Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh

Erasmus+ participant report, 2018/29019 Fall semester

It’s a strange thing to look back on the few months I spent in Edinburgh, now that I’m home. The whole thing feels sort of like a dream – I’m not entirely sure it happened at all. It is hard to believe I got to spend every day in what is probably the most beautiful and most lovable city in the world. Okay, this sounds like I’m exaggerating, but I’m really not. Edinburgh is the perfect place for an Erasmus semester (or two). Here’s why:

• It’s just the right size. Not so big that you would feel lost in it (it is significantly smaller than Budapest), but big enough to never get bored. Of course, in the first one or two weeks you will feel a little lost – you just have to get to know this new place, but it doesn’t take very long to find your way in Edinburgh. After a couple of minutes spent walking in an area you don’t know at all, you will get to a place you’ve seen before and realise: ‘Wow I was on the Royal Mile the whole time!’ or something like that. Also there are a couple of high points you can spot from the distance to help you find your way anytime: Arthur’s Seat, Calton Hill, the Castle etc.

• The people are soooo friendly and helpful. I remember the first time I stepped outside the airport, as I was walking to the bus to get to the city, I noticed that the people were smiling – not because I looked ridiculous that day or something, they were smiling, just in general. Coming from Hungary, I was shocked. I don’t like to generalise, but Scottish people are just the best. If someone is not particularly friendly with you while you are in Edinburgh, you know it’s not a Scottish person. It’s like they live to help you. I couldn’t count all the times (in the university or in Edinburgh in general) I had been told to not be afraid of asking for help – because really, they are happy to help you.

• I have said this before, but I think I will never stop talking about it: Edinburgh is incredibly beautiful. You can just go for a walk everyday and you will find another new place that will take your breath away. I remember thinking ‘this is not fair with all the other cities in the world’ – Edinburgh has so much more beauty in it than any other city I have seen. I could go on about all the amazing sights in and around Edinburgh for pages and pages, but if somebody lives there for a semester, hopefully, they will be able to explore it themselves.

• You can travel around in Scotland. And it sure is worth seeing. I think three or four months is just enough time to explore Edinburgh properly, but it is a very short time for the whole of Scotland. They have countless lochs and castles, hills, mountains, lovely little towns and beaches – and you will only see a fragment of them, but you will still be amazed. A couple of must-sees: North Berwick, Dunnottar Castle and Stonehaven, Portree, Bambrugh Castle (all right, this one is in England but close to the border), Melrose Abbey, South Queensferry, Loch Lomond (better than Loch Ness!). And of course, all the regular touristy places you will definitely hear about: Skye, Eilean Donan Castle, Glencoe, St Andrews etc. And there is so much more.

• You will never get bored. If you have nothing to do, you can just get on whatever bus you see first and enjoy the view (Very important: buy a Ridacard and use that for travelling around the city, it is very expensive but definitely worth the money! You can go quite far with it and visit some places around Edinburgh, like North Berwick, South Queensferry, Roslin, Musselburgh etc). Or go to one of the countless lovely cafés in town. Or to the amazing National Museum or the National Gallery (they are both free –
and so are many other interesting museums in Scotland). Or go to some charity shops. Or just walk around.

- Edinburgh is a very international city, so you don’t have to be ashamed of your weird accent or imperfect English – almost everyone has a weird accent and imperfect English. And Scottish people will not make you feel bad about it either, they are way too nice for that. It’s a great opportunity to practice your language skills. And you will probably have to write essays for university, so your academic English is also bound to get better.

- The people are open-minded. They have a lot of tourists and international people living in Edinburgh, but no one seems to mind. In fact, they seem to be thrilled that people from all around the world are coming to see their town, their country. They are happy to have you! (And of course, they all speak English, so no language barriers – unless you go to a place where the people have a really rough Scottish accent which does not sound like English at all.)

I could talk forever about why Edinburgh (and Scotland) is an amazing place but they say a picture is worth a thousand words (or something like that) so here are some photos of some of my favourite places I’ve been to:

![My favourite photo I took of the Castle](image1)

![Glasgow Cathedral from the Necropolis](image2)

![Arthur’s Seat](image3)
The view from Calton Hill

North Berwick

Eilean Donan Castle
Isle of Skye

Dunnottar Castle

The view from the Castle of Edinburgh
I think I was supposed to give practical advice in this report and now I realise it might not be very useful for people who have already decided that they want to go to Edinburgh. There is so much more I could say about this place, but I have to finish it at some point. But if you have any questions about looking for a flat, getting around town, the best pubs and cafés, the weather (not as bad as they say) or anything else, don’t hesitate to contact me (I’m happy to help, just like any Scottish person would be):

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