



EXCHANGE REPORT

Name

Andrei Radu

Year and semester for exchange

Fall 2022

Exchange university

Instituto Superior Tecnico de Lisboa

Degree programme

KTH: Transport and Geoinformation Technology

Lisbon: A Vibrant City

Before departure

I chose Lisbon for two main reasons. I had spent a significant amount of time in Brazil a few years prior and thought this would be an amazing opportunity to practice and improve my Portuguese. The second reason was to study in a city with good climate that would allow me to surf and skate during my free time. I decided on IST.

Upon arrival

I arrived in Lisbon a month before my studies to get situated with the city and to enjoy it before studies started. During the first week of September, IST hosted an introduction week to allow the international students to get familiar with the school and to allow students to get to know each other. There was a small fee to join the student association with perks of discounts at the bookstore.

Financials

As I am an international student at KTH I didn't receive any CSN while away. I only received the Erasmus scholarship which in some cases should cover all your rent for the month. Generally, Lisbon is significantly cheaper than Stockholm. Food at the student canteen can be as little as 2.80 euros for a full meal to as much as 7 euros. My tip to save money would be to eat at the canteen in the mathematics building. 2.80 for a soup a main dish and desert can't be beat. A lot of times that is much cheaper than buying groceries and making your own food. Also living in an area close to the nightlife in Cais or Bairro Alto or Intendente will save you money on Ubers (though they weren't too expensive).

Accommodation

Finding accommodation can be a difficult process. I would recommend looking on olx.pt. This is a spot where more locals are on. Try and look as early as possible. Housing can be expensive upwards of 500 euros a month for a room in a shared flat. I got very lucky with my housing. I got a spot in a student dorm at Residência de Estudantes Eng.^o Duarte Pacheco. It was 230 euros a month. Be on top of your emails as they send an application a month or two before you arrive with very limited spaces, on a first come first serve basis. The residence was far from the city and I wanted an Erasmus experience closer to the heart of the City. I made a friend my first week in Lisbon and he let me know that a room was opening up in his flat. In October I moved to the flat which was centrally located, approximately 8 minutes from Baixa Chiado, Bairro Alto, and Cais do Sodre. I was only spending 270 euros a month on rent, but this was the cheapest out of all my friends. Be aware in the winter months it can get cold at night in Lisbon and many places are old and do not have central heating! Areas that I recommend to live are Cais do Sodre, Santos, Arroios, Anjos, Intendente, Martim Moniz, and Marques to Pombal.

University and studies

The facilities at the school (Tecnico) are quite old, and many classrooms have no power outlets. Classes can also be disorganized. However, there are many Erasmus students in attendance, and a free language class is offered at night for those interested in improving their Portuguese. I took the B1 class as this was one of the main reasons why I chose Portugal.

All the masters courses are in English so if you are in your bachelors and taking bachelor level courses, there may be an issue. I had Fridays off and classes generally only lasted 2 hours with a laboratory component of 2 hours. The semester is broke into periods. You might have classes that are intensive for one period and some that span the whole semester.

Courses

Essentially all the courses I took at Tecnico will be used as my elective courses as part of my degree even though some are directly transferable. The courses I took were: Machine Learning, Road Traffic Engineering, Urban Management and Real Estate Economics, and Urban Planning. I would recommend the Road Traffic Engineering class it was taught well and the workload was very manageable. I wouldn't recommend the Urban Planning class as it spanned the whole semester and was a very significant amount of work for only 6 credits! The Urban Management class was very good with a very practical cases study class project. Generally I found the university much more difficult than at KTH mainly due to the teaching style and organization.

City and country

Lisbon is a such a beautiful, international city that offers a unique and vibrant culture. The city is always so lively. Be ready to have some very late nights when you go out there! There are plenty of things to do and see. Getting around the city is best done by metro, as buses are often crowded and unreliable, I always tried to avoid busses. The architecture is stunning, and there are plenty of places to see. My favourite places to hangout at were Eduardo 7 Park and Senhora do Monte Miradouro. There weren't any significant culture shocks when I arrived, mainly I was surprised how relaxed the city is. Every is always hanging out on the street drinking beers and having a good time. At no point did I feel unsafe or uneasy. Lisbon is a very safe city. For those interested in traveling, there are many destinations worth exploring outside of Lisbon. These include Porto, Peniche, Algarve, Milfontes, Madeira, Azores, Nazare, and Coimbra. The south of Spain, including Sevilla, is also easily accessible with a 20 euro bus ticket from Oriente.

