## Contents

1. Introduction

2. The Amsterdam Experience
   - The essentials
   - Transport overview

3. Humans of Amsterdam

4. Amsterdam Hotspots

5. Switch Story - Argentina, Amsterdam

6. How to befriend a Dutchie

7. Amsterdam Nightlife

8. Sports

9. Internship Stories

10. Holidays in the Netherlands

11. Switch Story - USA, Amsterdam

12. Breakfast from around the world

13. Erasmus exchange interviews

14. Travel guides:
   - Netherlands
   - Europe

15. ISN Amsterdam

16. Lessons from riding a bike

17. Dutch food

18. Transcript information

19. Things you’ll miss from Amsterdam

## Credits

Copyright © Student Services, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands
This magazine is published by Student Services to inform readers about experiences and achievements of students who are studying abroad

**Editors:** Janne van Eerten, Iris van Eijck, Leon Ingelse, Rogier Jansen, Tin Tin Kao, Malte Konings, Thea Kramer, Amanda Kurek, Ellen Limerick, Sophia Marilena, Jackson Riebel, Hanna Szyzka, Bart van Teutem Steven Wang, Aleksandra Brzózka

**Design:** Aleksandra Brzózka - ambassador at Student Services, University of Amsterdam
Leaving your hometown, the love and security of your known country is like free-falling into a world of unexpected possibilities and adventures. Boarding the plane, the moment you actually leave, meant leaving my comfort zone behind and discovering that what lies beyond. The moment I found out that everyone was feeling this way I can recall very well. All of a sudden I realized that everybody was scared and excited, looking for friends and lost in a new world.

My exchange was one of the best times in my life. I learned a new language, met tons of people, made incredible friends and saw the most beautiful places. The importance of this time to me is knowing that there is a great world out there, explorative and inviting, that everywhere people are living their lives their ways, and that I could go there anytime I want. The fun and new insights to life given by different thinking people from different countries and cultures have formed me.

To me this is exactly what is important. When you return from your exchange - probably nothing in your home country really changed. But you just had a great experience, with new friends and different perspectives. If you are going on an exchange I would encourage you to try and blend in the new culture by trying out different things and to not be scared of getting out of your comfort zone. You will probably have a lot of moments where you see how different cultures react to situations or how they have their own strange little habits. At first it might be strange, but when you look back at the experience you will probably laugh about it and be able to understand and respect different cultures and perspectives a lot better.

Oh and probably a very nice incidental thing is that your traveling will become a lot cheaper. Three friends from my abroad university will come over to my place for a weekend in Amsterdam. And in the summer I’ll go to Italy for a week.

In this Exchange Express we will give you a small insight in what fellow exchange students are experiencing or have experienced around the world. We hope that it will bring up good memories from your exchange or that it will encourage you to go out there and make some stories, experiences and memories of your own!

Leon Ingelse, Global Ambassador Team

Rogier Jansen, Erasmus Ambassador Team
The Amsterdam experience
Living in Amsterdam will undoubtedly be different than your home country. Once you start mastering the art of dodging tourists on your bike, you will begin to feel more like a local. However, there are many more things to learn about living here.

**Medicine**

While most North Americans are accustomed to medicating themselves when they sense the slightest hint of a cold, the Dutch do not. Common medicines that you may be used to using in your home country may not be available here in Amsterdam. If you are feeling under the weather you can visit a pharmacy (they will likely have a big green + sign above their shop), or a drugstore such as Etos.

**Groceries**

Common supermarkets include Albert Heijn, Jumbo, Aldi, and Lidl. Some supermarkets will only accept cash or Dutch bank cards (no credit cards), so come prepared when you shop. Supermarkets here also expect you to bring your own bag or purchase one for a small fee. Invest in some reusable shopping bags to save money and help the environment.

**Mobile Phones**

Assuming your phone is unlocked, you may like to set yourself up with a Dutch number. Lebara is a phone provider, and you will be likely given a free SIM card from ISN. Other providers worth checking out include Vodafone, T-Mobile or Orange. Also, a good cheap option is to buy a data bundle through one of these phone providers, and just buy call credit through the Skype app and use that for making phone calls. Most people use Whatsapp to easily chat with one another.

There are also many locations around Amsterdam where you can get free wifi, such as the main train stations, any Starbucks or McDonalds, some canals, and major parks.
Transport in Amsterdam

by Ellen Limerick

There are three kinds of transport available:
- Bikes
- GVB (public transport within Amsterdam including bus, metro, and the free ferry to Amsterdam Noord)
- NS (train for trips outside of Amsterdam)

Some general tips:
- Buy an OV-Chipkaart, which can be purchased from any major train station and pre-load it with money. This gives you a discount on public transport fares compared to buying a normal ticket for each trip.
- If you use the train you need to have at least 20 euros on your OV-Chipkaart.
- The Metro, buses and trams stop running after midnight but there are night buses available, however they cost more money than usual.

A guide to buying a Bike:

Where do I buy my bike from?
- Waterlooplein markets in the city centre have a lot of market stalls selling second-hand bikes.
- Join the ‘ISN Amsterdam Online Market’ on Facebook where bikes are sold every day by students from around Amsterdam.
- Bikes can be found for as low as 30 Euro on this Facebook page.
- Search www.marktplaats.nl for ‘fiets’ (the dutch word for bike).
- Ask a local Dutch person for the phone number of a cheap bike dealer.

Remember that there is also the option of renting a bike, but make sure you do your research to ensure you are getting value for money.

How much should I expect to pay for a bike?
Put aside around 70 Euros for a second-hand bike.

What should I look for when buying a bike?
If you are buying a bike second-hand, ensure that the bike has lights, a bell, a new-looking chain, and there is little to no rust on the bike. It is illegal to ride a bike without lights and you can face a hefty fine if you are caught without them at night.

You have the option of having a back-pedal brake, hand brake or both on your bike. Go for which kind of brake you feel most comfortable with using.
Humans of Amsterdam

by Tin Tin Kao and Janne van Eerten

Karmijne

Home university: University of Amsterdam
Field of Study: Psychology
In Amsterdam for: 1.5 years
Place of Origin: The Hague, Netherlands

Fun fact about me: “Shower mats annoy me because they’re never cleaned and it feels funny when you step on it.”

Memorable moment: Running around the canals (not naked, for the matter) with my student society while singing songs and dressed in overalls at night during the initiation activities.

Piece of advice: It’s okay to stay true to who you are and it’s not necessary to go with the larger group just for the sake of being cool or quirky.

Kas

Home university: University of Amsterdam
Field of Study: Brain and Cognitive Sciences
In Amsterdam for: 7 years
Place of Origin: Netherlands

Fun fact about me: I always prepare my sandwiches during class.

Memorable moment: “For three years I’ve lived in a flat in Amsterdam North with 350 other students. With some friends I opened a bar on the ground floor. The location is shit, it is completely ghetto and the rooms are really small. However, it is really fun to run the bar and to see that people tend to see it as their living room. No matter where, people will always find each other to have fun, talk and enjoy their time together!”

by Tin Tin Kao and Janne van Eerten
Seongeon

**Home university:** University of Amsterdam  
**Field of Study:** Economics  
**In Amsterdam for:** 2 years  
**Place of Origin:** Seoul, South Korea

**Fun fact about me:** I love cats - I have two of them and I also have a room full of cat pictures.

**Differences between Amsterdam and Seoul:** "The height of people and food. People here are much taller than in Korea. Also, Dutch food is rather plain compared to Korean food, which is spicy and has a strong flavor."

