



Visa Information

Israeli citizens who wish to study in the Netherlands for a period greater than three months have to get:

- 1) A student visa - passport stamped and valid for 3 months.
- 2) Residence permit - You get it in the municipality after your arrival, it is normally valid until the end of the studies (not necessary).

The cost is about € 430 and you can get a refund from the University for about € 215. The University helps to care for them both so it's not too complicated. It involves a bit of running around, for example going to the bank and the embassy, and therefore, I recommend dealing with it long enough in advance.

Housing

I lived in a temporary rent for two weeks and then moved to the Stadswonen International House (see ahead). Stadswonen is an organization that keeps many houses around the city dedicated for students. Bottom line I recommend on using their service.

Advantages:

1. You can arrange everything from Israel, and when you arrive there, you have a room, with all what you need (Internet, furniture, etc).
2. The "Stadswonen International House" is 15 minutes' walk from the university
3. Many international students, including many from the exchange group live there.

Frequent student parties on the top floor terrace.

Disadvantages:

1. You do not know who will share apartment with you. You just know it will be another student from the same gender.
2. Expensive - 600 Euro per month (for a room in a shared apartment, no living room). The charge is on full months only, so if semester begins 20/January, you are still required to pay full month. You have no door key, but a badge, so almost everyone get locked out few times. You need to pay 10 Euro for "Door opening service", and you might need to wait long hours for him. In addition they can give you fines. You have to transfer a one month deposit, which, I did not receive fully back.
3. The furniture are very basic, the bed is a single bed (80cm width).

Living expenses

It varies, depending on life style.

My expenses per month:

Rent: 600 Euros

Food: 300 Euros

General 300 Euros

(Tram, Cell phone, going out, shopping)

Trips –3000 Euros total

(London, Paris, Brussels, Germany, Israel (Passover))

Total: about 8000 Euros for the whole semester.

Transportation

Transportation within The Netherlands is very easy; there are direct trains from the Schiphol international airport to about everywhere. A one way ticket to Rotterdam costs about 13euro. Inside Rotterdam people travel by foot, bicycle, tram or metro, depending on the distance, weather and costs. People living in the Erasmus International House (EIS) will find line 21 of the tram the most helpful, it runs frequently between the Rotterdam Central (the main train station) and the International house (tip: you can save a cab on your first visit by taking the 21 tram to “De Esch” and get off at a station called Avenue Concordia). This tram travels through the main attractions of the city, goes near the EIS, and the Erasmus University (it also has two supermarkets and a pharmacy on its route). Tram Travel costs 2.5euro for one hour of travel, or (the cheaper option) 1-2 euro depending on the distance if you travel with a pre-charged card. There is an even cheaper option – getting the card for locals, but it requires a Dutch bank account, filling forms, and waiting few weeks for the card. I chose not to go through the process. Line 7 of the tram also reaches the Erasmus University, but a daily use of the tram can increase costs, I mostly walked from the EIS to the university which takes about 15 minutes. I didn’t find the Rotterdam underground very helpful because it wasn’t in my daily routes, but it is a very good system and you can use the same card that you use for the trams. Actually you can use that card in Amsterdam’s transportation and even in national trains, however, I preferred not to since the card uses a check-in\check-out system, so if you forget to check-out from a tram\train you get the maximum charge which in a tram is only 4 Euros, but in a train can reach 20 Euros.

Courses

The courses are demanding. Reading the course material is not optional. The class discusses it, and you will find it totally redundant to be in class unless you read it. In addition it appears in the exam. I had to do the re-sit exam because I thought coming to class, and reading the abstracts of the papers will be enough. IBP - The university is famous for the "International Business Project", where a team of students give consulting services to a company. I found this project to be bad decision, and I recommend NOT taking it. It involves a lot of work, most of it not teaching you much. The company you will get is probably a small/medium business. You do not choose your team, and you might get not what you wish for. The other courses I took were very good, and I enjoyed them very much. A lot of team homework is required in the different courses.

General Experience

I had an amazing time in the exchange program. It was different from what I expected, and was very good. I regret taking the IBP which requires a lot of time, and gave me very few lessons instead of travelling more. I travelled once a month, while it is possible to travel almost every weekend. I chose Rotterdam because of the ranking of RSM. It is indeed a good university, however, I would recommend choosing better location (such as Amsterdam).

I highly enjoyed it.

Tips

1. Do not use Lebara if you are heavy cell phone user - use one of the bigger providers.
2. Very good and cheap shopping of cloth at "Primark"
3. Go to the integration trip ! It is the basis of making friends within the Exchange group.

For any questions, feel free to call me. Ohad. 058-5553455.