

## **Experiencing Indonesia!**

My exchange took place from August until January, at the Gadjah Mada University (UGM) in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

### **Preparations**

When you're selected to study at the Gadjah Mada University, you're very lucky, considering this period as one of the happiest months of my life! When you're selected you don't have to do anything, they will contact you through e-mail. Do take in account the application deadline of the UGM, you can find this online at their website. Sometimes things go wrong at their university, so always check deadlines yourself.

They will send you an email with all the things you need to arrange in order to apply. At first you might be shocked, because there are a lot of things on the list. But in general, it's mainly documents you need to sign, and arrange things like a statement of health at your doctor. You don't need a TOEFL or IELTS test for this destination! After this they will guide you further in the process, and will eventually arrange all the documents for your visa. Applying for the visa was the cause of a lot of stress for most of us: things were often going wrong. Indonesia is a very bureaucratic country and things are not always going very efficient over there. I made the mistake to already book my flight, going there 3 week before the start of the exchange, in order to have a vacation with my family. I did not know that you get your visa application documents at the very last moment, which you need to bring to the Indonesian embassy in The Hague. I received those documents while already being in Indonesia (on tourist visa), and had to go to Singapore to the Indonesian embassy over there to arrange my visa. Also take in account that after you arrive in Indonesia you have to go to the immigration office at the university within 7 days, and you have to hand in your passport again for several weeks. Then, prior before you leave back to Holland, you also have to hand in your passport again and get an exit-permit. This all sounds very difficult, but don't let it stop you choosing this destination, it is worth it!

There are no on-campus rooms at this destination, so you'll have to find a house yourself. Make sure you become a member of the Semester Abroad in Yogyakarta-facebook, where others are also searching for a house. Housing in Indonesia is very cheap. I arranged a house via Ganda, who offers a lot of houses/villas for many exchange students, and is a reliable, kind man. My house was pretty expensive, still only 280 euros a month though, but beautiful. I lived in a large villa, with 12 people (all exchange students), with my own room and bathroom. We even had a swimming pool. It was a lovely house. Don't wait too long with finding a house. If you see a nice advertisement which matches with your budget, then go for it!

### **Arrival**

I arrived a couple of days before the university started, in order to get used to everything. You'll have a buddy who will contact you before it all starts, and who will pick you up from the airport and show you around. You have to be a bit lucky with your buddy. My buddy did pick me up, and showed me the university, but after that, I never heard from her again. Though, lot of friends of mine had buddies who took them everywhere and showed them around Yogyakarta, helped them buying their first things at the supermarket, etc. You can just join them if your buddy is not that cooperative as was the case for me. People in Indonesia are always willing to help you, and are kind people. Especially in Yogyakarta.

Around a week before the classes start, you'll have one introduction day in which they explain you a lot of practical things and tell you how to sign in for courses. There was also an event arranged in the evening, in order to get to know all the exchange students. Together with all the exchange students we ourselves also arranged a weekend in the first week to Karimunjawa in order to get to know everyone better.

If you don't have a house yet, you can just stay in a hostel, which can be very cheap in Indonesia. There are hostels where you can sleep for 3 euros a night, which is not terrible!

## **Courses**

I took four courses, to fill in my elective space. One course is worth 6 ECTS.

### *Business Ethics:*

In this course you learn to apply business ethics on different cases, using the basic principles of ethics. Every class there are different ethical questionable cases in business which are then in an interactive way analysed. This was a quit easy, but interesting course. You really get to see the cultural differences between Western people (the exchange students) and the Indonesian people. They have a very different way of thinking about business.

### *Portfolio Theory and Investment Analysis:*

This course teaches you everything about investing in portfolios. It's not only theory and calculus, you also have to do real-life trading in the Indonesian stock exchange market with a group. Tough some subjects can be quite hard, the level of education was still pretty low.

### *Entrepreneurship:*

This course is all about creativity and starting your own business. First weeks are about creating ideas of starting a business, being creative. After that you have to make a business plan in a group. Instead of an exam, you have to make big assignments. The level of education of this course was very low.

