Tips on Rooming with an International Student at Trinity University

1. If you know you’ll be rooming with an international student, try to contact them via email ahead of time. Once you get to Trinity, you'll be able to talk with them about what you already know about their home - they'll feel more welcome knowing that you took the time to get to know about their background.

2. Since international students are usually limited as to how much they can bring with them, if you have any extra items you think your international roommate may not have any or enough of, for instance, extra bedding, pillows, a small desk or bedside lamp, clothes hangers, small storage, bath towels, etc. and you have room, please offer to bring them with you.

3. International student roommates may be shy about talking to you because they are unsure of how to socialize in their new environment and because they may feel uncomfortable speaking entirely in English. This does not necessarily mean they don’t want to talk to you and spend time with you outside of the room. In fact, the more you open up to them and invite them to tag along with you to meals, outings with other friends, errands around town the more they'll open up to you and act more comfortable around you.

4. Ask questions about your international roommate's home country, family, culture, religion, etc. They will appreciate your interest in their background, and they won't hold ignorance against you if you’re taking the time to ask questions about what you don’t know about.

5. International students probably have preconceived ideas from having met Americans before or from films and television programs that color their impression of what Americans are. Please help them learn about American society that is enormously diverse and complex and cannot be reduced only to a few stories or stereotypes. Talk to them about important differences that exist between geographical regions, between rural and urban areas, and between social classes.

6. Ask your roommate to teach you a few helpful phrases in their native language, like 'thank you' and 'hello'. Use these new phrases and help make your roommate feel more at home by hearing even a few words in their language. If you already speak some of their language, try to speak it with them whenever possible. They'll enjoy it and you'll get a sense of how your roommate feels trying to speak English all the time.

7. At times throughout the semester your roommate may need to make a long distance call to their family at what you may consider an odd time. You will need to take into consideration time differences. It may be the middle of the day in our time zone, but it is 2:00 a.m. somewhere across the world. Perhaps compromising with your roommate on the time and/or day of the week when your roommate will plan to make/receive personal calls that will be convenient for both of you.

8. During long breaks (Thanksgiving, Spring Break, etc.) your roommate may not have a place to stay except in the dorms. If you can, offer to take your roommate home or on vacation with you so that they don't get left behind when you leave town. If you can't do that, offer to help them make plans to travel or stay with another friend, or offer to stay behind with them.

9. International students may deal with some physical, mental, and social challenges while living in the US. The majority go home feeling positive about their experience and believe that the time spent abroad was beneficial both academically and personally.

10. Keep in touch with your roommate after they return home for the summer or for good. Ask them for their contact information. If you're ever planning to travel to your roommate's country, staying in touch will ensure that you have a friend to call if and when you show up in their hometown.