**Memorable moment:** "Attending a Coldplay concert then having some drinks and eating space cake afterwards."

Laura

**Home university:** Universitat de Barcelona  
**Field of Study:** Business  
**In Amsterdam for:** 7 months  
**Place of Origin:** Barcelona, Spain

**Fun fact about me:** In my world, 10 minutes late is exactly on time.

**Memorable moment:** "Literally every night I go out in Amsterdam something weird seems to happen to me. This one time I fell with my bike on the ground and a guy came up to me to help me. He first helped me standing up, but then suddenly he tried to kiss me. I was overwhelmed (drunk) and confused so I decided to call an ambulance but they refused to come because it wasn't an emergency. So after falling, trying to escape from his kiss and calling an ambulance for nothing I just ended the night with how it all started: on my bike."

**Piece of advice:** "Travel, experience and don't be stuck in just one place!"
Home university: University of Amsterdam
Field of Study: Philosophy & Law
In Amsterdam for: 22 years
Place of Origin: Amsterdam, Netherlands
Fun fact about me: I have really pointy ‘elf’ ears.

Memorable moment: “This one time when I was on my way home there was a woman on the street and she started yelling at me. She seemed to be in a panic, because she did not have enough money to go to the homeless shelter. I sort of believed her so I withdrew money at the ATM. However, as soon as I gave the money to her she ran away. So I ended up being really confused by the fact if I just did a good deed by helping a homeless woman, or if I was a naive girl who just lost money.”

Piece of advice: “Don’t judge too quickly. Try not to have a too extreme point of view.”

Asad
Home university: University of Amsterdam
Field of Study: Economics & Business
In Amsterdam for: 7 months
Fun fact about me: “I make decisions very quickly. Coming to Amsterdam was a spontaneous decision - I applied, received an admission letter three days later, and now I’m here.”

Place of origin: Lahore, Pakistan
Memorable moment: “I wanted to get something photocopied and I asked a random guy on a scooter where I could get this done. He took me inside a building that he owned, got his assistant to bring us coffee, and helped us photocopied four pieces of paper. And it was all for free.”

Piece of advice: “If I could tell a group of 50 people a piece of advice, I would tell each and everyone one of them to be at the top. Healthy competition improves the mean performance of the entire group.”
AMSTERDAM HOTSPOTS

By Sophia Marlene
DE DRIE GRAEFJES

If you love cake (and honestly, who doesn’t) this is where you need to be! Both of the cute restaurants are located in the city center and provide the perfect opportunity to grab an amazing lunch with friends. Famous for its red velvet cake, De Drie Graefjes attracts many tourists and locals every year.

HANNEKES BOOM

Hidden behind the construction of Amsterdam Central Station, Hannekes Boom is a secret escape with an amazing view over the water. For dinner or drinks, in summer or winter, you are here always at the right spot. Almost every day of the week they even have special guests and little performances. Nothing nicer than some music with your drink!

THE BREAKFAST CLUB

If you want to enjoy your (all day) breakfast or lunch in let’s say London, New York or Paris style, this is definitely the place for you. With their wide choice in juices, smoothies, cereals and pancakes, there is some for everyone. With a settlement in already three parts of the city, there has to be one near you.

SPORTS BAR

As poor students, especially on exchange, the struggle of money has never been too real. That’s why my friends, I present to you: Satellite Sports Bar. Conveniently located on Leidseplein, this bar will take away all of your time and money problems. For 10 euros you will be able to purchase 10 shots.
**THUISHAVEN**

Party on a Sunday, do it all again on Monday. This weekly small-scale festival is held almost every Sunday all year long and is the perfect event to close off your weekend with a bang. Tickets cost only €15 euros, so get your lazy friends out of their seats and get them grooving! As it is April and warmer temperatures are coming around, you can have drinks here with friends in the sun, chill around the campfire, or explore one of the crazy rooms.

**DE HALLEN**

Located in an old tram depot, this new spot in Amsterdam west is a cultural center which includes a library, cinema, TV studio’s, hairdresser, and a huge separate part with different restaurants and bars. With their own cultural agenda, they offer music, art and dance. So if you want to combine culture and food, or you just don’t know what kind of food you are feeling, hang out here and you’ll definitely find something you like.

**DE IJ HALLEN**

12 times a year with more than 750 stands, De IJ hallen is the place to be in Amsterdam North.

It is even possible to get rid of some items there yourself cause for almost no money you can rent your own stand.

**BITTERZOET**

It doesn’t matter whether you are into soul, funk, dancehall, rock or RnB, Bitterzoet is a club and stage for every kind of music. It’s a place where different kind of music styles find each other and where musicians and producers can experiment and can get a bigger audience. Right in the city centre so if you are passing it by bike, don’t bother walking in for a bit!
DE SCHOOL
Westerpark

With the closing of Trouw in 2015, known as one of the best allround clubs of the Netherlands, Amsterdam lost one of their best spots for their clubbing crowd.

De School, a former school building in Amsterdam-West, has been transformed as the official successor. It is not only a highly modern cultural institution with a club and restaurant, but it also offers sports, a music hall, and a café. Despite all this a 24-hour license, so you guys can party on til the sun goes up (or down).

NORDERLICHT

Another hotspot on the North side of Amsterdam. This café and bar offers a lot of great food and drinks, which can be enjoyed while looking at the river and listening to live jazz music.

AMSTERDAM ROEST

Amsterdam Roest in the Oost neighbourhood is a place where you can get a drink and enjoy the hipster vibe of an industrial location. Also, check their Facebook page for events such as vintage kilo sale! Did I mention that there is also an urban beach there?

SNCKBR

As for many the words “snack” and “bar” together sound like heaven on earth after a long night out (I hear you think Fèbo), SNCKBR Amsterdam is way more than just an old school snackbar. Besides the fact that everything seems unhealthy, everything actually is very healthy and made of sustainable ingredients and free of E numbers. So embrace a good pizza, burger or a traditional “kapsalon” without any regrets and say goodbye to your guilty pleasures and transform them in some healthy pleasures.
An Eyebrow Raising Story

by Jackson Riebel

In the weeks before departing for my exchange semester in Amsterdam I heard many an opinion from people on what to expect of the city, and more importantly from the people. This of course included the ignorant comments from people who obviously knew little to nothing about Amsterdam.

“Amsterdam huh? Looks like somebody’s gonna be burning a few brain cells over the next few months. Smoking a little reefer?”

Or even the occasional “Try to maybe see the outside of the Red Light District once or twice a week while you’re there!”

But those friends and relatives who had either been to Amsterdam or perhaps knew a local could offer me better advice, such as you’re going to need a good rain jacket. Buy a bike as soon as you get there. All the typical and boring recommendations.

But along with the rest of the standard advice than anyone will get before moving to Amsterdam, I was also informed that while the Dutch are some of the most open and accepting people in the world, they were also very matter of fact and to the point. While they’ll stop short of being rude, they have a much easier time telling you what’s on their mind than most. It took me exactly two days to experience this trait first hand.

On the second day of the ISN Introduction Week I found myself partaking in an icebreaker session where individuals were randomly paired for five minutes and prompted with a subject to discuss. A few rounds in I found myself across from a Dutch guy who’s name I now fail to remember. After exchanging introductions we flipped over our prompt, which read:

“What is your immediate and honest first impression of your partner?”

A tough question, in my mind. My counterpart, however, jumped right in.

“Well for starters, you’re wearing glasses, so I can assume you’re probably an intelligent person;” he began.

Not a bad start, I thought, feeling slightly flattered.

“Uhmm... aside from that, your eyebrows are at a point where they could definitely use a plucking. You don’t want to be growing a unibrow, do you?” he said with a casual laugh. “So what’s your impression of me?”

Now I don’t know about you, but I had never, ever in my life been told I was in a near-unibrow state, let alone by a complete stranger. (Side note – I swear to God, my eyebrows aren’t even close to as bad as this story probably makes them seem.) I was at a complete loss for words, likely blushing and suddenly very self-aware of the space between my brows. I gave the only response I could think of in the moment.

