

Exchange at Yonsei



Hey potential Yonsei exchange student. In this report I am shortly going to describe my exchange experience at Yonsei University and I hope it will help you to choose Yonsei as your exchange destination. If you want some more information about it or if you want to personally talk to me feel free to contact me: paolo.m.cola@gmail.com

1. General Information

University: Yonsei University

Country: South Korea

City: Seoul

Address: 50 Yonsei-ro, Sinchon-dong, Seodaemun-gu

Period: September-December

2. Preparation

Before leaving your country to go to South Korea the most important things that you have to take care of are:

- your student VISA
- insurance
- Course Registration
- Accommodation

It is mandatory to have a student visa and an insurance plan before going to Korea. A visa is mandatory if a person stays more than 90 days in Korea which means that since your exchange is 4 months you surely need one. Once you have been accepted at Yonsei University, they will send you all the documents you need in order to apply for a student visa. The visa is a single-entry so if you wish to travel you need to apply for an Alien registration card (I will explain better in the arrival section).

Yonsei requires you to have an insurance that covers you in Korea. Some people have an insurance that covers them worldwide if for you this is not the case you need to contact your insurance to ask if they offer this possibility or you have to find one. The one I bought is called Amieasy and I paid 160 euros to cover all my stay.

Course registration opens up few weeks before the start of the semester. The registration is made of multiple rounds because spots are limited so if you do not get accepted in one or more of the courses you have selected you have the time to apply for a different one. When you pick the courses you have to grade the importance of the course for you. You have 60 points and you have to distribute them among the chosen courses. The more points you gave to a course the higher the probability you will be accepted.

Regarding the accommodation, there are two possibilities: living on campus or living off-campus. If you choose to live on campus there are two different dorms SK Global and International House. The first one offers both single and double rooms which have a private bathroom while International House has only double rooms and the toilets and showers are shared but the rooms have a small fridge. In order to be sure to find a place in the dorms you need to apply for it through the website right after the registration opens since the demand is really high and the spots are limited (I did not get accepted for example). Anyway, I think the best solution is to live off-campus because you have total freedom. You can try to find a place on the Facebook page Housing in Seoul, on Airbnb or Goshipages, a website where you can find goshiwon. A goshiwon is like a dorm where everybody has a small fully-furnished private room and shares the kitchen. I have lived in a goshiwon is not very comfortable due to the size of the room (around 4 or 5 square meters including the bathroom) but it can be really cheap. These are the links for the Facebook page and Goshipages:

<https://goshipages.com/search/false/0/sinchon>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/housinginseoul/?fref=ts>

3. Arrival

When you arrive at the airport the most convenient way to get to your housing is by metro. There is a train that goes from Incheon airport to Hongik Station which is only one metro station away from Sinchon where most likely you are going to live. The train ticket costs only around 5 euros and the rides are frequent.

If you opted for the dorms, you can check in a week before classes start and you will be given a room key. After checking in you can go explore the campus and maybe Sinchon. One week before the start of the semester there is an orientation day, I suggest you to go because they will give you lots of useful information and during this day you start to meet people and build friendships.

During the orientation it will be explained how to apply for an alien registration card. Remember to do this as fast as possible if you plan to travel outside Korea. Obtaining this card will require you more efforts and time than you think. You can apply for the ARC only through Korean computers so you need to use those at the university. Also when applying choose for mail delivery, this will cost you ₩3000 and saves you a lot of time and hassle.

4. Courses

At Yonsei there are multiple courses taught in English available ranging from economics and business to history and cinema. As an ESE student you need to obtain a minimum of 24 ECTS which means 12 Korean credits. Regular undergraduate courses at Yonsei are worth 3 Korean credits that means you need to successfully finish at least 4 courses. The maximum amount of credits you can take is 18. I suggest you to subscribe for all the courses you can and then, during the add and drop period, pick the ones you like the most.

Even though Koreans spend most of their times in the library and they are famous for being clever and dedicated to work, I think the subjects are pretty easy especially if compared to what we are used to do. The material is not difficult in general and the exams are short and not really challenging. At Yonsei attendance is compulsory so you need to make sure to not skip too many classes otherwise you fail the course.

The four courses I have taken are the following: Strategic Management, Advertising, Entrepreneurship & Strategy and Public & Political Economics. Strategic Management was quite interesting and the professor was lovely and funny. We had to do different group assignments

that counted for the biggest part of the final grade. Advertising was for sure the most helpless course I have ever taken in my life. The professor was really disorganized and sometimes she did not show up for the class. Nobody really understood what we were actually studying since the classes as well as the material had no structure. The course I have found the most interesting is Entrepreneurship & Strategy. During the course we talked about stories of successful entrepreneurs and we learnt how to write a business plan and the most effective ways to present it to potential investors. The classes were really interactive and interesting. The course is not too difficult and I would definitely suggest you to attend it if you manage to find a free spot. Public & Political Economics was maybe the most requiring course I have taken. The professor was funny and even though his English was not the best he was completely understandable but I did not really enjoy the course. The material could have been even quite interesting but it was poorly explained and it was more about learning it by hart instead of fully understand the concepts.

