

Some Culture Shocks, Many fringes and Tons of Amazing Times

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School: Jain Elementary School

Hi there!! My name is Talya Honor, I'm from Cape Town, South Africa and have been here since February 2011. Orientation was a fantastic experience where I made some of the most amazing friends and thanks to the lessons and the "sheltered" environment it provided to help ease us all in, I was not unprepared for new Korean experience and life.

Of course, then come the culture shocks. Even though I had been eating sushi since I was 15 I was not prepared to use chopsticks for every meal, I was even less prepared for the amount of rice that is eaten here: breakfast, lunch and dinner! But you get use to the chop sticks and the only time I now eat rice is at school lunches. On that note, the school lunch may not be your thing at first, they do serve some strange things you may not eat at home, but give it time as these meals are cheaper and healthier than any Western food you buy...vegetables with every meal!!! ☺ I cannot eat the red chili paste which they put on a lot of their food, and my school has found ways to accommodate me, as they do with vegetarians, so don't stress. Another shock was the squatting toilet, if your lucky like I am, both my schools have Western style toilets too but this is something else you may freak out a bit about at first (as we all did) but you will get use to it. People will openly stare at you, they are not judging you but are rather fascinated by you so don't get angry with them. ☺

As for my school, they put a lot of faith in me. They know I have no formal teaching education or experience beyond pre-school teaching yet they let me run my classes and teach how I like. They have created incredible "English Only Zones" where the kids have access to an amazing English library and computers with English learning programs on. Super advanced stuff!

The most difficult challenge I have faced is teaching English with homeroom teachers who cannot speak English well. They do their best but the lessons never run as smoothly due to a lack of totally clear communication. Things have gotten easier since I have gotten comfortable with each teacher and they are all wonderful people so that does make it easier. Also, some of the older students (Grade 6 for example) are use to the old style of teaching

English where they learnt reading and writing over speaking and understanding and this has been challenging as the Grade 3's and 4's therefore understand me more easily and are quicker to learn new words and phrases. This is the same reason most Korean adults cannot speak English but can read and write.

To end off, no matter how many countries you have been to, Korea is going to be a culture shock and the schools are going to be run differently and the children are just as boisterous and talkative as any Western school so do not imagine silent classrooms as you teach ☺ But whatever happens, the experience will be a once in a lifetime and you will have the time of your life if you choose to be understanding and accepting of others culture and just do your best and enjoy it!! ☺



**Drum Dance at
Orientation**



**Welcome Dinner...
new friends ☺**



**Historical Trip to
Hanok Village in
Jeonju...traditional
Korean dancing!**



More traditional Korean dancing ☺



One of my English
rooms at my school



Same room



My class that I
teach in



School lunch



Hahoe Village in Andong with my Grade 3's



Cultural trip to Andong with my other school in Damun (Hahoe Village)



Jijiksa (Sa = Temple) visit with teachers from Jain



Seoul trip for the Lantern Festival



Seoul trip for the Lantern Festival



Buddah Statue in Soerakson Mountains



Soerakson Mountain



Soerakson Mountain



Busan Sand Castle Festival



Busan Sand Castle Festival



Jijiksa



Bulguksa Visit on Gifted English Students camp



Bulguksa Visit on Gifted English Students camp