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Person to Person in Norway

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Field Notes from Abroad: Person to Person in Norway

I interviewed a flat mate by the name of Ina Bjørke Dypvik. She is also an Art student at my school and she is getting her second Bachelors. She and I have been friends since the beginning. She is very helpful when it comes to understanding cultural differences, or understanding how something works. Plus she's a great cook and very helpful to those of us who are taking Norwegian and want to practice. But like she said in my interview with her, and like I have noticed, she is very different than an average Norwegian. We discussed how the average Norwegian is cold and reserved, and often very embarrassed to speak English. Comparatively, Americans are friendly and outgoing. But there is one thing to be said about Norwegians, and EVERYONE says it: once you have made a Norwegian your friend, they are your friends for life.

Culturally, what is different besides being a reserved country, Norwegians are very liberal. They have a very public welfare-orientated mindset. Another major difference is that they instinctively trust their government, while Americans often do not. Ina and I discussed how there is a lot of public-ness to a Norwegian life, and they really don't believe in a private sector at all.

Lastly the flag: there is really only one day Norwegians have/wave their flags- the 17th of May. In America, it is common for people just to have one out side their house all year round. That would be considered odd in Norway.

When asked how she viewed America, Ina said, "Positively! You confirmed everything I thought about Americans, but nothing in a negative way. I always thought

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that you are happy, positive, out going people, just like you are Laura!” It was very kind of her to say.

Interviewee: Ina Bjørke Dypvik