



UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM



Digital
magazine for
exchange
students

UvA Study Abroad

Exchange Express

www.uva.nl/ambassadors

We are 



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Introduction

Life begins at the end of your comfort zone
- Neale Donald Walsch

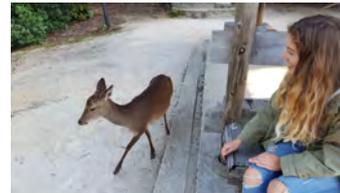
For us our exchange was or is one of the greatest experiences in our lives. We met tons of amazing people from all over the world and discovered new cultures. When you decide to leave your comfort zone and start a new experience in a different country, that is where growth can happen. There might be times when it is challenging and things might not turn out the way you wanted, but this is a crucial part in your personal growth. But when you arrive at your destination, you will see that all the struggles were worth it because what you get in return is invaluable and probably one of the most important lessons you will ever get. Diving into adventures, exploring the great world out there and connecting with people from all around the world is an experience that you will never forget.

With this exchange express we hope to give you insight in what fellow exchange students are experiencing both in Amsterdam and Globally. With some local tips on the do's and don'ts in Amsterdam we hope to make your exchange an even more amazing experience. Moreover, with our stories from places as far as China and Australia to Amsterdam; we hope to give you some insight on what it is to be on exchange and to experience what it is to live in a culture that might be very different from your own. Or if you have already been on exchange, to reminisce about your own experiences on exchange. Through this exchange express. we hope to show you that the exchange process is not as scary as it might seem. Moreover, a submission guide is provided to get you through the rather tedious pre-exchange process without it severely affecting your mental health.

Exchange was an experience that both helped us shape our identity and catered for personal growth. Our exchange has been so valuable to us and is something we wish everyone could experience.

Have a good journey!

On behalf of your Global and Erasmus Ambassador team,
Jennifer Them & Charlotte Out





INGOING

Testimonial

Hi I'm Madi, and I'm on exchange at UvA from UNSW, in Sydney Australia!

Although I knew that I wanted to complete my exchange somewhere in Europe, I did not have a particular city in mind. In coming to a decision I spoke to friends, family, university coordinators, and previous exchange students whom all spoke so highly both about UvA's programs and Amsterdam as a city. The more I researched Amsterdam the more I came to realise that it could offer what I wanted to get out of my exchange experience. As someone who is motivated and a hard worker I sometimes find it difficult to prioritise life experiences. The smaller geographical space of Amsterdam, its cycling culture and easy pace promised to provide me with the opportunity to develop lifestyle habits that would better enable me to achieve a more satisfying work/life balance. Upon arriving in Amsterdam I immediately felt at home. Although I do not speak Dutch, I found most people warm and welcoming.

In my first few weeks, without a bike, I pretty much walked everywhere! To me this was such a welcome change of pace from home, where the space often meant I had to drive to get from A to B. It also allowed me to familiarise myself with Amsterdam's streets, people, ways of life and traffic!! After a month or so of doing this, however, and after a month or so of being subject to continuous pressure from one of my Malaysian exchange friends who insisted I couldn't feel part of Dutch society unless I biked, I finally gave in to buying a second hand bike at IJHallen. This was despite the mild fear of cycling in Amsterdam that had been ignited in me after seeing motorbikes and mini cars speed up the bike lanes. It was thanks to my beautiful new Dutch friend that I gained the confidence to finally start cycling by taking me out on the road and teaching me the road rules.

I would have to say, out of all the fantastic experiences I've had in Amsterdam so far, it is the simple joy of riding to university in the morning, or to lunch with friends, or home from a concert at Paradiso or Melkweg that has been the highlight of my experience so far. The intimacy that cycling allows between Amsterdam's people and landscape is truly second to none.



Testimonial

Hello, I'm Ka Kyung Nam studying social sciences in the University of Amsterdam as an exchange student from Korea University in Seoul, South Korea.

As I came from a place that has a really different culture from Amsterdam, every new experience taught me something. I learned other students' interests, perception of society, speaking styles etcetera. Since Amsterdam is a diverse city and the University of Amsterdam has a lot of international students, I could broaden my perspectives on society.

There are many things to enjoy. If you want to make friends, you can participate in events like the semester opening festival, boat parties and drinking in Coco's outback. Every student here seems to be good at dancing, drinking, and having fun. If you are looking to have alone time, you can just walk by the beautiful canals of Amsterdam and forget everything. If you want to travel around, you can go to beautiful suburbs such as the Zaanse schans and Den Haag. Amsterdam is also the perfect starting point to go everywhere in Europe.

Living in Amsterdam as an exchange student from Asia was difficult in some ways. First of all; my English. I had not practiced speaking or discussing in English, and the conversations with friends and the activities in classes made me insecure and frustrated sometimes.

Moreover, I confronted some students – not many – that had misconceptions about Asians. As the speaking styles and party cultures are different, some friends think that all the Asians are shy and do not like to talk with others.

If you face such problems, challenge yourself and others. Most students and teachers are ready to accept you, so you can explain what makes you hurt or upset. I met a lot of friends who encouraged me to speak English out loud, who understood the cultural differences, and waited for me to speak my mind. I improved a lot through those difficulties in not only English but also communication skills and understanding cultural diversities. Besides, life in Amsterdam gave me time to relax and look back my past. Good luck! You will never regret the experiences and challenges in Amsterdam!

