

# EQUILIBRIUM SCHOOL

NEWSLETTER – April 2025

**CELPIP® PREP COURSE!**  
Intense Online Prep Course

**When?**  
**Tuesday & Thursday**  
 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM  
 8 sessions  
 Ongoing registration

**FIND OUT MORE!**

(403) 283-1111  
[equilibrium.ab.ca/celpip.html](http://equilibrium.ab.ca/celpip.html)

**FREE LINC CLASSES**  
Ongoing registration

**Equilibrium School**  
707 14th Street NW, Calgary

**In-person & Online Classes Available:**  
**morning** 9:00 - 12:00 PM **afternoon** 12:30 - 3:30 PM

**What we offer:**

- small class sizes
- qualified, caring teachers
- convenient location
- full and part-time programs
- accepting students with CLB: Pre-Benchmark - 4

**CONTACT US TO REGISTER!**  
[school@equilibrium.ab.ca](mailto:school@equilibrium.ab.ca)  
 (403) 283-1111

**EQUILIBRIUM CONVERSATION CLUB**  
 More on page 22...

**EVENING ENGLISH CLASSES**

## The Story of One

### Olympic Brick

Tina Jensen

If you ever walked downtown in Olympic Plaza, you may have noticed that the pavement was made up of thousands of bricks (about 33,000!) with names or words on them. Did you ever wonder about the bricks and what the words meant?

For more about the bricks... go to page 2 and 3.



*I am still disappointed and sad that Olympic bricks are gone, but so glad that at least one of the 33,000 bricks had a happy ending!*

## Lunar New Year 2025 Welcoming the Year of the Snake

Our LINC student Myoungsil Kim's daughters wearing their traditional clot (Hanbok) to celebrate Lunar New Year.

More page 4.



# THE STORY OF ONE OLYMPIC BRICK



*My cousins at Nakiska during the '88 Olympics*



by Tina Jensen

*Olympic Plaza during the '88 Olympics 1*

If you ever walked downtown in Olympic Plaza, you may have noticed that the pavement was made up of thousands of bricks (about 33,000!) with names or words on them. Did you ever wonder about the bricks and what the words meant?

As you may know, Calgary was the host city for the 1988 Winter Olympics. This was a fantastic, fun, exciting event (and many say, “The best Winter Olympics Ever!!”). The city built the Olympic Plaza for this event. During the Olympics, the winning Olympians received their medals in this plaza every night. Downtown Calgary was filled with thousands of people watching this ceremony and celebrating this special time.

Two people who travelled from around the world for the Calgary Olympics were my mother’s cousin Pat and her husband Tom. They live in Baltimore, Maryland (USA). Pat and her mom had visited us before, and I had visited them a couple of years earlier. Pat and Tom are two of my favourite people in the world, so I was excited for their visit. We had a fantastic, fun-filled time during the Olympics. We had to buy our tickets in October 1986 and were lucky enough to get tickets for several events. We also went down to Olympic Plaza almost every night to watch the medal ceremony and mingle with all the people there.

Before the Olympics, the City of Calgary had a fundraiser to help pay to build Olympic Plaza. For \$19.88, you could buy a brick and have it inscribed with your name or a message. My cousins bought a brick with their names on it (for some reason, I did not buy one!).

These bricks were placed in Olympic Plaza in random order. Pat and Tom came back to Calgary for the Stampede several times in the 1990s, and we were able to find their brick. There was a map/guide at City Hall that showed the general section where your brick was, so we walked around staring at the ground for about ten minutes until we found it!

Over the years, every time I passed Olympic Plaza, I remembered that fun time and how their brick was there to commemorate this special event in our lives.

# The Story of One Olympic Brick continuation

In September 2024, I found out that the city was going to renovate and expand the Arts Commons building (just south of Olympic Plaza) and unbelievably, all the bricks were going to be torn up and destroyed. As you can imagine, many people were upset and angry about this. These bricks were part of Calgary's history and

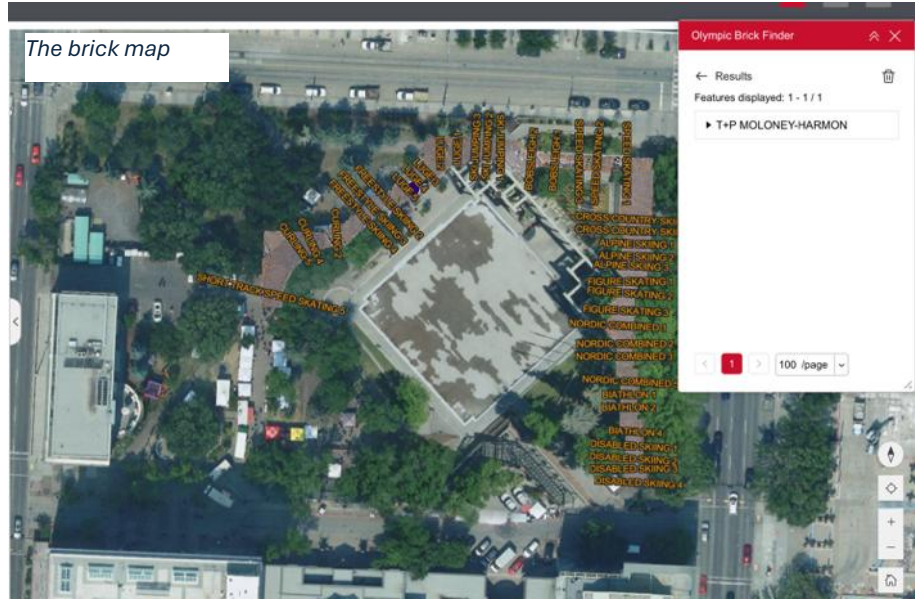
*The crayon rubbing*



I went to the section to find my cousins' brick... and happily, there it was! I might have cried a little at the relief and also sadness at receiving this brick. Unfortunately, the other bricks I registered for had not been saved.

I took it home and washed it and then thought...now what? How am I going to get this brick to its rightful owners in Baltimore? It's too heavy to mail, and what if it broke after all this?

However, as luck would have it, I had already booked a trip to go to New York City in January. Baltimore is only 3 hours away from NYC by train, so...I bought a train ticket and looked forward to spending a day in Baltimore visiting my favourite people and delivering the brick.



When I packed for my trip, I was so worried about having the brick in my suitcase – would it be allowed? Would it be taken away? Was it too heavy? I called TSA (Transport Security Authority) and even asked a friend who is a pilot for Air Canada, and they assured me it “should be fine.”



*Bricks ready to be picked up, Jan. 2025*

My luggage arrived at the airport in New York and my brick was there, safe and sound. Wrapped in bubble wrap, it was ready to go home to Baltimore.

our Olympic legacy. The city had several “brick events” where you could go and find your brick and do a rubbing (with a pencil and paper) with the help of volunteers; however, I did not know about these until they had passed. So, I went downtown by myself with some paper and crayons and made a rubbing of my cousins' brick (and of some other bricks that belonged to friends). I was happy to find the brick and make a small souvenir of it, but I was very sad and angry that they would all be gone. People gradually began to find out what was happening, and in October 2024, a petition was circulated by a Calgary MP (Member of Parliament) Stephanie Kusie to save the bricks. I don't know how many signatures it received, but miraculously, in December 2024, the city decided to let people register their brick to try to save it. They received over 7000 applications. Honestly, I don't think they advertised it enough or gave people enough time to register. You only had a week to find the website, locate the brick and fill out the online form. I was able to register 3 bricks (my cousins' and those belonging to friends that weren't in Calgary).

I spent a few days in NYC and then on Monday, February 3, 2025 I boarded the Amtrak train and travelled to Baltimore. My cousins met me and we spent the day together and...the brick found its forever home!

*I am still disappointed and sad that Olympic bricks are gone, but so glad that at least one of the 33,000 bricks had a happy ending!*



*Taking the train from NYC to Baltimore!*

In December 2024, the city starting tearing up Olympic Plaza. A few weeks later, I received an email that “one or more” of my registered bricks had been salvaged. You had two days at the beginning of January to go to the Stampede grounds to pick up your brick. I drove there on a freezing cold day, not even sure which brick(s) had been saved.

*When I arrived, I saw many happy people leaving with their bricks. The bricks had been arranged on the floor alphabetically, and many volunteers were there to help you. It was sad and happy at the same time, seeing all those bricks lying on the ground waiting to be picked up. Apparently, the city was able to save about 5000 bricks (out of about 7000 applications).*



**Olympic bricks being removed.**



# Lunar New Year 2025: Welcoming the Year of the Snake

Lunar New Year 2025 falls on **Wednesday, January 29**, marking the beginning of the **Year of the Wood Snake** according to the Chinese zodiac. Celebrated by millions across Asia and around the world, this festival symbolizes **new beginnings, family reunions, and prosperity**.

The **Snake** is associated with wisdom, intuition, and transformation, and the **Wood element** brings growth, flexibility, and renewal. This year encourages strategic thinking, patience, and adaptability.

