

# au pair life



CULTURAL  
CARE  
AU PAIR



ADVENTURES  
IN AMERICA

# What does it mean to be an au pair?

Is it road-tripping across the USA with your best friends? Is it eating pancakes with your host family on a Sunday morning? Is it slowly growing into a more complete version of yourself—more confident and capable than you ever could have imagined?



The truth is: it's all of these things and more. Being an au pair is an opportunity to travel, learn and grow in a new country. It's a chance to push yourself outside your comfort zone and face new challenges, head on. It's about forming connections, making memories and experiencing the moments—big and small—that add up to a year you'll never forget.

Every au pair is different, but every one has a story to tell.

Welcome to Au Pair Life.



# 5 Things You Learn as an Au Pair

## Life lessons you can't get in the classroom

by **Nathalia**  
au pair in Tennessee

### 01 You got this.

When I first arrived in the USA, I was afraid of failing. My host family was very helpful and supportive, but after a couple of months, I realized that I had to learn to trust myself and let the fear go away. Now, I apply this thought to every rough situation that I go through... "I got this!"

### 02 Enjoy the opportunities you have now.

Living far away from my family has not been easy, but I've learned that I need to fully enjoy the present. My time here in the USA will end one day, and the memories will be all that I can take with me. So all I need to do right now is stay calm and enjoy every single day I have here.



### 03 The world is yours.

As an au pair, I've been to beautiful places, met amazing people, and experienced a lot of different cultures. I feel like the world is exactly the size it needs to be for me to explore it. I learn more about myself with each trip that I go on, and I've learned how to make plans, stay focused and save money for my next steps—because I'm not done exploring this world yet!

### 04 Keep asking, "What's next?"

One of my goals for this adventure was to learn as much as I could to be ready for the next phase of my life. Since becoming an au pair, I've taken classes at art schools in Nashville; I've studied interior design, abstract painting, and graphic design. I never thought I could get this far with my studies or my English—and now, look where I am!

### 05 Don't be shy!

The people you meet as an au pair change your life forever. My host family has made me a better and more compassionate person—and some of the au pair friends I've made here, I can easily call a part of my family. I've learned that if you go out of your way to meet new people and open your heart to them, your life will never be the same again.



# Meet My Host Family

by **Gaelle**  
au pair in **Utah**

Do you know what love at first sight is?

It is weird to say but I kind of felt that way. I just knew it was them. After several months of searching online, I had found the most amazing people. Adrienne and Jason are the parents, and Steven and Jackson are the sweetest 3-year-old and 19-month-old boys ever; together, they are my host family. I have a hard time calling them my “host” family, though, because they aren’t my hosts—they’ve become my family. Adrienne is one of my closest friends; Jason is the best at making me laugh; and Ven and Jax have filled a place in my heart that I could never explain.



At the end of the day, what really matters the most are the little things they do to show me they care. For me, this has meant not only including me on vacations both large and small and being supportive when I want to do something, but them moving heaven and earth to find me an authentic “bûche de Noël” for Christmas; driving all the way downtown to buy me a brioche when I’m sick because that’s the only food I really want; picking up a Starbucks for me when Adrienne stops to get one for herself; or throwing me a 21st birthday celebration that lasted for a week with so many different surprises. I guess you could say it is about the time they take to really connect with me, whether through conversations around a campfire, watching shows together, on a hike or doing any other activities together.



Beginning when I first arrived, and throughout every situation since, my host family continues to help me, share with me, teach me as much as they can, and push me to fulfill my dreams. They love me. Today, I feel like you don’t really know me until you’ve heard about them. We believe that we were meant to be in each other’s lives for good.

I believe that home is more of a feeling than a place, and they are my perfect example of this. They are my home.

# A Day in the Life of an Au Pair

Your inside look at an average day for an au pair in the USA.

by Lucia  
au pair in Texas



## Morning

After I wake the kids up, feed them breakfast and drive them to school, I'm usually back home around 8:30am. My host mom and I spend an hour every morning working out together and chatting about life—it's one of my favourite parts of every day.

