



2018 FALL EXCHANGE REPORT

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ESADÉ BUSINESS SCHOOL

August 2018

I arrived Barcelona on 25th August. The school commenced right away and I took a non-compulsory Spanish intensive course which lasted for two weeks. Get prepared it was quite demanding for an absolute beginner but you can learn some daily phrases to help you survive in the following months. You got to know many exchange students in the Spanish course as well as those welcoming activities.



One of my highlights in that week was the Flamenco show at The Palau de la Música, one of the most important performance halls in Barcelona. If you've never seen this art at first hand, I recommend you to watch it once.



September 2018

The semester started on 7th September. Compare to HKUST, workload here was much lower instead more in-class discussions and group assignments were required. I took 5 courses for the regular semester with Monday and Friday day-offs. It gave me lots of free time to travel. Tips for travelling around Europe, you are advised to book your flights and accommodation at least 2 weeks before as the price will go up quickly.



Seeing a game in Camp Nou is always a dream of every Barca fans like me. I watched my first live match - UEFA match of Barcelona against PSV!!!! You will realize how massive it is when home fans start the songs and chant along the game then fill all of the stadium. I was extremely lucky to witness Messi netted stunning hat-trick and Dembele got the other goal. If you find yourself in Barcelona, attending a live match at Camp



Nou should be at the top of your list of things to do. It's easy to get tickets, it's a chance to see some of the best players in the world in action in the largest stadium of the best football team, in the 21st century.

I made a total of two trips out of Barcelona in September. The first one was to Madrid and the second one was to Menorca (one of the Balearic Islands of Spain). Both had a good time!

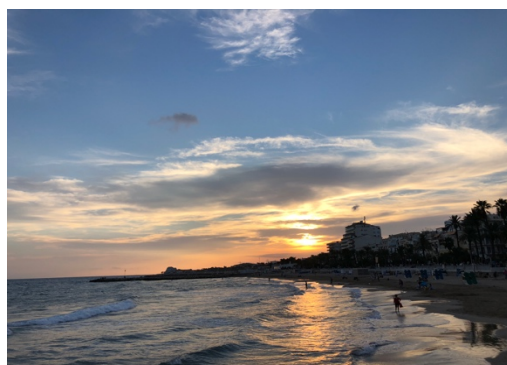


Every September, Barcelona celebrates their biggest festival "La Mercè". You should not miss this week-long festival, trill with festival essentials such as "correfoc" (fire run), "castells" (human towers), the amazing fireworks Piromusical and a huge parade the Cavalcade Merce with traditional Catalan figures.



October 2018

By October I had settled down well in Barcelona and classes at ESADE were well underway. In the first week of October, I went to Sitges Film Festival with other exchange students. The Sitges Zombie Walk was the highlight of the annual Sitges Film Festival, more than 1000 people dressed up as zombies and made their way through the town. It is definitely worthwhile for you to pay a visit for a beach holiday.



Beside the weekend break I got, there was a week-long mid-term break for exchange student. Therefore, I made a 16-days trip including Italy, Croatia, Germany and Austria. I made my first stop to Venice, always in my bucket list. Venice was truly a magical floating city, exploring the narrow bridges and laburinth of canals and of course pasta and galato!

Near Austria, there is a prime Germany's natural beauty, Lake Königssee. We took electric boat to cross the lake. On the way, you will hear the beautiful echoes bounce back from the mountain walls while the boatman plays his trumpet.

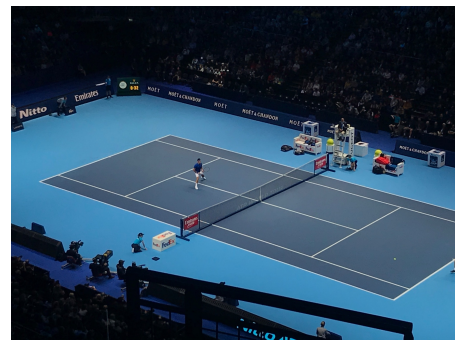
What's more! Croatia was a underrated country you must add to your itinerary! I paid an autumn visit to Plitvice National Park, which is Croatia's most well known natural wonder. The chain of 16 lakes filled with vivid blue water are linked by waterfalls. It was simply breathtaking to see the waterfalls tinged in hues of yellow and orange.



I also did my first rafting adventures in Split. The whole experience was safe yet amazing with fun rafting, cliff jumping. The last stop of my Croatia trip is Dubrovnik. Aside from charming old town and the Game of Thrones locations, there is lot of things to do in there. I joined a one-day trip to Montenegro and a sea kayaking tour. Of all the activities, I liked the city wall there the most.

November 2018

November was the busiest month for me. As the semester almost came to the end, there was few presentations and exams. Don't worry exams in ESADE were easier than UST. Meanwhile, I travelled to London and Switzerland. My trip to London was centered around tennis matches. I watched two semi-final matches in The ATP Finals at the O2 Areana. I was thrilled to watch Federer to play a live match although he lost against Sascha.



After my London trip, I have been to Switzerland – “a heaven on earth”. I had a unforgettable paragliding experience in Interlaken. Floating high over the Swiss Alps, the bird-eye views was amazing. The pilot showed me some tricks when I was up for it. If you have chance, take the plunge! I think exchange allows you to try new things, and explore unique locations around the world. Stay open-minded and adventurous!

Last week in November, I went hiking with exchange students in Montserrat, Barcelona. My friends had an adventurous streak so we hiked all the way up the mountain from the base to summit in total 5 hours. I was exhausted but this was by far the most rewarding hike. Layers of fog-filled serenity just put you in awe. Plan a one-day trip to Monserrat, it won't disappoint you.



