



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	BBI Major C Health and Disease
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	2-1-2023 until 20-6-2023
Country (exchange)	Norway
City (exchange)	Bergen
University (exchange)	Bergen University
Faculty (exchange)	Medical Faculty

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I wanted to learn an extra language fluently (So Norwegian, bc I was already fluent in English), see a new country, know how it is to go on an exchange and it was also my plan B when my sport scholarship with Slamstox would fail to the USA. Well, that USA plan was a catastrophe, so I was very happy to have signed up. Also: I had many Norwegian exchange friends and most of my friends went on Exchange so I didn't want to miss out.

What is the reason you chose for this country/university?

Norway is known to be quite rural, even for cities. I wanted the best of both worlds: nature and city. I would for example rather not be in Å, my friends live there and my Dutch friends have studied there but that would be nothing for me.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

Do you have any tips to reach your exchange destination? (E.g. bus, train, etc.)

Bergen is very hard to reach by anything else than a plane. I could recommend the boat, but that is very expensive. It was rather hard for me to decide to fly, since it is very bad for the environment, but options to Norway are unfortunately quite limited.

4. University and studying

Could you provide some general information about the followed courses?

	Course	ECTS	Short description of the contents	Appreciation of course: 1(low) – 5(high)	Remarks
1	Introduction to Occupational Health	3	You learn about diseases that affect mainly manual workers in developing countries	4	I thought it was super interesting, and I learned a lot but the level was not so high and the examination was really easy. Online
2	Global tuberculosis - Epidemiology and intervention	5	A very medical approach of the disease Tuberculosis. Given online	5	I liked it a lot. Also not a lot of work. It was very Medicine like.
3	Norwegian level 2	15	Learning to have fluent conversations in Norwegian and about the Scandinavian culture	5	I loved this course and learned to speak another foreign language because of it. It does only count as extra for my minor but it was a 100% worth it. My teachress was a cutie.
4	Medical Health Psychology	3	I had to learn about mental diseases and how to cure them (cognitive behaviour etc.) and write a report	3	It was alright. I was not amazed of the level of the course. I thought the academic level was rather low, especially with academic writing.
5					
6					

How is the study formalized? (E.g. study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material)

The examinations are really easy. Either online or open book exams, or maybe an oral that is not too hard to do. The academic level is not super high, I think Wageningen is definitely higher. I liked study forms, they work more with group things. The Norwegian course was really, really good. It was organised with a group of students and one student, a bit like you have in primary school. It worked very well I think.

What is the culture of the university? (E.g. How approachable are the lecturers, engagement with local students? What are the differences with the WUR?)

Very chill, very informal, very respectful.

What does the university offer the student additionally? (E.g. Catering, sports facilities, laundry facilities?)

There is a modest sporting facility and you can have additional stuff but I didn't use that so much. It did use BUA, that is a facility that rents free skis and hiking gear to international students. There are also countless discounts for students.

5.Housing-travelling-living

What are the possibilities for housing? (E.g. Availability to sign up for a room on campus, private rooms, rent rates?)

Fantoft, Grønneviksøren, many more. Fantoft is the cosiest and is a real international bubble. Definitely recommend Fantoft. It is the best one and the apartments are sometimes shared, but you can get one for yourself or ask a room for two and pay for two. The hallways are beautiful, you have a very good bathroom, and all the parties and international events happen there.

What is the culture of the country like? (E.g. Differences with home, local cuisine, habits, manners?)

Norwegian culture is very unique. People highly respect your privacy and expect you to respect their privacy too. Norwegians are silent in the public transport and expect you to be too, and they chose not to talk to you in public if it is not definitely necessary. That can be a huge shock, but if you give yourself a change to get used to it, you might like it. Some Norwegians can come across as very rude because of these cultural differences. Norwegians tend not to be used to being around a lot of people, except on a Friday night, then everyone drinks so much that they cannot walk anymore and people suddenly talk a lot to you and want to become your friend. Maybe a bit weird to tell but very useful for students: dating culture in Norway is only one-night stands. Norwegians agree on that themselves, and there are campaigns for the use of condoms and stuff because they have the highest chlamydia rate in the world. Romance in Norway is not a thing hahahaha. Something to keep an eye on.

Norwegians don't like bragging people and are actually quite communistic in my opinion. The men all wear the same clothes, and that is not exaggerated. People are very modest but they also do not really realise how rich they are. My Norwegian hallmate would never

brag but considered it normal that he had two extra houses and skiing gear worth 700 euros. That sounds like an exception, but Norway has funded its oil money in the state itself, so it is not. Norwegian people of all classes have quite some money, because the country wisely decided not to capitalise the oil profits. You can tell by the cars (they are literally all brand new models, with Tesla as the MOST sold car in Norway), the roads, the clothes people wear and the lack of hoboes on the streets. The country is very equal.