5. Finances

Life in South Korea is cheaper than in Netherlands but it really depends on what. Eating at home is really expensive since prices of the food we are used to are high especially for fruits, vegetables (1 onions costs around 2 euros) and dairy products. On the other hand, eating at university and restaurants in general are extremely cheap so you do not to worry about it. Prices of taxis and other means of transportation are quite low. I would suggest to visit other countries plane tickets for flights in Asia are not too expensive and often Asian airlines make some promotions. This is a list of some helpful prices:

Item	Price
Flight	650,0 €
Housing:	
Goshiwon	1.600,0 €
International House	1.600,0 €
Sk Global	2.000,0 €
Alien Card	30,0 €
Meal at university	3,0 €
Meal outside:	
Cheap	4,0 €
Fast Food	5,0 €
Korean BBQ/ DakGalbi	7,0 €
Clubs	from 20 to 0
Beer	2,0 €
Soju	1,3 €
Taxi ride 10 min	6,0 €
Metro ticket	1,0 €

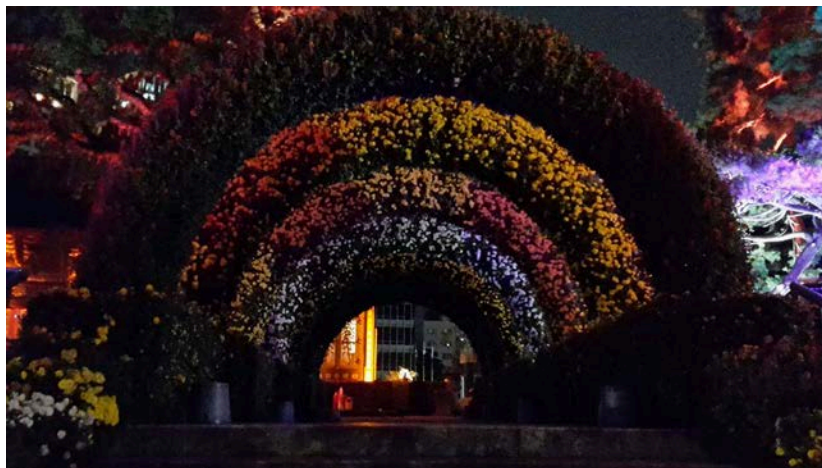
6. Daily Life / Travelling

Life in South Korea is much different than in Europe. I loved my time there since the first second, but if you have a cultural shock in the beginning is more than understandable. Koreans are really polite and shy but do not be surprised if they ask you a picture together or if they just stop you to tell you are beautiful/handsome, and they might offer you something to drink or if you get a lucky an entire dinner (it happened to me and my friends). Most probably you are going to have lunch and dinner outside everyday and this is something I really loved



because you are always out with your friends and you never need to cook which is one of the reasons why the time that you spend at home is minimal. Korean dishes are pretty similar and there just isn't that much variety, moreover food is usually extremely spicy but I think it is really good and you have the possibility to try some wired specialities like the alive octopus or the cow's intestine. I would recommend Korean BBQ and Chimaek (chicken and beer), they are both quite cheap and really tasty.

Within Seoul, there are lots of places to see, such as the palaces Gyeongbokgung, Changdeokgung and Changgyeonggung, the Seoul National Museum, the Han River, I visited the Lantern festival and the firework exhibition. I think the firework exhibition is unmissable there are amazing fireworks for 2 hours and just the atmosphere is great. Another wonderful event is the weekend of Yonsei against Korea university. They compete in five different sports to determine who is the



champion for that year. I watched only the football game and even if we lost the vibe was amazing, I had a lot of fun.

Seoul really never sleeps most of the restaurants and shops are always open especially the convenience stores (GS25, 7-eleven) which are everywhere and they never close. Nightlife

is amazing the number of pubs, bars and clubs is incredible. The best party areas are Sinchon for pubs and Hongdae and Itaewon for clubs but the most famous club, Octagon, is in Gangnam which is the poshest area of Seoul. The price tickets for clubs goes from 0 to 20 depending on the night, quite often there are some parties free for exchange students you just need to find them. I was usually going to the playground in Hongdae where all the exchange students meet and then from there you can choose what to do. Moreover, In October there is a dance music festival called

Spectrum which costs around 100 euros for Koreans but for exchange students if you can find ticket for 8 euros and it is for sure worth going.



I would recommend to travel the most you can since the studies are really simple and you are going to have a lot of free time. I went to Busan which is the second biggest city in Korea, Hong Kong, Macao and Vietnam. I enjoyed all of these destinations even though they are really different but maybe Hong Kong might be the best one to visit.

To conclude, In Korea I had the best time of my life I loved the city, the people, the nightlife, the atmosphere and everything else, I hope for you that you are going to choose Yonsei as your exchange destination since I am sure you are going to love it as well. If you need any additional information feel free to contact me,

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