

Au Pairis

.....

MY AU PAIRING YEAR IN PARIS, FRANCE

SEPTEMBER 2014

PART II: ARRIVAL 19/9/14

Welcome to the first part of my adventure, so settle down with a slice of bread, a piece of chocolate and a cup of coffee (or tea) and enjoy.

I am sorry for the delay of my newsletter, but of course my focus is on being an au pair, learning the language, area and just getting settled. I am safe, healthy and happy. There have been challenges as expected but I have a happy optimism that God has blessed me with. It's so beautiful here; the people, the food, the energy. I am making friends and Emmanuelle, Deborah & Gabrielle have made me feel very welcomed. I hope to have my newsletters on time but please do have patience. I am so thankful for all the people interested and supporting me. Thank you and if you have any questions, comments or would like to skype please do email me.

I would love to keep in touch.



...7 hours later...



It's a rainy Sunday (dimanche) perfect for finishing my newsletter...

Flight & First Day: My adventure started on a Thursday, September 18th, Emmanuelle was happy to hear I was in Delta Air Lines because Air France was having a strike. It was a full flight but the time went past well and I believe I saw the famous Coney Island from my window (I could get a clear picture thought).

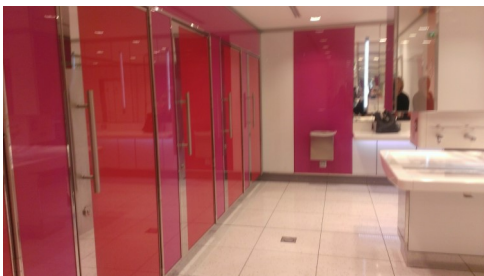
Now as my story goes a long, I do apologize, there is some a quite stressful story ahead. I am quite glad I can add it to this newsletter so I don't ever have to explain the complexity of it again.

The plane ride went smooth and I was entertained by "The Fault in our Stars" along with some frozen salad and the "Phantom of the Opera" soundtrack. When the airplane landed (7:00AM Friday, September 19th) was when the rollercoaster began because when I turned my cell phone off the airplane mode, I had no signal. This meant, I couldn't call or text anyone that I had arrived nor could I use my data to use my internet if I needed it. My cellphone was just a glorified calculator. I had detailed instructions of where to buy a ticket, get on a bus/metro and meet Emmanuelle but my printer at home was not working so I couldn't print off the map or instructions. I went easily through the visa line and went to go pick up my bags. Foolishly of me I had been waiting at the completely wrong side for my bags. I discovered this through the information desk, one of many which I would visit in the beloved Charles de Gaulle airport. While waiting for my bags, I had tried to call Emmanuelle through the payphones (I had some previously attained euros from last year) but I didn't realize it was a dead phone. Thankfully I did have some euros as a birthday gift and some dollars I could exchange , but my credit card hadn't been set up for international use (I was hoping to call and set it up...but you know...the phone).

If you know the Paris airport you would know there are about 5 levels of trains and metros and drop offs. Its crazy. I could give a tour guide on all these levels because I went all over them carting my 3 heavy bags all over the place. I made my best efforts, I stopped at information 5 times. I didn't know what time it was and if I was late. I could even tell someone I was going to be late. So it was a unique situation of me being stranded at the airport. I tried multiple times to use the payphones and finally discovered that you need to buy a payphone card and then dial the numbers on the back of the card. I thought two things...I need to communicate with Emmanuelle, and I need to get out of here. So I left a voicemail at the payphone for Emmanuelle, and I also called my mom who I tried over the breaking phone that I needed my phone fixed. I got a taxi and the gentlemen was very kind to let me borrow his phone so I could leave a message for Emmanuelle. Finally we were able to communicate and I met her at the apartment.

I don't know how long I was in the airport but I was so exhausted beyond any point I had been before, I was so hot, pushing around my luggage, and just wanting to cry. I kept telling myself "You can cry at your apartment, You can cry at your apartment" only once I finally meet Emmanuelle and got to see my adorable apartment...I wanted to do everything but cry! (I have attached pictures) It was such a bright, warm, beautiful day and I got to see it all from my apartment! Mind you I will be doing a lot of research from my return visit to Charles de Gaulle airport...I will never let that happen to me again. If you have any ideas of how I could've avoided this entrapments please let me know your thoughts.

All my stresses and anxiety left when I entered my apartment. I was so happy to be there that that great ordeal didn't upset me anymore. Now you may think "Yay, this is the end of the tale", but just to top of a humorous day, I later got locked out of my apartment and a wee bit lost on the way to Emmanuelle's apartment. I slept really well after that 22 hour day. Now I think you will agree that if I can have a positive attitude through that, I am going to be just fine.



