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2021-22 Postcards

Postcards from Abroad

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Spring 3-30-2022

## My Time In Ireland

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Elizabeth Ungar

Spring 2022

Galway, Ireland

March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022

### My Time In Ireland

I have learned many things throughout my time studying abroad in Galway, Ireland. I have learned more about myself, and many things about Ireland as a country and what it means to travel and experience different ways of life. For this assignment, I interviewed my friend Claire, who I met through classes at the University. Claire is from Derry in Northern Ireland and is studying at NUIG. I asked Claire many questions about Ireland and what life is like for her, what the differences are between our countries, and her likes and dislikes. Ireland is a very community-oriented country, and it is very welcoming to travelers and people from other places. Claire shared the things that she loves the most about Ireland, including the beaches and coasts, how clean and not polluted it is, and playing the Irish sport Camogie and the sense of community that comes with it. The beaches and coastal towns of Oregon are some of my favorite parts of my home state, so I thought it was interesting that this was the same for her. We spoke about how Christmas and St. Patrick's Day are the most popular holidays in Ireland, and how people get together and celebrate on these days. She shared that going to the beaches in the summer is a shared activity throughout the country and that everyone loves the warmer times of the year. This reminded me of how much Christmas is celebrated in the US and how a sense of community is shared when the holidays come around. I enjoyed hearing how people come together in Ireland in the same ways that we do in the US, as it is a reminder that people are the same in many ways around the world and that celebration is shared by all people and cultures in different ways.

One of the topics that my interview with Claire focused on was what she hopes visitors take away from their travels in Ireland and the impact that she hopes the country has on the world. She told me that she hopes people feel welcomed and that they will be treated nicely while they visit, and that native Irish people are not very hard to get along with. As an American, I always hope that people visiting the US feel welcomed and that they are safe, so it was nice to hear that she felt the same for travelers from the states as well as other countries. During my time here, I have found that the Irish people are welcoming and are very nice to travelers who want to explore Ireland. Local Irish people seem to be very helpful and kind in general, which is something that can be said for parts of the US but not necessarily all. As I have come to know Claire, I have found that we have similar likes/dislikes, which shows that difference in nationality does not always mean that you will view the world differently. I asked Claire to compare Ireland and the US politically and socially, and she said that there were large differences in politics and how involved the youth get in what is happening throughout the country. She said that there isn't as much controversy during elections and political movements in Ireland as there is in the US and that young people do not get as involved. This is interesting because I see politics as one of the biggest controversies in the US, and it has a large impact on the youth and younger generations. Politics and economics are significant cultural differences between Ireland and the US, and as the size of the countries may be a reason for this, I think there are many other reasons as well.

In general, I found that Claire and I have similar values and outlooks on life, as we both value family and friends, and we both share positive mindsets about life. Apart from basic differences between Ireland and the US such as weather, size, politics, and culture, I also found we have many similarities. Ireland is a very beautiful and diverse country with helpful people and strong communities, and so is the US in many ways. I learned a lot about Claire and the country of Ireland through this interview, and I found that though we as people share many differences, we share similarities as well, just like our two countries. I think the biggest lesson I have learned throughout my year abroad is that we are all people and that we have more in common with each other than we think. Furthermore, I have

gained independence and many life lessons this year, and I have learned many things from the Irish people, the most important one being to enjoy life and seize the day!