

Emma Timm



Age: 15 years old

Sex: Female

Length of stay: 2 terms

Natural Habitat: Hamburg- Germany

Hey, my name is Emma, I'm 17 years old and live in Hamburg. When I was fifteen I had one of the best times of my life spending half a year at Taupo-nui-a-Tia College in New Zealand. Before my stay I was excited to meet my host family, get to know a whole new country and their culture and make lots of new experiences, but I was also afraid I wouldn't get along with my host family, wouldn't be able to make new friends, my English wouldn't be good enough and that I wouldn't be able to take all the classes and do the sports I was looking forward to. Arriving in NZ I realised most of my fears were completely unnecessary. My host family picked me up at the airport, where I also met Aniek, our international coordinator for the first time. During the first few days and weeks I had to get used to my new life with my new family, but I always felt welcome and after about a month my host family and their place really felt like home to me. I shared different interests with my host parents and host siblings and that way we could connect over many different things and still get along great. Family evenings in front of the TV or walks with the dog, even if I sometimes felt very tired from all the new impressions, really helped me to get to know them better. They also took me on many different trips in and around Taupo. There couldn't have been a better, more fitting hostfamily for me. However even if I wouldn't have felt comfortable in my host family, as some of my international friends did, Aniek was always there to help with any kind of problem and was a great support during everyone's exchange at nui.

First days of school

My first days in school with parts of orientation program and first periods in class where a good start to really arrive at school. The first people I got to know at school were the other internationals. It was great to meet people that were experiencing the same exciting but also a little overwhelming time and speak German again for the first time with some of the internationals. But as it was important for me to make local friends during my exchange year it was definitely necessary to also get out of my comfort zone a little and talk to all the other people in my classes to connect with them. I experienced everyone as very friendly, open and helpful and became great friends with some of them.

Subjects

I got to choose my classes during my first day of school and the coordinator of my year tried to make it possible for everyone to get in all the classes we wished for. I got all of the classes I wanted and could even change out of one of them when I realised it wasn't really my thing. In the end I really had my dream schedule. The best classes for me were all the more practical ones like sewing or hospitality. The sport I usually do was only offered during the beginning of my stay. Since the sports offered change during the terms it makes sense to stay flexible, don't be too disappointed if your sport isn't available during all the terms of your stay and just try new ones. The next Gym is also only 10 minutes by foot from school, so it's easy to find something to exercise.

Tips from Emma

- get in touch with your host family before you arrive → takes fear
- communication with teachers, your host family and Aniek is key - never be afraid to ask questions
- share your expectations to realise whether they are realistic
- take every experience offered to you and say yes to every little thing, even the drive to the supermarket to get the most out of your exchange

A few last words

During the half year in New Zealand I got part of a new family, made great friends (internationals & locals), improved my English by a lot and made so many new experiences and memories I never would have wanted to miss. I miss Taupo and wish for exciting times for every new international!