

UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM

*Exchange  
Express*

We are 

# Welcoming Words

Many students who go on exchange do not want their adventure to end after only one semester. That is why some of them decide to extend their exchange, others stay at their destination for a while longer, and yet others choose to extend their exchange by doing their Masters abroad. When we came home from our semester abroad, we chose to become Ambassadors of the Erasmus & Global Exchange Programme of the University of Amsterdam. Being an Ambassador is all about sharing your stories with other students, sharing experiences with other Exchange Ambassadors, and about encouraging other UvA students to study abroad. Moreover, we are there to answer the many questions that future exchange students might have, because although going on exchange is a fun adventure on the one hand, it can be challenging too, not only because students have to arrange a whole lot before leaving, but also because being away from home for a while challenges you personally.

In this Exchange Express, we hope to create a representative overview of experiences and stories of the Exchange Programme, both from incoming and outgoing exchange students. Highlights of exchange programmes are elaborated on, but also the faced challenges before, during, or after the exchange will be addressed. Not only will students provide stories about their experiences, we will also inform you about the background of the Exchange Programmes, give you some surprising statistics, and tell you more about the different destinations you can go to! We try to provide answers to questions that you might have as a future exchange student, but explaining everything about the life-changing experience of going abroad would require an infinite number of pages.

Our aim is to encourage all of our readers to get excited about the UvA Erasmus & Global Exchange Programmes, which have been so well developed over the past years. Furthermore, we attempt to enthuse foreign students to consider the University of Amsterdam as an exchange destination! Hence, if you got excited by reading this magazine and would like to know more about our experiences, feel free to contact us and we will make sure you don't miss out on any important information.

*Rosan Ket* (Global Exchange Ambassador)

*Merel de Klerk* (Erasmus Exchange Ambassador)

# Introducing the Ambassadors



## Naomi van Geelen

Hi! I'm Naomi and I study Media & Culture at the University of Amsterdam.

I went on exchange to the University of Sussex in Brighton, UK.

I had an amazing time and wouldn't trade it for the world. The best part is having friends all over the world now.



## Maarten Hugen

I am a student Future Planet Studies at the University of Amsterdam.

I went on exchange to the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. Going on exchange has been one of the best experiences of my life.

I have made new lifelong friends as well as follow courses I would not have been able to follow back home.



## Inez Gortzak

I study Human Geography at the University of Amsterdam and I went to the University of Hong Kong during my exchange semester in 2017. The diversity in the city was incredible.

High-rise buildings, amazing hike tracks and idyllic islands, Hong Kong has everything.



## Rosan Ket

I study Cognition at Amsterdam University College and went on exchange to the University of Washington (Seattle) in the Fall 2017 semester.

Going on exchange was an incredible experience. Every day was a new adventure and I have learnt so much from being in a different environment and making new friends from all over the world!

# Introducing the Ambassadors



## Merel de Klerk

I went to the Universitat de Barcelona for my Erasmus exchange to study some courses of the master Neuroscience. Most courses were in Spanish, so my goal (to learn that language) was achieved!  
My favorite spot were the Bunkers del Carmel, from which I had an incredible view over the city.

## Etienne Pouly

I'm Etienne, a 21-year-old Frenchie studying in Amsterdam. I really hope you will enjoy your exchange at the UvA as much as I did !  
Going to the beach on a beautiful 28°C day in April, going on a boat party on Kingsday, exploring the many bars, the lovely canals and all the things this city has to offer, you will never get bored here!



## Leander Stukart

Hi, my name is Leander and I went on an exchange to the University College Dublin.  
My favourite moments were without a doubt the countless nights I spent in Dublin's many lively pubs.

## Tessa Wanders

I study Future Planet Studies at the University of Amsterdam and went on exchange to the beautiful Montana State University in Bozeman, United States.  
My exchange was so much more than I expected with a lot of adventures, national parks and new friends. It was the journey of a lifetime!



# Introducing the Ambassadors



## Marie van der Werf

My name is Marie van der Werf and I am currently on exchange in Amsterdam.

So far, I have enjoyed pindakaas, tulips and long bike rides in the afternoon.

My favorite spot in the city is the park in front of my house. I just love sitting there with my friends, watching the sun go down. This city is fantastic.

## Tessa de Wild

I study Political Science at the University of Amsterdam and went on exchange to Uppsala, Sweden.

My favorite moment was my last-minute trip to Göteborg.

It was my first time travelling on my own and along the way I met some interesting people!



## Wessel van der Woude

When I went on exchange, the most enjoyable moment was hiking in Norway with my friends.

All day long I was looking at the mountain and getting nice views of the village.

I will never forget how I felt during those days.

*We hope you all will enjoy reading this Exchange Express :)*

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*About the*

# ERASMUS EXCHANGE

*programme*

About the Exchange Programme

You might be reading this online magazine because you are thinking of studying abroad or because you have been or currently are participating in an exchange programme somewhere within or outside Europe. Either way, it would be interesting to look back at how it all started!