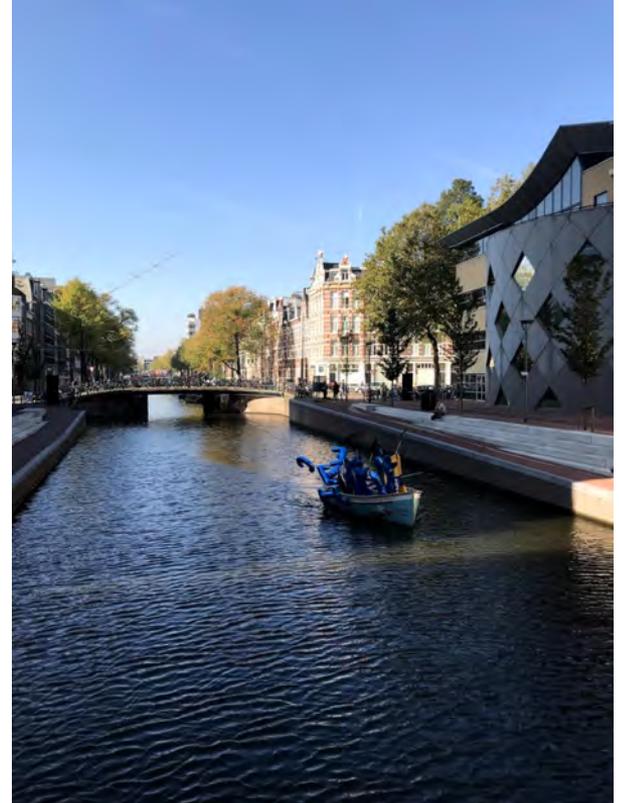
Best Memories in Amsterdam

When I decided that I wanted to study one semester abroad in Amsterdam I had no idea what I could expect from it. All thoughts about how it was going to be, how everything looked like, the people I was going to meet etc. was circling in my head. It was a nervous period of time not knowing anything except that I was leaving to a new country.

All the small memories along the way are creating one big memory, the best memory. Let me tell you what makes this experience in Amsterdam so special to me.

The first period of time here in Amsterdam was fun, but a bit turbulent, not knowing anything yet. After meeting new friends, getting to know more about how the university worked and how to get around in the city, it all became more clear to me. I have tried different restaurants, street food, cafés and not to forget, night food after a long night out. All the canals make it possible to take boat trips, which is a perfect thing to do either with your new friends or visitors from home. One of my greatest memories are from a boat trip in the evening. Me and my friends were the only people in the boat (and of course the captain). We sat in the front of the boat, with blankets and glass of white wine, going under the beautiful bridges with lights around them that lighted up the darkness.

This memory was breathtaking and something I will always remember.



Best Memories in Amsterdam



Late nights, riding our bikes through the city back home after a night full of dancing and good music with friends, that is for sure memories that will stick to my mind forever. The feeling that you are not alone, you have people that are experiencing and going through the same thing as me, that's beautiful. Amsterdam is a city that is very much alive. There is always something to do, new things to try, places to go and activities to share with each other. One morning I took my bike to a café, ordered a cappuccino as always and the best beagle I've ever had and studied for a few hours. Those small things you can do to create memories are the best ones.

Memories, big or small, are all together creating a big one. Actually the biggest one. All though seeing new places, exploring the city, trying cafés or having a night out is fun, the best memory is still about the people I have met and shared all of these things with.



Holspots in Amsterdam (Food)

Looking for some delicious and affordable food, but don't know where to go? In Amsterdam, you will find everything what a foodie could ever long for (and even more!). Be it traditional Dutch or international cuisine, progressive restaurant ideas or just some cozy cafés for rainy days. Here is a mini-starter package of places you should definitely try. And we swear, you will love them!



If you are in the Netherlands, trying Dutch pancakes is a must. Opt for the [Pannenkoekenhuis Upstairs](#), [The Pancake Bakery](#) or [Mook](#) to taste some thick and filling, sweet or/and savoury pancakes - almost every combination of toppings is possible (and highly encouraged). And while you are at it, you might also want to test some sweet Poffertjes.

If you want to dig even deeper in Dutch cuisine, [Skek](#) or [La Falote](#) are the restaurants of your choice. La Falote serves typical traditional Dutch food according to season of year. Contrary, Skek combines traditionality and new eating trends. PS.: They also host



ights!



For all the street food foodies among us, [De Foodhallen](#) and [World of Food](#) is the place to be. There is something for everyone: Sandwiches, burgers, sweets, Mediterranean and Vietnamese snacks, bitterballen, ... there is a range of different cuisines just waiting for you to try. Don't let them be waiting too long!

Holspots in Amsterdam (Food)

For a special atmosphere, go to [Bazar](#). The restaurant offering Middle Eastern and North African dishes is placed in a renovated old church. If it is not for the food, you might also just want to glance at the colourful interior.



If you love burgers, go to [Thrill Grill](#). All the ingredients are locally sourced and natural. They have burgers for all tastes. And if you are still not tired of burgers, head to [The Butcher](#).

