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quite a lot because I heard that the living expense in northern Europe is very high. However, I was over-worried. If you eat outside that will certainly be very expensive, but if you cook for yourself, that will be just a little bit more expensive than HK. Normally the price of the stuff in Finland is about double of it in HK. I cannot say it is cheap, but I think it is acceptable. At least I spent less money than I thought.

### Goodbye

I had a strongly mixed feeling. On one hand, I missed HK, I missed my friends, I missed my family, and I missed HK food. On the other hand, I was afraid that I could not make myself love the HK life style again. Finland is so quiet, living pace in which is so slow, and the place is not crowded at all. All these are very different from HK. One day, I will visit the place again.

### Home sweet home

My exchange life has changed me quite a lot. I know how to quiet at least in public areas and on public transportation. Also, I am more helpful as well. These behaviors were subconsciously inserted into my mind. I think this is the most interesting part brought by experiencing others' cultures: it will affect your personalities without consciously knowing it!

### Sharing and Overall rating

If you are considering whether an exchange is worth going, I can tell you: just join it, you won't regret. Trust me. The world is too big, and we are so small. HK is just a tiny little point in the world map. If you don't go to more places, at the end of your life, you will regret for having missed the chance. Catch this once-in-a-life-time chance to broaden your horizons.

I will certainly give my overall exchange experience the highest rating of "5".



## My Valuable Exchange Experience in University of Maryland

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*BENG3-INFE, Yr 3*

### My Blog

US is a completely different place from Hong Kong. It has vast lands, great environment, countless sports fans, various pubs... . Every unique aspect is worth a taste!

### Just Arrived...

On one hand, I felt very excited when I stepped on the land of US. On the other hand, a completely different environment made me nervous too. However, people there are so friendly that they will always try best to help you. So don't hesitate to ask for help.

The residence room is very comfortable. In the beginning, I was quite worried about safety problem when I first arrived there as I overheard that college park has a high crime rate. However, the situation was not so terrible as I thought. Do the right thing and be cautious, then you will be fine.

### Orientation

University of Maryland hosted an orientation for exchange students a week before the start of semester. And I think the orientation is very useful.

I made a lot of friends in that activity and hang out with some of them for the whole exchange period. Besides, during the orientation, I got a large amount of information, including how to use facilities in residence, how to get along with American students, where to seek help, etc..

### My Place

I love student residence in University of Maryland. 5 students share an apartment and we have kitchen, sitting room and large bedrooms. It feels like home! We can cook together and enjoy movies in the dorm.

Also, there are basketball courts and stadium close to the student residence. Moreover, everywhere is grasslands. During weekends, students lie on the grasslands, chatting, reading and enjoying the sunshine.

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### My First Class

Students are punctual in US and have passion in learning.

Self-learning is more important. Professors teach very fast in lectures, usually, they will cover one to two chapters in a book during a 75-minute lecture. Then we have to finish the homework. So, most of the materials are learned by self-learning.

### People I Met

People in US are friendly and you can easily make friends with them. I cooked together with my roommates, hosted parties and went to pubs. Also, I studied together with classmates, discussed with them problems and solutions. It is great to be with them!

Talking about the cultural shock, I think the biggest difference is the drinking culture in US. The American people love drinking very much and it becomes their main entertainment. Most of them go to party or pubs 3 to 4 days a week and they drink a lot!

### Out of Classroom

There are many extracurricular activities. Sports come the first. There are a great number of competitions every week. Basketball and American football are the main competition items.

Moreover, there is a club hosting various outdoor activities every week, including camping, hiking, canoeing, etc.. And different organizations may host activities like Taiwan food festival, Maryland Day, etc..

### Money

Goods in US is actually cheap, especially clothes. However, eating in restaurants may cost a lot. For example, a two-dish rice like those provided in our Canteen costs around 8 US dollars. So I cooked by myself for most of the time suiting my taste and at the same time, it saved much money.

### Goodbye

Time flies and it was time to say goodbye. I felt that I have not done enough with friends in US. It was especially hard to say goodbye to the great environment. Every morning, I woke up with the singing of birds and the air smelt so sweet!

This trip is valuable. It enables me to experience different lives

and to know what I lack in life skills in order to meet the global requirement. To me, food and language are great challenges. I do not really like western food, which I needed to get adapted to day after day. Also, people from different parts of the world have different accents when speaking English. In the beginning, I found it difficult to communicate with them.

### Home Sweet Home

I become more independent after the exchange experience. Also, I have more confidence in self-learning and my study.

Most importantly, I have better time and finance management.

### Sharing

I highly recommend the national parks in US. They show the power of nature and encourage spirits of exploration. However, be cautious and take well care of your own belongings when visiting.

### Overall Rating

4.5

