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**Degree Program at TAU:** MBA

**Host University:** FGV – EAESP

**Exchange term:** 5 months (Fall semester)

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### General Experience

While on exchange, exchange students benefit from unique life experiences which they might not have had in their native countries. In other terms, exchange program is eternally awesome! It is truly a worthwhile life experience, both academically and on a personal level. Everything is new, language culture social norms. But I can testify that while abroad for 6 months, I have learned countless life lessons that will be useful for all my life.

I have chosen Brazil because of its people. In Israel, I have heard so much about their sympathy, open mind and kindness that I wanted to try. Also, as a European, I wanted to go somewhere more exotic. I have no regret in having chosen this destination. Brazilians are incredible, friendly and are always trying to help you their best. The country itself has amazing landscape and scenery to offer. The overall experience was mind blowing!

In addition, as Israelis, we have an important duty while abroad that is to represent our country in the best way. Throughout my 2 experiences abroad, I always tried to spread the best about Israel. Fortunately, in Brazil people were very open to discussion and always tried to know more about our culture and country.

### Overview

I literally fell in love with the city. Sao Paulo is a huge city in which you can find anything at any time. At first, it was hard to adapt to the city due in part to its immense size. It took time to understand the system and to meet people but once it was done, I felt home.

In term of social and cultural life, Sao Paulo is incredible. The art scene is huge. Food is very diversified and delicious. The nightlife is Intense! To resume, you can't be bored in a city like Sao Paulo.

Also, as business students, Sao Paulo seems a good choice as it is the business center of Brazil. Moreover, FGV Sao Paulo is among the best schools in South America.

## **Safety**

It is true that Brazil is not the safest country, even more for Israelis that are used to a certain freedom in their home country. Like everywhere, you must be careful. Try to avoid wearing jewelry or branded clothes. Also, always be alert and never walk alone late at night. Other than that, there is nothing to be scared about. Act like a Brazilian and nothing will happen. By following some rule of conduct, I did not feel insecure and did not encounter any issue. It was way less dangerous than expected. Let's say that media likes to extrapolate the reality.

## **Transportation**

Metro and bus lines work very well. Both are safe means of transportation. I would recommend downloading the application such as Movit that contains all information concerning buses time. It is very helpful. Also, as students, you are entitled to a discount in the price of the bus card.

Also, Uber is a very good option as it is very cheap in Sao Paulo. Every students was using it extensively.

## **Neighborhood**

Here is the list of the neighborhood around FGV:

- Bela Vista – this is the area where the school is located. You can find a nice apartment for a good price. I liked this area as it is considered as safe. Also, it is a dynamic and lively area. However, beware! If you book your apartment in advance without knowing the area, you may find yourself in the “dangerous” area of Bela Vista. I booked an apartment in advance that seemed great and next to school. Once I arrived on site, I felt very unsafe on this specific street. It was very hard to break the deal with the landlord.
- Jardim Paulista – Best area to live in! Obviously it is the most expensive. However, it is very important for foreigners to feel safe in the area we live in. I personally paid the premium as it was too important for me to be able to circulate freely in my area without being scared. I loved it! It was very easy to build a routine there. I would recommend anyone to live there without any hesitation
- Higianopolis – I would not recommend to live there. There is not much to do and it is mostly for family. Also, I did not feel safe in most part of higianopolis.
- Itaim – It is also a good option to live there. It is located a bit further than the other areas from the school. However, it only requires a short bus ride. It is cheaper than Jardim Paulista and it is as good and as safe. I would recommend to live there if you don't mind taking a bus to school.

Feel free to contact me if you need any advice concerning housing. I have some contacts with agencies. Also, I know some apartments for exchange students that offer very good price ☺

## **Cost of living**

Don't be a fool, Brazil is not cheap at all! It is one of the most expensive countries in South America. I planned on a certain budget based on indices found. Obviously, I was way above budget.

The rental price varies between 1500 and 2200, depending on the area. You can find cheaper in further areas but I would not recommend living there. A good option is to live in a República, a huge house with 20 bedrooms. Most of the students living in such a house were very happy about their experience. Also, you will probably live with roommates

Restaurants are cheaper than in Israel. However, groceries are about the same price.

