

Erfahrungsbericht Auslandstudienaufenthalt: 2020/2021

Experience Report Semester Abroad 2020/2021

Preparation

I spent the spring semester of 2021 attending the University of Nova Gorica in Slovenia. As my program is in English, with a strong collaboration with other organizations in the country, I and my fellow students all decided to live in Ljubljana instead of Nova Gorica, since it is a bigger city. In preparation for our exchange, I spent some time researching the city online. I find that using TripAdvisor to find nice places to visit or eat in and the saving those in my Google Maps can be quite helpful further down the line! This way I had a long list over things I wanted to see when I arrived. I also spent time finding my local library and talking with previous students to see where they liked to go to study. In addition to culture and restaurants, I also did some brief research on the country's history. I like to be enlightened when I visit a new place, and this definitely helped. Another necessary thing is of course doing research on the bureaucracy involved with moving to a new country, such as registering with the police or foreigners' office. This step was further complicated by the Coronavirus, but it all worked out in the end.

Arrival

Since I was traveling from far away, I had to fly to arrive in Slovenia. Ideally, I could have used train or another Green alternative, but again, this was complicated because of Corona. This meant that the flight was a little bit more expensive than I would have liked, but the Erasmus+ scholarship luckily helped me pay for it. I also coordinated my arrival with other friends, so that I would know someone when I first got there.

Housing

I am a detail-oriented planner at heart, so I began looking for housing early. There are of course options for student housing through the University, but I ended up finding private accommodation. As I was beginning to look for housing, I made a new friend who had lived and studied for years in Ljubljana, and he was thankfully very helpful in providing me with good contacts. I ended up renting a room in an apartment in the city center, which I shared with three other international students. The landlord was great, and he even helped us arrange for bikes. Ljubljana is a great city to bike around in, and there are many wonderful sights all around, so it is definitely worth it! This way you don't get stuck being only at home or at the University.

Studies

I was really impressed with the level of teaching at the University of Nova Gorica. Our professors were skilled, knowledgeable, and always available when we had questions or issues we wanted to discuss. This is true even for those who don't know a word of Slovenian – like me.

Everyday Life

Likewise, in everyday life, you will get along with English and get to know the city quickly.

Language-wise I found that you can survive with no problems on English alone. Nonetheless, I also believe that learning the native language (or at least a few phrases!) of the country you're visiting can be quite helpful. Slovenian was unfortunately not a language offered in the Duolingo-app for my exchange, but I found some good resources online (especially on YouTube). Outside of Covid-times I also believe that there are intensive language courses you can take in the city, which aren't too expensive. I think the best part of living in Slovenia was the student discounts we got in bars and restaurants – it really encouraged us to get out of our apartments and go see the city and get to know the Slovenian people. I would highly encourage anyone who wants to go abroad for exchange to visit Slovenia and the University of Nova Gorica.