



Digital
magazine for
exchange
students

UvA Study Abroad

Exchange Express

www.uva.nl/ambassadors

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DEAR READERS,

The Ambassador team of the Exchange Office would like to welcome you to the Exchange Express!

2020 has been a difficult year for all exchange students as the COVID-19 pandemic crushed dreams of many that dared to go abroad.

The Ambassadors of the Exchange Office created this magazine to lift the spirits of the exchange students currently in Amsterdam. This magazine provides you with useful information and inspiration to survive the pandemic in our beloved city.

Having interviewed all types of students, we gathered fun to-do's both offline and online, tips to improve your mental health, fun communities to join, and much more!

We hope that the Exchange Express will exhilarate your time abroad, even if it's just by a little bit. Have fun reading the magazine! If you have any useful tips yourself, or you want to get in contact with us, follow us on our Instagram @uvaglobal!

BRAM & LOUISE
THE EXCHANGE EXPRESS
TEAM



LOUISE DE MAAT

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TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF!

My name is Aleksandra, I'm 23 and I have been studying at the UvA for four years. I'm Polish, and came to Amsterdam for my studies, so the global exchange program was my second study abroad experience. Right now, I am busy with my Masters in Business Administration, but I went on exchange during the last semester of my Bachelor's degree in Communication Science. I chose the university in San Jose, Costa Rica. A not-so-fun fact about my exchange is that it synchronized with the outbreak of the coronavirus, and it had to be terminated way earlier than planned.

HOW DID YOU DECIDE ON YOUR EXCHANGE DESTINATION?

I chose Costa Rica because I have always been keen about Spanish language and all Hispanic cultures. I was very excited about the possibility to study in Spanish, even though I had never done it before. UCR, the Universidad de Costa Rica, was my second choice. At first, I applied for Erasmus hoping to get a spot at a university in Spain. As you might guess I didn't get in, so once I was left with options outside Europe my choice was fairly easy. Costa Rica is a beautiful country, which I always wanted to visit. It is also safe and many people do speak English there, which was important for me as I was not that confident about my Spanish skills.

WHAT WAS THE BEST PART OF YOUR EXCHANGE?

My stay in Costa Rica was short, but I definitely experienced a lot. When I look back at the time I spent there it surprises me a little what I now perceive as the best part of it. I spent, or as I thought back then, wasted quite a lot of time on running around with papers. Student visa, translations, course registration - everything was in hardcopy and needed to be handed in somewhere. At that time, it was annoying as I thought I'd rather be visiting one of the numerous national parks (which are obviously great too). But in fact, during that hustle, I met the most people - real Costa Rican people, not only students or teachers - and had a real non-touristic experience. In this brief time, I got to see the genuine and unpolished side of San Jose and had to deal with ordinary situations in a country so completely different from what I knew from Europe. I think that was the best and the most enriching part of my exchange.

CAN YOU DESCRIBE WHAT HAPPENED WHEN THE NEWS ABOUT CORONA BROKE OUT WHILE YOU WERE IN COSTA RICA?

The news about corona was already there when I was leaving, though at that point, as I recall, there was no talk about the possibility of its impending quick and global spread. The moment I left Europe, the situation in Italy was getting really serious, and to be honest I was quite happy I was leaving to a continent where it hadn't started yet. I was obviously aware that my adventure might be impacted by the pandemic, but I was not ready for it to happen so quickly and to have such serious results - having to come back after a month.

WHAT WAS THE HARDEST PART ABOUT BEING AN EXCHANGE STUDENT DURING A GLOBAL PANDEMIC?

The hardest part was that we did not know what was going to happen and when. In the span of one day, everything became very chaotic. The decision that classes at the university would be held online appeared even before the first case was detected in Costa Rica, which was obviously not what you want when you are on your exchange. You hope for a real, on-campus experience, with live interactions with people. Then it was announced that all touristic attractions were closing, including beaches and national parks. It was a tough moment for me as I really hoped to see a lot of the famous Costa Rican wildlife. The worst part was with no doubt the moment when the government decided to close the borders. This is when the real chaos started. Most exchange students were really shocked, with no clue what to do. There was not a lot of time to make a decision as airports were about to shut down, flights back home were limited, and the alternative was to get stuck in a foreign country for an unknown period of time. Along with many students I decided to go back to Europe and even though it hurt a lot at that point, I believe I did the right thing.

HOW DID IT FEEL TO RETURN FROM YOUR EXCHANGE EARLIER THAN PLANNED?

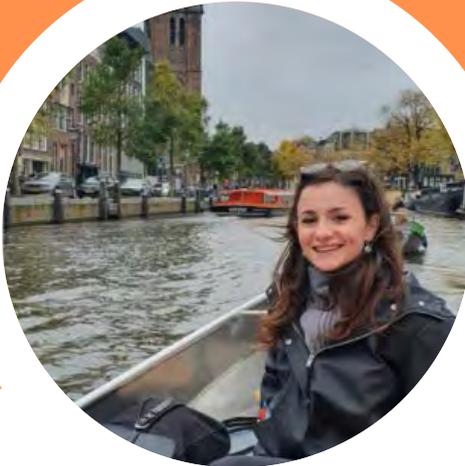
Returning early was with no doubt heartbreaking, especially after seeing how beautiful Costa Rica is, and thinking of how much more I could have seen. There were moments I thought it would have been easier to deal with it if my exchange got cancelled before I even got there. Then I would not have been aware of how much I missed. To a certain extent it felt like failure, even though it was not my fault it all turned out this way. Finally, I think I did feel a bit of relief when I got off the plane at Schiphol airport, as the uncertainty and fear of being stuck in a foreign country in the middle of a global pandemic, so far away from my family and friends, was not something I would have wanted either.

HOW DO YOU LOOK BACK ON YOUR EXCHANGE SEMESTER NOW?

When I look back on my exchange, I think I was very lucky. I still got to see Costa Rica, attended a few classes on campus, visit some national parks and other touristic attractions. I met amazing people from all around the world, and I think because I shared this chaotic experience with them, our bond became really strong. I got a grasp of a culture so different from Polish or Dutch, and, most importantly, I think I learned a lot about myself. I think everyone is going for an exchange, among many reasons, to explore themselves, test themselves in a new environment, get out of their comfort zone and learn how to deal with new challenges. In that sense I think I took an intensive speed course. It was an enriching time, full of plot twists, that required a lot of quick decisions, self-determination and nerves of steel. It was not easy, but in the end, I am happy and grateful I had a chance to have this experience.

Carla De-Vizzi

23, from Switzerland



HOW DO YOU STAY MOTIVATED WHILE BEING ABROAD DURING A PANDEMIC?

Lower your expectations. I see it like this: if I would be in Switzerland now, I would still have to deal with the pandemic. It is like that everywhere. At least now I can enjoy Amsterdam. Even though it's sad that I only went to two bars and to zero clubs, I still have a new environment. I still learn about Dutch people, and I have the chance to meet new people, different people. Yes, I think lowering your expectations is good advice. And don't forget to just make the best out of it!

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE TO-DO IN AMSTERDAM DURING THE PANDEMIC?

Just go outside and explore! I am often inside studying, and my building is great to socialize, but it's still inside a lot. So, last weekend, for example, I went to the canals and the "Negen straatjes" which was really nice with the Christmas lights, and the canals are just so amazing. Once I went to the North of Amsterdam with some friends. There were these little colorful houses and we had a really nice view. I also went to Zandvoort Beach once, which was really cool. So my favorite to-do is to just go out and explore, you'll find plenty of cool new places.

HOW DO YOU CONNECT WITH OTHER STUDENTS WHILE BEING ABROAD DURING A PANDEMIC?

I arrived here in Amsterdam two days before the semester started. I had no friends, but we had this huge group chat from the Masters program, and then people were sometimes like "let's do something", and I think it's really essential to just join there, and then when you are there, don't be shy and or ashamed to ask somebody's number to make plans together. Also, don't be ashamed to admit that it's Friday and it's 4 pm and you don't have any plans yet. Just ask "Hi, somebody up for a beer?". You'll see that there are many people interested!