You have the urge to go to Asia but cannot afford the plane ticket? No problem! For some Asian atmosphere and delicacies, you just have to turn the corner to [Happyhappyjoyjoy](#) or the [Oriental City](#).



At [The Avocado Show](#) - guess what - you will get food with avocado as main ingredient. So if you want to satisfy your craving for this special green fruit (or if you want to take some awesome Instagram pictures), we whole-hearted recommend you this place.

Feeling a bit Italian today? In that case, go to one of three locations of [Spaghetteria](#). You will find six different homemade, freshly prepared pastas each day.

Holspots in Amsterdam (Food)



Vegan, vegetarian or just open to new things? Check out [Vegan Junk Food Bar](#), [Dignita](#) or [Box Sociaal](#).

You are fed up with all the food waste in the world, but don't know how to help changing it? At [Instock](#), you cannot only get super yummy food, but also a good conscience. They rescue food from Dutch supermarkets that otherwise would be wasted and create delicious lunch and dinner menus.

Go to [Van Stapele](#) for the best stuffed chocolate cookies in whole Europe. Waiting in line in front of this tiny shop which only serves this one type of chocolate cookies is definitely worth it, because in the end, you can enjoy the freshly baked, still soft and warm cookies and it will feel as if you are in heaven (or hell, because the cookies are so sinful).

[Back to Black](#) not only serves good coffee varieties, but also offers lovely baked goods and a cat that will gladly snuggle up to you. In the mood for something homemade and organic instead? We recommend [Sticky Fingers](#).



[De Koffieschenkerij](#) is a hidden café right next to the Oude Kerk. It has a beautiful garden and tremendously cozy interior, so that it is quite easy to forget all your task and pressure from university and just chill with a slice of fresh apple pie and coffee.

Holspots in Amsterdam (Nightlife/art/sport)

Thuishaven

Party on a sunday, do it all again on monday. This small-scale festival is held almost every sunday all year round and is the perfect event to close off your weekend with a bang. Tickets cost only €15, so take advantage and get your lazy friends out and grooving! It provides a great experience all year around, particularly in the summer as you can enjoy drinks in the sun with your friends and make the most of the good weather.

Korte Leidse Dwarsstraat

This 'party street' located near Leidseplein is probably one of the most 'Dutch' evenings out you can get. Clubs like Bubbles, de Kleine Cooldown and Het feestje van Joop are known for their Dutch playlists and their famous bell which can be rung at any time. However, if you enjoy some personal space to dance this might not be the place for you as it tends to get quite crowded, but on the plus side, entrance is free. Tip: at the corner of Leidseplein is sports cafe, which is a cheap pre-drink cafe selling 10 shots for €10.

De IJ Hallen

De IJ Hallen are a monthly vintage sale in Amsterdam North with over 750 stands. Besides selling great items, it also has a nice atmosphere and welcomes you to stroll around the market.



Hotspots in Amsterdam (Nightlife/art/sport)



Paradiso & Melkweg

These two clubs are located near Leidseplein and are great for showcasing less mainstream artists. I, for example, saw one of my favorite South African bands that I discovered on exchange. Both places are very much worth taking the time to check out!

Hannekes Boom

A nice place just to have a drink during summer and enjoy the weather on their picnic benches along the waterfront.



De Biertuin Oost

A bar serving all the craft beers you can think of. Each bottle comes with a matching glass which makes the beer selection process even more fun. The bar is great all year round as they have a large outside area which is fantastic in summer but they also wheel out strong heaters for the winter months.

Plek

This is a great place for escaping the crowdedness of the city and to just relax. Located in North it is a bit more spacious and has a cool industrial vibe. Their nice menu and fatboys make this the ideal place to spend a sunny afternoon.



De Marktkantine

Good night out in Amsterdam West with music ranging from Techno to “hitjes”. Entrance can be a little more expensive and the drinks are not cheap inside either so keep that in mind before you go here!

Travel Guide around the Netherlands

Amsterdam is a cool, adventurous and vibrant city, but guess what? It is certainly not the only gem of the Netherlands. So do you dare to glance beyond Amsterdam? Believe us, it is definitely worth it and you will realize that there is so much more to see in this (comparably) small country. So get up, pack your bag, get on the train and explore the Netherlands!

The Hague is the seat of the government of the Netherlands which is why you can visit a lot of governmental buildings including the Dutch parliament. It also hosts the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court. And if you just want to relax, you can stroll around the city center and witness the fascinating combination of the modern skyline and historical architecture, or go to Clingendael Park with beautiful Japanese gardens.



Rotterdam is the second largest city in the Netherlands and displays modernity like no other Dutch city. Since most of the buildings were destroyed during the Second World War, Rotterdam had to be rebuilt which is where it received its distinct modern and progressive vibe.

Maastricht is one of the oldest cities in the Netherlands, situated close to the German and Belgian border. Take a walk through the city and enjoy the winding roads, medieval monuments, Gothic churches and reminisce of yesteryear.

Travel Guide around the Netherlands



Do not forget to pay **Nijmegen** and **Utrecht** a visit, which have both historical and architectural highlights and are cozy, friendly cities to visit. Or go to **Groningen** if you are up for creative vibes, looking for a healthy hotspot and a city engaged in saving the environment. If you want to see a traditional fisherman's city, go to **Volendam** or **Spakenburg**.

