

MY STUDENT EXCHANGE EXPERIENCE

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Undoubtedly, I will keep an everlasting memory of my Erasmus in Hradec Králové. I made some great friends that I want to keep in the future, despite the distance and our differences. There are many incredible aspects that I would like to expose here, and one of them is the diversity of people that we encounter. I was living in the dormitory of Palachova, so I had the chance to meet a lot of people from all over the world, mainly from South America. And I learned a lot from them. It is easy to meet others as we can see each other in class, but also in pubs, bars, and restaurants, or even clubs in the city. It was a big advantage to get to know new people, even when you are shy like me, and get used to sharing your space, and making new bounds.

Sometimes, the weather can be really bad, but staying only during the summer semester, I had the chance to enjoy mostly good weather. And when it got warmer and sunnier, we made a lot of picnics and excursions to the woods and the lakes nearby the dorms. Also, making a barbecue at night is the best way to meet with Czech people around the fire!

Another thing that I particularly appreciated was the possibility to travel, first around the Czech Republic, but also across all of Europe.



I had the opportunity to visit incredible places like Kutna Hora, Pardubice, Liberec, Olomouc, and Kuks. There are a lot of museums to see in Prague and I have already visited a lot of them: the Kafka museum, Kampa Museum, Kunsthalle, and the National Museum. There are also really nice places to eat food and sweets; I recommend the “Café Louvre” and the Pavlova. Of course, we also saw the astronomical tower, Charles’ bridge and the castle, which are very romantic. I had the opportunity to go to the Rudolfinum, listening to classical music three times and it was an unforgettable experience.

Also, I went with my friends to Vienna, Bratislava, Berlin, and Krakow. All of these trips were really instructive and this is easily the best point of Erasmus. It is also cheap to travel with student discounts. Vienna was expensive but worth it, the Belvedere palace is magnificent. But it is also the city of music, so we went to the museum of music and it was interactive. In Bratislava, we spent two days, we tried the traditional potato dumplings with sour cream and the garlic soup in a pub that was excellent. We visited the castle and took the time to wander around the city, simply looking at the baroque architecture, pretty much the same as the one we can find in the Czech republic. In Berlin, the island of museums is a must-do, and the Humboldt museum was particularly good, but we had trouble because of the reservation needed to enter the most well-known museums. Of course, we went to see the Checkpoint Charlie, the remaining parts of the Berlin Wall, and the Reichstag. In Krakow, we tasted the famous pierogi and visited the old town with its ramparts with a free walk tour, a really good alternative to visiting with a good cultural explanation. We also visited Auschwitz, which was a frightening but important experience for me.



The professors encourage us to travel a lot, and they are really comprehensive. They often orientate their discussions towards our trips. I was surprised by how friendly the teachers are, and the wide choice of courses we have made it easy for me to find courses that interested me. I do not regret my choices at all. The methods and dates of the exams are also flexible, which is very practical when it comes to travel and coming back.

Czech food is really interesting and different from the food of western Europe, so it was important for me to try it. The goulash is one of my favorites, with the duck plate with potatoes and dumplings, but also the Svíčková omáčka is really tasty. The dumplings might look a little bit worthless at first but they are good, especially the sweet ones that we can find in Prague. Of course, I tried a lot of times the Czech beer and I was never disappointed, especially Kozel and Pilsner.

Overall, I enjoyed a lot the five months I spent here.