Bonjour, it’s a Malaysian life!

Malaysia, in its aim to become an international hub of educational excellence, is fast becoming a choice destination for foreign students.

French students Florine Gaudicelli, Solène Senlis and Tarek Chelaifa have chosen to spend a year in Malaysia as part of their tertiary studies.

The trio from Euromed Management in Marseille, France, are currently studying business management at Universiti Tun Abdul Razak (UniRazak).

Part of the allure of coming to Malaysia for the three students is the opportunity to do some sightseeing with the trio having local and international travel on their agenda.

Florine and Solène have already been to Langkawi, Malacca and Penang; they also plan to visit Indonesia and Thailand.

Tarek has visited Tioman Island and is waiting for a friend to come down from France so they can travel through Malaysia and South-East Asia together.

"One of the reasons why I choose to study in Malaysia is its location in South-East Asia. "From here, I can travel to Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and other places," says Tarek.

The son of a diplomat, he dreams of following in his father’s footsteps and is currently doing a degree in International Business in France.

Meanwhile, Florine says she is passionate about the pastry business but may not necessarily start one in France.

As for Solene, she enjoys organising events but says that she is still exploring her options.

Despite the differences in potential career paths, the trio are unanimous on what they miss the most while in Malaysia — family and food.

Bread and cheese top the list of the food they miss with Solene craving for Camembert; a soft, creamy French cheese.

Although they have found stores that sell it, albeit with a higher price than that in France, they feel that it is worth paying the price just for a taste of home.

However, French food is not all that matters as the trio are very adventurous when it comes to trying out the local cuisine.

Florine especially enjoys the street food and follows a simple rule of “orange or red means spicy”.

Tarek, who loves spicy food, has no such rule and counts peteh amongst his favourite dishes. He also enjoys noodles and kway teow.

All three are also gung-ho when it comes to learning about different cultures.

“I want to learn about all the cultures that Malaysia has to offer," says Solene, adding that UniRazak has a good mix in its student population.

Tarek says he sees a lot of cooperation amongst the locals despite them being of different races and adds that “what really sticks out in Malaysia is how multicultural it is.”

All three enjoy the warm tropical weather that Malaysia offers and do not find it too hot or humid.

“What is strange is how cold it gets in the buildings," says Florine.

Solene adds that she never thought they would be wearing sweaters or jackets in Malaysia but finds herself doing so as it is sometimes cold inside the buildings.

Despite the occasional “cold spell” indoors, Tarek enjoys the warm hospitality from the locals.

“The people here are very nice and Malaysia is an easy country to settle into,” he says.

He also likes that everything can be negotiated including his apartment rent!

They live in Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur, and share their lodgings with other French students or workers.