



Deutsch-Kanadischer Schüleraustausch 2024

When I first heard about the program through school I immediately wanted to sign up. It has always been my dream to travel the world someday, so why not start early and get to experience the real culture and not just the touristy stuff. So that's what I did, I filled out all the documents and gave them to my school. To be honest I didn't expect to get picked, even though I won the selection at our school, getting chosen out of the entirety in Hessen seemed almost impossible. After quite some time I finally got the call, they had found an exchange partner for me! In that moment I was extremely happy, surprised and a bit scared at the same time, and so I accepted knowing there was no going back now.

Fast forward to the day of the flight- The drive to the airport was the worst part of the entire exchange, I didn't know if I had made the biggest mistake in my life and you might find yourself in the same situation, but you must remember, there is always a flight back, in case something goes wrong. One thing that gave me comfort, was knowing I wouldn't be flying alone, all the other German exchange students were incredibly nice and friendly and after a while there was nothing but excitement for this big adventure. When I first met my host Family, I knew, I made the right choice. They owned a beautiful house in Calgary, with a small backyard, that looked like straight out of the movies. My host family consisted out of my exchange partner, her younger brother, older brother, dad and mum, oh and they had a little dog called monty. The first evening they made me my favourite food and gave me some time to unpack everything, even though I just met these people, there was never really any awkwardness.

The first few days of school were hard, I was exhausted after a few hours of speaking the language and although there were many people that wanted to talk to me, no one really seemed to care that much. I was at the James Fowler High School, the second largest high school in Calgary, at least that's what I've been told and I had to choose 4 subjects, for me those subjects were Yoga, Foods, Sports Medicine, and last but not least Social Studies. You might think, Yoga? To be honest at first I didn't want to be in Yoga class, but the Art class had a waiting list, so they put me in Yoga instead. Turns out Yoga was my second favourite class and I had very good friends in that course, so even if something doesn't go your way, it might just be right for you. But my favourite class of all time is definitely Sports Med, a class where you learn about muscles, bones, first aid and where you train to become doctors or nurses. And every Friday we learned a new taping job, to prevent injuries like straining your ankle or your wrist. Through this class I learned many medical terms and met my best friend. Foods was

also a great course, we got to cook things almost everyday, and we were put in groups of 4, which was perfect, because through group projects you always meet the best people. The recipes were mostly for healthy versions of things like waffles, cake, brownies and sometimes main meals like spaghetti or omelette. The lunch break was my favourite time of the day, because I got to meet up with friends, and sometimes we would go to seven eleven, to buy snacks and sodas.

On the weekends my host family and I did stuff like hiking, going shopping or visiting museums. Here are some nice things to do, if you are in the calgary area: Heritage park, was the first ever trip we made and it was fun honestly, it is like an outdoor museum, that has old locomotives, houses and even some real animals. Thrift stores- I personally don't like thrift stores, but my friends did, so I wanted to include them into my list. If you are searching for the weirdest clothes ever, this is the place to go, and honestly it's a fun place to just look around, and they are very popular in Canada. Or you can go to Banff, a beautiful mountain landscape great for hiking or going shopping in little souvenir shops.(I also visited Canmore not far away from Banff and I personally prefer it way more, because it is not as well known, hence less people on the hiking trails). Additionally you could go to a brass pro shop, visit Edmonton mall and stay in a hotel overnight, go camping, visit Calaway park or go out for a nice dinner with your host family. I could go on, about all the great places to visit, and there are lots of them, but in the end it always depends on your preferences.

One of my favourite memories was without a doubt, Halloween. I mean I've heard, that it was fun, but I could never imagine how awesome it is, until I got to experience it myself. It starts with going shopping for your costumes, the store was called spirit halloween and they have every costume imaginable! The day of Halloween everyone at school dresses up, the teachers bring candy and you watch scary movies together, when you get home, the real fun begins: going trick or treating. Knocking on peoples doors and getting free Candy? It was unbelievable! And after around 9 pm most little kids go home, and the homeowners dump their entire candy into your bag. You also meet a lot of people, you didn't know before.

I love my host family with my entire heart, and they really became my second home. I now have a second sister and friends around the world<3 So If you are reading this, there will be moments where you want to go home, moments where you feel alone or get homesick. Please, don't have high expectations! Don't expect to meet a best friend in the first couple of days! Adjusting to everything takes time, learning how to express yourself in the language takes time, and feeling home also takes time. But in the end it will be totally worth it! I promise you, you will not regret a single thing! Enjoy the time you have and don't focus on the things you don't have while you are there. Overall, three months is not a lot of time so spend every moment being grateful even though things might be tough.

(Ps: at the end of your stay, print out a picture or buy a card, and let every one of your friends sign it! You can read it on the plane or when you get home. I hung mine in my room and reading all the nice messages makes you feel special and it will always remind you of that beautiful experience)





