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*Picture by Tim Coogan*
Write your story

“Every day would be new adventure and challenge from the comforts of life back home”

Going on exchange is something I have wanted to do since I was thirteen. Leading up to my arrival in Amsterdam, I used to daydream in the library about riding my bike along the canals with new friends. I’d eat delicious cheese and walk around in my new clogs. Every day would be new adventure and challenge from the comforts of life back home.

After two months in Amsterdam and some culture shock, I love my life here. Even writing this story in the university’s library right now, I get to overlook the beautiful canal and watch people live a similar Dutch life to my own. I am lucky enough to have a learning and growth experience far beyond the classroom and library.

In this magazine there are stories of students who have fallen in love with Amsterdam, and UvA students who have traveled around the world. Jim left the Netherlands for Argentina, Simon ventured off to Russia and many others went off to distant lands. Below are their inspiring and exciting abroad experiences. Let this be your guide to exchange and have it answer most of your questions, whether you have never thought about leaving the country or you have dreamt about it for years.

The only question left is, where will you write your story from?

On behalf of your Global Ambassador Team,

Timothy Coogan
Exchange at the UvA through the eyes of Mai and Bharath. Get inspired!

Mai
Age: 22
Home University: University of Queensland, Brisbane, QLD, Australia
Host University: University of Amsterdam

“Why did I decide to study in Amsterdam?” Mai looks up at me from the breakfast menu, her face coy. “… honestly? Well, the pictures were pretty… and I wanted to do something outside of the box.” She laughs and gives further explanation. It makes sense for a Law student to study here – everyone speaks English, there’s proximity to the International Court of Justice, and the UvA has a particularly strong international focus.

I ask her what her top tips would be for a new student coming to Amsterdam.

“Get a bike! From day one… a day in Amsterdam without a bike is a day wasted,” she sips her tea. “… and join ISN. It’s the best way to meet everyone and create a big network of friends. Exchange is such a precious time, and meeting other people in the same boat means you all try harder to embrace the moment.”

Mai also urges newcomers to “push themselves”. She notes that the weather is an easy deterrent, especially for those hailing from a Mediterranean climate. Rug up and bike on – the experiences you will have, despite the blistering cold, will make it all worth it.

We move back to talking about life at UvA. Mai really likes it here, and prefers the teaching style from the lecture-driven mode she’s used to at home. “Don’t be put off by the small class sizes and the way that they’re taught. Everyone benefits from it more. UvA is about self-learning at home and participation in class. You learn to have more opinions and thoughts about the subject matter you’re consuming. Your lecturers don’t let you sit on the fence… I find it quite novel and entertaining.”

“Get a bike! From day one…”
- Mai -

I ask Mai to explain a typical weekend in the Netherlands for her, and she grins sheepishly. “Well, I suppose it’s hard to fight the temptation to travel here, everything is just a train, bus or plane ticket away,” she ponders as she eats her poffertjes. “… Oh! The Dutch love flowers! So I buy flowers on Saturdays from the markets, which are always good fun to wander around. Sometimes I just like to ride around the canals with my friends. The thing about Amsterdam is that it seems small, but there are always new places to explore, even in your own neighbourhood. It’s a strange, cosy lifestyle here and you have to go out and find things. The night scene here is cool too - everyone’s very sociable and likes a drink.”

We have to pack up our things now – as Mai is off to Belgium this weekend and needs to head to Central, so I ask her one last question.

“… Most looking forward to?” she pauses. “Spring! Koningsdag! … more surprises!”

read more on the next page
I am Bharath. I am 23 and just over 6 feet tall. I was born in New Jersey but live in New York. I am a law student and this is my last semester, so I will have to graduate in a few months.

I decided to study abroad because this seemed like it would be the last chance for me to actually live outside of the United States (as opposed to just traveling). I am used to having fun all the time and am pretty terrified of having a real job, so this also served as a final hoorah before I enter the real world.

I chose Amsterdam specifically because everyone said it was one of the most fun places they visited in Europe. After living here for two months, I have to agree. It is super chill.

