

Portugal

IADE Creative University, Lisbon

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Introduction

I have always loved traveling and exploring different cultures, so spending a semester abroad was a no-brainer for me. I chose to go to Portugal because of the great weather and lively culture, and because the study options seemed like a good fit for my studies back at KEA. I expected the 5 months to be fun, interesting, challenging, and full of action - and Lisbon certainly did not disappoint when it comes to that.



IADE – Academic Experiences

ABOUT IADE

IADE is a creative university focused on design, technology, marketing and communication, and photography. The campus is located in the central Santos area with a view over the Tagus River. It is close to many bars, cafes, restaurants, and stores, as well as good public transportation options.

COMMUNICATION

The people at IADE were very helpful with the process of settling me in. The communication was smooth and all my questions were answered rather quickly. I got my student card and access to the school's online platform shortly after arriving in the city. In the beginning, the staff arranged a campus tour for us and also held an online welcome week, which made sure I had all the information needed to start my studies.

COURSES

In total, I was attending five courses that belonged to the package "Design". I am mostly happy with my studies at IADE, but I have to admit that there was a bit more school work than I expected. I can recommend all the courses I had, but I would definitely advise choosing at least Branding and Communication Design if you are into branding, communication, and graphic design.

COURSES

COMMUNICATION DESIGN

The Communication Design course was mainly focused on editorial design and art direction, and during this course, we worked a lot with Adobe programs such as InDesign. We had two main group projects that we were working on; re-branding of the city of Lisbon and a magazine concept. This course was one of my favorites and I feel like I got to use a lot of the skills learned at KEA, and also gained a lot of new skills, especially in editorial design and different printing techniques. The course was held in Portuguese, but the teacher and classmates were super friendly and helpful, and everything was translated to us into English.

BRANDING

The Branding course consisted of different branding methods and theories and was somewhat similar to my studies at KEA. We had a wonderful teacher with a very interesting past in branding and marketing, which made the classes insightful and full of real-life examples. Each week we had a little case study in groups which we presented to others, so the course was also good in order to practice our public speaking skills. In addition to that, we were working on a bigger 3 step project in groups. Another favorite course of mine without a doubt.

CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

The Creativity and Innovation course contained the basics of creative thinking and problem-solving methods and theories. We used a lot of design thinking and concept development tools, some of which were already familiar because of my studies at KEA. During this course, we did a couple of individual and group projects, that were also presented in the class. This course was definitely useful for a design/marketing student.

DRAWING AND VISUAL COMMUNICATION

The Drawing and Visual Communication course was perhaps the biggest surprise for me. We had three individual drawing projects that had to be done with different techniques, and later on, presented in the class. The course was fun and challenging, and definitely increased creativity and thinking outside of the box. However, I do not think that this course was super relevant considering my studies.

PORTUGUESE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

The Portuguese Language and Culture course was focused on the basics of the Portuguese language, as well as the Portuguese culture such as lifestyle, food, music, and politics. During this course, I strengthened my Portuguese language skills and got to know more about the Portuguese way of living. We also did a field trip to Óbidos and had a cooking class where we prepared regular Portuguese dishes.

Practical Experiences

The application process seemed complicated and time-consuming at first, but in the end, it was all managed very smoothly. I got a lot of help with multiple things from the KEA staff, especially the international coordinator Hanne, who deserves an award for all the help she has given me in every possible situation. I believe that everything from the practical stuff to the Erasmus grant application and so on went on without problems thanks to her. The staff at IADE, my school abroad, was also very helpful and answered all the questions I had in mind about my studies and life in Portugal.

I did not have any practical difficulties settling down at my destination. I found an apartment before moving to the city in one of the student residences, and everything worked well with the school, and starting my studies as well. If I had any questions or problems, I felt that I could always contact the people at KEA or IADE, and get help fast.



ACCOMMODATION

It was not hard to find accommodation in Lisbon, at least compared to the apartment hunting in Copenhagen. There are a lot of student housing and other rental options in the city. I myself stayed at Livensa Living student residence in Marques de Pombal, where I had my own studio apartment. Some of my classmates were also staying in similar buildings, but the majority had rented out rooms in shared apartments with other students. That option might be a bit more affordable, even though living in the studio was not too pricey either. Erasmus Life Lisboa has a lot of different kinds of student housing to offer, so that is a good website to check out if you are looking for a place to stay in Lisbon. The prices for rooms differ from approximately 300-700€ and the studios from 600-1000€ a month. The deposit is often only one month's rent or not even that.

EXPENSES

My expenses consisted mostly of accommodation, public transportation, groceries, and different kind of activities. I was preparing meals at home by myself or with friends, but I also ate out quite often as it was cheaper than back in Copenhagen. Some of my expenses also consisted of traveling, shopping, events, and parties. I think it was 100% worth it to travel to other places in Portugal and see more of the country, as well as to participate in some of the events and trips, such as the skydiving trip to Évora.

Social and Cultural Experiences

I did not experience any major challenges or difficulties in Lisbon, quite the opposite. I really enjoyed life in Portugal, and I was prepared for the fact that it probably will be different from life in the Nordics. However, it can be partially hard to adjust to how relaxed and laid-back life can be, and get used to the fact that most things rarely happen exactly on time; this goes from classes to bus schedules and everything in between.

