

Universidad Torcuato Di Tella - Buenos Aires - Argentina

Did you come across any problems during your application at the university? Subjects or country specific.

The application from here was fine, and I could choose all the courses I wanted, but I also had to write a Spanish motivation letter to get accepted here. Some of the courses I wanted to do were not available anymore, but it was doable to change that later. We also got some info in English, especially during the first intro language/culture course. The introduction day for the exchange students was in Spanish. The exchange office was in English.

Level of courses, more difficult or not?

The Spanish courses were more difficult due to the language barrier, but I also had to do a lot of presentations and read a lot of papers. That made the workload a bit more than in Tilburg I guess. But in the end I passed all my courses with high grades; maybe they were less tough for me because I was the only exchange student in my class. I choose for the Spanish courses, but you can choose all English courses.

Are there any specific items to pack for your region?

I had to get some vaccinations because I went traveling. I brought some medication like malaria pills, but I didn't necessarily need to bring them. The summer there is 12 degrees (in June), but the winter is really hot (in December). I brought sunscreen with a high factor, because the sun is way sharper there. Started in July and ended in December. I stayed until January. I didn't bring any real winter clothes, because for me, in July, it didn't feel like winter.

How did you arrange housing, any tips here?

I looked at craigslist to find some houses, which was pretty difficult. We booked a hostel for the first week, so we could look at some houses before signing anything. My friend already made some appointments to visit houses before we got there, which I would really recommend because if you have to start with that when you get there, you don't have enough time. There are too many other things that need to be arranged upon arrival, like a public transportation card and a sim card etc, and you only have (not very good) WiFi in the common areas of the hostel, so that would make the search for a room more difficult. Do not sign anything before you see the room. There is no campus, do it on your own. I arrived two days before my language course started because I had exams in Tilburg still, but if you have the time, go at least a week before. It gives you time to settle in and get over your jetlag etc.

Any tips for booking flights tickets?

I booked in February and booked a return flight. A flexible ticket was very expensive, so I just bought a return flight. Eventually I changed my destination and flight day, and it cost me 120 euros to change it. I sent my luggage back upfront, and traveled only with my backpack.

How did you have to adjust to the cultural differences? Language, food, customs, way of teaching.

Language barriers yes, but you learn to deal with that pretty quickly. Also it's what I wanted, I wanted to learn the language. Everything is going slow, but you will get used to it. It does not matter if you are an hour late. For dinner parties etc, just know that people will show up 2 hours later than you agreed to meet, but the sooner you get used to it, the easier your life gets.

The way of teaching was not very different than here, but with assignments or something is not that bad if you hand it in the day after the deadline. The uni is pretty flexible. I could choose my own courses, but not my own schedule. You could see at what times the courses were given, so you could base your schedule a bit on that. I did not have any courses in the morning; they all started in the afternoon.

Do you have any suggestions for associations to join or other ways to come in contact with local/exchange students?

My uni had a buddy system, so you were able to contact them. I would advise to do the language course of my university, so you can meet the other exchange students before classes start. You get lessons in the language but also in culture. But it depends per university. → Join an association when you go to another university. I did not join any association because my uni did not have that. I joined a trip of an association from a different university, but it was always possible to join these activities so that was nice.

Are there any places that you have to take a visit to?

I went to Iguazu falls, all the way in the north of Argentina and Brazil. I also went all the way down to Patagonia, El Calafate and El Chalten. Furthermore, I went to Chile, Uruguay, Bolivia and Peru. I went to Uruguay during the weekend, and that is enough time to visit that country. It's also very accessible from Buenos Aires via boat. In Patagonia and Peru, there is a lot of nature. If you have time after your exchange, you should stay there, and travel as much as you can. I did not have time upfront.

Golden

tip:

If you really want to learn Spanish, get a Spanish boyfriend/girlfriend/live with Spanish people.