



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Study programme WUR	BSc Food Technology
Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)	1/09/2023 until 12/02/2024
Exchange destination: University	Politecnico di Milano
Faculty	Food Engineering
Country	Italy
City	Leonardo campus, Milan

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I have always loved travelling, making myself uncomfortable in another country with another culture, to learn new languages, all in order to challenge my skill to adapt. This is why, from a young age, I have always wanted to go abroad. My first idea was to do a gap year and go to study at an American Highschool. However, then Corona happened, and thus this plan could not go through. Then during the introduction days of Wageningen University and Research I found out that I could go on exchange in my third year, and thus I was very motivated to do everything possible, so I could finally do what I always wanted to.

The entire first and second year of my bachelor, I still lived at my parents' house. I had multiple reasons for this that were all understandable at that time, but I did feel the need to get more involved with the student life, to be closer to the campus (I lived single trip 1.5 hours away), to be more independent, have more responsibilities, and to mainly just start my adulthood. This was also a big factor in my choice to go abroad. To challenge myself in these aspects and thus give myself an insight into my own character and perseverance for the future.

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

I personally wanted to stay within Europe, also because it would be easier to travel back if I would get too homesick, to avoid extra worries for the Erasmus+ Grant, to avoid a huge time difference with NL, or if there were other unexpected problems back home such as a sudden death within the family. I then looked at the options within Europe and wanted to go to countries that were not too close (Belgium and Germany fell out of the equation), I don't like France personally so I did not want to go there.

I then looked at the universities in the countries that were still left, and found out that for the one in Vienna you needed to talk German of high level, and in Barcelona it was the same but then for Spanish, so that was the reason why those two fell off. I then saw that Milan was an option, and I have always been a fan of Italian culture and way of living. Food is also very important within their culture and thus I was eager to see a study such as Food Engineering through their eyes. But I also wanted the Exchange university to be of value to my resume, so I looked into the university options available within Milan. The one that scored the best was "Politecnico di Milano" and the way it was presented also appealed to me. When comparing this university and the program Food Engineering to the other universities at other countries on the list, it was soon pretty clear that this was going to be my number one choice. Eventually I loved the idea of Milan so much that I put in Politecnico di Milano as number one, Università degli Studi in Milan as second choice, and no third choice at all. If I would not get into Milan, I would just not go at all.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

Do you have any tips to reach your exchange destination?

I went to Milan by car, it was the end of summer holidays, and thus the weather was still nice, this way we made the route to Milan a “roadtrip” with a lot of stops along the way, so it was enjoyable. Because I went by car I could take as much stuff as I wanted to without having to worry about needing to buy essentials in Milan in the very first few days with everything still being very new. You can also go by plane very easily, but then fly to airport “Linate” since this is very close to the centre of Milan. Airports “Bergamo” and “Malpensa” are both very far away (over 1 hour train ride), and the airports are very big so usually the regulations there aren’t the best. Linate is small so very efficient.

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	<i>Agri-Food Supply chain management</i>	5	https://www4.ceda.polimi.it/manifesti/manifesti/controller/ManifestoPublic.do?EVN=DETTAGLIO_RIGA_MANIFESTO=evento&a=2023&k_cf=225&k_corso_la=498&k_in_dir=FOE&codDescr=055771&lang=IT&semestre=1&anno_corso=1&idItemOfferta=165787&idRiga=299387	3	This course was okay, it had some overlap with some basic knowledge I had already learned in Wageningen. However, it still taught me some new stuff and the set-up was enjoyable.
2	<i>Management Tools and Analytics for Food Industry</i>	5	https://www4.ceda.polimi.it/manifesti/manifesti/controller/ManifestoPublic.do?EVN=DETTAGLIO_RIGA_MANIFESTO=evento&a=2023&k_cf=225&k_corso_la=498&k_in_dir=FOE&codDescr=057857&lang=IT&semestre=1&anno_corso=2&idItemOfferta=165794&idRiga=299396	1	I really did not like this course personally. It was boring and after the course was over I did not have the feeling that I had learned something.
3	<i>Pharmaceutical Chemistry Technology</i>	5	https://www4.ceda.polimi.it/manifesti/manifesti/controller/ManifestoPublic.do?EVN=DETTAGLIO_RIGA_MANIFESTO=evento&a=2023&k_cf=225&k_corso_la=498&k_in_dir=FOE&codDescr=058012&lang=IT&semestre=1&idGruppo=4803&idRiga=299419	5	This course was very easy-going, the professor did not expect much from you. He was very kind, and the course itself was very enjoyable.
4	<i>Trends in Food Industry Lab</i>	10	https://www4.ceda.polimi.it/manifesti/manifesti/controller/ManifestoPublic.do?EVN=DETTAGLIO_RIGA_MANIFESTO=evento&a=2023&k_cf=225&k_corso_la=498&k_in_dir=FOE&codDescr=0	5	Gave us the opportunity to work together with a company, so we could put our textbook knowledge in a real-time setting and thus see how far you would come. You worked together with a company for half a year, where we had to fulfil