“Uhm, well,” I stuttered. “You have absolutely perfectly maintained eyebrows!”

We shared a laugh, and he proceeded to tell me how he had a female friend who was kind enough to pluck his eyebrows when they were hanging out, or something of that sort. And when the timer rang at the end of the five minutes he moved on, leaving me to count down the minutes before I could go home, whip out my tweezers, and get to work.

Long story short, if you can expect anything at all in this city expect honesty. People really are happy to help you here in Amsterdam, whether it be simply by giving you directions back to your apartment or tips on personal facial grooming. It’s an attitude that can be extremely refreshing to international like myself who might be used to dealing with those who are more passive.

Oh, and one last piece of advice, don’t forget to pack your tweezers.
Switch story: Outbound

by Jackson Riebel

Names: Iris van Eijck
Home university: University of Amsterdam
Host university: Universidad Católica Argentina
Program: Global Exchange

What made you decide to go abroad?

I have always wanted to go abroad. From an early age I always loved going on holidays and I was lucky I got the opportunity to already see a lot of the world. For me joining The Global Exchange Program was an opportunity to see and discover a new place and combine this with study.

When you just arrived, what was your first culture shock?

The first culture shock for me was the fact that everyone kisses each other. If you don’t know someone it’s normal to greet someone with a kiss. Even boys kiss each other; this is something that I can’t imagine in Holland. At the end I loved this tradition and I found it hard to break off this habit.

What is your (real) opinion about the Argentinian people?

People from Argentina are really loving, very open and family is very important for them. I love this fact because it unites and comes with a lot of respect.

Did you learn the language?

All my classes were in Spanish so I had to learn the language really fast. This was actually easier than I thought though, because Spanish is all around you and you simply pick up new words.

Is there a difference between universities and classes?

What stood out for me especially was the fact that teachers are always late. They don’t know the word punctuality in Argentina and even teachers are very tranquilo. In The Netherlands it is a no go to be late for a class.

Where you happy to go back to the Netherlands?

After my classes I travelled for two more months. So no, it was actually really difficult to go back to my “normal” life here in Amsterdam. On exchange every day is different and full of excitement and that’s what I missed most. On the other side I was really glad to see my friends and family again of course.

What did your experience abroad bring you?

A lot! Many new friends who I can definitely call friends for life and moreover a new cultural experience and way of looking on life. I really feel I have learned a lot that I use back home here in the Netherlands.
Switch story: Inbound
by Iris van Eijck

**Name:** Gonzalo Elias  
**Home university:** Universidad Católica Argentina  
**Host University:** University of Amsterdam  
**Program:** Global exchange

**Why did you choose The Netherlands?**

Because of friends and family recommendations, plus of the high education level of the UvA.

**What did you think of The Netherlands (expectations) before going on exchange?**

**What turned out to be different?**

I wasn't expecting so many exchange people, it's like a majority, I was used to have only a few in my home university.

**When you just arrived, what was your first culture shock?**

It was amazing to see how the city flux and the spirit of community that dutch people have.

**What is your favorite Dutch word you have learned?**

'Gezellig'

**What is your (real) opinion about the Dutch?**

They've been very nice, only met dutch people in the university and they're very open minded and welcoming, and very patient with my english. In Argentina people tend to be with each other and don't mix very much with exchange people.

**Is there a difference between universities and classes?**

Yes, I can notice that classes here are more horizontal, meaning that there is no barrier between the teacher and the students. Furthermore, students get more involved with the courses, ask more and are more willing to learn. Contents may be the same, but students here are even more focused on real life examples and practical matters, is a great way of learning!
How to befriend a Dutchie

by Leon Ingelse

Dutch people are hard to get to know, and even harder to befriend. Normally if you ask Dutch people, they don't even like their own people; they don't like other Dutchies. Therefore it is for me, as a Dutchie, very hard to explain how to meet a Dutchie. Dutch people, for instance, mostly want to be left alone - they don't want you looking at them, commenting on their ways or showing any kind of interest in them. Because Dutch people are not easily befriended nor frequently met, here are some tips for when this interaction does happen.

A Dutchie's Top Tips to Be-Friending a Dutch Person

- Don't take what a Dutch person says to you personally. Dutch people can be rather blunt. They will call it honesty though. They will tell you what they think of you, of your looks, everything. Don't ever take any of that personal - just see it as an opinion.

- Talk about the weather, about football, talk about stuff everyone can level on. Before getting to know a Dutchie, don't talk too much to them about deep feelings or real issues or you will frighten them.

- Actually, don't try to befriend them! Although this is a very paradoxical statement because this is about making Dutch friends, it's true. We don't like fake love, friendships or people doing their best to be nice to others. Invite them to a party.
NIGHTLIFE GUIDE TO AMSTERDAM
by Steven Wang

Amsterdam is one of the party capitals of Europe with a constantly changing line-up of club nights, DJs, concerts, and festivals. The city's liberal values and diversity means that anyone can find a scene they can vibe with, whether you like techno, disco, hip-hop, deep house, or something a bit more experimental.

Opening times and where to go

Clubs generally open at around 22:00-23:00, though most Amsterdammers arrive at around 01:00. On weekend nights, most clubs close at 03:00 or 04:00, but more underground venues tend to be open until later, sometimes until the sun comes up.

There are two main nightlife hotspots in Amsterdam, in the areas surrounding Rembrandtplein and Leidseplein. The clubs here tend to be more tourist-oriented and are very crowded on the weekends, so the vibe can sometimes be a little off. In my opinion, the best clubs in Amsterdam tend to be more spread out throughout the city. This shouldn't prove too much of a problem though, as Amsterdam is a very small and walkable city, even for a roving group of drunk friends looking for the next dance floor. And of course, there's always Uber.

And just a warning: smoking inside venues is very common, and most clubs have designated rooms for smoking.

Getting in

Most clubs charge an entrance fee, usually around 10-15 euros, though this can range quite a bit. Sometimes clubs will have a discounted fee if you arrive early; other times, if there's a special act or famous DJ, they will charge more. Most clubs are 18+, but some clubs have a 21+ policy. However, I have found that the 21+ policy is often not a hard and fast rule if the bouncer likes your look, you usually might get in. Some clubs, especially those catering to a local crowd or a more underground scene, can have pretty selective door policies, which is something I'm not used to as a North American. If you don't want to have your night ruined by getting rejected at the door, it's best to check the venue's house rules first, go in pairs or groups of 3, know the DJs on the bill, and not arrive too inebriated. In general, avoid going with a large group of men.

Dress code

The dress code at Amsterdam clubs is generally very casual. Some jeans and sneakers will be fine for most clubs, but definitely don't feel like you have to dress down. For me, dressing up to go out is one of the most enjoyable parts of the whole experience, and I definitely feel comfortable doing so in Amsterdam. After all, you are in one of the most liberal cities in the world, so wear what you're comfortable with.
**FAVOURITE SPOTS**

**De School**  
Dr. Jan van Breemenstraat 1  
www.deschoolamsterdam.nl

De School is a cultural complex that took over a former school on the west side of Amsterdam. The club, located in the former bike garage, hosts underground techno and experimental acts that attract the hip and trendy of Amsterdam on a regular basis. Because it has a 24-hour license, parties here can go until 09:00 the next morning. Be warned: the door policy can be very harsh, so wear your coolest outfit and your flyest sneakers (and it definitely helps if you bring a Dutch friend along).

