

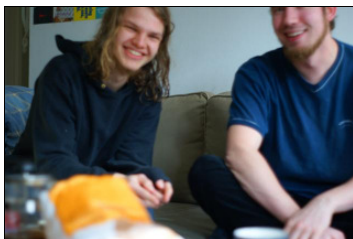
Stories and Adventures -

the report of my trip from Germany through Poland and the Baltic countries to Scandinavia and back. Done from April to June 2010.

Only some months ago, I couldn't imagine what these crazy travelers are doing all the time when they are on their journeys. Now I feel like understanding other travelers. Travelers like Cal, an Australian guy I met, who was traveling for ten months. He gave me lift to Tallinn, and just told me about traveling: "It's addictive". All these small stories and adventures you can experience on a trip – this is what I love when I'm traveling. This report is supposed to be like a survey of my trip and I can only scratch the overview of some the stories, probably you know how hard it is to find concrete words describing your experiences.

Hitchhiking trip – started by train

Last days and weeks before this trip felt intensive. I freed myself from all duties and I wanted to bring them to an good end. E.g. I organized some good events for my youth club, found successors for my web design projects and informed myself how to continue my studies after the break. I had a new view towards my family and friends which I payed a visit in order to say goodbye for some months.



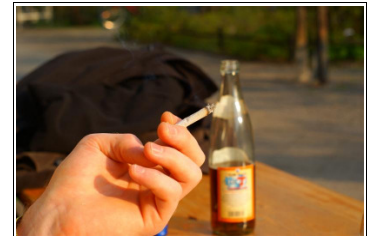
My very first couchsurfing host Michael in Regensburg

I started my hitchhiking trip by train. For my family it was much nicer to say goodbye at the train station instead of having started hitchhiking on my own, I guess. They cried and I was smiling – leaving something or someone also marks the steps to something new – for me it was positive. Of course as I was the traveler, I had the easier position too. With Skype and my blog I kept contact with my family.

German cities

Dresden is supposed to be my favorite city in Germany. With 500.000 inhabitants it's not too big and it seems like a nice combination of history, modern culture, alternative ideas and a little bit of nature.

In general I was impressed by the intensive consumption of people in big cities like Berlin – you can buy almost everything around the clock. I think for a lot of people it's an exception to cook on their own, instead of just buying fast food or going to a restaurant.



Heroes, detours and birthday cookies in Poland

In **Poland** I arrived at the time of the mourning days because of presidents Lech Kaczynski death. The Polish seem to have and celebrate their heroes, like they also did with the pope John Paul 2nd. He supported the polish people to emancipate from the Sowjets.



As a German, I was surprised about the careless traffic situation in Poland, Lithuania and Latvia. Felt like traffic is much more stricter in Germany, for example because of our holy breakdown lane..

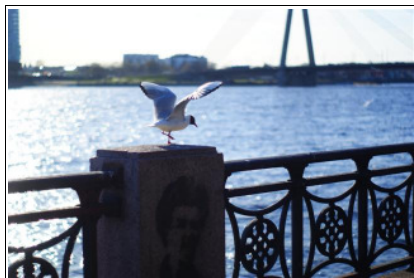
Although I met two bad guys rubbing me, people in Poland (and also on my whole trip) seemed very friendly and I haven't ever had big problems to get a hitchhiking lift (besides of Helsinki and Stockholm). Plenty of drivers shared their fruits (and chocolate bunnies) with me, gave me great touristical information and sometimes they made a detour which really didn't

match with the destination they were supposed to go. Two funny guys ("there's only one thing you need for hitchhiking: to look cool") giving me a lift, even gave me an invitation to stay in a

dormitory in the student district in Olsztyn :). I had a great time there – full of hiking around the lake, getting impressions from student life, experiencing the polish way to party (they seem to like Karaoke ;)) and preparing perfect birthday cookies.

Gone Moments

Especially in Riga/Latvia thought about that no moment lasts, everything is passing. Sometimes you only have one chance, e.g. to press the trigger of the camera - before the seagull is flying away. Or to ask the nice Finnish girl from the hostel if I could pay her a visit in a couple of days - before she's leaving to catch her plane. I made a great photo of a seagull but I missed to ask the girl. On a trip there are loads of proposals for new stories and adventures, and – to be optimistic – when one moment is over, there is space for new moments, proposals, stories and adventures. :)



In **Estonia** I was happy to get some time in nature to relax. I totally enjoyed to hike in the forests after I was jumping fast from city to city. I left Poland and crossed Lithuania, Latvia and finally Estonia in only one week. I noticed that the nature and more traditional life is much more attractive for me than big cities with their shopping malls.

