

Intro

The exchange in ESSEC was a chance to explore academics at a business school with an agenda completely different from TAU. The school is best known for its focus on luxury brand management and we were able to receive a taste of this. In addition to the academic element students receive a deeper understanding of Parisian and French culture. The highlight of the trip was the great connections that were made through the program with students from around the world.

Academics

The three-week summer module is set up in 3 parts. The first part had a focus on organizational behavior and the concept of diversity in business. The second part focused on economics within the EU. The last part focused on luxury brand management. Each part had different courses that were either 1-2 day long intensive courses. In addition to the course the module also includes two cultural day trips in and around Paris. The courses are all pass fail.

Visa Information

There is no need for a Visa when traveling with either an Israeli or US passport for only 3 weeks. If planning to stay longer there may be a need for a VISA, I suggest checking with enough time to go through the process.

Location and Transportation

The School is located in Cergy, which is a 30 min train ride from the center of Paris.

Traveling to and from Paris is fairly simple, however there are the occasional hiccups due to common strikes by the transportation/train worker unions. The RER line runs to and from, and there are weekly unlimited passes in the five zones within Paris and its surrounding area (including the airports). The same pass can be used on the RER, the trains, and the metro within the city limits. The metro is extremely easy and convenient, there are also buses, taxis, and Ubers at your disposal.

Housing

ESSEC provides the option of living in Cergy in their student dorms. Around 1/3 of the class chose this option. From my understanding, the accommodations are basic and the town is not super interesting.

Students can also choose to live in Paris, which is what I did. I used AirBnB to rent an apartment/studio, as did many others. There are other online sites that can help with finding an apartment for short term rent. There are a few neighborhoods that are convenient stops on the RER line to Cergy. In general, I would recommend to live in Paris if possible. There is always something to do, eat and see. We were able to take advantage of the endless museums, parks, ballets, and shows while in Paris.

Food and Dining

One thing to note is that food and dining is not necessarily open 24/7. Most areas are closed on Sundays- including supermarkets and restaurants. In the more touristic areas (i.e the Champs De Elysees) as well as the Marais have options that are open on Sundays. In addition, there are very set operating hours. Many places will not open before 8am, through there are many Starbucks stores that are open near the train stations in the early morning. Restaurants are generally open after 7pm until Midnight; while most eat dinner around 9:30pm.

Supermarket prices are comparable to those in Tel Aviv, with some exceptions here and there. The diet in Paris is heavily based on breads, cheeses and meats, and of course French pastries.

For lunch by the university there is a cafeteria and a café on campus. (coffee and Croissant for around 1.5 euro). There is also a Japanese restaurant, and a Pomme De Pains (sandwich and salads place) across the street that we frequented. Off campus lunch can go for 7-15 euro.

Summer time in Paris

Weather- just because its summer does not mean that you will experience summer weather. The temperature can be very fickle, with lots of rain. I was there from late June to mid-July, and the average temperatures were between 13-20 degrees Celsius and it rained nearly every day.

There is limited air-conditioning in the city, and at ESSEC. Though there were only few warm days, if there is a heatwave, it will be hot inside as well.

Sales- There are two sale seasons in Paris and they last for an entire month. Luckily for us, the sales take place from the end of June through the end of July. This is a great time to take advantage of the fashion, and beauty products that France has to offer.

Security

I had my worries about national security before traveling to Paris, though this can be said for much of the world. I must say that the Parisians are trying their best, there are many security checks at large public areas, as well as military throughout the city. Of course no place you go will ever be 100% safe, I must say I felt secure during my time in Paris. They also test their sirens every first Tuesday of each month so do not be startled if you hear one go off.

Conclusion

The time in Paris was short and sweet. The three weeks gives you enough time to enjoy most of what Paris has to offer (which is a lot). The academics, especially the section on luxury, really added to the academic experience I had at TAU.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me:

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