## Afternoon

Once I eat lunch, I'll either take a nap or meet up with friends in my neighborhood to play games, grab a coffee, go to the cinema, or rollerblade outside. Then I take some time to tidy up and prepare snacks at home before picking up my host kids from school around 3:00pm.

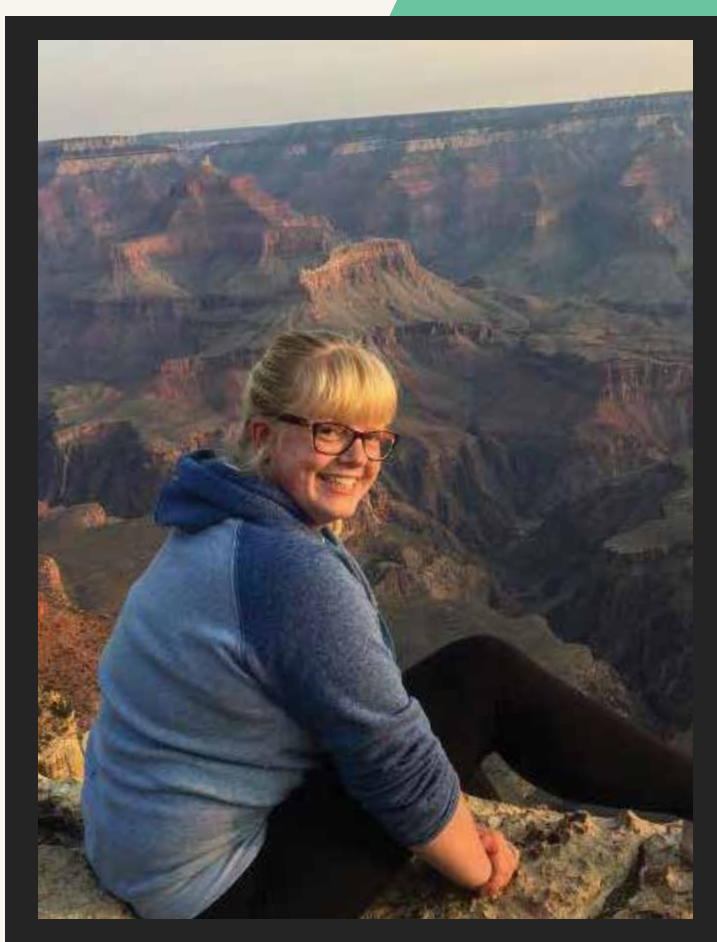


## Evening

When the kids' after-school activities are done, we'll play outside together or do some art projects before I start preparing dinner. We usually eat as a family around 6:30pm—then, it's time for baths and maybe a movie or board game before I put the kids to bed around 8pm!

# Au Pair Perspectives

by Tarni  
au pair in Virginia



Being an au pair is not easy.

We leave behind everything we know, all the people we love, and get on a plane on our own to pursue some crazy dream. We have this picture in our heads of this perfect, fun-filled year of travelling. The reality of being an au pair is that we take care of kids for 45 hours a week. I personally do four kids' laundry, wash their sheets, clean up the play room, look after them when they're sick, etc. And on top of that I'm trying to take care of myself, making sure I travel and find time to see my friends.

Being an au pair is not just playing with kids all day and travelling in the USA every weekend; and we are not just babysitters. We are family—a big sister or an older brother—and we play a major role in helping to shape the lives of the children we look after. We spend a lot of time every week with our host kids, and that makes a difference in their lives.

I honestly think that being an au pair is one of the best decisions I've ever made. Sure, there are things I planned that didn't happen, but also things that happened that I didn't plan—like travelling to 17 states, meeting such incredible people, and learning more about myself than I ever thought possible. I've learned that au pairs are some of the strongest, most courageous, open-minded, accepting, interesting, compassionate, and adventurous people I've ever met.