**Progress Bar**  
www.facebook.com/prgrssbr/

Progress Bar is a club night that happens once a month, usually held at Paradiso. It is unabashedly political, dedicated to amplifying the urgent sounds and voices of those not often heard in the mainstream. They book the most innovative, cutting edge artists in hip-hop, electronica, and dance music. If you’re in town, definitely check it out.

**Jimmy Woo**  
Korte Leidsewarsstraat 18  
www.jimmywoo.com

A luxurious club for the stylishly jet set located by Leidseplein. If you’re looking for a bougie night of champagne drinking and Beyoncé on the dance floor, Jimmy Woo is where it’s at. Upstairs is an Asian inspired lounge, and downstairs is a second bar and a dance floor. Dress well to get in.

**Vrankrijk**  
Spuistraat 216  
www.vrankrijk.org

Located on busy Spuistraat, this venue used to be a printing house and was squatted in the 1980s. Vrankrijk is a social hub for Amsterdam’s queer and punk counterculture. Apart from being a club and a convert venue, the complex also has a vegan café and living spaces. The Wednesday night drag shows and Friday night punk concerts are highly recommended.
Sport in Amsterdam

by Jackson Riebel

If you’ve just arrived in Amsterdam and are looking for a way to scratch your athletic itch, you’re in luck; there are numerous outlets throughout the city with which to do so.

**Head to the Gym**

Any student or employee of higher education in Amsterdam is eligible for membership at the USC gym system, which offers seven different locations throughout the city. The main location at Science Park boasts a complete weight center, yoga classes, rock climbing wall, indoor football and basketball leagues, and much more. Students wanting to check out the facility are encouraged to use up to three free visits before being required to pay, so head to the gym with a friend and see what it’s all about! More information can be found at http://usc.uva.nl/en.

**Dutch Standbys**

If you’re looking for an authentically Dutch way to move your muscles, activities such as swimming, sailing, surfing, and ice skating are extremely popular in the Netherlands. While the city’s canals are just about the last place you’d want to find yourself taking a dip, there are many indoor, outdoor, and approved natural swimming sites that a quick online search can lead you to. Numerous agencies and services offer wind and kite surfing excursions throughout the summer, and when the temperature drops, some of the most picturesque locations in Amsterdam such as Museumplein and Leidseplein open skating rinks to help get into the winter spirit.

**Take in a Professional Game**

There are multiple professional sports teams based out of Amsterdam, but none more notable that Ajax Amsterdam, the local football club. Fans clad in orange from head to toe flood to the ultra-modern ArenA stadium in Amsterdam’s Zuid-Oost district to watch their team take on Dutch rivals such as Feyenoord of Rotterdam. Outside of football, the city also hosts the professional basketball team Apollo Amsterdam.

**Keep your Eyes Open!**

If you’re the type to spend your weekends traveling, keep an eye out for local games and matches that may be taking place in the city that you’re staying in. Some hostels may even organize discount tickets and transportation to a local league game. While you may not find yourself at the biggest Premier League game of the year, getting the chance to take in the new venue, chants and traditions will be well worth your time.

**Join a Sporting Club**

The Dutch are no different from the rest of the world when it comes to loving sports. There are hundreds of different sporting clubs throughout the city, and joining one can offer a great way for new international students to blow off some steam and meet the locals. Even without a structured team, simply wandering to a park is an easy way to join a pickup game of football or basketball. No matter what sport you’re interested in, websites such as https://sport.nl/ can help you find the right team for you!
Internship stories
Outbound: Mapping in Ghana

by Janne van Eerten

Interviewee: Younes Douari
Study: Bachelor Human Geography and Urban & Regional Planning, University of Amsterdam
Home country: Netherlands
Internship in: Ghana

Where do you intern and why did you choose this company?

I am doing an internship at the Center for Remote Sensing & Geographic Information Services in Ghana. I have a fascination for public transport systems and mobility, and I enjoy making maps. The reason I chose this internship is because it gives me the possibility to combine these two interests. I am working on a project that is mapping out the structure of the public transport network in Ghana.

What motivated you to go on an exchange abroad?

The major human geography and urban planning forces you to think a lot about the world and your place within the world. I was really inspired by my trips to West Africa and realised I wanted to be more than just a tourist or passer-by. I wanted to get a sensitive perspective of West Africa, academically as well as work related. My trips and studies have motivated me to look beyond the Netherlands, that is why I decided I wanted to do an internship abroad.

What is the biggest cultural difference you experienced and how did you deal with this?

The biggest cultural difference is the concept of time. In the Netherlands it is very common to work at certain times. Everybody knows and relies that you are there at the time you have agreed on and if not, you need a good explanation for it. In Ghana this is completely different. If you agreed with someone to meet at two, this does not actually mean that you have to be there at two. No one in Ghana expects you to be on time. When I arrived in Ghana, I really had to adapt to this new meaning of time.

What was one thing you expected that turned out completely different?

The culture in the office is very different from what I expected. I thought it would be very strict and formal. I thought that you have to be very respectful towards your director and that it is not possible to walk into his office for a quick chat. However, it seems that those rules do not really apply, at least not for me. The director is really informal and easy to work with. This is a positive surprise for me!

If there was one thing you could recommend to students considering an internship abroad, what would that be?

If you want to do an internship abroad, the most important thing is that you know what to expect. Do not go on an internship if you do not know exactly what your tasks are going to be. Otherwise, your internship can be very disappointing and will be a waste of time. When searching for internships, set a goal for yourself of what you want to learn, and discuss this with your institution. Overall I would really recommend going on an internship abroad. Not just for the work experience, but also for the cultural experience of working in an international environment. This experience will always be of use in your future career.
Interviewee: Lissa Timmers  
Field of Study & University: Special Education at the University College Leuven-Limburg  
Country: Belgium  
Age: 21

Where do you intern at?

I intern at Jongerenwerk Dynamo in Amsterdam Oost, a non-profit community center that aims to provide activities for kids after school or during vacation to keep them off the streets. I work with kids aged 9-15 years old.

Why did you choose this internship?

I chose Dynamo because of its concept: the network of people is important to prevent people from getting involved in negative things, like doing drugs, etc. Having a supportive network is very important.

What is a typical day at work?

Just activities that change from day to day. Every day we have around 20 kids per activity. On Mondays, we empower the kids by looking at their talents and then tailor our activities to their talents. A lot of the children are good at rapping and making beats, so that’s what we teach them. On Tuesdays, we help them with their homework. On Wednesdays, we teach them cooking and other household chores. Thursday is chill day and we bring them to the park or let them play Play Station. On Fridays, it’s baking.

What has been the greatest challenge at work?

I think that working with children aged from 9-12 is difficult. I haven’t done any internships with children in the past so it was hard to connect with them at first. Also, I’m from Belgium and my accent is different so they made fun of me. But after a while, they warmed up to me and I don’t experience these issues anymore.

What do you do to relax after work?

I go for a drink, and on weekends my friends visit. Also, I do more things alone now - in Belgium I would never do that because I thought it was weird. For instance, I like to go to Mezrab in the center, which is a place where people go to tell and listen to stories.

What advice would you give to someone considering an internship in Amsterdam?

Working in Amsterdam is quite different from other places because the workplace is so equal - even as an intern, I’m considered a full colleague. In Belgium, there’s a clear hierarchy within the workplace and the lower you are, the less important you are. My ideas are taken into equal consideration as colleagues who have been around longer. This is not something I’m very used to, but I like it.
Holidays in the Netherlands
by Thea Kramer
Sinterklaas

For every Dutch person, Sinterklaas has been there since childhood. On the nights leading up to Sinterklaas (celebrated on the 5th of December), kids put a shoe next to the chimney with some food for Sinterklaas’ horse at night. The next day the shoes are filled with candy and presents. On Sinterklaas itself, the Dutch celebrate by coming together, waiting for Sinterklaas to arrive with his helpers. When he arrives, every child has to sit on his lap and is told whether or not he has been good that year; the year is revised and at the end, the child is given a present.