### *Risk Management:*

This course was all about risk. First weeks you learn different calculus to measure risk and deal with risk, which can be a bit hard, but you can use your notes during the exam. The last couple of weeks is more about reading cases of failure in risk management of banks and other institutions.

## **Finances**

Indonesia is very cheap, you will be surprised! You can eat every day for only 1 euro, or you can eat somewhat more Western for 5 euros (including drinks etc). They have all kinds of food, so don't be worried if you're not a fan of Asian food. I started exchange hating spicy food and rice, and came back loving it.

I spend a lot on exchange because I saved money for it and wanted the luxury which is relatively very cheap there. Every day we ate outside with the house, which is normal in Indonesia. I think getting a good meal cooked with ingredients from the supermarket would be even more expensive. We never cooked dinner once. You can eat sort of fancy at restaurants, or you can go to a 'waroeng' and eat Indonesian food for 60 cents. It's all up to you!

Booking flights is also not really expensive. It can be 200 euros, but for 50 you can fly to Bali. Skyscanner is a good website for booking your flights. Staying in hostels is also very cheap, around 5 euros a night.

In Yogyakarta, everybody rides motorbikes. A motorbike is to Indonesia what a bicycle is in Holland. I very recommend you to also rent a motorbike for 6 months, everyone does. I loved it, and it's the best way to get yourself through the city. Don't get too scared of the traffic, at first you might be shocked. It can be very crowded at the road, and it looks like there are no rules at all. The thing is: the rule is that there are no rules! But when you are driving for some days you'll find out that almost everyone does really watch out. Be careful though, small accidents happen fast. Motorbike is around 40 euros a month.

For your phone you can buy a simcard over there for very little money. I had 4 GB internet for 3 euros a month.

Going out is relatively quite expensive. Around 3 to 4 euros for a beer, they are very large beers though. Next to that, there are not many clubs in Yogyakarta, and the once who are, are not that great. Java is a very Muslim island. Selling beers in supermarkets is also prohibited, so it is not that easy as in Holland to get access to beers or other alcoholic drinks. But also not impossible. I quite liked it this way, being more reliant to the other exchange students and having fun throwing party's together.

	Per month	Total
Ticket AMS-YOG		1000
Visa		250
Rent	280	1400
Cost of living (food etc)	180	900
Other costs (going out etc)	350	1750
Transport	40	200
Travelling		2000
		7500

### Daily Life

Going on exchange is really one of the best decisions in your life, in my opinion. You'll learn so much, about yourself, integrating in a total different world, making new friends, build up a new life far away from home, I loved it! Indonesia is a very beautiful, intriguing country. Their culture is totally different from ours, and also differs a bit between the islands. In Yogya the people are very kind, polite, but at the same time humble. Sometimes they are even scared of you! They also don't know anything about efficiency. You will get very often irritated by this, but you'll have to get used to it. Also, they never say no, even if they don't know the answer to your question. Again, you'll have to get used to it and it can be quite annoying. They are very Muslim, so you can actually not go around the streets in a short and a tiny t-shirt. I sometimes did, and it's not that somebody prohibits you, they are too humble to do that. But they will look at you in a bad way. At the university there are strict rules what to wear, don't ignore this, you will insult your teachers.

Indonesia is a developing country, so keep this in mind. Sometimes the power suddenly went off for a couple of hours. When this happened, we build a fire in our garden to sit around. You have to learn to not get stressed immediately when things don't go according to plan in Indonesia, something I had problems with in the beginning. Just make sure you always enjoy yourself!

In Indonesia I travelled a lot. I've seen many island of this country, all different from each other and all very beautiful. You're in the middle of South-east Asia, so many of us also travelled to other countries. I also went to Thailand and Malaysia. Others to Vietnam.

Of all possible destinations, I think Yogyakarta was the best place to go to. It is the perfect combination of relaxing, discovering, having fun with good friends, travelling and experiencing new things. If you want to hear more or have questions don't hesitate to contact me, I love talking about it! My e-mail is [eline\\_tetteroo@msn.com](mailto:eline_tetteroo@msn.com).