



# Tylee

from

## Burlington North

to

## Brazil

### Canadian in Brazil

I arrived in Brazil on July 26<sup>th</sup>, which means I have been here for nearly 4 months. Every day feels like a blur but there are always those moments that will stick with you forever. Being on exchange can be very difficult but it has helped being in Brazil because everyone here is so open and will welcome you with open arms.

My trip started with a ten hour flight and then getting off the plane to drive six hours to my host city. I was very lucky because one of my best friends who was on exchange in Canada was on the same plane as me so I had a guide through the airport. This was extremely helpful because when I first arrived in Brazil I could not understand anything. The only phrases that I knew were. "Oi", "Tudo bem?" and "Obrigada." This made it very difficult to understand my host family when I first met them. Luckily my host sister spoke English.

My host city is a small city called Presidente Prudente, it is around six hours of non-stop driving away from São Paulo. In my city there are twelve exchange students and there are sixty exchange students in our district. Everyone in our city is really close and we are always getting together to go swimming, have a churrasco, or go out to a restaurant.

Currently I am staying with my second host family, I stayed with my first host family for three months and then I switched. I will be staying with this family until February next year and I could not be happier. This family is the most wonderful group of people I have ever met. The host father speaks English which is helpful for when I cannot understand a sentence. We have a huge lunch every day with everyone in the family and it is amazing to feel like I have such a big family. They are also very interested about learning about the Canadian culture and lifestyle because their son is in Quebec for his exchange year. The family has a lake house which we go to very often. I am able to bring friends to go swimming and have BBQ's.

My city is the hottest city in the state of São Paulo. When I arrived here it was still winter and while all of my classmates were wearing jeans and sweaters, I was wearing shorts and a t-shirt. The temperature here during the winter on average is 27 degrees Celsius. We are now in the spring and I have trouble believing it will get any hotter. It also does not help that my

school doesn't have air conditioning in any classrooms. There are fans in each of the corners; my teachers put me in the corner because they thought I was "going to melt."

The best part of my exchange so far is school; it runs from 7:00 – 12:20. I have met some of my best friends at that school. Everyone there is so unique and my friends are insane. They jump around singing and dancing in the middle of the quad because they want to. I am the only exchange student at my school and I am the first exchange student to ever go to this school. Since I am the first exchange student the school does not know how to exactly 'handle' an exchange student. I do have it tougher than the other exchange students because I am expected to do the homework and write the tests. This may make it more difficult at times when I want to do something but overall it has benefited me. I have become very strong at reading Portuguese and can read books now. My sentence structure for writing has improved a lot too. However I still have a lot of issues with pronunciation. But every day I am learning something new with the language.

As you are reading this I will be on a trip exploring the Amazon, the capital of Brazil, and the beaches in the north-east of Brazil. I will have a chance to talk with the tribes of the Amazon and to even go swimming with pink dolphins. 39 exchange students will be attending this trip.

The best thing I can advise someone going on exchange is to let go of who you thought you were and what you thought you could do. Exchange proves that you are so much more than what you believed. You go on adventures that you never thought possible and meet people from around the world.

Thank you to Rotary and everyone who helped me to be where I am now.

Tchau!

*Tylee*