The idea of getting presents and candy is awesome, but, especially in recent years, Sinterklaas comes with a lot of controversy. Sinterklaas is a tall white man, his helpers are dressed like and associated with slaves from the times of colonization. In Holland, this is seen as normal, mostly because we do not know any better. I, for example, have grown up with Zwarte Piet (as the helpers are called; translation: Black Pete) and have thought about it a second time. Since some time more and more people are acknowledging the fact that it is a racist caricature, and therefore it is slowly changing. Some people see it as a loss of traditional values, some see it as a better understanding of black and white in Holland.

There has changed a lot since people started talking about the controversy, and most people are willing to change the traditional racist caricature. For example, the Sinterklaas news (a famous Dutch TV show for kids) has changed its actors into chimney Petes, where they are not black because of their descent but because they have to climb through the chimney to put presents in the shoes of the children. The discussion around these festivities opens the minds of a lot of people. As the famous Dutch black rapper/pop singer Typhoon sang in one of his songs: “Without darkness the light cannot understand itself, hence the misunderstanding around Sinterklaas” (originally: “Zonder donker kan het licht zichzelf niet kennen, vandaar de ontwetendheid rond 5 december”)

see uva.nl Exchange Express | May 2017
If you have seen enough of the city and the free shows in and around the city, you can always decide to show your dance moves at one of the big annual festivals in Amsterdam.

**KINGSDAY**

Many people don't know the fact that The Netherlands is a kingdom. A really small kingdom but especially a great kingdom with orange as their national colour. Let orange also be the last name of the royal family so yes, there is a reason why every Dutch person is always crazy all over dressed in this specific colour.

Amsterdam, where the best party is happening of course, has a big flea market around the channels and there is music everywhere. You will find people who sell the most crazy things and if you have the opportunity, jump on one of the thousand boats on the channels. It's a party on the water and you will cross whole the city. Add some drinks and you will feel like a real ‘Amsterdammer’.

Because of the fact that all the Dutch love their king, the 27th of April is a very special day in The Netherlands. The Dutch celebrate the birthday of the king with parties, festivals, markets and music and drinks everywhere. Every place all over the country has their own celebration of this tradition and it is really a one of a kind event. Every street corner turns upside down. Almost every city or village has their own free activities in the city centre, but there are also options to join a big festival wherefore you have to purchase a ticket most of the time.
Kingsday festivals overview

Kingsland festival
This year the biggest kingsday festival of The Netherlands celebrates her 5th birthday. With 4 different stages and names as Tiësto, Blasterjaxx, Martin Garrix, Don Diabolo, Moksi, The Partysquad and Psyko Punkz it promises to be a good party.
Location: Rai, Amsterdam

Nassau festival
You feel like being sporty on kingsday? Then you should join Nassau festival in the heart of the Olympic Stadium in Amsterdam. With names as Eats Everything, ANOTR and Dax J it will be the best electronic dance festival of the area.
Location: Olympic Stadium, Amsterdam

These Guys Kingsday
If you feel like celebrating your Kingsday near the water the NDSM Werf will be the perfect spot for you. With music from Interstellar Funk, Robert Bergman, Ocke Weeda, Clairvoyance and many more, this will be your perfect tech and deephouse Kingsday.
Little sidenote: IT’S FREE.
Location: NDSM-werf

Loveland van Oranje Festival
All surrounded by green, this festival has the best setting for a smooth Kingsday. For the 20th edition they wanted to go crazy this year. Ufire B2B Steve Rachmad, Sam Paganini B2B ZØE, Karotte B2B Gregor Tresher, Rod B2B Juan Sanchez and Michel de Hey B2B Wouter S. will be joining you to celebrate the 27th of April.
Location: Meerpark, Amsterdam East

If you feel like celebrating more and turn the level up a bit like a real Dutchie, you can extend the national holiday with another night. The night before actually has become its own party and has welcomed the name “kingsnight”. People are not dressed in orange yet, but the party is definitely on.

A little suggestion to end up with. Please throw away your old travelguides and tell your friends!!! Before 2014, The Netherlands had a queen, who of course has another date of birth. The Dutch changed the date from the 30th of April to the 27th of April. The funny thing is that STILL, after three years, tourists show up all dressed up in orange on the wrong date. Hopelessly walking in the city center looking for a party they are never going to find.
Carnaval

As February progressed, I kept hearing more and more about a holiday called Carnaval. Being an international student, I had never heard of it before and really could not have been prepared for the day. When asking locals for a description of the festivities, often times they would describe it using the term random and crazy, without having much information on where it originated. Carnaval is only really celebrated in the South of the Netherlands and stems from religious practices, namely preparing for Christian Lent. Today, it has little association with religion and is now a celebration where normal societal behaviors stop, the streets shut down, people dress in elaborate costumes, and everyone indulges in food and drink.

To experience Carnaval, I traveled to Maastricht for one day. It was an early wake up and long drive but well worth it to see how intensely people celebrate. I was astounded at the level of detail and the production value of some of the costumes and elements of the parade. I learned that some locals prepare all year for their costumes and must spend thousands of dollars. There were many group costumes and interactive elements that clearly necessitated countless hours of work and preparation. Those who were less ambitious wore bright colours, sparkles, hats, face paint, and store bought costumes to participate in the spirit of the day.

Throughout the day everyone continued to eat and drink and get more and more into the celebratory spirit. There were DJs and stages in the streets so everyone grouped together and danced the day away. By the end of the night, we were caught in tight alleyways dancing with strangers and hardly feeling the exhaustion of our early start to the day. My first experience with Carnaval was incredible, it can only be understood firsthand what it is really like and is totally worth taking a trip to get there! Although I’ve never seen anything like it and at some points seemed crazy, it really was the randomness of it all that made it magic.
**Switch story: Outbound**

by Jackson Riebel

**Name:** Rico DeWit

**Home University:** University van Amsterdam

**Host University:** University of Minnesota, U.S.A.

**Why did you choose to study in the U.S.?**
I wanted to study in an English-speaking country which would have been either the U.S. or England. But I thought with the U.S. being so far away and having heard good things about it, I knew I wanted to go there.

**Within the U.S., why did you choose to study in Minnesota?**
It’s actually a funny story. My initial thought was to study in Los Angeles. It’s what you see on TV, and it kind of felt familiar. But I also wanted to do something different, and as you’ve probably noticed, we don’t really have a cold winter here in Amsterdam compared to what Minnesota does. When I was young I always used to watch the TV program What’s with Andy?, a children’s program set in Toronto. In the show it was always cold and it always looked fun to me, so when I found out Minnesota is relatively close to Toronto, and that Minnesotans were pretty into sports, I said screw it, I’ll go there. Looking back at it now I’m still glad I chose Minneapolis over Los Angeles.

**When you first arrived in the U.S., did you experience any culture shock?**
I think the biggest shock were the products. When I looked at the cars, the food, everything is bigger. I still remember when I arrived at the airport and seeing huge cars like Cadillacs driving around, it was crazy, it was awesome. Even the first time I went into a restaurant, they carried out this huge burger, something you definitely wouldn’t see here.

**How are Dutch and Americans different?**
Well I am from Amsterdam, and people from Amsterdam are different from the rest of the Netherlands, but the biggest difference I found was that the Dutch are more direct. In Minnesota especially people tend to have a hard time saying what they are actually thinking. In Amsterdam it’s to the point, no bullshit. If we say we’re going to do something we just do it.

