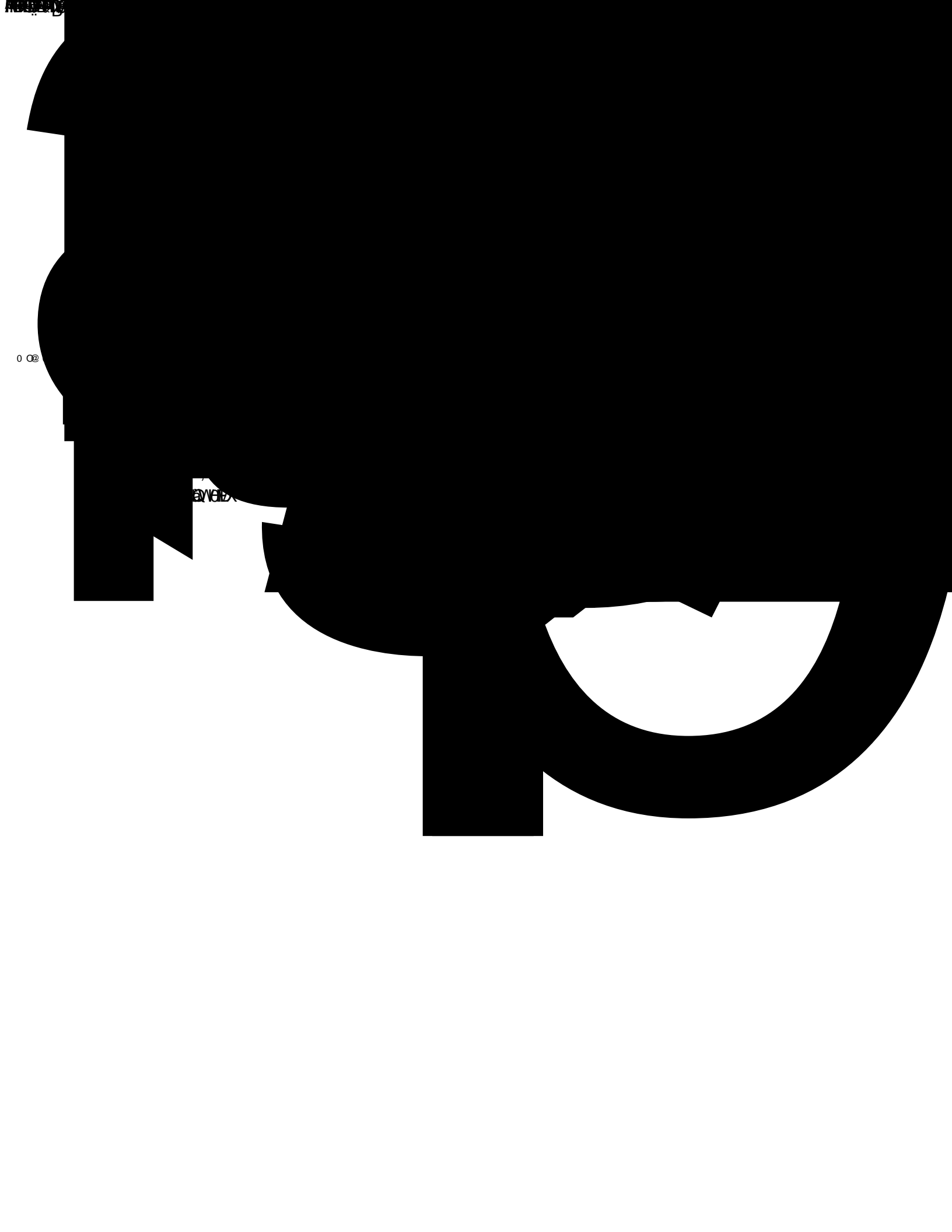


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Financial:

The Netherlands mainly functions on a debit card system. In most grocery stores, credit cards aren't accepted, but for clothing stores such as H&M, it's fine. It's a good idea to have cash on hand when you arrive, until you can open a Dutch bank account. This is also a good idea because you can live like the locals do and avoid unnecessary international charges. Generally speaking, the cost of living is equal to or less than living in Vancouver. Except for rent, groceries are typically cheaper. I spent approximately €25 each trip, and made about 2 trips per week.