Charles de Gaulle Airport's
Fancy bathroom



View from my apartment



Fried Cheese salad
1st meal in Paris (so good!)

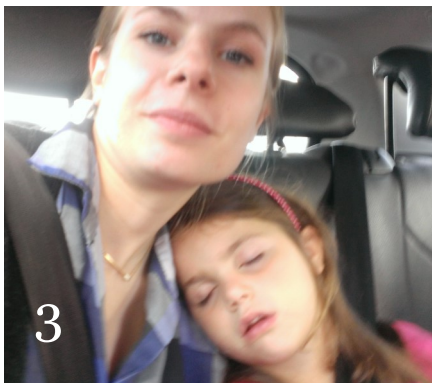
Emmanuelle & the Girls (Filles): I had met Emmanuelle through AuPair.com and I instantly felt comfortable and respected her. Emmanuelle is a business women with 2 girls, I instantly could relate to that because my mom was also business women and she had 3 girls so I found her very relatable. Emmanuelle speaks English (Anglais) very well and loves the American culture. Through the interview process I did have some other au pairing options but Emmanuelle's family was the one I was praying for. We are both new the au pair protocol but we figured out the paperwork and the timing (even though I did begin later in September) worked out for the both of our schedules.

If you have ever watched that movie *I Don't Know How She Does It* with Sarah Jessica Parker, that's how Emmanuelle appears to me. Super woman. She has her job and her girls, she has guests over all the time, she is even the President of both the girls parent-teacher groups at their schools. She gets meal prepared for the next day and has it all typed out for me of what the agenda will be for the day; I really don't know how she does it. But she is going to start showing how to cook some easy French dishes

And I am hopeful that I can help her more and more as I learn the ropes. She has made me feel so welcome, as have her guests and family. On September 24th to September 26th was the Jewish New Years and I was honored to be a part of the festivities . Emmanuelle's Father, Gerard, and brother, David (who lives next door to Emmanuelle), came over for the feast (Image 1). "We only have sweet things for the hopes of a sweet year", we ate dates, treats, and dipped apples in honey while making a prayer for the new year. It was felt so blessed to have been involved.

While Emmanuelle's father was in town, he took me and the girls to the Jarden des Plantes which is a beautiful garden and zoo (Image 4). I captured some great pictures of the girls with their grand-pere in the beautiful garden. As you can see from image 3, Gabrielle was exhausted on the ride home. Me and the girls have so much fun making crafts and drawing, we made the "WELCOME" sign for all the family and guests coming in for the Jewish New Year (Image 2)

Deborah is 7 years old and the first thing she did when I met her was she held my hand. She is very loving and is very intelligent. She writes poems, plays basketball, goes to singing classes, plays piano and violin, and in her down time you will find her reading books. She loves books! This year in school she begins English lessons and I hope I can help her get a head start. She is very huggable.



Gabrielle is 4 years old and she is very imaginative and full of energy. She is an artist, the same thing she does in coloring books is what I would do when I was her age. While Deborah reads books Gabrielle will be drawing. She sees how I draw something and she will copy how I do it. She has a creative eye and is a collector, collector of things she finds on the street (walnuts, acorns, branches, leaves, feathers). It's funny what you will find in her pockets when she gets home from school. She has a piano class and she loves dressing up with her sister. Both the girls love to sing Frozen songs, hand clap, and play board games. They only watch TV on the weekends, they are very social and imaginative and have great manners.



Deborah 7
(Left)

Gabrielle 4
(Right)

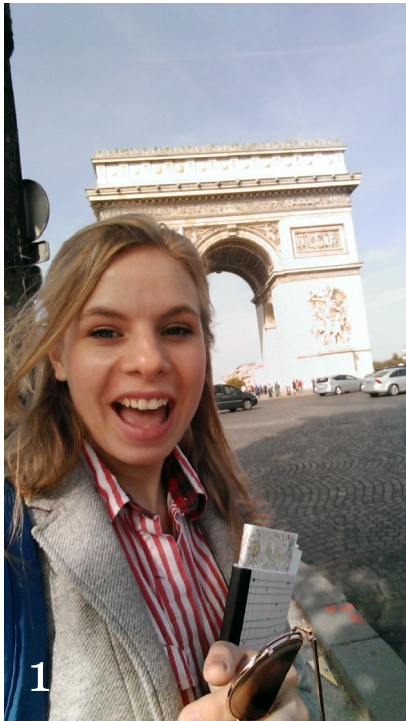
Disney Frozen
(Middle)

Animated film
the girls love



French Language: One of the reasons Emmanuelle hired me was because she wants her girls to start speaking English and be exposed to it at a young age. The girls speak a little bit of English but I am teaching them and they pick up very fast. They are also teaching me, we read books together and they show me how to say the image in French and I teach them how to say it in English. They are very talkative and I look forward to the day when I can understand them and they can understand me. There is a language barrier of course but Caroline, the daughter of Emmanuelle's girl-friend, has been staying at the apartment because she is moving to Paris. She speaks English and it's been helpful having her translate and talk to, she has taught me a lot. I have Rosetta stone online courses and my French class which is programmed specifically for au pairs so I am focusing very hard on getting my French down.

