

1ST TWO MONTHS IN SOUTH AFRICA

EXCHANGE 2025

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SCHOOL?

- In school I have to wear a school uniform, mine is green, but other schools also use black, red and blue uniforms.
- For the whole school the day starts at 08.00 and finishes at 15.15, but fridays till 12.30.
- When I arrive I have a homeroom (usually 20 min and there we have daily announcements), then 2 periods – break – 2P - B – 2P. The break is 30 min and lessons – 55 min.
- School has a complete no phone policy, you will get punished even if checked the time.
- Unique is the school bell – literally manual WW2 air raid siren...

My subjects are:

- Math Literacy – very basic, life needed, almost funny, grade 5 math things.
- Life Orientation – making life goals, career opportunities, education.
- English – all we do is rewrite poems in our notebooks and read a book (TSOTSI).
- Consumer Study – fabrics, hues, budgeting, cooking like things.
- Business study – the worst subject, random business things, for example, marketing, networking, environment impact etc.
- Tourism – my favorite subject, we talk about airports, airplanes, vehicles and transportation.
- Afrikaans – a very interesting language, yet I cannot participate in the lessons due to my knowledge of it.

- Even though we have only 7 subjects, we use a 2-week timetable, the lessons are same every day, but the order is not.
- Schoolyear starts in january and finishes on december, we have 4 terms, each 3 months and on the last 3 weeks of the term we write exams on every subject.
- Grade 12 are called matric – they have a lot of privileges like their own staircases, garden, skipping line in tuck shop and they are very annoying, because they are allowed to moderate students – make us tie our hair, tuck shirt in pants, take our phones away and other things.
- This school is very poor – they are trying to raise funds for literally anything every week, either it is a community need, support for rugby team or just charity.

- At my first weeks I tried discus and javeline, but the situation is so poor that for 200+ students there is only one tutor for all athletics.
- The athletics are happening 3 times a week starting at 07.00 on our big field.

DAILY ROUTINE?

- Wake up at 05.30
- School transport – 06.30 (10 min drive)
- School starts at 08.00
- School finishes at 15.15
- Home by 16.00
- Then I either hang out, do chores, study or plan future days.
- Sleep by 23.00

FAMILY?

I cannot decide if my family is good or bad. The house I live in is very dirty, nasty, people here are lazy, careless, greedy and irresponsible. On the other side the rest of the family tree is the best family I could ever want – we have family meetings every Friday, we are a huge family, over 20 households (in SA people here do not have friends, they have only families – everyone here marries their cousins), we also do activities like bus tours and beach days that the family I live with would never do. We are 4 exchange students in this family – me + italian + 2 germans. And it is truly fascinating that all these people live in one neighbourhood, I can just show up to almost any house in my area and I would know the people.

ACTIVITIES?

So far I have done so many things, I try to not sit at home and do nothing – I have climbed the Table mountain, visited almost every area of Cape Town, went on a 3-day tour to Garden Route where we went to safari, met elephants, canoed, hiked in a cave and more. I am also doing surf lessons, just had my solo surfing as well – a very pleasant experience. I have really done so many things so far, but the next big one is survival in Orange River – we will hike and sleep under the stars, canoe for 5 days, and cook forest food for full 8 days and then we will get a chance to step our foot in Namibia!

SOUTH AFRICA?

People here are much more friendly and welcoming, but it is also more dangerous here. I can only use uber, no public transport, and in uber I spend more than 100 euros every month. Due to power saving regulations, we have so called loadshedding - the electricity to specific areas is turned off by the provider. Usually for no more than two hours and happens any time in evening or at night several times a week.

TYPICAL PHRASES?

GOEIE MORE – good morning (in afrikaans)

GOEIE MIDDAG – good afternoon (in afrikaans)

LEKKER – very nice (very very popular word here)

CIVIES – ordinary clothes (we can pay R20 (1 EUR) on fridays to have a permit to wear regular clothes instead of school uniform)

GOED – good (in afrikaans)

AWE – yes/good/approve

YOH – something between OH and WOW

CONNECTIONS?

I have met so many other exchangeers from all over the planet. I have new friends from Italy, Germany, Belgium, Austria, Argentina, Brazil, Japan, New Zealand, France, Switzerland, Finland and of course South Africa!

OVERALL?

Despite everything I must say that I am not fully enjoying my experience due to my severe medical problems (I also got bit by a spider under my feet) as well the school is very bad and family is complicated. I am always meeting problems that I have to solve, but after all the programme is called Grow Abroad so that keeps me up for growing, not exactly having an enjoyable trip as everyone might think.













