

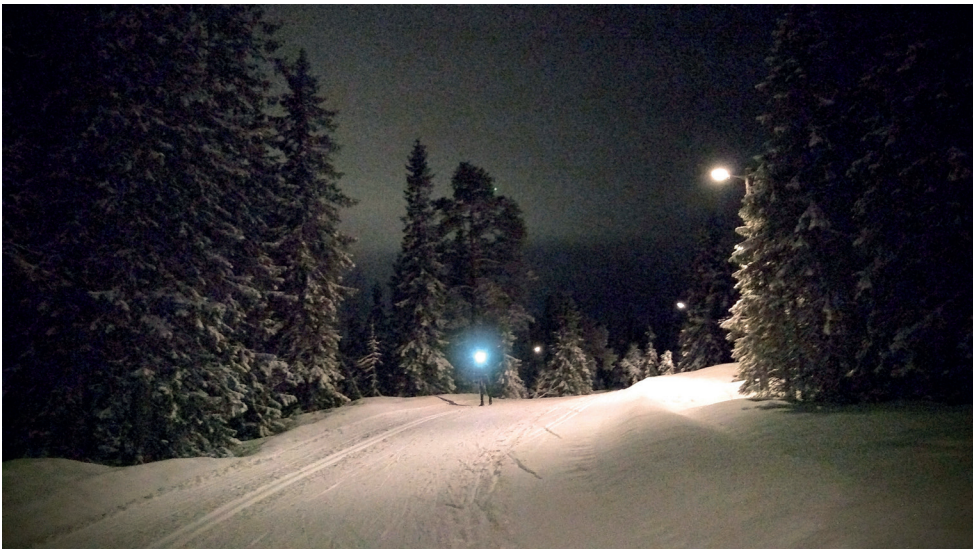
A semester abroad in the north

Livia Herle
NTNU Trondheim
Summer semester 2020

Being an exchange student during a global pandemic was not what I had in mind when flying to Trondheim in Norway on the first of January. And yet this last half year has been a wonderful experience despite the big changes due to the covid virus.

Starting the semester in the middle of the Norwegian winter, the first month was dominated by the extremely short days of only 4 hours. However, one quickly learned, that Norwegians are not influenced too much by the lack of light. For instance, going cross country skiing with a torch lamp was a quite common thing to do which I had to try out as well.

Actually, the first two months of my stay in Trondheim were dominated a lot by cross country skiing, the national sport of the Norwegians. Living only 20min away of the nearest slopes, I used the cold weather to go skiing as much as I could and also joined the ski team of my University.



In the same time, I started with the lectures at the University. Having only studied at the small University of Liechtenstein for my Bachelor as well as my Master, walking around on a big campus with thousands of other students was a first-time experience for me. Furthermore, I had to use an app, specially designed to find rooms at the campus of the NTNU Trondheim, to find my way to the lectures.

Nevertheless after a few weeks, I got used to the big campus and enjoyed the various activities a big university can offer. I joined the running team and started to regularly practice with them. Furthermore, multiple events were organised by the students every week, such as parties, movie nights or cultural activities.

Next to the University life, I also really enjoyed staying at the biggest student dormitory of Trondheim called Moholt. I shared a kitchen with 14 other flatmates but had a private room with a bathroom. The combined kitchen and living room area were really big and well furnished, so that it was easy to invite a lot of people for dinner or parties.

Furthermore, there were multiple offers for students living in Moholt, for instance a little fitness centre, a library or a big room to socialize which had a stage, table tennis and some seating areas. I would totally recommend living in Moholt for every new exchange student, since it can also be a good place to meet new people and had a good mix of Norwegians and exchange students living there.

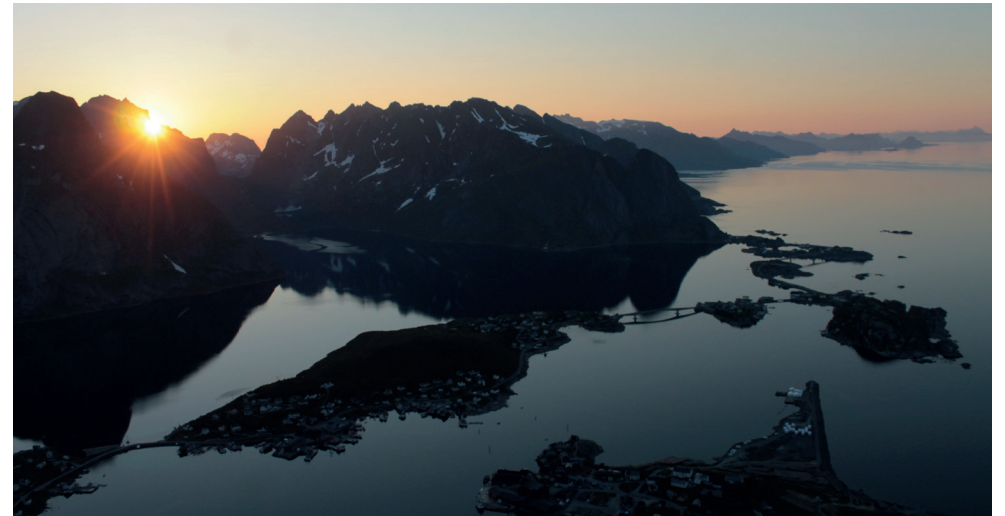
When the corona Pandemic also hit Norway and the University shut down, I was extremely grateful to live in such a nice flat. Furthermore, I was lucky to have 6 other nice flatmates which eventually became much closer during the lock down. We started cooking together a lot, watched movies together or played board games. Furthermore, I could still go skiing or running outside. Luckily the University in Trondheim made a very fast change to online lectures and had their own online portal for students and professors to meet and discuss. Therefore, I was able to successfully finish all my courses.

Due to low numbers of corona in Norway and the discipline of the Norwegians with isolation and keeping a distance, I experienced relatively less limitations on my everyday life. In fact, most of the stores never closed completely and after just one month of lock down, even restaurants, cafes or bars started to reopen gradually.

Therefore it soon became possible to travel within Norway again and after waiting until May for the first green leaves to arrive also in the nature in Trondheim, I went on multiple hiking trips with my flatmates and some other friends. I could never decide which area I liked most, or which hike was the best to recommend since Norway's nature is so stunning and offers so many different landscapes. I explored the more southern parts of Norway such as the region around Aalesund where one can experience one of the biggest fjords of the country, but also hiked one of the most popular hikes of Norway called Trolltunga and Preikestolen.



In my last two weeks in Norway I went on a trip to the Lofoten and some other islands, which are all located in the north of Norway above the arctic circle. Going hiking in such a remote and northern location, my whole travel group brought really warm sweaters, hats, gloves and even ski jackets. However, we ended up having the hottest weather of my whole semester in Norway. Despite being as north as Greenland, we hiked in shorts and t-shirt and were more sweating than freezing.



Experiencing the mid night sun and endless day with the sun never setting completely was something I will never forget, and I would definitely recommend a trip to the north of Norway. However, we were lucky to travel in times of corona since we had the normally fully booked and apparently really crowded islands of the Lofoten all to ourselves and could enjoy nature even more.

To summarize I am very grateful to have chosen Trondheim as my Erasmus destination. The University as well as the department of Architecture were really well organised and always tried to help the exchange students as much as possible. Furthermore, I was able to complete all my classes despite the difficult circumstance due to the corona virus since the NTNU Trondheim immediately switched to digital lectures and presentations. Last but not least, Trondheim is a student city and offers lots of opportunities. It is very easy to meet a lot of new people and go on adventures in Norway's beautiful nature.