

Swiss bike tour 2012



Swiss Bike Tour 2012 on the first day in Hori, Switzerland

I filled in my application for Rotary camp in March and applied to a camp in Spain. There were no places left when I applied. I also send the application to Romanian camp. Same story there – no more people allowed. As I am already 25 I realized there's not a lot of chances left. My younger sister Sonya got accepted to the Heart of England summer camp. I was happy for her but upset that I won't have the chance to participate in my last Rotary camp and I decided that I've already been to two wonderful camps and also did a long term exchange so nothing much to complain about. Anyway, in June there was a meeting for all the outbound students here in St.Petersburg. The boy who was supposed to go to Swiss bike tour couldn't make it, so I sent my application and luckily the answer to the question if I can come instead of him was YES.



My sister Sonya, Janet from Taiwan and me before watching musical Singing in the Rain in London

Five AWESOME days in London, flight back, unpacking, friend's birthday party, packing again, flight to Zurich, walk in the center and off to Hori where Swiss bike tour 2012 started. First night there I was dead tired, but people seemed nice, dinner was very good... We picked the bikes, helmets, got registered and on the second day the torture has started. I guess you understood from the beginning of the story that I chose cycling because it's a great hobby of mine, no... I hardly even knew what the gears are for on the bike. The first cycling day in Switzerland I found out what they were for. Swiss flat roads are not that flat! First few days on the bike were very hard for the lower part of the body and I mean not just legs, even though I was in the best group "Flower-power" where we could stop and rest. Though now that the time is passing there's no memory of sore muscles. Here are the things that I remember:

1. I loved Swiss nature. As my best friend from the tour said it felt like we were in a fairy tale. So if people like Lord of the Rings movie they should definitely visit Switzerland. Swiss air is clean and smells of cows. The water was also very clean; it was a surprise for me that we could fill up our water bottles in the bathrooms. Swiss sound is 100% - COW BELL. There are cows everywhere + every morning we got a waiky-waiky cowbell call from one of the group leaders – Max. Thanks Max, it's unforgettable! Also small towns and villages that we've visited are very beautiful. Plus we were very lucky with the weather... only one rainy day all the others were so nice and sunny. One of the things that surprised me about Switzerland is a lot of modern art outdoors.



Outdoor modern art in Walenstadt

If you ask me about the food – of course it's cheese and chocolate!!! I guess Swiss people just have to ride their bikes a lot to burn of the calories from that great chocolate.

2. Bikes. Even if you didn't cycle before you'll fall in love with it. It's an amazing way to travel around and really get the feeling of the place. Also Switzerland is a great place to cycle – there are cycling paths everywhere, special roads, signs, great views and the distances are manageable. Now I'm planning to organize a small tour with friends here in Russia, well... we'll see how it goes.



Lake Constance in Rorschach

3. Rotarians. We had the best group leaders. All of them answered any of our questions and helped us with any problems we had. I think I can say for all of the participants that we felt really safe being there because we knew that these people care about us. It's a very special feeling and I'm so thankful to all of them for doing what they were doing. Watching them doing all the cycling with us is also an inspiration. Special thanks for Gary and Angie who were "Flower-power" group leaders and also many thanks to Esther and Stephen who let us in their amazing house and in their lives.



Esther and Stephen Akers

4. Friends. It's unbelievable how you can find really good friends in such a short period of time. The group was pretty big 20 people and all the people were different in many ways: age, religion, status, tastes... But we all got along very well. I was lucky to find my soul mate from Asia. Minnie from Taiwan and I had so much fun together laughing all days long about everything. And I also made a very good friend from Slovakia – Adam. We still talk to each other every day and it doesn't bore us.



Adam, Minnie and me on Swiss national day



Washing Minnie's hair because of her hand injury



Me and Minnie in Kaufleuten night club in Zurich

I don't think any person should have a question whether to participate in the camp or not. This is a unique opportunity and if you have the chance don't blow it! From all my heart and my parents I would like to thank Swiss Rotarians for organizing such a special experience for me. You'll always be in my thoughts!!! Thank you!