

Korea University

Introduction

I am a fourth year business student majoring in Marketing and Human Resources. I went to Korea University in South Korea during the Fall semester of 2014. (September to December).

Preparation for Exchange

There was nothing much to prepare for my trip to Korea. Other than getting a valid visa, which took a week or two to acquire, there was nothing much I took with me other than clothes. Korea has four very distinct seasons unlike Vancouver where it rains almost on a daily basis. From September to October, it was pretty hot. I remember wearing shorts and shirts and wondering why the weather was not chilly as it would have been back in Vancouver. November was cool and in December, it snowed and the temperature dropped drastically. It is a lot colder than Vancouver, and the jackets that I brought from home were not enough so I ended up buying a couple more jackets and coats.

In regards to financial details, it is a lot cheaper to live in Korea than in Vancouver. I ate out almost on a daily basis from breakfast to dinner and bought a lot of miscellaneous such as makeup and clothes and ended up spending around \$4500 during my stay. But of course, buying foreign brands such as Abercrombie & Fitch or Zara is almost double the price. So I suggest buying local brands because they are affordable and are of really good quality.

I brought approximately \$3000 dollars in Canadian and converted in Korea and brought my credit cards as well just in case. (Make sure to notify your bank that you will be abroad though) But I ended up running out of money so I had to wire over money in the duration of my stay. But of course, you can last four months in Korea on half of the money I spent if you are able to put restraint on yourself from buying frivolous things.

During Exchange

Arrival and Orientation

Korea University offered a pick up system. So when I landed at Incheon International Airport, I saw a couple of Korea university students wearing school shirts and holding signs welcoming exchange students. Then they dropped off us at our school and helped us get to our accommodations (I didn't stay on dorm and they were nice enough to take me to my stay off campus)

Accommodation and Living

I was unable to get in to school dorm. It is pretty competitive to stay in school dorm because there were too little rooms to accommodate all exchange students. Even though I registered for dorm and paid my deposit really early, I got an email literally a week before my departure that I wasn't offered a room. But no worries, because

around school, there are so many goshitels which are off campus dorm like accommodations that are generally cheaper than on campus dorms. The goshitel I stayed at was 10 minutes walk to the main campus and business building but only 2 minutes away from the science building. The first and second floor was male only and the third floor was female only. And it is pretty safe in terms of security because in order to get in to the female only floor, there is a password you must input of the door to open. On the floor I stayed at, there were approximately 225 rooms. Some of those rooms are big and have private bathrooms but of course they are more expensive and the prices usually range from 45,000 won and above which is around \$450 per month. My room had a fridge, TV and cost around 27,000 won which is around \$270. But I had to use and share the washroom with the other girls that didn't have their own personal washroom. There was only one shower stall and two toilets and were not as clean as I would like them to. But there are better goshitels around its just that the prices are more expensive.

Academic Details

The course load was a lot easier than SFU. I took 4 business courses and two electives. There were barely any assignments other than one group project that was due at the end of the semester and one midterm and a final. Therefore, I pretty much only studied one week for Midterm and one week for Final and that was it. I didn't expect the course load to be this easy and simple considering Korea University is one of the best universities in Korea.

In regards to lecture format and lecture halls, they were really similar to SFU. Professors had power points and we were expected to print them out because some professors don't let the students from bringing laptops to class. The class consisted of 30-40 students and there were no tutorials. Usually for each class, the class would be held twice a week for one hour per class. I thought that it would be more efficient to have a two hour class on the same day rather than spreading out to two days. The lecture halls are really nice and can't be compared to Beedie school of Business in a sense that there were two business buildings dedicated solely for business students. The buildings are new and clean and have business libraries within those two buildings. As for the grading system for business students was the same as SFU business in a sense that it had curved grading distribution.

Country Information

Korea is such a fast paced and a lively country. There are skyscrapers and buildings everywhere unlike Vancouver where you have to go to Downtown in order to see things like that. Especially around university districts, the places are really developed in a sense that there are so many affordable restaurants, bars and cafés. In regards to cafés, these are no regular places where you go to drink coffee. There are animal cafés where you can pet animals such as cats, dogs, sheep or game rooms where you can play Wii or PlayStation. There are places for everyone.

Korea University is located in the heart of Seoul. It is located in close proximity to all the famous and fun places. For instance, to shop, I recommend Myeongdong and

Garosugil, which is only 20 minute away by using the subway. Or if you miss home and want to get some authentic foreign food or even clothes, I recommend going to Itaewon, which is only 15 minute away. (It is a place where a lot of foreigners live) Or you can even go to Gangnam to experience some great nightlife since that is where most young adults such as university students go to chill and have fun. All the major cities and places are in such close proximity!

Reflection after exchange

It was my first time living away from home and it was challenging to live by myself at first, especially without the help from anyone considering I didn't know much of

Typical Korean street food

Busan- aka Marine city

At Jeongdongjin

Chinatown