

Winter activities and Nordic skiing

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My winter experience.

Skiing has always seemed to me like an incredible sport. Maybe it's because I live in an area of Spain where it doesn't snow and when I have the opportunity to go skiing (I have to go quite far), I appreciate it very much. When I was little, I used to spend Christmas skiing with my whole family in the Pyrenees, so this sport brings back great memories. The previous times I had skied, consisted of normal skiing, downhill slopes which you usually access with a chairlift. I even got to throw myself on black slopes, which are very steep!

Despite I knew how to ski, nothing of this worked when I went cross-country. These, on the other hand, are thinner skis and the ski boot is not completely attached to the ski, but only to the front. I didn't remember falling to the ground so many times in less than an hour since I was a little girl but at least I wasn't the only one... The vast majority of my classmates also fell very frequently. If it's true that some falls were a little painful but we laughed most of the time. Little by little we improved our balance and at the end of the second day we looked like experienced skiers (and not beginners!). I was surprised by the skill of these Norwegians, they used skis as if they were shoes. With them they could run, jump, go up/down hills... Anything! I suppose that's normal in countries like Norway where they have snow most of the year.

We spent the first day of spring there (March 20th) and I don't know whether if it was by chance but the temperatures went up a lot. We spent two days with a splendid sun and temperatures that ranged between 3-7 ° C throughout the day (clearly at night temperatures went down and it was colder).

During this trip I have learned some very interesting things such as: how to behave when facing a snow avalanche, how to set up a tent in the middle of the snow (knowing how to detect the best place to do it and some tips), what food is recommended to have when you are continuously doing a lot of physical exercise... No doubt, what I liked most was when we were all around the fire heating our homemade bread and, also, making snow figures in groups. My group and I tried to make a baby bear. It was quite adorable and we had a great time while we were doing it. I also really liked the figures of the other groups, especially the igloo.

Dear Dad...

Dear Dad, I would like to share with you my experience during the snow trip to Norway with my 7 year olds students. I tell you because as you are a teacher and I just started with this profession, I want you to give me your opinion and advice to become a better teacher.

I went with them a few days ago, and in total they were 13 children. They are all charming and very mature for the age they are. Theoretically, we should already be back to Spain today but it has started to snow a lot this afternoon, and it was impossible to drive on the road, and all Oslo Torp flights have been cancelled for tomorrow, if it doesn't snow so much. At least we were lucky and during the three days of the trip it didn't snow and we were able to do a lot of outdoor activities. Coming from a country like Spain, it has been hard for us because it was so cold, especially on the first day. Then we realized that if you warm up properly, it is a cold bearable.

One important fact I can't forget to mention is that we went cross-country skiing. Only 1 student out of 13 had ever done this type of ski, so I faced a big challenge. Well, not me, rather the instructors. I suppose they are used to teach groups of people how to do this type of ski, but I didn't know if they had ever worked with such a young group of people.

The first thing we did when we arrived, apart from leaving the backpacks, was to introduce ourselves a little and see what the skis and boots of cross-country skiing were like. My students were surprised that the boot was only attached to the ski in the front area and at first, they were a little scared. Once each student had their skis and boots on, they went for a walk with them on, to get used to them and learn to have balance, because it is not easy. During the walk, the instructors told a typical legend of this place that is said to have happened many years ago. It is said that, a long time ago, some animals with the shape of rabbits used to live in Norway. It is known that they were very nice, they could even talk to humans and that they were magical.

After this, we stopped to have lunch and rest. In the afternoon, we started skiing on slopes, which were not very steep, apt for children. There were many falls but luckily no one was strong enough to get hurt. The children had a great time. Before nightfall, and when the children were tired of skiing, we did an activity that consisted of painting the snow by mixing a bottle of spray with water and paint coloring. The students were divided into two groups of 4 people and one group of 5. They had to draw a rainbow. Most of them

had seen it once, but they didn't know why it appeared. This way, at the same time that they had a good time painting the snow, they learned that it appears when it rains and at the same time the sun appears. In this way, the sun's rays pass through the drops of water and a multicoloured arc appears formed by the colours: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple and violet.

