



Rome January 14th – 15th, 2006

Saturday January 14th, 2006

Was off duty during Friday so I could prepare for the trip to Rome. I will attend a training at World Food Programme (WFP) before working in the field of Tanzania.

Took a flight via Amsterdam to Rome and arrive at noon. Taxi in Rome is expensive and you better watch out of illegal taxi's. Tried to make a deal with one of the "official" taxi companies, but they requested 70 EUR for a trip of 25 kilometer. They did not accept my offer of 30 EUR. I was asked by an older man who was informed that I needed a taxi, we made a deal of 45 EUR. I am in an older car which seems to be his private one, he seems not to know exactly the way how to get to the address I have given to him. I need to keep an eye open to find out how and where he is going and finally I am the one who finds the hotel. If I had not kept my eyes open, he had probably gone through Rome

Nevertheless, the hotel is located in a park, but not in the central of Rome. It is for very cold right now, much colder than normal and I am freezing. I am dressed for traveling to Tanzania. After checking in, I find some other volunteers in the bar, who had come from Australia after a 28 hours travelling, Andrew & Lisa, genuine Aussies... also Sietske from the Netherlands shows and we are having a small talk over some glasses of wine before it is time to go to bed.

Sunday January 15th, 2006

Woke up early in the morning after freezing the whole night, the hotel are freezing cold, they had no heating activated. At the breakfast I meet some other volunteers, besides Andrew & Lisa from Australia (who are going to Cambodia), Sietske, Johan & Linda from the Netherlands (going to Malawi) plus Peter from Belgium (also to Malawi). Also Elisandra from Brazil & Jaime from Spain (going to Nicaragua) arrives.

We are having a small talk get knowing each other over the breakfast and then we are taking a ride to downtown using the metro. We are taking a walk from the Spanish Stairs and then to Via Condotti where all the "expensive" shops are located, brands as, Gucci, Pierre Cardin, and all the others. It is nearly expensive even to look at the stuff through the window. After a while we arrive to Fontana di Trevi, the fountain where Anita Ekberg once took a bath, we did not as it was so damn cold plus that we were accompanied by "carabinieri"

Finally we arrive to Colosseum and here are as usual a lot of tourists, who have dressed up like the old "Gladiators" and they offer you to be photographed at the cost of 5 EUR. It is nice to be in Rome after 25 years, and nothing has changed really in the downtown of Rome. We are going back to the hotel for lunch and more volunteers arrive. Melanie & Frank from Germany (going to the Gambia) and Janet from UK, who will be my partner in Tanzania for the next 3 months. After lunch, we are welcomed by Christel, Jane and Derry, which are working with the World Food Programme here in Rome.

Sunday evening, we are invited to a guiding of Rome, and our guide is a very pleasant guide named Carla. She is telling us everything about Rome with big passion, after a while we are at Colosseum, Foro Romano, Piazza Venezia. We are taken to a small and cozy winebar to have some snacks and good wine. After an hour at the winebar we arrive to a part of Rome called Trastevere. This is the area where the romans go for a good dinner. Good food and wine are being served and everybody seems to be satisfied and happy. The night is getting late and we are going back to the hotel with a chartered bus.

