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Wait . . . I'm Actually in Australia

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Wait... I'm Actually in Australia



On top of Fitzroy Island

One month in and it still blows my mind I am writing this from my room in Cairns, Australia. It would be an understatement to say I am in love with this beautiful place. Flying into Cairns was one of the coolest flights I have ever been on– the many colors of blue in the ocean, the off-white beaches, and the most lush green from the Daintree Rainforest. Also, Qantas offers the best in-flight snacks!

Everyone back at home warned me of the humidity and heat but the weather thus far has been quite mild. Many of the locals are complaining about how cold it is (around 23-27C or 73-80F) but I don't have too much of a problem. Even though it is the dry season it has rained almost every day. It is a completely different rain than McMinnville, much more tropical.

I arrived to Cairns Student Lodge around 6:30pm on a Saturday. Everyone was so excited to meet the newcomers. It was nice to establish a sense of home right away. Sunday was a free day for us so Jo and I figured out where to get some food and orient ourselves with the area. One benefit of our flight schedule and being from the West Coast was our jetlag was not bad at all! Monday was the beginning of O Week, which consisted mostly of information regarding how Uni works, and some of what to expect for the semester. The highlight of O Week was a trip to Fitzroy Island! Almost all of the international students hopped on the 45-minute boat ride to the island to spend the day hiking, snorkeling, and exploring. Being able to snorkel on the Great Barrier Reef was phenomenal! We saw heaps of vibrant colored fish, turtles, and crazy colored reef. Sadly, it was clear where some of the bleaching is occurring.

Since the initial few days of being excited about being in Australia, life has calmed down a bit. My friends and I have done a good job of exploring some of the local waterfalls and seeing what all the area has to offer. It's in the downtimes that I feel a little bit of homesickness, but I do my best to go out and explore something new.

So far I would say the highlight of my trip has been Fitzroy Island and meeting people from all over the US and the world. Many of the non-Americans are quite fascinated by our political situation. I would say the majority of people I have met from outside the US have asked me "Trump or Clinton?" That is all quite funny to me but also quite eye-opening, because I know so little of other people's governments, yet they know so much of ours. Places where I can grow.

Friday my friend and I are headed to Sydney for the weekend to watch some rugby and explore!

Until next time,

Rita