exchange destination and get ready for a truly magical experience.

#### Time to wear a kilt?

Have you ever dreamed of exploring the Scottish Highlands with rolling hills dotted with sheep and surrounded by beautiful castles? Maybe you want to join those searching for Nessie (the Loch Ness Monster) or just feel like tasting traditional haggis, trying out the bagpipes, or wearing a kilt? With STS you can go on a high school exchange program to the beautiful area of Midlothian – just 30 minutes by bus from Edinburgh. It's an amazing location to experience life as a high school student!

#### School in the UK

The UK has a long tradition of hosting international students. Here you find a high level of education, excellent cultural offerings, and a safe and welcoming environment. You will attend a local school in the area where your host family lives and experience school life just like a regular British student.

#### After-school activities

After-school activities are quite common among British students. Each school and location offers something different, so whether you are focused on academic success, sporting achievements, or leisure time exploration, there is sure to be something for you. Football is an obvious favorite, but there are also some typically British sports to choose from, such as cricket, rugby or rowing.

#### Select program

High School Select is the program that gives you complete control of your exchange. Choose the exact school you want to attend and apply. **We have an extensive number of schools to choose from in some of the UK's most popular cities. From the coastal areas of England's south to the mountains of the Scottish capital, Edinburgh. Contact us and we will help you find the school and destination that suit you the best.**

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 countries in 1: England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.
- Birthplace of the English language.
- History, castles, and exciting cities.
- The home of Harry Potter.

#### FACTS

**Program types:** Classic and Select.

**Age:** 16–18 on arrival.

**Departure:** January and September.

**Language requirements:** None.

**Course length:** 3, 5, or 9 months.

**Visa requirements:** Yes (not required for EU citizens with program lengths of 3 or 5 months)

**Area choice:** Yes. Wish for a certain area at an extra cost (incl. with Select).

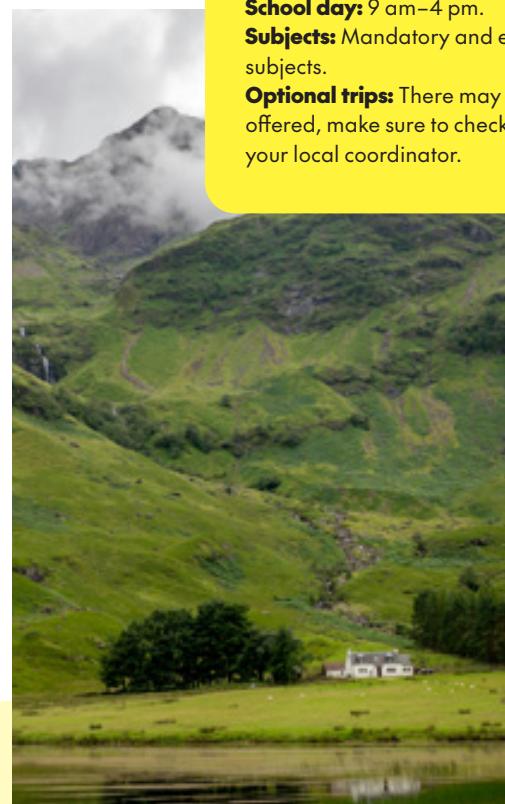
**Welcome Camp:** Included (fall departures).

**School year:** August to June.

**School day:** 9 am–4 pm.

**Subjects:** Mandatory and elective subjects.

**Optional trips:** There may be trips offered, make sure to check with your local coordinator.



"This was the best year of my life. The English people welcomed me with open arms, and their courtesy and openness were amazing!"

**— Philipp from Switzerland**



# LIFE IN IRELAND

As a small country with a long history, evidenced by the centuries-old castle ruins that dot the green hills of the countryside, strong traditions, and some of the world's friendliest people, Ireland is a land of extraordinary beauty. The vibrant cultural traditions live on to this day.

The Irish are known for their hospitality and sense of humor, so it's no surprise that they've been named the "world's friendliest people". You will feel instantly at home and almost like part of the family.

For being such a small country, its excellence in the cultural realm is almost overwhelming, from amazing contributions to world literature to internationally celebrated festivities, like St. Patrick's Day and Halloween. Traditional Irish music and dance is everywhere and make up an important part of Irish identity. It is the

perfect soundtrack to the Irish landscapes which the locals proudly proclaim to be the most beautiful in the world.

## School in Ireland

The Irish school system has a good reputation and high educational standards. High school, called Secondary School, is divided into two cycles: Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle. Most exchange students will be placed in Senior Cycle. On your exchange, you will study a balanced mix of theoretical, practical, and artistic subjects. English and math

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Beautiful green landscapes.
- Epic castle ruins.
- Vibrant cultural scene – folk music, literature, and traditional Irish culture.
- Warm, friendly, & welcoming people.

## FACTS

**Program types:** Classic and Select.

**Age:** 14–18 on arrival.

**Departure:** January and August/September.

**Language requirements:** None.

**Course length:** 3–9 months.

**Visa requirements:** Only for non-European students.

**Area choice:** Yes. Wish for a certain area at an extra cost (incl. with Select).

**Welcome Camp:** Included (fall departures).

**School year:** August to May.

**School day:** 9 am–4 pm.

**Subjects:** Mandatory and elective courses.

**Optional trips:** There may be trips offered, make sure to check with your local coordinator.



"Sometimes you miss your home and friends, but you meet new friends and get new experiences. And, you will become more open. My stay in Ireland was the best 10 months of my life."

— Mara from Germany

are usually mandatory courses, but you have quite a bit of freedom in choosing the remainder of your subjects. Why not take a Gaeilge class and learn the traditional Irish language?

## After-school activities

Ireland offers some unique extracurricular activities. If you're into music, try Irish folk instruments like the fiddle or tin whistle. If you prefer sports, schools often offer a fantastic mix of traditional sports including cricket, rugby, Gaelic football, rowing, hurling, camogie (the national sport of Ireland), and more. You can also find other clubs, like drama, choir, dance, astronomy, or public speaking.

"Ireland is real popular with exchange students. I made friends from Australia, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, and Finland!"

— Andreas  
from  
Austria





# LIFE IN FRANCE

France has long been an epicenter of culture, fashion, food, and high-quality education, not to mention the world's most beloved café culture. But it is also a modern and dynamic country with a variety of landscapes, climates, people, and local cultures and cuisines. There is much more to discover and fall in love with beyond Paris and the Riviera.

There is a reason France is the most visited country in the world. Or rather, there are many reasons. Year after year tens of millions of people travel to France to experience its glamour and sophistication, its world-class art and architecture, its quaint villages and vibrant cities, its superb restaurants, cafés, and 'boulangeries'. From the historical landmarks of Paris to the rugged coastlines of Brittany and the Mediterranean glamour, there is no end to the things you can see, do and taste in France.

## School in France

As an exchange student in France, you will most likely be placed in one of the last three years of high school, or 'lycée.' Most subjects are compulsory for all students, but you will also have the chance to take some interesting elective classes, like Latin or art. The school day lasts from about 8 am until 5 or 6 pm, with half-days on Wednesdays and Saturdays, when many students play sports or join other clubs in the afternoons.

## After-school activities

On weekdays, French students usually dedicate their evenings to homework and family time. Extracurricular activities such as sports, music, or art classes are usually reserved for Wednesday afternoons or weekends.

