

The Campus Querétaro Chronicle

International Students Adjust to Life in México

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What is it like to live and study in a country that is over 10,000 miles from your own? Just ask Prateek Kumar, Sharanya Acharya, and Shivraj Singh, three students from India who recently arrived to Querétaro. Although Mexico and India have very distinct cultures, adjusting has not been too difficult.

“The people here are very friendly and helpful,” commented Shivraj, who wanted to come to Mexico to learn about a new culture.

“We had no problem getting settled,” added Prateek. “Even though we arrived at 2 in the morning, we were able to call several of the International Programs staff, who were very nice and helpful.”

Even the students’ host families were awake and ready to receive the three tired travelers, who were warmly welcomed and immediately made to feel at home. Although Sharanya didn’t speak much Spanish when she arrived, her host mom “didn’t make [her] feel unwelcome and she didn’t ignore [her]. She really tried to make [her] feel at home in spite of the language barrier.”

While many people find it frustrating and difficult to live in a country where they cannot speak the language, Prateek, Sharanya and Shivraj are eager to learn as much Spanish as possible.

“People here are so nice and welcoming that it makes us want to learn the language,” said Sharanya. “We don’t feel pressured or pushed to learn Spanish, but we want to belong to this community and that’s part of why we have such a desire to learn the language.” All three are taking Spanish classes, as well as a business class in English. They like the Tec de Monterrey because it provides its students with everything they need

in order to get the most out of their educational experience. Prateek noted that that it’s “well organized, well planned, and equipped with good resources.”

In addition to improving their Spanish skills, these three motivated students are also eager to learn about how a Mexican business operates, which is why they have acquired an internship with Procter & Gamble.

“In India, this kind of opportunity is very rare, so we want to take advantage of it,” commented Prateek. “This will be a new experience for us, and we hope to learn a lot.”

So far, Prateek, Sharanya and Shivraj have managed to gracefully step into a country and culture so different from that of their native India.

They can’t wait to go back home and share their experiences with everyone. “India and Mexico are so far away that people in India don’t really know what Mexico is like,” said Prateek. All three agreed that they want to change the stereotypes about Mexico that have formed in India. They want people to know what Mexico is really like, that it “is far more than [they] expected it to be. It’s beautiful.”



For many study abroad participants, one of the best ways to get the most out of time spent in another country is to live with a host family. Not only are students able to practice the host country’s language, but they are also able to participate first hand in the customs and traditions of the family. No one knows this better than Curtis Verner from Indiana, who is currently living with a host family in Querétaro.

Why did you want to live with a host family?

My own family has hosted many foreign exchange students over the years from all parts of the world, and I really enjoyed sharing my culture with each one of them and learning about their own countries. I wanted to live with a host family because I wanted to experience Mexican culture first hand. I [have heard] that family is very important in Mexico and that there are many rich family traditions that can only be

Living with a Host Family: A Student’s Perspective

experienced by living with a host family. I also don’t know how to cook, so having authentic Mexican meals prepared for me [is] definitely a plus!

What have you learned from living with a host family?

My host family has taught me many things about Mexican culture that I never would have learned if I were living in an apartment or dormitory with other students. I have not only had the opportunity to learn about the traditions, food, and people of Mexico, but I’ve been able to experience them first hand. For example I was able to participate in traditions of the Day of the Magi Kings by sending a balloon up to heaven with my letter to the three kings along with my two younger Mexican brothers. I think that the best way to learn about a foreign culture is to take part in the traditions.

What do you and your host family do together?

I really enjoy spending time with my Mexican brothers and host parents. During the week I come home to eat lunch with the whole family and we always have a good conversation and great food. Often times in the evenings we pray together as a family before my Mexican brothers go to bed. During the weekends when I am not away from Querétaro traveling, we visit the grandparents and the extended family, go to the market, or take a short trip to see interesting

sites around Querétaro.

Was it easy fitting in with them or did it take time to adjust to a new family and culture?

It was easy to fit in with my host family because they are so hospitable. It did take a little bit of time to adjust to the Mexican culture with the different eating schedule and different pace of life, but after the first couple of weeks I’ve felt pretty much at home here in Querétaro with my host family.

What do you like best about your host family?

I think the thing that I like best about my host family is that they really value their faith, their family, and their culture. My host family is very close, and I can tell that everyone really cares about each other. I really respect my host parents; they are very authentic, caring people with a lot of wisdom.

If you had to give one piece of advice to another student who was going to be living with a host family, what would you tell him/her?

I would encourage him/her to actively participate in the traditions of the family, and to be open to the experience. Much of the experience is what you make of it, so take advantage of the opportunity to ask questions and immerse yourself in the culture. Also, prepare yourself for some excellent authentic Mexican food!