



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	Food Technology
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	23/09/2022 until 18/02/2022
Country (exchange)	Italy
City (exchange)	Bolzano
University (exchange)	Free University of Bozen-Bolzano
Faculty (exchange)	Faculty of Science and Technology

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I wanted to do something out of my comfort zone, and an exchange semester abroad was for me the perfect moment to do this. Besides, I wanted to get to know another country and new people from the different cultural backgrounds.

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

First of all, I wanted to study somewhere in Southern-Europe because of the favourable weather conditions. Secondly, I wanted to go somewhere where I could discover the nature and perform multiple sports. Thirdly, I also wanted to follow interesting courses that could be followed in English. The university in Bolzano offered all those three conditions, which why it was the perfect match for me.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

I would say Bolzano is quite hard to reach by all means of transport. The Flixbus takes a very long time from the Netherlands (>14 hours) but is not that expensive (about 50 euros). Apparently, there is a night train which could be a convenient option to reach Bolzano. However, I don't have any experience with that. If you want to go by plane, I advise to fly to Innsbruck, Verona, Milan/Bergamo, or Venice and then take the Flixbus or train. Of course, this is a less sustainable option. Lastly, the car is also an option which takes you in 10-12 hours to Bolzano. Overall, there is not really an affordable direct connection but the longer journey to reach Bolzano is definitely worth it.

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	Wine Economics	6	Wine trade, statistical research on wine attributes	4	Very nice external visits to a wine fair and wineries
2	Cocoa and coffee fermentations	3	Basics of the cocoa and coffee production process	4	Excursion to cocoa and coffee producers
3	Computer application in food sciences	3	Basics of R	5	Not too difficult
4	Sensory analysis approaches for mountains wines	3	The fundamentals of sensory analysis to describe winery products	5	The lab work and external visits to wineries are very interesting
5	Innovation and authenticity for winery products	6	The basics of the wine-making process and other relevant aspects related to that	5	Lab work is not that difficult
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How is the study formalized? (E.g. study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material)

The courses that I followed consisted mainly about lectures, lab work and external visits. I would say that the academic level is in general a bit lower than the WUR. The examination for my courses was diverse, this means written exams (essay questions and multiple choice), oral exams (which is very common in Italy) and presentations. The workload is average, not too much and not too little. The University is very small, so it sometimes feels like having private lessons when attending a lecture. This strengthens the interaction between students and professor.

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 lecturers are approachable just as at the WUR I would say. There is a lot of engagement with other Erasmus exchange students but less with the local students. Although, the university is trilingual and therefore students need to master English, German and Italian fluently at the end of their studies. This makes the communication with everyone within the university easy.

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

The University offers a bar inside where it's easy to get an espresso (to-go). It also has a big Mensa, where almost everyone eats their lunch and/or dinner for a student-discounted price. The student association SCUB offers several sports like football, basketball, volleyball, yoga, and workouts, but also discounts on ski passes. Other associations organize some events for and by 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?)

The university accommodates housing for a limited number of incoming students. If you are on time, you will be placed in one of the student dorms called Univercity or Rainerum. The rent is 300 euros per month but depends on if you have single or shared room. If you are not placed in one of the student complexes, you must search something yourself on the private market. Here, the prices are more expensive around 500 euros a month.

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

Of course, everyone knows the typical stereotypes about Italians talking a lot, usage of hand gestures and the lovely cuisine. In Bolzano, the capital of South Tyrol (Alto Adige), all signs are in two languages, namely German and Italian. Although, most residents speak Italian, quite some people also speak German. Therefore, in this area the Tyrolean and Italian cuisine are both very popular. In general, people have a light breakfast (coffee and pastry), a big lunch (mostly a pasta dish) and a very late diner compared to the Netherlands. Besides, the lifestyle is not that rushed (sometimes also not that efficient because of that) and Italians take regular breaks during the day. Overall, Italians are approachable and friendly.

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

South Tyrol is the most prosperous province in whole Italy. So, the standards of living are quite high. If you live in a student dorm, the rent is a bit cheaper compared to Wageningen. Expenses for general living (i.e., groceries) are similar, with some exceptions (e.g., local products). Besides, eating out is cheaper compared to the Netherlands. However, if you travel a lot to discover Italy and if you go skiing, then it will be more expensive compared to living in Wageningen.

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

The costs of a public transport card in South Tyrol are 150 euros for a year. This includes all busses, regional trains and even some cable cars. Basically, the bus is the easiest mode of transportation within the city. You could also buy a second-hand bike if you manage to get one. This is especially advisable during the summer semester. So, the best way to get to the university is by bus or bike.

6. Free time

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

In the city, the main attractions are Piazza Walther, Piazza Erbe, South Tyrolean Archeological Museum (Ötzi museum), several castles, the shopping street, and several promenades that you can walk. Also, the cable car that goes from Bolzano to Soprabolzano is really a must-see, since you have an amazing view over the city. Furthermore, the Dolomites are amazingly beautiful, you can hike and see beautiful lakes here in summer (e.g., Lago di Braies, Lago di Carezza, Lago di Caldaro), whereas it provides an amazing winter sports location in winter. You can reach everything by bus or car and by train if you want to travel further.

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

Just make a hike somewhere in the mountains, you will be surprised about the beauty of the Dolomites.

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

If you like skiing or snowboarding I would highly recommend buying a seasonal pass with discount for students. If you buy it for the area Seiser Alm – Val Gardena you get a huge discount which is really worth it! Furthermore, if you want to go eat the best pizza in Bolzano you should go to Il Corso. There are a couple of night clubs for going out in the weekend and there is always something to do at Piazza Erbe.

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

I did not really have a lot of challenges during my exchange period. If I must mention one, it was really a hassle to apply for the tax code which you officially need to live in Italy. I had to apply for it physically and they wouldn't let me in because I didn't speak any Italian.

What was your best memory abroad?

I have so many good memories and I felt blessed to study in Bolzano. I met so many nice people from all over the world, saw so many wonderful places, and even the courses were so interesting! 😊

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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