VALENcia 2018

I will start by saying that this has been one of the, if not the best, experience of my life so far. Moving to a new country and starting a “new life” is exciting.

I chose Valencia because I knew I wanted to move to a spanish speaking country in Europe, and Valencia was the only university that I could attend studying my program and I am so grateful for that.

Gandia
The first thing anyone going to Valencia for an Erasmus Exchange should know and consider is the two week spanish intensive course with welcome activities in Gandia. Gandia is a city about 1 hour away with train and has a lovely beach close to the university. The sign up for this course is available on their website and does have a fee. It cost about 300 Euros but it is absolutely worth it!

During these two first weeks you will get to know other exchange students going to Valencia so when you start the semester you will already have a group of friends. Every day there consists of 4 hours of spanish class and later in the day there are activities and parties to socialize and get to know one another. You will also get some free afternoons to go to Valencia and look at apartments. These two weeks were a really good way to start the semester abroad.

Accomodation
The majority of the students, both exchange and the locals rent a room in a shared apartment with other students. Some people chose to book their rooms online in advance while others fix their rooms during the first two weeks. It is recommended to actually visit the apartments and not only trust pictures you see online. The prices can range from 225 to 500 Euros or more per month.

The majority of the students live around the big avenue Blasco Ibañez. It’s a quite long avenue that stretches almost all the way from the beach to the upper part of the river. Some students choose to live in the Benimaclet area or in the city center. If you choose to live there you will probably have to take public transport to school. I choose to live on Blasco Ibañez about a ten minute walk to the university.

The University
The University of Valencia is big and the campus is absolutely beautiful. There are sport facilities including a swimming pool, several tennis courts, a wall for climbing, a gym, volleyball fields, track fields and a huge football field (to name a few).

The faculty of Caminos Canales y Puertos is the one I belonged to but I was able to apply to courses in other faculties without any trouble. The people in charge of the faculty and the
exchange students are really helpful and do everything they can to help the students to make sure that everything goes smoothly. There are many courses in english and the teachers I had spoke english really well so that was not a problem at all.

**Schedule**
One thing that I missed was that the schedules for the classes are actually available months in advance on the website of the faculty that provides that course. Knowing that, I could have planned and seen if the schedules of my courses was going to work or if there would be any overlaps but everything turned out fine anyways. Depending on what courses and from what year they are they could be morning classes starting at 8 am, or afternoon classes starting at 3 pm or even as late as 7 pm. Starting at 7 pm and ending at 9 pm was something that was quite new and unusual compared to my classes in sweden.

**The Beach and the parties**
The beach is really wide and really long. It is a great place to just relax or even study a little. The clubs in Valencia are really good and they are open a lot longer than in Sweden. Here they say if you go home before 3 am you have only gone out for dinner. Most clubs are open until 7 in the morning. If you want to enter the clubs for free there is an app called Exceed where you can put your name on the list or buy tickets to different events.

**Happy Erasmus, ESN and Erasmus Life**
These are three organizations that plan trips, events and activities, mainly for erasmus exchange students but they are available for everyone. The most popular trips that these organization organize are the trips to Morocco and to Ibiza. Before booking any trips it is a good idea to read the information to know what to expect.

For the Morocco trip or example, girls have to actively think about what clothes they are going to wear when visiting a country with a very different culture. Alcohol is also not something that is available over there which meant that a lot of people brought their own alcohol for the trip. The Morocco trip included a lot of cities to visit but the whole trip is made by bus which means there are a lot of hours spent in a bus and that toilet visits are limited.

The most popular organization is “Happy Erasmus”. For the Ibiza trip it is best organized by the ESN organization of the university. This trip is really good as it includes free entrances to clubs that are normally really expensive. Another good thing about these trips is the fact that you get to meet other erasmus students from other cities and not only Valencia.

There are also shorter day trips like the ones to Montanejos, Albufera and Peñíscola that are nice places to visit. It is also not too expensive to rent a car with your friends and see these places closer to valencia.
In short if you are considering Valencia, I would highly recommend that you go, you will love it. The city is absolutely beautiful, the food is delicious (and cheap), the people are great and the everyday life is amazing.