**How were the courses and lectures different from Dutch courses?**
There definitely is a difference. What I really liked about the courses in America was the way that students and the professor interact with each other. There is a lot of discussion, and everyone wants to talk. Here in Amsterdam, when the professor asks something, often nobody wants to talk. Also, the pace of the course is much, much faster than in the states, due to courses lasting 8 weeks instead of 16.

**Do you have any regrets? What do you think you could have done better?**
I think I would have wanted to travel more after the semester. Not even just to cities, but maybe just do something with friends, go out of town, rent a car, those kind of things. I did get to go to Las Vegas, which was a lot of fun.

**Is there anything you miss from your time in the U.S.? Is there anything you’re glad to have back now that you’re home?**
I miss the space and the freedom. Everything is packed here, everything is crowded. In Minnesota at least, you have a lot of space, you have to opportunity to go spend time outside in the woods. Other than that, we definitely have healthier food here in Amsterdam, which I am happy to return to.

**Advice for students looking to go to the United States?**
Watch your money. For example, even buying groceries can be a lot of money. I also paid a lot for my housing as I stayed at a university owned apartment. Don’t let yourself be scared off from searching for cheaper housing by the University saying it’s difficult to find housing “off campus”. To be honest, it’s pretty easy to find something for a much better price and location, so it’s at least worth a look. But above all, go into your exchange with an open mindset, talk to a lot of people from a lot of different cultures, and you’ll learn a lot.

see uva.nl Exchange Express | May 2017 29
Name: Jackson Riebel  
Home University: University of Minnesota, U.S.A.  
Host University: University van Amsterdam

Why did you choose to study in Amsterdam?
I always knew I wanted to study in Europe, as having never left the United States before I wanted to go somewhere where I would have the opportunity to travel and experience multiple cultures. And while the program here at UvA was by far the most affordable option in Europe for myself, I also knew Amsterdam to be an extremely vibrant and culturally diverse city, as well as fairly friendly to those who aren’t fluent in the language, so it really just all worked out.

What kind of expectations did you have about the Netherlands that turned out to be different or confirmed?
Looking back, I guess I was a bit ignorant in the sense that I kind of just assumed that things here would be pretty similar to back home, aside from obviously the language and maybe the food. But it doesn’t take long to realize that nearly everything you encounter throughout any given day is different from back home and unique to the Netherlands in its own way. While this was a bit of an adjustment initially, I do think it’s one of the best things about spending 5 months in a new place.

How are lectures and classes different?
Well the timeline is the first obvious difference; I was used to taking four or five classes over a 16 week period, while at UvA you take two or three classes at a time during an 8 week block, making for a much more rapid pace. Dutch courses require a lot less time spent sitting in class listening to lecture, but at the same time students are expected to spend a lot more time reading and studying independently in the Netherlands.

Both systems have their pros and their cons, you just have to adjust your study habits.

Any tips for students looking to study in Amsterdam?
I would say it’s important to slow down and take time to actually learn and experience what Amsterdam is really about. It’s tempting to travel every weekend, and for one I have done a lot of it, but make a real effort to spend your free time in Amsterdam doing a little more than just the superficial touristy stuff. Also, don’t be afraid to talk with Dutch students and get involved in student groups or clubs, as they can provide with the most fun and authentic way to take in the culture. But also – get a bike as soon as you can, and watch the hell out for them when you’re walking on foot!

Do you have a favorite moment from your exchange?
I don’t think I can pick one moment in specific, but I know that even with all the partying and traveling (and studying of course), the moment when I realized that I was finally figuring out how the city works, where things are, and how things are done, was when I really felt like this exchange was truly great and worthwhile experience.

If you could take something home with you from the Netherlands, what would it be?
I truly appreciate the openness and awareness people have here. Overall, people here tend to be just a little more in tune with what’s going on throughout the entire world, instead of just being focused solely on what’s happening in their own little bubble.
Rise and Shine: Breakfasts from Around the World

by Tin Tin Kao

As it goes, breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Smashed avocado with pepper and salt on toast, a piece of dim sum, or bacon and eggs - sounds mouth-watering already, doesn’t it? Each culture has its own way of greeting a new day, and the beauty of breakfast rests in its sheer diversity. Let’s explore how.

A typical day in Amsterdam would begin with hagelslag, otherwise known as chocolate sprinkles, on a warm piece of buttered toast to hold the sprinkles in place. This is usually accompanied with a glass of milk.

In the City of Lights, people generally love a warm croissant with café au lait or a cup of coffee for breakfast. Just imagine - sitting on the riverbanks of the Seine (with the Eiffel Tower in the background), contemplating life and watching people go by, with a freshly baked croissant in hand...

A typical breakfast in London is a Full English breakfast consists of eggs, bacon, some sausages, tomatoes, sauteed mushrooms and hot buttered toast, complete with a hot cup of English breakfast tea.

Cold cereal with milk is among one of the most popular breakfast foods in the USA, followed by eggs (with or without bacon), and toast or a pastry including muffins or a bagel.

Although not eaten everyday, a common Hong Kong breakfast/brunch is dim sum, which includes various steamed buns such as char siu bao (filled with barbecue pork), custard buns, dumplings, and rice noodle rolls. People usually enjoy these delicious little snacks with a cup of hot oolong or pu’er tea.
In India, the choice of breakfast varies significantly from region to region. In New Delhi, the breakfast staple is paratha, a type of Indian flatbread with stuffing. It is served with dal, a type of yogurt, as well as Indian pickle, and finally enjoyed with a cup of Indian masala tea.

**New Delhi, India**

What better way to start the day with a cup of mint tea, bread with jam, or semolina pancakes, olives and goat cheese? A typical Moroccan breakfast is varied and delicious.

**Rabat, Morocco**

A traditional South Korean breakfast features rice and doenjang jjigae - fermented soybean soup - and banchan, which are small dishes of food served alongside rice. Common banchan include kimchi (fermented cabbage) and namul (steamed, marinated, or stir-fried vegetables).

**Seoul, South Korea**

What better way to start the day with a cup of中期tea, bread with jam, or semolina pancakes, olives and goat cheese? A typical Moroccan breakfast is varied and delicious.

**Sydney, Australia**

Australians love to eat vegemite, which is a salty spread made from yeast extract, on buttered toast in the mornings with a mug of strong English Breakfast tea with milk.

**Mexico City**

Sure to wake you up, huevos rancheros is a classic Mexican breakfast of tortillas, rice, beans and eggs with spicy red sauce.

**Brasilia, Brazil**

Breakfast is referred to as Café da Manhã in Portuguese, which means morning coffee. Coffee is an integral part of a Brazilian breakfast. Breakfast staples include pão francês (French bread), which is commonly served with butter, and occasionally with cuts of ham or cheese, such as mozzarella. Brazilians also love eating papayas and other fresh fruits for breakfast.
Erasmus exchange experience: University of Amsterdam

by Hanna Szyszka

Name: Isabella Guglielmi
Age: 24
Home university: University of Bologna
Program of studies: Media Studies

What motivated you to go on exchange to Amsterdam?

The city (cultural activities like museums, exhibitions, cinema and music festivals), the UVA's English program (studying cinema in English, improving my language skills), the international environment.

What do you like the most about studying abroad?

Meeting new people from different countries, experiencing my field of studies in a different way. Not only the topics are different but also the way of studying. I really appreciate all the educational materials UVA has given me.

What advice would you give to a future exchange student?

Study English a lot before your exchange period! Choose your classes very carefully and share your apartment or room with other students. I live alone in Amsterdam and I like my independence a lot but for social activities living with other students is better.

What was a thing you expected that turned out completely different?

I don’t know. At the moment my expectations are completely satisfied. More than satisfied. I would like to answer this question at the end of my Erasmus.
How was the social life? How did you get in contact with other international and local students?

