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Degree Program at TAU: MBA

Host University: FGV – EAESP

Exchange term: 5 months (Fall semester)

Hello dear TAU students,

My name is Clara, I did my exchange at FGV Sao Paulo it was an amazing experience that I wish to everyone the same!

As a first tip before coming to Brazil:

1. Most of the Brazilian people don't speak English. Only the educated and young ones might, but the one you are referring to in terms of daily basis conversation like taxi drivers or waitress or at any shop won't. This is why it would be highly recommended to learn some basic Portuguese before arriving just enough to deal with these little things. It will also help to learn way more the language there once you have some knowledge instead of starting from scratch.
2. Try also before the trip to get to know the people that are doing their exchange as well, get into the FGV group for exchange students on Facebook.
3. About the country itself, yes as people say it could be a bit dangerous so just don't take your phone out in the street don't provoke anyone with nice jewelries, just be as simple as possible and nothing bad would happen. Also after 10pm don't walk in the street alone, better to spend money on a uber than risking anything to happen!

The Visa:

Comparing to other countries as far as I understood, Brazil was one of the most difficult to get a visa from, they are more tough on the subject and I would advise to go to the embassy as soon as you get the approval from FGV in order to start. Brazilian offices in general are very very slow so all this kind of paper work can take much more time than expected! I had myself troubles to get it so don't loose time!

Accommodation:

Sao Paulo is a huge city and so looking at the map you could look at two areas and think they are neighbors but actually would take half an hour in car to get from one to the other, so this is very tricky and you don't want to live too far from school knowing as well that the traffic can be crazy. The area I would advice to stay at are Jardins, Bela Vista, Pinheiros, Itaim bibi and Vila madalena (it's a bit far but there is a subway from there directly to school so in the end doable enough). These areas are the cooler ones for young people and with the more activity and dynamism there. Bela vista is a bit more dodgy but depends as well where. I think further than that it is not very nice. Be careful because some very nice and chic areas could be very close to bad ones surprisingly so if any doubts about where to stay in SP, feel free to contact me. Concerning the agencies, they would always try to screw you up so be very precise on the type of contract you get, the best though is to find a sublet in an apartment already rented.

Living expenses:

SP is expensive as TLV I would say, you can find accommodation in an apartment as a flatmate for about 1500 reals more or less. And about expenses itself i would say 2500 per month this will be all according to the way you live your life. For instance if you want to go out almost everyday at some point bars are expensive and there is a real expense to consider which are ubers at night. The subway is not the most useful way of transportation it is not very well spread throughout the city, but there are tons of buses to use and of course at night the uber which is very cheap in Brazil.

The other expense to consider is the travelling side, you would want to travel during school break or after the semester around Brazil north and south so better to take extra money for that.

The courses:

I took 7 classes but usually the students take 5 during their whole semester. For each class you need a group project so find good partners for that and not always the same ones because it is also a way to make friends.

Marketing for emerging markets: the professor gives every week a work to make in group and 3 quizzes during the semester in addition to the final project. So this is not a "light course", a lot of work has to be made but the teacher is very passionate about the material which makes it more interesting of course and the key is to find a good group project that you can rely on and divide the work properly.

Strategy in an international perspective: very fun, fair and skilled professor. Very interesting class, a mid-term, a final exam and a group project. Need to provide some work.

Living in the entrepreneurial challenge: a class a little childish, not what i was expected although not really hard class, just need to make the readings every week and work for the final and group project.

Development and sustainability: very lazy and pretentious professor that wants to work as less as possible. There is no final which is great but throughout the course every class there is a quiz about the readings so better be focus on that because he grades very strictly.

Marketing Analytics: amazing and nice professor very enthusiast, the course is interesting, there are some work to provide of course some assignments during the course and then a final paper to hand in. Good class.

Internationalization of emerging countries multinationals: very theoretical class about internationalization so not very useful for real life but still very important to master some key concepts in the future. Readings, final and group project. Fair class.

Brazilian business Law: incredible and passionate professor she is a famous lawyer and loved by her students. The course itself could be boring but mainly important if desire to open a open a business in brazil. The final paper is not so hard, just follow the slides.

Brazilian economy: I haven't done this class but i heard the students complaining so much about it, apparently the professor asks for way too much readings every week and the final exam is only about them so a bit complicated to remember them all.

My overall experience:

People may say that SP isn't the best place to stay but I would say the opposite totally. Yes, it is not highly recommended for tourists but it is one of the most amazing cities I've seen and it is just great to live there. There is a lot to do every night for every taste, music style, dancing classes, bars, restaurants in tons, and the people are just so nice and open minded. It is the kind of place you learn to love and once you love you don't want to leave anymore! If needed I can provide all the little tips where to go out according to the person.

I would suggest not to stay only with the students that are in exchange at FGV because I saw a lot of people doing that and you don't get to know the city as it should be. I met a lot of local people and it was way better because you don't want to feel like a tourist for 5 months you want to be part of the society. Besides, the parties for students aren't good since they would probably be a bit younger.

In addition

1. Once you arrive on the country there is a procedure to follow which is going to the police federal, the school will explain how to proceed. Do it as fast as possible otherwise you will end up paying a fine. Don't be scared the place is a bit disorganized, it is an emerging country!
2. When you start the exchange be open minded, set for new experiences and ready for meeting new people, and all the fun will come to you!!

3. Last point. We are coming from Israel, and all the students that you meet there are in a big majority from Europe and have very bad prejudices or are biased because of what they watch in the medias. So you kind of have the role to show the best side the Israeli people and be ready for talks about Israel being open minded and comprehensive in order to establish the dialogue.

For any further question I'll be happy to answer in private talks.

Best,
Clara Guez