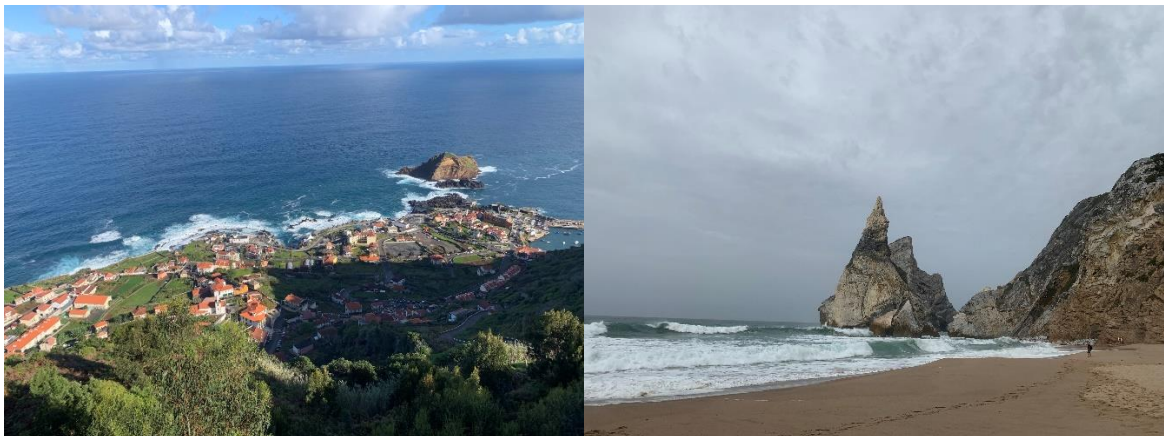
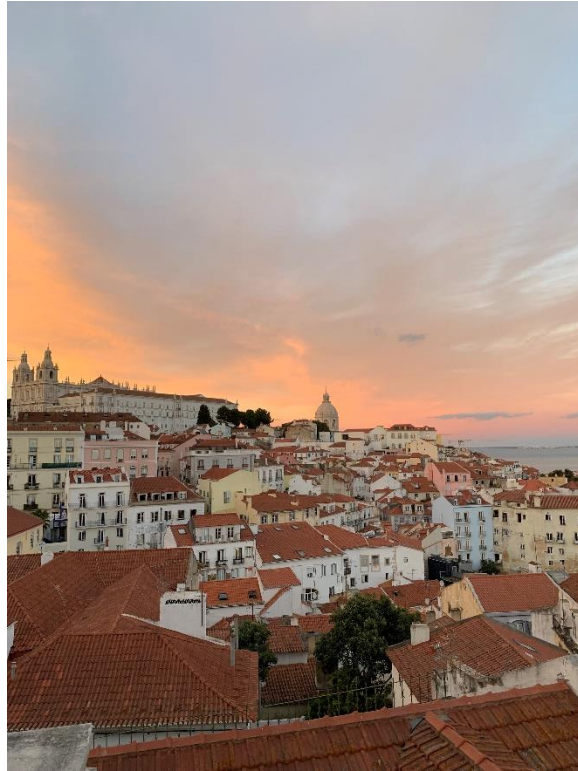


Photo from Madeira (left) and Praia da Ursa (right)



Looking into Alfama

Leisure and social activities

The vast majority of my spare time was spent skateboarding in the city. There are so many cool spots to explore. Everyone was so welcoming, and I made a really nice community through skateboarding there! The surfing is also amazing in Lisbon. The most popular beach is Carcavelos where you will definitely be fighting for waves. For a more relaxed surf session I recommend Costa da Caparica. The most beautiful beach around Lisbon was Praia da Ursa. I also recommend the beach in Setubal where you can also enjoy some choco frito.

Sustainability

Unfortunately I couldn't travel the most sustainably to Lisbon as I was travelling in Italy before and didn't want to spend 20 hours on a train to get to Portugal. I think Portugal still has a lot to work on in terms of sustainability. All the garbage is put in the same bin without any separating. The school didn't really encourage sustainability as the campus can be thought of as a big parking lot where professors come and drive to school when there are other means of transport available.

Other recommendations and observations

I recommend getting out of your comfort zone when on Erasmus. Try and make friends with people who aren't from your country or region. It's nice to meet people of different cultures and mindsets. You will not be disappointed with Lisbon as your Erasmus spot. The vibe of the city, affordability, and weather will have you wondering if you want to extend your Erasmus for a full year! Lisbon is definitely one of the most unique cities in Europe.