While studying at Sciences Po it was nice to meet people with the same interests and ambitions even from your home University. In general people are very ambitious at Sciences Po and they are more focused on getting good grades. But after study time, enjoying the local cafes in Paris makes up for a hard day of work.

Le Marais is probably the best area to go to cafes - it’s a bit like ‘De Pijp’ in Amsterdam. Even though you hang around mostly with international students, the best way to find the coolest parties is through locals. Once we went to this really fancy club where you would never end up if you didn’t know the locals (entrance was just a black door).

The best way to interact with locals and local students is to just blend into the French culture which also means drinking coffee on terrasses, going out for dinner and picking up a baguette which aren’t the most difficult things to do. Overall being proactive really helps.

Is there anything you wish you knew before arriving at exchange destination? Any final thoughts about your exchange?

I can really recommend people going to Sciences Po, it’s such a good university and Paris is just amazing with all the cultural attractions. Also, if you are a European student and carry your ID around you get free entrance in all museums in Paris. For people who are into movies, I recommend to go to a real French cinema (with English subtitles) to experience the French film culture. If you want to go out for dinner but don’t know where and want it to be local, have a look on the ground in front of restaurants, if you see a lot of cigarettes then it means a lot of French people were there and you probably arrived at a good local restaurant. (The French smoke quite a lot).
The Netherlands Travel Guide
by Malte Konings

THE HAGUE

The political capital of the Netherlands has some beautiful sights. Museum Mauritshuis, Het Binnenhof and the large amount of cafes make this city perfect for a day trip. When you’re done shopping, consider taking the tram to the Hague’s beach, Scheveningen.

OOSTVAARDERSPLASSEN

Flevoland is probably one of the most ignored provinces of the Netherlands. Its largest city Almere, isn’t considered to be particularly attractive for students either. Nevertheless, the youngest province offers some of the biggest unspoiled nature reserves of Europe. Perfect for a walk while spotting wild horses and red deer.

DE WADDEN ELANDEN

The Dutch islands located in the north are all worth a visit. Texel is the biggest of the five, and there is a lot to do throughout the year. From culinary events to Ecomare, a nature centre with its own seal shelter. A short vacation to one of the islands is perfectly suitable to get rid of every day stress. The smallest island, Schiermonnikoog, even has the broadest beach of Europe.

KEUKENHOF

Well known among tourists, the park near Lisse offers more than 7 million flowers. The wonderful scenery is filled with tulips, crocuses and many more flowers. There are several exhibitions, but take notice that the park is only opened about two months a year (March-end of May 2017).

LEIDEN

This town has many similarities with Amsterdam. Yet, it is not overwhelmed by tourists. The many canals and bridges give this university town its charm, which contributes to the calmer atmosphere.

Leiden has numerous museums and a large market on Saturdays. It is recommended exploring the town by bike.

The Netherlands Travel Guide
by Malte Konings

THE HAGUE

The political capital of the Netherlands has some beautiful sights. Museum Mauritshuis, Het Binnenhof and the large amount of cafes make this city perfect for a day trip. When you’re done shopping, consider taking the tram to the Hague’s beach, Scheveningen.

OOSTVAARDERSPLASSEN

Flevoland is probably one of the most ignored provinces of the Netherlands. Its largest city Almere, isn’t considered to be particularly attractive for students either. Nevertheless, the youngest province offers some of the biggest unspoiled nature reserves of Europe. Perfect for a walk while spotting wild horses and red deer.

DE WADDEN ELANDEN

The Dutch islands located in the north are all worth a visit. Texel is the biggest of the five, and there is a lot to do throughout the year. From culinary events to Ecomare, a nature centre with its own seal shelter. A short vacation to one of the islands is perfectly suitable to get rid of every day stress. The smallest island, Schiermonnikoog, even has the broadest beach of Europe.

KEUKENHOF

Well known among tourists, the park near Lisse offers more than 7 million flowers. The wonderful scenery is filled with tulips, crocuses and many more flowers. There are several exhibitions, but take notice that the park is only opened about two months a year (March-end of May 2017).

LEIDEN

This town has many similarities with Amsterdam. Yet, it is not overwhelmed by tourists. The many canals and bridges give this university town its charm, which contributes to the calmer atmosphere.

Leiden has numerous museums and a large market on Saturdays. It is recommended exploring the town by bike.

See uva.nl for more information.
Europe Travel Guide

by Amanda Kurek

So you’ve decided to go on exchange to Amsterdam. Well, lucky for you Amsterdam is a hub for travel around Europe, not only will you have the chance to live in and explore the beautiful city of Amsterdam, you also have the opportunity to travel around Europe with relative ease.

Us students all have one thing in common: we want to travel as cheaply as possible.

Bus

While 11 hour overnight bus rides aren’t for everyone, they’re a great way to save on accommodation and arrive at your destination without emptying your bank account. Just imagine how you will feel when you wake up in Prague, Paris, London or any other beautiful destination in Europe.

One of the cheapest ways to get around Europe is by bus. There are numerous coach companies and you can usually find the cheapest bus fares by using goeuro.com.

Traveling for an extended period? Skip the Interrail pass and check out Busabout, a hop on/hop off bus service that connects you to over 46 European destinations.

Budget Airlines

For most, flying is the preferred mode of travel as it is the quickest. In a few hours you could be in Greece, Sweden or Portugal. However, flights can be costly, especially last minute flights. To get the best deals on flights, it’s important to book ahead of time (at least a month) and get the best deals with budget airlines.

Use sites such as skyscanner.net or google.nl/flights to get the best deals! Companies like Transavia, EasyJet, Ryanair, and Weliging offer really cheap flights throughout Europe.

One thing to remember with budget airlines is that, while the fares are cheap, they charge extra for everything else. Pay attention to each company guidelines to make sure you don’t have to pay an extra fee for forgetting to print your boarding pass beforehand, or forgetting to check in online before you arrive at the airport.

Other Options

Whether you want to spend your weekend sipping Sangria on a beach in Barcelona or trekking through the Alps in Switzerland, you can make it all possible with a bit of planning to fit your budget.

Getting a Eurail pass is a good option if you are going to be traveling across vast distances, and for an extended period. The train is a very relaxing and scenic mode of travel. Only gone for the weekend? Your best bet is to try budget airlines or bus companies.

If you do decide to take the train, and opt out of a Eurail pass, try checking the regional trains instead of the high-speed trains to save on ticket prices.

Blablacar is a rideshare company that allows you to meet other people going to the same destination as you, and join them for the ride. This is a fun way to save some money and (hopefully) meet some interesting locals.
Accommodation

Hostels are a great place to meet other travelers, save on accommodation and stay in a central location. A good thing about Hostels is that will often provide free walking tours, free breakfasts and pub crawls.

Airbnb is a great resource to use. Feel like staying in a castle in Ireland? How about an ocean front Villa in Greece? Airbnb connects you to many different and unique accommodation types to suit your needs.

Couchsurfing is another option that is popular for travellers. This website will connect you with locals that will let you stay with them for free.

General Tips

With traveling anywhere, it is important to use your common sense and be aware of your belongings. Assume that there will be pickpockets at any destination you go to, and keep an eye on your things.

Be respectful of the local culture and try to pick up some of the local languages, even simple greetings in the local language shows locals that you are trying.

The key to traveling around Europe cheaply is planning. Plan, book in advance, and save.
International Student Network

by Ellen Limerick

Joining ISN Amsterdam is a must-do for any student coming to Amsterdam. ISN organizes events for UvA students each week and attending the events is a great way to meet other exchange students.

Some of the activities ISN organizes are:

- **ISN Introduction Week** – a week at the beginning of the semester full of parties and fun things to do. You get put in a group and many of the people you will meet in that group will be your friends for the rest of your exchange!

