

Jess Jackson

Report on the Goethe Institut Course in Schwäbisch Hall (30th July - 23rd August 2018)

Travelling

On Sunday 30th July, I flew from London Heathrow Airport to Stuttgart Airport. When I arrived I met up with another scholarship student from Finland and we both took the S-Bahn, which is beneath the airport, together from the airport to Schwäbisch Hall-Hessental. Just to note, we bought the tickets there so there's no need to buy tickets online beforehand. When we arrived at Schwäbisch Hall-Hessental Station, Karin, one of the organisers of the scholarship, picked us up and very kindly took us, as well as 2 other students, to our accommodation, answered all our questions and took us out for ice cream!

Day 1

The next day, the four of us went to the Goethe Institut for the interview to determine which level we were and what class we would be put in. We were given information about what events would be held every day, where to find the cafeteria, our classes etc. There was also a test for those who hadn't done it online before but I recommend doing the test online before the trip because it saves time as you're not having to wait to be tested. In the interview, I was asked how long I'd been doing German, what I study, my hobbies etc. (i.e. nothing too daunting!)

Accommodation

I was very impressed by the accommodation there, I had a fairly large room with a single bed, desk, chair, fridge, cupboard, wardrobe and a shared bathroom with a shower. The rooms are cleaned weekly with a fresh set of towels and fresh bed sheets. There was free wifi. You also have access to a kitchen (where we made Apfel Strudel one night so it has all the utensils and cooking paraphernalia for cooking and baking) and a washing machine.

Catering

In terms of meals, breakfast and lunch are catered for Monday to Friday, however, the evening meals and weekend meals are not catered for. I either bought food from the supermarket, went to a restaurant or cooked with the other students. Remember that all the shops are closed on Sundays if you need to buy food for Sunday. For breakfast, there was a huge variety from cereals to croissants, pretzels to cheese, yoghurts to bread rolls and so on. A selection of teas and coffee was always provided. For lunch, the menu varied day to day and there was always a vegetarian option available. Generous portions were provided. Coffee, tea and water were also provided in break times between lessons.

Additional money

You also receive a sum of €250 pocket money through the scholarship but I had taken an extra €400 just in case of emergencies. I would advise taking a sum of at least €300. Some money is useful for buying food at the weekends and some excursions (e.g. to Berlin which costs €99).

Lessons

After having been interviewed and tested, I was placed in A1. I found this rather easy so I spoke to my teacher and asked whether I could move up a level. I was immediately placed into the class above and enjoyed the lessons a lot more. In class, we would do group work as well as individual work, make presentations and dialogues, play games, essentially a great variety different things so we were never bored! Classes were from 8:30am-1pm, with 2 breaks in between, 10-10:30 and 12-12:15.

Free time

After lunch, the students would either do their homework, go to the planned Goethe activities or just do their own thing. It's very relaxed! In Schwäbisch Hall, there are museums, pubs, shops, bakeries, a huge park, galleries and restaurants. In terms of Goethe activities, you could do all sorts from making pretzels at a bakery to watching a German film at the cinema!

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Return Journey

On Thursday 23rd August, I walked to Schwäbisch Hall - Hessental Station and took the train back to Stuttgart. Then I took the S-Bahn from Stuttgart train station to Stuttgart Airport and flew back to Heathrow Airport.

Summary

I would like to thank both the Goethe Institut and the Loughborough Town Hall for allowing me to experience this amazing opportunity to go to Schwäbisch Hall for a month. I've met so many fantastic people from America, France, Italy, Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Russia, the list could go on! My German has without a doubt improved, especially in terms of speaking and writing. Plus, with all the students in the same position, it's easier to speak German without feeling like your German has to always be perfect. We're all happy to help each other and speak German as much as we can. I would encourage you greatly to, regardless of your level, apply for this scholarship because it's definitely impacted me in a positive way and now I know for sure that I would love to do German at university.