The Blue Bear

Newsletter #5
February 2022

Dear Duke in Berlin friends near and far,

Here we are again, well into the new year already, but now with our small cohort of Duke in Berlin students finally complete! Joining Emma Evans-Nolet (Class of 2024), Isabel Rask (Class of 2023), and Jacob Becker (Class of 2024), who all arrived in January, is Lindsay Dial (Class of 2023). However, Lindsay got a little head start into her Berlin stay, as she took advantage of her time off in January and toured the city with her father for a week. “Even during the rainy months of winter, Berlin is gorgeous and full of life and things to do!” -- Spoken like a true German: realistically hopeful and to the point!

At the moment, all of our students are working hard on improving their German skills in the various courses we are offering here at Duke in Berlin. But, as you can see in the newsletter, life here in Germany certainly also offers a lot of fun and the January cohort already went on their first day trip to the *Sächsische Schweiz*.

We hope you’ll enjoy reading our first newsletter of 2022!

Mit herzlichen Grüßen

Tin Wegel (Resident Director)

Lina-Sofie Raith (Program Assistant)

Ask a BLUE DEVIL

Feel free to email us at duke@zedat.fu-berlin.de with any questions about the program or to get in contact with one of our current Duke-in-Berliners.

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"This weekend we visited Saxon Switzerland, an area that lies in the very Southern part of East Germany, despite its confusing name. It is actually called that because of two 18th century landscape painters, Graff and Zingg, who began to describe the region as such because of its similarity to their Swiss homeland.

We started the day bright and early, meeting at 5 am. The trains ran fairly smoothly, with the exception of a short power outage due to strong winds. Luckily, the gusts had died down a bit by the time we got to our final destination, and were able to take the ferry across the river Elbe.

We hiked up to *die Bastei*, a bridge built into natural rock formations that make for stunning views. We then went down the other side through the *Schwedenlöcher*, tight cave formations covered in moss. To finish off our time in the town of Rathen, a quaint *Kurort,* we walked along the river Elbe again before taking an S-Bahn back to the Dresden main station.

The Bastei Bridge

Because we had a bit of extra time, we walked around Dresden and saw some of the beautiful historic buildings, like the *Frauenkirche* and the *Zwinger*. Overall, it was a day of many steps and beauty of many kinds."

-- Isabel Rask

"My first time on a European train and my first train trip since I can remember was incredibly empty at 5:30 am. The wind had already started to blow but with the heat on inside, I barely noticed the trees swaying. Since we left before the sun rose, I easily got some sleep on the ride. Our second train arrived just after our first, since all the trains had been delayed for a tree falling on the tracks. While cutting it any closer would have been nerve-wracking, the convenience of only standing on the platform for five minutes rather than half an hour was great. We missed our third train so we did a lap around the train station waiting for the next one to arrive half an hour later. The station had shops like a small mall and despite it being a Sunday, the built-in grocery store and cafes were all open at 9 am. The way back was just as comfortable as the way there, but without any difficulties.

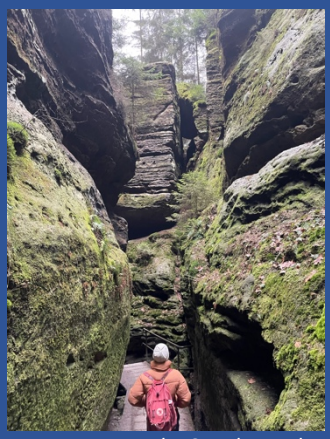
View over the Elbe River

My favorite part of the day was looking out over the Elbe and the town below after hiking up the mountain. The town had a distinctly German style and had clearly been living in tandem with the river for years. Despite the width of the river, we were far enough above to see its gradual turns and enjoyed the view of the ferry in it and the clouds above it."

-- Emma Evans-Nolet

Jacob and Swiss-sponsored cow

"We set out very early in the morning from Südkreuz, a central train station in the southern part of Berlin as its name in translation, South Crossing, indicates. Along the way to Rathen in the federal state of Saxony our train was diverted, but it didn't delay our arrival much. The town of Rathen is very scenic and it has a ferry across the river Elbe. The hike had many long sets of stairs and lookout points along the way. At the top, you reach the *Bastei* bridge and there you are rewarded with some amazing views! You can see villages below, rolling hills, and even a castle off in the distance. Large towering rock formations create many damp shaded areas of the trail where mosses and ferns flourish. The downhill portion takes you through crevices and past a waterfall. Crucial pro tip: When you end back at one of the small towns, make sure to have a 50 cent coin, so that you can go to the bathroom at the ferry terminal!



The Sweden Holes

The highlight of the day were the amazing views of the landscapes and the historic buildings of Dresden."

-- Jacob Becker