- **Dutch Buddy Activities** – you get matched with a Dutch student and ISN organizes activities for you to do together, such as mini golfing and laser tag. Believe me, knowing a local is really helpful, especially in your first week of living in Amsterdam.

- **Coco’s Student Night Every Wednesday** – Coco’s is an Australian-themed bar in the popular nightlife district of Rembrandtplein. On Wednesdays you will find cheap drinks and lots of students there!

### Travelling around the Netherlands and in Europe

ISN organizes great trips abroad. Some of the tours I went on included:

- an afternoon bike tour around Northern Holland which finished with a Pancake boat trip with all-you-can-eat pancakes. After the exercise from the bike ride the pancakes are totally justified right?!
- a day in Antwerp, Belgium which included a bus trip there, a lunch at a Restaurant in Antwerp, a guided tour of the old town and eating copious amounts of Belgian chocolates and waffles!
- A 3-day trip to Berlin. ISN takes the stress out of travelling by taking care of everything from booking the hostel to taking you to the best clubs in the city!

### Other Activities

- there are many other activities which you can partake in such as Dutch movie nights, comedy nights and exclusive student parties.

#### Contact Information and Office Hours:

Address: CREA, Nieuwe Achtergracht 170, room 1.15
Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday and Friday between 1 and 5pm
Website: www.isn-amsterdam.nl
Email: info@isn-amsterdam.nl

see uva.nl Exchange Express | May 2017 38
Things I learned from riding my bike around Amsterdam

by Ellen Limerick

**Lesson 1:** No matter how fast you are going, do not think that you can mount a footpath that doesn’t lead in with a gradual slope. You will fall flat on your face and everyone on the bike path will slow down to view your spectacular fall. If you are lucky, a passing Dutch cyclist may quickly ask if you are okay before riding off into the distance.

**Lesson 2:** If it is winter and there is a large puddle of dirty-snow-water on the road, do not ride on the side of the bike path closest to the road. You will be sprayed with said dirty-snow-water when a car speeds around the corner. This will cause you and your bike to be covered in a spritzing of mud; it will hasten the speed of the rust beginning to form on your 30-year-old secondhand bike and will cause you to be late for your hipster brunch at Mook Pancakes in Jordaan, where you will have to explain to the hipsters working there why you have mud in your hair and your jeans are sopping wet.

**Lesson 3:** Indicating by putting your arm to the side is not optional, it is compulsory. You may be scared to bike ride one-handed at first, but if you do not quickly acquire this skill you will be flattened on the ground by the Dutch cyclists as they cycle over you, or worse, the Dutch will ding their bell authoritatively and frown at you as they speed away as fast as they can on their bike. The Dutch will always choose flight over fight.
Dutch food

There is much more to Dutch cuisine than pancakes and raw herring. The Dutch have an equal amount of delicious dishes that are sweet and savory, which is why we will break it down into a small list, to make it easier for you to try the greatest.

PANCAKES

A Dutch specialty!

OLIEBOLEN

Popular during the Christmas time or New Years, these are the Dutch equivalent of Donuts. Although in the shape of a ball instead of a ring, these are made by scooping dough into a specially designed spoon and deep-frying them.

DUTCH LICORICE

Believe it or not but there is not just one ‘type’ of licorice in Holland. The Dutch have many different variations, some soft and sweet and others hard and salty. They even have the controversial ‘dubblezout’ kind, translated directly into ‘doubly salty’.

STROOPWAFELS

SWEET

Another Christmas favorite, these small snacks are small and crispy, loved by adults and children alike and have that common Dutch spicy almond taste.

KRUIDNOTEN

HAGELSLAG

Sprinkles on bread, with butter, for breakfast. Need we say more?

SANDWICH + BUTTER + HAGELSLAG
OSSENWORST

Ox meat. An Amsterdam specialty, ossenworst is served with pickled onions and saffron.

KAAS

Cheese, cheese, cheese! Who doesn’t love it? Luckily for us, the Dutch cheese is one of the most popular in the world! Whether young (jonge) or old (oud) the Cheese variations are endless!

BITTERBALLEN

Note that bitterballen should NOT be translated into bitter balls, because in no way is this dish bitter. In fact, it is very crispy and salty. Filled with minced beef or veale and battered in breadcrumbs, this Dutch delicacy is usually eaten with mustard.

KAPSALON

A perfect meal after a night out drinking, the Kapsalon is essential a combination of chips, kebab meat, topped with cheese and a salad, garlic dressing. The direct translation of this dish is “Hairdresser”, stemming from the creator of the dish, a famous hairdresser living in Rotterdam!

KIBBELING

Pieces of white fish dipped in batter and then deep fried. Usually not something that people try when they are visiting, but this dish is great and served on many markets and food halls. It is topped with onions, herbs and lemon juice.

STAMPPOT

This very Dutch dish consists of mashed potato, with vegetables like sauerkraut, spinach, or kale. Thrown on top, is the rookworst, or smoke sausage that is crispy and soft at the same time.
Transcript Information

What to do with your grades?

by Bart van Teuten

1. The transcript

Once you have completed your courses, your host university should issue you an official transcript. This transcript is a record of all academic work attempted at your host university. You will need to present this official document to your home university as a proof for the courses you have taken and the grades that have been awarded to you.

2. Making the request

Most host universities require you to request them to send a signed copy of the transcript to either your home address or your faculty at your home university. Do not forget to make this request before leaving for home or for travelling in order to ensure you will receive the transcript on time. Usually, the transcript will be received in about two months after the semester ends. However, there are exceptions. Hence, it is important to enquire your host university about its specific arrangements. Doing this will allow you to make sure you will receive the transcript on time.

3. Converting your grades

Once you have received the transcript you must apply to the Board of Examiners of your faculty within your home university to convert the details recorded on the transcript into official study credits and grades. Make sure you hand in an official signed copy of the transcript, since a printed copy of an electronic transcript is usually not considered to be official and will therefore not be validated by your home university. In some cases your faculty may require you to hand in a detailed description of the courses taken – from the student handbook, for example – as well as a conversion formula in addition to the transcript. Therefore, you need to ensure you obtain an explanation of your host university’s credit and marking system. Its international office or registry should be able to provide this.
Things you'll miss from Amsterdam

by Leon Ingelse

Amsterdam is not flawless, although it sometimes feels like it. Some things you will happily leave behind, some things will be terribly missed, just because it doesn't exist in nearly no place on this earth. Come to Amsterdam and you will experience it yourself.

The freedom of riding your bike everywhere

In Amsterdam you can ride your bike everywhere, bicycles are easily obtained and everyone has one. No struggling with public transport or cars. Clean air and exercise, What more would you want?

Parks on sunny days

Dutch people are used to rainy, cloudy and misty weather. Whenever it clears up and the first sun beams burst through the clouds the city explodes. Everyone starts barbequing in the parks and puts and summer clothes. The happiness of the Dutch with the sun is celebrated by festivals all summer round.
Did you know that you could win a money prize with taking pictures on your exchange? Every semester the Global Exchange Ambassadors organise a photo contest. There are three prizes to be won for both inbound and outbound students!

Requirements:
- You are a UvA student currently outbound global exchange or a student currently on inbound global exchange at UvA.
- The photograph was made during your exchange and you are pictured in it.
- The photograph has a size of 2.5mb or more
- Inbound and Outbound exchange category.
- Price money: 1st place €100, 2nd place €75, 3rd place €25.

And on top of that the 6 winning photographs will be showcased in a small exposition on one of the UvA campuses. And your picture could be the one!

So keep that in mind when you go on exchange and keep an eye out on our Facebook page where you can check out the winning pictures of last semester.

Lots of love,
Your Global Ambassador Promotion team!