To be honest, there are a dozen cities worth a visit, like Delft, Leiden or Eindhoven. Just go to the main station and look where the next train will get you!

If you are done with visiting cities, you might want to check out **Efteling** - the biggest amusement park in the Netherlands and, in fact, one of the oldest theme parks in the world. Get the adrenalin flowing and learn about ancient myths and legends!

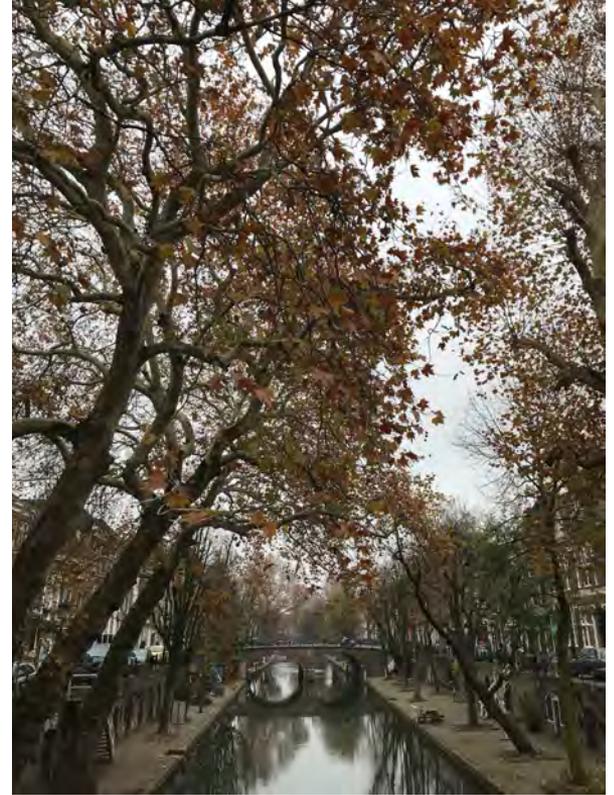
Or are you in the mood for some Dutch traditions? Then let's go to the UNESCO World Heritage **Kinderdijk** where you can see 19 beautiful windmills that were built in the 18th century and dip into Holland's history. It cannot get more Dutch than that!

Travel Guide around the Netherlands

After long and intensive sightseeing, you might just want to relax. This is no problem at all in the Netherlands due to its lovely scenery! Check out **Hoge Veluwe National Park**, a preserved park that covers several provinces in the Netherlands and offers a delightful insight into Dutch nature. In addition, regardless of the time of year, a day trip to the **Dutch coast** or to the **West Frisian Islands** is always a good idea. Five of the 50 islands in the **Wadden Sea** belong to the Netherlands. One of them is **Texel**, the largest and most populated island. Enjoy salt marshes, sand dunes, lavender and of course beaches on Texel. If you want to stick more to the mainland, go for beaches like **Zandvoort** or **Scheveningen**

Although all of the mentioned sights and cities can be reached easily by train, you might not have time to visit everything. That is why you should go to **Madurodam** in The Hague. There you can see a miniature version of the Netherlands - so all the top destinations at a glance.

Embrace the opportunity to travel the Netherlands while your stay. There is so much to see and explore. And the Netherlands certainly deserve to be referred to with more than just mentioning Amsterdam.



Holidays in the Netherlands

Kingsday

When Queen Beatrix was still reigning, this day was known appropriately as Queensday. Now we celebrate our king, sometimes lovingly/mockingly nicknamed 'prins pils' (prince pint). Apparently King Willem-Alexander liked a drink or two during his university days. This holiday is centered around selling your old things, making the whole city a sort of flea market, and celebrating in the streets. Everyone is dressed in their orange best (the dutch national color) and walks around to enjoy the sights, food or parties. This day is fun for everyone, whether you want to look for a good bargain or follow the kings tradition and have a drink or two!

National Remembrance & Liberation Day

On May 4th we remember the people who died in the Second World War and more recent conflicts. At 8pm there is a large ceremony on Dam Square, where the whole country observes a two minutes silence. Be mindful of this when you are in a restaurant or even in the street, as the tradition is honored in most places. The next day, May 5th, we celebrate! This is the day The Netherlands were liberated from German occupation. While it is not a free day unfortunately, a lot of people still see this as the perfect excuse to party.



Holidays in the Netherlands



Sinterklaas

Some might call this Dutch Christmas. Sinterklaas involves lots of presents, sweets and decorations. Little kids can set up their shoes in front of the fireplace for smaller presents leading up to the big 'Sinterklaas Eve'. Legend goes that Sinterklaas rides his horse over the rooftops and comes down the chimney. The Dutch get very creative with this holiday, as there is 'Sinterklaas news' and even a TV-show where the hurdles Sinterklaas has to overcome leading up to the big day are shown and discussed. Try some traditional 'pepernoten', 'taai taai' or 'schuimpjes' around this holiday.

Ascension Day and Pinksteren

These classic Christian holidays are a reason to attend mass and come together for some. For others, it is just a free day to enjoy!

New Years Eve

Special mention goes to New Years eve. This is of course a known holiday in most other countries, but one thing that is different is the widespread use of fireworks by every man, woman and child. Officially fireworks are only allowed between 6pm and 2am, but if you listen (not so) closely you can hear the occasional firecracker in the month leading up to new years eve.

