

## December in the US

I cannot believe that the December of my exchange year is now over. I have always been so excited for this month. -Christmas in the US is a thing I've always wanted to experience. I saw it in movies and read about it in books and then with sixteen in 2025, my dream came true and I celebrated my first American Christmas!

My hostmum always said that for her, the most beautiful thing about Christmas is that it's a whole season and every single day during this time is something special. And guess what, that's what it actually turned out to be. We were lucky and got a lot of snow in the beginning of the month so we were able to go on a lot of hikes and snow walks in a true winter wonder land! Because of the freezing temperatures the Mississippi River froze fully and I was able to join the first cold water emergent in my life. What should I say, it was freeeeezzziiinggggg. But for the feeling afterwards it is worth every single second of it and coming home to a warm cozy home is perfect. Especially when someone baked fresh cookies. -Which happened a lot in my December. Whether I baked them with my hostmum, my friends or German ones by myself - it just made everything so special. Two days before Christmas Eve my whole host family and some friends went Christmas caroling. We sang at the hospital, the jail and the homeless shelter. It was so beautiful to see them happy and grateful that we made their Christmas time a tiny little bit more joyful and it really made me feel like I helped in some way.

The 23th was my last day of school and then we finally had winter break:) The day of Christmas Eve we spent at home playing board games, watching TV, cooking together and having good food and spending time together. On the 25th we then drove to the twin cities to my hostmums' family to celebrate Christmas in the bigger circle. We had a big dinner and it was nice to see everybody from Thanksgiving again. Friday morning we went tubing on the snow, which was so so cool and then around lunch time we had to head back home... I was so sad that Christmas was over but at the same time I couldn't have been more grateful for how amazing this holiday was. It was filled with a kind of love, joy and safety I will never forget. And it once again made me realize how blessed and lucky I am.

Nevertheless, it is still important to know that Christmas is not always the easiest time as an exchange student. Being on the other side of the world far away from home during a time of love, relationships and joy is hard and getting homesick is more than normal. So if it doesn't turn out to be your favorite time, no worries it is so okay and makes more than sense.