HOW DO YOU CONNECT WITH OTHER STUDENTS WHILE BEING ABROAD DURING A PANDEMIC?

I live in a student accommodation so I find it easy to communicate and hang out with people from different universities. From my own university, they organized pub quizzes on Microsoft teams and we also have been holding coffee mornings. On a Friday, we have these little things on Zoom and Microsoft teams to virtually hang out.

WHAT IS YOUR TIP FOR STAYING MENTALLY WELL DURING THE PANDEMIC?

I like to go for walks with my roommates. I've been meeting up with people outside and just going for long walks and getting to explore Amsterdam. It's a beautiful city, both at night and during the day. I walk places that I'd never really normally go to, or along the canals.

ARE YOU CURRENTLY IN A COMMUNITY?

I'm in a community with people I live with. I live with 16 people and it really feels like a big community. We're doing the Dutch Santa Claus, Christmas celebration - Sinterklaas. We're all making each other something. We're writing each other poems which is really fun and that really feels like a community, and we cook together all the time.



Mairead Carter

24, from Ireland

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE THINGS TO DO DURING THE PANDEMIC?

I have a really big family back home. I have like ten aunts and uncles and we normally never see each other face-to-face, but now we have these weekly quizzes or just weekly hangouts and I'm actually seeing more of my extended family than usual, which is really nice! Also, just exploring places. We went to Zandvoort to the beach and it was beautiful, it really felt like a nice holiday!

Jose Rosenzweig

21, from Mexico



HOW DO YOU CONNECT WITH OTHER STUDENTS WHILE BEING ABROAD DURING A PANDEMIC?

I connect with other students through projects for my career. We have to make a video and ask students from other disciplines to be a part of. We are doing this mostly online.

WHAT IS YOUR TIP FOR STAYING MENTALLY WELL DURING THE PANDEMIC?

Exercise: sports help a lot! I also like to talk about feelings with my roommates, about how you feel and what you were doing every day. This makes me realize that you are not alone and everyone goes through the same.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE TO-DO IN AMSTERDAM DURING THE PANDEMIC?

Dinner time is very nice! I like cooking and relaxing in the evening. I also take online classes for things I'd never have time to do. I'm taking a SketchUp advanced, and digital architecture course in my free time. I also like to spend time online with my family in Mexico, go for a walk to Oosterpark or around Hermitage. When it is sunny, I usually go to the park to draw.

HOW DO YOU CONNECT WITH OTHER STUDENTS WHILE BEING ABROAD DURING A PANDEMIC?

Because I'm in my third year I already know a few people from my course; it's nice to get to know people in your course who you can meet and study with. Also, some student associations are holding events online where you can meet new students.

WHAT IS YOUR TIP FOR STAYING MENTALLY WELL DURING THE PANDEMIC?

I think it's really important to get outside and interact with people when possible - going for walks with a friend, or going to the school library to study.

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE THINGS TO DO DURING THE PANDEMIC?

Taking up new hobbies is a great way to spend free time and also feel productive, me and my flatmate have been painting memes which I'd say is a solid 10/10 hobby.

Daisy Miller

22, from England





ELLA HOLLEMAN
THE OUTBACK, AUSTRALIA



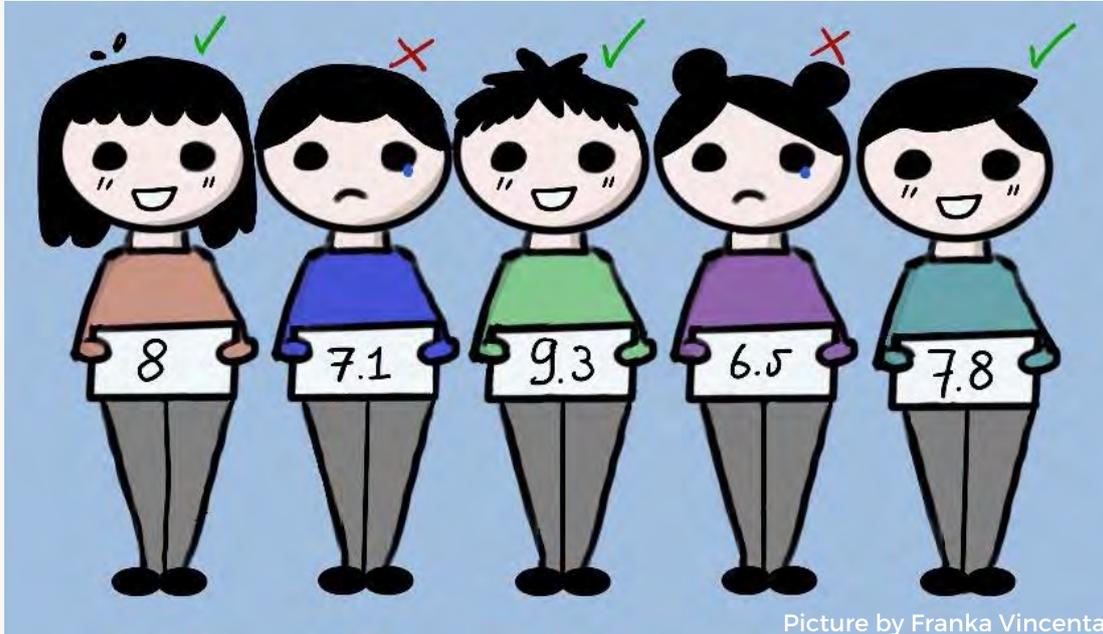
LISELOTTE TIEMAN
BROOKLYN BRIDGE, NYC, USA



"SELECTION OF THE FAIREST"

EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION (EDI) WITHIN THE EXCHANGE SELECTION PROCESS

BY CARMEN VEENKER



The experience to go abroad as an exchange student is a crucial part of the study and life for many students. Especially for the global exchange program, there is a lot of interest and many students apply each year, with 773 students applying last year and up to 868 applying this year. While the number of students applying to this program is ever-growing, the University of Amsterdam (UvA) also increases the number of placements each year to accommodate these students. However, what happens when the number of applications outweighs the number of placements?

When too many students apply to a program such as the global exchange program, a selection has to be made. There are many different methods for selecting students, but which one is the most fair, transparent and efficient is a tough topic. The UvA has spent much time pondering these questions and has adapted its selection procedure every couple of years in search of the fairest, most transparent, most efficient and most sustainable selection procedure. Moreover, their main focus is to create a method in which equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) are included to their fullest extent. This means identifying and eliminating unfair biases, stereotypes or barriers that may limit full participation in the exchange system, valuing all students' unique qualities and attributes, and ensuring all students feel respected, accepted and valued.

Based on a survey of students participating in the selection procedure, the faculties with the most placed participants were the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences (32%), the Faculty of Economics and Business (24%), the Faculty of Humanities (16%), Amsterdam University College (14%) and the Faculty of Science (10%). Moreover, the students were predominantly female. None of them have a physical disability, 2% of them have a developmental disability, over 30% have struggled with mental health, 20% are part of the LGBTQ+ community, 18% have a parent with a migration background and 10% have a migration background themselves. As this group in total might not be considered as the most diverse or inclusive group of students, there might be some room for improvement.

This year, the selection procedure was based solely on the grade point average (GPA) of the students. The students each applied to one specific university on the world map and were placed based on the highest GPA. In case of rejection, the students are able to apply again in the next round. If selected students were to reject their placement, these places would open up for the next round. According to the survey, it became apparent that students believe this selection procedure is unfair: 47% of respondents in the survey responded with 'not fair at all' or 'somewhat unfair'. They reckon a student's grades do not accurately portray their (academic) ability, nor reflect their personality and motivation for going abroad. Many felt disadvantaged, because their extracurricular activities, jobs, or impairments might have been the cause for missing out on this experience.