The Erasmus Programme is named after the Dutch philosopher, humanist and theologian Desiderius Erasmus, who lived and worked in many different European countries in quest of knowledge, experience and insights. ERASMUS stands for EuROpean community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students.

The Erasmus Programme was launched more than 30 years ago, in 1987. It was launched by the European Commission to help students with their personal and professional development. Studying abroad would improve students' foreign language skills, increase their independence and self-confidence, develop their intercultural awareness and develop their ability to adapt to different and changing situations. According to the European Commission these skills would help with European integration and decrease youth unemployment within the European labor market. Another aim of the programme was to improve the cooperation between institutions of higher education to increase the overall level of education.

In the first year of the programme 3,244 students studied abroad in one of the 11 countries that initially participated. Today the number of participating countries has risen to 34. This includes the 28 EU member states, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Now almost 300,000 students enjoy higher education abroad each year. Today, around 4,900 higher education institutions are involved in the Erasmus programme of which almost 3,600 are active in sending and receiving students and staff. The Erasmus programme is by far the biggest and most successful student exchange programme in the world. Over the past 30+ years it helped over 4 million students to study abroad!



# Amstergram

Always wondering where all your fellow instagrammers take their best photos and find their photo spots? I spent a few days tracking down unique spots of Amsterdam. Let me take you on an Amsterdam Instagram tour and I will tell you where to find the best Instagram spots.

## Central Station

The station was built in 1889 and all the details make it a beautiful place to photograph. If you are into street photography this is the place to be – there is always a lot of people walking around. Also, if you get the chance – go up the fairly new ADAM tower to get the amazing panoramic view of Amsterdam.

## Eye Film Institute

The Eye is situated just opposite of Central station. The free ferry ride from the back of central station (about two minutes) to the other side is a treat itself. There is an endless list of things you can photograph from the ferry so do not forget to look around because it is a short ride.

## De Pijp

Oh dear, where do I start? De Pijp is my favorite neighborhood in Amsterdam. It is one of Amsterdam's residential gems, full of cute coffee shops, spots and colourful houses. In the Frans Halsstraat you can find a wall with this quote on it: "Wake me up when I'm famous." A perfect Instagram spot. You might need to avoid the bikes while taking a photo, so do not forget about the bikes haha.

## The Avocado Show

Since the avocado is part of our daily lives now, the fairly new Avocado Show restaurant in de Pijp a very popular hotspot and seen on Instagram a lot. Art on your plate is art on your feed.

## Oudemanhuispoort UvA

The vintage book stalls in the small passage to the entrance of the university. As one of the most beautiful buildings belonging to the UvA this is definitely a spot you don't want to miss. On the way there from Spui you will walk past De laatste kruimel – definitely pop in to try a piece of one of their delicious cakes or a take-away coffee.

*The most instagrammable places in Amsterdam.*



# Amstergram



## Hortus Botanicus

The Hortus is a botanical garden and one of the oldest in the world. It is a nice spot with a tropical feel for your feed with cactuses and all that.

Het Amsterdamse Bos literally means 'the Amsterdam forest.' If you happen to be in Amsterdam in April you should definitely check out the Japanese blossom in the forest. You may even spot someone on a white horse like I did.



## Amsterdamse Bos (seasonal)



## Het Vondelpark

Need for green? Stroll around the Vondelpark and add a pop of green to your feed. This is one of my favourite places to take photos outdoors and also the perfect spot to have a picnic and capture it. Fun fact: the park has broken the Guinness World Record for biggest picnic multiple times. A tip is to take your photos during golden hour. The colours are warmer which make your photos look even prettier.

## Mook Pancakes

Just one food spot, because it counts as an Instagram spot as well. Like the Avocado Show, you will get art on your plate – but in the form of pancakes. If you search for #MookPancakes you will find the most amazing-looking pancakes. Apart from that, they also taste amazing. If you love pb and chocolate, then I can definitely recommend that one. There are two locations – one in the center and one in West.



Let's finish the list with the best Instagram spots in Amsterdam in style – there cannot be a list without the canals in it. Because what's more Dutch than crisscrossing canals?

Tip: always use the reflections in the water while photographing the canals – it makes your photos look a bit more interesting and provides them with an extra dimension. They are definitely worth a photo!

The Prinsengracht canal is a great spot and the bridges where Leidsegracht and Keizersgracht meet make for a nice spot as well. Also, make sure to not forget the ones at Damrak near Central station.

