

Greetings! My name is Alina, I'm 18 years old and my home country is Germany. I have lived in Chengdu, China, for a little bit more than 5 months and want to briefly share my experience with you. Before I came to Chengdu I already visited China once and learned Chinese for around two years, and still I found myself being surprised more than once every day.

I lived with a Chinese host family and took care of their two children Barbie and Ken (no kidding, it's their real English names!) which was challenging at first as I had literally zero experience with children, but with some help from my personal advisors I quickly learned how to set boundaries and how to leave space for fun at the same time.



Pandas! Chengdu is famous for it.

At this point I really want to recommend anyone, that if there is any problem, even if it's a little one, to tell it your personal coordinator. As long as you ask, you will always be helped.

I had a really great host family as an employer, we respected each other and my host mum always had my back. I was greatly respected and never required to do any household chores. As far as I know all au-pairs were introduced as teachers, and being a teacher in Asia is very honorable. We visited many places together, as for example Jinli Street, Jinsha Museum, Qingchen Mountain, and enjoyed lots of delicious food. Even though we never really had the feeling of one family (which is most probably due to the fact that my host parents had to work a lot outside of Chengdu), we still had a special relationship, which is

way more than that of an employer and employee.

I liked my university (Southwestern University of Finance and Economics) very much, as the teachers are very caring and prepare their classes very well. Moreover I found that my language course (Class D) was exceptionally well and even though my home was quite far away from the university, it was still very convenient to get there.

There are a lot of international students at SWUFE and even though I loved their company and made some good friends, I strongly recommend finding some Chinese friends. It's the people that make this country so beautiful! Moreover you can practice your Chinese, understand their way of thinking and their culture way better than any text book could ever teach you. Chinese people are very warm, helpful and indeed, open. They like to invite you to lunch or dinner and show you around in and out of Chengdu. Don't be afraid or shy, just join some club or some activities in Chengdu where Chinese people come too and try to engage in some conversations (just say “你好” and they will start to ask you all kinds of questions).



My two kids, Barbie and Ken. How I love them and their names!



I used to live in one of those houses.

I had an experience of a lifetime in Chengdu, and I would recommend going to China literally to anyone. In the beginning I had a lot of ups and downs, but as time went by I started to feel very happy. Do not expect however everything to be easy – it is not – and that is what it is all about. It is a wonderful challenge and an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. You will not only learn Chinese here, but also grow as a person. I've never felt as free before as I did in China. Thank you *Star Exchange*, for giving me this amazing opportunity and for always being there for me!



One of the trips organized for all au-pairs. And yes, this is still China!



Chengdu, the most relaxed city in China.



This beautiful temple is right in the center of the city.



I hope I inspired you to find your freedom and have an amazing experience in China.

My friends and I cheer you on! 😊

If you're thinking of going to Chengdu and you have some questions you may contact me.