Another complaint was that different faculties could possibly constitute different gradings, so average GPA's might differ from one faculty to another. Additionally, extra academic activities were not taken into account (double bachelor, teaching assistant, honours programme) which possibly disadvantages students who are academically motivated but might have jeopardized their GPA by taking on extra-curricular responsibilities. Furthermore, this GPA calculation did not take into account the ECTS credits of each student, thus creating an imbalanced focus on high grades rather than completed subjects.

Another concern many students had was that they could only apply once and to one destination only. This allows the students to fully dedicate themselves and their time to one specific destination, decreasing the likelihood of a student rejecting a spot once placed. However, this also means that if they apply to a popular destination, their chances of being selected are slimmer. They are allowed to apply again in the next round, but only for the destinations that are not filled yet. Thus, after being rejected once, the students have to overcome their feelings of rejection and try to apply again, which might discourage them from participating in the next round.

Furthermore, if another student were to decline the spot, this spot will be freed again in the next round and will not be filled with the student that would be next in line for this spot (no waiting list). Because of this strategy, many destinations are made available again in the next rounds. However, at the end of round three some destinations still remain unfilled.

In the survey, a specific question detailed different methods of placement and selection, where the respondents chose which method had their favour. For the application procedure, most students (83%) [1] voted for being able to choose a top 10 of universities they would like to go to and being placed according to those preferences. This would probably decrease the amount of destinations left open at the last round, since students would be placed according to multiple preferences. However, a student might realize they only wanted to go to their first destination, and as a following, decline the resulting destination and drop out of the exchange program.

The next most selected option (26%) was to keep it the same as it has been up to now, thus keeping the same problems as mentioned above. After this, 12% of the students chose for applying for a country each time; this would slightly decrease the problems above since there are multiple universities in most countries. However, the main problem concerning popular destinations would still hold. The remaining students (9%) voted for rolling admission (being placed according to what is still available). This would solve the unfilled places but it would disregard all motivation and dedication of a student to go to a specific university. Lastly, 18% of the students chose for a mix of the above options, but this would also be a mix of the problems and solutions mentioned above.

No selection process can be completely fair, because it will always disadvantage or advantage some students.

Most students (84%) voted for a selection procedure based on motivation only, as this gives students a chance to express their personality, ability and motivation. However, past experience showed that students with a degree in which writing was essential, would always be the most excellent at writing motivations. Furthermore, these motivations were incredibly similar in nature and the standards for acceptance were highly subjective.

On the other hand, 26% of students chose a procedure based on academic cv and professional cv, as this can portray a student's academic, social and professional prowess. However, this would also encourage having side jobs and maybe undertaking more extracurricular activities than necessary or feasible, decreasing dedicated study time. The latter is something that the UvA wants to prevent at all costs.

Then, 22% of students wanted the process to remain the same. This would mean keeping the same problems as were mentioned earlier. Another 22% chose to base the decision on diversity quota, as this would allow for more diversity in the exchange program, and possibly encourage students from more diverse backgrounds to join. However, GPA- and diversity quota will always be greatly (dis)advantageous to certain groups of students and is therefore not a completely fair option.

The remainder of students chose for a lottery system (11%) or a variety of other methods. The lottery system would be the most fair and the most EDI-appropriate, since it successfully eliminates unfair biases, stereotypes or barriers that may limit students' full participation. It values all students equally and ensures all students feel respected, accepted and valued. However, past experience with this system showed that students voiced their aversion, because it takes away all sense of control over the outcome. Furthermore, it also does not allow students to portray their personality, motivation or ability.

In conclusion, it seems like most students agree that an application procedure in which choosing multiple universities is possible would be their preferred method. Furthermore, although most students prefer a selection method based on motivation, this seems to not be the most fair or EDI-appropriate selection method. Choosing a selection process will always be a difficult task, since selection inevitably also comes with rejection. Like most things, life is not always fair. So how do we make a selection process fair? When subscribing to the idea that fair means EDI, then it seems that a lottery system would make for a better solution. But for students, a system that is devoid of personality is a hard one to accept. There might not be a fair system, but is there a fairest?

[1] These percentages do not add up to one hundred percent, since multiple answers could be chosen in the survey.



Amsterdam Guide

01. Amsterdam Restaurant Guide

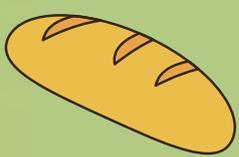
Amsterdam Biking Tips

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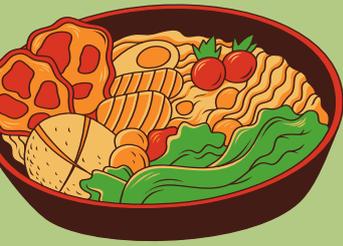
03. Amsterdam Activities

How To Manage Your Budget

04.