Amsterdam Survival Guide

How to Get Around by Bike

Bikes, so many bikes. They are hard to miss, as you will probably be nearly hit by one the moment you step foot in the city center. You will see some interesting configurations, ranging from a Dutch couple sharing a bike to a mother somehow transporting her weekly shopping and three toddlers. The traffic may seem daunting at first, and the other cyclists highly unforgiving, but it is worth it to get a bike as it really is the easiest way to get around. The three top tips for beginners are:

1. Get a big lock. Your little lock that comes standard on your bike won't cut it. Everyone in Amsterdam is very fond of bikes, including thieves.
2. Be careful when crossing over a tram track, always cross them at an angle or your wheel might slip into them making for a bad fall. Watch out for the trams themselves too as they can be surprisingly quiet.
3. Don't follow the Dutch example: follow the rules. Dutch people run red lights, bike without lights at night, you name it. Biking has become second nature to them, and they can be a little too comfortable. If you are new to this whole biking thing, do it right.



Amsterdam Survival Guide

The Dutch Language

A common complaint from expats or exchange students that are trying to learn Dutch is that Dutch people will switch to English the moment they detect an accent. This is true, a lot of Dutch people feel like there is just no use entertaining you and your linguistic attempts. However, for a lot of Dutch people it is also just to show that they do speak English very well and they might even think you prefer it. Tell your Dutch friends you want to practice and they might indulge you!

The People

There are some generalizations that are often made about the Dutch. While every person is different of course, some character traits might be more common in The Netherlands than in other countries. The Dutch are often described as blunt or forward. This is somewhat true and can be both bad and good at times. Dutch people won't beat around the bush and they might not spare your feelings. Dutch people generally mean well, but we don't have as many social rules when it comes to making pleasantries or not discussing certain topics in certain situations. Try to embrace it, and don't be surprised when the topic of religion or politics is casually brought up during a party.

OUTGOING



Testimonial - Habiba

Applying for an exchange program in Amsterdam is a challenge. As an Egyptian student, leaving her country and trying to find her way out in a German University, I experienced a lot of ups and downs. With every step in my young path, I add to my personality. Adapting to a new culture as well as a new lifestyle was one of the best experiences of my life, and that is why I applied to an exchange program in the University of Amsterdam. I wanted to experience once again what it felt like to live in a different, unique place such as Amsterdam. Especially when their inhabitants are well known as easy going and welcoming to foreigners.

To be completely honest, fears and obstacles were accompanying me throughout the whole process. By way of illustration, nightmares about not finding a reasonable and cheap accommodation or surviving the first bureaucratic week, kept me thinking if I made the right decision to take such a path. I used to overthink that I won't be able to register to the right courses and therefore not be accredited for courses in my home university and waste one semester.

However, these nightmares and obstacles vanished when I first landed in Amsterdam. I found an apartment, I was correctly registered to all the courses, and I survived through all the demanded paperwork. This made me stronger and aware of my organizational skills. Moreover, it made me realize what my abilities are. I started adapting and making new friends, for instance by joining a Basketball team and following one of my hidden passions.

To come to a conclusion, during my exchange period I want to look at problems or obstacles from a different perspective and that they are only going to make me stronger and will give me the opportunity to explore my abilities.

Testimonial - Dennis



My semester in Shanghai was one of the most exceptional experiences I ever had. I still remember the flight attendant at Schiphol Airport saying: “Buckle up, flight ready for takeoff.” That was the moment I realized there was no way back anymore and that this adventure finally started. That was the moment this flight really took off.

Once I arrived in Shanghai, I had to find my way to the Fudan University campus.

At that moment, I held a phone (without battery), some cash (Euros, unfortunately), a massive jet lag and I experienced a significant language barrier. Nevertheless, eventually, I landed at one of China’s top-notch universities.

The months that followed were a blast. I visited one of the most beautiful places on Earth, took my hobby for photography to the next level, learned a lot about business administration and experienced cultural differences while I was accompanied by wonderful people from all over the world.

When you are around 9000 kilometers away from your hometown, you will be able to develop yourself in a way no one could by staying in the comfort zone. With some help of the immortal words of Mark Twain, I just highly recommend you to throw off the bowlines and sail away from the safe harbor. Aim high and go to Shanghai, it’s time to buckle up!

Testimonial - Cassandra

Studying abroad gives you a lot of memories and experiences, most experiences for me has been positive, and some of them has taught me a lesson. Here are a few tips that I would do if I had a chance to do this exchange semester one more time.



Firstly, a small practical thing as going with public transport differs a lot from where I come from. Always make sure to check out when leaving the train, bus or tram. Otherwise, it will be pricey. I made this mistake when I was going to IKEA, where the out-checking machine almost was invisible, and this mistake cost me 20 Euro instead of 2 Euro. But remember, all slips result in new knowledge!

Secondly, if I would do it again, I would participate in all activities possible. Amsterdam and the student group ISN gives the students a lot of opportunities to try new and different things. Thanks to Facebook and all the events posted there, I've been able to enjoy rooftop parties, Paris trip, markets etc. which I would try to participate even more in if I would do it all again.