*Actually, what is even more Dutch than crisscrossing canals is riding a bike. I would recommend renting one seeing that this is the best way to explore the city. Ready to take them snapshots?*

# Erasmus Exchange Destinations

The Erasmus programme goes all through Europe ever since 1987. There is a great diversity of potential locations. It stretches all the way from Iceland to Greece, from Poland to Ireland and from Bulgaria to France. The most popular locations are Spain, Germany and France. There is a suitable location for everyone, whether you want to stay (culturally) close to home, or whether you are up for a complete adventure! The most popular destinations are the most popular for a reason, but it's also fun to look at the destinations that are a bit less mainstream. There are a number of reasons to pick a destination. But the overall appeal of the city the university is in, is undeniably one of the most important factors. Therefore we will show you a couple of potential destinations, and show you why students experienced these cities as amazing destinations.



Lund is a relatively big and renowned university in a small city, which is why the student life is so amazing. The city feels familiar very quickly. Besides, there are a number of student nations, where a lot of social activities are organized. This is a really nice way to get to know a lot of fellow students. Another big upside to studying in Lund is that it has nature very close by. For the nature lovers and/or hikers, this is obviously a nice feature.



Liverpool is another amazing city to study in. The people really make the city. The warmth and hospitality is really remarkable and will make you feel at home really quickly. Besides, the campus of the University of Liverpool is very modern and centrally located. Most things are just a 10-minute walk. Besides, the student union is a nice place to get a pint. Liverpool's nightlife is incredible as well; there really is something for everyone. There are a lot of students who really give the city its lively character



Barcelona is a big and vibrant city, which is very diverse. It obviously has all the beautiful landmarks most of us know. It is a lot of fun living in a city where there is so much to do. The diversity of the city comes from all the different areas with different characteristics. It therefore attracts different types of people, so there will always be a part of the city that you particularly like. Besides, if you want to learn Spanish, it is a nice challenge since people tend to rather speak Spanish than English. It is therefore a fun challenge to learn a bit of Spanish.

# Erasmus Exchange Destinations



**Budapest** is nothing short of amazing. There are plenty of historic buildings and landmarks to see. But it is not just an open air museum, but a lovely and lively city. Budapest is really known for its amazing student- and nightlife. There are plenty of pubs, clubs and festivals to visit. There is always something to do in this big and beautiful city. It is therefore also helpful that the cost of living is very reasonable. This really allows you to experience your exchange in whatever way you like.

**Dublin** is an extremely lively city and it has a couple of big upsides to it. It is an international city, so you won't have too much trouble blending in as a foreigner. It is also not an extremely large city, with around 530.000 inhabitants. It is therefore pretty easy to get around and to get familiar with the city. Besides, Dublin is known for having an amazing nightlife. There are just so many ways to enjoy this city, but if you want to get out of the city, then that is no problem. If you love nature, Dublin has the beautiful 'Wicklow National Park', right on the south side of the city. Moreover, Ireland is not that big, so other parts of the country are very accessible.



**Prague** is a very historic city and that is still very much visible. There are a lot of fun museums and beautiful buildings to visit during your stay. Furthermore, even though Prague is a very international city, it is also a fun challenge to learn a bit of the language to really participate in Czech culture. It might be more fun than a country where they already speak English, if you like a challenge. Prague is also a very centrally located city. You see some Eastern European and some Western European influences and it is therefore a very interesting city. Because of its central position it is also easy to see other parts of the country by train, but also to see cities in other countries.



University of British Columbia  
Canada



Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile  
Chile



University of Cape Town  
South Africa



National University of Singapore  
Singapore



University of Sydney  
Australia

# Global Exchange Destinations

# Surprising Statistics about Amsterdam

How much do you know about the beautiful city of Amsterdam?  
Here are some surprising statistics and fun facts you probably need to know.

881,000

When you think of Amsterdam, one of the first things you think of are the (sometimes dangerous) bikes. Did you know that 63% of the Amsterdammers ride their bike every day? Way to go! There is an approximate number of 881,000 bikes in the city which is even more than the city's population! Maybe the following number will explain this fact...

Woah, that's a large number! 25,000 bicycles end up in the canals each year. Although, just 8,000 bikes are pulled out of the water annually... So when your bike gets stolen, you can always dive into the canal, there's plenty there!

Oh wait, don't try this at home.

25,000

1,280

Amsterdam is known for all her canals which means there is a lot of bridges. Since the 17th century a web of canals (big and small) divides the city centre into 90 islands. Hundreds of bridges bring these islands together. Within the city centre there are 80 bridges. There are 1281 in all of Amsterdam. The Magere Brug (the Skinny Bridge) is the most famous bridge in the city. In the evening it offers you a perfect photo opportunity with thousands of lights lighting it up. Pretty!

So, that is a lot of bridges, but we will cross those when we get to them, right? (Ha, bad pun).

Home to at least over 180 nationalities, Amsterdam is one of the most diverse cities in the world. No lack of culture, that's for sure!

180

# Surprising Statistics about Amsterdam

How much do you know about the beautiful city of Amsterdam?  
Here are some surprising statistics and fun facts you probably need to know.

