



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	Agrotechnology
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	01/09/2022 until 28/02/2023
Country (exchange)	Austria
City (exchange)	Innsbruck
University (exchange)	University of Innsbruck
Faculty (exchange)	Biology

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

Because I wanted to experience living abroad, also Wageningen is for me after 3 years not the most exciting city anymore.

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

To experience living in the mountains (be able to ski and enjoy the nature). Also I have been on holiday many times in Austria and saw this as a good opportunity to improve my German.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

There are two ways I would recommend and one way I would not recommend. Do not go by Flixbus, yes it is cheap and sustainable, but you will be exhausted of the trip. The train especially the night train is quite nice, I have to say compared to flying it is a bit expensive. Innsbruck also has an airport, easily and cheaply accessible from Eindhoven airport or Schiphol, this is off course not sustainable at all. I went by car because I had a lot of stuff that I took with me. So I would recommend going by car or night train.

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	Botany	3	It is an introduction course into botany, you learn the basics of plants (the types of plants) and plant cell components.	3	
2	Plant and Population Ecology	1.5	Population ecology focused on plants, how do plants reproduce and spread, how can populations adapt in new circumstances.	5	
3	Aquatic ecology	3	Introduction into the ecology of different inland water bodies, lakes, rivers and ice. The division and	3	
4	Alien Plants and Nature Conservation in Alpine	1.5	Most invasive plant species in Alpine Austria, where did they origin from. How do invasive species spread. What fuses has an invasion and how to tackle it. It also includes a small excursion.	4	
5	Botanical colloquium	1	Colloquiums of different researchers in different topics in Botany. The topics ranged from taxonomy, anatomy to even global vegetation modelling. Every few weeks there was a colloquium of an hour of which you had to make a summary.	3	For me the beginning was a bit hard because my knowledge of Botany was not that very high. Also it is a master course.
6	Microbial symbioses		Different types of symbioses, endosymbiont theory, brief history of origin of life on earth focused on microbes. Many microbial symbioses	3	The teacher knew a lot and also was very positive about the WUR

			where explained, the different types of mycorrhiza, termites, ants, lichen, bacteria in animals, bacteria in insects.		
7	Ecology		Introduction course into basic ecology, terms and working principles.	3	
8	Terrestrial ecology		You learn about the structures and dynamics of terrestrial communities such as energy- and nutrients flows through ecosystems. Furthermore you learn about biogeography and nature preservation.	3	

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

The WUR works with 3 periods per semester, here it just one semester with no separate periods. You have to look if courses do not overlap which is very time consuming. Also most of my exams took place in the last month which can be quite stressful.

Academic level

If you would rate the WUR as a high academic level then I would rate Innsbruck as adequate. However the level really depends on the study you do. Also it is difficult for me to access as the courses were in German and I definitely experienced difficulty because of that.

The courses for bachelors are divided into three categories, VO "Vorlesung" lectures not obligatory, VU tutorials/lectures/practical obligatory, EU excursions

Lesson material

Courses use books as background literature, which can be borrowed in the library or bought. In the library there are only a few available of each book. I only used a book once, but had enough study material with my personal notes and the lecture slides.

In the courses I choose, it were mostly only lectures, just one course (botany) had practice exercises. For the other courses there was no material to practice yourself with other than reading a book or going over the lecture slides and your personal notes.

Examination

Exams are extremely short, my longest exam was one hour and 15 minutes, my shortest one 15 minutes. It was a lot focused on learning facts and also specific details. For other studies I heard exams were longer but still not the three hour exams we are used to in the Netherlands.

Workload

I only followed 19 ECT's so off course the workload was lower than I have in general at the WUR. But it really depends on the courses and faculty, a friend of mine studied computer science and his workload was higher, also the beta department, chemistry, physics are known to have a very high workload.

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?)

I would say local students can be very approachable, all was it sometimes hard me because of the language barrier. The lecturers are a bit more approachable than in the WUR. During the lecture the lecturers sometimes make small jokes and dates of exams are discussed with the whole class.