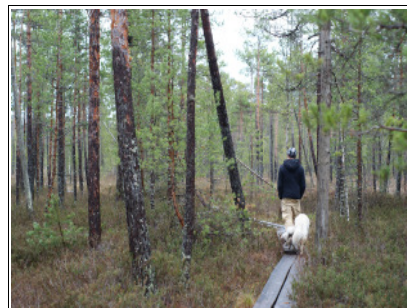


Warm temperatures

The first warm days in Finland (Turku/Naantali) surprised me – temperatures went to approx. 25 degrees in the beginning of May. So I was able to enjoy the beaches and rocky landscape (with Forrest everywhere). Not to forget I was glad about a nice introduction to the Finnish sauna (which some families actually use almost as often as the shower) including some bottles of expensive Scandinavian beer... :)

For me it's also interesting that mobile phones displaced the ordinary landline phones from Finnish homes – and of course almost everyone has a Nokia mobile phone...

By the way: I felt very lucky with the weather on my trip. During ten weeks I only had a few days of rainy or cold weather. I already considered that I'm the good-weather-man, bringing nice conditions with me – when I arrived in Germany again, hot summer temperatures displaced weeks of wet and cold days.

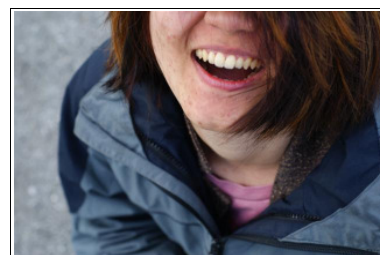


Hitchhiking and other adventures - Yiwu

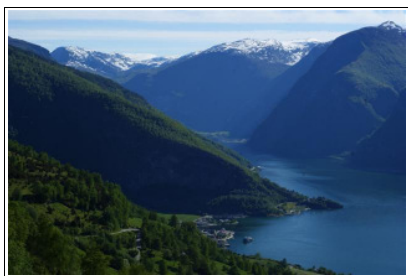
On the ferry from Finland to Sweden it was exciting for me and my travel buddy Yiwu to imagine different ways of making money on a trip. We had fun collecting cans in order to earn the pledge. We also tried to make good exchanging deals ("do you want to change a bottle of beer with my tasty banana") and to build a device for making huge soap bubbles as a street performance. Unfortunately both ideas haven't been very successful, but at least it was fun to try.

Besides of Stockholm we didn't have any problems to get good lifts for hitchhiking. In the different cars we met interesting and nice people and nobody begged us to have sex with (this is what happened to me in Poland).

Yiwu accompanied me for two weeks. We met in Finland through Couchsurfing and decided to go to Bergen/Norway together. She's a very interesting person. On one hand I loved her careless and easy attitude, - she just knocked on private doors as she felt like filling up her bottle of water or she



spontaneously joined graffiti sprayers to make first spraying experiences. On the other hand I have values and own expectations about being a guest, which obviously didn't match to Yiwus. It was good to hitchhike and travel together and I'm sure we both had a lot of benefits and some learning experiences. Together we decided to separate in the most beautiful place I've been on my trip: Aurland in Norway.



Nature and culture

It was awesome to climb some beautiful mountains and fjords in Aurland and Bergen - stunning views and relaxing impressions of the green nature! I like that even in the cities of Norway (and probably in the most cities of whole Scandinavia too) you can just start near the town

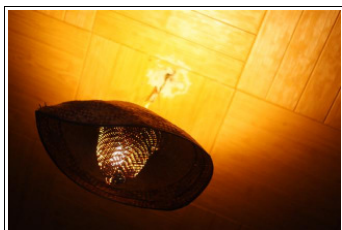


center to go to nature – no matter if you climb a mountain or you pay a visit to the next Forrest or lake. And you are able to enjoy the city life as well, for example the cultural happenings – I've seen the best music festival I've been so far, maybe also because I could take part as a volunteer at it: Bergen Reggae Festival 2010.

