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By Bryan

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Preparation for exchange

Looking back at my preparation for exchange, it would have been nice to familiarise oneself with Montréal's transit map. Montréal's Métro system is a big one, which can often be quite confusing sometimes. However, once you take it enough, the system is convenient, and distances between each station is on average much shorter than the Skytrain, makes it easier to get from Point A to Point B with minimal walking (especially for people like me who wishes there were electric walkways on every street).

Packing is something to take seriously when planning to go to Montréal. The weather can be quite shocking for us Vancouverites who enjoy the luxury moderate climate. Montréal tends to get quite hot in the summer and very cold in the winter. So, be sure to pack outfits for all seasons if you plan on doing multiple semesters in Montréal like I did. Your winter jacket will be your best friend when the temperature hits 20 or below during winter. I strongly recommend winter boots and other winter gear as well.

View from my room before and during a snow storm

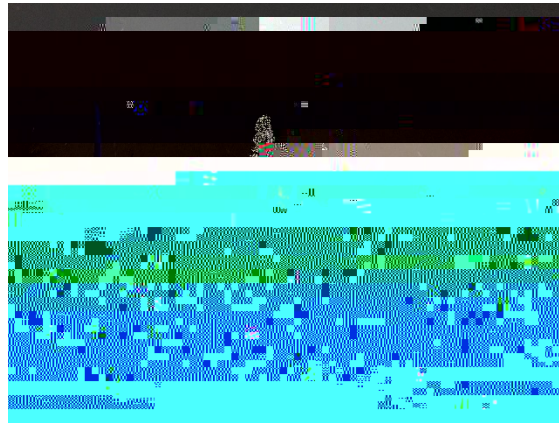
Other pretrip things to take care of is financing and accommodation. Finance wise, it is very important to plan out your budget ahead of time to make sure you have the means to survive. What is good, however, is that because you are still in Canada, your Canadian bank account and credit card

During exchange

I arrived a week before school officially started and was not able to move into my place yet because the lease started on the 1st of September, so I had to stay in a hotel room until my lease began. Orientation was quick. All exchange students were invited to attend a course selection session. I didn't like the way the session was set up since all course selection and changes had to be done through a counsellor and we were not allowed to make changes to courses online. That would be one thing that I found the most frustrating. Some of my friends

room you choose. In my opinion, it is worth the extra money you pay since you get a better experience.

There are a lot of cool places downtown to visit. Winter is a great time to explore if you are ready to brave the cold, although snowstorms can be quite brutal. There is a Christmas market located at Place des Arts around Christmas time with food trucks and other fun displays for spectators to enjoy. Not to mention, you got to witness the internationally mocked Christmas tree that was on display that year. Winter is the time to enjoy all the fun activities planned throughout the city.



The infamous Christmas tree that went viral

If you feel confident enough to conquer Québec drivers and traffic, a road trip to Québec City is also a fun activity to plan with a few friends. Although, I do recommend finding other means of transport if you don't have much experience driving in the snow, especially during a snowstorm. Not to sound like a driver's ed book, but driving in a snowstorm and I found the road visibility to be low and more control of the car was needed especially when manoeuvring through tighter traffic. The trip itself to the city, however, I strongly encourage.



A few battle scars from driving through a snowstorm

Reflection after exchange