

MY STUDENT EXCHANGE EXPERIENCE

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When people think of studying one semester abroad, it is common to find an immense number of different interests. There are always those who want to acquire new perspectives about their fields by studying in a different academic setting. There are those who want to get to know the world by traveling and exploring different parts of a new city and country. There is also a group of people that is interested in knowing different cultures by interacting with others that come from different backgrounds. And finally, there are also people that think of their future, thinking that the contacts made abroad, the new academic perspective, and the new experiences are great inputs for their professional lives.



It really does not matter what your interest in a semester abroad is because the Erasmus semester offers them all, even if you are less interested in one, you will get the possibility to build also upon those spheres of your life. These opportunities begin when you move into a country that you do not know. Even before the beginning of your studies, you begin to learn about other cultures because you will have time to know new people from different countries and cultures. At least that is what happened to me when I first arrived and had the opportunity to make my first train trip with Brazilians, Lebanese, Russians, and Hongkongers, among others.



This cultural experience was only the first one of many others. After that, the nights of food sharing, culture comparison, games, and fun came along. Even before the beginning of the classes, I had already learned a lot. This does not mean that the classes were not important, on the contrary, they were. They were the opportunity to understand different perspectives, mainly European ones, about how the world is. The academic perspectives made me realize how important it is to hear the others and try to understand them even if you do not agree 100%.

Finally, in my Erasmus experience, there was also the fact of living in a new place where you have no background. Getting out of your country and trying to build new relations with those who had left their countries behind, but also with those who had not and are used to living in the place that you are now visiting is an interesting challenge. This entails getting out of your comfort zone and growing as a person, especially in values such as respect and tolerance. All of these things allow me to say that my semester abroad was one of the experiences that will for sure mark my life forever, with a lot of moments that I will treasure in my heart.