Traditional celebrations include **family gatherings, feasts, fireworks, dragon and lion dances, and giving red envelopes (hongbao)** filled with money for good luck. Many also clean their homes before the new year to **sweep away bad luck** and welcome positive energy.

As we embrace 2025, the Year of the Snake reminds us to **approach challenges with intelligence and embrace change with confidence**. Wishing everyone a **Happy Lunar New Year!** 🎉 🇨🇳



Some of Olena's students shared their pictures from celebration of Lunar New Year.

First set is from Korean student **Myongsil Kim**. She showed her family (husband and two daughters) wear their traditional clot (Hanbok) to celebrate Lunar New Year.

Other photos are from Chinese student **Luo Hua**, he showed how they decorate their house for Lunar New Year.



Toan Minh Tran took some pictures of 'Tet' for the school newsletter. Tet is what they call the Lunar New Year in Vietnam.



My family took this photo on Lunar New Year 📸  
 We cook food and invite our deceased grandparents to celebrate the Lunar New Year with our family.  
 We give lucky money to grandparents, parents and children during the Lunar New Year to get good luck.

Toan Minh Tran

# Tina's class listened to two songs before *Valentine's Day* and then created their own Recipes for Love:

Recipe for Love – Harry Connick, Jr. (1990)

Memories are Made of This – Dean Martin (1955)



## Recipe for Love #1

### Ingredients:

- 2 cups of **trust**
- 1 tablespoon of **time**
- a pinch of **mysterious sweetness**
- 3 heaping spoonfuls of **love & warmth**
- 1 generous handful of **hugs & kisses**
- a dash of **laughter**
- 4 teaspoons of **kindness**

### Instructions:

1. In a large bowl, mix together the **love & trust** until well combined.
2. Slowly blend in the **night time**, being careful not to **fall**.
3. Sprinkle in a pinch of **sweetness** for extra flavor.
4. Stir in the **heart** and let the mixture rest for a while.
5. Gently add the **kindness** and mix until the texture is **laughing & warm**.
6. Serve with a side of **hugs & kisses** and enjoy with someone special!

## Recipe for Love #2

### Ingredients:

- 2 cups of **kindness**
- 1 tablespoon of **patience**
- a pinch of **humour**
- 3 heaping spoonfuls of **compassion**
- 1 generous handful of **trust**
- a dash of **forgiveness**
- 4 teaspoons of **understanding**

### Instructions:

1. In a large bowl, mix together the **kindness & patience** until well combined.
2. Slowly blend in the **compassion**, being careful not to **overwhelm**.

3. Sprinkle in a pinch of **humour** for extra flavor.
4. Stir in the **trust** and let the mixture rest for a while.
5. Gently add the **forgiveness** and mix until the texture is **smooth & warm**.
6. Serve with a side of **understanding** and enjoy with someone special!

## Recipe for Love #3

### Ingredients:

- 2 cups of **eye contact**
- 1 tablespoon of **nice speech**
- a pinch of **thoughts**
- 3 heaping spoonfuls of **gifts**
- 1 generous handful of **hugs**
- a dash of **starlight**
- 4 teaspoons of **kisses**

### Instructions:

1. In a large bowl, mix together the **strong feelings & trust** until well combined.
2. Slowly blend in the **nice speech**, being careful not to **forget**.
3. Sprinkle in a pinch of **eye contact** for extra flavor.
4. Stir in the **starlight** and let the mixture rest for a while.
5. Gently add the **hugs** and mix until the texture is **soft & romantic**.
6. Serve with a side of **kisses** and enjoy with someone special!

## Recipe for Love #4

### Ingredients:

- 2 cups of **trust**



- 1 tablespoon of **time**
- a pinch of **mysterious sweetness**
- 3 heaping spoonfuls of **love & warmth**
- 1 generous handful of **hugs & kisses**
- a dash of **laughter**
- 4 teaspoons of **kindness**

### Instructions:

1. In a large bowl, mix together the **ingredients of love** and **stir** until well combined.
2. Slowly blend in the **hearts**, being careful not to **fall**.
3. Sprinkle in a pinch of **mystery** for extra flavor.
4. Stir in the **heart** and let the mixture rest for a while.
5. Gently add the **time & trust** and mix until the texture is **sweet & soft**.
6. Serve with a side of **love & warmth** and enjoy with someone special!





Our teachers never stop learning so we can serve our students better.

Fridays are our Professional Development days.



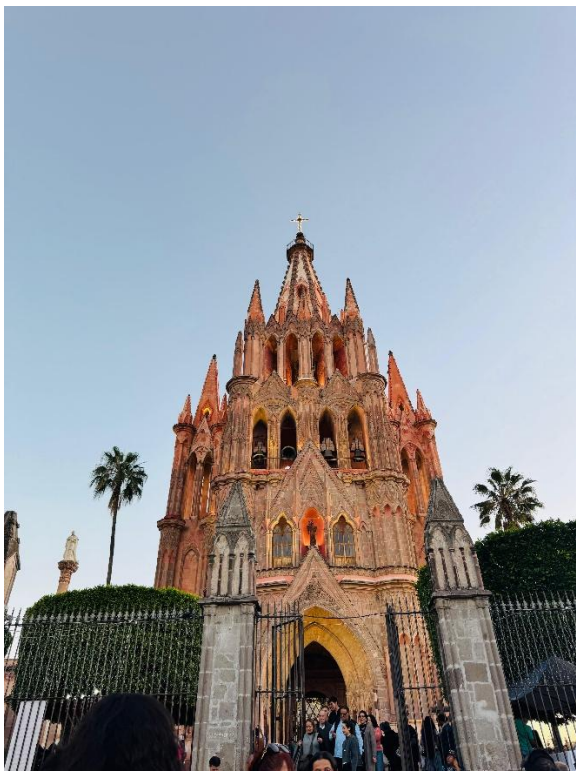
# San Miguel de Allende

Mexico's historic city in the state of Guanajuato, was founded in 1542 by the Spanish. The city's name combines the names of two important Mexican figures.

The first Spanish settlement in Guanajuato, it was founded in 1542 by the Franciscan monk Juan de San Miguel, a [benefactor](#) of the Indians, and was named for him. Allende was added in 1826 to honor a native son, Ignacio Allende, a hero of the revolution against Spain. Historically a market center for the silver district, it is now an agricultural center and is increasingly dependent on tourism.

San Miguel de Allende is located practically in the dead center of Mexico, in the state of Guanajuato, about 170 miles north of Mexico City. Renowned for its Colonial charm, San Miguel's 64-block historic center was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2008

The impressive Parroquia de San Miguel Arcángel is a work of religious architecture that was built in 1880. Its builder, Zeferino Gutiérrez, inspired by European Gothic works, designed the parish tower with a neo-Gothic style, which is part of the colonial neoclassical temple. The interior architecture is in the form of a Latin cross.



## TIN HEARTS AND WOODEN WITH MILGAROS

Eduardo Domínguez Yañez and his brother Filiberto created a tin heart that has become an emblem of San Miguel de Allende. They learned the trade from their father, Don Santiago Domínguez Muñoz, who made jewelry boxes and compacts. He was one of the forerunners of metalwork in this World Heritage City.

Wooden hearts are a traditional folk art form that symbolize love, resistance, and freedom. They are often decorated with flames, rays, and thorns.

As well they are painted in red and covered in Milagros with a gold trim detail. Milagro is the Spanish word for miracle and each charm represents wishes, prayers and thanks. Hearts may represent love, valor, loyalty, kindness, friendship and more.



# Mexico

By Martha I.

# Rosebud School of the Arts Rosebud, Alberta

Like many others in 'The Equilibriiverse' (thanks, Kyle, for coining that phrase!), my wife, Judy, and I enjoy live theatre as well as going for drives in the beautiful Alberta countryside. Did you know that there is a wonderful village, just a 1.25 hour drive the northern Calgary city limits, that offers live theatre and musical performances each season? Yes indeed, that place is Rosebud, Alberta, namely the Rosebud Theatre of the Arts. Check out their own and related websites: <https://www.rosebudtheatre.com/>; <https://www.travelalberta.com/listings/rosebud-theatre-2657> for more information.



**Rosebud, Alberta is a picturesque river valley located 100km east of the Calgary airport or 35 km southwest of Drumheller. All highways leading to Rosebud are paved and well-maintained.**

Travel Times to Rosebud  
**Drumheller: 25 min Calgary: 70 min**

Besides live theatre and special music performances, the charming little village of Rosebud, nestled in the Rosebud Valley along the Rosebud River (see the theme here?), offers old-world memories in its museum as well as several unique arts/crafts stores for the bargain hunters and crafters. There are two theatres in the village that offer theatre and musical performances. The local hotel offers special lunch and dinner buffets for theatre goers, but buffet tickets can also be purchased separately.

Do you want to make it a weekend or overnight visit for your visit to Rosebud? There are several bed and breakfast places in town, each with their own websites for viewing their amenities and booking procedures. If you're on a budget, there are also camping facilities close by. Drumheller is just a short drive away from Rosebud, so many people book hotel or camping spots there and make a weekend of their trips to the area.

