



# WUR Goes Abroad

## 1. Student Information

<b>Field of study in Wageningen</b>	BSc Biology
<b>Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)</b>	31/01/2023 until 21/06/2023
<b>Country (exchange)</b>	Czech Republic
<b>City (exchange)</b>	Prague
<b>University (exchange)</b>	Czech university of life sciences Prague (CZU)
<b>Faculty (exchange)</b>	Tropical AgriSciences

## 2. Motivation for exchange

### Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

It's something I knew that I wanted to do pretty quickly. Living abroad and building something from the ground up always interested me and going on study exchange was a fairly easy way to do this.

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

I choose Prague, because I had been here with my parents a few years ago but only for like two days. But in those two days I noticed that I really liked the ambiance of the city. I had also heard that the university is quite similar to Wageningen university. That's why I choose for CZU.

## 3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

Going to Prague I made use of the plane. This is very easy and quick, however it's not great for the environment. Going back I went by bus, this is cheap and better for the environment but being in a bus for 14.5 hours is not very nice as a tall person. You can also go by train. I've seen trains where you only need to transit in Berlin but at the moment there's construction on this route so there are more transits. The day I wanted to leave I only saw trips where you had to transit four to five times, which I didn't want. I've heard there goes a sleeper train directly from Amsterdam to Prague, but I've never seen it as a possibility on booking sites.

## 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
<b>1</b>	Wildlife Capture and Translocations	5	Learning how to catch and handle almost every animal in captivity and the wild	4	The teacher was very intense, but we did go to the zoo a few times
<b>2</b>	Antelope use and conservation	4	Everything there is to know about antelopes	5	I loved this course, but it is very specific. Didn't know I could care about antelopes this much
<b>3</b>	General Epizootology and Prevention of Animal Diseases	5	The basis of infectious diseases in animals	3	
<b>4</b>	Economic Botany	5	The relation between plants and people. How indigenous people use certain plants and if that can be applied somewhere else.	5	This was a really cool course. I've never heard of something similar. I really tied together plants and culture
<b>5</b>	Tropical Pastures and Fodder Crops	5	This course teaches you which plants are most suitable for feed for animals in tropical environments	3	
<b>6</b>	Paleoecology	3	The basics about fossils and prehistoric ecosystems	4	This course only consists of three days. Friday through Sunday of which one is a fun excursion where you can also find your own fossils

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

One of the things I noticed immediately is that the amount of contact hours there was way less compared to WUR. For exchange I really liked this as it gave me more freedom to plan when I wanted to study and when I wanted to have fun in Prague. I did kind of miss the level of practicals I'm used to in Wageningen. Often the practicals in CZU are more demonstrations and most of the work you don't actually get to do yourself. Most of the exams were oral which I was not used to but didn't mind. Most exams you could plan yourself or you could choose between multiple dates, this reduced the workload and stress levels.

**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 was part of the newest and therefore also the smallest faculty of the university. This meant that most of my classes didn't consist of more than 15/20 students. The contact with the local students was in the beginning not very much, but because the classes are so small you will merge with them eventually and then you get to know most of them pretty quickly. Most professors also gave multiple courses within the faculty, therefore a lot of the teachers already knew most of the students (usually all except the exchange students), this allowed to have very personal contact with the professors.

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

There is a cafeteria when you can buy lunch with student discount. There are also some sporting facilities, but you didn't get any information on this and since the campus isn't very close to where most people lived, I don't know anyone who made use of it.

## **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 does provide rooms that are available for exchange students to rent, however these rooms are nowhere near the campus nor the city centre. The gas and electricity inflation has hit Czech Republic very hard and therefore rent can become really expensive. Luckily, most of your other costs are relatively lower than in other countries. Also be very aware of scammers, there are a lot of them in Prague.

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

Czech people can be pretty stern and standoffish, especially towards internationals. Czech people aren't great at English and therefore can get irritated if internationals don't speak Czech as they're not able to communicate with people in their own country. As I stayed longer in Prague my Czech also improved and I noticed that if locals notice that you're at least trying to speak some Czech they're way more open and friendly towards you. A lot of my friends had a pretty negative view of the Czech people, but I actually

really started to like them, and I think that's mainly because I tried to speak some Czech which made me understand them better and made them more willing to understand me, creating a better bond. Czech Republic has a very strong beer cuisine. It's accepted to drink beer at anytime during the day. If I went to class at 9am I already saw students with beers. On campus the bar opened at 10am and they solely sold beers. The cuisine is very heavy and very potato and meat oriented. Vegetarians can have a tough time with the local cuisine.

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

Rent is way higher in Prague than in Wageningen. Last year the rent really increased a lot due to the high inflation. Luckily, most of the other costs are lower than in Wageningen. Prague is cheaper than the Netherlands, but not as cheap as most Dutch people think it is. Groceries don't differ a ton but are a bit cheaper in Prague. Local products can be very cheap, but a lot of imported brands can be quite expensive (like ben&jerry's, Pringles, M&M's and those types of products). Eating and going out is quite a lot cheaper than the Netherlands. In most bars you can get a beer (always 500ml) around 2/3 euros.

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

I will forever love the public transport in Prague. It's punctual, affordable, and accessible. Okay for most people it did take some time to get to the campus, but that's because the campus is bit removed from the actual city with limited possibilities to live close. The public transportation during the night is also still very good and if you need a taxi, use the bolt app and most rides will cost like 5euros.

## 6. Free time

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

There are a lot of cities within like an hour around Prague that are definitely worth the visit. Unfortunately, I didn't have much time to explore them. Czech Republic is very centrally located in Europe. It's therefore rather easy to travel to multiple countries. Regiojet is a company that's comparable to Flixbus. I believe it's a Czech company, so it's more popular, usually cheaper and more facilities.

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

Near the Malostranska metro station there's a little hidden park (Valdstejnska zahrada), that's very beautiful and peaceful. There are a lot of bars next to the river. Especially if you go to the Dancing house (which is very overrated) and then down to the river there are a lot of cozy bars. Dumplings are a very traditional Czech food. In the centre there's a restaurant called Knedlin, which serves this traditional food with a modern twist. It's a student hotspot. Finally, I would really recommend the Letna neighbourhood. It was probably my favourite neighbourhood. It is a bit more alternative and has tons of cozy cafes to study or just chill. The area also is connected to two of the best parks in Prague (Letna park and Stromovka Park).

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

Especially during spring and summer time there are a lot of festivals/ little events in Prague. A lot of them are only advertised on Facebook so definitely check that. Also, a tip is that just because something is known/ big/ well-advertised does not mean it's good. A lot of clubs and places are advertised for tourists. To find better places it is way better to google clubs with the specific style of music you're looking for and then don't click on the top one. This way you find clubs with less tourists or ask a local person for tips on clubs and places.

## **7.Challenges & best moment abroad**

### **What was a challenge you have experienced?**

In February, I badly injured my ankle. So, for like 2 weeks I could not walk completely properly. This is when I noticed that Prague has quite some elevation, almost exclusively cobblestone pavements and very little elevators. For me this meant that my ankle only hurt a little bit more, but for someone less able to walk it is good to know that the city is not very accessible.

### **What was your best memory abroad?**

Probably meeting a ton of cool fun people. Knowing that if I go to a European country that probably I have a friend there.

## **8. Contact details (optional)**

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