And I've learned that the things I've discovered about myself, about the world, and about what I want in my future will be with me for the rest of my life.

# Our Au Pair Meet-ups

by **Juliana & Shekinah**

au pairs in Ohio

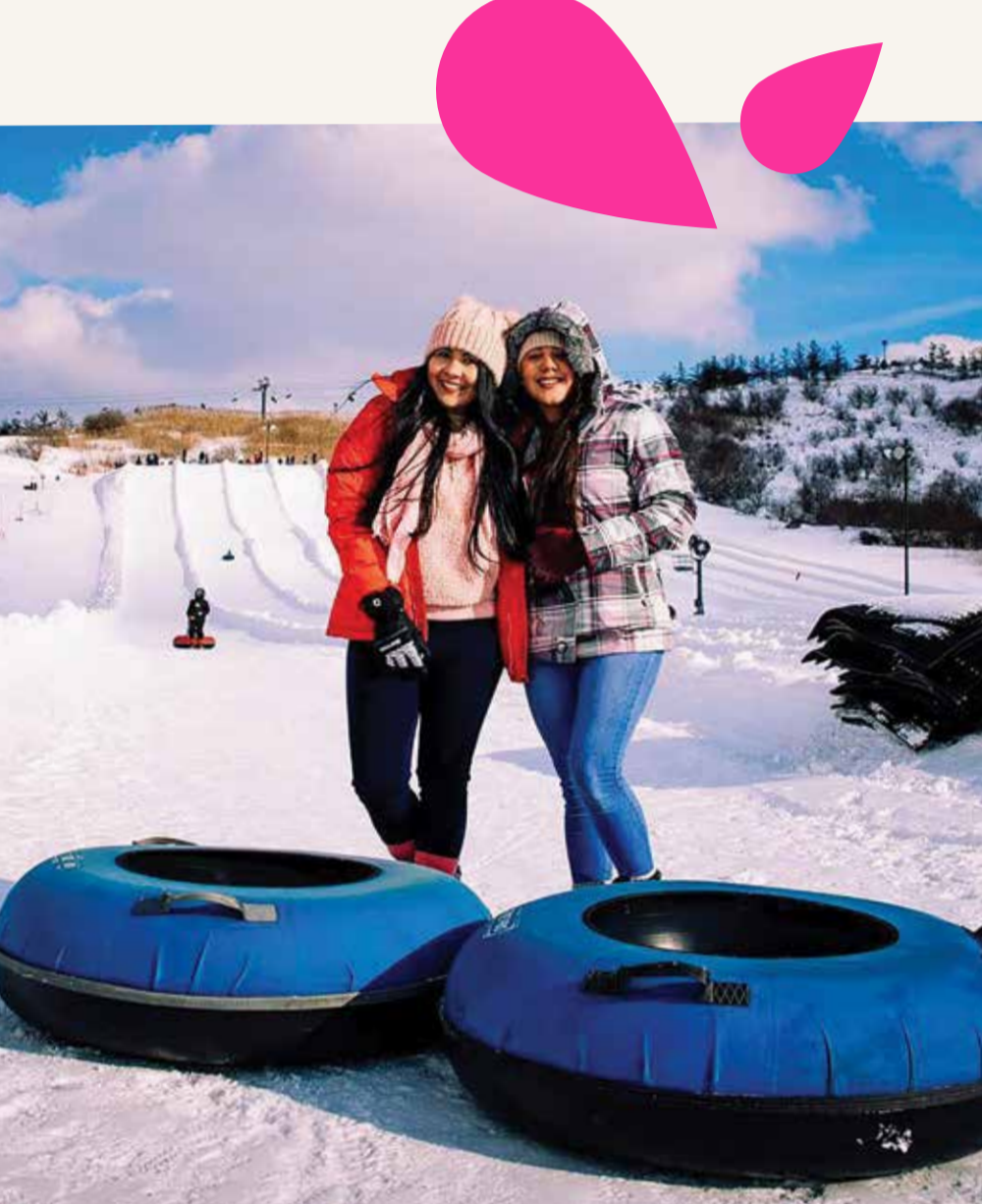
## The best part about au pair meet-ups

**Juliana:** Being able to meet girls and boys from different parts of the world is amazing.

**Shekinah:** We share our own cultures, and we learn about other countries. Mostly we talk in English, but it's also fascinating to listen to other au pairs talk in their own language.

## What are au pair meet-ups?

**Juliana:** Once a month, Steffi, our Local Childcare Consultant (LCC), plans fun things to do with other au pairs in our area. It's the best way to make new friends and get to know our LCC. We also get to see cool American places and try new American traditions.



**“When I first started as an au pair, I was nervous about making friends. But that didn't last long. A couple of weeks after I got here, we had our first meet-up and suddenly I had more than 20 new friends.”**

## What does an LCC do? / Who plans the meet-ups?

**Shekinah:** My LCC Steffi plans our meet-ups, but also supports me when I need help. Steffi is really kind to me. She isn't only my LCC, she is my friend. And I can talk with her about everything—my family, my friends, my home country. She is always there to listen.



## My favourite au pair meet-up

**Juliana:** My favourite meeting was our holiday party in December. We all cooked something typical from our country to share, and then we decorated cookies together.

**Shekinah:** We played laser tag once—every time you tag a friend, you get a point. I lost but I had so much fun playing it! It's also fun to just meet for coffee and talk. And laugh. I can be myself and be silly and that feels really good.

# On the Road

by **Mariany**  
au pair in **California**



Living in California and travelling throughout the USA has changed my life! During my almost two years as an au pair, I've been able to travel to 17 different U.S. states and see what life is like for Americans in each one. The USA is so big and full of so many different kinds of places and people—it's been incredible to discover the beauty in every corner of the country.



