

NEOMA BUSINESS SCHOOL

In fall 2013, Supapit and I had a chance to be exchange students at NEOMA Business School in Rouen, France. It was a great opportunity for us to get to know new people and learn about new cultures from various countries, especially France.

We first arrived at Paris Airport (CDG) in mid-August 2013 and stayed at a hotel that we booked 1-2 months in advance because it was much cheaper to do so. When we arrived in Paris, we could only buy a pre-paid sim card from a shop (SFR). The pre-paid sim card was used before we got a French bank account, which we had to apply when we first arrived in Rouen. Once we got a bank account (BNP Paribas), we could then buy a post-paid sim card that provided us more Internet connection (3GB) at the same price (19.99 Euros per month). The monthly fees would also be charged directly from the bank account, so it was very convenient.

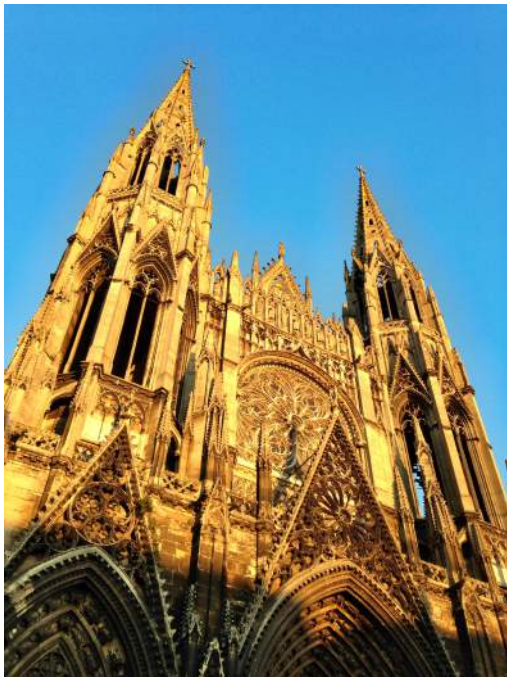


Before we departed for France, we had to prepare important things as well as necessary documents for our arrival. Neoma business school gave us a list including all documents that we had to use to open a bank account, apply for bus cards, and many more. At first, we brought a lot of passport copies and always kept one in our wallets instead of carrying around the real ones. After we stayed in the school for a while, we learnt that we could actually make copies and print for free in school.

One of the most important things about living in France was to take our own safety into extra consideration. We can say that there were so many robberies in France due to the economy instability. As a solution, we were great at bring aware of our surroundings both in Paris and in Rouen. It would be better not to use an iPhone and carry a lot of cash while travelling in Metro.



For study, we had to check the add-drop and withdrawal period. The school informed us on the orientation day. It was possible to do the add/drop within the first 1-2 weeks and withdraw around 2-3 weeks after the semester began. We could not withdraw after the period and there was no “W” in the transcript. The subject withdrawn would not be in the transcript at all. We could check the weekly timetable on <http://myfirst.rouenbs.fr/> > timetable. It is also possible to download the handouts from this website (then click at “Moodle”)



Rouen is one little peaceful city located in Normandy, France. From Paris to Rouen, it would take around an hour by train. It is also considered as one of must-go destinations in France due to its uniqueness of the architecture. As for us, we stayed in an on-campus residence on *Mont Saint Aignan*, which was a 15-minute bus ride from the city center. In order to get to the school, it would take around 10-15 minutes of walking. Most of the time, we took buses no. 4 and 8 to get around the city. We would go to *Carrefour* for grocery shopping. In order to get there we had to take bus no.4 heading to the last stop (*La Vatine*), which takes around 10 minutes bus ride from the residence (*La Varenne*).

Mont Saint Aignan is quite a pleasant neighborhood. The surroundings are mostly educational institutions, followed by residences and a few convenient stores. *Place Colbert* is the name of the shopping area where banks, bakery shops, and cafés are located. The downside is that these shops closed around 5-6pm, and after that the neighborhood would be completely quiet. Our suggestion is that you should enjoy home-cooked meals or dine in the city center instead.

Rouen offers you quite a variety of cuisine. There are French, Italian, Chinese, Korean, or even Indian cuisines, located just in the city center for you to explore. The recommended restaurants are *Chez Pepe* that sells excellent pizza and *La Couronne* that serves Michelin Star, Norman style of meals. If you are looking for a bakery shop,

our choice would be *Yvonne patisserie*, located just across *Gare de Rouen* (the main train station). This place literally serves the best *éclairs* you could ever ask for!

Must-go places in Rouen are *Rouen Cathedral*, *Joan of Arc monument*, *Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen*, *Hôtel de ville*, and the big chronicle clock, where the shopping street is located.

In summary, we would say that living in Rouen offered us quite interesting experiences. To keep you motivated, there are many clubs offered by the students of Neoma Business School that you can attend such as cooking and sport clubs. The best way to enjoy the moment is to stay open-minded, make lots of quality friends, and of course be positive. Most importantly, stay active and appreciate every single moment during your stay because this opportunity is considered an once-in-a-lifetime thing!