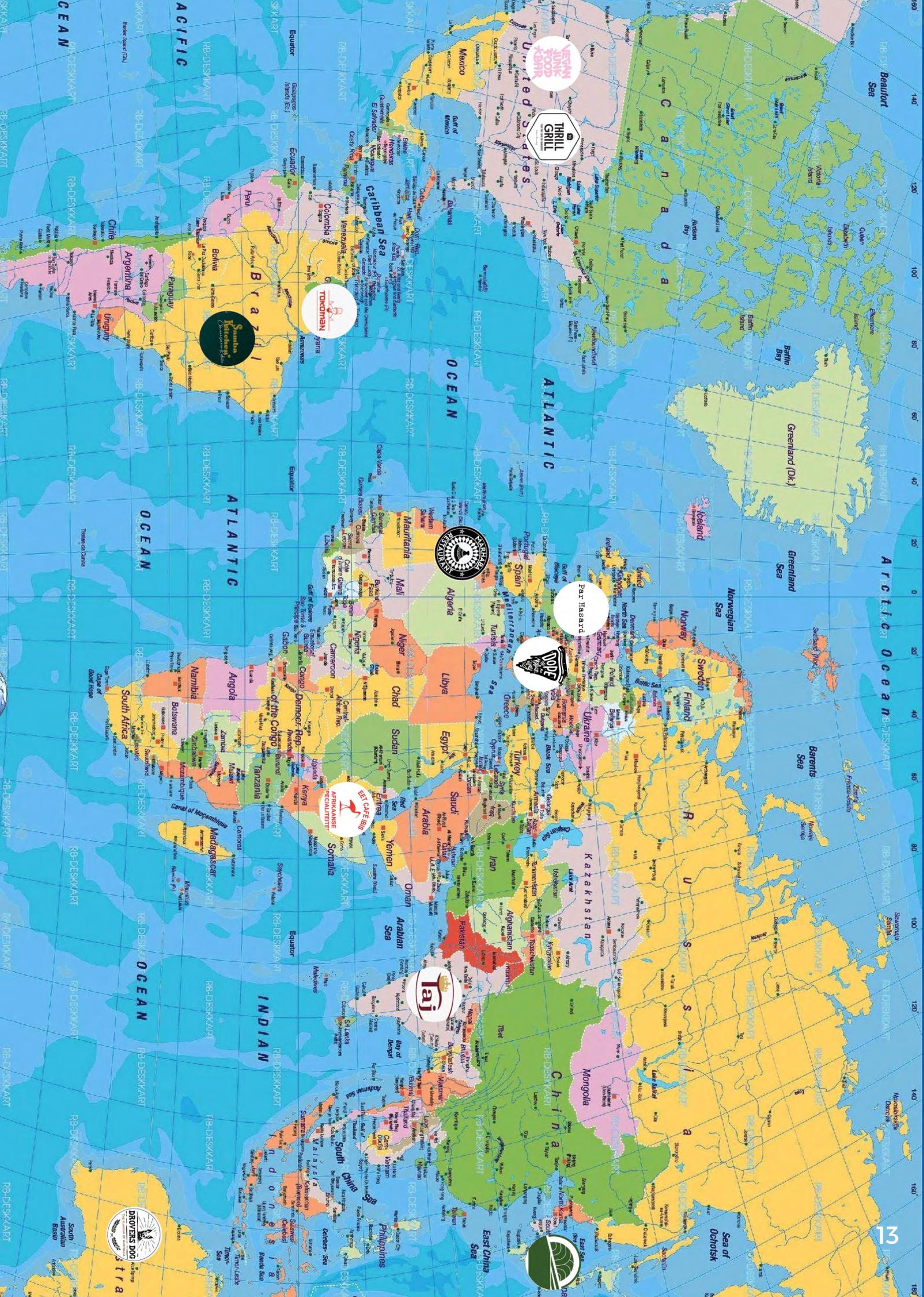
AMSTERDAM RESTAURANT GUIDE

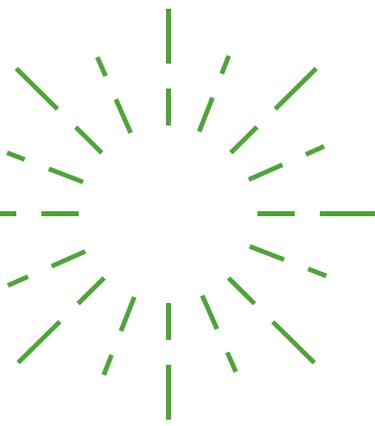


Unfortunately, we are not able to travel the world at the moment. However, there are many different ways to explore the world. One of those ways is through food! Therefore, we have looked up the best delivery restaurants in Amsterdam and organized them by continent, so that you are still able to enjoy the world from the comfort of your own home. Turn your screen for the world food map!

by Iris Verbrugge







Restaurants



North America:

Thrill Grill: When you order at this restaurant, you can live the real American experience enjoying your burger and fries.

Vegan Junk Food Bar: For the vegans and vegetarians among us, or just for whoever likes it, the Vegan Junk Food Bar is a great alternative!



South America:

TokoMan: For whoever craves a good roti or many more delicious dishes the Surinamese kitchen has to offer, this is your place to be!

Samba Kitchen: Missing the sun? Taste some sun when you eat the delicious authentic Brazilian food Samba Kitchen has to offer!

Europe:

Dope: Always dreamed of eating a real Italian pizza? Dope is your place to go!

Par Hasard: If you want to travel all the way to our neighboring country Belgium, try the delicious Belgian fries from Par Hasard.



Africa:

Eetcafé Ibis: Want to try the Ethiopian kitchen? This is your chance! Try the many delicious dishes Eetcafé Ibis has to offer.

Marhaba: Order your favorite Moroccan dishes at Marhaba. With restaurants in both East and West Amsterdam, your Moroccan dish will be delivered rapidly to your door!

Asia:

Sushito: Want to go for a fancy sushi-night? Order at Sushito: with the many different styles there is always something you will like!

Taj Indian: Many people consider this to be the best Indian restaurant in Amsterdam, let's find out if you share that opinion!

Australia:

Drovers Dog: Taste the flavors of Australia and go for a bite at Drovers Dog! Not only does their food taste super good, it also looks very nice.



AMSTERDAM BIKING TIPS

WAYS TO GET A BIKE
AND HOW TO RIDE IT
SAFELY

by Huub Diepens



Amsterdam is one of the most bike-friendly cities. Some even call it the cycling capital of the world. Cycling around Amsterdam might seem scary and chaotic, but with this short survival guide we hope to prepare you for what is coming, as you will definitely use a bike whilst studying in Amsterdam.

Getting a bike

First of all, let's get you on a bike. There are multiple ways of acquiring this French invention. Let's start with the one you probably should avoid: buying a bike from some person on the streets. Chances are that you're buying a stolen bike, and that shouldn't be your plan.

There are many easy and safe ways, such as:

Renting a bike: you'll see a lot of tourists on rented bikes in Amsterdam. Companies like Mobike/Hello-Bike work with an app you can install, here you can see available bikes nearby you to pick up and use. You pay per usage, and are limited to the virtual zones these companies have set up.

Leasing a bike: One of the best ways of getting a bike for a certain period of time is through Swapfiets. Here you can rent a bike for a certain amount each month. You are insured, and if the bike is damaged or anything you'll get a repair for free. It can be quite expensive but it will save you some stress.

Buying a bike: You can buy a good second-hand bike from bike shops in Amsterdam. However, be careful and buy a good lock as bicycle theft is very common in some areas.



HOW TO GET AROUND ON A BIKE SAFELY IN AMSTERDAM

Cycling through the urban jungle of Amsterdam can seem like a minefield. So here are some short points to keep in mind:

1. Be aware that some bicyclists will make strange or sudden moves, so keep some distance if possible.
2. Always cycle on the right side of the road, and do not ride in the middle. You'll block the street this way.
3. Never stop without a reason. Never ride in front of a tram. Even if you can keep up with the tram, your wheels might get stuck in the tram rails which can lead to some nasty situations.
4. Pay attention to these tram rails. Narrow areas like near Leidseplein have tram rails, so make sure to keep an eye on them.
5. Do not use your phone while cycling. It is dangerous and illegal.
6. Don't cycle under the influence of drugs/alcohol.
7. If you turn, use your hand and arm to indicate the direction you're going.
8. Lock your bike! As mentioned before, bike theft is not uncommon.

Cycling can bring you everywhere in Amsterdam, and if you're really feeling ambitious you can even cycle to other places in the Netherlands. Say for example, you want to go to the beach in Zandvoort. It's less than two hours on the bike, and completely on separate cycling lanes, so don't worry about cycling on the highway.



 NIKKI STROOBAND
BERGEN, NORWAY



18
EMMA VAN DEN AAKSTER
ZION NATIONAL PARK, USA 

8 THINGS TO DO IN AMSTERDAM DURING A PANDEMIC

by Nikki Strooband



Picture by Max van den Oetelaar

A'DAM TOWER

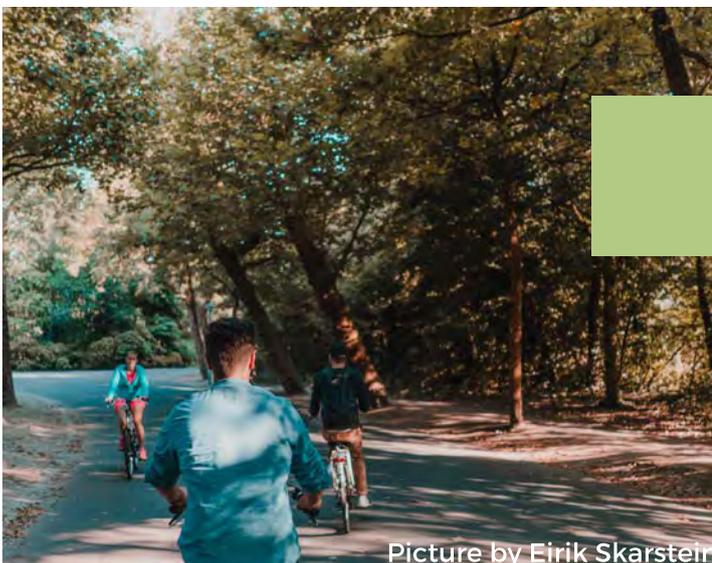
Visit the A'DAM Tower to look out over the city, and sit on the highest swing in the city!

GO FOR A SWIM

When summer is around the corner, the Sloterpas is highly recommended for a nice dip!



