

EXPERIENCE REPORT

Lisbon, Portugal February 2021 - February 2022

My originally-planned year abroad was supposed to start in the Winter semester of 2020. Due to COVID-19, I had the chance to cancel that semester and instead begin my mobility period in the Spring semester 2021. This was no problem, but meant that for the following semester I would have to go through the entire application process again and do everything double, once for each semester. This was an additional stress factor. I had to book my flight and leave Germany spontaneously because the borders were closing between countries and I was at risk of not getting into Portugal. I found my apartment that I shared with five boys through an Erasmus+ WhatsApp group that I had created through Facebook Erasmus+ pages. Lisbon was in complete and very strict lockdown as I arrived and it remained that way for almost two months. All of my lectures were online and we were only allowed to leave the house to go to the supermarket or pharmacy, and that only within a 1km radius of our residence. The lockdown was bearable thanks to the boys. We watched a lot of *The Office* and I studied and wrote a lot and stared out the window into a Lisbon that I did not meet yet. Eventually and gradually things started opening up and we started getting some of our freedom back. Sometime in mid-April we had one or two courses on campus, but a few weeks later, the semester was already over and exam season started. All of my exams were online. My professors were all very kind and professional and helpful. The relationship to them is a lot closer than in Germany. Here, they call you by your name and take their time to help you and genuinely care about you and go out of their way and office times to support you with everything. I am very thankful for them. Lectures are very interesting and there is a great variety of courses to choose from. The Nova School of Law is an all around great faculty to be a part of. I didn't become friends with anyone there since everything was online. The second semester, most classes were on campus and everything was way better. It was like a different world. Lisbon is the best city to do an Erasmus in, it has great culture, people, nightlife, beaches and Portugal generally has amazing nature all around, super accessible and affordable. It has many museums, you can go to university in the morning and end the day at the beach watching the sunset. The surf here is great as you have a variety of different spots for different levels. The food is amazing as there are authentic little coffee shops and canteens in every corner with the best coffee — don't come here to go to Starbucks! Lisbon has many top notch restaurants from all cuisines and the pastries and porto wines are so good. If you don't feel like sitting inside, local restaurants always offer outdoor seating so you can watch the people pass by. Lisbon also offers many viewpoints. You can take a bottle of wine, some pastries and olives and watch the sun set behind the city and the river. Since I still have two more months here until I have to fly back, right now it is end of November and the sun shines every day, I went to the beach on the weekend and I don't even need to wear a jacket when I'm out during the day. I'm happy and I'm grateful for the opportunity and glad I chose Lisbon to do my Erasmus+. It's a time I will never forget and I will definitely be coming back soon.