My favourite trip so far was going to Alaska! It was absolutely amazing—the nature there took my breath away. It was unlike anywhere I'd ever been before! Whenever I can, I travel with my friends—but I also love to travel by myself, too. It's good to have quality time alone with myself to think and to realize how fully independent I've become during my time living abroad.



Travelling the USA makes me feel like I'm living in a dream. It's changed the way I see things, helped me face problems, and, best of all, it's taught me how to make new friends wherever I go! I've learned that the world is there for me to explore—all I have to do is pack a bag and go.

 [@marianyviaja](https://www.instagram.com/marianyviaja)



# Shaping My Future as an Au Pair

**Au pairs across the country are attending American universities—and setting themselves up for personal and professional success.**

## **Verena, former au pair in New Jersey**

On a whim, I signed up for a Computer Science course at Princeton University, because I was curious. I quickly learned that it fascinates me to create my own computer programs, and I decided to make it my career. Back home, I applied for an undergraduate program in Computer Science and they accepted me right away. They told me they were impressed by the fact that I had a class from Princeton on my CV!

## **Elena, former au pair in Washington, D.C.**

I got the chance to study effective communication, speaking, and presenting. After this class I felt like a different person! It taught me how a good presentation should be, as well as the importance of your presence and confidence when speaking to others. This has helped me a lot to find a job back in my country—I've been able to interview without all the stress!

**“The class also gave me friends for life. I met some people there who aren't au pairs and we still talk a lot. Taking classes in America was one of the coolest things I've ever done.”**

**— Alicia**

## **Paula, former au pair in Massachusetts**

Today, I work in a travel agency. My time as an au pair in the USA is something that my current boss values a lot—because in my career, it's important that when you are selling a destination, you have an idea of how the culture or life is there. So for me, living like a local in America—where there are many different cultures—gave me an idea of how the world works.





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