Introduction

Hi, I’m a marketing student at Beedie School of Business.

I went on exchange at BI Norwegian Business School during my 3rd year (spring semester) of university. The school (Norwegian name: Handelshøyskolen BI), as well as its main campus is located in the capital city of Norway—Oslo. It’s a private university, largest business school in Norway, and second largest in all Europe. I immediately got attracted to this huge, “city-like” building when I saw its video on YouTube during my exchange research. (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pwukJbBrI5A (This is the one that got my attention!! But I also found this newer version which is also very cool! http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gb8IrSp1Ghk)

Preparation

What to bring

Norway is pretty cold during the winter. To be honest, there is a lot to bring especially if you’re going in on the January to June semester, since you need both winter/spring/and some summer clothes. The temperature difference is very high during the day and night. You can choose to bring (ship) as much as you can, depending on the airline you choose when flying to Oslo, but there’s also IKEA, which you can buy all furniture/accessories very cheap.

Try to bring enough clothes, so you don’t have to buy any in Oslo, since it’s very expensive. Most dorms have a bed, chair, and a desk. Some dorms have common kitchenware and utensils you can share with other students, but you might want to use your own utensils. You will have to buy duvet, pillow, room accessories etc. at IKEA, unless you have enough room in your luggage to put all that in.

Finances

It varies depending on how much you travel around in Europe. I applied for BIMA scholarship, which I highly recommend everyone to apply if you’re thinking of going to BI.

Spending of each MONTH:

-rent at Kringija Student village NOK 2900

(this is where I stayed; could cost more depending on which student village you choose)

-Skiing at Oslo Vinterpark around NOK 1560 in total (NOK each time, I think I skied 7 times)

-Books NOK 800 (I would say average people spend this amount if they buy books, but I spend around 100 NOK because I borrowed most of my books from the library)

-Food NOK 1800 (varies depending on where you shop, and how much you eat)
Transportation NOK 380 I couldn’t remember the exact figure (Tbane pass)

Travel (Varies depending on the hotels you choose, and the airline you take)

I recommend “Ryan air”, a very cheap airline company with prices as low as 20 Euro to go from Oslo to other parts in Europe. But be sure to book it early, since price fluctuates very unpredictably.

During exchange

Arrival

I applied for a residence permit at the Danish consulate before entering Norway, as I planned on staying for at least 3 months. Canadian passport only allows you to stay for 3 months, please check the Norwegian immigration government website for detailed rules on permit application.

I highly recommend you to sign up for arrival pick up service. When I got there, they helped me find my student village, and explained the Tbane system for me.

There are usually mini stores in each student village where you can buy some food for the first day, but I suggest you head to “Groland station”. It’s the station after “Oslo central station (Jernbanetorget)” and buy all your groceries there. It’s the cheapest, and there’s also other Asian markets nearby, where you can buy some cultural food.

Transportation system and popular student villages

There is Tbane (similar to skytrain) in Oslo, and it is very convenient. Most student villages are less than 30min away from the school. The 3 most popular student villages are:

1. Kringsja, It is the cheapest. Lots of people choose this. I chose this too, and 70% of all my exchange friend live here. There is a forest/park close by, which you can jog around the lake, or do cross country skiing, have a campfire in the snow, and watch sunset. It gets even more interesting in the summer, which you can even swim and do BBQ in the park.

I highly recommend this, because the kitchen is big, and you can have parties, which make it easier to make friends. You share bathroom with 1person, and kitchen with 6 others. It takes 30min to go to school.

2. Bjolson, It’s almost the same to Kringsja, but more expensive, since you have your own bathroom, and the building is newer. You can take a bus (5 min) to school, or you can walk for 20 min.

3. BSN. Don’t really recommend. It’s the most expensive, kitchen is super small since its only shared between 2 people. But, there are still lots of people who choose this, since its 5 min walk from school, and also has a roof, which lots of people host parties.
The following are the pictures I took at Kringsja (where I stayed). Stunning both in winter and summer.

Academic, social life, and extracurricular activities

One thing I must say is that it’s worth it to get the 4 month-gym pass. You can have access to 3, 4 major recreation centers including the one in the school. Also, you can take free lessons (yoga, weight training, aerobics etc.)

Besides that, there’s also Oslo Vinterpark, a perfect place for Ski and Snowboard lovers!! There is student Fridays, which the price is significantly reduced. You can also purchase the season pass.

Places to visit

Please go to www.visinorway.com for more info.

Within Oslo, there’s a lot of places you can go.

Oslo Opera House, Holmenkollen Ski Jump Place, different museums for more Viking history of Norway.

I went on an Iceland trip with INSA (BI’s international student association).

Each exchange semester, INSA organized trips for exchange students. Iceland trip cost about 2800NOK.
I suggest that if you don’t have a lot of friends from your home university to travel with you, be READY to make friends FAST! Go to all the social events, for example, bbq, bars, movie nights, monthly Binner (free dinner event) etc. In that way, you can find people to travel with you.

People usually start traveling as soon as they settle down in late January or February. So, join some travel groups, or arrange your own. Be brave, and outgoing! Or even make a post in the exchange facebook group, and I’m sure there will be people who are interested in going to the same destination with you at the same time.

Look out for other students’ travel invitation on facebook as well. Sometimes the exchange group will self-organize trips to islands in Norway. The following picture is from a trip to an island, where me and my friends are standing on floating ice in late spring.