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[When Dilijan is your home](#) | March 14, 2018 12:44

## Home Beyond Words and Picture Frames



Photo: UWC Dilijan College

*Mediamax and UWC Dilijan College launch a joint project introducing the stories about Dilijan and life in Armenia by students from different countries.*

### **Lucia, Spain, UWC Dilijan '16**

*Lucia is one of the pioneer students of UWC Dilijan. After the graduation in May 2016 she was accepted to the University College of London. Even after the graduation Lucia remains very connected to the life of the College: she is actively contributing to the foundation of the Young Alumni Association, and in summer 2017 she came back to Dilijan for a 2-month-long internship. Also, Lucia is a keen member of the UCL Armenian Society, a link between Armenian culture, society and language, and student life at University College London.*

I still remember the first time I saw Dilijan. With a mixture between excitement and confusion, emotion and commotion, my internal turmoil was matched with a turbulent curvy road. Out of the tunnel, delving into the valley, it felt as falling from the sky through an evergreen cloud of trees. Dilijan seemed like a recondite Eden, hidden amongst an endless ocean of mountains.

As an enigma yet to decipher, back then it would have been unforeseeable the extent to which that foreign place would come to acquire a priceless significance, how each of its corners would occupy an everlasting, immutable place in my heart.

The late summer heat welcomed us with cloudless blue skies and constant sunshine, guiding the way through our first footsteps in Dilijan. Slowly, hesitantly, we discovered the joy of gazing at the city from the amphitheatre, the pleasure of eating sunflower seeds in the green gazebo by the river, the beauty of afternoon strolls through the old amusement park, so peaceful it felt like walking across a forgotten film set. Unhurriedly, we learned to appreciate the harmonious sound of the river, our soundtrack for the two years to come, the mellow chirping of birds in the morning, the sudden summer storms, the power of the thunder vibrating across the valley and the humble beauty of the rainbows that followed. Embraced by the forest, halfway up the mountain slope, we were captivated by the late afternoon sunshine reflecting on the trees. Gazing forward, beyond the mountaintops into the horizon, down on the streets and buildings, we were filled with awe by what was to become our home for the next two years.



Photo: UWC Dilijan College

Autumn was paradoxically a period of blossom. Upon awaking one day, the surrounding mountain slopes were experiencing a relentless explosion of bright ochre, glaring yellow, intense maroon, shimmering orange, ardent brown, like the palette of an eccentric and indecisive artist. The gradual falling of the leaves came along a growing confidence in our steps and an increasing dare to explore our surroundings. We started to go off the main streets to notice the joy of getting away from the world by having tea and dried apricots sitting at the top of the cemetery, we started to experience the thrill of going on unplanned hikes through the forest to stumble upon centuries-old monasteries and breath-taking views. The timid curiosity of the people of Dilijan turned into welcoming smiles, and our shy stares into customary greets. As the foreign became familiar, as the weather got colder, our hearts grew warmer as Dilijan started to truly feel like home.

Looking up at the sky, a silver drizzle of snowflakes gently fell over our thrilled stares one night: the long-awaited snowfall had finally come. The next morning, opening the curtains unveiled a dreamy, fairy-tale landscape: a white, fluffy blanket of snow had covered our mountains, buried rooftops, camouflaged trees, making the distant peaks look like frosting-covered wedding cakes. With our eyes half-closed due to the blatant reflection of the sun on the ice, it was hard to believe that we were truly living in that quasi-wonderland. Winter in Dilijan taught us to appreciate the beautiful winter days, where gelid temperatures are compensated with a bright blue sky that still pushes you to go outdoors. Grey skies and gloomy afternoons led us to discover comforting murabba tea and warm gata, and lazy strolls along the river were replaced by quick walks avoiding slippery ice plates. Winter had a characteristic sapphire gloss; a magical comforting atmosphere that brought us closer to our surroundings through a bond that would withstand above and below-zero temperatures.



Photo: UWC Dilijan College

Spring quietly came in the form of timid green patches on our long-white-looking mountains, shy flowers and the returning chirping of birds. Spring came as the closing of a cycle and the beginning of a new one, slowly bringing us back the dense green forest that, though foreign a year ago, had now become a silent witness. A witness to all the irreplaceable moments, uncommon experiences, unique friendships, tears of joy and of grief, uncontrollable laughter, incomparable personal self-growth that Dilijan brought us all in different ways over our first year there.

The exceptional attachment that I have to Dilijan, each of its recondite corners and unreachable mountaintops, cannot be expressed with words. Every evening at dawn, I remember watching the sun set behind a distant peak, the last rays gently kissing the rooftops, the pink hue bathing our hidden gem at the bottom of the valley, and feeling truly blessed. Day after day I tried to trap that precise sight in a picture, but no shot was able to capture it. Pictures could not capture not only the gorgeous landscape, but the unique experiences that Dilijan brings to each individual

who is lucky enough to be embraced by its perennial yet ever-changing, solemnly beautiful mountains. Whether it is a day or a lifetime, Dilijan has an indescribable magic and, once under its spell, makes you feel home forever.