Hey Erasmus Applicants!

I’ve spent 4 months at NHH in Bergen, on Erasmus, and I’m here to tell you why it’s worth choosing Bergen, and to share some useful info and tips for those travelling to Bergen.

First, if you love nature and fancy hiking, you must visit Norway once. Bergen is surrounded by 7 mountains (hills), which provide you a perfect possibility to hike and to explore the beauty of the Norwegian nature. I travelled a lot to hike, e.g. Trolltunga is totally worth a trip, and it’s not even far! (Tip: Go for a night in a tent on the top!) It’s good to know, that most trekking and hiking possibilities close their “doors” in the middle of October, because of the early ice. There are many reasons, why it’s better choosing the Spring semester for an Erasmus in Bergen and Norway: hiking, climbing, swimming in the sea, less rain, longer hours of daylight. It’s important to know, that from October, days are getting shorter, and it can be quite depressing, with the everyday rain. There is another reason: less students are going on Erasmus to NHH in the Spring, so it is easier to get a single room at the dorm and communication with school staff is more personal.

About the school, as a masters student, it is hard! I’ve chosen this school because I wanted to benefit from the academic part of Erasmus, but I worked very much on my courses, even more than I expected. This is known as one of the best economy schools of Europe, and it is different from Hungarian education institutions. Education is very much theory-based and less practical, and there are only lectures, no seminars. For me this was a disappointment, but I also had some surprisingly good classes, where we used case studies or where we used R programming language to analyse data. It is common that you have to prepare assignments for the courses, and it is usually not directly related to the theory introduced on the lectures, which means hard work for students. There are 3 types of exams: written (1-4 hours), oral (presentation and/or discussion, usually no less than 15-20 mins per person), and home exams (4 or 8 hours long, open book). Exam regulations are very-very strict, different from Corvinus, so it is really worth reading and keeping them, and there is
always only one exam possibility! The semester is short, only 4 months, but very intensive.

At NHH everyone is super nice. Norunn, international coordinator and her colleagues are the most helpful and flexible people I’ve ever met in the education. Students are nice but a bit reserved, and amazingly ambitious and smart. It’s not easy to get into students’ organisations, but there are some which are open for exchanges too. There are mentors, who you spend your first week (welcome week) with. They are usually helpful and fun people (and if you are a master student, you will realize, that they are mostly younger than you). University students in Norway have a special drinking culture, you will see that, and it is funny how they can’t handle alcohol.

There is a welcome week (in August or January), which is worth attending. There are many fun programs on a surprisingly cheap price but limited attendance. Worth getting up early to buy the tickets. Programs are like: parties, concerts, boat trips, white water rafting, sea rafting, shrimp night, other fun occasions. This week is the best to make friends which can last for the whole semester and longer.

“There is no bad weather, but a wrong clothing!” – the motto of Bergen people. It is always raining. So, if you don’t feel comfortable with a pair of rainboots and raincoat, don’t go there. The best side of this climate is that tap water is clear, even tastier than bottled mineral water, and there are beautiful rainbows over the sea. I lived in Hatleberg, and my window headed to the shore, trust me.😊

If you like hiking or skiing, it is worth buying a membership at BSI Friluft. They rent out nearly everything for camping (tents, sleeping bags, mats, gas stoves, etc), climbing and skiing for good prices. You can also lend stuff from Hatleberg’s Tenants Union (it is a bit cheaper).

Let’s talk about everyday life a bit. Prices are high, that is very important to know. I’ve never really went out eating I always cooked and I spent around 8000 NOKs a month (accommodation, little travelling, food). It is worth applying for a Campus Mundi and having additional sources, cause, without that you won’t make it in Norway. Accommodation in dorm is between 2500-5000 NOKs a month. A cheaper loaf bread is at least 30 NOKs, a box of eggs is around 50 NOKs, meat and fish is
very expensive. For me the most surprising thing was that even the cheapest goods are very good quality. A can of beer or cider is 30-50 NOKs, but in a bar, 80-120 NOKs. In the supermarket, you can only buy beer and cider, no wine or spirits. For them, you go to Vinmonopolet, the government’s monopoly shop. Services, like hairdresser or cosmetics, bars, restaurants are very expensive. (But at least once, it is worth trying real local specialities!) In Norway, you can pay by card almost everywhere, so you don’t even really need cash with you.

Public transport is quite good. A bus ticket is valid for 1,5 hours and it costs 37 NOK. A student’s monthly ticket is around 500 NOK. For travelling in Hordaland, you need the Skyss Billet and Skyss Reise mobile apps. Even from the airport there is a light rail, no need for flybus. Bus drivers are nice and helpful.

You will spend your time mostly with international and exchange students. It is hard to make friends with locals, but it is worth trying. People are reserved, not easily let you close. I can even recommend Tinder to meet new people in Bergen, really. :D

Furniture your room? Join the semester’s FB group and you will find many “starter packs” for sale advertised by those who spent were there before you. These are mostly sheets, duvets, pillows and cases for your bed, and other useful stuff like hangers, coffee tables, chairs, mirrors, storage boxes and other stuff. In the end of the semester, you can also sell them for the next ones. These starter packs cost 500-1500 NOKs. If you don’t want to buy these second hand, you can buy them in IKEA (prices are not much higher than in Hungary).

About night life… There are many party places in Bergen. The most famous is Ricks, for those who like mainstream pop music and parties full of students. I have a special taste, I love techno and electronic music, even funk and rave – for these I can recommend Ostre and Hulen, the best places in town (Hulen is a cave inside, unbelievable!). If you like psytrance, there is Dwell, a vegan restaurant, becoming a cool trance party place for some nights (here paying only by Norwegian card or cash). Parties usually end at 2:45 prompt, cause law bans to sell alcohol after that time, and it is magical, but everyone reaches the last bus at 3:00.😊

I hope I could show you a little but honest picture of studying in Bergen! Have fun!