



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

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| Field of study in Wageningen | Biotechnology |
| Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy) | 23/09/2019 until 17/02/2020 |
| Country (exchange) | Slovenia |
| City (exchange) | Maribor |
| University (exchange) | University of Maribor |
| Faculty (exchange) | Faculty of Agriculture and Life Sciences |

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I wanted to experience life in another country and studying in another study format. Erasmus exchange is the best/easiest way to do this.

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

Slovenia is a really diverse country in its landscapes. On top of this, it is small, which makes it easy to explore the country and living costs are relatively low. I chose the University of Maribor for having the possibility of taking classes in English and the specific classes about food.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

It is really cheap to go by plane to Vienna and take the bus to Maribor. However, I liked my first mode of transport, which was the train. It is a bit more expensive, but makes up for it in comfort, the ability to take all your stuff and is most of all more environmentally friendly. I booked with NS international. Tickets with Deutsche Bahn might be cheaper, but include more stops.

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 | Selected topics from biochemistry and immunology | 4 | Human immunology and biochemical pathways essential for the body. | 4 | - |
| 2 | Chemical analytical methods in agriculture | 4 | Involves several methods of determining agricultural important compounds in soil or foodstuffs. | 3 | - |
| 3 | Biological risks | 10 | Biological risk factors associated with food and how to prevent them from spoiling the food. Different food borne diseases. | 5 | The theoretical part has a heavy workload, easily justified by the number of ECTS. |
| 4 | Plant biotechnology and the environment | 6 | Diverse subjects like plant transformation and tissue cultures as well as applications like biofuels, phytoremediation and ecological restoration. | 3 | Course has an interesting set-up, with a lot of seminar work. |
| 5 | Microbiology | 6 | Study different families of mostly bacteria into detail | 3 | - |
| 6 | | | | | |

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

Study forms differ from subject to subject. A lot of the subjects include seminar work with a presentation and the accompanying text. English lectures sometimes are given, however they involve more self study. The academic level was also diverse, but mostly easier than at WUR.

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 approachability of the lectures is quite similar with that of lecturers on the WUR. Lecturers are easy to contact and are often available for questions surrounding your subjects. The local students may have some trouble with English, but the ones that don't are not afraid of meeting Erasmus students. Still, you are more likely to become friends with other Erasmus students or students at your residence.

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

The university offers help with getting a room at a student dorm. These dorms have laundry facilities. Sports facilities next to one of the faculties are free to use for students. Catering is available close to or at every facility and contains discounts with the Student Coupon system in Slovenia.

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?)

Housing provided by student dorms offers a rooms for a lot of erasmus students. Rent rates for these dorms are low (~115 EUR/month), but include only shared rooms. Private housing is more expensive, has lower capacity, but may be on better locations.

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

People in Slovenia are quite relaxed and can be found on terraces drinking beer before noon most of the time. Compared to the Netherlands it seems like a lot more people smoke in Slovenia (or they just have more spare time to be smoking). The restaurants are lively and super cheap compared to the Netherlands. Local cuisine is just almost only meat, but luckily there are plenty of nice restaurants that offer a lot more than only meat.

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

Housing is 2-3times cheaper in Maribor (~115EUR/month) compared to Wageningen (~250EUR/month cheapest). Supermarkets tend to be equal in price or maybe even more expensive in Maribor. Transport like taxi's, car rental or car sharing is cheap in Maribor. Prices to go from Maribor to Ljubljana with car sharing are 6euro for 130km!

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

To go to the one faculty 9km away from the centre by bus is 1,80euro one way without discounts or card. I had a bike, so I don't know a lot about other prices. There seemed to be buses from and to the centre regularly and there is a train connection to Ljubljana and Graz.

6. Free time

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

Cities like Graz, Celje, Ljubljana and Bled are must-sees. Most of these can be reached with car sharing through "Prevoz". Triglav national park is nice as well, but might be a better option for a multiple days trip. You can find 4 other Erasmus students, rent a car and explore some of the mountains. Virtually every weekend is a good opportunity.

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

Participate in the Slovenia trip organized by ESN-maribor. This trip will take you all over Slovenia and gives you great value for the low cost.

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

Mostly go out on Erasmus parties, since some of the people don't appreciate foreigners on their own parties. Slovenian people say these people are gypsies and just look for a fight with foreigners. Erasmus parties are pretty fun and organizing your own parties with people in your residence sometimes even more.

If you are willing to try some good vegan food, try "Loving Hut". It is fast food in a good way.

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

Changing from a steady environment to going to Slovenia completely alone. The hardest part might have been going away from my girlfriend for 5 months. Although, new friends and nice experiences make you forget these challenges.

What was your best memory abroad?

Going up in the hills above Maribor for a good drink at the sunset.

8. Contact details (optional)

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