My most memorable story so far started when my professor made a comment to the class about how she was very worried because her cat was going to be alone in Paris for a week. I thought she was kidding about wanting one of her students to skip a week of class to take care of it, and so I made a joke about actually doing it. It turned out she was serious, so she gave me her train ticket to Paris and the keys to her apartment. The reason this story is so memorable is because 1) I am not an animal person and am specifically allergic to cats and 2) it turns out her cat is not a pet, but a wild animal that she found on the streets of Tunis. Fortunately, two Australians girls came and rescued me and everything ended relatively well.

I would advise incoming exchange students to meet as many people as possible and to make an effort to connect with people from different backgrounds. I think the most valuable part of studying abroad in Amsterdam is the diversity of the student body. There are an enormous number of international students from all over the world, and that makes for a pretty unique opportunity to learn about different cultures and to learn how to view the world from different perspectives. Perhaps more importantly though, it is an opportunity to learn about the many things we have in common, despite our differences in nationality.
These two students have “switched” places, Raïsa is from the UvA and is now studying at Boğaziçi University, Istanbul. Alper is from Bilkent Üniversitesi, Turkey and is currently at the UvA.

Raïsa

How was your Erasmus experience to Istanbul?
I loved it. I had already lived in Istanbul before but this time I went studying at the university whilst before I went there to do secondary school.

Did you experience many cultural differences?
For me it wasn’t really a problem because I had already lived there for a lot of years, but the rest of my friends had difficulties, mainly with the bureaucracy. Because bureaucratic issues are really weird there, sometimes things are possible and sometimes they are not. It really depends on the person you have to deal with, if that person is not in the mood then you can be very unlucky. For example people had to get a residence permit and had to make an appointment for that months in advance. On the site it indicated that the bureau was open from 8.00 untill 22.00 but then when they made an appointment for 20.00 and they would be there on time the bureau would have been closed already since 18.00. And what the Turkish would expect you to do then is to come the next day when it opens again but they wouldn’t let you know that. So for some people it would take months to get a new appointment at a good time. I was very lucky though, because it all went good for me so I kind of laughed at the most of it.
And also, one big difference is the way they look at girls. Girls in the Netherlands are more free in the way you can dress the way you look and the way you talk to guys on the street. For example, ff you talk friendly to a man or smile to him, he will probably take as if you are interested in him.

Did you adjust yourself to that?
I know I did that all the years I lived here before, but this time I did not care at all to be honest. I wore the same clothes I do here in the Netherlands. The thing was also I lived in a nice neighbourhood, the university was in a nice neighbourhood so for that I did not need to adjust myself. However when I had to go out of these areas I put on my long pants otherwise I would feel really uncomfortable. So I did adjust myself a little but in the neighbourhood I lived and where the university was the Turkish girls wore short skirts and stuff as well so I didn’t really mind there. However, I would for example not be so friendly to a random man in Istanbul whilst I do do that here.

What about the cultural similarities?
Well, Turkish and Dutch people have a really similar kind of humor which I really like. They have a lot of self-mockery which I have as well, so that works well for me. Also they are really caring and helpful so those are the things I really like about the culture.

What else did you learn from their culture?
Something that really struck me is that family is extremely important to them. Everything is based around the family, it is the most important institution for the Turkish people. They always think on behalf of the family, like what is good for the family. For example, in class we talked about shame, and the examples students gave all related to possibly shaming the family instead of personal shame.

One tip for a person going on exchange to Istanbul.
Istanbul is a beautiful big city, it has something for everyone. Because it is so big it has something for every different person. Also politically it is a very interesting city bordering the Arabic and European world. And also don’t expect everything to be as well organized as in the Netherlands. If some bureaucratic issues come up, laugh with it and go on, it also has its charms.
Alper

What is your most special experience?
I went to the ISN 3-days introduction week. I believe the organizers of ISN Amsterdam Board has done a tremendous job in preparing this event. This introduction week provides me with an opportunity to immerse myself into Dutch culture. The Canal, the school and everything is so great. It gives me a good touch of the basic of Amsterdam. But more importantly, I met a lot of friends over there, even today we still hang out together. I am so happy to form a new social circle through this introduction week. It is important for us, as exchange students, to know each other and form a tight bonding in the beginning, so that we can have more chance to travel around or study together during the semester.

How did the exchange contribute to you on a personal level?
Doing an exchange is comparable with taking a step out of your comfort zone. Back from Turkey, I seldom have the chance to do cooking. But now I start to enjoy the way I cook. You know, after school I would go to Albert Heijn buy some food, go back home and start cooking. I try different kinds of food with different ingredients. So I believe that during exchange can really force you to change your mindset, to evaluate yourself to a higher level mentally.