Thirdly, I would go and visit more local places, restaurants, try more Dutch food and see more of the Netherlands. It is so easy to take a day trip to for example Rotterdam, or why not outside of the Netherlands, for instance, Brussels or London. At the same time, just walking around in Amsterdam is something that I should do more often, walking around is probably the best way to find places you never knew existed, and it's for free!

Lastly, one of the most important things I would do if I would do the exchange semester abroad again is to not stress so much about unnecessary things. Sometimes it's easy to become stressed about money, school, grades or finding new friends. This is probably for most of the students an once in a lifetime experience, and of course, there will be stressful situations or other things that are not working as good as you might expect. But from my perspective, once I learned to relax and enjoy every day more, this experience became much more

Best Memories Abroad

In Scotland I rediscovered my fear of heights. I forgot that I had this fear, because in the Netherlands I'm never really confronted with high places because of the lack of hills. In Edinburgh however, there's a hill that rises above the city called Arthur's Seat, which has an amazing view over the city. Arthur's Seat was only a 15 minute walk from my flat, so I hung out there many times. The first time I hiked there I was quite scared, because the hill was slippery and I was afraid I was gonna fall down. I got used to it however and really enjoyed the hill and its amazing views. But one of the best memories in Edinburgh was the last time I climbed Arthur's Seat.

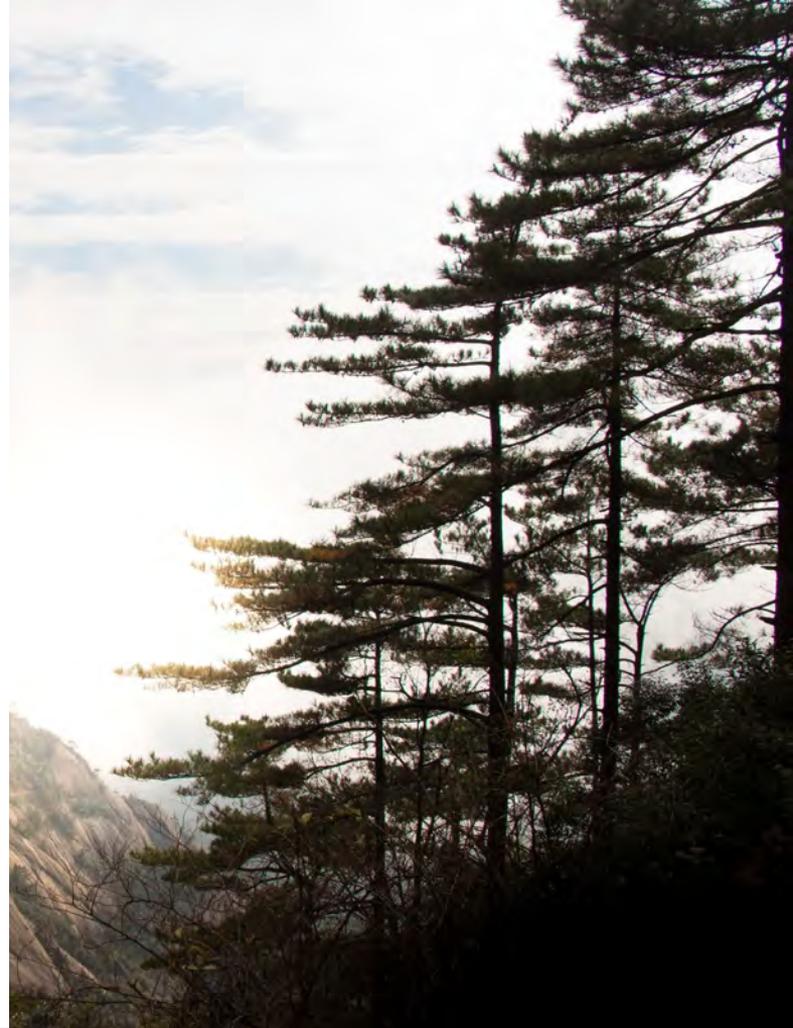
It was 1 AM. We just got back from a pub and my friends from Greece and the USA decided that it was the perfect time to climb Arthur's Seat. I didn't want to go with them because I was scared, but they eventually convinced me to do something which I would have never been able to do in Holland...



Best Memories Abroad

...It was dark and windy. The hill, which is usually packed with people was now deserted. We put on music and just walked up the hill without looking down. I discovered that it's less scary to climb a hill when you cannot see what's under you. I looked down, but all I saw was darkness. The bottom of the hill could have been either 1 meter under me or a 100 meters. It was impossible to see. I knew how dangerous it was what we were doing and I tried not to think about it too much.

When we reached the peak of Arthur's Seat I felt euphoric. The cold wind was blowing heavily and we could not hear a thing of what we were screaming at each other. We just grabbed each others' hands and looked around. We saw the city lights all over the city. We were completely alone on the peak of the hill. All I could think was how special it was to be there with the friends that I met three months before. It was unforgettable and I never wanted my time in Edinburgh to end.



“If I were to do this again, I would...”

