

Sunday, 12 May

Dear Berlin,

It is funny how life works out. If you had asked me five years ago where I would live I probably would have answered Paris or London. I wouldn't have thought about you, you weren't on my mind even a little bit. It was not me, but the man I loved who was completely in love with you. I just wanted to move abroad, to have some fun and a new experience. I convinced him that we could take our company on the road and work from Berlin for our Swedish clients. It's the same time zone so why not try it out for 3 months?

In the beginning everything was fantastic, it was summer, a new city and lots of new things happening. We have been here now for two years and I can tell you with nothing more than good intentions that the fun is up. We will be moving back to Sweden by the end of June. In the end everything was very different than what I thought. I thought it would be easier. Like I thought I could learn German in three months but when I came here I realized it was actually much harder, especially to speak it. My expectations of you did not live up to reality.

Still it was good to be here and experience a different culture. You have a big mix of people from all over the world from all different social classes and there is a high level of tolerance for each other. Getting to know new people was exciting and fun although it takes a while before they become real friends. It sometimes feels like dating and it gives you a kick. Back in Stockholm it's a bit square but here our group of friends is very international, they are from Sweden, Iran, Chile, some Americans and it is very refreshing. Everything is more relaxed here especially in the summer, everyone is happy and goes out and have BBQs in the park. There is more spontaneity and it feels like the parks are the gardens of the people. But the winters are fucking cold, the streets are so big everyone is grumpy and you're freezing all the time. When spring comes, I meet more people again; it feels like all my old friends have crawled out of their nests.

Here people work with different stuff, it is like work isn't their lives. You see that they have a different focus. They meet their friends after work for a beer at the imbiss or when you go out on the streets people walk quite slowly. People take life easy here. In Stockholm you go to your job at 9am and you go home at 5pm, you go for lunch at a certain time, at a certain place. Everything has a special schedule, you are constantly in a hurry, hurry to work, hurry to the gym and hurry back. If you don't want that kind of lifestyle, it can make you feel like an outsider sometimes.

Although Stockholm is smaller and more uptight, I feel that it has a certain buzz, a certain flow. Maybe it is because people go to work on certain hours. After living here for so long I realized that it sometimes gave me more energy in the sense that I wanted to create new entrepreneurial things. I am not feeling that here. Everything is very relaxed and that's nice but it sometimes feels a bit death or sleepy and I am not getting inspired that much.

But life is definitely cheaper here. You can find a cheap apartment and go out, it's an easier lifestyle to survive in. For us it has been good working from Berlin for our Swedish clients as they pay us double as the Berlin clients. The combination is in theory perfect as you can have a pretty good life in Berlin; only I didn't feel totally at home. When I moved here it wasn't with the intention to live here the rest of my life. It was a small break to do something fun for a while. I always knew that I would return to Sweden one day and go on with my life. I really like Berlin but I don't feel that my heart is here. This is not my Heimat my Heimat is Stockholm, where my heart and soul is.

Yours,  
*Ausländer*