Rosanna Smee

AARHUS SUMMER SCHOOL, DENMARK -
Digital Business Innovation

I would recommend going on a European Summer School to anyone. Not only does it look great on your CV, but it provided me with unforgettable life experiences.

I went to Aarhus University, Denmark for my Summer School, on the course ‘Digital Business Innovation and Social Media’. With less than a 2-hour flight from London, it was the perfect location to learn new subjects, meet people from all over the world and explore a new city. By staying there for 3 weeks I actually got a real feel for the city, rather than just capturing a touristic feel for the place. I visited all the major sights and attractions, such as the world-renowned AROS museum, botanical gardens and beautiful harbour and beaches, but I also spent time in the less well known parts of town.

The Summer School organised both university and city tours on my first few days of arriving, which was a great way to start to get to know my way around. There are extensive bus routes all through the city and out to the surrounding areas, which made getting around between the accommodation, uni and city very easy. I looked into renting a bike, to get the full Scandinavian experience, but decided to just use the city bikes for a few days (similar system to Santander Cycles – commonly known as ‘Boris Bikes’ in London). Activities organised by the Summer School included:

- Pub crawl - a great way to experience Aarhus’ nightlife
- Viking Moot at Moesgaard Museum - learned more about the history of the country and its people
- BBQ at Mindeparken - a beautiful park overlooking the coast
- Trivoli Friheden - Amusement Park and concert
- Silkeborg Canoeing - definitely the highlight of the trip for me. Canoeing through beautiful countryside in wind, rain and shine, with a picnic in the middle of the day. Such a great experience.
- Tour of the Old Town (Den Gamle By) - an incredible museum where you can walk into typical Danish homes from across the ages
- Bowling night
I also explored a lot of places by myself or with the friends that I made. It was a very safe environment and the frequent buses meant that even at night you never needed to walk far by yourself. My favourite spots around the city included the beach, with the Sculpture by the Sea art exhibition. Also, the city had great shopping, with a mixture of international brands and small local boutiques. I also visited Dokk1, the local library and a hub for entertainment and amusement. The harbour, including the Iceberg Building is a great way to witness the city’s industrial roots. I was lucky enough to meet some Danes who owned a boat and so I also saw the city from the sea – an amazing experience. My favourite place to grab a bite to eat was the Street Food Market – I wish we had more of these in England. There were stalls selling food from all different nationalities, and in such an expensive city it was nice to have some cheaper options. Finally, the Deer Park (Marselisborg Dyrehave), an enclosed woodland which housed hundreds of tame deer that you could feed and interact with. It’s a beautiful park in itself but I also thoroughly enjoyed meeting the deer.

By far the best part about the trip was the course itself. I can’t speak for the entire Summer School as obviously I only experienced my course, but I could not fault it in anyway. The lecturer was enthusiastic, knowledgeable and approachable and the course was really well organised, with lecture slides available online and optional relevant reading material. The course was dominated by local Danish students from Aarhus university, which I didn’t expect. But it was great to get an insight into their normal university life in comparison to mine at Surrey. One thing that I definitely noticed was that the Danish students are a lot more inclusive and involved during lectures. They are confident and happy to ask questions, which created a very welcoming and social environment in the learning environment. I feel this contributed to my high (1st) grade and positive experience.. The facilities and classroom where we were based was beautiful, modern and very inviting. We had guest lecturers which really enhanced the teaching week.
For my course we had two assessments: a presentation on an article assigned to us by the lecturer, which we presented to the class, as well as an exam which I did back in England, a week after I left Denmark.

A Typical Day:
7.50am: Wake up and get ready for the day.
8.17am: A walk to the morning bus to university, arriving at 8.45. 5-minute walk to my classroom with 10 minutes to spare to set up and get settled.
9am: Lecture starts, with a 5-10 minute break every 40 minutes or so
12am: Lunch break. Either took in some food I had prepared before or bought some of the delicious canteen food. Once a week we also received a free smoothie/snack from the summer school
1pm: Uni day finishes. Free for the afternoon. Would either go back and do some work, or head into town with course mates to explore a bit more
Evening: Back in time for some dinner, then either off into town for drinks, or next door to my friends flat for dinner and a movie, or just a night cracking on with some work and Facetiming home. Same sort of thing as back in Surrey really.
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