



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	Bsc Tourism
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	September 2022 until January 2023
Country (exchange)	Spain
City (exchange)	Gandia / Valencia
University (exchange)	UPV Valencia – Campus Gandia
Faculty (exchange)	Tourism

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I chose to go on exchange because I was curious about the international experience and because I have only heard good things about it. Since I am from Germany but study in The Netherlands, that is already an international experience for me, but I have always loved Spain and as I started the study, I knew that I wanted to go there for my exchange, also in order to improve my language skills.

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

As I said, I love Spain, the people, the weather (currently sunshine and average temperatures around 15 Degrees everyday – 24.01.23). Additionally, I wanted to improve my Spanish and because South America as an exchange spot was still a little unsure due to Covid, etc. I decided to look for something in Spain. Although Valencia was not actually my first choice, I am more than happy that I ended up here.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

Since the Campus is not actually in Valencia, but in Gandia, it takes a one hour train ride through the beautiful Orange-orchards and along the mountains until the destination is reached. Due to the sustainability aspect of my study, I actually chose to travel by Bus when I first went there in August. It was a long ride of 28 hours but exciting at the same time. Otherwise, flights from Eindhoven and Amsterdam are quite accessible.

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	Mercados Turísticos	4.5	Introduction to the tourism market and its consumers, companies, etc.	4	As the class was in Spanish, it was ofc challenging at times but also rather easy to follow along because the teacher spoke clearly and some of the things were familiar.
2	Groundwater Management in Costal Zones	4.5	This course aims to teach programs used in groundwater management	2	As I did not have much prior knowledge to the topic, it was quite hard trying to understand the different programs used, which was not what I expected at all, unfortunately.
3	Adaptation to Climate Change in Ecosystems	4.5	Learning about different methods and the importance of adapting to climate change and its negative results	4	Really cool course with a very motivated teacher and he gave us loads of freedom in our groupworks.
4	Ecotourism	5	Ecotourism strategies within Spain and different stakeholders involved.	5	Same teacher as above and very cool excursions such as to a vinery to learn about Ecotourism on a biological vineyard, tasting included ;)
5	Creación y gestion de espacios verdes	4.5	Aka Creation and management of green areas which aims to teach about the proper way of managing green areas for adequate use	2	This course was also in Spanish and unfortunately the teaching method was hard to follow, as mainly what felt like 1000 pages were uploaded and we sort of had to pick out what could be important for our exam on our own.
6	Intercultural Communication	5	The importance of intercultural communication among different nations and how different theories can be applied	4	Nice excursions to Benidorm and Alicante, as well as cool group work with many other internationals.
7	Innovation Management and Entrepreneurship	5	Learning about different theories in innovation Management and Entrepreneurship and applying it to a project of our choice.	3	The Spanish level of the teacher was not the best, which made communication hard sometimes, but the project left a lot of space for self-work.

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

To be honest, having 7 subject at the same time and still being able to travel places pretty much every weekend, already says that the workload is less than it would be with 7 subject in The Netherlands. Nevertheless, when it comes to exam periods, it still adds up. In some courses however, when attending 80% of the time and handing in the assignments required, there is no exam, which is quite a relief. I experienced a lot of group work and less academic reading than at WUR. I mean that is also what everyone told me about the southern European countries and their educational styles, compared to the northern European countries.

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 level of English among the lecturers differs and some are better than others. However, normally they are quite helpful and since the classes are small, it is easy to communicate with them and also the other students. Especially during group work, you get to know quite a lot of the others and since many are also international, at least in the English classes, you meet other Erasmus students too.

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

There is a nice cafeteria on campus, which offers coffee, Bocadillos, regional Paella and other drinks. The gym is right on campus too and during my time there, I was able to take the local bus for free as well as the train that goes from Gandia to Valencia. Apparently, due to the inflation, this support will continue all the way through 2023. I also spent quite some days at the Campus in Valencia which is a lot bigger, has more cafeterias and a bigger library too. It is nice to include in a day visit when feeling bored of the rather small Gandia.

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 paid 180€ for quite a nice room looking onto the ocean! The university offers to rent rooms via an agency and that is pretty much how everyone that I knew did it. The apartments are quite alright, but do get pretty cold during the winter, due to bad isolation. (more info below)

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

As many know, Siesta is quite a thing in Spain and it really is also in Gandia. Other than that, the people are super nice, open and often eat dinner late which is also something to get used to. Plus, timing is a little bit less strict than in The Netherlands for example.

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

Well that is probably the most exciting thing about living there. I only paid 180€ per month and had a lovely apartment with a beach view. If you get to choose, which is what I could through giving my preferences, chose *Edificio Madrid* to have the ocean view included ;)

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

Well, due to current inflation and the crisis situation, the Spanish government introduced a train ticket for regional trains for which you only need to pay 10€ once and are able to travel to Valencia and many other places nearby for free! Apparently that still goes on until the end of 2023. Also busses can be accessed for free with the student card, so that is super handy. In Valencia itself we also used the taxi a lot, since it is quite cheap, or downloaded an app to use shared bikes or scooters.

6. Free time

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

Of course Valencia is a must see! That is also the city where most connections leave from to other cities nearby. Places that I saw and was very amazed by were Montenejos, Buñol with pretty waterfalls, Alicante, Guadalest, Altea, Xativa castle and when wanting to go further, Andalucía is stunning. I did a van road trip there and it was absolutely amazing! It is great when having a car to visit all those places, which was often the case for us, as a friend has brought his car. Otherwise, a lot of places are also accessible via trains.. that just takes a little longer of course, but shouldn't keep you from traveling! ☺

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

Just wandering through the city and exploring, by watching people, drinking good coffee and enjoying the sun.

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

As I spent most of my time in Valencia, Ruzafa is a really cool area to go out. It is close to the train station and full of young people and very alive. In Gandia, there are a couple of bars and a few clubs, where you can sing Karaoke, dance Reggaeton or eat tapas with a beach view. One of my favourite restaurants in Valencia is San Tomasso!! Not a Tapas place unfortunately, but the best Italian restaurant in town! When searching for specialty coffee in Google Maps, places like Blackbird, The Coffee, News & Coffee and many more great Barista places will pop up. My Go-To spots in Valencia, because coffee is always a good idea!! ☺

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

The rather cold temperatures in January and February as the houses don't have the best installation. So if you don't go home for Christmas, make sure to bring your Wool socks, even though it might seem ridiculous to bring them in August when it feels like 33 degrees at night... which by the way, is also a challenge...

What was your best memory abroad?

Way to hard to put into one. There were so many, with so many great people and I would've not wanted to miss a single one fo them!

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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