

## **Kristopher Fortin**

### **First Impressions in Goiânia, Brazil...**

(7/12– 8/12/10)

#### **1. What do you like the most of your experience so far?**

I prefer in a huge way the eating habits in Brasil than I do in the United States. Café de manhã, or breakfast, is a light meal that consists usually of juice or coffee and bread. Almoço/Lunches are big feasts and the most important meal of the day for Brazilians. This is shown with the closure of almost every business and the high density of people in restaurants or going home for lunch. I have seen this in the more rural parts of Goiania, and in the government sector of Brasilia, Brasil's capital. There are many self serve restaurants and they charge by how much your food weighs. Jantar/Dinner is optional. Some people eat dinner religiously, some don't, and others opt for a small snack.

In the United States I ate three huge meals everyday. I put on weight since I didn't have time to exercise. I have lost 16 lbs in the three weeks I have been here. My body has reacted extremely well to the lifestyle and change and it has made me wonder what I was doing eating so much everyday.

#### **2. What are your first impressions? Overall?**

I love the people. The people are talkative and friendly. They help if you ask, and actually are curious to learn more about you since you are a foreigner. The programs at the Universidade Federal de Goiás in the City of Goiânia are impressive and far above anything I could have expected. Many of the students that I have met have shown a curiosity and interest for their subject.

#### **3. What are you looking forward to?**

I am looking forward to learning more about the history of Goiânia, how it was planned, politics, culture, and how it differs from the rest of Brasil. I want to learn the same points for other cities in Brasil, especially Uberlandia, Goiás Velho, Pirenopolis, and, if possible, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Curitiba, and Salvador in Bahia.

#### **4. How's the language process been? Do you like Portuguese?**

I love Português! It is such a beautiful language. I have started to become more fluent in Portuguese than in Spanish. It has been easy when there are so many people willing to correct your speech and grammar.

#### **5. Do you have any advice for future students?**

The more you study before the trip will increase your ability to pick up the language quicker. For example, my colleague Sheela Bhongir and I who studied for 7 months prior our arrival can participate partially in a conversation and understand Brasileiros normal speech. Three students that studied little to none before they arrived, and who have spent the same amount of time in Brasil as Sheela and I, can't understand Brasileiros normal speech and struggle still with the foundation of Portuguese grammar.

Be in shape. You will work out your legs because you dance so much and you will work out your palette and stomach from eating so much food.

Lastly, be open. You will be kissed on the cheek when you are introduced to someone and you will kiss him or her on the cheek almost every time you see him or her thereafter. The homes will be painted different colors and lack a front yard, but everything thus far has been great because I have been open to accept this new lifestyle.