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

The university has a comparable sport facility as the "Bongerd", cool thing is that they also give courses in alpine sports on alpine areas. They give beginner and advanced ski/snowboard courses in a local ski resort, but also climbing, ski touring, freeriding etc. They have a canteen or "Mensa" on the campus and a general student association where you are free member of, they organise activities such as opening/introduction parties and excursions. I took part in one opening party, an excursion to Bolzano and a action to get your ski's cheaply serviced.

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 in Innsbruck is quite difficult, it also is the most expensive city the live in whole of Austria. Most exchange students live in a student dorm for which they can apply through the university. You can sign up for a room via OEAD student housing. There is also the private sector, I had some friends who lived in private housing, you can get via Facebook in contact. It helps a lot for private housing if you can speak fluently German. I would say rent rates in private sector are 350-700. In public sector double room 260-340 single room 390-450.

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

Austria is part of Western Europe and therefore is cultural wise quite close to the Netherlands. Austrians are compared to Netherlands more rule followers, but still a lot more relaxed than Germans. People greet each other when walking outside of the city, they say "Servus", "gries sie" or "bis Gott". They can drink a lot, also on the slopes. They are generally more content with their lives than Dutch people I would say. In conversations they are less direct of course and overall they are more religious.

Cuisine

The Tirol cuisine is based on mountain food which is high calorie dense food like potatoes, cheese, meat and eggs. Many Dutch people, of which me, really enjoy the Käsespätzle which is a dish made from noodles with melted cheese and roasted onions on it. Furthermore "gröstl" (baked potatoes with bacon and an omelet), "Apfelstrudel" (no explanation needed), "Kaisersmarre", "Germknödeln" (dumplings), "Schweinebraten", and "Wiener Schnitzel" are typical Tirolian dishes.

The bread was not really my taste, they eat a lot of "Schwarzbrot" which you can compare a bit to the Dutch "Roggebrood". They also eat a lot more meat, therefore there are very little vegan or vegetarian options in the supermarket.

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

I paid 390€ per month for a single room with own bathroom and shared kitchen. The room was tiny but sufficient. In Wageningen I pay since 1st of January 360€ a month, before that 290€, this is a room without a personal bathroom at Idealis.

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

For 180€ you could get a public transport ticket for the whole province for the whole semester. It is also possible to get for 260€ a ticket for the whole study year. The ticket included buses, trams, (high-speed) trains and night buses. Night buses go through the week every hour from midnight and in the weekend every half hour. The public transport in the city is amazing, I lived on the edge of the city and in rush hour had every 5 min a tram stopping next to my residence. For people who live more central it is even better, at the other student dorm there were trams or buses stopping every 2 minutes during rush hour. To travel to the university I usually did take my bike, because that saved me a bit of time and I enjoy riding my bike. But when going with friends to the library I usually took the tram. Traveling throughout the province takes a bit more time compared then going by car.

Ski

There are some free ski buses going to 3 nearby ski resorts.

6. Free time

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

Go hiking! There are a lot of beautiful mountains to climb and valleys to enter around Innsbruck.

- Hiking in Stubaital (there is a direct bus from Innsbruck hauptbahnhof which stops in the whole valley)
- Watching sunset at Patcherkofel (and hike there ofc). Bus from city centre every 10min
- Axamer Lizum ski resort in summer also beautiful for hiking (direct bus from IBK Hbf)
- Nordkette: hiking summer and skiing winter : do one of the ski trails if your level is good enough. Bus from city centre every 10min same bus as patcherkofel.
- Karwendel National Park, beautiful for hiking. Accessible from Nordkette but a lot of villages like scharnitz. Take a regional train through the mountains to Scharnitz.
- Après ski in Sankt Anton "Moosewirt" and "Krazy Kangaroo"
- Kufstein; small village with cool fortress, enter the fortress museum.
- Swaroski crystal worlds: museum of Swaroski, the experience is visual but also with scent. Not the standard museum, go with a camera and make cool pictures.
- Hall in Tirol, a beautiful small village next to Innsbruck. bus or train
- Bergisel, the ski jump ramp of Innsbruck. They also have a restaurant with a view over Innsbruck.
- Sledging/Rodeling in Schlick2000: go on the evening when there is also a night show.
- Munich Oktoberfest, flibus
- Bolzano

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

I think the techno party at Seefeld in winter. It is really cool because you are there with a beautiful sunset.