165

Amsterdam is also referred to as the 'Venice of the North.' There are 165 canals in total! Together they add up to more than 100 kilometers or about 60 miles. The four main canals are the Prinsengracht, Keizersgracht, Herengracht and Singel.

The number of parks in Amsterdam - perfect for a summer picnic or riding a bike, plenty of options!

40

75

Amsterdam is soaking in culture so the number of museums in the city must not come as a surprise to you - there are seventy five Amsterdam museums. Amongst these seventy five, Amsterdam Rijksmuseum is the largest one. My personal favourite is FOAM - photography museum. Anne Frank House is definitely worth a visit as well - just make sure you book in advance because otherwise you will be disappointed.

**TOP 10** of the most visited museums in Amsterdam

1. Rijksmuseum
2. Van Gogh Museum
3. Anne Frank house
4. Stedelijk Museum
5. NEMO Science Centre
6. Hermitage
7. Maritime Museum
8. Rembrandt House
9. Nieuwe Kerk
10. Amsterdam Museum

10



## WILLEM SPEELMAN (24)

📍 The Netherlands 🇳🇱 ✈️

📖 Sociology

🏫 University of Amsterdam ➡️ Humboldt University (Berlin, Germany) 🇩🇪

In the beginning of 2016 my exchange semester in Berlin was almost over. I was not ready to leave yet. Especially since people told me that the city that I love so much would be the most beautiful and alive in summer. A plan was easily made, and I tried to extend my exchange to a second semester. This went so easy it actually surprised me. As often with such moments, more people had the same idea and a lot of people stayed longer. My new semester evolved around a friend group made of old and new friends. With this clique I celebrated the first of May, which is important in a left-wing city as Berlin. In the weekends we went out in the evening and sat outside in parks or next to lakes during the day. On my bike I drove big distances around the city to discover new places: abandoned swimming pools, little harbours, GDR-architecture and pine forests.

Since I already wrote my Bachelor thesis and didn't need the ECTS-points, there was not much academic pressure. However, the Humboldt University offered interesting courses which kept me coming to university. The summer semester ended and after the holiday I returned to Berlin, this time no longer as a student. With summer and university life gone and my roommates kicking me out of my apartment, my beloved city seemed hostile. A search for purpose and housing began. After finding a new apartment and a job in a call centre life went on. I learned that the status of being a student is very influential for the experience you have in a city. When I left Berlin in April 2017 I could say that I had a multi-faced perspective on it. The city is not only about clubs, nature, interesting people and coolness; it also is full of alcoholism, deprivation, —mental illness and frustration. I left Berlin a cooler and wiser man.



*A little bit longer please*



# ANNA DE BOER (21)

 The Netherlands  

 English Language and Culture

 University of Amsterdam  University of British Columbia (Vancouver, Canada) 

There are all kinds of benefits attached to spending time abroad, from improving your speaking skills to broadening your horizons to advancing academically. Basically, all the answers the officer processing your application for your exchange program would want to hear. But these are all things you could do at home, right? Why go through all the trouble of going abroad? Well, it's actually quite simple. An exchange experience can be so much more than the classes you attend. For me, it was always about the people.

I have just spent the last year at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. Originally, I was only supposed to stay for one term, like most exchange students do, and I tried to make the most of it. Knowing absolutely no one when I first arrived, the Exchange Student Club was the place to be. Being seasoned exchangees themselves, the Exchange Student Club organised parties, bonfires and trips galore to give every exchange student an amazing time.

Within the span of four months I travelled all I could, from skiing in the mountains of Whistler to lying on the beaches of Hawaii. Although all of this travel and partying (while of course keeping my grades high enough so no one would complain) is a dream come true, exchange students tend to get stuck in an exchange bubble. Exchange students have a tendency of only spending time with other exchange students, resulting in an experience shaped by the YOLO (or maybe YOEO, you only exchange once) mindset of the exchange student, rather than the opportunity to actually be a student at UBC.

Truly, my real exchange experience began when I popped that bubble. It was when I started joining clubs and meeting local students that I realised one term wasn't enough. So, I applied for an extension and had to fight to get it. But I did. It was this opportunity to spend the full year studying in Vancouver that gave me the chance not to just be an exchange student, but become an actual student at UBC. In the end, it wasn't the trips and the parties that shaped my experience, it was the people I met right here. By the end of it, no one even remembered I was an exchange student in the first place.




This past year, I have made friends for life and became a Vancouverite by heart. An extension on my exchange gave me the chance to build a completely new life for myself, new friends, new hobbies, new homes. I know that I'll be back now.







## MARIE VAN DER WERF (22)

 Germany  

 Social and Cultural Anthropology

 Freie Universität Berlin  University of Amsterdam 

Moving to Amsterdam was a brilliant choice. Prior to my arrival, the university helped me secure a room in a Duwo housing near Bijlmer Arena. It was an easy process and I ended up having a big room with a balcony, a view of the Ajax Stadion, and three awesome roommates from all over the world. Living in our building is great because most of my friends are here as well, so every time we want to hang out, we just have to knock on each others windows. Walking distance: two minutes max.

