

STUDENT EXPERIENCE REPORT: IST LISBON

I am a Spanish student and I am finalizing a Master in Renewable Energies (EUREC) that I started last year. I am currently carrying out the Master thesis in a research center in Northern Spain, but my University is the Carl von Ossietzky of Oldenburg.

Talking about the experience I had the luck to live with the EUREC Master, I have to say that it represents a unique opportunity that can not be missed. Going from Northern Germany to Southern Portugal means a huge cultural exchange and quite a different environment. The cultures are distant and if you are not open to the change, it can be quite shocking in the first days.

I shared the Erasmus experience with four other colleagues of the EUREC Master. We all four chose Lisbon as our Erasmus destination.



Our first day to the IST of Lisbon

We were a group of close friends; this was good and not so good at the same time, because we did not get to know the local people. Most of the time of our stay was spent in class or in study groups, and life reduced to the Erasmus group of students. Going alone forces you to meet more people, but I highly recommend going with colleagues too. That was my case; the four of us were living in the same house, and we were all coming from the same class of Oldenburg.

The learning at the “Instituto Superior Técnico” (IST) of Lisbon surprised me as it was tougher than I thought. My experience told me that learning in Portugal was more relaxed, because I had the chance to study for some months in Porto while I was getting my Bachelor, and there the ambience was much more relaxed. That was not the case in the IST, the content of the lectures was not that easy and required of a lot of effort from my side to follow and understand. It was hard but still a positive experience, to learn under a completely different educative system.

Studying at the IST trained me to be more flexible and manage better the stressing situations, always doing my best with the time I have. I have to say that leaving at home with my colleagues was a key factor to pass the course. The team work and also team support was essential for me through the hard times.

Regarding the “out-of-uni” life, we had the chance to go out for the Eurovision 2018 event that took place in the city. I personally enjoy surfing, and that is one of the main reasons why I love so much this city. It has not only a lot of personality, as a very bohemian and decadent town, but a wide number of beaches close to the city center.



Street with paintings in the center of Lisbon

I was lucky enough to have my car with me during the Erasmus, as I come from Spain, but the traffic was terrible in peak hours. If not by car, you can reach many beaches by bus or taking the metro and the train. My favorite beach was “Costa da Caparica”, because it has plenty of surf spots. I joined a surf group of Portuguese people, what allowed me to enhance my Portuguese skills, otherwise, I was all day speaking in English.



Picture of Lisboa's coast, the beach of Caparica



Surfing group in southern Caparica

Overall, the Erasmus experience was not easy sometimes, but it definitely changes you in a positive way. You know more aspects of your own person and you break down the walls of your own judgements. You learn to see the people as they are, just people, and you do not worry about their beliefs or habits. I adored living with my three friends, it was the greatest of the experiences. I found I learned a lot at the IST University, despite their chaotic organization. There was always something to do in Lisbon, and I left the city with the taste of wanting to stay for a couple more years.