I had so many amazing cultural and personal experiences during my time in Lisbon, that it would take a lifetime to go through them all. Still, I would definitely say that the people were the best part of it all - both the Portuguese people I got to know and the other internationals in the city. Just living and breathing the city of Lisbon on a daily basis was a cultural experience in itself, and it would be hard not to fall in love with it. Portugal is definitely a place to be if you ask me. The food is great, the people are friendly, the weather and environment are second to none, and the party is everywhere.



WHERE TO MEET PEOPLE

Meeting new people in Lisbon is quite easy. Most of my new friends definitely came from school - we had an amazing class of Erasmus students from different countries, and I also got to know lovely Portuguese people thanks to my Communication Design course. In addition to that, I was hanging out a lot with the girls who also went on exchange to Lisbon from KEA, so I suggest contacting the people choosing the same destination if there are any. Apart from school, Erasmus Life Lisboa arranges all kinds of social events and parties where it is easy to meet new people and make friends. But because the Portuguese people are extremely open and friendly, it is not impossible to meet new people while sitting in cafes or walking on the streets either.

WHAT TO DO IN LISBON

There is a lot to do and see in Lisbon. Being the capital of Portugal, it offers everything you could wish from a modern European city. In my opinion, Lisbon is the perfect combination of old and new. I could spend days just walking around the charming old streets and sitting in the multiple cozy parks and cafes the city has to offer. It is also easy to take the train or bus to spend the day at the beach and go surfing, for instance. There are a lot of good restaurants and bars, and the nightlife does not disappoint either. For people seeking culture and history, Lisbon is filled with historical buildings and museums. It is also a great city for many sports activities, like padel or running by the Tagus River.

PLACES TO GO

ALGARVE

Algarve is a region in the south of Portugal. It has many beautiful destinations to visit, like Sagres, Lagos, Portimão, Albufeira, and Faro. You can reach Algarve by bus or train, or rent a car with friends and roadtrip through the whole coast. The beaches are definitely worth seeing, and there are also a lot of other fun activities in the area, like waterparks, kayaking, sup boarding, and boat parties.

PORTO

Porto is another bigger city 3-4 hours apart from Lisbon. It is smaller than Lisbon but full of things to do and see. There are a lot of good bars, cafes, restaurants, and stores to visit, and you can walk by the beautiful river. One weekend is enough to see the city in my opinion, and there are a lot of nice Airbnbs and hostels to stay in the area.

SETUBAL/SESIMBRA

Setubal and Sesimbra are smaller cities 1 hour away from Lisbon. They can be reached by bus or train. I would definitely recommend visiting some of the beaches close to the cities, like Praia de Galapinhos and Praia do Ribeiro do Cavalo.



Praia da Coelha



Albufeira

PLACES TO GO

CASCAIS

Cascais is a small city on the Portuguese Riviera that you can reach in 40 minutes by train. It is a perfect day trip destination with its many beaches, cafes, restaurants, and stores. The city is cozy and has some sort of vacation feeling to it. Lovely mini get-away from Lisbon!

BELÉM

Belém is a laid-back area along the Tagus River. It is a great place to spend a day off, as there are many cafes, restaurants, museums, parks, and historical monuments. In Belém, I would suggest visiting the museums MAAT and Coleção Berardo as well as the botanical garden and enjoying an original pastel de nata at Pastéis de Belém.

SINTRA

Sintra is a beautiful city and perfect for a day trip. It takes approximately an hour to reach it by train. There is a lot to see in Sintra from all kinds of castles and palaces to gardens, not to forget the sympathetic little town full of cafes and restaurants. My favorite thing about Sintra was the nature - it almost feels like being in a rainforest. If you head to Sintra, put your best shoes on and be prepared to walk a lot!



Praia dos Coelhos



Setubal



Cascais



Sintra

OTHER PLACES

Feira da Ladra (weekly flea market in Alfama)

LxFactory (factory complexes in Alcântara full of nice cafes and restaurants and arty retailers)

Costa da Caparica (26km coastline of sandy beaches and beautiful nature, good spot for surfing)

Carcavelos (popular beach that can be easily reached by train, good spot for surfing)

Almada (on the opposite side of the river from Lisbon, a couple of nice restaurants and a good park for spotting sunsets, can be reached by ferry as well)

Nazaré (nice town for a day or weekend trip, world's biggest waves)

Ericeira (cool little surf town not far from Lisbon, with many surf and yoga retreats)

Óbidos (medieval town 1 hour apart from Lisbon, beautiful old buildings and possible to visit a local liquor factory)

Évora (UNESCO world heritage site, has a skydiving center)

Cabo da Roca (westernmost point of Europe, beautiful hike)

Praia da Ursa (stunning beach and short walk away from Cabo da Roca)



Conclusion

To all the people considering studying at IADE in Lisbon I would say; go for it! It is a good school in a great location in the heart of Lisbon, and the courses offered are mainly interesting and relevant. The school staff and other students are friendly and welcoming, and you will make new friends in no time. In addition, Lisbon is without a doubt a great student city full of life. There is always something happening, and the parties are never-ending. At the same time, it is one of the most chilled-out cities I have ever been to. Meeting new people and making friends is easy if you are open-minded, and there is a lot to do during your days. The beaches are also very close by, which is ideal if you want to learn how to surf, for example. There are many cool places for day trips and long weekends, too. It is rather easy to feel at home in Lisbon. Learning a bit of Portuguese and having some cash in your pocket will definitely help along the way.