During the ISN introduction week, we learned some Dutch, did a pub tour, cruised through the canals and got to meet a mix of very diverse people, many of whom later became my closest friends. On Wednesdays, you can dance at Coco's, this little Australian bar that turns into a club at night. Public transportation ends around midnight, so if you want to stay out longer, make sure to avoid the long, expensive journey with the night bus. Call an Uber and share it with friends instead. Another word on public transportation: in Amsterdam, only Dutch students who pay tuition fees can ride the trains and busses for free. So if you're an Erasmus student, better buy an OV Chipcard. It is a one time €7,50 investment and you can charge it with as much money as you want. It is much cheaper than buying spare tickets. Do not forget to check out though. My advice: rent a bike from Swapfiets. It is €15 a month, you are insured against theft, and if there is something wrong with your bike, they fix it for free. Also, by riding a bike you get to appreciate the Dutch way of life.

When you're on exchange at the UvA, there is always something fun to do. Get creative at Crea or explore Europe with your pals. I went to Paris and Brussels for less than €30. Me and my friends also started a weekly cooking night, where we get together and cook our nation's respective traditional dishes. You should also buy a museum card and visit the tulip fields. One of the most exciting events here in Amsterdam was celebrating the King's birthday in April by wandering the streets of the city, dressed head to toe in orange. You can sit by the canals or dance at countless parties on the streets and it is simply fantastic.

What else? The classes here are great, but pretty intense. You get a lot of assignments during the term and it can be stressful, so plan ahead and carefully read the syllabus. Moreover, the grading system can be quite frustrating since it is hard to archive more than 8 points in class. In general, Amsterdam is a beautiful, rainy city. The perfect combination of relaxed and vivid. In this city, the old world and the new one coexist peacefully, the population is diverse and if you decide to study here, I promise that you won't regret it.

*Off biking and tulip fields*

# The Different UvA Faculties

One of the most remarkable things about the University of Amsterdam is that there is no main building in which all different faculties are located. The faculties are spread out all over Amsterdam, accommodated in different campuses. The four main campuses are Science Park, Roeterseiland, the Academic Medical Center and the Binnengasthuis site, which all have a unique location in Amsterdam.

## Science Park

The Science Park campus is located in the eastern part of Amsterdam and is home to the Faculty of Science. The campus is relatively new and was officially opened in 2009. Since 2012, the prestigious Amsterdam University College also opened their doors at this location. The campus has many facilities, such as an innovative data center, a huge sports center, restaurants, and is conveniently located next to a train station.



Amsterdam University College



Science Park Campus



Roeterseiland Campus

## Roeterseiland

The Roeterseiland campus is one of UvA's newest buildings and is located in the eastern part of the city center. The Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Economics and Business are all accommodated here. The campus is surrounded by cute restaurants, many different museums, Artis (the zoo of Amsterdam), the botanical gardens and different beautiful parks, this makes the atmosphere very laid-back and relaxed.



Café de Krater: a nice place to drink a beer after a hard day of studying!



And of course: enough place to park your bike!



The new entrance of Roeterseiland Campus

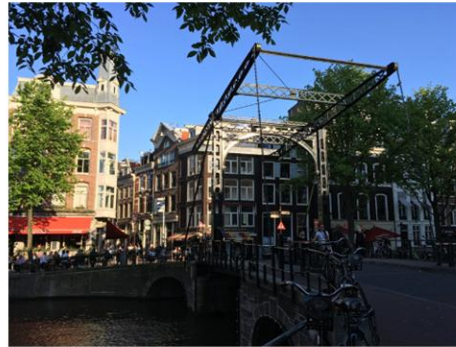
# The Different UvA Faculties

## Binnengasthuis Site

Located close to the Red Light District and the Kalverstraat (the biggest shopping street in Amsterdam), this campus lies directly in the historical center of Amsterdam. This campus is home of the Faculty of Humanities. The site has a long history and some of the monumental buildings were built in the sixteenth century.



The Binnengasthuis Site is surrounded by restaurants and bars...



... and by the authentic Amsterdam canals.



Oudemanhuispoort,  
one of the oldest buildings of the UvA.

## Academic Medical center

The Academic Medical Center offers study programmes in Medicine and Medical Informatics and is therefore located in the same building as the AMC-Hospital. The faculty has professors from many different medical disciplines, which makes this a very interesting place for medical students. The campus is located in the South East district of Amsterdam, and is easily reachable by metro, or bicycle :).



