

When I told my friends I was going to exchange to Seoul, South Korea, they all asked me the same question: why? For most of the people, Europe may be their first choice when they choose a school to exchange. However, South Korea always has a special charm that attracts me, and I did not regret my choice. As a student majoring in International Studies, I chose Yonsei University in Seoul, South Korea as my first choice to exchange, and spent a wonderful semester there from September 2015 to December 2015.

The thought of going to exchange and living in a whole different country already excited me in the summer. For most of my friends, the most exciting but also the most worrying part might be the thought to survive by themselves oversea. Leaving their parents for the first time is a scary thing to think of.

“How am I going to survive? Will I be so homesick that make me not enjoy my trip at all?” However, as long as you start to plan for your exchange, you will find yourself having no time to worry, as there is so much to do in Korea and you are already too excited about the things that you are going to see.

My planning started with exploring things to do and eat in Seoul and in other cities in South Korea. When looking for information about tourist spots, I found the website “VisitKorea” very useful. It not only introduces attractions, travelling information, transportation and accommodations, but also includes music, food and popular shopping locations. The website of the Consulate General of the Republic of Korea in Vancouver will help you prepare for your application for student visa. An event that I found very helpful was the nomination section held by exchange advisors from SFU. The information section gave out a lot of guidelines about preparing for exchange, such as document required to submit, things

After looking at exchange questionnaires and exchange reports from former students that went to South Korea, I started to pack and book my air ticket. As I went to Korea in the fall, it was summer for the first half of the semester and winter for the

second half. I only brought summer clothing as I knew I could buy winter clothing there. The winter in Seoul was colder than the winter in Vancouver, so I knew my winter jacket would not be enough. Also, there are a lot of choices of clothes in Korea, so I really recommend bringing few summer clothes and buy the rest there. For travel and transportation, I booked my air ticket right after I received my acceptance letter from Yonsei. There is direct flight from Vancouver to Incheon (the city where the airport is located), and there are some choices to go to Yonsei from the airport. Direct bus takes about an hour and costs about \$10, subway is cheaper but you will need to carry your luggage for a long walk and change the subway line for several times. Taxi is another option if you are travelling with big luggage and you know someone who can share the fees with you as it is quite costly to take the taxi. For financial details, opening a bank account in Korea is easy as Yonsei has a bank on campus and is experienced in opening bank accounts for exchange students. You will get a debit card, and ATM is everywhere. Street food and fashion stores only accept cash for most of them, restaurants usually accept debit cards and department stores will accept foreign credit cards. The cost of living is overall cheaper than Vancouver. Food is definitely cheaper by half, transportation is cheap, and the cost for entertainment is also cheaper. Clothes, shoes, cosmetics and other goods will depend on where you are buying them. Clothes in department stores is usually expensive, but they often have sale events and things tend to be cheaper. Products from local cosmetic stores are cheap but the quality is acceptable.

Yonsei provides on-campus housing for exchange students, but the space is limited. The facilities in the dorm were in good quality, and the location was convenient. The dorm was about 10 minute walk from the main campus, and there were restaurants and convenient stores located in the dorm. There were bus stops located about 2 minute walk from the dorm, and the bus there can take you to any part of Seoul. No need to worry if there is

no space in the dorm, Yonsei will provide information on off-campus housing. For academic details, the lecture format, schedules and grading were similar with SFU, but Yonsei took attendance for every class.

There was a lot to do in South Korea. One of the biggest events in the