

# TRAVEL DIARY part 1

A few days ago it turned out, that somehow ESN in Vaasa forgot about our - 4 exchange students - existence, here in Jakobstad. Once we were invited to Vaasa for a one day trip in a beautiful archipelago - Kvarken; but regrettably later on they didn't notify us about any of their trips, such as to Norway or Saint-Petersburg!

Luckily my whole October was mostly about travelling - so I'm not that mad for their mistake. Okay, maybe I'm envy for their visit to the Lofoten Islands, because that's on my bucket list!

So what are the travelling options from here?!

Once you leave Jakobstad, then you can go almost anywhere! Leaving the town is the most complicated part, as the stops of long distance buses and the railway station are about 10km away (in different directions). There is a small bus company which has connections between the railway station and Jakobstad. If you prefer bus rides, then you have to ask for a lift or call a taxi (30€ to the bus stop).

*Bus ticket to Helsinki: 14-21€, (7-8 hours) Train ticket to Helsinki: 21-45€, (4-5 hours)*

*There are cheap flights from Helsinki to Norway, Sweden and also to Iceland - mostly if you buy it in advance.*

*Moreover you can cross the border on water - by ferries to Russia and Estonia (return ticket 12-20€).*



Tromsø, Norway



In the beginning of October I had a flight to Tromsø, Norway. It was then when I understood the question: *Are you planning to buy a car during your stay?* As I missed the long distance bus - because the other bus didn't stick to the schedule. I had to wait for 3 hours for an other bus which would take me back to Jakobstad - literally from the middle of nowhere! But instead of waiting, I walked to the nearest railway station (about 10km) and caught the next train to Helsinki. Since then I always travel with train! *haha*

Tromsø is magical! With it's mountains, snowstorms, cafés, hiking trails and not to mention the Northern lights' dancing performance!! It was totally worth it!

On the next week - autumn break - we organised a Lapland journey for ourselves! We rented a car, drove about 500km, stopped at Oulu and then (after almost having an accident with a herd of reindeers in the dark) we arrived to our Airbnb - in once piece! It was a typical Finnish house with huge windows, fireplace, sauna and candles, in the middle of a forest with no fence. In the 5 days we spent there, we went for a little hiking in the surrounding areas, made fire so as to prepare our lunch outdoors and watched the Northern lights along the river. And as we were just an hour drive away from Rovaniemi, we also visited Santa Claus. But I'm not sure if he was the real Joulupukki or just someone sitting there in Santa costume?!



our Lapland adventures

A few days after these amazing days up in the North, I have travelled to Helsinki... *to be continued*