			54242&lang=IT&semestre=1&anno_corso=2&idItemOfferta=165794&idRiga=299395		their needs and come up with a new packaging solution. It was especially nice since you won't get this type of experience in Wageningen unless you are in your second year of the Masters.
5	Enterprise Risk Management	5	https://www4.ceda.polimi.it/manifesti/manifesti/controller/ManifestoPublic.do?EVN=DETTAGLIO_RIGA_MANIFESTO=evento&a=2023&k_cf=225&k_corso_la=498&k_in_dir=FOE&codDescr=099309&lang=IT&semestre=1&idGruppo=4803&idRiga=299412	3	Liked the way the professor was able to inspire the whole class, gave the engineering students the reality check that was needed. However, he was very unclear about what he wanted from us during the exam, changed his views multiple times which was very confusing and annoying.

What is it like to study there?

E.g. study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material.

The way of studying is very different, of course here you are used to very intensive shorter periods with 1 or two courses. But there you will have 4 or 5 courses simultaneously over the whole semester. If you stay on track with the courses, the workload is very little, and thus I was able to go on trips to a lot of beautiful places. They do have more oral exams, and the way of doing them is also different than from the WUR. Here you have a 1 on 1 with the teacher, but in front of the entire class. So other people are in the room with you while doing your exam. Instead of that the teacher takes you to a separate room.

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 culture is very nice, they really respect people coming from the WUR since it is a nice and prestigious university and a lot of the students tried to get into it themselves. So they really think of you as a "smart" person, and really want you within their group. They do have some issues with talking English, so some might not approach you, just because they don't really know what to say.

What does the university offer students additionally?

E.g. catering, sports facilities, laundry facilities?

The university has a beautiful sport campus, similar to the one in Wageningen, only without the swimming pool. The fee is a bit high, but it is still nice. Laundry is (for as far as I know, not available on campus, but they are in the streets).

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 rent rates are very high at least if you want a nice room in a nice area. But still, I would always recommend doing that. Go to a trustable site, because you don't want to get scammed. Some friends

of mine had more affordable housing but there were a lot of issues. I would also recommend going close to your campus and/or metro station, it's way nicer to be involved and you don't have to walk long distances at night.

What is the culture of the country like?

E.g. Differences with home, local cuisine, habits, manners?

It is Italy, so what you expect of Italian culture. It is a very nice city for students, and for being the age you are now.

Could you give some information about public transport infrastructure?

E.g. Cost public transport card, taxi prices, how to travel to the university?)

Train tickets are not that expensive, unless you want to buy one on very short notice. The metro system is very convenient and a young person pass costs 22 euros per month (you do have to buy a card for 10 euro once, but you can use that for 10 years I think). Also the flibus is very active, so if you don't mind using that system, you can just buy very cheap tickets to get to various cities.

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.

The prices are lower than in NL but that is also because of the fact that the salary is way lower there. So for Italians everything is as expensive as for us in the Netherlands. But with "Dutch" money, everything will be cheaper there. So if you have a job in NL, and spend it in Italy, you will be very happy.

Ticket there:

Visa if applicable:

Vaccinations if applicable:

Insurances (extra, if applicable):

Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation:

Groceries:

Public transport:

Restaurant/going out for dinner:

Daytrips/sight-seeing:

I don't really think the above is relevant, since this will be different depending on your own preferences. So I prefer not to fill this out.

Additional remarks regarding expenses?

Enjoy your time there, if it costs a bit more than in NL so be it, you won't be able to make those memories later.

7. Free time

What are must-sees in the area?

E.g. nearby destinations, how do you prefer to travel, when to plan?

Just go everywhere you are able to go. I was able to go to Rome and back for 15 euros by flibus for example. Take the time to enjoy everything there.

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

Just visit everything you like, but also go to the more quiet and smaller towns now that you have the chance to. Go live like a local, not a tourist.

Do you have general tips and tricks about leisure time?

E.g. recommendations for restaurants, going out?

Go with the Italians, they know fun places to go, but also explore on your own. I would recommend not making Dutch friends since this experience is meant to go away from that.

8. Challenges & best moment abroad

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

Communicating with my landlord since everything is in Italian, and they don't speak English. But just use google translate and learn some basic Italian and it's fine. And if you are not from Europe you will have to get a Visa which is a very tough process. I did not have to do that, so I don't have any recommendations for that unfortunately.

What is your best memory of your time abroad?

The trips that I made on my own and getting to see and enjoy Milan and Italy as a "local" rather than a tourist. It was a very nice time of getting to know myself and my limits.

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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