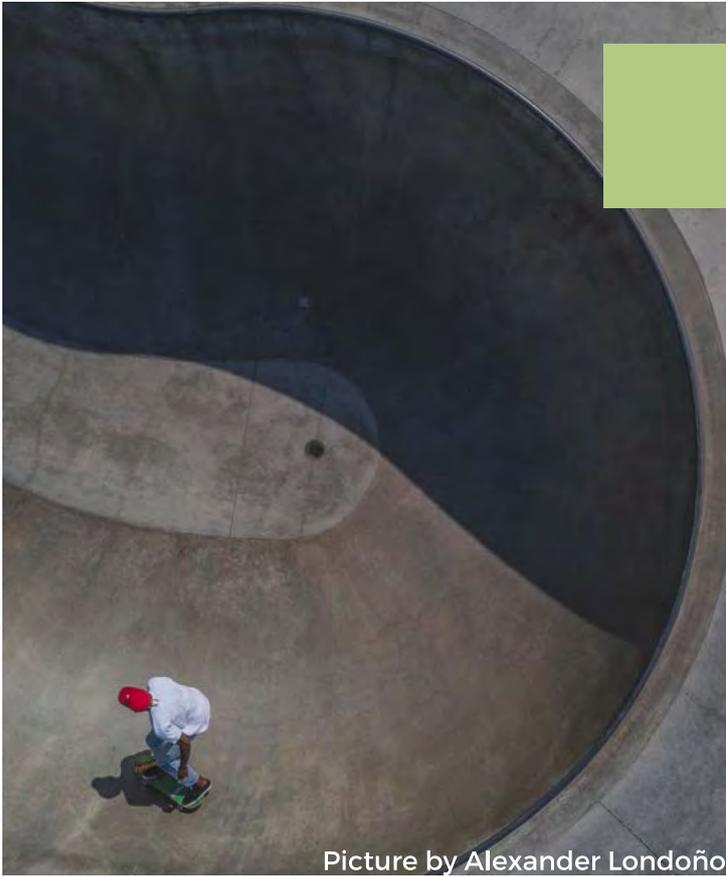
Picture by Wei Ding



Picture by Eirik Skarstein

ROLLERSKATING

Go rollerskating in the famous Vondelpark. It has asphalted roads and there are no cars, so this is a perfect place to go around on wheels.



Picture by Alexander Londoño

SKATEPARK

There is a great skatepark at Zeeburgereiland. Bring your own board or just get a coffee to-go and watch other people perform amazing tricks!

AMSTERDAMSE BOS

Go see the baby goats and Schotse Hooglanders in Amsterdamse Bos in spring. You can even feed them, and trust us: they are adorable!



Picture by Rudolf Peter Bakker



Picture by Joel de Vriend

ARTIS ZOO

In the middle of Amsterdam, we have Artis Zoo: enjoy the monkey rock, butterfly house and the Planetarium. Bring your studentcard and get a great discount!



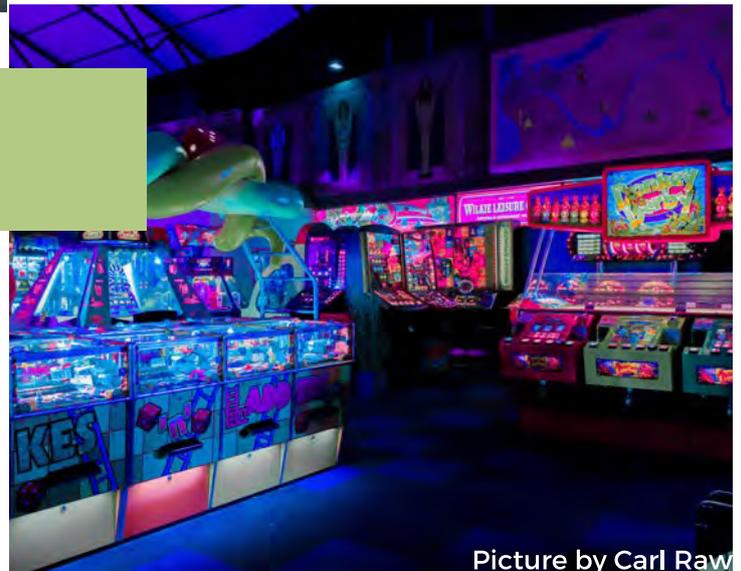
Picture by Joel de Vriend

CATCH A MOVIE

Go see a movie at The Movies. This a tiny and cute movie theater located at the Haarlemmerdijk. Pathe Tuschinski is another beautiful cinema.

GAME HALLS

Play games in one of the game halls. PUCK and Tontonclub Westerpark are amazing!



Picture by Carl Raw

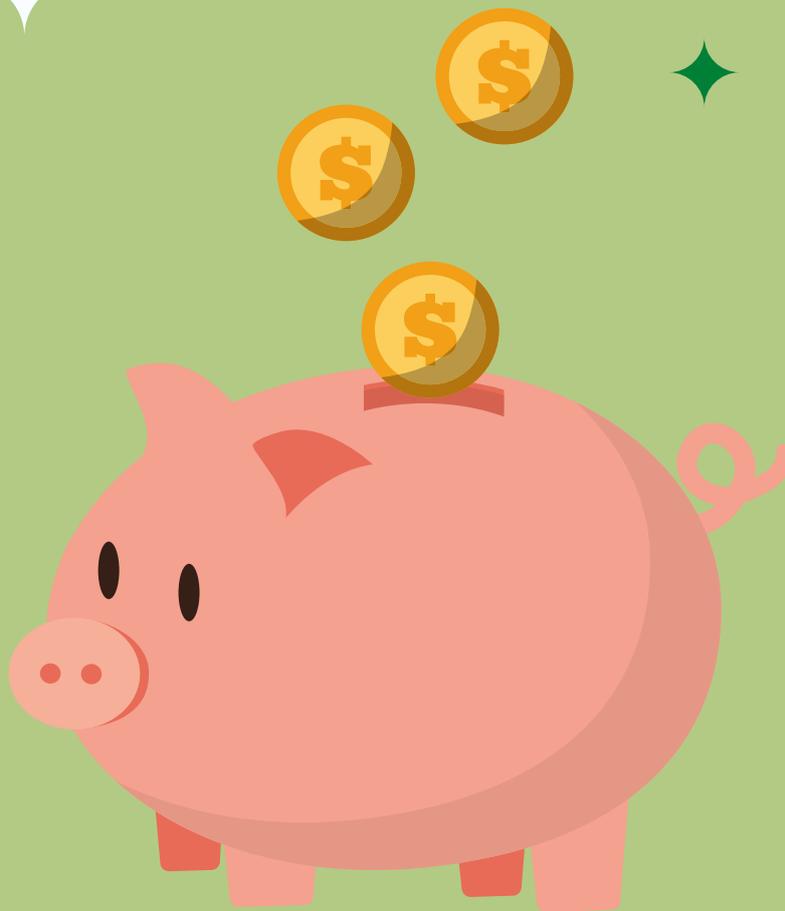
Always make sure to check recent Covid-19 regulations before engaging in any social activity! You can find the most recent updates at:

<https://coronadashboard.government.nl/landelijk/maatregelen>

or click here

Dashboard Coronavirus COVID-19 | Government.nl

Information on the development of the coronavirus



HOW TO MANAGE YOUR BUDGET IN AMSTERDAM

by Jelle Spanjaardt



Finances can be an intimidating topic when you're planning any sort of trip. Even a weekend away with some of your friends in another city in your own country requires a critical glance at the bank account that you might have been neglecting to take a look at ever since you had your last paycheck, so your financial self-reflection before an exchange that will last for months (or even longer) must be a lot more scrutinous. Fortunately, you're not the first student to take on the financial adventure of studying at a foreign university. Many others have had the opportunity to over- (or under)spend before you!

First and foremost, it's important to realize that Amsterdam is not considered to be the cheapest city in the Netherlands, which isn't surprising as it's the capital and extremely attractive to tourists. This is not the only reason for the city being expensive; rent and taxes are also relatively high compared to other places in the Netherlands. This causes prices for many products and services to go up. Generally speaking, it's an expensive place to live.

My first tip: save money and plan your finances ahead. Students are usually not experts in financial planning. However, it's essential to know what you can maximally spend every month or week before you leave. This will prevent financial stress that can be detrimental to a nice experience abroad. No financial stress will be a valuable asset!

For those who really want to be submerged in the Dutch culture, get a job in Amsterdam! Amsterdam is a very internationally oriented city. Speaking Dutch is not a necessity to get a job at all. You could work in the Horeca (Hotels, restaurants, cafés), or in many other places like clothing stores. You could, ironically, even be a (canal) tour guide. Speaking English professionally will be the only language-related requirement!

