

October Rotary Update

I have now lived three months in Brasil! October is spring here in Brasil and it has been hot, about 32 is normal in the afternoon. People always tell me that it gets hotter and that Christmas time all people do is go in the pool because it is so hot. I can't even imagine the kind of heat that they are trying to describe, similar to how when I showed people pictures of Calgary after the "Snowmageddon" people couldn't really grasp how cold winter gets.

Initially I was worried that my Portuguese was "plateauing" and I couldn't really see my progress as obviously as I could previously, however, upon reflection I think that I have grown a lot this month too. I definitely have more stamina in conversation and it is much easier to pick up words from context now. I have also had a few dreams that were partially in Portuguese, which is an incredibly weird experience, but a good indicator of learning the language!

October is my birthday, and to celebrate we had a party with my host family and some other exchange students and people from school. It was very fun and very, very long. I got several books in Portuguese, as I have taken to reading kid's books to learn more (my reading level is about the same as an 8 year olds). I also received a package from my family in the mail which was really exciting and I got to introduce my host family to maple fudge! They enjoyed it, but I was beyond thrilled to eat it.

I went to Presidente Prudente to do a Thanksgiving Dinner with another Canadian and an American. We made the full classic Thanksgiving Dinner for their host families there and had a ton of fun cooking it all. It was a little odd how hot it was, and I fully understand why people don't cook with the oven a lot here- we roasted along with the turkey.

I have also recently changed host families. My host father is the president of the Rotary Club here and my host mother is the president of Casa de Amizade (house of friendship)- the branch of Rotary specifically for women here. I also have an older host sister who lives with us here and I am very grateful to have a sibling in the house again. Once again, nobody in my family speaks English which I am very glad about and I am lucky in that my host sister is very patient in explaining things to me in Portuguese.

In October I also had quite a few moments of homesickness, but luckily in the end of the month it started to wear off. I talked to the other exchange students and that helped a lot, one of the things that helped me the most was having a host sister, it's really nice to almost always have someone to do something with, no matter what you're doing.

All of the exchange students are getting very very excited because soon we will be going on what is called "the big trip". Basically, it is 20 days where we visit the Amazon, the north-east part of Brasil and Brasilia, the capital. There are about 45 students going and we are all very excited to see each other again, since we haven't been together as a group since the orientation in August. I am a little worried that my Portuguese will decay on the trip, (exchange students usually speak in English with each other) but hopefully I can make a conscious effort to speak Portuguese with them and the local people.

I am very excited for the trip and I'm sure the next update will be very long and hopefully with a lot of photos.

Until December,

Emma

PS

One thing that NEVER crossed my mind was that daylight saving would go in the opposite direction in the Southern Hemisphere. I am now 5 hours ahead of home...it was a big surprise to me when I realised this happened!



Pictures from Thanksgiving



my new host dog



My friend from Germany and me goofing off (those are coconuts and maracujá fruits on our heads)



Some other exchange students at my birthday party!