

**Exchange university**

Kungliga Tekniska Högskolan

Degree programme

Master of Science Real Estate and Construction Management

Erasmus in the very Southwest of Europe

Before departure

In April, several months before my arrival in September, I began the process of planning my exchange journey to Lisbon. As a German citizen, the lack of visa requirements simplified the initial preparations, allowing me to focus on securing accommodation and selecting courses at Instituto Superior Técnico (IST). With a keen eye on ensuring a comfortable living arrangement, I looked for recommendations early, aiming to secure a desirable place to call home in Lisbon's bustling streets.

Upon arrival

Arriving well-prepared ahead of the academic term, I immediately immersed myself in Lisbon's culture and IST's community. Moving into a new apartment close to the lively neighbourhood of Barrio Alto provided an exciting introduction to city living, offering proximity to IST and offering opportunities for exploration of the city.

Meeting fellow Erasmus students and exploring the southern European culture further enriched my experience, as we navigated the charming streets of Lisbon together, trying local cuisine, and diving ourselves in the city's rich history and traditions.

Financials

Thanks to an Erasmus Plus scholarship from KTH, I was able to manage my finances comfortably during my exchange. With 600 Euros allocated for accommodation, I secured a room in a shared apartment with three other students, ensuring both affordability and companionship.

Meals in restaurants ranged from 10 to 15 Euros per dish, with the option of delicious meals at local eateries for as little as 8 Euros. Beverages were also reasonably priced, with beer typically costing between 3 to 5 Euros and cocktails ranging from 5 to 12 Euros.

For transportation, a monthly metro card cost approximately 30 Euros, providing convenient access to all corners of the city and facilitating exploration beyond the touristy areas.

Accommodation

I settled into a cozy apartment located close to Barrio Alto, sharing the space with three other students. The apartment featured one bathroom and one kitchen, providing space for communal living. Its central location in the city afforded easy access to IST via the public transport metro green line, with a commute of approximately 20 to 25 minutes. I found my apartment on <https://inlifehousing.com>.

Living in close proximity to the bar area of Barrio Alto was a highlight of my experience, with an abundance of restaurants and cultural attractions right at our doorstep. However, I would highly recommend choosing a living location slightly south or north of Barrio Alto, such as Principe Real, to avoid the noise disturbances often associated with the lively nightlife scene in the area.

University and studies

IST's esteemed reputation as a leading technical university in Portugal offered a diverse range of engineering disciplines, enriching my academic journey beyond my specialization at KTH. Engaging with professors and fellow students broadened my perspectives and deepened my understanding of the field.

Courses

Enrolling in courses tailored to my interests in real estate management, I delved into a diverse array of subjects, including "Urban Planning", "Real Estate Economics", and "Construction Planning and Control". The interdisciplinary nature of the curriculum at IST broadened my perspectives, offering unique insights into the Portuguese real estate landscape and enhancing my academic journey.

Additionally, participating in the course "Product Development and Entrepreneurship" provided me with valuable skills in developing and pitching products to investors. This hands-on experience complemented my studies and offered practical insights into entrepreneurship and innovation in the real estate industry. Please consider a high workload with hand ins and presentations every week.

City and country

Portugal got my heart since I first travelled to the Algarve 2017. After that I returned three times, always falling more in love with the people and the country. Lisbon's charm and rich cultural heritage provided an unforgettable experience for my exchange. Watch out to avoid certain areas like Martim Moniz. Even though it seems quite central, and rents are usually lower there, tourists and foreign people aren't safe there, especially during night. Also tourists/ foreign people often become targeted by pick pocketers and robberies. After 2am its safer to take Bolts/Ubbers, even if it only seems like a 15 min walk away. Good thing: Bolts are quite cheap!

Leisure and social activities

In my leisure time, I took advantage of the activities that Lisbon and its surroundings had to offer. Whether it was spending lazy days at Carcavelos or Caparica beach, surfing, playing beach volleyball, or simply soaking up the sun, I found happiness in the beauty of the Portuguese coastline.

Back in the city, playing paddle at Técnico provided a fun and affordable way to stay active and socialize with friends, with sessions priced at a mere 5 Euros per person for 1.5 hours.

Evenings were often spent dining with friends, watching sunsets at one of Lisbon's many miradouros (viewpoints), or exploring the city's bustling nightlife scene. Whether it was trying delicious Portuguese cuisine, enjoying drinks at a local bar, or strolling through the charming streets of Lisbon, each moment was filled with excitement and discovery.

Other recommendations and observations

When possible, take trips down to the Algarve region or venture to Madeira for breath taking hiking adventures. Additionally, consider exploring nearby Morocco, as it's just a short distance away and offers a fascinating cultural experience.