

## **Studying in the sunniest capital of Europe**

During the 2015 fall semester I lived in Lisbon as an exchange student at Nova School for Business and Economics.

### **Preparation**

The preparation of my exchange took more time than I expected in front. In particular the amount of documents you have to sign and get both your Home as Host University to sign as well. For example I had to arrange my Learning Agreement, Grant Agreement, Dutch public transport compensation, Erasmus scholarship and the documents for both my apartment in Lisbon and Rotterdam. I have rented an apartment before I arrived in Lisbon. I recommend searching for rooms before your departure, but to make your final decision when you have seen them. I would be careful with payments before signing a contract as well, because I have heard stories where rooms were not the same as shown on the pictures.

### **Arrival**

The arrival in Lisbon was very easy. There are two big Erasmus Students Unions who provide you with all the information you need in the beginning of your exchange. They will help you to get a cheap Portuguese phone number, public transport card and finding a room. I will definitely recommend to become member of Erasmus Life Lisboa(ELL). They organize great parties and trips to the highlights of Portugal and also give you discounts to many useful things. The membership costs around 10 euros which I already earned back with the discount of one surf lesson.

The university arranged a lot of welcome dinners and parties, which were very useful to meet people from your own university. But do not worry about meeting other Erasmus students. You will meet a lot Erasmus students at the Erasmus Corner in Bairro Alto (The most common nightlife area).

### **Courses**

#### *Strategy (7,5 ECTS)*

This is a first course in Strategy. It aims at (i) introducing many of the main topics in Strategy and (ii) training the student to think strategically when analyzing a firm's behavior as it competes in the marketplace.

I recommend taking this course, because it is an easy course and I liked the mathematical exercises. The teacher speaks English fluently and the practical classes are very useful and sufficient to pass the course. The only disadvantage is that the professor does not use slides and his lectures are a little boring.

#### *Management Accounting (7,5 ECTS)*

This course aims to provide students with an understanding of the information that must be produced within the companies for the valuation of their inventory, for decision making by their managers, and for the planning, control and performance measurement of their activities. Concern is given to the design, use and role of accounting information in the management of organizational activities.

I am studying econometrics in Rotterdam and I wanted to gain knowledge about general economic courses. This course was useful to learn the basics about management accounting, but I would not recommend this course to others who have already attended accounting courses. The teacher has a Portuguese accent, but is very helpful if you ask her.

#### *Law for Business and Economics (4 ECTS)*

In this course students will become familiar with the topics and tools necessary to understand the interaction of law within their daily life, especially with regards to Business and Economics.

I highly recommend choosing this course. The teacher studied at Harvard and speaks English as her mother tongue. She is an interesting speaker and you only have two lectures a week. This course has one midterm which counts 30 percent of your final grade and one final exam.

#### *Entrepreneurship (7,5 ECTS)*

This course is an introduction to the diversified nature of entrepreneurship. Through theoretical lectures, case-studies, presentations by guests, and discussions, the course focuses on the entrepreneur's point of view during the process of starting a new business.

You have to start a company with four other teammates during this course. Every week you work on a different part of your business and present this during lecture. The professor did not show up once and came late regularly. Besides that, the course was vague in my opinion. The lectures were kind of useless, so it is sufficient to just attend practical classes.

The only disadvantage of studying at Nova during the fall semester is that the final exam period is in January which overlaps with the beginning of block 3 in Rotterdam.

Useful link for your course selection:

<http://www.novasbe.unl.pt/en/programs/bachelor-deegree/curriculum/courses-description>

### **Finances**

#### *Revenue*

Before going on exchange I applied for the Erasmus scholarship which gives you around 200 euros a month. Besides that I got a compensation for my public transportation card in the Netherlands from the government worth 97 euros a month. I also got 280 a month from the government as study compensation and I used 2000 euros which I earned during a holiday job.

#### *Expanses*

For renting a house you should expect to spend between 300 and 350 euros a month, depending on the location and size of your apartment. I recommend to live in the neighborhood of Baixa-Chiado, because it is in the middle of the city and you will have access to the two most important subway lines.

The public transportation card costs 36 euros a month. This card gives access to metro, bus and tram. Besides that I spend on average 15 euros a month for the bus to Costa Caparica where I surfed once

a week on average. You pay around 6 euros per cab in Lisbon and this is a perfect way to get home after clubbing. I shared a lot of cabs, but still spent around 20 euros a month on cabs.

With your ELL card you could get a two hours surf lesson including material for just 10 euros during the week. I two times bought a five times ticket for just 40 euros each. The costs of buying a second hand surfboard is around 150 euros and a new wetsuit is around the same price. Besides that I played basketball for the university team which was free and paid by Nova.

The best part of studying in Lisbon is the cheap way of living. My monthly mobile phone costs were just 8 euros a month including 500 MB internet and 500 minutes/text messages and more important you pay around 1 euro a beer in the most bars in Bairro Alto. You pay around 10 euros for a dinner in a restaurant and the supermarket prices are the same as in the Netherlands.

Although the prices I recommend to keep your expenses in mind during your exchange period. As a result of the low prices I lived as a king resulting in spending 800 euros a month to (road)trips to different cities, restaurants, daily groceries, bars and clubs. But I think you can have a very pleasant way of living for 400 euros a month for daily life as well.

Unforeseen costs are your expenses when friends visit you in Lisbon. It is a short vacation for them, so they want to live like that. If your friends like to party like mine do, expect to spend around 70 euros a day during their visit.

### **Daily life**

Living in Lisbon as an exchange student was like living in a dream for me. As a result of the daily sunny weather I felt like being on vacation every day. The temperature has never been lower than 17 degrees and there were just 3 rainy days in 4 months. Portuguese people are very friendly and helpful and the young generation speaks English very well. A disadvantage of the good weather is that it influenced the culture as well. Portuguese people do not know the word 'hurry'. Although you have to wait a little longer in the queue of the supermarket, you will get used and slightly appreciate this chilling vibe.

The city itself has a lot of beautiful secret places which you will discover during your semester. The rooftop bars and clubs were very fancy and the old city center has his historical charm. Within 45 minutes you are at a beach which has perfect waves.

The central location of Lisbon in Portugal gives you opportunities to visit both the beautiful and sunny Algarve in the south and Porto in the north which are both really worth visiting. If you book your flight early tickets are just 40 euros both ways to Porto, Madeira or the Azores and renting a car costs around 30 euros a day everything included.

Finally the best thing of going on exchange is meeting new people. You will learn a lot of things about the different cultures and people in foreign countries. Exchange students are very social in general and are open to meet fellow students. You will make new friends and study, party and travel together. So where are you waiting for? Subscribe for your exchange to Lisbon!