

Student Exchange Questionnaire

Name: Caitlyn Poole

Massey Degree: AgriScience

Host university: Federal University of Santa Catarina, Brazil

Semester and year of exchange: Semester 2, 2014 and Semester 1, 2015

[Caitlyn Poole's One Farm blog](#)

Why did you choose this particular university and/or country for exchange?

My goal was to learn Portuguese and I just happened to be placed there.

Did it meet your expectations?

Exceeded my expectations

What papers did you study while on exchange? Would you recommend them?

Elementary Portuguese I

Elementary Portuguese II

Intermediate Portuguese I

Intermediate Portuguese II

Brazilian Anthropology and Culture

Brazilian Music and Dance

Surfing

Introduction to International AgriBusiness



Yes would recommend them all, except for the agricultural class. This was my favourite class, but there were people who struggled with this class because they didn't have any background in agriculture.

Were there differences in the teaching methods and academic environment at your host university, compared to Massey University? If so, what kind of differences?

Yes! Our friendships for example with our lecturers. I think this is a cultural difference. We would go out for drinks with them, they would be at birthdays, they had an end of semester party for us at their homes.

Did you stay on-campus or off-campus? What was the accommodation like?

I stayed off campus with a host family in a beautiful three story home! I was lucky, I had one of the better homes of the exchanges.

How did living expenses compare with New Zealand?

Almost exactly the same but this was because I chose the most expensive option- living with a host family. You could easily get by on half the living expenses that I pay in NZ if you chose to live in an apartment of a more normal standard.



What extra-curricular activities did you participate in at the host university?

I went on some of the group hikes. I played soccer, but this was not with the university, it was with a football club.

What's one thing you learnt about your host country or culture?

They are rather inefficient.

What were some of the highlights of your exchange experience?

Becoming close with my host family. They treated me as a member of family always. Finally having breakthroughs with the language was also amazing.

What did you find challenging?

I had to become more patient and get used to waiting in lines EVERYWHERE. I used to hate going to the supermarket as it would take 10 times longer than it should. I struggled not being able to speak any Portuguese for the first couple of weeks and being unable to express how I was feeling.



What do you feel you have learnt or gained from going on exchange?

I have definitely learnt patience and to be more open-minded. I have learnt a lot about keeping myself place in a country considered to be quite dangerous. And a whole lot of Portuguese!

Do you have any tips for future students intending to travel to the same country or university?

Definitely, definitely learn basics of Portuguese before you go and you will get SO much more from your experience. I would also advise you to live with a host family, and push yourself to make friends with locals rather than sticking with all the other foreign exchange students.

Do you have any comments on the support provided to you by Massey University and/or by the host university before/during/after your exchange?

It was excellent. Craig was always so fast to respond to my emails and help me with everything. It was the same over here with my host university. There was always support and help when I needed it.