How did the exchange contribute to you academically?
It allow me to compare and contrast education system in Netherlands and my home country. For instance, we need to self-study in Netherlands, and adopting this system is an academically challenging experience.

How do you think this exchange will help you in your future career path?
Most of the international companies in my industry (Economics & Business) attach importance to exchange and Erasmus experiences. Therefore, it may provide me and other exchange students a significant advantage.

If there was one thing you could recommend upcoming exchange student, what would that be?
Enjoy your moments in exchange. Meet as many friends as you could. For me, I do cherish personal relationship. To study at the same school and enjoy a the same living style in a new national environment. So under this situation, this makes it easier for all of the exchange students to build up relationship easily. I believe if you are willing to open your mind, you can definitely make some life-long friends during exchange.

What was the biggest cultural difference you encountered? How did you bridge the intercultural differences?
Mostly cycling, there are certain rules and hand signals in cycling that I figure out at the first week. I always tried to be bike slowly in order to play safe. It’s funny to see other old people or young kids surpass me with their small bikes. I once felt a little embarrassed because of this, but then I thought I just need to be myself since I am a tourist. Therefore, I still decide to play my game safe till the end of semester.

Did you meet any locals?
Yes. People always make an impression on Dutch, saying they are rude or direct. However, I never feel the same way, I believe Dutch is one of the most nice, decent group of people in the world. One morning, my bike was broke down on the street and I borrow a screwdriver from a Dutch construction worker. Without a second thought, he decide to lend it to me immediately. I was so impressed and moved by his act, it is unbelievable that the Dutch can be that helpful. So I truly feel that I have been treated well since I arrived Amsterdam.

Exchange for me is...
... an invaluable experience. I think I made some friends for life.
Jim, Exchange at Universidad Católica Argentina Buenos Aires

What was the most memorable experience?
Since the whole exchange period is a period with so many new experiences, it is hard to pinpoint at one most memorable experience. But at a certain point I developed certain daily life patterns in Buenos Aires so certain activities got “less” special already. In that case I would like to nominate all the trips I made in the weekends and after the semester ended. Since I made a smart planning like a good amount of the exchange students did, I had 4 day weekends. This made it possible for me to plan trips in the weekend to other cities in Argentina or rural areas outside Buenos Aires. And so, during the semester I visited Iguazu with a large amount of students and I went to Mendoza twice (once with my roommates and once with my girlfriend). I also spent a day at a farm an hour away from Buenos Aires with a large group of exchange students which was very delightful. After the semester I travelled with my girlfriend to the Salta region and to the Uruguayan coast, where we had an amazing time.

How did the exchange contribute to you on a personal level?
It is a very valuable experience to need to sort out every single thing, ranging from easy things like finding groceries in the supermarket to more difficult things like sorting out student visa obligations. I didn’t have all the regularities I normally have in Amsterdam and this made sure I gained new knowledge every day. The necessity of self-reliance in a foreign country gave me skills I’ll be able to use the rest of my life. Also, since I didn’t know anyone in the beginning of my stay, I ended up in a social status where I hadn’t been for a really long time. It was interesting to see how the whole process of making friends and everyone’s desire for social contacts worked.

Syb, Exchange at Peking University, Beijing

What was your most special experience?
Maybe it was just trying to find the daily routine that was so special. I got breakfast at the same local store everyday and tried to become friends with the owner, but his English was as limited as my Chinese, so further than a friendly nod and some smiles we never got. And in general in the beginning it was just trying to make sense of the weird culture.

Because how big were the cultural differences?
Huge. People laughed at me, tried to touch me, pointed towards me. I know I am two metres tall and a special appearance for them but this I didn’t expect. I had people standing next to me trying to discretely take a selfie with me. I did however laugh at this and didn’t take it too serious. Once in a club a beautiful girl walked up to me, she was sent by her group of friends who were constantly looking at me, and all we did was cheers with our drinks and then she went running and giggling back to her group of friends and continued staring and giggling at me all night.