December 2018

Reaching the end of the semester, there are few group projects and essay left. You might have noticed I was a big fans of football and tennis, nevertheless i also love watching snooker as well. I did my first ever solo trip to York, UK to watch The UK Championship. I am so exciting when I watched Ronnie O'Sullivan playing in front of me. He won the competition for a record seventh time by outclassing Mark Allen.



The rest of the time I was again travelling around. I did a road trip in Iceland and also trip to Lisbon, Budapest, Vienna, Amsterdam and Paris. There's nothing like a good road trip. Giant waterfall, blue icebergs, icy glaciers...the country is visually captivating in a way I've not seen elsewhere. But I was not lucky enough to catch the northern light. Before coming back to Hong Kong, I spent my treasured last days in Barcelona. Yet an exchange is an experience, never to be forgotten, a journey of self-discovery. I had the best time of my life in Barcelona.



There is an Three Kings Day in Spain on 5th January. It was one of the most celebrated holidays in not only Barcelona but the whole of Spain. Spanish starts off with a night parade followed by a Winter Big Sales from 7th January.



General Exchange Information

- **Visa Procedures**

I did not go through any visa procedures since I am a Portuguese and no visa was required for EU cities.

- **Orientation Activities**

Orientation held in the first two weeks including welcoming, security talks, ice-breaking game by ESADE student committee, city tour. It was not compulsory but you are recommended to go and meet other exchange students.

- **International Service & Activities**

If there is any enquiry, feel free to contact your exchange coordinator. There is also a Facebook page and Whatsapp group for exchange students, make sure to keep track on it for different activities. You can also join the Erasmus for more events like parties, trips, dinners with exchange students. (<https://www.erasmusbarcelona.org/>)

- **Accommodation**

There is an on-campus dormitory in Sant Cugat but it is quite expensive and far away from city center, which you can explore the city and takes more time to reach the airport. You are strongly advised to live near the city center. I spent a week of apartment hunting and running around looking at rooms since I arrived Barcelona. I rented an apartment in El Born at 460 shared with 4 other exchange students with all utilities included. Other suggested locations are Gracia, L'Eixample, these regions are safe and convenient.

- **Course Registration**

Course registration is straight forward. You will be required to prioritise your courses online 2 months before the semester starts. Few weeks later You will notify with the class schedule. You can adjust your timetable during the add/drop period. Friendly reminder please submit your course mapping earlier as it will take one month to process. You will be able to view syllabus and course material on Moodle, a system like Canvas after you registered into the course.

I took 6 courses in total:

- 1.Español Intensivo: Principiante
- 2.Project Management
- 3.B&E: Global Environmental Challenges and the Business Response
- 4.Never Too Many Movies: Spanish and Catalan society through cinema
- 5.CMP: Implementing Strategy: Process and Indicators
- 6.Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning

- **Finance & Banking**

Cost of living is not high. I usually cook my meal and rent a shared apartment. I didn't open a bank account in Spain. Before I departed, I had activated international banking option in ATM in Hong Kong.

- **Safety**

Despite its reputation for petty theft and street crime, Barcelona is really not that scary. You are very safe to walk alone at night. The general crime problem is with pickpockets in popular tourist area especially on Las Ramblas, central metro stations ...those crowded places. Be extra aware on your bags and be wary of any strangers touching you. So far my belongings haven't been stolen.

- **Food**

My flat mates and I ate out occasionally but also cooked on weekdays. You can find inexpensive food at the grocery store like Carrefour, Mercadona. Be ready that they won't open on Sunday. Other than that, Barcelona is a paradise for foodies! The city streets are lined with large restaurants, cafes and bars. Don't miss their Spanish cuisines like pintxos, tapas, paella, jamon and also sangrias. The Spanish like to eat from 9pm until midnight for their dinner so some restaurants won't open before 8pm. You'll need to adjust your body clock accordingly and embrace the siesta(a rest from 2pm to 4pm).

- **Transportation**

The entire city is reached either by metro, bus or tram. Metro runs overnight on Saturdays and buses operate night route everyday. To transport from our campus, San Cugat to the city center, you have to take FGC Railway. I bought a 2-Zones T-Month transport passes which gave me unlimited rides for 3 months. It's a right choice for a short stay.

- **Climate**

Perfect weather is one of the points why I love Barcelona. Most of the days were sunny with clear blue sky. Precipitation is at its highest in autumn and winter. In September, temperatures drop progressively, while enjoying warmth akin to late summer. But then October begins to feel more like autumn with around 15-21 degree. Temperature starts dropping in November to around 14 degree.

- **Communication**

Everyone can speak Spanish. But for plenty of Spaniards, Spanish is actually their second tongue. In Barcelona they speak Catalan. Not all of them know English so you better learn some basic Spanish phrases beforehand. Download the offline version of Google Translate for your grocery shopping as well!

- **What to bring**

Passport & ID
Cash & Credit cards
Electrical adaptors
Personal Laptop & Power bank
Sunglasses & umbrellas
Summer and winter clothes, some thicker clothing for travelling to colder cities
Luggage bag / small suitcase for short trips
Medicine

- **Useful Links**

Online housing agent

Uniplaces <https://www.uniplaces.com/d/barcelona/study-in-barcelona>

Spotahome <https://www.spotahome.com/barcelona>

Idealista <https://www.idealista.com/en/alquiler-viviendas/barcelona-barcelona/>

Travel around Europe

Go Euro <https://www.goeuro.com/>

FC Barcelona Ticketing

FCB <https://www.fcbarcelona.com/en/tickets/football>