

Personal Information

Full name: Hadas Shamir

Email: hadasshamir@gmail.com

Degree Program at TAU: MBA MOTI program

Host University: ESADE

Exchange term: Fall 2016 - 2 months

Exchange Experience

The city - Barcelona is the capital city of the autonomous community of Catalonia in the Kingdom of Spain, as well as the country's second most populous municipality, with a population of 1.6 million within city limits. The official language is Catalan and Spanish. There is a lot to do and see in Barcelona and it is one of the most touristic cities in Europe. Take the time to know and explore the city, if possible arrive before the semester begins to have the time and enjoy the city. Notice you can stay in Europe for 90 days without a visa, so in case you plan to stay longer you will need to ask for a visa before you arrive. Spanish classes can also be a good idea before you go to enjoy the beautiful language.

The school - Esade is one of the top MBA schools in Europe. The campus you will be in is located outside of the city in a town called Sant Cugat. You will join the 2th year students from the full-time MBA in their elective courses. There are students from all around the world and you will get to know many cultures during your stay. Most of the work is in teams so that is a good chance for you to learn from different people - my recommendation is for you to try and diverse the people you team with so you can know more people. Everyone in Esade are very nice and helpful, from the staff to the students so feel free to ask for anything you need.

Elective courses - Registration for courses is about 3 months prior to the beginning of the semester. Registration method is bidding-based, similarly to the registration method in TAU. You can see the grading students gave to each course and choose according to this. Some interesting courses I had - Entrepreneurial finance, Matching supply with demand and Strategic sales management. You can also take a Spanish class to improve your language knowledge.

School activity and social life - The school has a lot of events and it is recommended to follow the mails with all the events the university sends you to keep up with it. Another great social activity is TGIF (thank god it's Friday) that the students arrange on every Friday and everyone goes to some bar and a club afterwards. Some of the clubs require some dress code so make sure you don't go there with flip flops or they will not let you enter.

Accommodation - Finding an apartment from long distance is not an easy task. Most apartments are for long term so take the time to look for a place to stay few months before you get there. Some people preferred to take a place for one or two weeks and look for something for the rest of the stay while they were there, but that is up to you. I found a nice apartment in Gracia area through AirBnb and that made some things easier since you don't need to deal with contracts and money transfer outside of the platform. Other than that there are few other sites you can look - www.aparteasy.com, https://www.uniplaces.com/?utm_campaign=269211&campaign=269211&utm_medium=ambassadors&open-registration=yes&utm_source=ir&irgwc=1.

Most of the MBA students live in the area of Gracia or Eixample, however there are also more touristic locations such as El Gotic or El Born. It is best to look for a place close to the FGC train route that goes between Plaza Catalunya and Sant-Cugat so your daily travel to ESADE would be short.

Transportation - Barcelona has a great public transportation that includes the metro and buses. It has a lot of lines so it is very recommended to use Google maps and know the fastest way to go from one place to another. There are few different cards for using the transportation and you can use both metro and buses with the same card. One option is the T-10 that gives you 10 rides for the area you choose (the city center is all area 1 but the school is in area 2) or you can buy a card with unlimited rides for both areas. Notice that the cards are anonymous and if you lose it you will not get your money back, so getting an unlimited card for 3 months is risky.

Living expenses - The money used in Spain is Euro, and it is not an expensive city compared to other main cities in Europe. You can have a nice meal with a glass of wine for about 10 euros (outside of touristic places) so that is very nice. In terms of monthly budget it depends a lot on the apartment you will take (I had a one bedroom apartment for myself and it was 1200 euros, you can also stay with roommates in a less expensive area for about 500 euros). Shopping is also not expensive compared to Israel, specially the Spanish stores like Zara and Mango that cost much less than in Israel. You can also get a tax refund if you leave Spain after 3 months so check this out before.

Some tips -

- 1 - Before I got to Barcelona I heard a lot of stories about pickpockets. Make sure you know where your things are. Don't put your wallet or cellular in a place where it can easily be taken like your pockets because someone will take it. Some places are riskier in that matter like the metro and touristic places, so just notice that.
- 2 - Time goes by very fast so try to get the most out of it from the beginning.
- 3 - As much as it is a lot of fun to travel outside of Spain since flight costs are very cheap inside Europe, I felt I wanted to take only one trip outside of Spain and use the rest of my weekends in places in Spain or Barcelona. I know people that traveled a lot and felt they missed some of the social activities on weekends. My advice is to look at your schedule and requirements for the courses before you book flights.

I really enjoyed the Esade experience and recommend everyone that has opportunity to go for it. I loved the school for being interesting but not too competitive and the warm people all around me. Leaving abroad is a great experience and I gained a lot from it. If you have any questions you are welcome to contact me.
Enjoy your time!

