



Bonjour, Paris!

Paris is the city that I have always dreamt about. It is the city of many amazing writers, painters, and musicians with lots of museums and best bakeries. When thinking of Paris, I imagine a very romantic city where people dress nicely, using high-end brands, a bit arrogant, and has a certain type of etiquette. The truth is, Paris is really a romantic city but that applies when you come with your boyfriend/girlfriend, not your friend! The city itself is very beautiful; the buildings, streets, shops and everything will take you back in time. I chose Paris, not only because of all these reasons, but also because it was very easy to travel to other countries since France is surrounded by Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Belgium, etc.

FIRST WEEK IN PARIS

When I arrived in Paris, I went to my apartment which I shared with my friend. I found this apartment via an agency called "Paris Attitude" since ISC did not provide accommodation for students. I had to pay an agency fee for this apartment, however, if you contact the owner directly to ask for the availability of the apartment (apartment's owner email: a.brocail@noos.fr), you do not have to pay for an agency fee. This apartment, suited 2 kms from the university, was very nice; everything was provided including all the kitchen utensils, towels, bed sheets, etc. I walked to school every day which I really enjoyed, however, there was also a PC3 bus that could take you from the apartment to the school. During the first week, there was an orientation arranged by ISC for the international students. The exchange coordinators, Christelle, would tell you anything you need to know about ISC and also about Paris. Also, she would ask you to open a bank account with LCL near the school, and that was mandatory if you have a smartphone and want



to be able to use the internet (without a bank account, you cannot subscribe to any mobile phone package!) After having a bank account, the bank will give you a debit card so that you will not have to carry cash all the time. For the mobile package, I used SFR Red, and this could be subscribed online via their website. Moreover, you also have another choice which is FREE mobile operator.



TRANSPORTATION IN PARIS

When I first arrived in Paris, I used metro a lot. I bought a “carnet” or 10 metro tickets as this was cheaper than buying an individual ticket. The metro ticket can also be used for bus, tram, and RER. I found metro very convenience and very fast. Moreover, there are lots of stations that whenever you get lost and you see a metro station, you just get in there and it will take you anywhere in Paris. Paris metro was not like BTS that everything

was new and clean; the metro was actually very dirty and stinky. You could see homeless people everywhere in the metro. Moreover, there were a lot of thieves and you have to be careful about you handbag all the time—your bag must always be zipped and must be in front of your body! If I had a choice, I wouldn’t use metro so that’s why if there was a bus for anywhere I wanted to go, I would rather use a bus. I recommend you to download an application called RATP as this application has all the bus, metro, RER, and tram maps, and it can also recommend you a journey from the point you are now to the location that you want to go.

STUDYING AT ISC

I registered 4 courses and that included a French course. The classrooms were quite small compared to Thammasat and most of the class will not exceed 30 people. There were lots of participation and also presentations in the class. Teacher were really nice and they could speak perfect English. I found the study here much easier than Thammasat: lesser contents, easier exams, and you had to study for only one and a half hour per class. There were, also, lots of group works and most of the assignments were in group. Grading was different from Thammasat as it was out of 20; getting a 15 here would consider an excellent. For exam preparation, I just prepared like when I was in Thammasat and



just tried to do my best. I always had to remind myself that the purpose of coming here was to study, not to travel!



LIFE IN PARIS

I love Paris and of course, my life in Paris! It was very convenient; I could go anywhere I wanted at any time I wanted. In Paris, almost all the shops were closed on Sunday, and that included department stores including the famous ones, for example, La Fayette and Printemps. Furthermore, almost every department stores and shops closed at 8 pm which was very early compared to Thailand. Food price here, of course, were very

expensive, however, that could not stop me from eating! I loved all the cakes, eclairs, hot chocolate, and many things over there. During my exchange, I think “Bonjour” or Hello was the word that I said the most. I said Bonjour to everyone; to the cashier in the supermarket, to the bus driver, to people who lived in my apartment building even though I did not know them. I think it was like a custom here that when you met anyone, the first thing that you should say is Bonjour or Bonsoir when it was in the evening. In Paris, there were also lots of Japanese restaurants and Thai restaurant; so whenever I was bored of sandwich and French food, I would go to Japanese restaurants and the good ones were located in Opera (metro: Pyramides). For Thai restaurant, I recommend you to go to Thai Vien II restaurant near metro Place de Italia; the food there was very delicious—like I was in Thailand.

