

Ling Xiao Chen Lchen12@schulich.yorku.ca ESSEC- Short Exchange 2018 Summer

The short exchange is the highlight of my MBA career. Although short-lived it was a great opportunity to meet wonderful people from all over the world and learn and understand some real business problem and innovations from another part of the world. It opened up my eyes for all the possibilities that different operations in different part of the world can exchange thoughts and innovate together. Although different I also learnt how much we are alike. I now thorough this program met friends from all over the world as the program had student from over 12 different countries. Since it was a small group it was a great opportunity to really get to know each other and create a friendship that I will hold dearly. The program is highly recommended but having said that there are a lot of logistics that I would suggest for anyone considering.

Visa

Since I am Canadian, a visa was not necessary especially for such a short stay.

Insurance

My work had insurance, but I would suggest for you to check with your work insurance policy to see how much personal travel coverage it has as some might not have it while other already have it included.

Arrival

Part of what made my experience was my Airbnb host. I would highly recommend staying at a Airbnb with a host on site because you will be able to interact with locals and see how the French really lived. My host was so kind, she threw a welcome party for me with her friends and treating me to local home-made cuisine. She also help with certain logistics in association with travelling to Paris which can be very difficult with the strike. (See below for transportation) She welcomed me with directions on how to get to Cergy from CDG airport. There is a direct bus which is cheaper and faster than taking the train.

Academics

Since this was a shortened program, the in-class time was a full day event. Each day a different professor with a different background was leading the class. I thought the way it was organized allowed interaction and a topic of interest for everyone in the room. The speed of it was quick but manageable. There were no test and the in class assignments could be finished in class. The professors were all very welcoming.

Cost/Expenses

Paris is expensive no doubt but you can still manage on a tight budget if you know where to eat and party there are plenty of free activities to enjoy. Ex. Picnic by the river or the Eiffel tower. But for those of you that are a foodie and wants to try some good restuarants here are my list:

Restaurants:

Southern France food : <http://www.bistrot-opio.com/>

Cheese, cheese, and cheese! : <http://www.laffineuraffine.com/fr/>

Fishes:

<http://vin-et-maree.restaurant/>

Fishes:

<http://www.pedraalta.pt/mobile/default.aspx>

Argentinian bref :

<https://m.facebook.com/LesGrilladesDeBuenosAires>

Japanese :

<http://www.higuma.fr/>

Transportation

Get "Navigo" app and pass to move in Paris. It's cheaper than single tickets and can be used to get on/get off from bus, tram, regional train, metro. If you are making the trip from Cergy to Paris even twice a week it is worth it to get this pass.

Where to Live

I had the opportunity to live in Paris and Cergy throughout this program and here are my list of pros and cons.

Paris Pros	Paris Cons	Cergy pros	Cergy Cons
-I don't think I need to say much other than being in the heart of the city and culture	-travel time is long and unpredictable(RER is on strike most of the time -Expensive -no air-conditioning in most places -apartment are tiny!	-hung out with friends -develop closer bonds -sleep-in in the morning -not rushed and good for rest days	-far from the action -impossible to come home at night sometimes due to transit strike -expensive to uber back from Paris

Traveling while there

I had the opportunity to travel to 8 different countries while I was there. To be honest weekend travels are hard as its very short timed but doable. For trips to Belgium or London I would highly recommend.

But for further places it is best to go before or after your program and make a trip out of it.

#whenineurope. Furthermore you would probably want to spend more time with your new friends from the program.

Over all I would not trade this experience for anything. Even though I spent an extra summer to finish off my MBA. This completed the experience. I leave you with this pics. Just look at the smile on everyone's face and you will know it was an exchange of a lifetime.

