

Dear host family,

my name is Emilia Thea. The two names are from the two sides of my family. My mother is from Germany, just as the name Thea but my father is actually from Portugal. That's the reason for the idea to go to Portugal. I've lived my whole life in Germany and unfortunately, I don't speak Portuguese. It's very important to me to learn the language during the exchange year. I've been to Portugal several times for vacation, and I want to spend a year in Portugal, so I can really dive into the life there. My grandparents are from Alcobaca, near Nazaré, but I'm interested in regions all over Portugal.

I'm turning 16 years old soon and here I'm in 10th grade. I live in a town in the south of Germany, near to the french border, with my parents Paulo and Elna and my older brother Tonio. We usually have a lot of friends and relatives that visit us and I'd say we're welcoming and open, but because of the COVID 19 pandemic this was limited during the last months. I know that Germans are supposed to be very structured, planned and rather cold, but I feel, that this doesn't hold true for our daily life.

We don't have any pets but many of our friends have some and I think it's great. On weekends we often go on trips with friends or cook dinner together. We love spending evenings playing board games and I even taught some friends and my cousins portuguese card games. Besides, I have 5 cousins that are between 6 and 16 years old and I'm really close with them, my aunts and uncles and my grandparents. Family is very important to me and therefore we try to spend time together during vacations because we live in different cities in Germany.

In my free time I love to dance, and I always listen to music. I've danced my whole life no matter what style. In my opinion everything from HipHop to ballet is fun. I used to do acrobatics and gymnastics for several hours every day but due to a back injury I had to quit recently. Actually, I just moved back home because I attended an international boarding school in Berlin where I specialized on doing aerial rope. It's a rope, similar to trapeze, where you can do tricks in the air. I lived in Berlin for one and a half years and learned many things about living with other teenagers and away from home. I built some great friendships and got to know teenagers from all over the world. When you live together you really grow close with the other students and that's also what I imagine living in a host family will be like.

Without all the sports I'll have to figure out what to do in my spare time. Maybe I will start playing the piano again and I'll focus more on my interest in science. My favorite subjects in school are math, social studies and physics.

In my daily life I try to be as ecological as possible. I've been a vegetarian for 8 years now and I try to avoid plastic. My diet is only my personal choice and I don't have any issues with people eating meat around me. I know, that in Portugal very few people are vegetarians. I'd love to show a host family some of my vegetarian receipts and learn some delicious portuguese cooking. My mother likes to bake typical german cakes on the weekend and I sometimes help her.

I also chose Portugal as the country of my exchange year because I love sunny weather. I prefer the summer over the winter and I often get annoyed with the cold, rainy weather in Germany. If the sun's shining I'm happy. In general, my friends describe me as a cheerful person, only early in the morning I'm sometimes a little grumpy. One more reason why I like the southern European culture, because they stay up later than the Germans.

Generally speaking, I'm quite curious and open to new experiences, especially when it comes to group activities. My friends consider me as understanding and helpful. I think I'm a rather emotional person but depending on the topic and the situation I can be rational too. Open communication in arguments is important to me. Because of the time in Berlin, I know how to deal with homesickness or the fear of missing out.

I know some friends who have spent a high-school year abroad and everyone agrees that this was a unique experience in their lives. I hope that I will also have this opportunity and that I can share this experience with a warm and funny Portuguese family.

Estou realmente ansiosa pelo meu tempo em Portugal e já comecei a aprender português. Espero que em muitos dias vá haver pasteis de nata, bolo de arroz, sopas de legumes e azeitonas.

Um abraço grande, ganz herzliche Grüße and best wishes  
Looking forward to getting to know you

Emilia