"My stay in France is unforgettable, mainly because of the great people I met. One of my favorite memories is when my host family showed me famous French songs and I showed them the best Austrian songs. We danced until midnight."

— Lena from Austria

## HIGHLIGHTS

- World's most popular destination.
- Centre for world culture, art, cuisine and more.
- The French Alps with Mont Blanc, Europe's tallest mountain.
- Fantastic food and café culture.

## FACTS

**Program types:** Classic and Select.

**Age:** 15–18 on arrival.

**Departure:** January and August.

**Language requirements:** English A2. Basic French is recommended.

**Course length:** 3, 5 or 10 months.

**Visa requirements:** only for non-European students.

**Area choice:** Yes. Wish for a certain area at an extra cost.

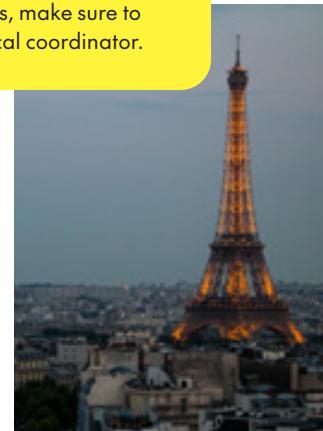
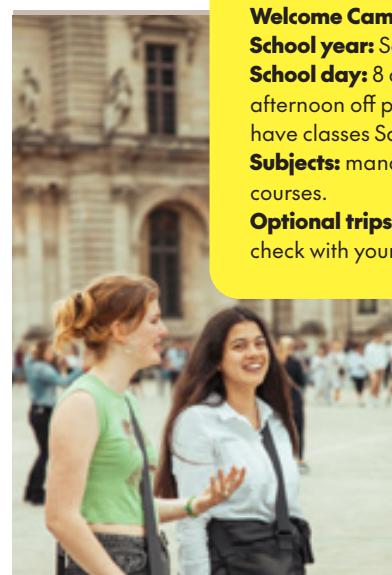
**Welcome Camp:** Included.

**School year:** September to June.

**School day:** 8 am–6 pm with one afternoon off per week. Some schools have classes Saturday morning.

**Subjects:** mandatory and elective courses.

**Optional trips:** Yes, make sure to check with your local coordinator.





## Explore more!

During your exchange, you may get the chance to join optional trips. The offered trips may vary but in previous years these trips have included Venice, Florence, or Rome.

# LIFE IN ITALY

Culture, art, and beauty: Italy is known as an open-air museum. Any city or town, from the North to the South, from the mountains to the seaside, is lively and dynamic, rich in history and traditions. Italians are talkative, outgoing, and true foodies, which makes Italy the perfect place to enjoy family and social life.

Throughout history, Italy has been a vital center for art, music, literature, architecture, and design, a fact made clear by its 55 UNESCO World Heritage sites, the most of any country. And yet there is something wonderfully laid-back about the Italian way of life. People are outgoing and you can hardly walk down the street without encountering lively conversations and shared cheer. Italians are family-oriented, and parents are caring and welcoming, so it is easy to feel like part of the family.

### School in Italy

Italian high schools offer a great variety of subjects and are specialized according to the curriculum chosen. Some schools have shorter school days, but also attend schools on Saturdays. Exchange students usually attend lyceums specializing in science or social science. You will be in the same class for all your courses, which means you can socialize with your schoolmates and make friends easily.

### After-school activities

Football is a national passion in Italy, and you will most likely have many classmates playing in the afternoons. But there are plenty of activities you can join after school. Swimming pools and sports centers are quite common in most cities.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Most UNESCO World Heritage cultural sites in the world.
- Fashion, design, and football.
- Varied landscapes: mountains, beaches, islands, and more.
- Some of the best food in the world.

### FACTS

**Program types:** Classic and Select.

**Age:** 15–18 on arrival.

**Departure:** January and August/September.

**Language requirements:** None.

**Course length:** 3, 5 or 10 months.

**Visa requirements:** Only for non-European students.

**Area choice:** Yes. Wish for a certain area at an extra cost.

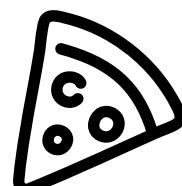
**Welcome Camp:** Included.

**School year:** September to June.

**School day:** 8 am–1 to 2 pm, some schools also Saturdays.

**Subjects:** Mandatory courses vary by school.

**Optional trips:** There may be trips offered, make sure to check with your local coordinator.



"The absolute best thing about my exchange year was my host family and one of my best memories is the trip I took with my host sister to Sicily."

**- Madlaina  
from Switzerland**





## Explore more!

During your exchange, you may get the chance to join optional trips. The offered trips may vary but in previous years these trips have included Madrid, Málaga and Seville.

# LIFE IN SPAIN

Spain is one of the most visited countries in the world, attracting millions of tourists every year. With idyllic beaches along the Mediterranean coast and the electric pulse of cities like Madrid, Málaga, and Barcelona, it is not hard to see why. With white beaches, exciting cities, world-class architecture, and amazing food, there is always more to do and discover just around the corner.

What really sets Spain apart as one of the world's best destinations is its warm, open, and friendly people. They love making visitors feel welcome and sharing everything their beautiful country has to offer. English is not as widely spoken in Spain as in other countries, so you will be able to improve your Spanish quickly by practicing with the talkative locals. You will probably notice that the daily routine is different from back home, with very late meals (lunch at 2–3 pm and dinner at about 9 pm) and a relaxing mid-day break.

### School in Spain

You will take a good mix of mandatory and elective subjects, but you will likely have the same classmates for most courses, so you will really get to know your group. Daily schedules can vary from school to school. Some might have class from 9 am to 5 pm with a two-hour lunch break (students who live close to school usually go home for lunch), while others might have class from 9 am to 2 pm, without a lunch break.

### After-school activities

After-school activities are quite popular in Spain, including sports (especially football), gymnastics, music, art, and crafts.



"I not only learned the language, but also the serenity of Andalusia! Late night dinners, the many festive occasions... it was all new territory for me, but as they say in Spain: ¡Viva la vida!"

- Ellan from Switzerland



## Explore more!

During your exchange, you may get the chance to join optional trips. The offered trips may vary but in previous years these trips have included Hamburg, Berlin, and Munich.

# LIFE IN GERMANY

There is a range of things to see in Germany: charming Bavarian villages, lively East German cities, fairy-tale castles, deep green forests, misty mountain tops, and the list goes on. All the while, German cities cover the whole spectrum from highbrow to underground, with varied regional cultures, dialects, and specialty sausages.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Exciting and dynamic cities: Berlin, Munich, Hamburg, and more.
- Beautiful fairytale castles.
- Vibrant culture and music scenes.
- Over 1,000 different types of sausages.

## FACTS

**Program types:** Classic.

**Age:** 15–17.5 on arrival.

**Departure:** January/February and August/September.

**Language requirements:** Basic German is recommended.

**Course length:** 3, 5, and 10 months.

**Visa requirement:** Only for non-European students.

**Area choice:** Yes. Wish for a certain area at an extra cost.

**Welcome Camp:** Included (fall departures).

**School year:** August/September to June.

**School day:** 8 am–4 pm.

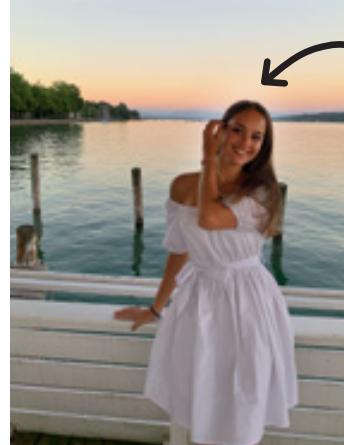
**Subjects:** Mandatory and elective courses.

