

# My life in China



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ries about life in China, and what it's like to live here. Because it is such a big country, I was worried that I would be lost in a sea of people, treated like a stranger. But that has not been my experience here at all.

*By AMZ class3*

When we arrived in China, the first thing I noticed about life in China was the difference in weather: In Ireland, it rains every day and is very cold, but in Hangzhou, the weather is very hot, and I look forward to the rain! People also dress very differently – they wear much nicer clothes.

The girls also carry parasols, to keep their skin pale. I thought this was really unusual! In Europe, girls try to make their skin darker! The grass is always greener on the other side. The second thing I noticed about China is how people drive. The way Chinese people drive is crazy! They drive very

quickly and don't pay much attention to traffic lights. The roads are also much busier. We visited Shanghai during the Dragon Boat Festival, and went to the shopping district there. There were a lot of people.

China is extremely busy. The pace of life is much faster. When we drove to and from Shanghai, the roads were jam-packed with cars everywhere. I learned that during the Dragon Boat Festival, people don't pay toll on the road, so many Chinese people drive on the road to visit family during this time.

The food is also very different here. I was surprised when I first visited a Chinese restaurant, because the food is served on a carousel, and we have to take small portions off with chopsticks, which can be very difficult! However, I feel like this is a good thing, because it makes us eat in smaller portions, but still feel satisfied. On top of this, we also eat on smaller plates, which make meals look bigger. It's very psychological!

The food itself is also something I am not used to. I have never eaten fish and chicken at the same time! I have also never eaten so much rice in my life, but I really love rice so I don't mind. We're often served a local specialty of this province, which is the fat of a pig's leg. The girls in my group try to avoid it because they are afraid of getting fat. But I like to eat, so I dig in. Staff in restaurants also treat us very differently here. In the West, staff try to look busy, but staff in China will stand at the table and watch us eat, in case we need anything. It's very unusual! But I like it, because it shows that they care about their customers.

In fact, it is not so surprising considering how Chinese people are – very friendly! I feel like they will do anything for us if we asked them, to make us feel welcome. Chinese hospitality is very good. I can't complain! They are extremely friendly and our host university has done so much for us. Chinese students are also very friendly and eager to use their

English, which is good, because my Chinese is not so good... yet! I am having a great time in China, it is not at all like what I was expecting.