

Final Reflections: Last Weeks in Amsterdam

ITS. ALL. GOING. TOO. FAST. Time has been behaving very strangely ever since I came to Amsterdam. Literally every single week seemed to go by quickly, in a blur, leaving me with just a hint of the memories and loads of pictures.

I am writing this blog post while half my stuff is off the shelves, the other half is on the floor next to an opened, but very much still unpacked, suitcase. Because I refuse to pack. I think I am going through the five stages of grief and I am stuck at the first one, denial.

My time in Amsterdam has been a list of adventures. Spending some of my weekends on buses and hostels in random parts of Europe, while others sitting in the kitchen with my housemates. I somehow managed to find a group of people who are just as comfortable waking up at 1pm everyday as they are dancing at a silent disco at the Van Gogh Museum, and we have together made so many memories.



The past few weeks have been just as many firsts in Amsterdam as there have been lasts. As I scrambled to have one last house party, to spend one last evening looking out my window at the canals and the cyclists and making awkward eye-contact with strangers who caught me staring at them, and to ride the 52 from Zuid one last time. I visited the Van Gogh museum again, shopped at Pull & Bear, went to De Pijp, tried studying in a café (and couldn't, again) one last time... And then there are the firsts. I wanted to do all the things I had promised myself that I would but had never gotten about doing. I went to the famous vegan junk food bar, had fresh stroopwafels, tasted all the types of oliebollen and finally visited the second floor of the Rijksmuseum...

Cramming all these experiences, in an already crammed week left me with no time to actually study. And since my grades don't transfer back to my home school, I literally had negative

motivation. And a strange combination of pre-timed nostalgia and lack of motivation gave rise to my panicked state before my Dutch final exam. My Dutch exam was at 6:30pm and I had another exam that morning. So, by the time I *finally* got to studying for it, it was 3pm. This was honestly the least prepared I have ever been for any exam in my life- and it was terrifying. So, when I got the email shortly after, that I had passed, I literally (well, not really) wept tears of relief. And this marked the official end of my stay in Amsterdam (I was scheduled to leave later that night).

I just want to say that this is the first time in my life that I have navigated a city on my own and actually stayed by myself. All of this has taught me so much about myself. I think the fact that I am leaving this wonderful city that has given me so much hit me for the first time at a Christmas party we threw. And amidst the carols, the paper-Christmas tree, the exchanging of presents, mulled wine and goodbye-cards, my process of grieving over a place began. And having gone through denial, I now await anger...