

Exchange in Barcelona

General Information

I took part in the Erasmus+ Exchange Program from September 2015 until the end of January 2016. I was selected by the partner university Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. The Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona is located just outside the city center of Barcelona, Spain. It takes around 35 minutes by train from Placa Catalunya to go to the university. The transportation that is going to the university is called Ferro carril. You have to take S2 or S55 if you live in the city center and not at the campus. The connection is good, though, and trains go frequently and punctually.

Preparation

The Universities provide you a lot about what you have to prepare and take care of before leaving. However there are still some points to pay attention.

First of all if you have a Dutch nationality or if you are a European citizen then you can just book your flight to Barcelona. So, you don't have to worry about getting a Visa or a permit.

As second, Health insurance, you have to have a European health insurance card. You can check it by looking at the back of your health insurance card.

Temporary citizenship (NIU), this is a kind of document that you might need to provide to have a substantial discounts at companies like mobile network providers and gyms. It is not easily obtained from what I have experienced. You have to make an appointment online to go to the police station. I had a lot of difficulties for getting an appointment. So, if you are not staying longer 4 months I suggest you not to get it.

The most difficult and annoying part is to find an accommodation. I had some troubles before finding a place. There are several internet sites (most of the are Spanish), one of them is idealista which, I was using. There are a lot of groups on Facebook too, however it is not trustworthy and most of the time they are looking for girls instead of boys. Another suggestion is if you want to live in the city center try to

find a place near plaza catalunya, provenca or gracia, ferrocarril stations. So you can reach the university with one transport vehicle.

As last, please learn some Spanish before you go to Barcelona because you will be surprised with the level of English that the people are talking. The locals are not so helpful and kind to tourists, actually they don't care.

Arrival

After you landed and you are in Barcelona with its nice weather, you have to take the aerobus to reach the city center.

If you decide to live in the city center then you are going to travel with the S2 or S55 to get to the university. There is a public transport card that is 155 euros for 3 months. It is unlimited during the weekdays and in the weekends. This public transport card is easy to buy at the machine in any station almost. It is called T-Jove and you have to choose for 2 zones. Whole of Barcelona is zone 1, however for Bellaterra(university campus) you need 2 zones.

Buy a prepaid Spanish sim card. You can go to Orange, Vodafone or Movistar and ask easily for the prices that will fit you budget. I suggest you to get a simcard with internet because the wifi at the university is pretty bad.

Course

The classes end around mid December but the exams are in January. There are some courses that provide you early exams so you don't miss the classes back in Rotterdam. I took 2 4th year courses, 1 first year and 1 third year course. For the 4th year courses they provide early exams however the other 2 they didn't.

-Foreign Trade (6 ECTS) This class focused on Export and Import between countries. The main focus was on what Spain was importing and exporting. It is a very interesting and actually easy course to pass. It also has an early exam planned. You have a lot of freedom with the projects; the teacher didn't have any minimum requirements.

-Entrepreneurship (6 ECTS) This course is so fun with Javier. I highly suggest you to choose this one. It is almost impossible to fail the course. It will focus on what a business plan is, what are its functions as well as its main sections. Every two weeks you have to read a case and answer its question but it is quiet easy. Participating is mandatory to get bonus points.

-Finance 1 (6 ECTS) If you are considering to do Finance in your master I suggest you to follow this course. It is quiet easy to pass by studying the old exams. However this course does not have an early exam. The exam is in mid January. It is almost the same Finance course that we followed at the Erasmus University but this one is more theoretical.

-Math 1 (6 ECTS) It is the basic math class, I do not suggest to choose this course because you will probably be the only Erasmus student in the class with a lot young Spanish students.

Finances

Barcelona is as expensive as Rotterdam or Amsterdam. However the rent was not so expensive, I was living in the city center, it was walking distance from Passeig de Gracia and Plaza Catalunya. I paid 380 included everything. You have to be careful with the landlords because most of them don't provide a contract so be aware of that.

The transportation ticket costs 155 euros for 3 months unlimited access for all the public transportation. Taxis are not so expensive too. There are a lot of nice restaurants where you can eat delicious food. These are not cheap, so most of my money went for nice food.

The cost for a sim-card is around 10-20 euros depends on the combination that you want. If you are looking for a cheap supermarket I definitely recommend you to go to Mercadano.

If you like going out and partying, then the most important part of the night is pre-drinking. The reason of this is the drink prices in the club. For example a beer costs around 7 euros in a nightclub.

Daily Life

The city is full of museums, nice buildings and beautiful roads to walk on. I explored the city by foot with the nice weather. I would definitely recommend visiting the Sagrada Familia, Parc Guell with the nice view, Tibidabo hill and the museum of the history of Barcelona.

People take their time to eat and drink and relax. For lunch a lot of restaurants offer menus where you can eat for a payable price warm and nice food. The beach is like perfect to go visit everyday. The holiday atmosphere stays all year round. The nightlife is quiet crazy and amazing. The Spanish have dinner around 22.00 and they go to the clubs at 2 am. If you have close friends I recommend rent a car and going to different cities in Spain. You will see the amazing difference between Barcelona and the other Spanish cities.

If you have question please don't hesitate to contact me. This is my email address; emretrkn21@gmail.com. I can provide you more information in detail. Enjoy your stay!