Was that for all the Chinese?
No, for example teachers were very informal. We even had a Whatsapp group with our teacher where she talked with us the whole day. The Chinese students however were very status-minded, so they kept it very formal whenever they were with you in the classroom. This was in great contrast with the older generations. I remember, When I arrived in Beijing I went to a restaurant at night to eat something and after a while...
two working-class men invited me to come over and sit with them. They didn’t speak a word of English but we played drinking games for like three hours until one of the guys received a called from his wife and had to leave. These were poor hard working class men, but they insisted on paying for my whole meal and all the drinks.

What was maybe the biggest cultural difference you experienced?
The way they interact with each other, and the importance of respect. Here in the Netherlands, when I arrive late for class the teacher doesn’t make anything of it. In China, the teacher sees it as a personal insult when you arrive late or you don’t do your homework, as though you are not interested in his or her class. So I saw myself changing as well, really trying to be on time and making all the homework because my teacher was such a nice lady and I did not want to insult her.

Can you give on tip for a person who might want to go?
Well I’m biased, but I definitely recommend everyone to go on exchange to China! And one tip would be to break the international exchange bubble that can develop and make friends with more locals.

Simon, Exchange at St. Petersburg State University, St. Perersburg

What was the most memorable experience while on exchange?
The most memorable experience of my exchange period in Russia was travelling to the far north. With a group of 7 international friends we travelled to a town called Vorkuta. It was a train ride of 48 hours.

How did the exchange contribute to you on a personal level?
My exchange contributed to me on a personal level in the way that I got more independent by living (sometimes surviving...) in a foreign country by myself. I experienced a different culture and I met a lot of people from all over the world.

How did the exchange contribute to you academically?
My exchange contributed to me academically as well. I started learning a foreign language, Russian, and studied my current major topic in Amsterdam. Except there I studied Russia and Eastern Europe from an internal point of view instead of an external point of view. I experienced a different worldview and became acquainted with interesting people from Academics and politicians to businessmen who have experience in the working field concerning Netherlands-Russia relations.

If there was one thing you could recommend upcoming exchange student, what would that be?
One thing I would recommend upcoming exchange students is that although arranging an exchange might be a lot of paperwork and while on exchange you might experience some difficulties, it is all a 100% worth it! Don’t let anything scare you away from this opportunity. Also, while on exchange: say YES to the adventure!

Which aspects of the exchange did you find difficult? Or less fun? How did you solve this?
In Russia the bureaucracy was a problem which I had to face a couple of times. Arrangements with the university didn’t often go as planned. This could be stressful! Sadly enough, some things you can’t change. In Russia the bureaucracy is so entangled in the culture that you just have to deal with it, but accepting that arranging things will take more time than you’re used to back home helps. Also, sometimes the language barrier was a difficulty, but then there were always local students willing to help me out!

Describe your exchange in one sentence
Exchange for me is one big adventure that everybody should experience at least once in their life!
Our Favourite Places in Amsterdam
An Insider’s Guide to the City

Winkel 43 - Centre
I think everyone knows Winkel 43 for their famous apple pie, but it’s also an atmospheric candle-lit bar in the evening that stays open until 1 am. Although the kitchen closes after dinnertime they intelligently keep apple pie on hand for those who’ve heard the rumours that theirs is the best in town.

Restaurant Mandarijn 蜜柑
If you like Chinese food, you definitely should go this one. To start with, I am Chinese. This is the best Chinese restaurant in town, not one of. They are specialized in spicy Sichuan food. If you don’t like spicy hot food, then you’d better try other restaurants in the China town.

Food/Film Hallen - West
This old train station has recently been renovated into an indoor food market/movie theater. With the international food trucks and a huge bar it’s always buzzing in the evenings. It’s a great place to hang out with the westside locals.

Hap-Hmmm - Centre
If you have never eaten Dutch food then this is definitely the place to go. You basically walk into the living room of two typical Amsterdam woman who cook the old Dutch cuisine. I don’t think you can get it any Dutcher then this. Try the real “stamppot met rookworst” or their apple pie. And the best thing is that it’s really affordable.

Noorderlicht - NDSM-Werf
Take the free ferry to the north! Very different from the city centre, but nevertheless worth visiting. It’s an awesome hangout especially in spring/summer, as it has a huge industrial looking festival area and some cafes next to the waterfront like Noorderlicht and Pllek. Every first weekend of the month they have the biggest flea market of Amsterdam.