Couchsurfing experience

A Norwegian guy who gave us a ride told us, that - as a part of his studies of economics - he looked a little bit closer to the phenomenon of Couchsurfing. He mentioned that fact that local people know the habits and situation best. Also the community is very strong and able to make pressure on members which abuse Couchsurfing. These facts combined with the security measures result Couchsurfing as probably a much safer way to travel than the conventional vacancy in hotels.

My own couchsurfing experience was awesome. I'm sure I've learned something from everyone –



that's how I like couchsurfing. What I've learned? For example stitching and fixing buttons, whistling through grass, don't care too much about others, the basics of playing diabolo, ideas to make money, recipesour-creamaporridgedgege, sima, birthday muffins with fluid chocolate center, saltibarsciai soup, a way to use old bread,...), the advantages of having a structure, enjoying life more consciously, a lot about hospitality and so much more things...

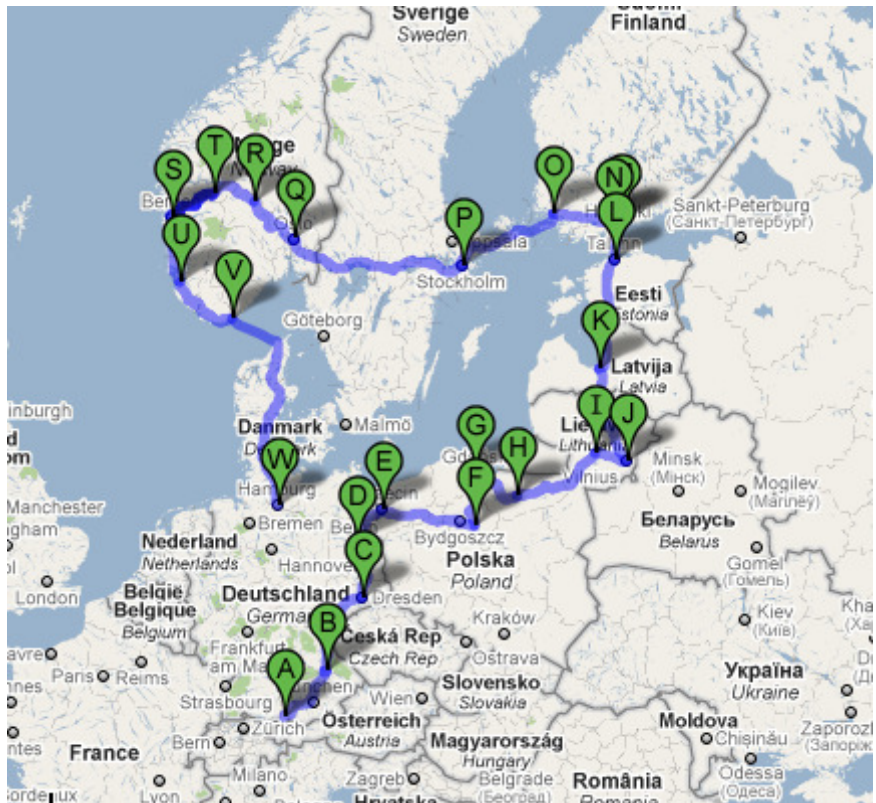
As I was traveling alone most of the time, I also improved to make own decisions and to express feeling and own desires, when needed.

Tidying up

In southern Norway I felt like going home for a couple of weeks. Germany wasn't far away and during my trip I created some ideas which I'm actually on to put into practice. So I brought new structure too my room at home. At least after ten weeks of living only with a few things out of my backpack, things at home seemed much to complicated when they haven't been sorted in a shelf. I also sold a lot of things from our home on a flea market. Actually I enjoyed to spend time with my family again and there are a lot of other things which maybe I'll do in near future - like designing own clothes, traveling around with huge soap bubbles,...

At least I want to find a practical experience for my studies as soon as possible. Will focus on pedagogical guided experiences in nature and the education of an environmental awareness.

At the moment I'm not sure, if I'm going to settle down and get a job for some months in my home area (or somewhere else) or if I continue traveling. There are no concrete plans yet with one exception, only one fixed date in my schedule - and I'm looking forward to it: The visit of a Taiwanese girl from Couchsurfing. :)



[Watch at google maps](#)