Overall, choosing to go to Paris is absolutely the best decision I have ever made. If I can choose again, I will still choose Paris. This city has many things to see and explore and because I went to Paris in fall semester, the weather was just right; not too cold and not too hot like in Thailand. This exchange gave me priceless experience; it was my first time going abroad and living in other countries. I learned to live on my own, to not to trust people easily and I also learned how to adapt to new environment and to new friends. I could not find this experience anywhere if I did not go to this exchange. Even though it was just only five months, I think I have learned a lot and if I have a chance, I will go to Paris again!



PASSARA TECHAPATIKUL
BBA#20



From August to December 2013, I had an opportunity to be an exchange student in ISC Paris School of Management in France. What do you think about when you hear the word “Paris”? “Eiffel tower” “Fashion City” “Civilized City” “Clean” etc. What I have to say is that it is the total opposite of what you would imagine! Nevertheless, Paris impressed me by being way out of my expectation in a very fascinating way. Let me introduce and explain why it is not the same as what most people perceive, step by step.

Preparation

What I prepared from Thailand before the departure to Paris helps me a lot to survive there in the first couple weeks. For your information, for fall semester, if you want to travel for many days in a row, you have to travel before semester begins since you won't have a time after semester ends as you have to back to study here. I make a short list of what I suggest you to prepare in Thailand.

1. Find the accommodation! This is super important!! If you cannot find the accommodation there, you will suffer a lot since finding a place to live there is practically impossible. Recommended websites are www.parisattitude.com, www.paristay.com and www.lodgis.com. All of these websites are in English so you can search for and contact the agency by yourself. However, keep in mind that you will have to pay the agency fee which is quite expensive. The best way for ISC student is to stay at the same place as mine. Inquiry regarding my accommodation can be made directly to the following email : a.brocail@noos.fr
2. Study some French. France is a country with very high nationalism so French people will prefer to speak French rather than English. Anyway, there is no need to be serious because you can survive there happily even if you do not know French. Nonetheless, you may struggle in some circumstances.
3. Plan your trip in case you want to travel before semester starts. You should book all of the trains and hotels in Thailand. In France, there are not that many Wi-Fi hotspots so it can be troublesome to get any essential information on the go. It is better to find and print out some maps and bring them with you in case of getting lost, which is likely to happen.
4. Paris is the most dangerous city I have ever been to. This is not exaggerated at all. In Paris, and in most of the big cities in Europe, there are a lot of thieves and homeless people. Therefore, you have to make some preparation for your own safety of life and belongings. You should buy locks for your luggage and money belt, or anything that would make you safer.
5. Food. French food is not really delicious compared to Thai. Moreover, it is very pricey so I suggest you buy some instant food or long-lasting ingredients such as Knorr or Lobo and take them with you to Paris.



First week

The first week of exchange life is the most difficult and challenging time. My case was quite unique since I would like to travel to other countries besides Paris before moving in to my pre-booked apartment. As a result, I had to stay in a hotel first. The most torturous thing was when I had to carry my luggage on the public transport. So, it is strongly encouraged that you make your luggage as light as possible. I traveled to 5 countries, namely Switzerland, Italy, Czech Republic, Austria, and Spain in 21 days. Therefore, all of my 3 weeks after arriving was spent in travelling and exploring the world.



