

# Exchange semester in Chile



For the second half of 2016 I went on exchange to the capital of Chile, Santiago. I studied at la Universidad de Chile, facultad de economía y negocios. There are a lot of universities in Santiago and therefore also a lot of fellow exchange students. It also is one of the safest cities in South America, so except for a lot of pickpocketing you don't really have to worry about that aspect.

## Preparation

The application procedure to the university was not very smooth for me, apparently there was some sort of miscommunication between the universities, which made me miss the original application deadline, but fortunately it worked out. After you have been accepted the procedure is pretty straight forward though. They send some information about housing, which I do not recommend using since it really is not very hard to find a place when you get there. You can also get a Chilean buddy to answer all your questions but they don't put you in contact with them until a couple of days before the beginning of the semester when I was already there.

You can get a student visa, but it saves a lot of effort and money to just go on a tourist visa. With the student visa you can get a discount for public transport, and with the tourist visa you can only stay 90 days, but I still think it is not really worth getting the student visa. If you want you can take a bus to Mendoza in Argentina and back just to renew your visa, but it's likely you'll get out of the country anyways.

As far as vaccinations go, I had to renew my DTP vaccination. If you have travelled before you probably won't need any.

## Arrival

I arrived there with my parents about a week before the introduction started, and did the standard things, like getting a public transport card and a Chilean sim card. After about a week or so I found a house, if you want to find something this website might be useful: [www.compartodebto.cl](http://www.compartodebto.cl). I ended up paying about 360 euros, but if you want you can find something a lot cheaper. The university organised a compulsory introduction day, with just about anything you needed to know about studying there for the semester. Also, I arrived in the winter, which is fine during the day, but at night it can still get pretty cold. Since almost every house in Chile doesn't have heating, you definitely need to bring some warm clothes. However, because it is winter, you can also go skiing there, which is very cool.



## **Courses**

The general level of the courses was quite a bit lower than I was used to in Rotterdam. Most of the examinations were in essay form, which is also not what I was used to. All the courses are 6 new credits, which is equivalent to 6 ECTS. Therefore you need 4 of them to reach the 24 ECTS you need to obtain to fill your minor and electives. I chose my courses such that I only had to go to the university on Mondays and Thursdays, and that I would finish my semester in early November, November 7<sup>th</sup> to be precise. This resulted in the following courses:

### **Latin America in world affairs**

This course is about participation of Latin American countries in the international political system. The grading of this course consists of reading tests about papers relevant to the subject, some more interesting than others, and a written paper in groups. Although some of the material is quite interesting it is really hard to pay attention to the lectures because of the professor. This course has compulsory attendance but does not require a lot of time. I recommend taking it.

### **Globalization, Treaties and Trade Agreements**

This course is taught by the same professor as “Latin America in world affairs” and has the same setup, so also compulsory attendance. The course is about mostly American politics and the same applies to this course: there is definitely some interesting material but the lectures are hard to pay attention to. I also recommend taking it.



### **Urban economics**

This course basically covers everything economic activity in cities and the layout of them. It uses some models to do so, but they are not very mathematical. The grading of this course consists of a presentation, reading tests about papers, and a final exam. The course required a little more work than the previous 2, but given the generally lower level, it still was not very time-consuming. The course does not have obligatory attendance however.

### **Global development**

In this course, the focus lies on the development of mostly developing countries, in several aspects, like economical or healthcare. This was probably the most interactive class. The grading consisted of a midterm 3 presentations and a final. This course did not have compulsory attendance, and was not too much work.

### **Finances**

The price level in Santiago is actually not too different than in Rotterdam, in contrary to what one might expect. You will find that prices in the supermarket are pretty similar, usually slightly lower. However, some things are quite a lot cheaper. Your mobile phone costs are also pretty much the same as back home. Public transport is not very expensive nor is it cheap. I also spent quite a bit of money travelling but of course you can do as much or little of that as you want. It is also possible to save money by finding a cheaper place to live, most people paid less than I did. My most constant monthly costs were as follows

rent	360
food	160
Going out	110



## Daily life

The daily life in South America is as expected a lot slower than in Europe. Don't expect people to be on time, even your profesors. The system in general is not very efficient, but I did not have a very busy life so it didn't matter. The nice thing about Santiago is that there are a lot of things to do in and around the city. In the winter you can go skiing, and for the summer, the beach is very close. There are also a lot of parks in the city, where you can just chill, and hills which can give you a nice view of the city. That is, if you have clear day because there is a lot of smog in the air and the air is quite dirty. Because there are so many exchange students in the city, there are a lot of activities especially for exchange students, if you are interested. Going out in Santiago can be a lot of fun, in the neighbourhood Bellavista. In Bellavista there are a lot of bars, clubs, and restaurants you can go there pretty much any time of day. There also is a small gym on campus and a football pitch, where we played a couple of times with the exchange students. I also had time to make a nice couple of trips in Chile, Argentina, and Brazil. The nice thing about Santiago as an exchange location is that you can do a lot of nice things around the city, and that there are a lot of exchange students. Great place for an exchange!