The Academic Medical Centre campus

# The Best Study Spots in Amsterdam

The university of Amsterdam and the city itself offer a lot of different options for students who seek a nice place to study at. Some students prefer a library-like atmosphere, with lots of quietness and other students around them, while other prefer to study in a more vibrant environment like a café or coffee bar. Amsterdam offers all kinds of places to study, ranging from huge libraries to the most vibrant and trendy coffee bars.

## Roeterseiland Library Learning Centre

Besides its different faculties, the Roeterseiland campus also has a Library Learning Centre that is a very popular study spot for UvA students. There are two big rooms, with plenty of space. Even though there are usually lots of people studying in these rooms, they are always very quiet, which creates a good studying atmosphere for many. The Library Learning Centre has coffee & printing machines just outside, a big canteen underneath it, and all other facilities needed for a good university library.

## Open Bibliotheek Amsterdam (OBA)

The Open Library of Amsterdam is located just next to the Amsterdam Central Station. The open space really makes the experience of learning more enjoyable. In the building they really try to think about how reading and learning can be more efficient, and less annoying to do. Which results in a lot of open space, with a lot of space to think.

## Café-Restaurant de Plantage

Café-Restaurant de Plantage is a spacious restaurant located next to Artis, the Amsterdam zoo. You can go there for delicious breakfast, lunch, or dinner, but the café area is also very suitable for studying while enjoying a nice meal and good coffee. Also, there is free WiFi!

## Stadskantine

Stadskantine is a nice spot in the Van Woustraat in the bustling Pijp. Many people go there to work or study, so go early to avoid the crowd. WiFi is not completely free, but if you order something, like a nice coffee or sandwich, you get a free WiFi code that you can use all day.

## Hutspot

Another spot in the Van Woustraat that's suitable for studying is Hutspot. Hutspot is a concept store with a relaxed atmosphere where you could sit all day! While studying, you can enjoy a nice granola breakfast or good coffee. And when you want to take a break, you can take a look at all the nice products they sell!

# The Best Study Spots in Amsterdam

## CT Coffee & Coconuts

CT Coffee & Coconuts is a popular study spot on the Ceintuurbaan, also located in De Pijp. It is a very spacious place where you can have breakfast, lunch, and dinner, so you could easily sit there all day. With warm weather, we recommend taking the Cool Java coffee, and make sure not to miss out on their Scrambled Eggs Avo toast! WiFi code (suprise suprise): coconuts.

## White Label Coffee

Are you a coffee lover? Go to White Label Coffee in De Baarsjes! These people know how to brew their coffee and this spot is perfectly suitable for studying! You can either pick a spot at the window and look at people outside, or pick a table in the back, where you can study in all quietness.

## Rum Baba

Want to stay close to the Roeterseilandcampus but have better coffee than in the cafeteria? Go to Rum Baba! This is a small coffee place in the East, where many people go to study because of its relaxed atmosphere and good coffee (and with good I mean really good!). Also, make sure not to miss out on their delicious toasted banana bread!

## Bagels and Beans

Bagels and Beans has multiple locations throughout the city of Amsterdam, so there's always one nearby! As the name implies, Bagels and Beans serves a range of delicious bagels and nice coffee and juices too! I love to go here for lunch with a friend, and stick around to study afterwards.



# AMBER BLIKSLAGER (24)

The Netherlands 🇳🇱 ✈️

Political Sciences

University of Amsterdam ➡️ Institut d'études politiques d'Aix-en-Provence (Aix-en-Provence, France) 🇫🇷

Around 9.30 in the morning I leave for my first class. I go to my university by foot. It takes approximately 25 minutes to get there. Sometimes – when I am in a hurry – I miss my bike, but the vibrant city atmosphere and the picturesque streets of Aix-en-Provence make the walk worth it. My university is located inside a beautiful square at the center of Aix. It stands out brilliantly, with iconic roman style columns that greet students as they make their way to class. Because the student-led associations often organizes events and fundraisers at the university, the school maintains an inclusive and lively ambiance.

My first class on Monday morning is 'Feminist Political Thought', followed shortly after by my second class, 'International Negotiation'. These are not my favorite classes but when I leave to go home at 14.00 o'clock the sun has usually started shining and lifts up my spirit.

## Monday

## Tuesday

On Tuesdays my first class of the day is 'Gender and Politics'. I really enjoy this class, as it provides clear examples and concrete arguments on how gender plays a role in politics, and in which ways this can form a disadvantage for women. I have already found myself using information from this class in conversations with my friends and family to fortify and explain further my arguments on this complex topic.

My second lecture is a French language class. As a result of this class, I managed to improve my French substantially. Unfortunately, I did not get to advance my French as much as I wanted, as most of my friends are other exchange students. On Tuesday evening we usually go to happy hour in a bar close-by the housing.





