

A Kiwi for Christmas

An interview with my host sister Tara who came all the way from Auckland, New Zealand, and stayed with me from Dec. 15, 2016 until Jan. 25, 2017.

What is the biggest difference between New Zealand and Germany?

I think the way that daily life is different. Because in New Zealand people don't go by train to school, their mums don't make their breakfasts or lunches for them. And that you go to and come back from school when it's dark.

Which shops did you like the most here?

I love Douglas and dm. But I think the best thing was the souvenir shop, because I love buying souvenirs.

What is different when you go shopping in general?

At first we don't have drug stores like dm or Douglas. We usually have to buy our make-up in pharmacies, which is way too expensive. So you are lucky, when you find a make-up store which is heavily discounted and you can buy a concealer for 10 dollars. And our food in supermarkets or the fast food is really expensive. So living in New Zealand is not very cheap, groceries are expensive, bills are expensive, buying a house is expensive. It is very different to go to a supermarket and see things for 99 cents or so and you have such a big offer of yoghurt or many different spices or sauces.

Which experiences will you remember the most?

The snow is one of the biggest things I'll remember, especially the one in the Bavarian Forest. And the German Christmas in general, that you visit your grandparents, all your relatives are there and you sit around and have a nice time. And going to the German lessons, because it meant a lot to us having the opportunity to learn a new language.

What were weird habits of Germans you wondered about?

The weirdest thing that I came across was the fact that you always put bread on the table. In New Zealand bread is actually just a breakfast thing. Another fact is that we usually drink still tap water at home, but you guys are always having sparkling water, we just have that in fancy restaurants and it's very expensive.

Which food did you like best?

I really appreciate pick-ups, because we don't have them. And my favourite meals are milk rice, Weißwurst and Gulaschsuppe.

When you walked through the city what did you wonder about most?

The biggest thing is that there are so many old buildings, because New Zealand is a very young country. We just don't have old houses or churches from the 15th century or even buildings from the Roman time.

If you could take three things with you, no matter what, what would they be?

I would definitely pack my host family into a bag and just ship them over. Because it is very hard being in a country where you don't speak the language, but it makes it ten times easier, when you have got a host family who are really kind and understanding and feed you so much, it's great. And I would definitely leave space for pick-ups and Deit, which is a very nice sparkling citrus drink. And the last thing I would put on top would probably be the snow, if it would't turn into water by arriving.

What is different about the landscape?

I mean New Zealand is a very green country and there's always grass next to the footpath in the city. And there are growing trees or rose bushes. And except from the really central city with business skyscrapers, literally every house has a backyard or at least at like piece of grass. Another thing is that we don't really have villages, we just have big cities or farming towns not with under 10 000 inhabitants.

And finally to what extent the German school system different compared to New Zealand?

We don't have to earn that many points like you do, but I think for us it's harder to earn them. So when you fail the year you just have one other try to pass, when you fail again, it's over. And my school is like double the size of your school. The amount of people that go there or the grounds. So you don't have a grass field or a big assembly hall, or we have one indoor and one outdoor swimming pool and three different gyms. And also an important thing is that we wear a school uniform, so every school in New Zealand has its own uniform to wear.

So thank you very much for answering my questions. I wish you all the best and I hope you will come back soon.

I really appreciated being here. I enjoyed it very much. Thank you.

Interviewer: Eva Maria Jungmayer, Q 12