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

Restaurants:

Macheté: best burrito place in town

Restaurant Olive Wiltener Platz: vegan restaurant, really nice.

Naked indigo: vegetarian and vegan options, relatively cheap for healthy food. Has the best terrace in summer, unfortunately you have to pick up the order yourself.

Bars

Lichtblick 360: rooftopbar in which you have a beautiful view of the city

Wohnzimmer: the "Stammtisch" of ESN Innsbruck, go there on Mondays to meet Erasmus people. You get a discount on the beer with your ESN card. Beer costs with discount 3.50eu for 0.5l.

Tribaun: craft beer bar, comes also with one pool table. Very nice hangout spot.

Treibhaus: bar/small event location. Sometimes they have live music. Cheapest beer in town 3.50eu for 0.5l

Galaway bar: Irish pub was nice to watch the football world cup

Moustache: nice bar to talk with friends, good beer.

Montagu: Hostel and bar/club. Quite big, friendly staff and good beer. Sometimes also live music.

La copa cobana: karaoke bar, nice to go with a group of friends.

Dom Café: officially also a gay bar, good service, looks nice/fancy.

Clubs/nightlife

Maussefalle: free entry with Schlager music and basic pop songs

Luna: relative fancy more expensive club, good music looks cool

Bacchus: free entry officially a gay bar but everybody is welcome, best music in town

Tante Emma: nice club, good music bit expensive

Aztec: Techno club

etc.

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

Adjusting to the housing culture and a crazy aggressive dorm manager. In second week I lived there I washed my clothes and after three days they still hadn't dried in the laundry room, so as a solution I hung them in the hallway of my floor. I put them in a dead corner, a corner where there is a window but normally people would not walk. The next day I saw that some of my clothes were on the floor, so I asked the cleaning lady who was at that moment on my floor what happened. She said that is not allowed to hang clothes in the hallway. I was a bit surprised so I asked why, she said because I have to clean and because of fire safety. I said really? But nobody walks there. I thought I will do it later and went for breakfast and then a walk. When I came back from the walk I was called several times, so I called back. It was a manager higher up who said I should listen to the cleaning lady and not hang my clothes there. I asked again "but why is it not allowed to hang my clothes in the hallway?" she said because of fire safety. I did not agree and said shall I invite the fire department so they can have a look? She said no you will not do that or you can look for another dorm and the call ended. I also got an email that this was my last official warning. (it was also my first). Yeah I got a bit stressed but it was still all right. Then a few weeks later the dorm manager came into our kitchen and said that we should be more tidier in the kitchen. I do not remember what she exactly said but I remember being stressed about it because I already got a last warning... So I called my study advisor and she said that I should back down and not go into discussion again. Which I did and everything turned out fine.

What was your best memory abroad?

Difficult to choose one I have several amazing memories. For me the first time I went ski-touring on my own. The weekend before I had an avalanche course where we also went ski touring, that was my first real tour. I was super hyped to go now as a more experienced person on avalanches on my to the back country. I looked up a valley which was at the back of the ski resort Kappl. In my youth we went almost every year to Kappl for skiing. I know the area well and it has a lot of childhood memories. I took the train and then the bus together with a friend from Finland. He also did skitouring but only in Finland where there is not really a danger of avalanches. We were super excited and I scouted the whole the day before. The weather was amazing that day, it was a clear blue sky with a warm sun. We went to the resort and the slopes were almost empty. We did a few rounds and then went all the way to the top, from there we entered the valley which was behind the resort which was totally empty. No-one was there just a big white valley

waiting to be skied. The moment we entered the valley was so special for me because in all those childhood years I looked at the valley but it was always unreachable for me. It gave me an ultimate feeling of freedom...



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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