**Optional trips:** Yes, make sure to check with your local coordinator.



"I'm so grateful to my friends, family, and all the STS people who made this the best experience of my life so far. I will carry the emotions of every single day in my heart forever and treasure everything I have learned. I will always have half of my heart in Germany."

— Vittoria from Italy



## VITTORIA'S STORY

Vittoria from Italy,  
on exchange in Germany

### Why Germany?

I had studied German for three years and wasn't very good; I didn't like it at all. So, I thought the best way to overcome this obstacle was just to go there and improve the language.

### How was school?

It was super-organized and gave me the chance to try so many activities: different sports, dance, language courses, workshops in journalism, photography, and art, perform at the end-of-year concert, and much more!

### Why go on exchange?

It will make you more mature and responsible, you will learn to live and respect habits and traditions different from yours, and you will have a second family and lots of new friends.

### What's your best memory?

I could make a very long list... the school trip to Berlin, the holiday in Berlin with my host family, the STS camp in Paris... But a moment that will always stay in my heart was my 18th birthday. Thanks to my fantastic friends and host family, I had a birthday party I will always remember.

### How will the exchange affect your future?

I will return to Germany to spend a year as an Au Pair. In the meantime, I will study for the C1 German certificate which will help me to get into the university in Munich. I am super determined to reach this goal.

## VITTORIA'S TIPS

### Do it!

Don't be afraid, take the chance and chase your dream. You will grow, get a second family and lots of new friends!

### Don't see the end of your exchange as sad

Treasure this experience which will certainly open up many opportunities for you in the future!

### Take active part in school activities

Especially if school performance can't be high due to language difficulties. It will definitely be rewarding!



"The friends I've met in Germany are super and I'm so happy to have gotten to know them. I'm really grateful for this experience."

— Michaela from Italy



"Since my exchange started here, I found myself a brand new hobby which is visiting museums and finding pleasure in art!"

- Sergio from Mexico

## Explore more!

During your exchange, you may get the chance to join optional trips. The offered trips may vary but in previous years these trips have included Vienna and Salzburg.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- High culture and museums galore.
- Great balance of urban and outdoor environments.
- Incredible skiing and mountain railways.
- Amazing coffee houses.

### FACTS

**Program types:** Classic.

**Age:** 15–17.5 on arrival.

**Departure:** January and August.

**Language requirements:** Basic German recommended.

**Course length:** 3, 5, and 10 months.

**Visa requirement:** Only for non-European students.

**Area choice:** Not available.

**Welcome Camp:** Included (fall departures).

**School year:** September to June.

**School day:** 8 am–2/4 pm.

**Subjects:** Mandatory and elective courses.

**Optional trips:** Yes, make sure to check with your local coordinator.

# LIFE IN AUSTRIA

Once the center of one of Europe's mightiest empires, Austria is grand in every respect, from its opulent palaces and cities to the majestic mountains that tower over the entire country. But it is also a highly dynamic place, with vibrant alternative subcultures and quaint rural villages, classical music and electronica festivals, traditional cuisine, and cutting-edge street food. Austria is sure to have something for everyone.



### Life in Austria

Life in Austria is defined by the mountains. Swarmed with skiers in winter and hikers in summer, the majestic Austrian Alps hide glistening snowy peaks and lush river valleys alike. They are also home to picturesque villages and grand imperial cities, where high culture mixes with alternative scenes and lively cafés. And as the undisputed center of classical music, Austria also offers incredible cultural experiences.

### School in Austria

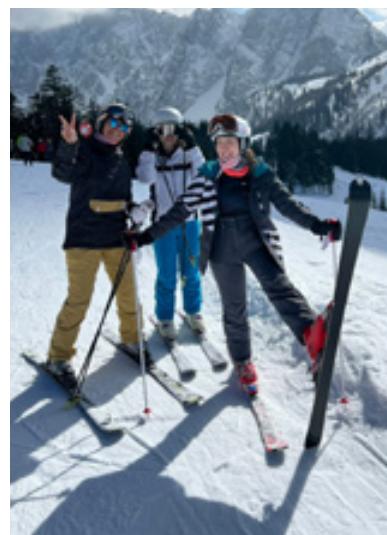
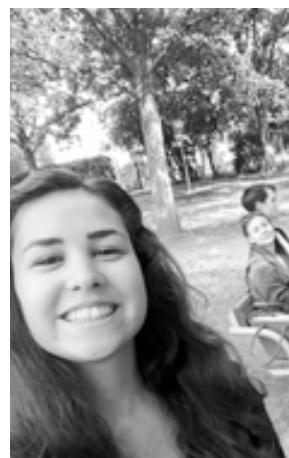
As an exchange student in an Austrian high school, most of your courses will be compulsory. They offer a diverse mix, including German, English, math, natural and social sciences, sports, and so on. Students can sometimes choose art, music, or another language, like French or Spanish.

### After-school activities

The best thing you can do in your free time is to enjoy the beautiful outdoors. Go skiing in winter, hiking in summer, and do not miss the chance to take in the mountain scenery from the comfort of a train for some of the most breathtaking landscapes you will ever see. And if you are a musician, there is hardly a better place to be.

"My favorite thing to do is go skiing and see the beautiful mountains."

— Clara from Sweden



## ISABELLA'S STORY

Isabella from Mexico,  
on exchange in Austria

### Why did you decide to go on exchange to Austria?

I decided to come to Austria because I wanted to learn German and at the same time practice my English.



### How is it to live with a host family?

I had the opportunity to get a great family that opened their home to me. They have shown me their country and traditions. They have helped me with everything I need and I really appreciate them.

### Austria is very different from Mexico...

Yes, especially the weather. In Mexico the weather is always warm. Here in Austria I have noticed how all the seasons of the year are changing. In winter I got to see snow and had the chance to ski and see the beautiful sights of the mountains.

### What have you learned?

I've learned about the language, the culture, and the beautiful city of Vienna. But also to become more independent and make unforgettable memories. The experience in Austria has let me know a lot of people from different countries, and especially the chance to make really meaningful friends. I hope I get the chance to see them again in the future!



## ISABELLA'S TIPS

### Join the trips!

I like all the trips and activities STS have organized for all the exchange students, they unite us as a group and I've really enjoyed spending time with them.



NETHERLANDS

# LIFE IN THE NETHERLANDS

The Netherlands tends to conjure up images of bicycle rides along idyllic canals and windmills dotting fields of colorful tulips. And while those are certainly common sights, this tiny country with a big heart has much more to offer. It boasts a history of excellence in both traditional art and cutting-edge architecture and is always at the forefront of innovation and creativity.

Dutch society is known for being tolerant, open-minded, and hospitable, and you will find that the people tend to be very sociable and quick to laugh. They love enjoying their beautiful cities with narrow streets, lively cafés, and market squares. They also love the outdoors and riding their bikes.

## School in the Netherlands

There are various types of secondary schools in the Netherlands, including the two most attended by exchange students: pre-university and senior general secondary schools. Typical classes in these schools include math, natural sciences, social sciences, English, and an additional foreign language.

