



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Study programme WUR	BBN
Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)	01/09/23 until 27/01/24
Exchange destination: University	Universidade de Lisboa
Faculty	Instituto Superior da Agronomia (ISA)
Country	Portugal
City	Lisbon

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I wanted to try and live abroad for a little while and Erasmus Exchange is the perfect opportunity to try it out. I wanted to create a more international network and really immerse myself in a different culture.

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

I had been in Portugal before and I really love it there. I love the nature and the people. They are hardworking, but know how to relax too; proud but not in an egocentric way and very kind (although admittedly less in the big cities). The people speak very well English too! I lived in Lisbon during my mobility and I had been there before too. The city is incredibly colourful with lots of stuff to explore and very safe.

In Lisbon there is a master called MEDfOR (Mediterranean forestry) which is an Erasmus Mundus program. The courses from this master are taught in English. There is another Erasmus Mundus master called Vinifera EuroMaster (viticulture) which is also taught in English. You can expect all the other courses on the faculty to be in Portuguese. The courses of MEDfOR are very interesting.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

Do you have any tips to reach your exchange destination?

There used to be a night train coming from Bordeaux, but it discontinued during Covid. Now if you want to travel to Lisbon by other means than aeroplane it will take you at least 2 or 3 days. You have to get to Madrid and from there take a train or bus to the border with Portugal. There you have to take a bus to cross the border and get to a major city. I decided to take the plane which takes 3,5 hours. If you get the ESN-card you can get a discount on RyanAir which is really worth it. It depends on your preference.

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	Forest Governance	6	Very theoretical and a bit unorganised. The course talks a lot about the importance of politics and not a lot about forestry.	3	MEDfOR
2	Forest Management and Certification	6	Interesting but a bit difficult if you do not have experience with financial analysis. There is a lot of math involved.	3	MEDfOR
3	Management and Conservation of Vegetation and Agroforestry Systems	6	Packed with information. The field trips are very fun and the course is not too difficult. They do not talk a lot about agroforestry.	4	
4	Management of Forest Pests and Diseases	6	It would be nice to have a bit of background in this course as the Portuguese students have this. The course is not too difficult and the teachers are very passionate about the material.	4	MEDfOR
5	Wildlife Management	6	Easy to follow, not too fast. Lots of use of example cases and the field trips are amazing! The teacher is very experienced and passionate about the material.	5	MEDfOR
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What is it like to study there?

The lessons have never started on time. For the MEDfOR courses you have two times per week 2,5 hours of class per course. The teacher can decide for themselves when they do a break and for how long. They can also decide for themselves when to plan an examination. Most of the teacher plan an exam halfway through the semester and another one at the end. Most also make you present at least once. The lectures are usually so full of information that it is hard to select what you actually need to know and there is a lot of reading material. So if you plan on doing everything it is a busy week.

What is the culture of the university?

Lectures are never recorded and the classrooms can be a bit rundown. You are supposed to call your teachers 'professor', but overall the atmosphere is informal. Everyone eats together in the cafeteria or lies in the grass on sunny days. The campus is very big and very green. There are a lot of animals such as peacocks, geese and cats. The campus can also be entered during the day by civilians to walk their dog or go for a run.

What does the university offer students additionally?

There is a canteen with lunch for 2,10 euros. There is always a vegetarian and meat or fish option. There is also always soup, bread, salad and a desert or fruit. There are multiple places where you can get a coffee and something sweet. There is a student room which is open 24/7 and a library where there is definitely Wi-Fi. There are two

tennis courts that they are renovating, there is a botanical garden and a campus shop. There is always someone at the main entrance from security you can ask questions.

5. Housing-travelling-living

What are the possibilities for housing?

There is housing on campus, but it is very limited so I would recommend you look for housing outside of the campus. There are a few private companies for student housing, but most people get their room via Facebook or Idealista. The rent can easily be around 500 euros per month. It is illegal in Portugal to rent a room without a window. I would recommend to search for housing first in the area of Alcantara since the campus is close to here. You can, of course, live in other parts of the city but then it can easily take an hour to get there as there is no metro-line to Alcantara/Ajuda.

What is the culture of the country like?

You usually eat warm for lunch and dinner and you can expect dinner to be served no earlier than 20.30. People show up late for almost everything, but no one is bothered by this. Usually there is a lot of things to till late in the night since the weather is nice and people can just be outside. The local cuisine consists of a lot of meat and fish and occasionally they put crisps in your dinner. There are a lot of foreign people in Lisbon so some Portuguese people are less friendly to non-Portuguese people. Learning the basics of the language can do a lot!

Could you give some information about public transport infrastructure?

The cost for a Navigante card is since 2024 free for every student under 23 (also international students). You have to apply for the card once at an information point. You need a few documents for this that you can get at the international relations office. I would recommend you do this ASAP and you need to calculate quite some time to get the card as there are often a lot of people at the information points and you will have to wait for hours sometimes. Bolt or Uber are very cheap in the city. The metro works great and the buses are fine but are sometimes quite full and also never on time. To get to campus you can either take a bus (there are a lot of options) or take a train depending on where you live. There is no metro to campus.

6. Expenses

Can you give an indication of your expenses for/during your exchange?

E.g. you can also indicate price differences (higher/lower/equal) in comparison to the Netherlands.

Ticket there: 120,- (without ESN discount)

Visa if applicable: NO

Vaccinations if applicable: NO

Insurances (extra, if applicable): 2,50 at campus

Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation: LOWER

Groceries: LOWER

Public transport: LOWER
Restaurant/going out for dinner: LOWER
Daytrips/sight-seeing: Depends on activity.

Additional remarks regarding expenses?

7. Free time

What are must-sees in the area?

You can travel in the Lisbon district with public busses or trains. You can go to Cascais, Sintra, Mafra, Ericeira, Setubal, Arrabida (natural park) and Costa da Caparica (beach) or any beach along the river. These are perfect for a day trip in the weekend for example. If you want to do a weekend trip to another city you can go to Evora, Coimbra, Peniche, Nazare, Porto or Braga by bus (Flixbus or Rede Expressos)

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

Try to visit some areas more inland of Portugal too and not just on the coast. Portugal offers a wide variety of landscape from north to south and inland vs coastlines.

Do you have general tips and tricks about leisure time?

There are a lot of nice viewpoints all over the city where people gather to watch the sunset. Bairro Alto is a neighbourhood full of bars that comes to life at night. More alternative bars and restaurants can be found around Intendente. Clubs can mostly be found around Santos along the docks, but there are many options all over the city. Humana is a nice chain for second hand clothing. There are enough nice restaurants and park all throughout the city.

8. Challenges & best moment abroad

What challenges did you encounter and how did you overcome them?

The city is very loud and busy all the time. For example the airport is located very close to the city centre so there is a lot of noise from overflying planes. I went to green spaces regularly during the week and often in the weekend I went outside of the city for some quiet.

What is your best memory of your time abroad?

Everyone singing 'happy birthday' in their own language during lunch when it was again someone's birthday. It never sounded great.

9. Contact details (optional)

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