Hannekes Boom - Centre
This bar/cafe is nicely located on the waterside, close to the Central Station. Very laid back, relax atmosphere. The perfect place for a sunny day!

Roest - East
This bar is located on a old industrial park (and a bit hard to find), but don’t let this fool you! If you’re ready for a bit more alternative vibe Roest is the place to be! Unique location, skillful barmen and awesome parties!

Flevopark - East
Want to relax in the park? Flevopark is a small park in the east of Amsterdam. It’s the perfect place for a picnic, a walk or jogging. More beautiful (and less crowded) than the famous Vondelpark and thus a good alternative to escape from the city!

Heineken Experience
Very interactive tour. You can spend a whole half day there, experiencing the way the Heineken brand was developed through time. And the interactive part is well thought out and great fun. Finally, you will drink a couple of beers that will make your day better in this amazing city.

Rijksmuseum
A brilliant attraction in the heart of Amsterdam City. I’m not really a fan of art, however, after visiting Rijksmuseum I’ve changed my views. Some really beautiful pieces are on display, and reading the stories and information behind them was very interesting and insightful. Leave plenty of time to be able to fully explore the museum.
What is ISN-Amsterdam?

International Student Network Amsterdam is a student-run organization dedicated to helping international students studying in Amsterdam to make sure you will have the time of your life when studying abroad. ISN is part of the Erasmus Student Network (ESN); an organization, with 391 sections in 36 countries. The aim of ISN is to help foster student mobility through optimizing the social and cultural integration of international students in Amsterdam. We try to achieve this by organizing introduction days, parties, ‘borrels’, weekend trips, excursions and other cultural activities. We also promote contact with Dutch students by our buddy and coach system. Fundings for the organization are provided by the UvA and HvA together. This enables us to provide low-priced activities.

Every semester about 1000 international students join ISN Amsterdam. Not just for the reasons mentioned above, but also because it’s the best way to meet fellow international students. To become a member of ISN Amsterdam, the only thing you need to do is obtain your ESN card for just 5 euros during the introduction week, at our office or at our ‘borrel’. Two Wednesdays a month, ISN-Amsterdam organizes the ‘borrel night’ at Coco’s Outback bar, the place to meet, dance, drink and party with other international students. With the ESN card you will be able to join all our activities and get various discounts. Also subscribe to our weekly Newsletter and check our Facebook page (ISN Amsterdam) to keep yourself up to date.

International Student Network Amsterdam
Nieuwe Achtergracht 170
1018 WV Amsterdam
www.isn-amsterdam.nl | info@isn-amsterdam.nl
1. Request your copy
After you have completed your time abroad, your host university should issue with an official transcript. This is a record of the courses you have taken and the grades awarded. In most cases, however, you will not receive it automatically: you have to request a copy from the international office or registry responsible for the course(s) taken.

2. Know the specifics
In general, the transcript is sent to the International Office at your faculty in Amsterdam about two months after the end of the semester. There are exceptions, though. For this reason it is important to ask your host university about its specific arrangements before you come home. Once you are back in Amsterdam, you must apply to the Board of Examiners for your programme to convert the details recorded on the transcript into usually require a detailed description of the courses taken - from the student handbook, for example - as well as a conversion formula. You therefore need to make sure that you obtain an explanation of your host university’s credit and marking system. Its international office or registry should be able to provide this.

3. Don’t forget!
Once again, remember to do this before you return to the Netherlands. That will save you a lot of inconvenience and possible disappointment!
UvA students who spend time abroad in Europe for their study or internship can apply for the Erasmus scholarship. They can use this scholarship as a compensation in exchange expenses. The Erasmus scholarship is paid in two instalments; the first instalment is paid prior to departure after signing the Erasmus contract and the second is paid after the exchange upon submission of all other documents.

The deadline for submitting this (academic) year’s Erasmus documents is 30 days after the exchange has ended. Please note that the date is absolute; a delay of even one day may have serious consequences and can even result in a reclaim of the entire scholarship.

If you are receiving an Erasmus scholarship and you have any questions or need the required documents, please do not hesitate to contact:

Ms. Carine de Wilde
International Student Affairs
erasmus-sts@uva.nl
How to: The Locals

How to approach a Dutch person in the Netherlands?

