



# Sydney

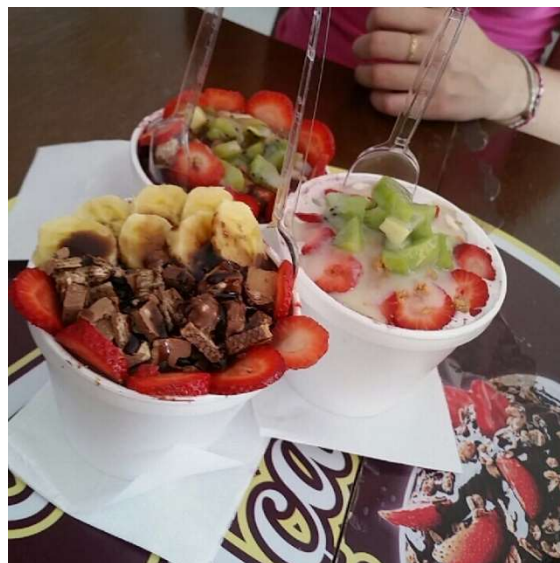
from Milton  
to  
Brazil

*“It is at the most unexpected moments that the true peaks of exchange arise”*

It has been almost four months since I arrived in the São Paulo airport to begin this life changing journey. It is so surreal to be living here in Brazil, in the sense that what started as the idea of going on exchange has become my reality. The last three months have proven to be the best of my life already and I am excited to see what the rest of the year holds.

At this point in my exchange, I am a lot more accustomed to the way of life here, but at first everything was so new and so different. From tasting brigadeiro for the first time, to listening to funk music, to eating pizza with a knife and fork. Actually the last one still has me shocked every time. On top of the new culture and customs, I have also had to adapt from living in a big city in Canada to now living a small town lifestyle. My city is called Presidente Venceslau. A city where everyone knows everyone and weekends are filled with churrascos and house parties.

There is one other exchange student in my city from Germany. I am very happy to have someone in my city who understands the occasional trials and tribulations of exchange life that arise and to have someone to talk to when they do occur.



The cultural difference is also very prominent in the schools here. The first day I arrived at my new school I sensed the amount of community accommodating it because here the students have been studying together since they were children. The schools are very small so everyone knows everyone and the teachers change rooms rather than the students so the class stays together the whole day. I thought this would make it harder for me to integrate myself as a member of the class, since I am new in a sea of people who have known each other for years, but my class was so accepting. The second day of class, one of the boys brought his guitar so they could sing Photograph by Ed Sheeran for me, which he said was the song that made the class realize how lucky they were to have each other.

School has been the place where I have learnt most of my Portuguese and gain lasting memories, but it is at the most unexpected moments that the true peaks of exchange arise. Like when my host family announced we will go ziplining down a mountain in the morning only a few days into my exchange. Or the time my friend knocked on my bedroom door and told me to get dressed for the cold because we are going horseback riding. The last time I've gone horseback riding was when I was riding a pony at a fair when I was five, so it was quite the experience. Or Faive; the festival I got to see the concert of the "King of Brazil".



I have done a lot of traveling to other cities in the area since I have been here, my favourite being Presidente Epitacio, where I saw the most beautiful sunset in all of Brazil, but this summer vacation is when the real travel begins. I will attend my school's prom in early December, which I am greatly anticipating, and after will be visiting Foz do Iguaçu with my host family and Águas de São Pedro to go white water rafting. Needless to say I am excited beyond belief!

I want say thank you to all the Rotarians in Canada and Brazil for making this experience possible. You have given me the opportunity of life changing adventure that a year ago I never would have thought I would be living. You have given me a second home. What you do is making a difference in my life and makes a difference in the lives of so many young people, I can't express just through words my how grateful I am.

Tchau por agora,

*Sydney*