

Xianne Williams December RYE Report

Now I have experienced a true Danish Christmas, and it was great! I got to celebrate Christmas with my second host family. My host mom (Britt's) family came to visit us in Aalborg so we were about 16 people in all. It wasn't something I was used to, but it was nonetheless fun to have so many people to celebrate Christmas together. Maybe I'm getting ahead of myself, I should first say that in Denmark they celebrate Christmas on the 24th of December and not the 25th. I think it is very typical to be together with family on the 24th and 26th of December but it seems that most Danes just relax the entire day of the 25th.

For me I was with Britt's family on Sunday the 23 of December and we went to the outdoors ice skating rink in the center of Aalborg and after we drank hot chocolate and ate æbelskivers. On the 24th I was also together with Britt's family for brunch (there was about 30 people and that night there were about 16 people). Christmas eve (which is Christmas in Denmark) we ate typical Danish Christmas food. We ate duck and a traditional pork dish, a warm cabbage dish, brown sauce, white potatoes, brown potatoes (more of a caramelized potato), and two different types of salad (but the salad is not traditional Danish Christmas food). But for dessert we ate a traditional dish call risalamande (which is kind of a rice pudding with a berry sauce and chopped almonds on top). And it is a really old tradition to hide an almond in the bowl of risalamande and whoever finds it gets a gift. And guess who found the almond! It was me!! (no cheating whatsoever).

After we ate risalamande we took all the presents and put them under the Christmas tree (I thought it was crazy how many presents there were). After we put the presents under the tree, we sang some songs and danced around the Christmas tree (it is also a tradition to have real candles on the Christmas tree, so I became completely afraid when we started to dance that something would happen (thankfully nothing did). The last thing we did was open all the presents starting with the youngest opening one gift at a time and then the next oldest and so on. We continued in a circle until all the gifts were opened (it took a few hours). It was really fun, but I was so tired because we weren't done until around 3 am, but it was worth it.

On the 25th of December my host family got a surprise visit from Santa, so they got to experience a new tradition of waking up to presents! But other than that, we relaxed and did next to nothing the whole day. We were together with Britt's family the next day again but this time we were about 40 people. We ate the entire day and played a gift game where you tried to get as many gifts as you could, I ended up with zero, but it was okay because all the gifts were crazy and not very practical (mostly just weird, funny, or random things).

Overall, I had a really good Christmas. And if you are wondering if I missed Christmas in USA, I would have to say no. But it is only because I was so busy and having so much fun that there wasn't time to think about it. It just feels like my life in Kansas is on pause.

I hope everyone back home has had a merry Christmas and I hope you have a good new year!