



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Study programme WUR	Bachelor Forest and Nature Conservation
Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)	17/07/2023 until 06/12/2023
Exchange destination: University	Stellenbosch University
Faculty	Multiple faculties: Sociology, Political Science, Agriculture & Conservation
Country	South Africa
City	Stellenbosch

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I have always been curious about what life would be like in a different country. I love travelling and discovering new cultures and landscapes. I thought studying for a semester abroad would be the perfect opportunity to get a better feeling of what it is like living in a different country for a longer period. Besides this, I believe that studying abroad helps you to develop academically and as a person.

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

I have always had a passion for nature, and as I grew older, I developed an interest in conserving it. South Africa's nature always looked amazing to me, and I dreamt about going to the Country one day. And what better way to visit than during your exchange right? Next to nature, I am also interested in development, and this makes South Africa a very interesting destination.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

Do you have any tips to reach your exchange destination?

Take a plane. I booked two separate tickets (twee enkeltjes).

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>Social Issues in South Africa</i>	6	This course provides an overview of current social issues in South Africa, based on for example gender inequalities, apartheid, and issues in the work/industry sphere.	2	I personally really did not like the topics and lecturers during the first part of the course (gender inequalities). The second part I liked more, in which we read literature about historical topics of South Africa.
2	<i>Political Development</i>	4	The course offers insights in why certain nations are rich and others are not, and what is creating inequality in the world. It explains this through the concept of inclusive and exclusive political and economical institutions, and provides multiple relevant case studies in doing so.	5	I really recommend this course if you want to understand a bit better why the world is the way it is today. The course explains why some countries have higher welfare, better living conditions and democracy compared to others, based on important historical events, such as the Atlantic trade, Black Death and the Glorious Revolution. I liked the professor and his way of teaching.
3	<i>Sustainable Agriculture and Community Gardening</i>	6	Course is mostly about sustainability (both agriculture and other topics such as recycling) and global challenges. It offers both lectures and practicals.	3	Fun course but a bit of basic topics. Good balance between lectures and practicals.
4	<i>Practical Conservation</i>	6	A lot of different subjects based on nature conservation will be discussed, such as risk management, eco-friendliness, reasons to protect ecosystems and relationships between organisms.	4	Very interesting discussion topics about nature conservation were provided during class. Not very challenging.
5	<i>Practical Conservation Field Work</i>	2	Nature conservation field work course in National Kruger Park. Extra payment fees.	4	Experience Kruger with classmates! Good experience.
6	<i>Community Development</i>	6	The course focusses on the different	4	We first had a pretty bad professor, but then we got a

			concepts and theories of poverty and how we can help stimulate communities to develop in a sustainable way.		new professor and I really liked how she taught the course! The course was a bit more challenging, which was nice. First you get theory and then you will do some practical work at a community development organisation. I did this at Kin Culture where they among other things provide foster families for children in need.
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What is it like to study there?

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

Overall, really good experience. Kind people that work at the University and many of them want to help you during times you need it. Everybody speaks very well English. Academic level was not too difficult, but I felt like the examination (of for example essays) was often quite strict. After my final examination period I found out that two courses managed to lose an exam of mine, which was quite stressful. But I did not hear of this problem from other people, so maybe I just had bad luck.

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?

Like I said, very nice and kind people! Not much engagement with local students from the university, but you can stimulate this yourself. Some of the classes that I took had more than 1000 students, which was something that I was not used to from the WUR.

What does the university offer students additionally?

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

Amazing gym and food options!!

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?

Multiple options, both from the university as private housing. Both are fine, but from my own experience I would recommend looking for private housing. I lived in a private house with 15 other exchange students. We did a lot together which makes living in a new place a bit easier!

What is the culture of the country like?

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

Stellenbosch is quite westernized and 'white'. South Africa is a melting-pot of different cultures and nationalities. The country has 11 official languages! The South African people were coming of as very kind to me.

Even though I came quite prepared to Stellenbosch knowing that nowadays there is still discrimination and huge poverty, I did not expect to see the aftermath of the apartheid-

era so extremely. The huge inequality and gap between poor and rich in the country is very visible. Being there as a white exchange student often felt a bit wrong to me, but I also think that it is very important to experience this yourself. The university provided multiple volunteering incentives in which you can connect with the communities around Stellenbosch. The locals were very interested in the internationals and loved to learn about our countries. I think Stellenbosch/Cape Town have nice atmospheres. Just be careful with your belongings and use the provided safety principles.

Could you give some information about public transport infrastructure?

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

Use uber (very safe!), rent your own car at Hertz (only €300 for a month, cheap when you divide it with others) or walk. Do not use the public transport.

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: quite expensive (be prepared for around €1000 in total)

Visa if applicable: in total I paid around €250.

Vaccinations if applicable: I had insurance.

Insurances (extra, if applicable): South african health insurance was mandatory, but not very expensive.

Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation: around €500-€600 per month.

Groceries: bit cheaper as in the Netherlands.

Public transport: n.a.

Restaurant/going out for dinner: very cheap and super good! Eating out is maybe even cheaper than buying groceries.

Daytrips/sight-seeing: differs a bit per activity, but overall same as in the Netherlands.

Additional remarks regarding expenses?

7. Free time

What are must-sees in the area?

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

- Lots of beautiful wine estates around Stellenbosch, such as Delaire Graffe, Waterford, Hidden Valley, Ernie elst, Mont Marie for breakfast, Lanzerac and manyyy more.
- Cape town: waterfront, bo-kaap, food-markets (old biscuit mill and oranjezicht market).
- Hermanus whale-watching June-November
- Langebaan, flowering in August-September
- Garden route!
- All the amazing and cheap restaurants in and around Stellenbosch/Cape town.
- Travel with your own rental car for longer destinations or use an uber.

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

You have a lot of nice hiking trails in Stellenbosch, I used the app All Trails and really liked the hike to the waterfall in Banghoek Conservancy. Jonkershoek is also a beautiful nature park nearby.

Do you have general tips and tricks about leisure time?

E.g. recommendations for restaurants, going out?

I think pretty much all the restaurants are super good. But some of my favourites in Stellenbosch: Sofia, Manoushe, Warenmarkt, fat butcher, Lanzerac, Bootlegger, Wine Glass, Basic Bistro.

8. Challenges & best moment abroad

I enjoyed my weeks in Stellenbosch a lot!! Too much to see and do. Some of my favourite moments:

Watching whales in Hermanus in the sun on a cliff with two friends and some beers! Doing the garden route.

Seeing wildlife during random moments, like encountering a cape cobra on a hike! And seeing all the wildlife in Kruger and Addo Elephant Park.

Meeting local people and gaining new insights. Tasting South African food.

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

Liked stated before, I found seeing the aftermaths of apartheid quite challenging. But for me it really helped to talk with other people about it, especially the locals, and to learn more about the history of the country. Me and some friends would also often buy homeless people groceries, but I understand that this does not solve anything in long term. Just try to help where you can and be thoughtful of the people around you and your privileged position in such a country.

What is your best memory of your time abroad?

Honestly the whole 5 months!! Enjoyed every aspect. After studying at the university in Stellenbosch I went on a 3-week trip to Namibia and Botswana with 9 other friends/housemates. Truly an unforgettable experience!

9. Contact details (optional)

Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
Name/e-mail	Inge Feij – Inge.feij@wur.nl	