Be critical of your housing. There are several agencies in Amsterdam that provide students with housing. These studios are usually less expensive than a room in the city center, and they are located close to public transportation so your travel time will be limited. However, there are long waiting lists, and only first-year international students get priority, so it might be better to find something in the private sector. There are pages on Facebook on which people offer rooms. Make sure to actually check the place in the offer and contact the person placing the ad before making any payment to avoid being scammed. 'Hospiteren' (like a job application, but for getting a room) is a very standard procedure before actually getting a room. This is good to know if you want to switch houses while already living in Amsterdam, because it's difficult and expensive to visit a place just to check it out before you actually live in Amsterdam.

Public transportation is pretty expensive, so get a bike! You never have to wait for your bike at a rainy bus stop or buy a ticket for your bike: it's always there for you. Mind that, as mentioned earlier in the magazine, there are many random people offering you bikes in the city. These bikes are almost always stolen and not being directly aware of the exact circumstances of theft doesn't absolve you of legal or ethical responsibility. These bikes are usually of terrible quality and won't last longer than two weeks, making them a waste of money anyway.

The Netherlands isn't exactly famous for its food culture. Eating out in Amsterdam will thus not be an experience that will be a cultural enlightenment in the sense that you can experience locally developed dishes. Traditional Dutch food can be easily made at home for a very low price or bought at a food stand or snackbar. However, you can find most ingredients that you need for a good meal in the supermarket. I'm not saying that eating out in Amsterdam isn't something you should do, because there are plenty of nice restaurants to discover, but it's definitely not a necessity and, Amsterdam being a relatively expensive place as it is, should be considered thoroughly in terms of finances. This doesn't apply for going out for drinks: there are many bars and cafés in Amsterdam where you can have an amazing night out without investing all your savings in expensive drinks. Watch out for big clubs / grand cafés around Rembrandtplein and Leidse Plein though, drinks here may be very expensive, and the experience might be a lot less 'gezellig' (depending on your preferences, needless to say).

In conclusion I would like to add that, however big your budget, it's important to have fun. I can't stress the importance of saving beforehand and getting a job in Amsterdam enough, as they're the most prominent factors in increasing your budget without limiting your opportunities while on exchange. The more financially prudent student will always find their way around the city without spending too much.



Covid-19 Tips

01. Social Activities

Mental Health

02.

03. Virtual Tours

9 AT HOME/ONLINE ACTIVITIES TO DO WITH YOUR FRIENDS DURING COVID-19

by Iris Koster



Picture by Ahmad Syahrir

COCKTAIL NIGHT

Every friend can make his or her favorite cocktail and you can wear a fancy dress or suit to experience a real classy cocktail night.

(ONLINE) BOOK CLUB

Start an (online) book club with your friends. Recommend nice books to each other and talk about the interesting things you read in the books.



Picture by Lisa Fotios

(VIRTUAL) MOVIE NIGHT

Pick your favorite movie and tell your friends why this is the best film ever. Next time, you can watch the favorite movies of your friends. With the Netflix Party Extension it is possible to chat with your friends while watching the movie!



Picture by doreen--1643989

BOARD GAME NIGHT

Organize a board game night, with games such as monopoly, 'mens erger je niet', halli galli or card games. It might sound old-fashioned, but fun is guaranteed. At vintage stores and charity shops, it is possible to find board games for a cheap price. The vintage stores at Derde Oosterparkstraat 271 (East), Bos en Lommerweg 361 (West) are especially very nice and specialised in board games!

Picture by Skitterphoto--324082

ONLINE PUBQUIZ

You can join several online pubquizzes from Dutch pubs, but it is also fun to make your own quiz for your friends. Fun guaranteed!



Picture by Anna Shvets

DINNER PARTY

Cook the best dishes from your country and ask your (international) friends to do the same. This way, you and your friends can taste international food you have never tried before.



Picture by Alexy Almond

ARTSY AFTERNOON



Picture by JTMultimedia

Have a creative afternoon with your friends. You can make cute jewelry by threading beads. Other creative activities such as painting or coloring can also be fun. There are many hobby stores in Amsterdam, such as Pipoos and H.J. Bruinink.

SPORTS NIGHT

Watch a sports game together with a beer and a pizza. Beforehand, you can make bets on the winning team and then enjoy the game together.



Picture by JEShoots.com

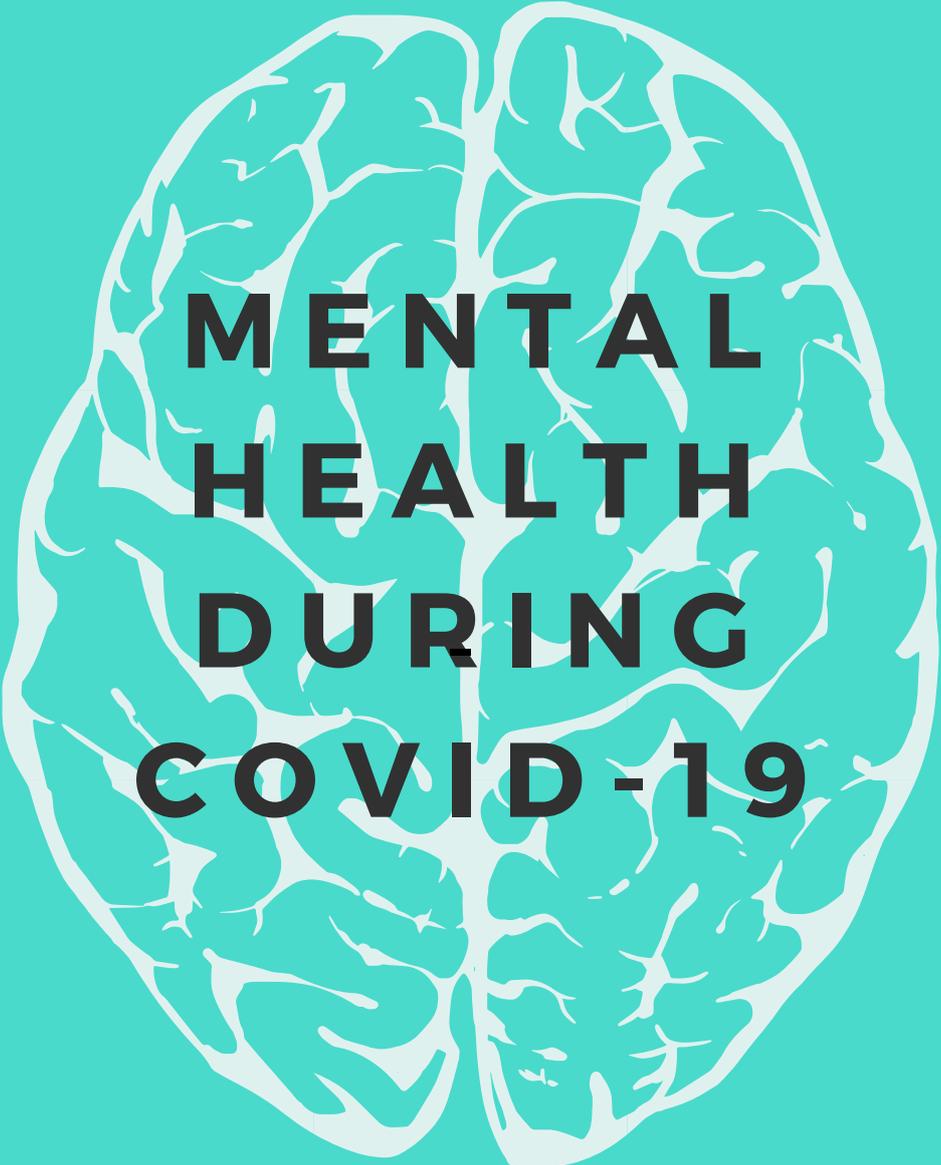
HOME WORKOUT



Picture by bruce mars

Do a work-out at home. Put on your sporty outfit and stretch those legs. If you do not know how to exercise, watch a tutorial online or take a look at 'Nederland in beweging' on the Dutch television.