People that do manual work are not looked down on, and the income differences are also very levelled. I think that is wonderful and something we can learn from.

The academic culture is very respectful. Professors don't like to be spoken to as if they are wiser than you (even though they for sure are), and are very informal. The level of education is not as high as in The Netherlands (in my opinion). Norwegians do not work a lot. They prefer to 'live', and you can very much tell. A lot of companies close at 4. Working days start late. During easter break, everything is closed, including supermarkets (almost all), and people highly value their free time. Hiking and being in nature is highly encouraged. The possibilities are endless regarding skiing and hiking and are funded by the government. You can get free gear from BUA as a student. Quality of life is very high. Sustainability is not a big thing..... people take a lot of flights (do not forget that it is very hard to travel sustainable in Norway, which is a HUGE country with a lot of mountains interrupting roads) and you can get plastic bags everyway.

There are a few things you shouldn't talk about. If you talk about fishery or whale hunting from a sustainable point of view, cut that out, because Norwegians are very proud to be Norwegian and it is a very cultural subject. Also, you shouldn't compare Norway to Sweden or Danmark, they do not like that.

Could you give a general price indication of the place of residence compared to living in Wageningen?

I am currently living in NANO and I have to pay 620 a month. No sink. Shared shower. Old disgusting building. If we have problems, they are never fixed. There was a broken lock: criminals came in. We asked the people to fix it, it took them MONTHS. Socius raised the prices with a 100 euros whilst I was abroad (so 520-620), so most of my friends are moving out. I heard the WUR regulates also with the prices, but they should know about this I think. I think housing at NANO, and Wageningen in general, even though I love it there with my friends and loved to live there: is very bad. Especially when I got my room in Norway, a super expensive country, for 400 euro's a month (200 euros less expensive), with a new bathroom, my own sink and toilet and a huge shared, new kitchen. I would rather live at a complex with my friends in Norway then what Socius and Idealis offers its students. The prices are scandalous, my friends and I are all in debt for the next 20 years.

Could you give some information about public transport infrastructure? (E.g. Cost public transport card, taxi prices, how to travel to the university?)

I can only speak about Bergen. In Bergen you can get a SKYSS ticket online, via SKYSS APP, and with that you can travel for quite cheap with the buss and the bybanen (local tram). You need the bybanen, and the check very often in winter, so you will need the SKYSS APP a lot. You can easily walk if you live in the center, but you need the local transport if you live at Fantoft or any places further out of the city.

6. Free time

What are must-sees in the area? (E.g. nearby destinations, how do you prefer to travel, when to plan?)

I don't know where to begin.... It is amazing around Bergen.

- Hardangerfjord and its little towns
- Ulriken, Fløyen, and all the other 7 mountains surrounding Bergen are worth a visit. Hiking with friends is so much fun and keeps you healthy.
- Trolldhaugen (house of Grieg)
- Troll Tunga (bus to Odda, hike of around 7 hours(!), much recommended to sleep at the top)
- Voss skiing
- Hardanger as a national park: frozen waterfalls, mountains, fjords etc.
- KODE museums if you like art. You can get a membership, 60 euros, almost all museums are free in Bergen for a year and the most important ones in Oslo, Trondheim. You can bring one person for free. It saved me a lot of money.
- Very cheap concerts in Grieghallen for students

What does not appear in the travel guide, but is worth a visit?

- Concerts in Grieghallen are super expensive, except for students and they are amazing
- Too much to tell.

Do you have general tips and tricks about leisure time (E.g. recommendations for restaurants, going out?)

- Heidi's bierbar is fun but sometimes filled with horny 16 year olds, so be aware
- Duggfrisk
- Fantoft Klubb
- Lille
- Restaurants are unaffordable, but you can try Sabrura, that is sushi and affordable
- Godt brødt
- Det lille kaffecompagniet

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

I moved in within a Norwegian house because I didn't want to live inside the international community to have a more local experience. That was a big mistake. Norwegians don't live in student housings like we are used to. It was rather ongezellig. They cook for themselves, don't talk to you, they leave and are not very social. It is a much wiser idea to move to an international housing such as Fantoft if you want a cosy and vibrant studentlife in Bergen. Also don't stay too long. I saw everyone leaving and that is not a nice ending of an exchange.

What was your best memory abroad?

I travelled with my friends all around Norway. It was amazing. I saw Northern lights, moose in the Lofoten, amazing dramatic sceneries, cute cities... I will never forget travelling and hiking through Norway.

8. Contact details (optional)

Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
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