Studying in ISC

Studying in ISC was a breeze compared to what we did in BBA. The French curriculum slightly differ from what we study in Thailand. In ISC, the professors would not require us to memorize much but would focus more on understanding. This means that if you attend all the classes, you would be able to do the final exam well without any preparation. Anyway, keep in mind that studying there was easy but the grading system was very strict. Therefore, do not be surprised if your grade is below your expectation despite feeling that you could do the exam. Another problem that I had when I studied there was the English accent of the professors. As I mentioned, French people are not comfortable with English. Hence, a number of professors would occasionally use French in class or speak English in French accent which is very hard to figure out. However, studying in ISC was easier and less time consuming compared to what we are studying right now so you will have free time to enjoy a lot of activities that I am going to talk about.

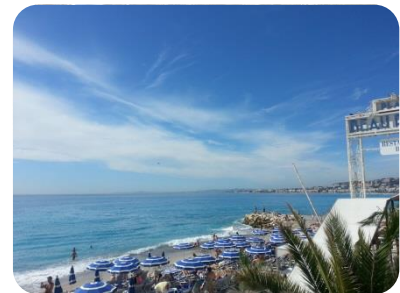
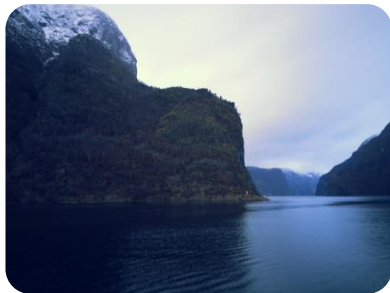


Activities

Main activity when I had free time was travelling. I travelled to 13 countries which are Switzerland, Italy, Czech Republic, Austria, Belgium, Netherlands, Monaco, Spain, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, England and ,lastly, France.



Europe is definitely fascinating and intriguing. It has a lot of natural attractions as well as historical places such as museums or monuments. Cities in Europe are similar but they have their own charisma and characteristics. I really enjoyed the time when I could explore the vast world. Travelling provided me a chance to learn some life skills that I did not have before. Moreover, when I went to some places that had different cultures, I seemed to become more adaptable and flexible.



Another activity that I did was to hang out with friends who mainly came from South Korea, Japan, Mongolia, and European countries. Most of my friends over there are exchange students too. I improved my interpersonal skills and I became more independent. Hanging out with foreign friends broadened my perspective in many aspects. For example, the most memorable activity I did was to throw a Thai Party for my foreign friends. My Thai friends and I cooked Thai food and introduced some of the Thai cultures to our friends while they also exchanged their culture and lifestyle with us. I appreciated





every moment since they taught me to be more dependable and have more life, social and interpersonal skills.

Getting to know Paris

1. Paris is dirty and dangerous! Especially in the Metro. However, it is not that bad that you cannot survive in. Try to be a lot more careful of your wallet and your precious belongings.
2. Paris has a lot of public transports so you can travel very easily. The main mode of transport that I normally use is the Metro and the buses. You should download an application named “ratp” to your phone. It is very useful!
3. Getting a mobile phone SIM card with unlimited internet is rather complicated since you will have to open your bank account first and it has a lot of steps to do. Thus, what I suggest is that you buy a pre-paid SIM card with limited internet first then you can get the SIM card with unlimited internet.
4. Paris’s cost of living is approximately 7-10 times higher compared to Bangkok.
5. In my opinion, despite all the drawbacks that I stated earlier, I totally fell in love with Paris. Paris is a very charming and mysterious city that you can discover nice shops, historical places and romantic sceneries around every corner. You can do a lot of things in Paris and you can never get bored of it!



I feel really thankful to BBA who provides me the opportunity which granted me one of the best moments of my life. Normally, I improve myself and learn some skills from tough and hard situations. However, the exchange program was the first time that I learned and became more mature in a very significant way with happiness and joy. I hope you enjoy Paris and exchange life as much as I did! ☺