Over the past years, Judy and I have visited the *Rosebud Theatre of the Arts* at least once a year. It's a longer drive now that we live in Edmonton (about 2.5 hours) but Rosebud is still worth the trip. We've seen wonderful live theatre performances, such as "The Sound of Music", "Little Women", "Chariots of Fire" and more. We also attended one of their summer special music performances, which was held outdoors and was a lot of fun. When we go to Rosebud, we usually book buffet tickets at the old hotel just down the street from the main theatre – delicious and entertaining! Several of the theatre students offer short musical performances as they move from room to room in the hotel during each buffet, which is always appreciated.

So check out the quaint and charming village of Rosebud, everyone, particularly the *Rosebud Theatre School of the Arts* – you won't be disappointed!

Respectfully submitted,

George Van Bruggen, Proud-to-be an Equilibrium Instructor

## Welcome to Canada, eh!

### A Short History of the Canadian Flag

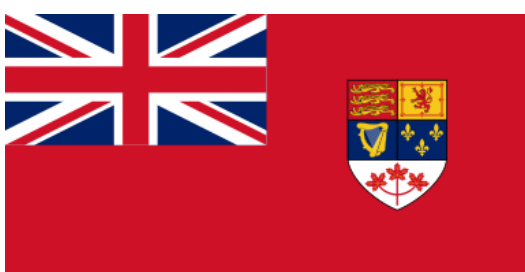
By Dale T. Latham, BSc.

CAEC Instructor, Equilibrium School



For newcomers to Canada, or perhaps people born in Canada after 1965, the only Canadian flag they might possibly have ever known is our current version with the maple leaf, shown below.

However, that was not always the case. Prior to 1965, there was another flag called "the [Red Ensign](#)", shown below, that was our national symbol during the 19<sup>th</sup> century right up until it was replaced with the one we have now.



Some politicians on one side of the House of Commons wanted to replace the Ensign with a "made for Canada" version while Official Opposition's, Progressive Conservative MPs on the other side of the House vehemently opposed the idea.

After the [Great Canadian Flag Debate](#) that took place between 1963 and 1964, the new design was finally adopted in Parliament, by Prime Minister [Lester B Pearson](#)'s ruling Liberal party as the national flag of Canada, known throughout the world as **distinctly Canadian**.





Sunset at 30,000 feet was taken as Dale left Calgary.

# Hawaii

By Dale T. Latham, BSc.



Sunset at sea level was taken from Dale's hotel room.

Equilibrium out for a walk was taken on a footbridge close to the Hilton Hawaiian Village.



Incredible colour was taken in the morning from our hotel room. Cheers!

# What situation made you feel lucky?

**Abdelaziz Jbili:**

I felt lucky when I got the opportunity to work as a production manager in the manufacturing industry. But also, learning and improving my English skills makes me feel lucky because it opens more opportunities for me in the future. I believe that I was very lucky to move to Calgary because it gave me a chance to build a better future for my daughter.

**Svitlana Kouruza:**

When we decided to come to Canada, it was a risk. I had to get permission for my son to leave from his father, and at first, he agreed, but then he refused. We only had copies of documents in Polish, so we found a translator from Polish to Slovenian and then to English. We took a chance, and now we are here.

**Sonia Garcia:**

I’m lucky to be a very healthy person. I appreciate good moments especially when I have my kids by my side.

**Satvinder Singh:**

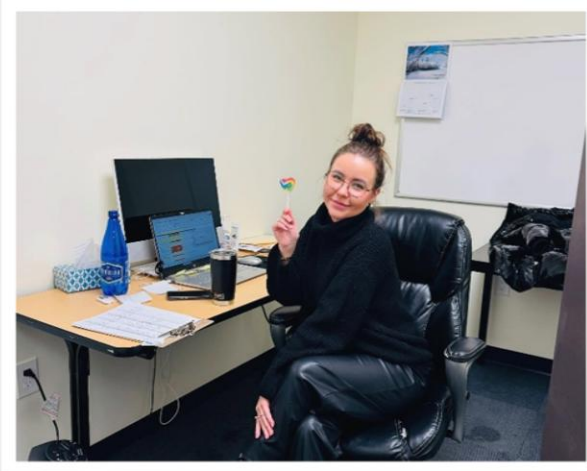
I’m writing about a lucky situation that happened 23 years ago. At my sales job, it was my target to sell 1000 mobile SIMs in one month. The company gave me a foreign trip as a reward. I was my luckiest situation because it was the first time I visited two new countries. I went to Malaysia and then Singapore, I enjoyed it a lot.

**Hasnaa Lakhal:**

When I was a student, I was taking the bus as usual. When my stop came, I got off and started walking away. Just moments later, a group of robbers entered the bus. I couldn’t believe how lucky I was on this day. I had gotten off just in time to avoid any danger. I really felt relieved and shocked at the same time.

**Ryma Hanna Mekhzoumi:**

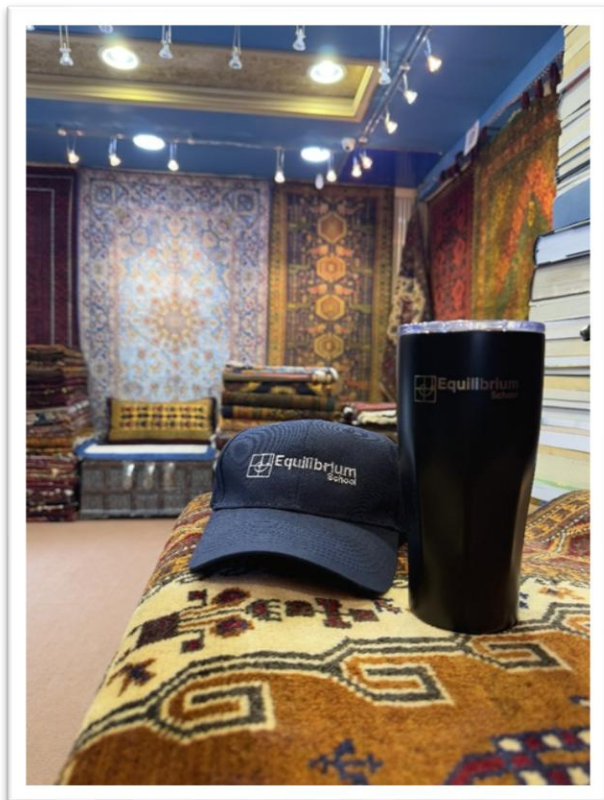
On October 4<sup>th</sup>, it was my first day in Canada. I had already traveled in the past, but since I was young, I have always dreamed to live in another country to get out of my comfort zone and live new adventures. That’s why I think I’m lucky.



For years, my husband, Amin, and I dreamed of broadening our horizons through overseas study, believing that firsthand international experience would enrich our perspectives and deepen our contributions as educators. That ambition fueled our resolve to step beyond the familiar. In January 2024, we left behind family members, friends, all our memories, and our secure jobs in Iran to chase that dream in Calgary, Canada, where I began my second doctorate at the University of Calgary. It was a leap filled with obstacles, but after a year of highs and lows, we found our footing as instructors at the renowned Equilibrium School. After a year in Canada, by mid-December 2024, with Iran's situation unsteady, we flew back to reunite with family and friends—a moment of joy beyond words. Strolling through Isfahan's alleys rekindled memories of our childhood, and as we captured the city's magic through our lens, we knew we wanted to share its story with you.