## After-school activities

In the Netherlands, most extracurricular activities are not done through the school, but independently or through local community and cultural centers. This means that you will have even more opportunities to branch out and meet new people from all walks of life during your exchange. Find an activity that suits you and do not hesitate to give it a try.

"Not only have I learned lots of new things but I've also made so many friends and got a second family. I love my Dutch life and I would do it immediately all over again!"

— Franzi from South Tyrol, Italy

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Bicycle life; the Netherlands has more bikes than people.
- Beautiful canal-filled cities.
- Colorful fields of tulips.
- Open-minded and tolerant people.

## FACTS

**Program types:** Classic.

**Age:** 15–17.5 on arrival.

**Departure:** January and August.

**Language requirements:** A mandatory Dutch language course after arrival at an additional cost. Lessons in small groups and private lessons.

**Course length:** 5 or 10 months.

**Visa requirements:** Only for non-European students.

**Area choice:** Not available.

**Welcome Camp:** Included (fall departures).

**School year:** August to June.

**School day:** 8 am–4 pm.

**Subjects:** Some mandatory and many elective courses.

**Optional trips:** There may be trips offered, make sure to check with your local coordinator.



**HIGHLIGHTS**

- World-class design tradition.
- "Hygge" – coziness, cheer, and contentment in all aspects of life.
- Fantastic cuisine.
- Very high quality of life.

**FACTS**

**Program types:** Classic.

**Age:** 15–18 on arrival.

**Departure:** January and August.

**Language requirements:** None.

**Course length:** 3, 5 or 10 months.

**Visa requirements:** Only for non-European students.

**Area choice:** Not available.

**Welcome Camp:** Included (fall departures).

**School year:** August to June.

**School day:** 8 am–3 pm.

**Subjects:** Mandatory and elective courses.

**Optional trips:** Yes, make sure to check with your local coordinator.



The Danish state of mind is perhaps best summed up in just one word: 'hygge', a concept that is hard to define, but easy to love. It conveys a sense of coziness, comfort, warmth, wellness, and contentment, a vital form of everyday togetherness and camaraderie. This word embodies a lot about the culture, people, and atmosphere of Denmark. **But do not ignore their high-level knack for design and exquisite taste in everything from food to architecture.**

**School in Denmark**

There are many different types of secondary education in Denmark: technical training, commercial training, etc. But as an exchange student, you will most likely attend a Gymnasium, where you will get a well-rounded education in several different core subjects and elective courses.

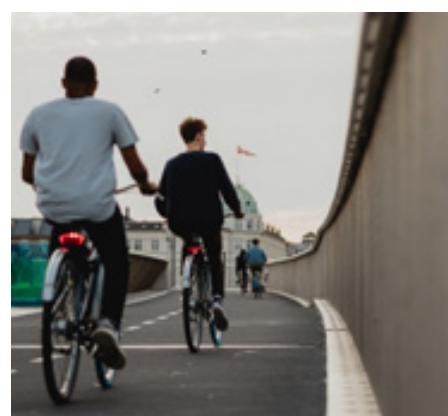
**After-school activities**

Most Danish teenagers are used to organizing their spare time on their own. **They are largely independent and decide for**

**themselves what they would like to do after school, so be proactive and find hobbies and activities you are interested in.** There is plenty to choose from, including popular sports like football or handball and various cultural clubs.

"It's not easy, but the difficulties make you love it. Denmark is very different, because I come from other traditions and attitudes. But when you understand it, a new world opens up and that experience changes you completely. I'm happy to now call this home."

— Alice from Italy





## HIGHLIGHTS

- Natural wonders everywhere; lakes, mountains, islands, and more.
- Sleek design and fashion.
- Fascinating Viking history.
- Cozy 'fika' culture – Take a break with coffee and cake!

## FACTS

**Program types:** Classic.

**Age:** 15,5–18 on arrival.

**Departure:** January and August

**Language requirements:** None.

**Course length:** 3, 5 or 10 months.

**Visa requirement:** Only for non-European students.

**Area choice:** Yes. Wish for a certain area at an extra cost.

**Welcome Camp:** Included (fall departures).

**School year:** August to May/June.

**School day:** 8 am–4 pm.

**Optional trips:** Yes, make sure to check with your local coordinator.

## Explore more!

During your exchange, you may get the chance to join optional trips. The offered trips may vary but in previous years these trips have included Stockholm, Gothenburg, Luleå, and trips to the neighboring Nordic countries.

# LIFE IN SWEDEN

Sharp style and fine tastes meet candlelit evenings and an obsession for coziness and baked goods in Sweden, a vast Nordic country with rugged Nordic landscapes. Dark green forests and deep blue lakes cover a land dotted with typical red cottages and rocky coastlines, a scenery that starkly contrasts the people's warm demeanor and zest for life.



## ELIZA'S STORY

Eliza from the Netherlands, on exchange in Sweden



### Why did you go on exchange?

I wanted an experience of my own, away from all the things I considered normal at home. I wanted to learn about new things and cultures.

### What was it like to live with a host family?

My host family was amazing, we clicked from the beginning and they took me out on so many adventures. My host family was a welcome family at first, but decided to host me the whole 10 months.

### What did you learn during your time abroad?

The main things I learned were how to become more independent and confident. I now consider studying abroad at a university, my exchange gave me the confidence to do this. I also learned how to speak Swedish and I learned about the Swedish and Sami cultures.

### Can you recommend going to Sweden?

Yes. I would recommend everyone who wants to learn a new language, culture, and likes a bit of cold weather to go. The long winters can be quite challenging, but all the snow activities we did during the weekends (I learned how to ski!) and the northern lights kept me motivated and happy.

#### Life in Sweden

This cold Scandinavian country is home to friendly and hard-working people who take great pleasure in the small things, like a 'fika' with the perfectly baked cinnamon bun. Sweden's cities really burst with life in spring and summer, when people make the most of the long days and much-appreciated sun by crowding outdoor cafés and restaurants, swimming in the ocean or a lake, and spending every possible moment outdoors.

#### School in Sweden

High school in Sweden, or Gymnasium, consists of three years of focused studies. Swedish students can choose from a variety of programs, such as economics, social sciences, natural sciences, the arts, and vocational training in many different areas. Exchange students may wish for a certain program, but placement depends on the availability.

#### After-school activities

Swedes love to stay active in their free time, and it is not uncommon for Swedish youths to play in several sports teams outside of school. Football and hockey are the most popular sports, but handball, volleyball, gymnastics, dance, tennis, and golf is also widely popular. If sports are not your thing, try drama, music, or pursue another passion in the great facilities and organizations available in Sweden.

"Getting friends was easy. It takes a little longer to get the Swedes to open up, but once they do they are the nicest people you'll ever meet."

— Eliza from the Netherlands



## ELIZA'S TIPS



#### A food tip:

Eat as much 'köttbullar med lingonsylt' (meatballs with jam) as you can!

#### Take every chance you get to try new things

Choose a subject at school you wouldn't be able to choose at home, join a club, try new sports and activities. You only have this chance once in your life.

#### Start speaking the language as soon as possible

It's so much fun and is way easier to learn while speaking!



## Explore more!

During your exchange, you may get the chance to join optional trips. The offered trips may vary but in previous years these trips have included Helsinki and Rovaniemi (home of Santa Claus) as well as trips to the neighboring Nordic countries.