Going out is also expensive. Beers may be cheap, the rest is expensive! Usually, clubs and bars require an entrance fee. Also, a multitude of events are organized throughout the year and some may be very expensive such as Independence day.

Traveling in Brazil is expensive! The issue is that Brazil is huge and requires sometimes to fly from a place to another. And tickets are expensive. I would recommend to plan in advance a traveling budget to avoid being stuck in Sao Paulo during the whole duration of the program. Trust me, you want to be able to see Brazil.

## **Insurance and Health Service**

As an exchange student, you will be required to take an international insurance from your home country beforehand. Don't be cheap and take the best one! We never know what can happen. I personally had an experience in a hospital there and was very happy to be well insured.

Concerning the health system there is nothing to worry about. Hospitals are new and at the top of technology. I felt in very good hands. Health services are great and doctors very skilled.

## **Visa**

Once accepted, you will receive the required forms to go and apply for your Visa. Beware! Brazilian embassy in Israel is slow. Don't wait the last minute to do it. Except for that, the process is very smooth. You will obviously have to pay a Visa fee. It is approximately 500 Shekels.

Also, once in Brazil, you are required to register at the Federal Police. Let's be honest, it is a painful process. Concerning this part, you will get all the necessary information once the semester starts at FGV.

## **FGV – EAESP**

Overall, FGV is a very good school and reputed to be the best one in South America. It offers many opportunities, even for exchange students.

The campus is very small. It consists of 2 buildings. It is tiny compared to TAU! Due to the small size, it is very easy to bond with other students. Also, despite its size, the school contains everything you need. You have several restaurants, cafeterias, a big library, study classes and computer labs. You don't lack anything.

The registration to courses is made in 2 steps. You will first have to register to the system. Few weeks later you will be required to register to the classes. You usually get the classes you chose. If not, you can still send an email to the coordinator and he will do his best to get you in. Anyway, once you are accepted to the program, FGV coordinator will regularly send you mails with explanations of the whole process.

The school offer a welcome week. During 2 days, the coordinator at FGV explains you everything you need to know. I would recommend you participating.

Also, the school can help you find an internship. It is a very valuable experience! I would recommend you getting in contact with the career center once you arrive and see what is possible. In addition, internships are paid! If the internship option does not interest you, you can easily integrate one of the entities on campus. They have tons of them – Consulting club, finance club, investment club, campus newspaper and so on I took part in the ITCP entity in which we were offering consulting services to non profit companies. I could get a glimpse of the Brazilian business way of doing as well as meeting new people

Concerning the classes, some are more demanding than others Don't expect to turn your thumb! I would advice you to complete the maxx

Here is the list of the classes I have taken:

- Strategy in an international Perspective – It is a basic Strategy class If you have already taken strategy in TAU, I would not recommend it. However, the professor is great and it is mostly the study of case studies, which is very interesting
- Leadership and its hidden components – the class is handled in the same way than a workshop I truly believe that each Business student should participate in such class. In addition, the professor is incredible, and truly makes you think about yourself and your career path. Not a hard class
- Entrepreneurship challenge – mostly practical class in which you are required to create a new venture It is very dynamic and interactive between the students and the professor I really liked it It is a demanding class though but I could not say it is hard
- Marketing Analytics – Interesting class in which you learn about some useful key metrics to evaluate the success of a company. Mostly theoretical, I did not learn the knowledge I was looking for
- Internationalization of emerging multinational – Demanding class but very interesting. It explains the several reasons a company wants to go abroad. It mainly consists on case studies and discussion I would recommend it.
- Development and sustainability – Useful to get a preview on sustainability. Demanding class but very interesting teacher
- Brazilian Business law, a comparative approach – Theoretical class giving you all the information necessary if you want to open a new venture in Brazil The teacher is incredible! It is not a simple class but it is not very demanding

**I hope I have covered all the main points and that you will find this file useful to make your choice and hopefully, to organize yourself to go to Brazil! I truly loved my experience and I would recommend it to anyone looking for a lifetime experience. If you need any additional information, feel free to contact me!**