Look at the activities and workshops in CREA. This institute of the UvA offers a lot of online coronaproof courses to improve your skills in photography, dancing and writing. On the website <https://www.crea.nl/cursussen/?lang=en> you can view the different possibilities CREA has to offer to the UvA-students.



**MENTAL
HEALTH
DURING
COVID-19**

by Lina Große-Schönepauck

Tips on how to take care of your mental health



Stay Informed

Check amsterdam.nl for information about the Netherlands and local regulations in Amsterdam.



Stay connected

Although physical contact is greatly restricted, even a phone or video call can help you to feel less isolated.



Reduce alcohol use

It might seem tempting to drink during these times, but alcohol consumption can negatively impact your mental health and even increase your likelihood of getting infected with the virus!



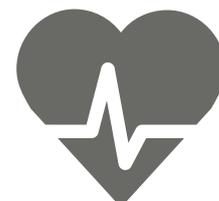
Reduce screen time

Since almost all classes are online already, we spend much more time in front of a screen than usual. Keep in mind that not everything you come across online is true, social media might expose you to misinformation on the virus, which can trigger fear and anxiety.



A daily routine

Keeping your routines or even creating new ones greatly helps you structure your day and getting things done during these uncertain times.



Seek professional help

In case you do experience more serious mental health issues, please reach out to the mental health service of the University of Amsterdam via student.uva.nl.



Not only fear and anxiety about your own and your family's and friends' health, but also social isolation increased mental health problems among students throughout 2020. The rapid shift from physical to online classes at most universities lead to a dramatic decrease in socializing, and caused a large number of students to experience feelings of loneliness or isolation. However, there are ways to counter the negative effects that the current pandemic can have on your mental health.

Thankfully, Amsterdam offers plenty of opportunities to help you improve your mental health during these difficult times. For example, ClassPass and Onefit are two platforms via which you can include a variety of movement in your day. These two apps offer courses at more than 500 different studios in Amsterdam, including classes for meditation, yoga or HIT training. Amsterdam has a great number of parks inside the city but also in its surrounding area (such as Amstel Park, Amsterdam Forest, Zuid-Kennemerland National Park) which are perfect for walks or exercising. Amsterdam also offers a number of communities which you can join to keep busy during the pandemic. One great example is the Conscious Club, which is located in the Jordaan area. The Conscious Club offers a place where individuals can connect, create and learn, during workshops and classes evolving around a more sustainable and mindful lifestyle.

Some tips for setting up a routine/schedule:

- getting up and going to sleep at the same time
- making a study schedule
- scheduling time for things you enjoy
- make sure to leave the house at least once a day
- keep moving (exercise or going for walks)

You can use the template on the next page to make a daily schedule!

TODAY'S PLANNING

TO-DO LIST

-
-
-
-
-
-
-

MORNING SCHEDULE

AFTERNOON SCHEDULE



 **THUB DIEPENS**
TORONTO, CANADA



 **IRIS VERBRUGGE**
IGUAZÚ, ARGENTINA



PLACES TO EXPLORE
FROM HOME

VIRTUAL TOURS

THE BEST ONLINE MUSEUM VISITS AND
SIGHTSEEING ACTIVITIES IN AMSTERDAM
AND BEYOND

BY EMMA VAN DEN AAKSTER



AMSTERDAM

RIJKSMUSEUM

Via the Youtube channel RijksCreative, museum experts provide detailed workshops and tours.



Picture by rebel1965

ANNE FRANK HOUSE

Oculus.com offers a free Anne Frank House VR experience through which you can learn more about the life of Anne Frank and the people who lived with her in hiding.



Picture by ernestovdp--3345557

AMSTERDAM 360

Through the Amsterdam 360 page of iamsterdam.com you can take a 360-degree tour of the Amsterdam area and immerse yourself in the canals, streets and tulip fields.



Picture by djedj--59194

WORLDWIDE

THE VATICAN

On the website of museivaticani you can follow a range of virtual tours, including a visit to the world-renowned Sistine Chapel.



Picture by Valentin Onu

MACHU PICCHU

Via youvisit.com you can take a virtual tour of Machu Picchu, the ancient Inca city in Peru.



Picture by Republica

GOOGLE ARTS PROJECT: STREET ART

This online project features the world's most special street art and tells the stories behind it through virtual walking tours, online exhibitions and artist interviews.



Picture by Anderson Guerra

Amsterdam's Communities

01. Student Disability Platform
The Green Office

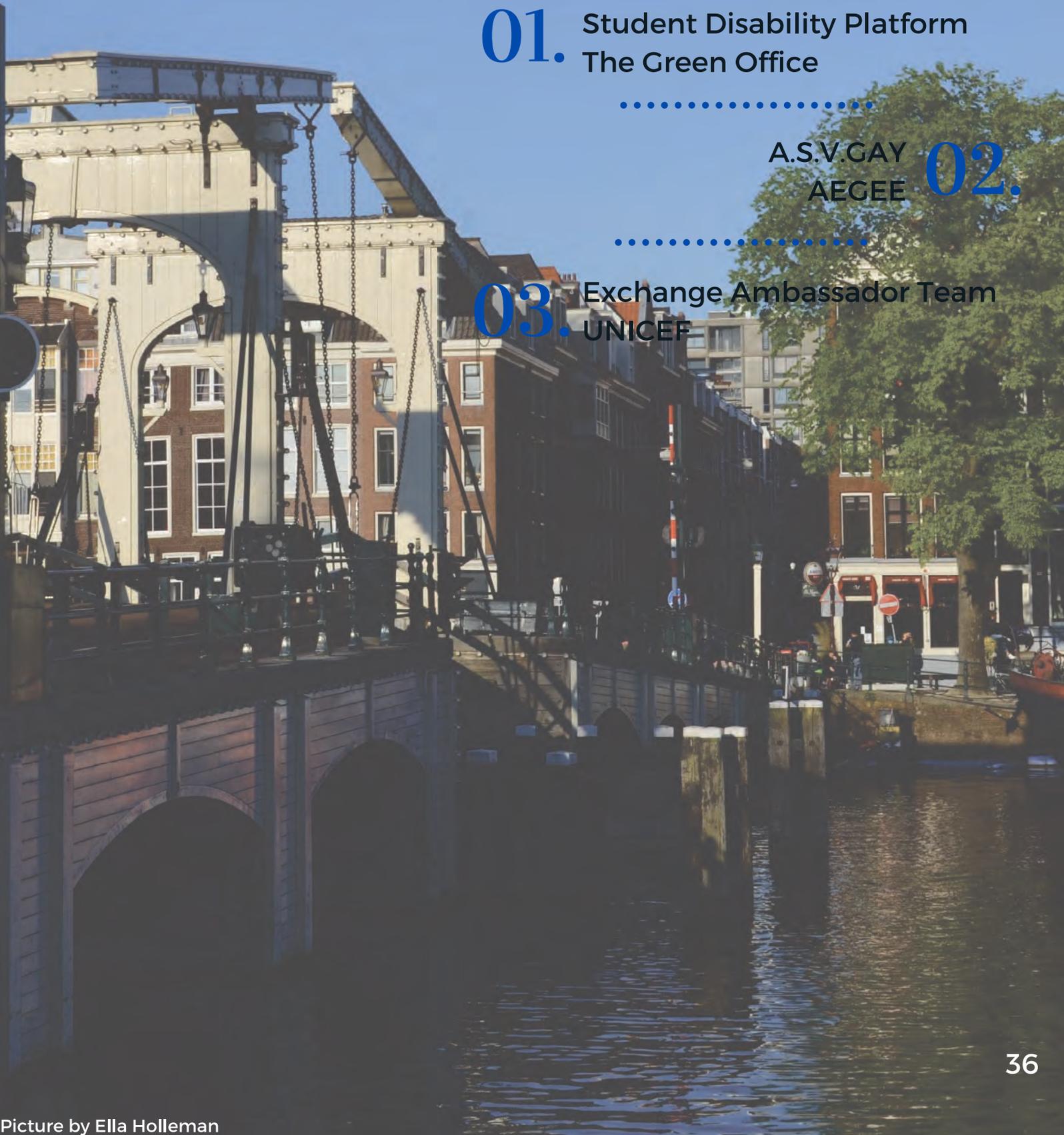


A.S.V.GAY
AEGEE

02.