It might be difficult to approach a Dutch person because they might not see you. However do not let their length scare you off. Here are some tips about how to approach a Dutch person:

The Dutch are known for being tight with money, therefore if you pay for a Dutch person’s drink you have just made a new best friend.

A Dutch person’s agenda is their Holy Bible. You must make an appointment with them for a drink because they like to schedule every little meeting they have. Even their own parents need to fit in a family dinner to their calendars sometimes.

This has consequences for those who were not scheduled into their agenda. If you have not been invited to stay over for dinner, leave around 18:00. Otherwise, your host will kindly send you to the door. So if you want to have dinner with them, you can invite them over and if it suits their agenda they will be more than happy to join.

If locals have finally found a spot in their agenda to come over, make them some ‘frituur’. It’s a fried food. Dutch love typical fried food or snacks from your home country, and by transitive property would start to love you.

Master pronouncing the most Dutch word ever *gezellig*. It’s an untranslatable word, but has a strong positive connotation and is often generalized as ‘coziness.’ Everything is *gezellig* therefore say it for every occasion and the Dutch will queue up to be with you. In other words, be ‘gezellig’.

Keep some cheese in your bag in case you get lost and need to attract locals!

The Dutch know the legalization of marijuana is special for foreigners, but it is not special for them. Therefore do not talk about it.

More appealing topics: cows, football, bikes, the royal family, the weather...

Typical Amsterdam ‘Slang’

Fissa party swa dude tantoe a lot fatoe crazy pata’s shoes

Easy Dutch sentences to learn:

- ‘Wat is het gezellig hier’ ‘lekker weertje he’
  - The vibe is good!
  - The weather is nice or sarcastically when it’s really bad
  - do you come here more often?

- ‘kom je hier vaker?’
  - (The perfect pickup line for this hot Dutch boy/girl at the bar if you don’t know what to say)

Guys,

if you wanna buy a Dutch girl a drink, you can try to say “wil je wat drinken?”
If you are not able to say that, ‘biertje’ will suffice. First make sure her boyfriend isn’t around! Not a great way to make friends and definitely not gezellig.

See: www.uva.nl
Dutch for a Day

13:30 A visit to the Maagdenhuis where UvA students are currently occupying the main administration building to protest.

Julia:
I’m glad you guys thought to take us inside and show us around, I would never have had the courage to walk in by myself as an international student and it was really interesting to see what’s happening politically at the University. A very Amsterdam kind of protest as you guys said! I’m just sorry your bike got stolen while we were inside Maartje, but also very Amsterdam!

Tim:
Wow. Students at my home university would never be able to organize like this. It’s really interesting and reflective of Amsterdam’s egalitarian mindset to see how the student’s ideas of reform affect the University.

Maartje:
As the occupation of the Maagdenhuis currently is such a trending topic amongst the UvA students, I thought it would be interesting to show this to our international students. It was cool talking with you guys about it. We noticed that problems concerning education are not just issues in Amsterdam, it is present at other universities in other countries too.

Simon:
As a student at the faculty of Humanities, the place where the protests all started, it’s important for me to discuss the current events with others. It was very interesting to exchange ideas and thoughts with international students about the way universities work around the world. A very education start of the day!
15:00  Following a lecture of a UvA/exchange student National Identity in the News & European Memory and Heritage.

Julia:
National Identity is one of my classes but it’s cool to take it in Europe as it’s very different than if it were being taught in North America, though I think the professor is American! Maartje what did you think?

Maartje:
Earlier on at the Maagdenhuis we were discussing how culture shapes our identity and this came back in the lecture, interesting! It was nice how the class was 50/50 local and international students. It wasn’t actually that different from my own lecture.

Tim:
Coming from the states, multiculturalism is something we discuss a lot. Never before have I had a chance to have that conversation with such an international group though! Definitely gained a lot more perspective

Simon:
The European Memory and Heritage class of today was about how migration and multiculturalism in Europe and how this changed national memory. An Italian teacher and a very multicultural group of students: what did you think of the course Tim?

18:00  A real homemade Dutch “Boerenkool” dinner.

