

# ≧MY 10 MONTHS IN≦ Canada

On the first of September 2021 I said goodbye to my parents at the Munich International Airport, travelled 24-hours to Maple Ridge, British Columbia (located on the west-coast of Canada) and started my 10-month adventure of living in a foreign country.

These 10 months taught me a lot, gave me insights into the most different cultures and allowed me to live a “second life“ that I would now like to share with you.



Golden Ears Provincial Park  
in Maple Ridge

First of all, my School:

During my stay in Canada I went to the Thomas Haney Secondary School (THSS) in Maple Ridge. This is a public high school with a self-directed learning system, meaning you can organize what you are learning, as well as when and where you are learning it, all by yourself.

And this what a typical day in my life at THSS looked like: School started at 8:30 am every day with “TA”, which is short for “Teacher Advisory”. My TA-Group was located in the Theatre of my school, so every morning the other students in my group and I went there to write down our plans, classes and projects. In TA we also talked about the news, our plans for the weekend or played with Winston, our TA Teachers Golden Retriever puppy.



Winston ♡



the math-great-hall

At 9:00 am the first block (we had 5 blocks each day) started. In some of them I had set classes and some of them were “working blocks” meaning I was working on my own in one of the “great halls” during the block. (The “great halls” are big halls with each a different focus, for example the math-great-hall, the socials-great hall or the teach-lab. In each of the great halls are at least 3 teachers to help you with questions). Officially I was in 10th grade, but I went to 11th and 12th grade courses to match the expectations and topics in Germany.

My first semester schedule consisted of Dance, Math12, Chemistry 11 and Choir.

In my second Semester I had Choir and Dance again (these were whole year courses), as well as French 12, Anatomy 12, Piano and Beginner Spanish.

My school also hosted many school events like karaoke at lunch, the Spring Formal, different contests (pumpkin carving, cookie decorating, etc.), a poetry slam and "Teacher vs. Students"-competitions.



my pumpkin from the pumpkin carving contest

cookie-decorating-contest my choir class right before our Winter-Showcase

I really loved going to school in Canada and met amazing people in THSS. The teachers were very welcoming and more like friends to their students, than teachers. These open-minded and ambitious people really created the best learning environment and support system for their students.



One of my favourite teachers & I during spirit week

my dance class

the student council preparing giftbags for Christmas

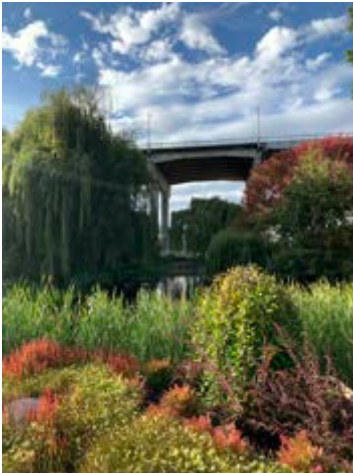
Some of my closest friends now come from Brazil, Thailand, Italy, Spain, Mexico, and of course Canada!

I met most of my friends in school or through trips with other international students. I loved hearing about their cultures and their home countries, but with time I also noticed that apart from your origin and background there really is no big difference between the teenagers from all over the world. In my opinion it is a very beautiful thing to know, that you will always be understood by some people, no matter where you are.



my friends and I from Brazil, Thailand & Germany

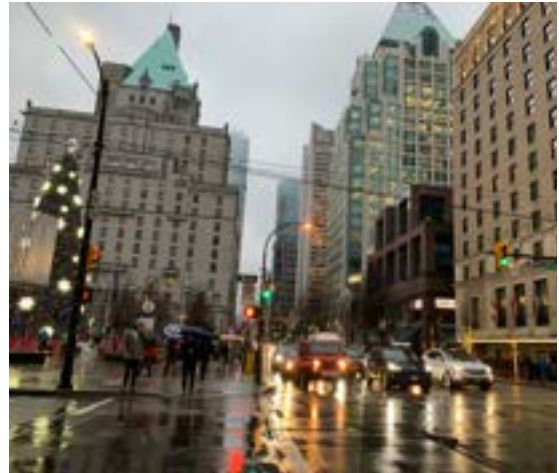
Nearly every weekend I went to Vancouver with some of my friends, as we could easily reach it by train (and the 1,5-hour ride only cost 2-4 cad\$). My favourite places in Vancouver are Granville Island and Stanley Park. On Granville Island is a big public market, with delicious food and a great view over a small harbour as well as the sea and Vancouver. Stanley Park is perfect for picnics in the summer or for riding bikes to one of the beaches with a view over North Vancouver.



Granville Island



my friends & I  
at the river



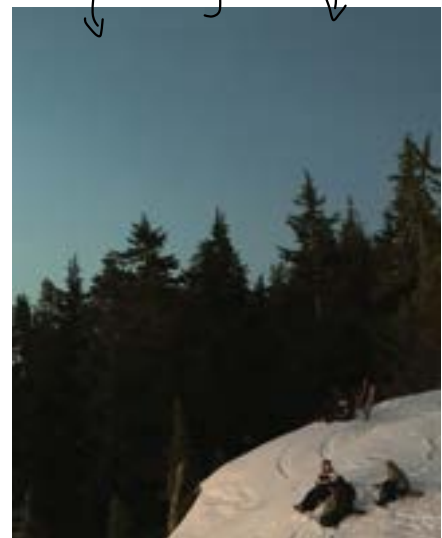
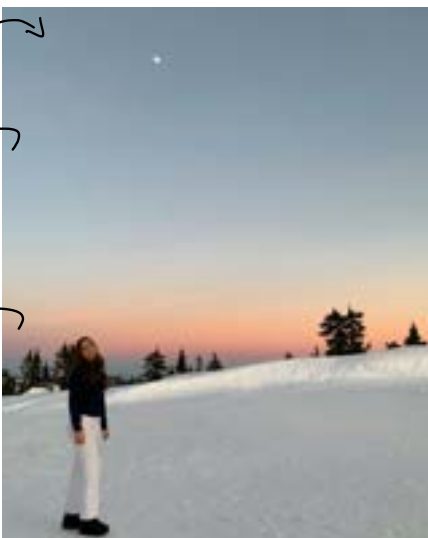
Vancouver in the winter

In the winter months I went to my first ever hockey game, a crazy experience which I can recommend to anyone visiting Canada. Also, as soon as it started snowing, one of my friends from Germany and I started to learn snowboarding, together with one of my friends from Thailand, who learned how to ski. We went to Mount Seymour and spent hours going up and down the hill, getting a little better each time. Sometimes the temperature went down to  $-15^{\circ}\text{C}$  and we were freezing, but in the end it was so worth it and we always had tons of fun.

my first hockey game

↙ Mt. Seymour ↘

↙ snowboarding on Mt. Seymour ↘



As you can probably tell by now, I had a year with a lot of different experiences. Not all of them were as positive as the ones in the pictures. I for example had to say a lot of goodbyes to people who became very important to me, but who I will sadly not see for years. I also did not have good experiences with host families, but that is a story for itself. In the end the good as well as the bad experiences both formed the year in my life, I have probably learned most in so far.