



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

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|---|-----------------------------|
| Field of study in Wageningen | Social Sciences |
| Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy) | 11-01-2023 until 31-05-2023 |
| Country (exchange) | Finland |
| City (exchange) | Helsinki |
| University (exchange) | University of Helsinki |
| Faculty (exchange) | Social Sciences |

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I decided to go on exchange because I have always wanted to study in a different country. Due to personal circumstances I did not manage to go during my bachelor, so I took my change during my Masters.

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

Since I am interested in sustainability and want to learn more about climate change I looked in to sustainable countries/universities. The countries narrowed down quite fast to the Nordic countries or Switzerland. I really focussed on the courses I could follow within each University and saw the best opportunities in Helsinki.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

There are several options, if you do not want to take the plane you can go by train to Stockholm and take the ferry there.

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 | Environmental History | 5 | A course focussed on history and looking at climate change at the same time. | 5 | Really interesting course but a relative high work load in comparison to the other courses. |
| 2 | Climate Change and Global Justice | 5 | This course explored interdisciplinary perspectives on climate change and justice | 3 | Interesting course but the lecturer was a bit difficult to follow |
| 3 | Theories of Sustainability | 5 | The course looked at the different theories on sustainability and therefore looked at sustainability from different point of views | 3 | Interesting course but relatively easy |
| 4 | Global Climate Governance: Organizations, Networks and Knowledge | 5 | This course helped me understand themes within climate governance and is nice to broaden your political climate change knowledge | 4 | Interesting course to follow even when you don't have a lot of prior political knowledge |
| 5 | Media, Activism and Social Change | 5 | Course on activism, protests and how online activism emerged | 2 | The course was different than I expected and mainly focussed on difficult readings that sounded very utopic |
| 6 | Sustainable Welfare | 5 | The course helps you to understand the aims of sustainability and you can apply them to sustainable welfare. | 2 | The course was switched to online last minute and following a online course did is not really nice |

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

The workload during the study weeks is depending on your courses. The workload is relatively low, with in my case no exams at the end. Most courses had a final essay or groupwork which in my opinion did not have a very high academic level.

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?)

The culture of the university is very nice. The lecturers are very nice, and the course groups are relatively small which is nice and very similar to the WUR. The engagement with the local students was okay, they are a bit more introvert but always include you within the group work. However, if you want them to do something you should always politely ask instead of expecting them to take the lead.

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

The University offers Unicafé, a lunch/dinner place where you can have vegetarian, vegan and a meat/fish option for 2,95 max. They have healthy options and the one close to the central station is open in the evenings. In addition, there are a few very nice gyms where you can get a prescription for 100 euros for 4 months and they even have a sauna!

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?)

I signed up for a HOAS room with roommates and that is what I eventually ended up getting. You can sign up for housing during your registration for the university and the rest will work out itself. Be aware that you might not get your preferences, since friends of mine signed up for roommates but ended up getting a private room (which was a bit more expensive as well). You can also sign up for private housing which is nice as well, but the location of the place with roommates is nicer. Your flat will obviously have a sauna which you can rent or you can just enter as a common sauna, I would definitely recommend going there at least one!

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

The culture in the country is very relaxed. Everyone is taking it easy and especially in winter things slow down. When it is light outside you should take advantage of it and you will see the locals do the same. In addition, the cuisine is a little different, but in the grocery stores you can find practically everything you can find in the Netherlands. Just expect the Asian food to be a little less present in the stores. The Finns are in general very polite and give you the space you need. If you need their help, ask them since they do not want to be rude and assume you need help. If you ask they are always very willing to do so.

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

Living in Helsinki will definitely be a bit more expensive than living in Wageningen. But the room I lived in was not too expensive (440 euros) and the dinners at unicasté are very cheap. Depending on how much you cook yourself (groceries are more expensive, how much coffee you want to drink in bars and how much you like alcohol it can be relatively cheaper than you would expect. The Lidl is the cheapest option. Just be aware of the prices, there are always places where you can eat relatively cheap. Oh and try some Hesburger! It's the Finnish version of Burgerking/Mac Donald's, they have nice vegetarian/vegan options and are not expensive.

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

The public transport card will be provided during the introduction week at the University. On this card you can load money for the City Zones. When you are an active person and would like to hike regularly I would advise to load the ABC zone on there since it gives you access to at least 2 national parks by public transport as well, in addition the airport is in this zone. Nuuksio is very pretty and very well reachable. If you would like to stay in the city the AB zone ticket will do. The ticket lasts for 30 days and then you can update it again. The regular tickets are not expensive ABC for 90 minutes is about 3,10 euro and you can switch from train to tram to bus to metro within these 90 minutes.

6. Free time

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

- Nuuksio National Park - Nice in winter, but also in summer or spring reachable by bus
- Sipoonkorpi National Park - I went here in spring but probably also nice in winter. However, I would suggest for a winter hike to go to
- Porvoo - Daytrip from Helsinki by Onnibus
- Tallinn - Daytrip from Helsinki by ferry
- If you have the time a trip to the lake district is really worth it. Try to rent a cabin at the lake with a sauna!

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

Take a stroll around the city and just enjoy the architecture. The main things appear in the travel guides, but there is always more to discover!

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

I would recommend studying at the National Library, eating a cinnamon bun (korvapuusti) at Café Regatta. I would recommend a traditional Finnish dinner at Restaurant Savotta or KuuKuu (more expensive but very nice). In addition, I would suggest going on hikes, runs and be active in and around the city. Check out Mari Mekko, a Finnish designer brand (you will see all the locals with their prints/bags). Enjoy a nice Sauna with your friends in your friends or treat yourself at a nice sauna in Löyly.

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

The sea wind was a bit colder than I had expected in January. Therefore, the feeling temperature will be much colder than the actual temperature. I would recommend buying a long jacket on forehand!

What was your best memory abroad?

Renting an off the grid cabin with three friends and enjoy our wood fire sauna while cooling down in the snow.

8. Contact details (optional)

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| Is the reader allowed to contact the writer? | yes <input type="checkbox"/> | no <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Name/e-mail | | |