

Letter from Douglas Wright
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Well, after around 24 hours of tedious travelling, I'm finally here with my host family in Switzerland. Here's a bit of a run down of the chronological events.

Mum, Dad, and Al saw me off at the airport on Thursday, after a big night of orientation and midnight netball (which ended in a freaky guy scoping us out.. who hangs around in a netball carpark in the middle of the night besides us anyway?). It didn't really strike me then that I was actually going away for a year.

So, the first flight was Qantas to Singapore. I'm not an experienced traveller, but Qantas economy is good enough for me. Tamara, another exchange student and I travelled from Sydney, and met up with other AFS dudes, Daniel, Hollie and Alisha/Alicia/Alyssa (grr can't remember!) in Singapore. It's funny how now I feel like we all have some unspeakable bond because we spent so long in transit together.



On a hike with my host mother

So after what seemed like an immeasurably long amount of time, we arrived in Switzerland. I was first greeted by my host mum Madeline. We drove from Zurich airport to St Maurice, with another host mum who I didn't catch the name of and an AFS student, Tess (NZ). The drive to St Maurice was around 2 and a half hours, and while I was suffering from a bit of jetlag, I couldn't help but stay awake because of how amazing the countryside was. It literally blew me away -- it's just like the postcards! Going through the German part of Switzerland, there were thousands of white houses with terracotta roofs, and big ol' mansions perched on the top of hills that look highly unstable. When we got closer to Lake Geneva, the mountains appeared. Now, I live in the 'mountains' but these were like, gargantuan mountains. Those big white sharp looking ones...

So there was much gazing at the most beautiful countryside I've ever seen, followed by dropping Tess off (in a stereotypical Swiss village, with beautiful thin roads with big hedges either side and cool little old cottages; I'll get a picture if I go there any time soon) followed by shopping followed by home.

When we got home, I met up with the older brother and one of his friends, who are both really really nice dudes. Matthieu (bro) is into really good music, so looks like we'll get along great. They're speaking a bit of English to me at the moment, but I reckon that'll stop tomorrow after my brain isn't so fried from all the flying.



The View from my bedroom

The younger siblings were home too, and it turns out the younger bro, Adrien is into making stop-motion animation and snowboard movies. sweeeet. The younger sister Aurelia seems really nice too, very talkative, and easy to understand and have a chat with! And of course, my host mum Madeline is great, just a really nice person.

Well, I have been thinking now 'Ohmagawd, I'm here for a year' and I think it's finally starting to hit me. I'm getting a bit of 'why am I doing this again' but just because its mega draining trying to speak French 24-7. I think at this stage I'm just more enthused about the whole thing than I have been, and I haven't even really left the house yet. Well, that's all for now, I'll write some more when I've done stuff.

I start school on Monday with no language school preparation!!! eek!

Doug