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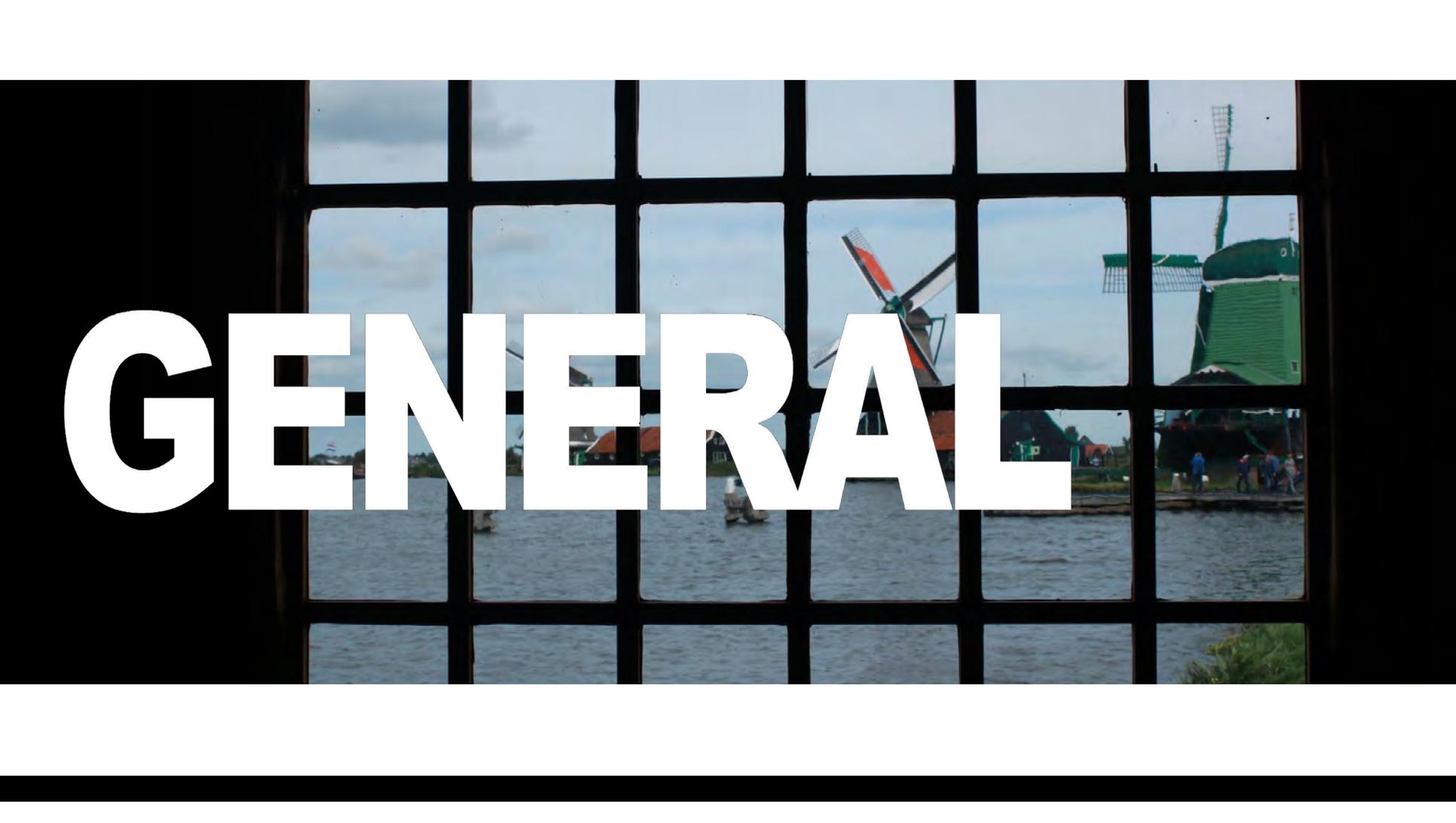


“If I were to do this again, I would...”

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GENERAL

A view through a window grid showing a Dutch windmill and a canal. The window is divided into a grid of panes. In the center, a windmill with a red and white sail is visible. To the right, a green windmill is partially visible. In the foreground, a canal with water and a small boat is seen. The sky is blue with some clouds. The word "GENERAL" is overlaid in large white letters across the center of the image.

How to survive Uni while on exchange

Tip 1: Studying and being a 'student'

How hard you study would depend on why you choose to experience the exchange life, but you are most likely required to study as a student at your exchange university and the study methods could be much different from what you are used to. Adapting to new environment and studying in a new way can take a lot of your energy. However, it is recommended to participate in class actively and study hard, as you have the opportunity to obtain new perspectives and opinions during the process. Do not hesitate to talk about it with your friends and professors if you have difficulties in class. It may take a while to fully get used to a different way of studying. But don't be frustrated; just trust yourself and your abilities, then you could gain a lot of new interesting insights!

Tip 2: Using School Facilities & Student Services

As an official student of your exchange university you are allowed to utilize all of the schools facilities and student services. The school may offer a library, sports center, or theater performances at a very low price or free of charge. On top of that, exhibitions, speeches and other events held by the university could contain interesting and high-quality content. Do not miss out on the school newsletter because the newsletter could give you information about such events and other relevant issues. And don't forget, the school may offer to help you, whenever you for example feel psychologically exhausted. You could for instance go to the student counsellor for advice. Were you to have issues with your health, there are university doctors in most schools. Just remember, most student services are always there to help you. Make use of them!

