

Why Participate in an ISE Exchange?

By Sarah Zeran



Participating in a program with ISE is a once in a lifetime opportunity for you, an Ontario student, to venture to a faraway location for a greatly unique experience. There are an abundance of reasons why you may be curious about partaking in our exchanges. Maybe you wish to travel far from home and discover the differences in another culture. Maybe you are eager to take a big step towards your independence. Maybe you are simply enamoured with France and want to eat a baguette next to the Eiffel Tower.

All of these are perfectly valid motivators as long as you are prepared for the challenge of living in a foreign country for 9 or 12 weeks (3 or 4 weeks for our summer exchanges). The list of both little and big things that make our exchanges so fulfilling could likely go on for pages, but there are ten main reasons you might want to look further into our programs and apply!

1. Improving Language Skills

Being bilingual is an exciting and beneficial achievement, and a great way to boost your skills is to actually surround yourself with the language in a country where it's primarily spoken. Picking up words and phrases will be easy! Within several weeks, your hands-on experience is guaranteed to bring you to a much higher language level than you were at originally.

2. Learning for the Future

What you learn on an exchange can assist you in your future job search and life aspirations! You will grow as a person on this journey, achieving independence and being educated on so much along the way. Having this extra bit of life experience will tell employers a lot about what kind

of person you are and will help you to have more confidence and opportunity in your day to day life. You never know when the knowledge gained by living in another country may play a vital part in your future.

3. Making New Friends

While attending school and spending time with your exchange partner, you have a great chance at making friendships that could last a lifetime! Your partner will be someone you spend lots of time with, and you will help to navigate through the ups and downs of your visitations together. If all goes well, this offers a great chance for both of you to learn and create a bond that is unlike that you have with anyone else. Attending classes in a new place where you don't know anyone is also an exciting chance to make a new group of friends that you can maintain long after you finish your visit.

4. A Family Connection

A big part of our exchanges is the family that you will be placed with while travelling abroad. You will essentially gain a second family, having a support group to travel with and learn from when you are away. Your partner will get the same experience when they come to visit you, giving you all a new member of the family to develop a connection with.

5. Experiencing School in Europe

The educational system in Europe differs from the one in Canada, and while participating in our 9/12 Week exchanges, you will have the chance to experience them for yourself. While few find true joy in attending school, involving yourself in a new type of learning environment will surely make your education more of an adventure.

6. Learning a Different Way of Life

Canada and European countries are vastly unlike each other and by participating in our exchanges, you will get the opportunity to immerse yourself in a different way of life. By seeing a perspective and environment different from your own, you will develop a greater understanding and acceptance of others. With our world seeming smaller than ever with the ease at which we can interact with anyone from anywhere, it is important to embrace our variances while knowing what keeps us all united.

7. Discovering New Places

There are many incredible places to explore scattered all around our partnered countries, and you will have the opportunity to explore them! From the tourist destinations to the city or town you will be residing in, your destination will offer a new flavour from Canadian spots, and surely, you will get the chance to visit the places you think look the coolest.

8. Trying New Activities

Your exchange is the perfect opportunity to participate in activities you never would have attempted before! Be adventurous by taking chances when you are given the opportunity to do it!

9. Tasting New Foods

Many specialities in foreign countries may be dishes you have never tried before, and you will get the chance to taste some of these delicious new foods! Each country has a unique flavour to their cuisine and it would be a missed opportunity to not go out and sample it. Personally, the allure of a tasty meal or snack makes me hungry just thinking about it!

10. Making Unforgettable Memories

No matter what you do, your exchange experience will be something unique and exciting that you will fondly remember for the rest of your life. This opportunity will only be available for a few years of your youth before you will no longer be eligible to participate. All that you see, discover, and learn will allow you to grow, make new friends, and experience the world in a way you never would have expected. *Why not take advantage while you can?*