03. Exchange Ambassador Team
UNICEF



STUDENT DISABILITY PLATFORM

The Student Disability Platform is committed to making sure every student who is coping with a disability nevertheless gets a chance to make the most out of their studies and student life. Our goal is to create awareness and visibility within the UvA concerning studying with a disability. The platform ensures contact with fellow students and with lecturers, absence during the program, accessibility of the buildings, et cetera. We feel that for every (prospective) student, studying should be as obstacle-free as possible, and the platform is aiming for an accessible UvA!



 @uvadisability
 studentdisability@uva.nl

THE GREEN OFFICE



The Green Office is a student initiative with the goal to make the University of Amsterdam a greener place. In order to complete their mission, the Green Office launches projects that help UvA and its students to become more sustainable and environmentally friendly. As a result of the Covid-19 regulations, the Green Office had to cancel all in-person events. However, the Green Office Team put a great effort and managed to create an online environment in which their projects can still take place! For example, to promote a more environmentally friendly lifestyle, the Green Office even offers interactive projects online. One of those projects was the 21 Day Sustainability Challenge: For three weeks the Green Office challenged students to make simple life changes that greatly reduce environmental impact and waste production, such as changing to a vegetarian or vegan diet, buying sustainable or second-hand clothing and composting kitchen waste. Besides these fun and meaningful projects, the Green Office also offers Green Talks (lectures, interviews and debates), and their own podcast in which different environment-related documentaries are discussed. You can find all this on their blog, Instagram and Youtube channel, and of course their website. In order to stay updated on the environmental crisis and ideas for climate action, join the UvA Green Office!

 @uvagreenoffice
 Green Office Online



@asvgay 
 ASV Gay 

AEGEE

AEGEE-Amsterdam is a fun student association with approximately 500 members. We don't have hazing and all activities we organize are without obligation! We are active within Amsterdam as well as in Europe and therefore have many trips, exchanges or member weekends. Becoming a member at AEGEE means cozy weekly drinks, adventurous hitchhiking competitions, a spectacular ski trip, various parties, interesting exchanges, a chic gala and much more! AEGEE-Europe consists of approximately 170 university cities in 40 countries, also known as locals, with a total of 11,000 affiliated students. For this reason, we regularly visit cities such as Budapest, Riga, Krakow or Barcelona. You can also go on a cheap summer vacation during a Summer University. Even in times of corona, AEGEE continues, with online pub quizzes, movie nights, virtual museum outings, game evenings and online drinks!

A.S.V.Gay is the student association for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer students. With over 300 members, A.S.V.Gay is one of the larger social associations in Amsterdam and also the largest LGBTQ+ student association in the country! We have our weekly 'borrels' on Wednesdays and have all sorts of other activities all year round, such as parties, discussion evenings, and games. Do you want to find a safe space in Amsterdam where you can truly be yourself? Do you want to meet other LGBTQ+ people? And do you want to have a lot of fun? Then join A.S.V.Gay!



 @aegeeamsterdam

 office@aegee-amsterdam.nl



EXCHANGE AMBASSADOR TEAM

The Exchange Ambassador team consists of (ex-)students, both from the UvA and partner universities, that want to make sure that future exchange students, both inbound and outbound, will have as good of a time as they did on their own exchange. Overall, the team promotes exchange and acts as a port of call if students have questions about the different destinations, the selection process, how to prepare for exchange, you name it. Also, we post inspiring stories on the UvA Global's Instagram page, and we created this very magazine! Do you also wish to promote equity in mobility, celebrate cultural diversity and inspire other students with your exchange experience? Join the UvA Exchange Ambassador team!

 global@uva.nl

 [@uvaglobal](https://www.instagram.com/uvaglobal)

 [Study Abroad Experience](#)

BY ELLA HOLLEMAN

Have a look at our "meet the team" page at the end!



Picture by Ella Holleman

UNICEF STUDENT TEAM

UNICEF is an international organisation working in more than 190 countries and territories across the globe. The organisation is involved in saving children's lives, safeguard and defend their rights, but also inclusion, education, gender equality, life-saving aid in emergency zones, and long-term assistance. The UNICEF student team of Amsterdam is a group of enthusiastic students passionate about human rights and children rights issues! This year, our main project is 'Mamans Lumières': a project to tackle malnutrition in Burundi. We raise awareness by hosting talks, debates, panel discussions or movie-nights. If you are passionate about such issues and want to do something meaningful in your spare time, feel free to join us or to come to our events! The community/family we create is the best part of this association!

 [@unicef_amsterdam](https://www.instagram.com/unicef_amsterdam)

 [UNICEF Student Team Amsterdam](#)





LINA GROSSE-SCHÖNEPAUCK
LONDON, ENGLAND



CARMEN VEENKER
SOKCHO, SOUTH KOREA



MEET THE TEAM



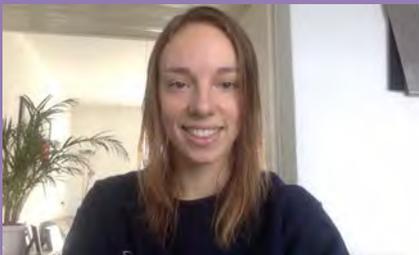
Bram van den Berg
Exchange to Charles
University, Prague, Czech



Emma van den Aakster
Exchange to New York
University, NYC, USA



Ella Holleman
Exchange to University of
New South Wales, Sydney,
Australia



Louise de Maat
Exchange to Anglo-American
University, Prague, Czech



Carmen Veenker
Exchange to Yonsei
University, Seoul, South Korea



Lina Große-Schönepauck
Exchange to University of
Edinburgh, Scotland



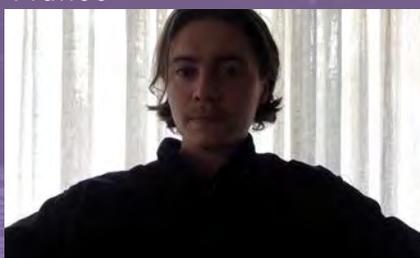
Jelle Spanjaardt
Exchange to Paris-1
Panthéon-Sorbonne, Paris,
France



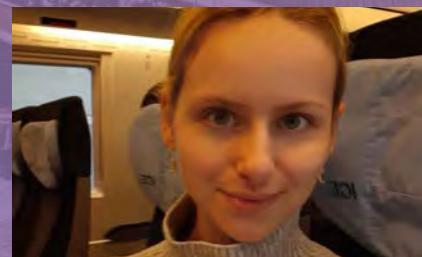
Huub Diepens
Exchange to Wilfrid Laurier
University, Waterloo, Canada



Iris Verbrugge
Exchange to Universidad
Torcuato di Tella, Buenos
Aires, Argentina



Floris Westerhof
Exchange to Universität Wien,
Vienna, Austria



Vivien Schübler
Exchange to University of
Cape Town, South Africa



Iris Koster
Exchange to University
College Dublin, Ireland



Abdel Haddou
Exchange to Universidade de
Lisboa, Lisboa, Portugal



Liselotte Tieman
Exchange to Baruch College,
NYC, USA



Nikki Strooband
Exchange to Uppsala
University, Sweden

CONCLUSION

TO AWAKE ALONE IN A STRANGE TOWN IS ONE OF THE PLEASANTEST SENSATIONS IN THE WORLD

- FREYA STARK

That is it for us! We hope you had as much fun reading the magazine as we did making it. Please go to our Instagram and tell us what you thought of this edition of the Exchange Express! Did we forget anything? Do you have tips for the next edition? Or do you simply want to ask a question?

Find us here!



@uvaglobal



global@uva.nl