### A Glimpse of Isfahan's History and Charm

Isfahan, often called "Nesf-e Jahan" or "Half of the



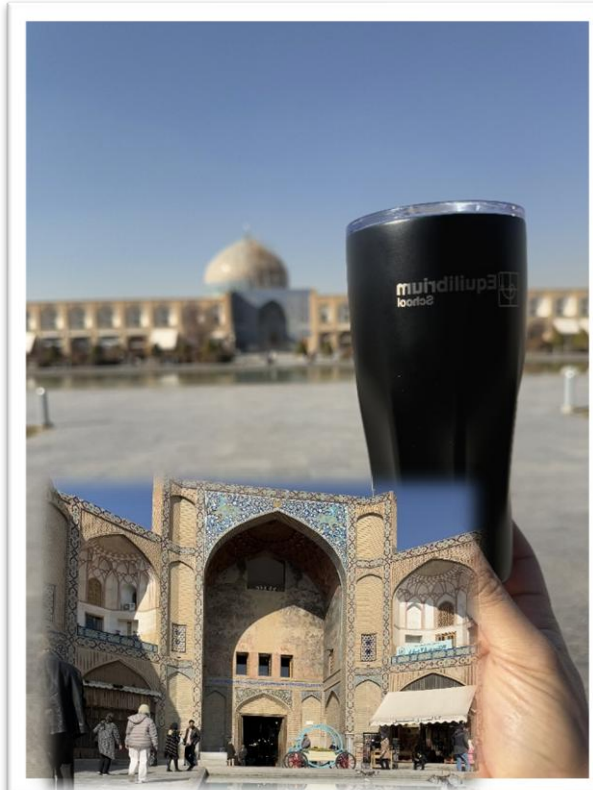
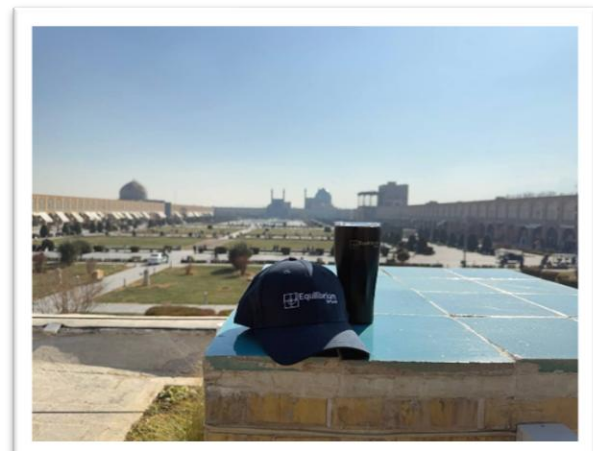
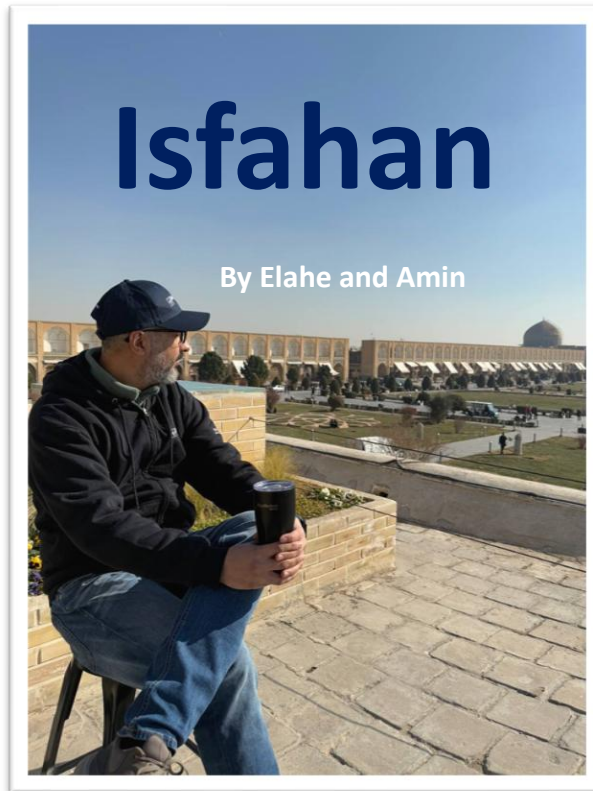
World," stands as a jewel of Iran's rich past, once a thriving capital of the Persian Empire under the Safavid dynasty in the 16th and 17th centuries. Renowned for its breathtaking architecture—think intricate tilework, grand mosques, and elegant bridges—this city has long captivated travelers and poets alike. When Amin and I arrived in mid-December 2024, the crisp winter air carried quiet energy, softening the bustle of its historic bazaars and lending a serene glow to its timeless landmarks. It was the perfect backdrop to rediscover the city we'd always known, now seen anew through the lens of our journey abroad.

### Isfahan's Golden Age: The Majesty of Naqsh-e Jahan Square

During the Safavid dynasty, Isfahan blossomed into a global marvel, handpicked by Shah Abbas I as his capital in 1598 for its strategic beauty and potential. At its heart lies Naqsh-e Jahan Square, a sprawling masterpiece that showcases the era's architectural

genius and remains one of the world's largest public squares.

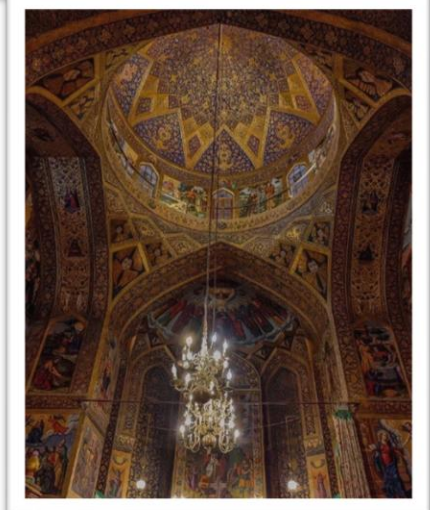
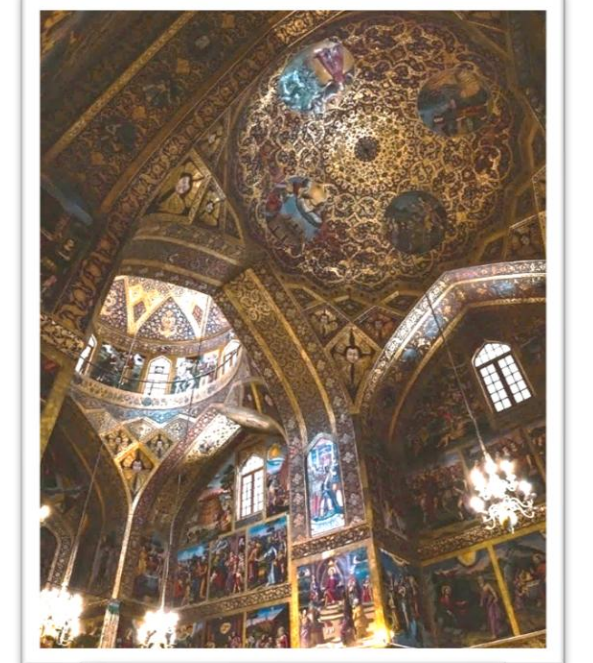
Here, the King's Mosque dazzles with its towering dome and intricate mosaics, a testament to Persian artistry, while the nearby Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque enchants with its delicate, golden-hued interior, built as a private sanctuary for the royal family.



Across the square, the Ali Qapu Palace rises with its ornate music room and lofty terrace, offering a glimpse into royal life, and the Qeysariye Bazaar hums with the echoes of centuries-old trade, its arched corridors brimming with vibrant crafts. In December 2024, walking this historic expanse, I felt the weight of a legacy that still pulses through Isfahan's veins.

Isfahan's vibrant history extends beyond its Persian roots, embracing diverse communities that have shaped its soul, including a thriving Armenian

population. Since the early 17th century, when Shah Abbas I relocated thousands of Armenians to the city, their presence has flourished, most notably in the Jolfa quarter, where the stunning Vank Cathedral—adorned with vivid frescoes—stands as a testament to their enduring legacy.



Centuries later, during World War II, Isfahan opened its arms again, this time to hundreds of Polish orphans fleeing the Soviet invasion of Poland. Evacuated through Iran in 1942, these children found refuge in the city's orphanages, cared for by locals amidst the war's chaos, their brief stay weaving yet another thread into Isfahan's story of resilience and compassion.

# Isfahan

In December 2024, wandering Isfahan's narrow streets, I felt the echoes of these layered histories beneath the winter sky. Isfahan's UNESCO World Heritage sites paint a breathtaking portrait of a city steeped in



history and elegance, inviting the world to marvel at its treasures. Beyond the famed Naqsh-e Jahan Square—inscribed in 1979 with its majestic Masjid-e Shah, delicate Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque, and towering Ali Qapu Palace—the city boasts the Chehel Sotoun Palace, a 17th-century gem added in 2011 as part of the Persian Garden listing, where its forty slender columns reflect in a serene pool, whispering tales of Safavid royalty. The Jameh Mosque, recognized in 2012, unfolds a millennium of architectural evolution, while the Khaju Bridge, also tied to the 2011 Persian Garden designation, arches gracefully over the Zayandeh River, its illuminated stonework a marvel at dusk. In December 2024, under a winter sky, their grandeur felt both timeless and intimate, a legacy Isfahan shares with the world.

In today's Isfahan, the city pulses with a modern rhythm that dances alongside its ancient roots. Along Chahar Bagh Boulevard, a historic thoroughfare reborn as a bustling artery, trendy cafes spill onto sidewalks where students and families sip saffron-infused tea, their laughter mingling with the hum of scooters. The skyline, once dominated by domes and minarets, now shares space with sleek high-rises, a sign of Isfahan's growth as a hub for education and industry.



Isfahan's culinary heritage is a tapestry of bold flavors and cherished recipes, each dish a testament to the city's warm hospitality. Yogurt Stew, rich with the golden glow and earthy aroma of saffron, melds tender meat and creamy yogurt into a luxurious comfort food, its vibrant hue as striking as Isfahan's tiled domes.

Kebabs, skewered and grilled over open flames, arrive juicy and fragrant, their smoky essence a staple at every gathering.

For sweets, Ferni—a velvety rice pudding dusted with cinnamon—offers a soothing finish, while Gaz, the city's famed nougat packed with pistachios and rosewater, melts in your mouth, its sticky

sweetness a beloved gift for travelers. In our visit, sharing these dishes with loved ones brought back the tastes of my childhood, each spoonful and bite a delicious bridge between past and present in a city that feeds both body and soul.