Maartje:
I have to admit that I haven’t eaten Dutch food in a long time. The internationals did a pretty good job helping with the Dutch cooking. Julia peeled the potatoes like a real dutchie! As an extra Dutch touch, we put on some 100% NL radio station. I know our music can sound somewhat strange, but you have to admit it was pretty catchy

Simon:
The nostalgic part of the day: eating “Boerenkool met Worst”. I remember my mum making this back in the old days! During the cold winter days this was the best food you could wish for! Today it was the first day making it myself actually, and I think it went well.

Maartje:

see: www.uva.nl
Julia:
It was so nice to have a home cooked meal in a real kitchen! And the Boerenkool was very good, perfect before skating and now I know how to cook something Dutch!

Tim:
Dinner was the best meal I've had in a while, very gezellig! Did I use that right?

Simon:
After a nice meal it was time to be active! It was time to prove my Dutchness. My outfit was probably more professional than my speed skating skills but anyway I had a lot of fun! Funny thing is I didn’t know there was such a big crowd speed skating on a Monday evening in Amsterdam! Definitely gonna do this again sometime!

Maartje:
As a UvA student, I am always hanging out with my fellow Dutch students, and I notice that also the exchange students do the same thing. Why don’t we integrate more? I guess today shows a good example that hanging out with exchange students is good fun! Don’t be afraid to approach each other.

Maartje:
Again, one of the most Dutch things to do and I never speed skate! Thanks for inviting us to your class Julia. It is cool to see that our exchange students do Dutch activities too and that they really enjoy it. Sometimes you have to step outside of your comfort zone and join a local speed skating group (completely in Dutch!), but you will meet nice people and truly experience the local lifestyle.

Julia:
I'm glad we all got to try this. I love that it's outside with all the lights and Tim you did a great job for your first time skating practically!

20:30 Speed Skating Lesson at Jaap Eden Bahn in Amsterdam Oost.

Tim:
My skating skills definitely didn’t allow for speed, but it was a lot of fun to join the lesson! It was super impressive to watch the talented skaters while I went along the outside of the rink haha
Each semester the office of International Student Affairs organizes a photo contest open to all exchange students. The best picture might be used for promotional purposes and could end up on the cover of our brochures or promotional material. A selection of the best entrants will also be displayed during the yearly Study Abroad Fair photo exhibition.

The following prizes are awarded: €150 first prize, €100 second prize and €50 third prize. There will also be an additional public favorite prize of €100. Prizes are awarded by the Office of International Student Affairs (BIS). All entrants will be judged by a committee of at least three judges. The goal of this competition is to find the perfect image of what it entails to be studying at a foreign university. Think of pictures of you or your classmate in the unique environment of your destination. You can enter photos taken on campus, in your accommodation or on field trips.

The criteria on which photos will be judged are:
- Quality of the image, composition, setting
- The way the image relates to student life and shows the aspect ‘exchange’
- How it promotes the host institution

Email: your two best photos (minimum resolution: 3 megapixel)
Before: 1 May 2015
To: exchange-sts@uva.nl
Mention: your name, your home university, the exchange destination and be sure to add a caption to each photo.

Please note that by entering this competition you will be asked to waive the rights to your photo, should your photo be used for promotional purposes.

So grab your camera and take the winning shot!
We look forward to receiving your entries.
The Bucket List
Written by Sanne van den Heuvel and Julia Grandfield

☐ Take a Spontaneous weekend away.
   Try the website srprs.me

☐ Celebrate a national holiday:
   Koningsdag, Australia Day, St. Patricks Day, Thanksgiving, or Carnaval!

☐ Try new foods!
   Especially local cuisine you’re not used to.

☐ Adopt a new favourite meal.
   Maybe even something you can make yourself.

☐ Learn a little (or a lot!) of the local language.
   At least learn how to say hello, goodbye and thank you.

☐ Wander home way too late at night or early in the morning with new friends.

☐ Attend some of your classes!

☐ Try to hitchhike somewhere.
   If the country is hitchhiker friendly.

☐ Explore your neighbourhood!
   It can be easy to be taken with all the other places you’ll travel to on your exchange, but get to know the place you’re living

☐ Make at least ONE friend.
   You can do it!

see: www.uva.nl
Sign the learning agreement

Enter the photo competition

Register for your Master’s programme

Re-enrol at the UvA

Arrange Accommodation

Register for individual modules

Important

don’t forget to...

Have your credits validated

Volunteer as an ISN coach

Sign up for Students meet Students

see: www.uva.nl