

International Summer School 2011 in the heart of Turku European Capital of Culture

The first Monday of August marked the start of International Summer School 2011, organized by the University of Turku from 1st August to 28th August 2011. The weather could not have been better as 18 enthusiastic students from 13 different countries participated in the orientation day. The International Summer School took place in Turku, offering the international students one of the most beautiful milieus in Finland. All the students – from Europe, Asia, Australia and America – were charmed by the oldest city of Finland and its archipelago, nature and atmosphere as well as the amazing culture.

The students spent their days studying the Finnish language, and some of them took additional courses on the Finnish culture, history and society, taught by local experts in the fields of culture and society.

On top of the intensive courses during daytime, the students' evenings and weekends were occupied by a versatile social programme. The social programme introduced the students to the Finnish culture, food, sports, nature and history. In addition to the most famous attractions like the Turku Castle and the Cathedral, the students visited many historical museums and explored the Turku region. The idea was to show them the Finnish way of life, not just the tourist attractions. According to the international students, the most memorable trips were the trip to the archipelago of Turku and the hiking trip to Kuhankuono, one of the National Parks in Finland. The beauty of the Finnish nature astonished the whole group as they listened to the silence in the forest.

One of the must-dos was of course trying out the Finnish sauna which all the students loved. They enjoyed swimming in the sea as well as dipping in one of the thousands lakes of Finland. Mondays were booked for cooking. The kitchen was full of international chefs who made traditional Finnish food like Karelian pasties, cinnamon buns and season's best pies in the traditional Finnish way.

The International Summer School 2011 was an unforgettable experience to all the students as well as to the International Summer School team. At the farewell dinner, the happy atmosphere was tinged with sadness. It was hard to say goodbye after a very intense month together. However, all the lovely memories and new friendships will remain with everyone who took part in the Summer School.

Since Turku is the Capital of Culture 2011, this year had something special to offer to the students. Among the many cultural experiences, the Culture Tall Ships Regatta made the last weekend very special. During the last evening, there was an amazing fireworks show by the Aura River – a great sendoff for the participants of International Summer School 2011 and a perfect ending to the last evening together.

The International Summer School 2012 is held on **30th July-26th August 2012**.

Further information: www.utu.fi/summerschool

Paula Ollilainen