In December 2024, I watched artisans in the bazaars adapt tradition



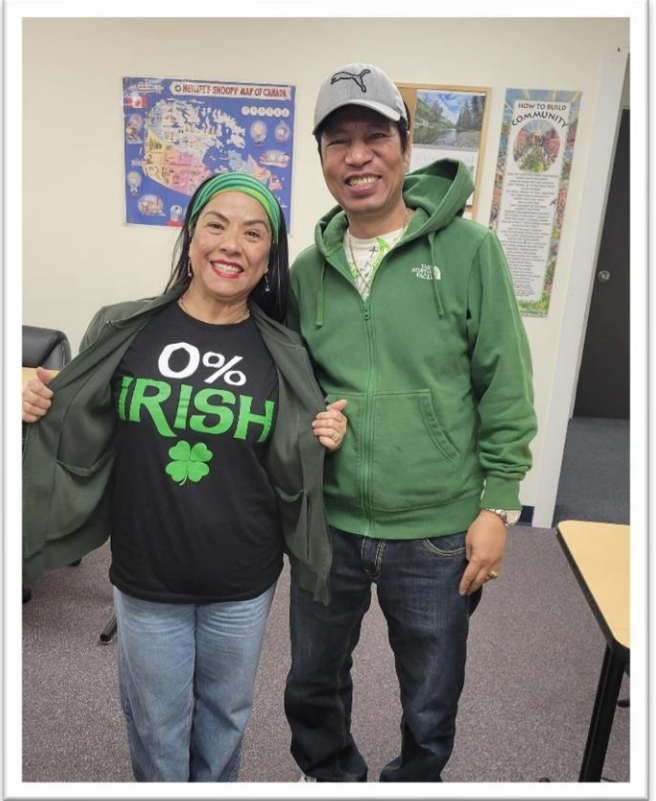
to the times, crafting souvenirs for tourists while nearby, tech-savvy youth scrolled their phones—proof that Isfahan thrives as a bridge between yesterday and tomorrow, its spirit as vibrant as ever.

Winding through Isfahan's heart, the Zayandeh River has long been its lifeblood, a historic thread that ties the city's past to its present. Once a vital waterway for trade and agriculture, it inspired the construction of iconic bridges like Si-o-se-pol and Khaju, their stone arches standing as silent sentinels over centuries. Though drought has often stilled its flow in recent years, leaving the riverbed a stark canvas of cracked earth, its banks remain a gathering place—locals stroll there at sunset, and in December 2024, I joined them, capturing the bridges' silhouettes against a golden horizon. The river's quiet resilience mirrors Isfahan itself, a city that adapts yet never forgets the currents of its history.

Returning to Isfahan in December 2024 after a year abroad felt like stepping into a living memory, where every alley, bridge, and dome told a story of resilience, beauty, and belonging. Through my camera lens, I captured a city that balances its storied past—Safavid splendor, Armenian echoes, and wartime refuge—with a vibrant present, all under a winter sky that softened its edges. Sharing these glimpses with you, the Equilibrium School community, is my way of celebrating the power of place and perspective, forged through our journey from Iran to Canada and back. I hope these words and photos inspire you to imagine Isfahan's magic—or perhaps one day, to wander its paths yourself.

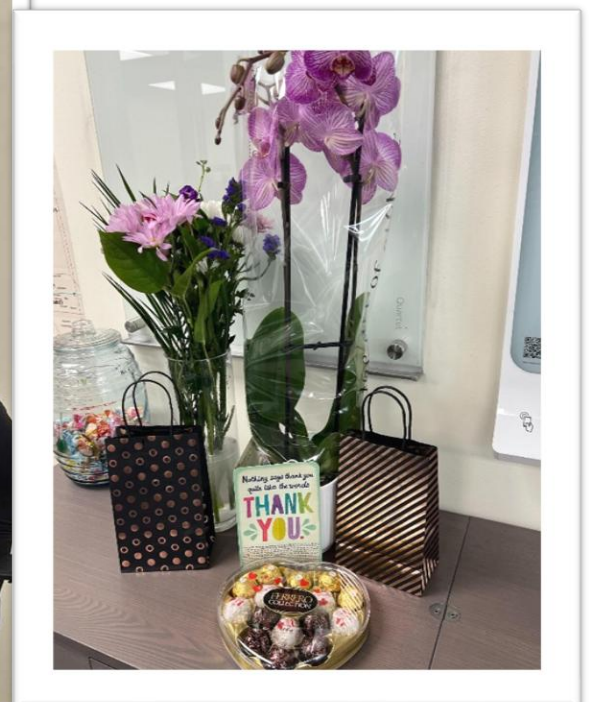


# Saint Patrick's Day or The Feast of Saint Patrick



We celebrated St. Patrick's Day with cookies and green drinks. Thank you, Darren, for your presentation.

# Women's Day



# Paćzki Day 2025

In 2025, Polish communities and enthusiasts celebrated Paćzki Day on March 4, coinciding with Fat Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday. This tradition, deeply

rooted in Polish culture, involves indulging in paćzki—rich, deep-fried doughnuts filled with various jams, creams, or other sweet fillings, and often topped with powdered sugar

or glaze. The custom dates back to the Middle Ages in Poland, where consuming these pastries symbolized a final feast before the Lenten fast.



# EQUILIBRIUM PORCELAIN CLUB

We'd like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to **Linda** from **Aberta Porcelain Artists** of Calgary for generously teaching our students and staff the beautiful art of painting on porcelain.

We're thrilled to announce that all students and staff are welcome to join these classes, completely free of charge. Classes are held twice per month on Fridays, and we encourage everyone to take part in this creative and enriching experience.



# Saying Goodbye and Saying Hello: Some Uplifting Words for the New Semester

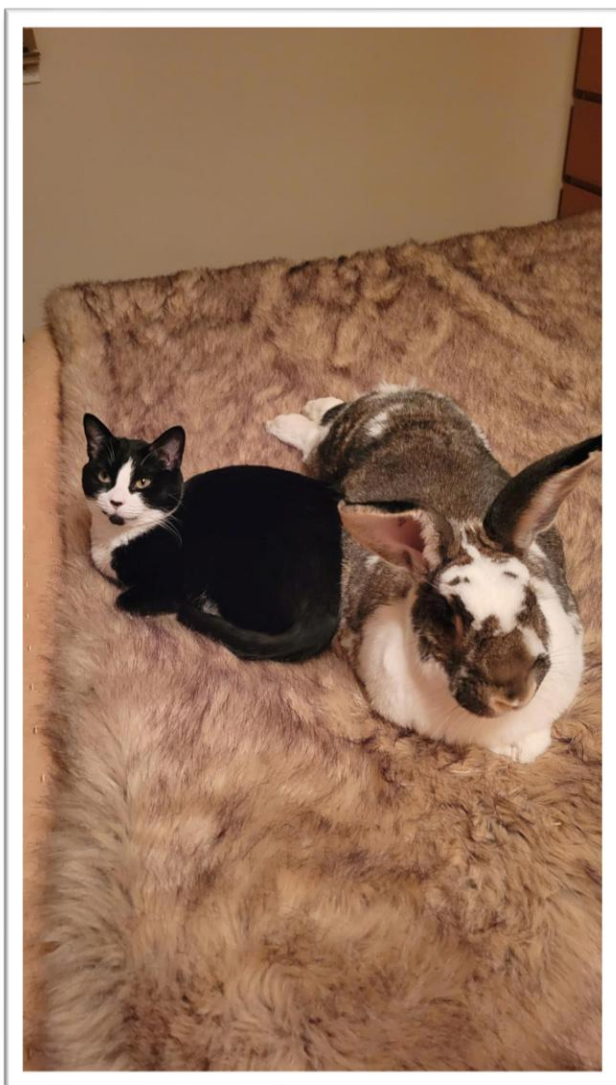
By: Julia Licznanski

April is the start of a new semester! I don't know about you, but I am definitely going to miss last semester. Wonderful students, classmates, teachers, classrooms (or Zoom rooms 😊), and routines; there is so much to say goodbye to from last semester (We are even saying goodbye to winter! 🌨️). There's something really scary about saying goodbye; about going through a big change. It's scary to know only that everything will be different, and not know how things will actually be.

Let me remind you, though; as much as saying goodbye can be difficult, it means that we are moving forward. It means that we are starting to create a beautiful, new normal. *It means that there is so much ahead, waiting for us to say hello.* One day at a time, we can say hello to what is new, and our what we learned in the past can guide us through it. So, here is your homework for the start of this new semester (Homework already?? I know 😂); **don't focus on what you have to say goodbye to, but what you get to say hello to.**



Remember to **Pay it Forward like Dina Would** and spread this positivity forward; you never know when someone needs a few kind words. Thank you for being a part of our school; I am so grateful that we get to say hello to new things together. I wish you all a beautiful semester!



Mini the tuxedo cat and Jingle Bell the bunny.

They are both rescues from the Calgary Humane Society, where I have been volunteering for 15 years.