Once it was completely dark, we made a bonfire to keep us warm and to cook apples with chocolate. We decided this food and not banana with chocolate because there was a student who was allergic to the skin of the banana. Throughout the evening, we sang songs around the bonfire, played card games and told one by one of some experiences that when we remembered it, made us happy. All the stories had their beautiful part and more when they were told by such small children, who are very innocent and have no evil at all. At 21:30 we went to sleep, as it had been a long day and we needed to rest.

The next morning dawned with a splendid sun and a few more degrees than the day before. The first thing we did was get dressed and have breakfast together. We drank chocolate milkshake and toast with cold stiff. Then, we did the same thing as the previous afternoon: take a walk and go skiing on easy slopes. The children progressed little by little and fell less and less. They also noticed that they were getting more and more into skiing. They were having such a good time that they even forgot that they had to stop for lunch in the middle of the morning to eat a snack.

After eating and taking advantage of the snow, we made a giant igloo together. The children had never seen one and they didn't know what it was for. We all went inside, imagine if it was big because we could fit the 13 children, the two monitors and me. We drank hot chocolate and started talking about what they thought was the shelter we had just built. The first thing they thought about the igloo when it was finished was that it must have been very cold inside. After the story of the origin of the igloos was told and that the igloos began to be built many years ago in areas where it is very cold and full of snow most of the time and where the building materials were, and in some places are still, practically non-existent, the only way to shelter from the cold was to build an igloo, which at least shelters you from the wind, rain, snow and wild animals.

Then we went to have lunch and once we finished, we went sledding. The children were enthusiastic about the idea. They had a great time as there were sleds of all sizes:

individual, in pairs and even one in which there was room up to 5 children. Then we made snow angels, lying on soft snow and moving our arms and legs. Finally, before sunset, we had a snowball war. The monitors and I set some rules so that no one would get hurt: the balls couldn't be too big and you couldn't hit someone in the head. Once it was dark, there was no problem to continue doing activities as the monitors put some light bulbs next to an esplanade near where we were staying, and we could make snowmen. We divided the children into three groups again and they all did very well, some focused on the size, that is, on making it as big as possible, another group focused on the details (making it a smile and beautiful eyes, looking like simulating the buttons of a blouse ...) and the last group paid attention to making the balls of his body as round and perfect as possible. At the end of the day, we all had dinner together in a room where we were staying and went to sleep at 22:00.

The last day (today), it has dawned snowing a lot. What a difference in weather from yesterday to today! I guess this is very common in Norway, not like in Spain. We had to suspend the morning skiing as it could be very dangerous for children since they do not have enough practice to go skiing in these weather conditions. As teachers, we must always have more options in mind because some situations may occur that do not allow us to do the activities or plans we had in our minds. Instead of skiing, we have done indoor activities. First of all, we have reviewed what we have learned: why does the rainbow appear? because igloos were created and for what purpose? In this way I have confirmed that all the students have learned it perfectly.

Afterward, we have made snow ice cream. We have taken clean snow and put it in a bowl, and mixed it with sugar, vanilla extract and milk or cream, depending on the taste of each student. Then we have done a craft until lunchtime. This consisted of drawing a snowman on a piece of paper and then putting it inside a transparent plastic cup and putting cotton around it, simulating the snow. I attach a photo in the annex.

Then we stopped to eat and supposedly, we were going to pick up our things and leave because the flight is at 21:00, but it snows so much that all southern Norway is on alert, both roads and airports and can be very dangerous, so the flight has been postponed to tomorrow. We have sent an emergency message to the parents so that they could know

and calm them down telling them that they were all very well and were having a great time.

After explaining the situation to the children, we have seen a film while we have eaten popcorn. It's called "Inside Out": a 3D animated film about managing emotions, empathy and the importance of cooperation. With an individual point of view, you don't get the full picture of a situation, this is the message that underlies the film. The film is from the year 2015 and its main character is an 11 years old girl, but most of the story takes place inside her mind. It is highly recommended to understand that sadness also plays an important role in well-being.

As a conclusion of the trip, I can say that everything has gone very well, the children had a great time and I am very happy because everyone has behaved very well. I hope tomorrow we can fly to Spain because they are already very tired and most of them want to see their parents.

ANNEX:



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