# LIFE IN FINLAND

Finland's stark Nordic scenery is home to fascinating wildlife, pristine pine and birch forests, some 200,000 lakes, and the world's happiest people, not to mention Europe's top educational system, the almost mandatory saunas, and high quality of life.

For several years now, Finland has topped the list of the world's happiest countries, which might catch you by surprise. Finnish people tend to be rather reserved and must endure long cold winters. But scratch beneath the surface and you will find people that love the outdoors, enjoy the pleasures of winter and know how to have a good time.

### School in Finland

Finland's school system is famous for being one of the best in the world, promoting critical thinking and intellectual exploration, rather than repetition and memorization. There are no mandated standardized tests, minimal homework assignments, and shorter school days since free time is seen as a vital part of a healthy and complete education. But although the school atmosphere is generally more relaxed, Finnish students consistently rank among the best in the world for reading, math, and science.

### After-school activities

Finnish people do not lock themselves in during the cold winter. Instead, they adapt and make the most of it. Be sure to try some ice skating and cross-country skiing during your exchange, and do not skip the sauna, preferably with a dip in an ice-cold lake!

### HIGHLIGHTS

- The happiest country in the world
- Steamy sauna culture.
- Extremely high quality of life and education.
- A land of green forests and deep blue lakes.

### FACTS

**Program types:** Classic.

**Age:** 15–18 on arrival.

**Departure:** January and August.

**Language requirements:** None.

**Course length:** 3, 5 or 10 months.

**Visa requirements:** Only for non-European students.

**Area choice:** Not available.

**Welcome Camp:** Included (fall departures).

**School year:** August to May/June.

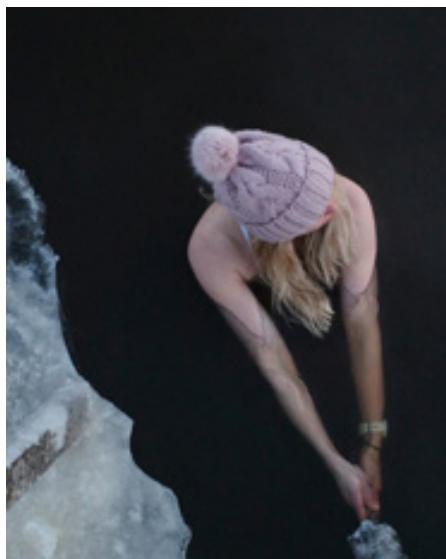
**School day:** 8/10 am–2/4 pm.

**Subjects:** Mandatory and electives.

**Optional trips:** Yes, make sure to check with your local coordinator.

"The Finns are very active, you never get bored. Like when my friends and I went sledding, I think I never laughed so much in my life. I've had an unforgettable experience here and I'll go back for my future studies!"

— Serena from Italy



## Explore more!

During your exchange, you may get the chance to join optional trips. The offered trips may vary but in previous years these trips have included Oslo, Bergen, and trips to the neighboring Nordic countries.



# LIFE IN NORWAY

Norway is characterized by spectacular views, from incredible fjords to glistening glaciers to the magical northern lights, and there is no wrong way to explore this country's natural wonders. Whether you prefer hiking, skiing, dog-sledding, or white-water rafting, both the thrill of the adventure and the staggering beauty of the landscapes are likely to take your breath away.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Some of the world's best spots to see the northern lights.
- Stunning natural beauty.
- Vibrant and sophisticated cultural life.
- Whale watching in the northern Atlantic.

## FACTS

**Program types:** Classic.

**Age:** 15–18 on arrival.

**Departure:** August.

**Language requirements:** None.

**Course length:** 10 months.

**Visa requirements:** Only for non-European students.

**Area choice:** Not available.

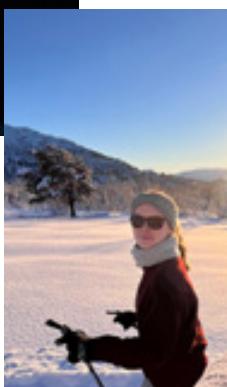
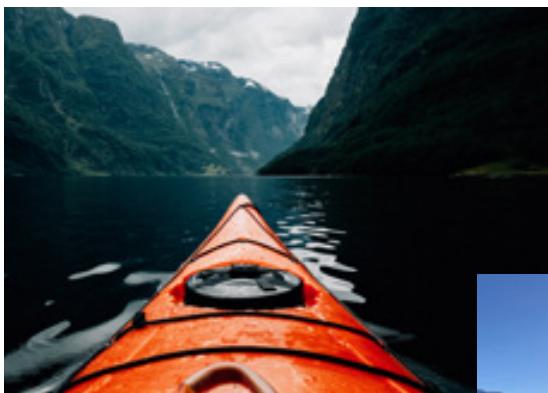
**Welcome Camp:** Included (fall departures).

**School year:** August to June.

**School day:** 8 am–4 pm.

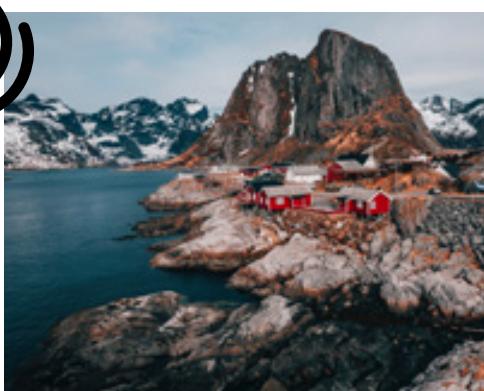
**Subjects:** Mandatory and elective courses.

**Optional trips:** Yes, make sure to check with your local coordinator.



"My great great grandmother was Norwegian and I wanted to experience where my family started. I also love photography and there are so many opportunities for that in Norway"

**— Kalen from the USA**



As amazing as Norway's natural marvels are, urban life can be just as interesting. While most cities are quite small, they are **picturesque and alive with culture, art, and food**. Norwegians love being innovative and push boundaries in everything from design to architecture to cuisine, but they also know how to kick back, relax and enjoy the high quality of life the country is known for.

## School in Norway

High school in Norway lasts three years, and students choose which areas they would like to focus on. Students have a certain number of compulsory subjects such as math, English, Norwegian, history and social science, but they can also choose a range of elective subjects depending on their interests and school.

## After-school activities

Norwegians are very active people who love to be outdoors. **Skiing is a very popular weekend activity in the winter, while hiking, boating, and swimming take up a lot of people's time in the summer.** More traditional sports like football and handball are also very popular.



### Explore more!

During your exchange, you will get the chance to join optional trips. The offered trips may vary but in previous years these trips have included national parks, volcanoes and beautiful (surf) beaches.

# LIFE IN COSTA RICA

Costa Rica is a nature-lover's dream, with deep rain forests, perfect beaches, mountains, volcanoes, islands, and spectacular wildlife. But the country's best asset is its people, who are warm, welcoming, and share a unique way of seeing the world. *Pura Vida* ('pure life') is both a greeting and a national philosophy. It encapsulates a friendly and worry-free lifestyle and an appreciation of people, nature, and a good time.



"One of my favorite activities was snorkeling. During the year I saw sharks, turtles, and many amazing species of fish. Once we even found an octopus. I didn't even know that one of my dreams was to hold an octopus in my hand until I got to experience it for myself. I even got a scar on my hand – this will forever remind me of that amazing experience."