They are best friends, and I always find them together sleeping on my bed, like in this photo.

By Tina



Thank you Mariusz for the delicious treat. Your home-made bread, fish paste and the apple pie were amazing. Our students are the best!

## Fatima's EAL class writings

### El Salvador: Customs and Celebrations

By Sonia Garcia.

El Salvador has a rich cultural heritage with a variety of traditions that reflect history and indigenous influences, and Spanish colonization, traditions include:

Fiestas Agostina's; Held in the first week of August in honour of San Salvador, the patron saint of the capital. The celebrations include parades, cultural events, music and food.

Semana Santa (Holy Week) This important religious observance includes processions and reenactments of the Passion of Christ, showcasing vibrant colours through carpets made of coloured sawdust and flowers  
Many Salvadorans are Roman Catholic,

Cuisine Tradition foods

Pupusas made of corn stuffed with various fillings such as cheese, beans, and pork. Pupusas are often served with curtido (a pickled cabbage slaw) and tomato salsa.

Tamales is another dish, tamales are made from masa (corn dough) and filled with meats and vegetables and wrapped in banana leaves and steamed for one hour.

Music and Dance: Traditional music Marimba (a wooden instrument) and guitars. Folk dances, such as "La danza de los pipiles," reflect indigenous heritage and are performed during festivals.

El Salvador has several active volcanoes, these volcanoes are parts of Central America and are continuously monitored by ministers of environmental natural resources of El Salvador.

There are numerous events and practices reflect the rich history and community spirit of the Salvadoran people.

### Customs in Mexican Culture

By Yolanda Chavez

*Throughout history our ancestors have developed traditions and customs that embrace our heritage. It is important that we teach others about our culture as it is the only way to prevent them from being history. Here are some popular customs in Mexico:*

- *Dia de Muertos*
- *Las Posadas*
- *Day of the Virginia of Guadalupe*
- *Dia de la Madre*

*Our country has been making an effort to preserve our customs throughout the years. Our people work hard to maintain our way of life and pass it along for the future generations to come.*

## Eritrean Culture

By Becket Hashelit

Eritrea is a country in East Africa, located on the coast of the Red Sea. It has a rich history and a unique culture. The people of Eritrea come from different ethnic groups, but they share many traditions. The most common languages spoken in Eritrea are Tigrinya, Arabic, and English.

### Food and Drink

Eritrean food is delicious and full of flavor. One of the most popular dishes is **injera**, a spongy flatbread made from teff flour. People eat it with different stews, like **zigni** (a spicy beef stew) and **shiro** (a dish made from ground chickpeas). Meals are often shared with family and friends, and people eat with their hands. **Buna** (coffee) is very important in Eritrean culture. The coffee ceremony is a special tradition where people roast, grind, and brew fresh coffee in front of guests. It is a time for conversation and hospitality.

### Clothing and Traditions

Many Eritreans wear modern clothes, but traditional clothing is still important. Women often wear a **habesha kemis**, a long white dress with colorful embroidery. Men sometimes wear a **shamma**, a white cloth draped over the shoulders. Eritreans celebrate many holidays, including **Independence Day** on May 24th, which marks the country's freedom from Ethiopia in 1991.

### Music and Dance

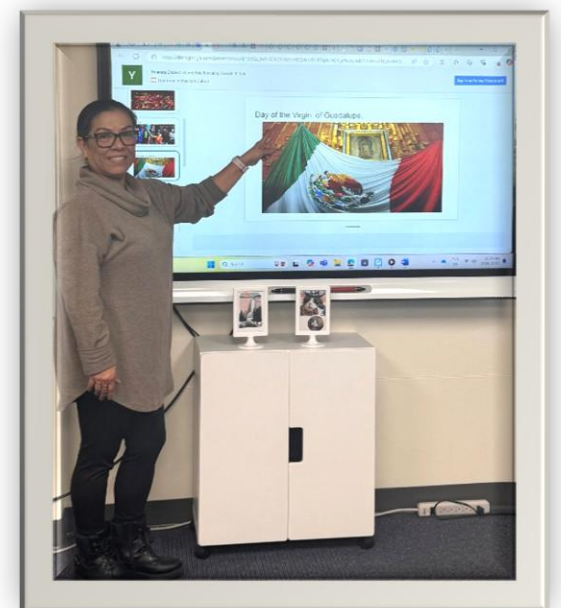
Music and dance are a big part of Eritrean culture. Traditional music includes drums, string instruments, and unique rhythms. People dance at weddings and festivals, moving their shoulders and feet to the beat. The **Eskista** dance, which involves shoulder movements, is popular in Eritrea and Ethiopia.

### Daily Life and Family

Family is very important in Eritrean society. People respect their elders and help each other in daily life. Many Eritreans live in extended families, where grandparents, parents, and children live together. Cities like **Asmara**, the capital, have beautiful Italian-style buildings, cafes, and busy markets.

### Conclusion

Eritrean culture is full of history, hospitality, and strong traditions. Food, music, and family life are important parts of daily life. Whether drinking coffee, celebrating with dance, or enjoying a meal, Eritreans take pride in their rich and diverse culture.



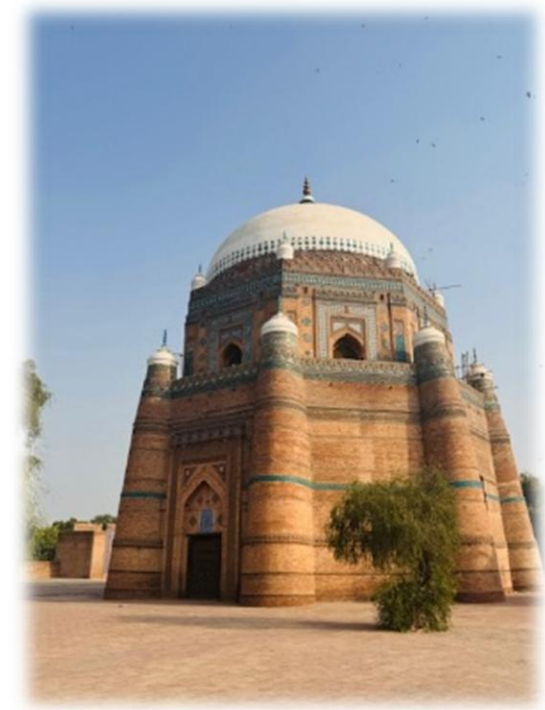
Our last group of SLAVA students finished their program on March 21,2025.



We wish them all the best and we will miss them a lot.

# Multan: The City of Saints

By Fatima Majoka



Multan is one of the oldest living cities in the world. It is located in the Punjab province of Pakistan. The city is known as the "City of Saints" because many Sufi saints and scholars lived there. Multan has a long and rich history, dating back thousands of years. It has been ruled by many empires, including the Greeks, the Mughals, and the British.

One of the most famous historical events in Multan was the visit of Alexander the Great in 326 BCE. When Alexander attacked Multan, he faced strong resistance from the local population. During the battle, he was severely wounded by an arrow but managed to capture the city. This wound later led to his death, making Multan a significant place in world history.

Today, Multan is an important cultural and economic center in Pakistan. My own family has a connection to this historic city—my father was born in Multan after my grandfather moved there for studies and employment. Incidentally my husband was also born and grew up in Multan.

## Customs and Traditions

Multan is famous for its religious and cultural traditions. Many people visit the shrines of Sufi saints, such as the shrine of Bahauddin Zakariya and Shah Rukn-e-Alam. These shrines are decorated with beautiful tiles and calligraphy. Bahauddin Zakariya was a famous Sufi scholar and poet, while Shah Rukn-e-Alam is known for his spiritual teachings that continue to inspire people today.

The origins of Sufi saints in Multan can be traced back to the 11th and 12th centuries when Islamic mysticism spread through South Asia. Many Sufi saints came from Persia and Central Asia, bringing their teachings of peace, love, and devotion to God. Their presence made Multan a center of spiritual learning and religious harmony. Every year, people celebrate Urs (a festival to honor saints) with music, prayers, and food.

Hospitality is a big part of the culture, and visitors are always welcomed with delicious food and tea. The people are warm and really

know how to take care of visitors, they are friendly and helpful and generally genial and peace-loving.