# AMBER BLIKSLAGER (24)

 The Netherlands  

 Political Sciences

 University of Amsterdam  Institut d'études politiques d'Aix-en-Provence (Aix-en-Provence, France) 

On Wednesdays I have class until 20.00. After my class I usually have a €2 pizza slice for dinner in the city center and watch champions-league games, with the other students. After this we often have some more beers in one of the lively bars located in the center and go out for the night.

## Wednesday

On Friday's I have one four-hour class on development economics. It is a challenging but interesting class.

## Friday

On Thursdays I have only one class: 'Fighting Economic Crime in the EU's External Relations'. On my way home from this class I usually do grocery-shopping at Monoprix, a conveniently located supermarket in between the university and the student residences. Overall this supermarket is a little more expensive than 'the Dirk' in Amsterdam, except for the wine. One can find a bottle of wine here from €1, however, decent wine costs €3.

## Thursday

My weekends have been very diverse. Some weekends I spend hosting my friends and family who come to visit me from The Netherlands. Other weekends I spend on holidays traveling Europe. The demands for homework from the university are not high so you will have a lot of time to plan fun activities and trips.

## The weekends



# DANA KELDER (20)

 The Netherlands  

 Future Planet Studies

 University of Amsterdam  University of Otago (Dunedin, New Zealand) 

## Monday

My week started out very relaxed, with a field trip for my course 'Natural Hazards of New Zealand and Beyond'. I was on a bus, driving around to spots where earthquakes and floods are likely to happen and learning about these spots.



Me and my friends went surfing in a place called Aramoana, about 40 minutes from Dunedin. Afterwards, I went out to dinner with my housemates. Here in Dunedin, the restaurants do BYO, which means you bring your own bottle of wine, which you will share and then you all order a main course at the restaurant. Very good for students.

## Tuesday

## Wednesday

At night, me and my friends went to a rave cave on Long Beach. There was a big party with a campfire, and after that we slept on the beach and watched the sun rise together.







## DANA KELDER (20)

 The Netherlands  

 Future Planet Studies

 University of Amsterdam  University of Otago (Dunedin, New Zealand) 

### Thursday

In the afternoon we left with a car to Te Anau, a 3-hour drive through a beautiful scenery. We drove to the start of the Kepler track, where we would start our hike the next morning.

### Saturday

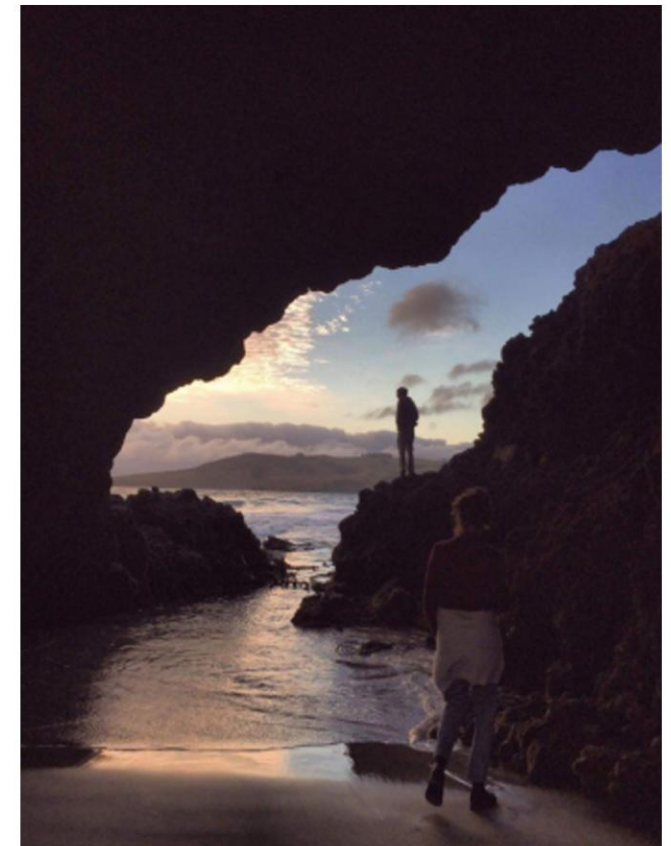
The next morning the ranger came to tell us that the rest of the track was closed, due to snowfall, ice and avalanche danger. But we could try it, so we did for about two hours. Then we had to turn around, because without the right equipment, like ice spikes, we just couldn't go further. Very disappointed, we walked back to Te Anau and booked a kayak trip instead.

We started on the Kepler Great Walk, a 60 km advanced hiking trip. It took us 6 hours to get to the first cabin on the track, because we had some bad weather on the way.

### Friday

The kayak trip was in a place called Doubtful sound, which took us a while to go to. After a bus ride, a boat trip and another bus ride we finally arrived. Doubtful Sound is very secluded, so we were the only ones in this immense outstretched landscape. One of my friends suddenly saw something move in the water. It turned out to be a group of 25 dolphins that came to swim with us. They swam with us for a long time. I don't even know how to describe this moment; there are simply no words.

