



- **Laura de Lima Hartmann - CFJL**

MY EXCHANGE TO GERMANY 2025

From July 26th to August 9th, Camp-Berlin-Charlottenburg 2025

In the following text I'm going to share my impressions about my amazing short exchange to Berlin. Firstly I want to thank everybody who made this experience possible, because it was incredible and showed me so many things I could have never experienced without your help!

THE TRIP

The whole experience started with a long time traveling to Germany, I've never been before to a European country and I was extremely excited!

I travelled with my friend Kauana who also took part in the exchange. First, we took a bus to Porto Alegre from my hometown Horizontina, a city with roughly 20000 inhabitants and arrived at the airport very early in the morning.

We looked at each other and said: "Now what?" because we had no idea how to check in. After some confusion with the machines and help from the staff, we finally got our tickets.

On our first flight, I met a kind woman traveling to Switzerland. She shared stories with me, showed me photos and even helped us find the right terminal in São Paulo.

Arriving in Frankfurt was stressful. The airport was huge, security took forever, and we almost missed our connection. In the end, we ran to the bus and caught our last flight just in time.

THE WORKCAMP

When we arrived in Berlin, a girl was already waiting for us. She was not part of our camp, but she helped us with the train, the bus, and then walking to the camp. I was very excited! Reaching the camp, we were welcomed by one of the teamers, Hannah. In addition to her also Martina e Selma, two young women in their early twenties.

My first impression of the camp was quite positive- the place was cozy and welcoming. Still, the shower only had cold water, and there were a few small leaks in the ceiling of our room.

In the beginning, the teamers said we would stay more at home. But I was lucky because my host sister from Denmark, Erica, was there. So I was allowed to go with her on the first day. I met her parents, and we took a Big Bus tour around Berlin. We didn't have much time, so we saw the tourist attractions from the bus, without getting off. The bus had headphones with many languages, including Portuguese. Later, we visited some street markets, and I tried my



first currywurst, a typical German dish with sausage, sauce, and bread or potatoes. I also had fried potatoes on a stick with salt.

MY TIME

On Monday was our first day of work. We worked from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. I liked using the bicycles to the cemetery, there I also enjoyed the work, because even though it was hard I learned a lot, and it was fun doing it together with people my age who became over time my friends and I still have contact with some of them nowadays.

In the afternoon after showering we always had lunch prepared by the kitchen team. Each day, two people cooked for everyone. On Wednesday, I was in the kitchen team, so I didn't go to work that day.

The Country Evening at night was interesting, because all the participants presented food and culture from their countries. On the Brazilian night, me, Kauana, and a Brazilian girl called Mariana (who lived in Spain) made Coxinha and Brigadeiro, two traditional Brazilian dishes.

In the second week, we worked in another cemetery. There, we did different tasks: cutting plants, sanding and painting benches, and organizing the garden.

In our free time, we enjoyed shopping and eating. One of the places we visited a lot was the Alexander Platz. I liked it, because of all the restaurants and stores, where I also bought some souvenirs for my family!

It was fun doing bracelets and necklaces in our free time with the material that the camp bought for us.

On the Sunday from the first week, we went to the church in the morning, where we had a really good time, with good music, and received flowers from Karolin, the coordinator of the camp. It was very interesting seeing the differences between Brazilian and German churches.

The second week was also very exciting, and we visited a lot of famous monuments like the Berliner Mauer or the Juden Denkmal, which was impressive but also very depressing to see after knowing what it represents.

This whole exchange was just incredible, I saw so many things, learned about your German culture and just had an amazing time! I would do it every time again and thank you for making this for us students possible!

Danke für diese tolle Zeit!