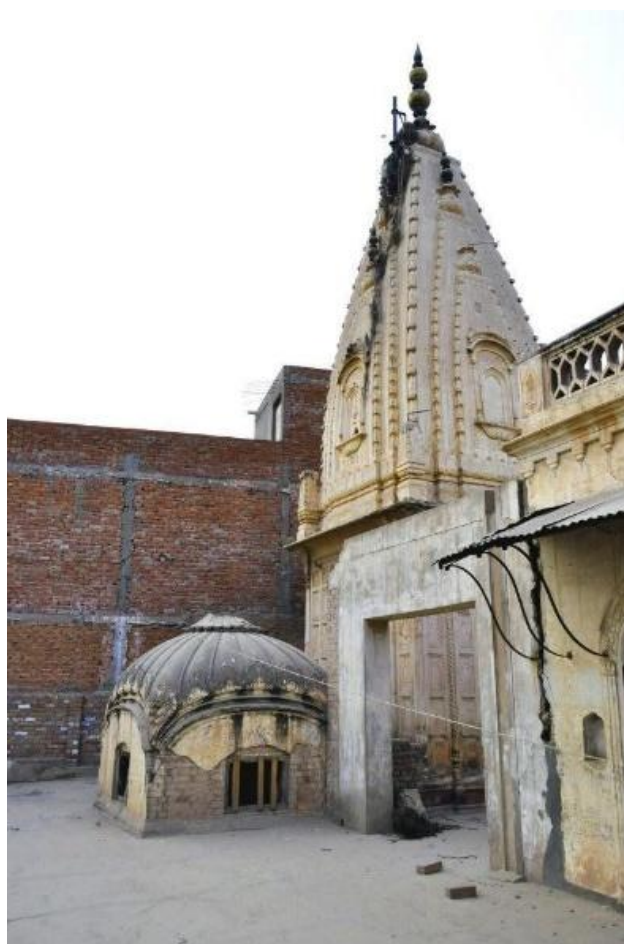
One of the most famous things about Multan is its traditional crafts. The city is known for its blue pottery, handmade carpets, and camel-skin lamps. Blue pottery has a unique style that originated from Persian and Central Asian influences using cobalt oxide dye. Multani embroidery is famous in South Asia too, it is a well-known fact that Multani street food is so good and cheap because the women were mostly artisans, working from home and preferred to order in rather than cook. Although these crafts are not as common today, they are still alive.

## Language

The main language spoken in Multan is Seraiki. Although often grouped with Punjabi, Seraiki is a distinct language with its own vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. It is soft and melodic, and many famous poets have written in this language.

## A Warm and Historic City

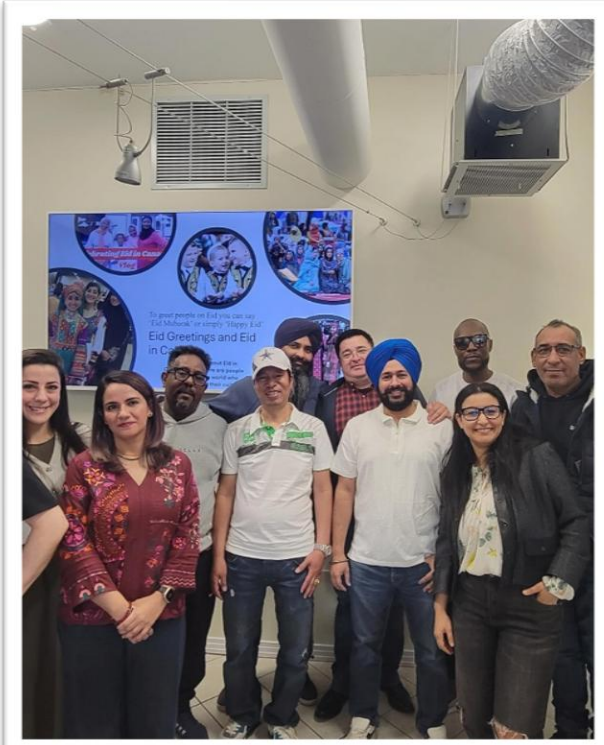
Multan is a city full of history, culture, and warmth. Its people are kind, its food is delicious, and its traditions are beautiful. From its ancient shrines to its colorful bazaars, I always enjoy visiting the city, we make sure that we visit the Sufi shrines, the old city with its six gates, walk along the old city wall, the inner city markets and the beautiful gardens and the old fort.



## Nowruz Presentation



## EID Presentation



## Ramadan preparations

(Nassima)- LINC student



# RON'S EAL STUDENTS WROTE ABOUT THEIR HOMETOWNS

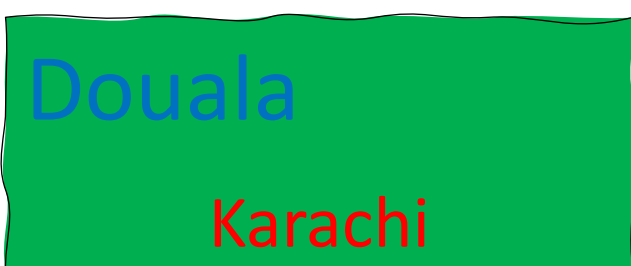
**Douala** is one of the most beautiful and biggest cities of Cameroon. Located in the southwest, Douala is the capital of the coastal region and the economic capital of Cameroon. It has about 923 km<sup>2</sup> with 4.9 million inhabitants (residents), which makes it the largest popular city, and also the richest city of the CEMAC (Economic and Monetary Central Africa Community). The climate is tropical. As for (regarding) the main geographical features, Douala is on the Atlantic Ocean coast. In addition, the city is located on the banks of the Wouri river. Limbe and Mount Cameroon are beautiful famous places located in the south of the city. (inhabitable – adj – not possible to live there due to poor conditions)

The most impressive thing about my home city is that it has the country's major international airport. It is the commercial and economic capital of Cameroon and the entire CEMAC region. The consequence of this is that it handles most of the country's major exports, such as oil, coffee, metals, and cacao. If you are in Douala some interesting things you can see are the Palace of the Kings Bell, Centennial Temple, and the Wouri river. Some activities to do are spending good times near the Wouri river, visiting several museums and learning about the old country's history.

As in most large cities in Cameroon there are several nursery, primary and secondary, and high schools. The city of Douala is home to a number of higher educational institutions, including the University of Douala. There are also a number of professional schools. Douala has a pretty big shopping mall, which is located near the airport.

The city of Douala has indigenous people living in different areas. They have their own mother language (Sawa) and their traditional ceremony called "Ngondo". People eat many delicious, fresh, spicy traditional foods such as "Bongo Chobi", "Ikok", and roasted fish made with special ingredients. People wear different kinds of clothes such as Kaba ngondo, jeans, sweaters, and tops - depending on the weather. Lots of people go there (come here) for their businesses and that makes the city very crowded. (Etc. et cetera)

By Sandrine Foute



**Casablanca**. Casablanca is the largest city in my country, and it is the economic capital of Morocco. Located on the western coast of the country, it is considered both an economic and cultural hub. Casablanca has a strategic geographical position, as it is situated along the coastline of the Atlantic Ocean. Its terrain is flat, and it has one natural attraction: the Bouskoura Forest.

The city enjoys a Mediterranean climate, with mild, wet winters and warm, dry summers. Its coastal location moderates the temperature, so winters aren't very cold, and summers aren't too hot, making it a popular destination for tourists.

Most of the people of Casablanca are Moroccan, with a mix of other ethnic groups, and they are known for their hospitality and openness. They are generally fluent in Arabic, French, and some in English. Casablanca is home to one of the largest mosques in the world, which is a marvel of modern Islamic architecture. Casablanca has a rich cultural scene, including music, art, and theater, and it also has several other attractions, such as the Corniche area along the Atlantic coast and the old Medina, a historical district full of narrow streets and markets.

In conclusion, Casablanca is a city where the old blends with the new. Its favorable climate, rich culture, and strong economy make the city unique, with a global character and charm.

By Rachid El Kaghene

I am from **Karachi**, Pakistan. Pakistan is a Muslim country, and the motto of the Pakistan is unity, faith and discipline. Pakistan is located in Southern Asia and is the 34th largest country in the world. The capital of Pakistan is Islamabad. The population of Pakistan is 240.5 million. The mother language of Pakistan is Urdu. There are four provinces, which are Sindh, Punjab, Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Geographical features of Pakistan are the northern mountains (Himalayas, Karakoram, Hindu Kush), western mountains (Sulman Kirthar), fertile plains, and flowing rivers. There is also Punjab and Sindh. Coastal areas are along the Arabian Sea, and the Thar desert is in the west. Pakistan also has all four beautiful seasons.

Karachi is my hometown and the largest city in Pakistan, which has a big industrial area that is very crowded and busy. Karachi has many universities, colleges, modern buildings and shopping mall, and big spectacular sea views. Karachi has also historical building named Mazar-e-Quaid e-Azam, which is a popular landmark in Pakistan. Karachi is famous for its delicious food and is known as the city of lights of Pakistan. Most of time Karachi weather is humid and hot sunny. This is my home city, and I wish to once again visit my beautiful home city.

By Saima Asif

My hometown is **Al Sulaimaniyah**,

located in the Krurdistan region North of Iraq. It is a small city the same size as Calgary. It known for stunning natural beauty and diverse geographic features. It is surrounded by mountains, including Zagros mountain. Popular mountains include Goizh, Azmer and Baranan, which people visit for hiking and picnicking. Between the mountains, there are plains like Sharazor plain that is a great place for agricultural. There are no rivers or lakes in the city but there is a huge lake an hour outside the city, it is called Dukan lake, and it is the source of water for the people in the city. The weather is great out there, and we do have four seasons, winter (season), summer, fall and spring. It snows roughly about 7 days per year. Kurdistan has mild winters and hot summers. The west of my city is known for (present) producing pomegranate. Halabja pomegranates are famous for its exceptional quality, rich flavor, and large size.