**- Tuuli from Finland**



#### Life in Costa Rica

After a civil war, Costa Rica decided to abolish its military forces and has since invested those resources in education, healthcare, and raising the living standards of the Costa Rican people.

So, it's no surprise that Costa Rica happens to be one of the most well-developed countries in the region, with higher quality of life, better infrastructure, and higher quality education than many of its neighbors.

#### School in Costa Rica

High school in Costa Rica lasts five to six years, depending on the type of curriculum you choose. While the first three years are dedicated to general education, the remaining two to three years provide specialized training, depending on your chosen area of focus, so you can have a great deal of freedom in determining the course of your studies.

"My best memory was the first trip with the other exchange students. We went to Ostional in Guanacaste, one of the prettiest parts of the country. We woke up at 4 am to see the baby turtles go into the sea. It was the best trip I have ever had."

**- Jenny from Norway**



#### HIGHLIGHTS

- Natural beauty and biodiversity.
- "Pura Vida" – a laid-back and friendly way of life.
- Safe, peaceful country without an army.
- Non-stop adventure, from zip-lining to cave diving.

#### FACTS

**Program types:** Classic.

**Age:** 14–17 on arrival.

**Departure:** February and July.

**Language requirements:** None.

**Course length:** 5 or 10 months.

**Visa requirement:** Yes.

**Area choice:** Not available.

**Welcome Camp:** Included.

**School year:** February to December.

**School day:** 7 am–3/4 pm.

**Subjects:** Mandatory and elective courses.

**Optional trips:** Yes, make sure to check with your local coordinator.



"I could never have imagined that during my exchange, I would get two sisters that now are my best friends. My double placement sister Barbara, our amazing host sister Rebeca, and I had so much fun together. I feel so lucky that I got to share my experience with them."

— Hedda from Sweden

#### After-school activities

Costa Rica may be a small country, but it has so much to offer in terms of free-time activities. Schools often have sports programs, like football, basketball, or swimming, and there are so many things you can do on your own to discover the country's many charms. Take in the stunning tropical landscapes on a volcano hike, learn to surf on the spectacular beaches, or get up close and personal with the unique wildlife.



## JENNY'S STORY

Jenny from Norway, on exchange in Costa Rica

### Why did you go?

My dream has always been to travel, and an exchange year is the perfect way to do that. I choose Costa Rica because I wanted to learn Spanish, because of the beautiful nature, and because the culture is so different from my home country.

### What was school like?

School was so fun! I went to public school, and the education level was not very high, but I learned a lot of Spanish. I was put in the best class ever, and my classmates became my best friends. My school also had a lot of animals, everything from crocodiles to racoons!

### What was the best part?

It made me meet so many people that I cannot wait to meet again. I'm right now planning to go back after my graduation.

### What did you learn?

I matured as a person, learned about the world and that people are different and that is okay. My exchange gave me a sense of independence and I feel a lot more confident now. The biggest challenge for me was the language, but little by little I learned and now my Spanish is better than my English.

### Would you recommend going to Costa Rica?

Yes definitely. Costa Rica is a beautiful country! I recommend Costa Rica for people who are patient and careful since the cultural differences can be very big.

## JENNY'S TIPS

### Go!

An exchange helps you gain a better understanding of the world, it shows you beautiful places and you will meet great people. You learn about the world in another way, and it is a once-in-a-lifetime kind of experience.

### Listen to your host family and their advices.

They know the country and know what is safe and what is not.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Vibrant culture; football, tango, literature, and more.
- Exciting urban life in Buenos Aires.
- Famously delicious meat and steak.
- Varied and stunning landscape ranging from subtropical in the north to sub-polar in the south.

## FACTS

**Program types:** Classic.

**Age:** 14–18 on arrival.

**Departure:** February and July.

**Language requirements:** Some Spanish is recommended.

**Course length:** 3, 5 or 10 months.

**Visa requirements:** Yes.

**Area choice:** Yes. Wish for a certain area at an extra cost (incl. with Select).

**Welcome Camp:** Included.

**School year:** March to December.

**School day:** 7/8 am–1/2 pm.

**Subjects:** Mandatory and elective.

**Optional trips:** Yes, make sure to check with your local coordinator.



# LIFE IN ARGENTINA

Argentina has the South American flavor with a European twist. It is an electric mix of football and tango, bookshops and markets, vast green pampas, rain forests, and mountains. It boasts delicious meat, interesting wildlife, and warm people waiting to welcome you. From the boulevards of Buenos Aires to the glaciers of Patagonia, this huge and exciting country is full of surprises.

Argentina is often thought of as almost European, not just because so many of its people are descended from European immigrants, but because many cities and cultural traits resemble those from the old continent. But the temperament of the Argentinian people is firmly Latin. They do everything with passion, whether they are cheering for their favorite football team at the stadium or meeting friends for coffee.

### School in Argentina

There are several types of high schools in Argentina, but most exchange students go to bachelor schools, which focus more on academics. Exchange students will attend 'Ciclo Orientado' (oriented study cycle), which allows them to choose the subjects they would like to focus on: social sciences, natural sciences, arts, sports, design, etc.



### After-school activities

Argentinian students are usually quite active in the afternoons after school. Sports are a huge part of life in Argentina. Football is king, treated almost like a religion, but there are many other sports you can try, including basketball, volleyball, rugby, or athletics. Dance is also common; the local specialty being tango, 'cuarteto', and salsa.

"Argentina was the best decision I've ever made. Imagine going to a country where you find extraordinary nature, people dancing at any time of the day to celebrate every little moment of happiness, the kindest people who will treat you like family, and the most delicious traditional food. I simply had the best time of my life while learning Spanish, dancing cuarteto and salsa, and making amazing friends.

— Leona from the Netherlands





## HIGHLIGHTS

- Unique cultural blend of tradition and innovation.
- Exciting big cities like Tokyo, Osaka, and Kyoto.
- Home of anime, manga, J-pop, and more.
- Spectacular food.

## FACTS

**Program types:** Classic.

**Age:** 15–18 on arrival.

**Departure:** August/September.

**Language requirements:** Basic Japanese (read and write Hiragana and Katakana). You can join a Japanese language course before departure at an additional cost. (subject to availability).

**Course length:** 5 and 10 months.

**Visa requirements:** Yes.

**Area choice:** Not available.

**Welcome Camp:** No.

**School year:** April to March.

**School day:** 8 am–3:30 pm.

**Subjects:** Varies by school, mandatory and elective courses.

**Optional trips:** There may be trips offered, make sure to check with your local coordinator.

# LIFE IN JAPAN

The small islands that make up Japan have given rise to one of the most unique and fascinating cultures in the world, where the fusion of tradition and innovation is blended into the very fabric of society and daily life. A place of contrasts, Japan boasts cutting-edge technology next to peaceful Shinto shrines, an exciting food scene alongside cat cafes, and enormous and dynamic cities surrounded by stunning natural landscapes.



Japanese society is both interesting and highly complex. The different relationships and social norms can be a bit difficult to navigate at first but learning how everything works is a fascinating journey. You will get to discover it all as you enjoy the wonderful mix of old and new that is present in everyday life, from Shinto traditions to cutting-edge pop culture and technological developments.

#### School in Japan

Though you might study many of the same subjects as back home, you will find that many things work differently in Japanese schools. For instance, Japanese students are responsible for cleaning the school and serving lunch, which teaches young learners to be responsible for their things and to cooperate with students of different age groups.