During Exchange

Arrival and Orientation:

Once you arrive, you will experience jet lag for sure. I recommend arriving a week before Orientation, which is a week long full of information essential to your stay and study. This means you should arrive two weeks before classes actually start. The first week allows you to rest a day or two after arrival and to unpack. Then you can head over to the IND office to complete the permanent residence procedure. As well as open a bank account and register with the city as well. Not to mention a little exploring of this new city that will be home for the next 6 months. Then the next week you will have orientation, which is very important, not only for information, but also to meet other exchange students!

Accommodation and Living:

I technically was not living in the city of Den Haag, but a city called Voorburg, which is about a 10-12 minute bike ride from the school. (Note: If you live outside the city of Den Haag, when registering, you need to register at the city hall within that residence) Yes, bike ride. I recommend renting or buying a bike and selling it before you return home. Biking in Holland is everything. Carrying groceries back can be difficult, which is why I would make around 2 trips per week. The Dutch love to use their bikes with their hands while carrying their bags! It's also a great way to get around and know the city better. Live like a local! If you do decide to live outside the city, make sure the bike ride is between 10-15 minutes. It sucks to have to go longer in rain, wind or any other kind of inconveniences (Note: living outside the Hague can be cheaper than living in the city, but only if your accommodation was) I also recommend getting a phone card there. It makes contacting friends and family easier.

tutorial). I recommend just doing the readings, because there is little class time, and most of the time, they are mainly related to the exam. It's easy to do well, take advantage!

Country Information:

The Dutch are known for being very direct, and not beat by the bushes or smile politely as you might know us fellow Canadians to be right away. Many people find that weird. I think overall Europe tends to be colder. It comes off as rude sometimes, however, don't take it that way. They just like things straightforward with no misinterpretation. And are indeed, very friendly! Bikes are a way of life, in fact there are more bikes than people in The Netherlands. I was given this information by a local. In my opinion, Amsterdam is good for one time and one time only. It's too overrated and crowded with tourists. I recommend going to Rotterdam, Delft, Gouda, The Hague, and the beaches to check out the Coast. The weather is similar to Vancouver, however more wind for sure and at higher and stronger speeds. One minute it's rainy and cloudy, the next it's blue skies and sunny.

Social & Extracurricular Activities:

The Hague has a huge center filled with many delicious restaurants. TripAdvisor is good for finding good affordable student pricing food. The BeerGarden is a good local pub to go to on Thursdays, as it is free entry, and most students from Uni go there. There are tons of artists, therefore plenty of art museums to see. Van Gogh (Amsterdam), Rembrandt, Escher, and so many others. There are many, many, museums to see... I recommend googling them and checking the site to see which ones might interest you. Also, visit the International Criminal Court, since The Hague is the international city of peace and justice.

Reflection After Exchange

What I Learned & Challenges I Faced:

I tried to learn Dutch, but it is a very, very, very hard language. I would say harder than German, which is something I am learning right now, and I have gotten further with than with Dutch. When one of my teachers told me it took him more than 5 years to properly learn Dutch, I officially gave up. I learned basic mannerisms, like thank you, you're welcome, etc. Yet nothing more. Fortunately in this country, that was not a problem as mentioned before, most everyone speaks English and is willing to help in anyway. One challenge I faced was learning to understand other cultures and their habits. For example, when working in school group projects, there were many international students who have different work ethics and different ways of getting things done. It's important to keep in mind that not everyone will do things the way you do, but just try to adapt and compromise when necessary. Some advice for future students is to be open minded to trying new things and opportunities, because you never know where you will end up. I went for multiple 30+ minute bike rides and discovered another city and some farmlands. I would recommend doing the same thing with the train, I didn't get the cha

much as possible and say yes to everything (most things that seem safe, use your judgment).
Step outside what you might be used to and I can guarantee you won't regret it!

Photos