The west of my city was known for (past not now) producing pomegranate.

The west of my city has been known for (from the past until now but now has stopped) producing pomegranate.

My hometown is historical. During the 1980s and 1990s, Sulaimaniyah experienced significant hardships, including the Anfal Campaign, which targeted the Kurdish population by Saddam Hussein's regime. More than 85,000 people were killed in one hour, and most of them were children and women. The Halabja chemical attack was one of the most tragic events in Kurdish history.

One of the most interesting things in my hometown is the variety of food. It is known for its delicious food, especially kababs. There is a variety of food, including, dolma, rice, bean, and tika. Dolma is one of the famous Kurdish foods. People cook dolma for every event especially cultural events.

There are more than 5 universities in my city, including public and private. The University of Sulaimaniyah is one of the public universities which offers education for free. Students can study for any field without having tuition fees or charges. There are three big malls as well that provide all human necessities.

By Nahro Ameen



**Casablanca** is a large, busy city located on the western side of Morocco, along the Atlantic Ocean. It is the biggest, most important city in Morocco, known for its modern buildings and strong vibrant economy. Geographically, Casablanca has an industrial city areas and flat land. To the north, you can visit clean sandy beaches, and to the south, you'll find large industrial zones. To the east, is the famous, historical landmark of Hassan II Mosque, and to the west, you can find the busy port and marina that offer beautiful views. Casablanca has a mild, pleasant climate, with cool, wet winters and warm, dry summers.

One interesting historical fact is that it was a small fishing village before growing into a major economic city, especially after the French colonization. If you are going there, I would recommend visiting the Hassan II Mosque, one of the largest mosques in the world, known for its beautiful, unique design. You can also explore the old medina with its narrow, colorful streets, or relax on the sandy beach along the coast. The city is also famous for its vibrant, modern nightlife and shopping malls like Morocco Mall, which is one of the largest malls in Africa. It offers a variety of shops, restaurants, and entertainment options.

**By Khadija Idhssaine**

My hometown's name is **Douala**, the largest city in Cameroon, on the Atlantic Ocean. It's coast is approximately 130 square miles (210 km<sup>2</sup>). It is also the economic capital of Cameroon. There are many geographical features like in the eastern part of the city, there is the Douala International Airport, the busiest in the CEMAC. In the southern part, there is the Wouri River estuary, also a sandy beach. Many people around the world come and visit it. It is a famous beach with much entertainment and also crowds all of the time.

Douala is an old city in Cameroon with interesting stories and facts. There is the Douala Maritime Museum, the richest maritime museum. The building is shaped like a boat and the museum occupies 400 m<sup>2</sup>. It is a really clean, modern, and quiet place. There is also the new freedom statue, made with recycled materials. Many artists do their shows there, so it is always full of people and noise. Likewise, Douala is a home to a number of higher educational institutions, and professional schools. It has the biggest university of Cameroon named University of Douala, with many departments like science, art, and health departments. Some buildings are colorful and seem industrial.

Talking about my hometown it is also talking about people. First all of, people are friendly and like partying, drinking and dancing. There are many dancing places, and some are attractive and modern, others seem ancient because of their architecture.

To sum up, Douala is one of the hottest cities in Cameroon. It is not easy to live there without an air conditioner (without air conditioning) in your home. It is also a city of floods, so if you plan to visit, think about these things before travelling there.

**By Marie Mewamba**

I grew up in a big town called **Cauayan**. It is located on the Philippine island of Luzon, in the province of Isabela. It is about as big as the city of Calgary. The east side of the town is mountainous, but the rest is flat. About half of the land is being farmed, and most crops are rice, sugar cane, and corn. The weather is usually humid and rainy.

Because of the fast improvement of the town, it became a city, and since then has become the fastest growing city in the province. Within just a few years,

commercial buildings, malls, and hotels have been built. There are some interesting places within and outside the city. There's a dozen resorts, parks, and museums too. Located on the north side of the city is the Cagayan River, the longest river in the province. And on the west side, just a half hour drive is the biggest dam in the province, which produces the electricity for the province and beyond.

The city has 2 college-universities, one being public and the other being private. There are also three malls to which the people often go not just to shop but also to cool themselves. They take advantage of the mall being air-conditioned.

The locals are mostly friendly, and they come from different backgrounds and ethnicities. The city has 2 local languages, but it is not usual to meet people that speak more than 3 languages.

I am looking forward to seeing the city again.

**By Erwin Caigas**

**Damascus**, the capital of Syria, is my city. It is a small city in size and area, as its area is 105 square kilometers. It is flat and has one mountain, Mount Qasioun, which overlooks it, and a beautiful river called Barada River passes through it. Damascus contains ancient and very famous landmarks, such as the Great Umayyad Mosque, and the long Hamidiyah Souk, which is roofed with Iraqi mosaics, and tourists from all over the world visit them. They are famous not only in Syria, but in the Arab world and the continent of Asia. Damascus has moderate and pleasant weather, without humidity.

I studied at the University of Damascus, which is a large and ancient university, and all branches are taught, including the study of medicine in the mother tongue, and I believe that it is the only country that does not teach it in English. As for its markets, they are beautiful and enjoyable for shopping, and Damascus is distinguished by its luxurious embroidered fabric, which is famous for its quality and beauty, and the evidence for that is that the Queen of Britain bought her wedding dress in Damascus. As for the ancient museum, it has copper and wooden furniture crafted with precision and exquisite design.

The people of Damascus are generous and love tourists and welcome them. They are very kind people. And everyone in Zasuria has known this beautiful and wonderful feeling.

**By Alyaa Ammar**

**Douala**  
**Cauayan Damascus**  
**Casablanca**

My hometown **Jalandhar** is located in the Punjab, which is a part of India. It's area is around 51,000 square kilometers. There are a number of geographical features like rivers and dams, and weather is very enjoyable. In my hometown, there are a lot of interesting places like the Golden Temple, which is located in Amritsar, Punjab and is a major center of Sikhism. There are big five rivers in the Punjab.

There are a number of interesting stories and historical facts, like Maharaja Ranjit Singh who established the Sikh empire 1799. He was a very kind and honest king in Punjab. Two of the most impressive and interesting things are history and culture. There is natural beauty and delicious food that attract people to visit. In my hometown there are big parks, schools and playgrounds.

In my hometown, there is a big college named Sikh National College and there are a number of students studying there. This college is very famous in my hometown.

The people are very helpful, honest, and hardworking. They know abouts their culture and traditions, so my hometown is such as very amazing place.

**By Jatinder Singh**

## HOMETOWNS

I live in downtown **Casablanca**, the largest and most crowded city in Morocco, with more than 5 million people living in 384 km<sup>2</sup>. This is almost 2.5 times smaller than Calgary, but with three times the population.

Casablanca is called the financial capital of Morocco. If you want to improve yourself and build a strong career, you should definitely work for a few years in Casablanca. This city has a lot of malls, and one of the most famous is the Morocco Mall, with more than 350 stores and a beautiful large aquarium, as well as a wonderful view of the sea. It is definitely the mall you should visit when you travel to Casablanca.

You cannot come to Casablanca without contemplating the wonder of the Hassan II Mosque, which is built partly on the Atlantic Ocean and partly on land. It is one of the largest and most spectacular mosques in the world.


The city also has an old medina that tells the story of the French colonization, and it has been preserved to maintain the beauty of its construction. You should understand it is definitely a place to visit.

Although Casablanca may be crowded, it is still the most intriguing city, from the old city to the new green city, which accommodates all those who come for work or tourism.

**By Adam Jouahr**



# CELPIP® PREP COURSE!

Intense Online Prep Course

 **When?**

**Tuesday & Thursday**  
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM  
8 sessions  
Ongoing registration

**FIND OUT MORE!**

 (403) 283-1111  
 [equilibrium.ab.ca/celpip.html](http://equilibrium.ab.ca/celpip.html)



# EVENING ENGLISH CLASS

**Tuesday & Thursday**

3:30 - 5:30 PM

- Ongoing registration
- 8-week program
- Prerequisite: min. **CLB 4** in all skills
- Online class
- Teacher: **Phillip Mattie**


**CONTACT US TO REGISTER!**

[www.equilibrium.ab.ca](http://www.equilibrium.ab.ca)  
(403)-283-1111

# Conversation Club

 **When?**

**Monday-Thursday:**  
• 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm (in-person)  
Start Date: **Ongoing registration**



 **Where?**

**707 14 Street NW, Calgary T2N 2A4**

**What is it?**

- ✓ Led by professional English teachers
- ✓ Informal discussions on interesting topics
- ✓ Learn new words, improve grammar, gain confidence in speaking
- ✓ Meet new people
- ✓ No textbooks required

**How to register?**

 (403) 283-1111  
 [school@equilibrium.ab.ca](mailto:school@equilibrium.ab.ca)

**\$150**  
per month

**CONTACT US TO REGISTER!**