#### After-school activities

After-class activities are a huge part of the Japanese school experience. It is very common for Japanese students to be active in several clubs ranging from sports like baseball, judo, or swimming to hobbies and cultural clubs, such as calligraphy, science, or broadcasting. Not only are these activities a great way to learn a new skill, but they are a window into the ways students interact and how society functions in Japan.



## JOHAN'S STORY

Johan from Norway,  
on exchange in Japan



## What were your expectations when you first came to Tokyo?

I came to Japan with a vague idea about what I was going to learn and experience. I had heard stories from other exchange students that you grow and make a lot of friends, but I was not prepared to gain such a deep understanding of the Japanese culture, the people, and myself. I grew and learned more in 6 months in Tokyo than in 3 years at home.

## What did you learn?

I learned to enjoy my own company, about my hobbies, and who I want to be. The distance from my family back home made me realize just how much love I have for them, and just how much I took for granted. It resulted in a deep gratitude.

## What was the best part of your exchange?

That I have made lifelong friendships that I can call family. I have shared tons of amazing memories with people that I will always remember.

## JOHAN'S TIPS



### Don't create too much expectations

Before you go, don't create too much of an image of what it will be like living abroad.

### Try things you can't do at home

Do things that you can't really do in your home country, either it being some sports or some type of cooking, or anything.



CHINA

# LIFE IN CHINA

The past, present, and future seem to merge in China, where cutting-edge technological development is combined with a history that dates back a millennium. Chinese is now the world's most widely spoken language, and as China's influence grows, it is set to become the language of the future.

## School in China

Education is taken very seriously in China, so it can be challenging, but also very rewarding. During the week you will live in school dorms on campus along with Chinese students. Then on the weekends, you will stay with a local Chinese host family where you can share all aspects of daily life. These living arrangements can provide deep cultural immersion and great opportunities to improve your language skills.

## After-school activities

Schools in China tend to offer lots of extracurricular activities and clubs in the afternoons and evenings. You will have plenty of opportunities to play the sports you love or take up a new hobby. Basketball and ping pong are the most popular sports in Chinese schools, but other options include athletics, football, and traditional Chinese martial arts. Cultural classes are also quite popular, like painting, music or dancing.

"You'll learn so many new things every day that will feel natural later on, like walking backwards!

The Chinese are friendly and curious and learning Mandarin isn't as difficult as it seems!"

— Amanda from Sweden



## HIGHLIGHTS

- World's largest population.
- Oldest continuous civilization.
- High pace of modernization and development.
- Huge variety of landscapes, languages, food, and people.

## FACTS

**Program types:** Classic.

**Age:** 15–18.

**Departure:** March and September.

**Language requirements:** At least one year of Chinese.

**Course length:** 5 or 10 months.

**Visa requirements:** Yes.

**Area choice:** Not available.

**Welcome Camp:** Included (fall departures).

**School year:** September to June/July.

**School day:** 8 am–5 pm.

**Subjects:** Mandatory courses include math, Chinese, English, science, history, and more.

**Optional trips:** There may be trips offered, make sure to check with your local coordinator.

# FAQ & THE PROCESS



## Am I guaranteed a placement?

We have a placement guarantee. In the unlikely event of us not being able to secure a school or host family placement in your chosen destination, you will be offered to choose an alternative destination, a full refund of the program fee, or the possibility to postpone your exchange.

## Which grades are needed?

Our students need to be achieving at an average to above level across all subjects during the last three years (or the years that they have received grades). If you have below-average grades please contact us and we will do an individual evaluation.

## Can I choose where I end up?

You have several options to have a say in where you end up on your exchange. If you choose the High School Select program you can choose the exact school you want to attend. In the High School Classic program, depending on your chosen destination, you can request area, state, or city placements, but these cannot be guaranteed. If you know a family that would like to host you, you can also apply for direct placement.

## Do I need to have prior knowledge of the language of the program country?

English is usually sufficient to start with for most programs, even those in non-English speaking countries. For some countries, some knowledge of the local language is required. Be sure to check your destination's page for more detailed information.

## What kind of school will I attend?

In most countries, you will attend a local public school. If you choose the High School Select program, you have a choice of either public or private schools. Let us know which you are interested in, and we can help you find one that suits you best.

## How do host families work? How are students placed with host families?

Our host families are carefully screened and vetted. When a family applies to become a

host family, we interview them, make background checks, and visit their home. Once they have been accepted, we present them with some students that we think might fit their family and lifestyle. Families look at student profiles and introduction letters/videos before making their selection. Give as much information as possible about yourself in your application. That makes it easier for our host families to choose you!

## Can I arrange a host family on my own?

Yes! If you have a potential family and school that would like to host you, you can apply for direct placement. We will still need to meet with the family and follow the same checks and procedures that are required of all host families. Host families cannot be related to the student.

## When will I find out who my host is?

Most of our exchange students departing in early fall, receive their placements in June–August, sometimes earlier. But since we want the host family to be active and choose their own student, we can never tell exactly when your placement will be ready.

## Will there be STS representatives on-site?

Absolutely! You will have your local coordinator (from STS or our partner in your host country) working on-site. Local coordinators are responsible for selecting host families, keeping in touch with local schools, and supporting you with everything you need during your exchange.

## What happens if I am not enjoying my exchange and want to go home?

We will help you and support you throughout your entire exchange. We encourage you to get in touch with your local coordinator or with the local office if you encounter any difficulties. We will try our best to offer support in every way possible to make your experience more enjoyable. You have the option to end your exchange early, but this should only be viewed as a last resort.

## 5 STEPS TO GET STARTED

Remember to be on time with your application because we have more applicants than spots. So, apply early to secure your place. Do not hesitate to contact us with your questions. We are happy to help and tell you everything you need to know about your high school adventure.

**1. Interest.** Fill out the application on the STS website. We also recommend that you and your parents attend a webinar to learn more and get your questions answered.

**2. Free interview.** You and your parents attend a free, non-binding interview where we get to know you better in order to guide you toward the right program.

**3. Application and preparations.** Once you have decided to go, we will guide you through the full application process including gathering a doctor's certificate and any necessary vaccines, getting signatures from your current school, and applying for a visa (if required). You will also be encouraged to write a personal letter and make a video to present you to our host families. Before departure, you and your parents will be invited to a PDO, Pre-Departure Orientation meeting.

**4. The journey and the Welcome Camp.** To prepare you extra well, you will participate in a Welcome Camp. This is the first stop on your way to your final destination. Together with other exchange students, you will participate in workshops and make yourselves ready for your new home.

**5. The adventure begins.** After the Welcome Camp you will meet your host family and get settled into your new home.

# BECOME A HOST FAMILY

**We have students between the ages of 14 and 18 from all over the world who are venturing out into the unknown to learn, grow and make memorable experiences. If you are interested in other cultures and languages, consider becoming a host family. Welcoming a foreign student into your home is a unique and unforgettable adventure – an adventure you can experience in your very own living room!**

## Who can become a host family?

Our host families come in all shapes and sizes but share a passion for cultural exchange. It does not matter if you live in a house or an apartment, in a big city or in the countryside. You can be married or single, with or without children, working or retired.