### Sunday





## ETIENNE POULY (21)

📍 France 🇫🇷 ✈️

📚 Political Science

🏫 University of Nantes (Nantes, France) ➡️ University of Amsterdam 🇳🇱

Living an Erasmus experience in a city like Amsterdam is surely a lot of fun. There is always something to do, to see. The sun is rising? Just grab your bag and go explore the city or just hang around the lovely canals. Here, no week looks the same as another, but for the purpose of giving you insights of the Amsterdam life, I'll share with you my diary of a typical Erasmus week in Amsterdam.

### Monday

Since I don't have class on Mondays, I like to start a week full of adventures by resting a little bit longer in the morning. After studying a bit for my class on Tuesday, I go to one of the activities regularly organized by the "Buddy programme" of the ISN. I strongly recommend that you participate in this programme! You would have one Dutch and one other buddy from another nationality assigned to you, forming your group. From there, your group can participate in the activities organized throughout the semester such as bowling, pizza night, going to an arcade bar... But of course, you can meet your buddies whenever you want!

### Tuesday

On Tuesday, I go to class and study a bit at the library. After a productive day in school, my friends and I like to catch a movie at the many movie theaters in Amsterdam, or in the comfort of our homes, thanks to our Netflix accounts.

### Wednesday

Same as Tuesday, I dedicate my Wednesday to the duties of a student (even an Erasmus student has some) and then I usually go for a drink in the many bars you can find in whatever area you might live in. If you are in the mood for partying, you can participate in the international ISN parties organized every Wednesday night at Coco's club on Rembrandtplein..



## ETIENNE POULY (21)

📍 France 🇫🇷 ✈️

📖 Political Science

🏫 University of Nantes (Nantes, France) ➡️ University of Amsterdam 🇳🇱

Living an Erasmus experience in a city like Amsterdam is surely a lot of fun. There is always something to do, to see. The sun is rising? Just grab your bag and go explore the city or just hang around the lovely canals. Here, no week looks the same as another, but for the purpose of giving you insights of the Amsterdam life, I'll share with you my diary of a typical Erasmus week in Amsterdam.

### Thursday

On Thursdays, after my student duties, I sometimes have meetings or workshops to attend, because I'm involved in the Ambassador programme of the UvA. This programme is a lot of fun and filled with opportunities to meet many new people who share the same international experience as you, and who are all involved in the promotion of the interuniversity student exchange. The "assignments" you must do are enjoyable and additional, you get to share this experience with a cool team of other students.

### Friday

Friday night is dedicated to enjoying the nightlife of Amsterdam in any way you prefer to do it. With my friends, we usually share some drinks at home before going to the bars. If you are in the mood for clubbing, you can find many options, on Leidseplein for instance.

### Saturday

After recovering from the heavy partying of Friday night, I really enjoy dedicating my Saturday afternoon to discovering a neighborhood of Amsterdam or even another city. For example, in only 30 minutes by train, you can spend the afternoon in the lovely city of Utrecht or even go to the beach! You can also just grab your bike and go explore the countryside and other cities around Amsterdam especially when the weather is good!

On Sundays, I usually visit one of the many good museums of Amsterdam. By the way, I strongly recommend that you purchase a museum pass for the year/semester because museums are a bit expensive here if you don't have the pass. After a cultural day, I have the tradition of organizing a big special dinner with my friends.

### Sunday

# Closing Word & Acknowledgements

*“I had the best time ever”.*

This quote sums up our exchange experiences. All the ambassadors are enthusiastic about their experience during their semester abroad. We all studied at different universities in different countries, but we are all extremely happy that we've taken the step to go abroad. It was a big step and decision to take, but we have never regretted our decisions. We hope to have enthused other students about going on exchange with this Exchange Express. We would like to help future students to expand their boundaries, and show them how wonderful it can be to study in a different country at a different university. We hope to spread the word with this magazine and other events regarding exchange program, because it's a once in a lifetime opportunity!

We would like to express our deep gratitude to **dhr. Guido de Wilde**, coordinator of the Global Exchange Programme, for his guidance, enthusiastic encouragement and valuable and interesting meetings during the development of this magazine. Our grateful thanks are also extended to **Rosan Ket** and **Merel de Klerk** who are the leaders of the Ambassadors teams. We want to thank all the Erasmus and Global Ambassadors who participated in creating the Exchange Express for their willingness, input, support and assistance. Special thanks should be given to the students **Amber Bliklager**, **Anna de Boer**, **Dana Kelder**, and **Willem Speelman** for their willingness in sharing their experiences and stories. Finally, we wish to thank **Rachael Chuang** for her design and creative mind.

*We wish you*

**ALL THE BEST**

*for the exchange journey*



*"You will never be completely at home again,  
because part of your heart will always be somewhere else."*

*"That is the price you pay for the richness of loving  
and knowing people in more than one place"*