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Tip 3: Making friends

As an exchange student you meet local students as well as other international students. Making new friends can be challenging especially when you are in an unfamiliar environment, but it is definitely worth it. Together you could chat during lunch, study in the library, and throw parties after classes. Most of the international students are in the same situation as you, which makes it easier to become friends, because you can sympathize with each other's trials. Engaging with the local students can be very valuable as well, for you could learn a lot about the local culture. At the same time, your fellow internationals probably have different backgrounds, so you will also learn about new cultures from them. Your exchange and your new experiences with your new friends will fly by, so be sure to make unforgettable memories together that will last forever.



How to make local friends

As Amsterdam is a diverse city, you can befriend many people who have different backgrounds as well as local friends in the city. Local friends are experts in Amsterdam so they can answer to your curiosity and sometimes help you with practical matters. Also, making local friends will help you figure out more about the city. Here are some tips to make local friends in the University of Amsterdam while you are on exchange.

The first platform is **ISN**, International Student Network. Don't worry that you don't have any friend here at first. ISN Amsterdam holds bunch of events for international students during the semester, such as an introduction week, a buddy program and language exchange programs. Every activity, there are local buddies or coaches to lead you. As they are voluntarily in the organization, they are very willing to help you in many ways. Parties including Coco's every Wednesday, the boat tour festival or Halloween parties are super fun to enjoy with local friends.



Secondly, you can meet local students **in class**. The classes in the university of Amsterdam are very active and students are not reluctant to talk to each other. Most classes give you the opportunity to discuss matters with each other, which provides you with chance to get to know your fellow classmates. If you have team projects during the semester, you can become close friends with the members of your team.

How to make local friends

Thirdly, you can and should participate in many **school activities**. CREA, cultural student center, provides you with interesting activities including student organizations and courses of photography, music, dance. Most of them are open to non-Dutch students too. The UvA Exchange Ambassador program is also perfect for making local friends who have had their own exchange experiences. Keep your eyes open for the flyers that are hanging all around campus, you could learn about fun events from these too.

The most important thing is ***your attitude***. As it is the first time for you to meet your new fellow students, you could feel awkward or feel different from them. But remember, they probably feel the same as you. You might feel uncomfortable sometimes because the way of speaking is different from the way you are used to. People in the Netherlands can be direct in presenting their feelings and opinions. When you notice this, remember that they do not mean to offend you, but they are unaware of this difference in the way of speaking and will by all means regret upsetting you. Be open to making conversations with the locals and try to resolve misunderstandings if these occur. The locals are open to you!



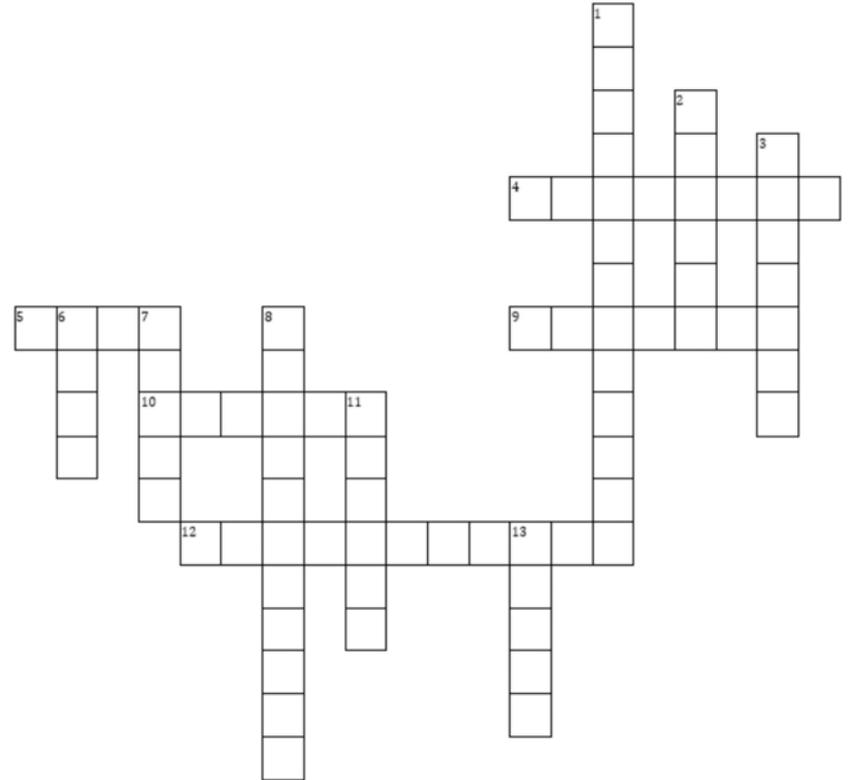
Crossword Puzzle

Horizontally

4. A well known beer from Amsterdam
5. A type of footwear made of wood
9. The last name of the mayor of Amsterdam
10. The Dutch national color
12. Two thin layers of baked dough with a caramel filling in the middle

Vertically

1. Amsterdam has over 178 nationalities. It's a very ... city
2. The amount of provinces of the Netherlands
3. The Netherlands' biggest neighbouring country
6. The Dutch national animal
7. After going on exchange you will have friends all around the...
8. The original Santa Claus
11. With Erasmus you can go on exchange in...
13. The Dutch word for bike



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