

Roshan Golani Spring Term

2021-22 ESADE Business

School,Spain

Study Abroad Experience

January

I lived in a shared apartment space called LiveFurther. This was in El Clot. In this first month I joined the Esade rugby team and met a lot of locals. This was great because the way that Esade structures exchange students is in a way that you are only in classes with other exchange students. Rugby was next to campus and we trained for an hour and a half. We were sponsored by a beer company that gave us about 80 cans of beer per training session. This was great! We also went to a lot of bars in the area. My most frequented location was a mall called Glories! This had a lot of restaurants, places to pick up sim cards, shops, groceries, and even a gym. There was also a festivity going on called Saint Jordi, it's a story about how 3 kings gave presents to children. While walking around Barcelona there were many parades. For the rest of the month I did not do much exploring as I got COVID and had to self isolate.

February

In February I started cycling on electric bikes to explore the city more. My friends and I especially liked the gothic quarters. It has an old vibe to it and there were a lot of picturesque buildings. If you go there by metro you will end up in an open space area enclosed by short structures that has restaurants around the boarder. I would definitely recommend this. My friends and I also spent a lot of time in Plaza Catalunya. This is the tourist hotspot and the hub of the entire city. You will find the shopping lane La Rambla here, along with the bus terminal and the train that takes you to Esade. I also travelled quite a bit in this month across Europe. I went to Manchester, London, and Belgium!

March

In March I went for 2 FC Barcelona football games at Camp Nou. Tickets cost around 70 euros and it is well worth it if you are a football fan. I got to see the time when the team was just starting to win games again – the environment was electric! March was when I realized that I should be saving some money by cooking more meals at home. You can get a lot of affordable groceries. There was also an all inclusive carnival in Sitges, a town slightly outside of Barcelona. There are exchange/Erasmus groups on Facebook that help you book tickets

there and back by bus. This was super fun, everyone was dressed up, there were drinks, music, and platforms that take your breath away.

April

It took me this long but I finally started hitting the tourist attractions. Casa Batllo is a fine architectural building created by Barcelona's very own Gaudi! It is one of the iconic places to see. They take you through a guided voice tour of the 5 floors with a rooftop on top where you can have drinks. On the second floor there is also a Cartier store that was fun to look at! Another great spot I visited was the moco museum. There was a really cool section on Ai generated art that were also NFTs. Along with that, there was some interactive segments, some work from Banksy, and a huge Kaws figure. I would highly recommend going to Macchina's pasta bar after – you can customize your own pasta here and it is to die for.

General Study Abroad Information

Visa Procedure:

- Hong Kong passport and HKID
- Visa requirements were
 - Visa Application Form.
 - Two biometric photos.
 - Your passport.
 - Copies of passport pages with info.
 - Flight reservation.
 - Proof of accommodation. (You can use an acceptance letter for this)
 - Medical Insurance.
 - Medical Certificate.
 - Proof of Sufficient Financial Means.
 - The fee was around 350 HKD

Orientation Activities:

- There were 5-6 webinars giving you details about transport, classes, and school rules
- There is also an International Students Association that plans cool activities like hiking drips, bar crawls, etc.

International Services & Activities:

- All the clubs at Esade are run by the students, you have to ask around to see what fits for you. I knew that I wanted to get into sports and so I found the esade rugby Instagram page and contacted them about training sessions.

Accommodations:

- I was not sure where to live for the longest time
- I would suggest these areas: Plaza Catalunya, Glories, and Muntaner
 - They are city hotspots with direct train access to campus
- Alternatively, you could choose to stay on campus – I do not recommend this!

Course Registration:

- They have a scholl intranet where you put in the course codes that you want and it checks feasibility. You cannot take classes that overlap so you will have to map this out. They give you 1 week to do this and it is NOT on a first come first serve basis

Teaching & Assessment Methods:

- Class sizes were about 30 students
- The teaching method is to have an interactive class with friendly professors who encourage questions. There is usually some coursework (individual/group), a midterm, and a final exam.

Finance & Banking:

- I used Cash that I brought from HK as well as my credit card. I recommend to track your finances closely so that you can spend wisely.

Climate:

- Barcelona is cold for someone from Hong Kong. I would recommend carrying some sweatshirts / hoodies / sweats, and a light puffer jacket for the night.

Health and Safety:

- The public healthcare system is not the best. I dislocated my shoulder and had to wait 3 hours before getting any attention. Not sure what to recommend – make some local friends and get them to help you.

Food:

- Spanish food was delicious, a lot of tapas
- There are some great ramen restaurants, good kebabs, and a lot of Italian places

Transportation:

- You should get the 3 month metro card that is valid for all trains, buses, and night buses. Barcelona's public transport system is great and intuitive to use

Communication:

- You should get a Vodafone simcard, this works really well in Spain and also other European countries. I personally went with Movistar and regretted it. It is standard to have 20gb in data per month for about 20 euros.

Sports and Recreation Facilities + Social Clubs and Networking Opportunities:

- All clubs at Esade are student led. If you find something that you like, talk to someone already involved or look for their social media pages. Esade does not have many facilities as it is a very small campus.

Cautionary Measures:

- Watch out for El Raval, it is not the safest neighbourhood. Other than that you should be good, it is a lovely place.

Items to Bring

Clothes, chargers, calculator, laptop, adaptors, jackets, medicine

Useful Links and Contacts

Esade will provide you with a list of these once you have confirmed that you are enrolling in their school.

Photo sharing and Description



This is a photo of me and some members of the rugby team on tour in France. We won the tournament and had a great time!



This is me posing next to the Arc de Triomphe – a monument. At the end of this pathway there is a beautiful park that is great for reading or just chilling.



Here is an image from my ski trip in Andorra. It was my first and last time Skiing because I had no clue how hard it would be.



This photo is from the Avalanche Summit, a cryptocurrency conference that happened to be in Barcelona while I was there. It was filled with developers, enthusiasts, and investors!



This is a friend that I made while on exchange. We had a great meal at an Authentic Iranian place. It is a good memory that I cherish.

Evaluation

My exchange semester in Barcelona had good moments and bad moments. The first month was great to explore and meet people but almost all the exchange students got COVID! I learned a lot about Spanish culture, lifestyle, and mindset. This was also the longest time I had ever been away from home. It was a huge learning experience to take care of myself, plan out my time well, and make the most out of it.

Reflection

I would definitely recommend exchange for anyone considering it. It is a couple of months immersed in another culture. I got injured during my trip and had to stay home for about 3 weeks. This was really difficult and it made me really lazy. However, when I was in my last week I was running around trying to go and see all the beautiful things that Barcelona has to offer. One big lesson for myself is that I should not sit and wait until other people are ready to do the things that I want to do. If it sounds interesting to me and I want to do it, I will make it a point to go whether other people want to or not!