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Degree Program at TAU: BA in Management and Economics

Host University: National Chengchi University - NCCU

Exchange Term: Spring 2020 (5 months)

Exchange Experience

About the country and city

Taiwan is a beautiful island in Southeast Asia. The terrain is lush and green, full of amazing waterfalls, lakes, rivers, and beaches (well, it is an island after all). It is rich in Far Eastern culture and history, complicated politics and interesting people. You are going to be very lucky to be visiting this country for a semester.

Taipei is the new capital of Taiwan; it is vibrant in some areas and authentically boring in others. It is modern, fun and very tasty. The city's population is divided between the modern and mostly English-speaking young and the traditional, older people, who are difficult to communicate with.

About the Host University

National Chengchi University, or as the locals call it, "Chen chi da she", is well-known and considered one of the top three schools in Taiwan. It is located in the southern part of Taipei (just outside of the city). The campus is large and built right on the mountains that surround the city (which are also great for hiking). There's a big sports center with everything you will need, for a cheap price. My exchange was during COVID-19 so the school did not arrange any events.

Courses and professors

I took a few courses during my semester and was surprised to find how easy the learning requirements are in the school. The grading methods rely mostly on assignments rather than exams like those that we are used to in TAU. All professors speak English but are much stricter than the ones we have in Tel Aviv and it's very important to show respect when speaking to them. I would recommend the

“business negotiation” course, taught by Cathy Ku, she really understands western culture and can identify what the pain points of a cross culture negotiation might be.

Accommodation

In terms of accommodation, you can choose to apply for a room in the "Ihouse", which is an exchange student dorm, or find an apartment in the city through a company called “my room abroad”. The Ihouse is located really close to the school and is filled with fellow exchange students who are also looking to make friends and connect. It’s a comfortable way to have a soft landing in the foreign city. I stayed in Ihouse in a single room (you can apply for single or double) and I can say that the facility is fine and the service is good. With that being said, I would recommend going for the second option, which is getting an apartment in the city. This option would let you experience the city from a local point of view and would allow you to meet new people from the city easily. The price for both options is the same.

Visa

You don’t need a visa to enter Taiwan, when you enter you can get a tourist visa for 90-days, which will renew when leaving the country. If you plan to travel anyways, I would go for that option.

Transportation

Taipei has an amazing public transportation system with busses and subways to all the different spots in the city. To get the best experience of the city you can rent daily-use bicycles in more than 300 stations across the city. If you want to get to your destination faster than you would with public transportation, you can take a cab, which are also very cheap, or rent a scooter for the entire duration of your stay which is what I did and I recommend it strongly. With my scooter, I could drive to nearby waterfalls and small towns on my days off and see much more than I could have seen if I relied on public transportation (and it’s really fun as well). Taiwan also has a great HSR (high-speed rail) that could get you to the southern part of the island (Kaohsiung) in 90 minutes! When traveling, I suggest you take the train and rent scooters in the city or area you are visiting.

Living expenses

Taiwan is very cheap! You can eat a decent meal for less than 80NTD (New Taiwanese Dollars) or 10 shekels. A drink in a bar would cost you 20 shekels, coffee is around 14 shekels and an entrance to an “expensive” party would set you back only 50 shekels. The living costs are cheap as well; I paid a 1,000 NIS per month in the school dorms.

Food

The local food is very cheap but in my opinion, the quality was not so great. I discovered that I am not so keen on Taiwanese or Chinese “authentic” food. It usually included the less attractive parts of the animals in some sort of soup or stew. However, don’t you worry! EVERY place you come across will be more than happy to make you some fried rice, which has very little ways to go wrong. Besides Taiwanese food, you can find a variety of interesting and delicious cuisines such as Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese and Thai for cheap prices as well. If you are looking for western food, you will have to spend a bit more money (20 shekels per meal, its sounds cheap now but when you’re living the cheap life that is a lot of money). Last but not least, 7-11: this convenient store has everything and is located on literally every street in Taipei. If you are hungry and on the run, you can always find something to eat there.

Night life

Taipei has an amazing nightlife scene. You can find anything from crazy underground techno clubs to mainstream hip-hop parties. There are many bars all over to get a drink and meet new people. During weekdays, there are student nights all over the city in which you can enter parties for free and only pay 40 shekels for an all you can drink deal.

Summary

I cannot describe how happy I am to have gone through this experience; I met a ton of new friends from all over the world and became a local in a truly unusual place. Taipei is a great city with so many options and Taiwan is so peaceful and charming. The fact that this destination is so different than life in Tel Aviv is why I chose to go there and I got what I wanted, a place that would "blow my mind". I really recommend this destination for your exchange, take the leap and go somewhere different!