## Here is how it works

Once you have been accepted to the host family program, you will be presented with several students. Based on their profiles and introduction letters/videos you can choose a student you believe will be a great match for your family. Our students typically stay for five or ten months, but you can also choose to become a Welcome Family for three months to try out the concept.

**We take care of all the practical matters.** All students have been well prepared in their home countries, and most of them have also attended a Welcome Camp at the start of their program. We take care of the school placement, flight or train tickets, visa, and insurance. You will be supported by a local coordinator, and we are available by phone and email. We provide telephone support even outside office hours for urgent matters.

## A part of the family

As a host family, you give your student companionship, food, and a place called home. In return, you will gain a lifelong friendship and get a life-changing experience. You and your host student will get

"Hosting has given us a big worldwide family. All the memories we have made over the years will last a lifetime for all of us."



to know and learn about each other's everyday lives and you will get the chance to see your own country and daily life through new eyes.

The student will attend a local school and eventually come to have his/her own social circle and leisure time. Of course, it's great to do fun activities, excursions, or even travel together with your host student. But the idea is for the student to adapt to everyday life where the small details mean a lot, like cooking or baking local specialties together. Those things can really enhance the experience.

## Host & Go-discount

Is one of your family members going on exchange with STS? Perfect! You will receive a discount on the program fee if you become a host family before, during or after your family member's exchange.

Contact us if you want to learn more!



## How was your hosting experience?

We had previously hosted three girls from the USA, Italy, and Japan. Matteo was our fourth exchange student. It's incredibly inspiring to gain the trust of another Italian family who "lend" us their child. With Italian Matteo, it was exciting and educational for the whole family. Of course, there were also challenges, but it was great to experience how he developed in language, life, school, and socially as well as how he absorbed our culture. We often discussed differences and similarities, politics and social structures and everyone in the family learned from it.

## How did your lives change during the exchange?

Getting a new family member is a big change in itself, but we always tried not to change our way of life that much. But, with Matteo, we sure ate more pasta than usual!

## What would you say to someone who is considering hosting?

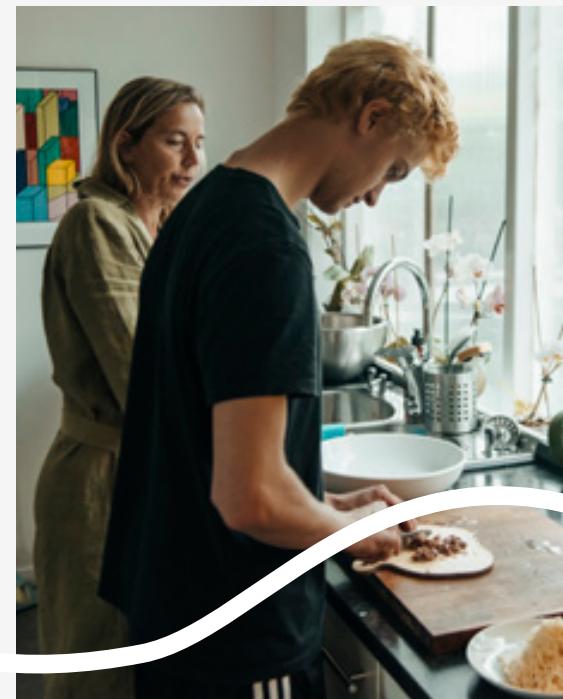
Being a host family is inspiring and makes a lasting impression. Part of the charm of being a host family is rising to the challenge and growing in the process. Everyone in the family gains new perspectives and a friend for life.

## What are some of your favorite memories?

It was wonderful to see how Matteo loved our Christmas traditions – especially when we were in the woods with friends chopping down the Christmas tree. Another nice moment was when three other STS students stayed overnight with us. The atmosphere was great, and it was so much fun to hear about their experiences in Sweden. Also, Matteo's parents, grandmother, and aunts came to visit from Italy. To see Matteo, show off his school and his life in Gothenburg, was great.

## THE AHLQWIST FAMILY & MATTEO

Matteo from Italy stayed with the Ahlqwist family in Gothenburg, Sweden.



## THE AHLQWIST'S TOP TIPS

### Be open and curious

Be open and curious about your exchange student's life, family, culture, and personality.

### Establish rules

Talk about expectations early on and establish what rules should apply throughout the exchange.

### Network

Network with other host families and develop a good support system.





# Aiducatius

# STS & AIDUCATIUS

When you travel with STS, you're not just going abroad. You're becoming part of something that helps kids who wouldn't otherwise have access to education, supports local communities, and the environment. As part of the Educatius Group, STS contributes to Aiducatius, a non-profit initiative that funds meaningful projects in The Gambia and Tanzania. Every STS exchange student helps support these initiatives. Whether you realize it or not, you're part of something bigger, something that's helping create opportunity and hope for others.

### Saint Martin Basic Cycle School, The Gambia

With the help of all Educatius students and parents, Aiducatius supports students every year at Saint Martin Basic Cycle School in Kartong, a town of 5,500 people. Students don't have to pay tuition, but Aiducatius supports school attendance by providing funds for uniforms, shoes, books, and backpacks. This allows parents to save money for higher education, to expand their businesses, or to create local jobs.

### The Gabriella Centre, Tanzania

At the foot of Mount Kilimanjaro, the Gabriella Centre helps disabled children learn work and life skills to take care of themselves and to contribute to their families and their communities. They learn to make cobblestones, bake, garden, as well as carpentry and caring for domestic animals. The Tanzanian government has been sending teachers to the Centre to learn how best to maximize the potential for these children and their communities.

### Tree Planting and Conservation Projects, Biharamulo District, Tanzania

An international exchange program requires a lot of travel every year. To



compensate for this carbon footprint, Aiducatius supports tree planting and conservation in the Biharamulo district in Tanzania, leading to recovery of natural forests, restoration of water sources and planted forest management, donating fruit tree seedlings to be planted close to the schools and sending some home with the students as well. Aiducatius also supports a campaign called Environmental Conservation with zero pollution, which engages local villagers to clean their environment and reduce tree losses through alternative solutions such as building and using fuel-saving cookstoves.

### The Aiducatius Creativity Internship

Since 2024, Aiducatius sends a group from the global Educatius family – staff, host family representatives, former students, and teachers to Saint Martin Basic Cycle School in The Gambia. This group spends two weeks helping out at the school, leading workshops, helping out with different projects at the school and its surroundings. They also bring tons of school materials, books, and hygiene products.

Your exchange experience can make a real difference!

# WHAT TO PACK?

**Start by making a list in your phone or a notebook.  
Add stuff every time you think about something.**



Small favorite things that you might not want to be without. A diary planner for personal notes?



A gift for your host family (something small, like candy), is very appreciated



Medication & toiletries (just the basics, the rest you can buy at your destination)



Everyday clothes, dressy evening clothes, underwear and socks, jacket or coat for different seasons.



Shoes for different seasons and occasions like sneakers, dress-up shoes, summer and winter shoes



Passport and vaccination documentation



Phone, laptop, headphones, camera, chargers, and power adapter, if needed at your destination



Sport gear, beachwear, and swimwear.



**Don't pack too much.** It might sound crazy, but we suggest that you pack as if you're going on a two week trip. You probably want to buy some local stuff when away. So, save some space in your suitcase. If you run into any questions — don't hesitate to contact us!

**SAY YES  
TO ONCE  
IN A  
LIFETIME**



**STS Education**  
Part of Educatius Group