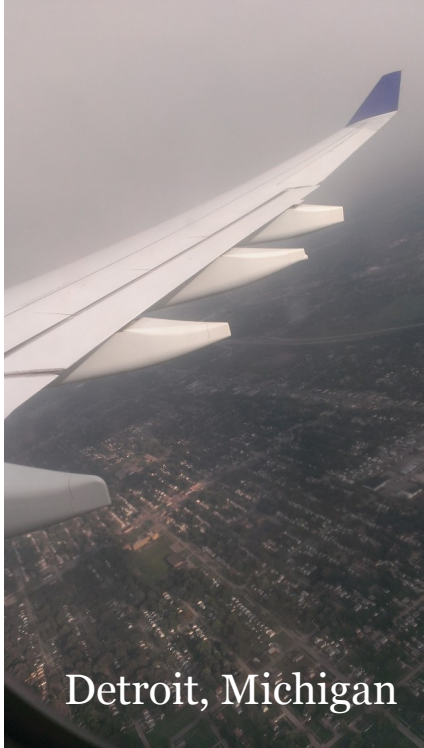
Community & Friends: I really want to enjoy Paris and to do that I have been focusing on my French. I haven't been going to all the museum's or monuments but trust me, I will. My French classes are near the Arc de Triomphe (image 1) so I walked around there when I was getting to know the area.



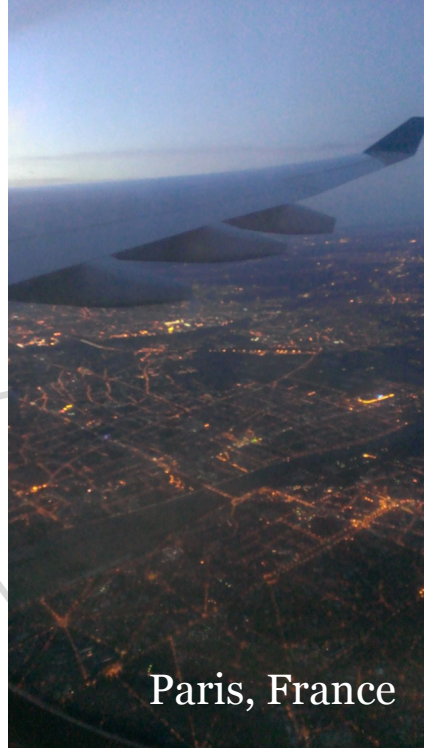
I also passed by the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral which I plan to attend Church (image 2). In Emmanuelle's building there are quite a few English

speaking families, one of the families is Irish and have an Irish au pair named Sinead. She and I have become very close and we go out to get crepes, crème brulee, and wine very often (images 4 & 5). I have also made friends with some au pairs in my French class; Jessica from Canada, and Jordyn from Seattle. Going to the park or the girls activities I have also chatted with babysitters and mothers and everyone has been very open

and willing to talk with me. Needless to say, I have felt very welcomed here and it's nice to be making so many friends and acquaintances. I am enjoying the people and the culture here so much. It's a very safe area with plenty of restaurants and things to do...all I have to do is not miss out. I love using the metro and my good sense of direction has been very helpful on many occasions.



Detroit, Michigan



Paris, France



1



2



3

My apartment (1)

1. Compliments to Aunt Swain who handmade this for my apartment; it hangs on my door.
2. The view of my apartment from the front door (little kitchen area on right/ bed-above)
3. My apartment from the window
4. My keys (so cute!)



4



1



2



3



4



5



6

My apartment (2)



7

1. My bathroom
2. The shower (I have to step up)
3. The kitchen area (water heater above)
4. The hallway (I am on the top floor)
5. My toilet (on the opposite side of my apartment-I have to go out in the hallway)
6. Unlocking my toilet room
7. My private "PRIVE" toilet

The view from my apartment

Isn't it beautiful?!



There are so many things I have noticed or experienced and I want to share. I will try to capture them as they come. Please enjoy my newsletter and I will be updating you soon. Please email me with questions.

Thank you for your support!

Best Regards,
Julia Matson

Photos by Julia Matson

*except Disney's Frozen



Mushroom Mountain

3 Cheese Sandwich & Macaroon



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