

MY STUDENT EXCHANGE EXPERIENCE

SOFIA ISABEL CORREIA DO CARMO


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My experience here in Hradec Kralové was absolutely amazing. My expectations were already high, as I know that the Erasmus period is usually a fun time to meet people from all over the world and travel, but this city made it even better than I expected. It's a university town, so it provided me with a very good academic environment because it made it much easier to meet a lot of students.

Usually, most Erasmus students stay in student dormitories, which from what I've seen, are not that bad and make it easy to get along with other Erasmus students, but I decided to rent my own room in the city center for 6000 CZK which is equivalent to €242.75 (expenses included), which is even cheaper than what I paid for my rent in Portugal, and I was able to have access to an entire apartment with my own room and the privacy I needed. Although the dorms are cheaper and provide another kind of experience, sometimes closer to our colleagues, I don't regret my decision because despite living a little further away from them, I met a lot of people from all over the world and created beautiful friendships that I believe that will last for the rest of my life. I really believe that I managed to enjoy my Erasmus period in the same way as everyone else, or even more, given the central location and the added privacy, but I needed to research and book in advance (a few months earlier). From the beginning, I participated in almost all the activities of the university and ESN, so I had no difficulty creating connections with my colleagues. I quickly integrated and started to live my life always with my Erasmus friends by my side.

The Czech Republic is in the center of Europe and train transport is super cheap if we have a student card so I really believe that there is no better place to do Erasmus if we want to travel around Europe, or even within the country that has so many beautiful cities full of history and gothic architecture, and also full of nature. Within the country, I went to Prague, Pardubice, Olomouc, Kutná Hora, Liberec, and Poděbrady. Outside the country, I went to Vienna (Austria) and Bratislava (Slovakia). I would have loved to have traveled a lot more, I think most people traveled more than I did, but unfortunately, I had health problems that made it impossible for me to live the Erasmus period to its fullest potential. Still, under the circumstances, it was the best experience I've ever had in my life for which I will be forever grateful. There is nothing more rewarding than getting to know so many different cultures and traveling to new places.



When it comes to studying, I also loved it, because the classes were very captivating, the teachers love to have debates in the classroom and I had never had this experience in Portugal. I never had to read so many articles weekly and submit so many essays either, but it was nothing excessive that interfered that much with my experiences here.

The adaptation here, despite the initial cold weather that I was not used to (I am from the south of Portugal) and Czechs (in general), speak little English and friendliness is not their strongest feature, it was very easy because I had a great coordinator who was always available to clarify any doubts I had and gave us everything we needed. When I got sick, she was always worried about me and reached out to me to make sure I was okay, and always did her best to advise me through all the difficult steps.

It is with great regret that I leave this city behind, I will miss this very much. I wish I could stay longer, but good things end fast. However, the memories we create and the connections we establish with the people here will always remain.