



Tel Aviv University
TAU Recanati

The Leon Recanati Graduate School of Business Administration

The semester abroad was a wonderful, mind opening experience. I was accepted to IE (Instituto de Empresa) Business School in Madrid, Spain. I arrived to Madrid just before the semester started, and I've been there for about three months.

- **Visa information**

I checked with the Spanish embassy. Basically, as a foreign student who's taking a semester in Spain, you are obliged to get a visa if you're staying in Spain for more than three months. The Spanish are very easy, and since my total duration there was 3 months and I was also traveling outside the country during my stay there, I wasn't required to get a visa.

- **Housing**

I was very lucky with finding an apartment. I got a place with a fulltime IE student, about 2 train stops from the university. The rent was 600 euro per month, including utilities. I found the apartment using the Facebook group of the IE students – there is a special group for this purpose. The Israeli students who are taking the fulltime program were very nice and very helpful – before I came there and during my stay in Madrid. Other foreign students paid for their rent between 480 euro to about 1000 euro (big apartments for more than one person which they rented by themselves). So, I guess the average rent for a nice place is between 550 to 700 euros. You should really take into account that the rent search may take some time, and so most of the people take care of this before they arrive.

- **Living expenses**

As far as I could tell, Madrid is relatively cheap in living expenses – The prices are much more proportional than in Israel. You can get a good wine in about 2-3 euros, and I guess that says it all. Compared to the housing expenses, which I found approximately close to those in Tel-Aviv, the living expenses are very low.

- **Transportation**

The public transportation in Madrid is very easy. I got a monthly subway ticket, which cost me about 50 euros and was worth it. The subway stations are all over the city and so it's very easy to use them even when you go out. Other means of transportation are the bus – which I barely used, taxis – which considering you're paying in euros, are not that expensive. Some people bought bicycles and some preferred walking – it all depends on how far you live from the university. If you're looking to travel in Spain, you can either use the bus for close distance destinations, or use the train for other places. The train is very comfortable, and if you buy few

rides together and in advance the prices are very low – much cheaper than taking a flight for example.

- **Courses**

the semester I studied in Madrid consists of two terms (4 & 5) each of them is a month and a half with a short break in between. These terms are for the electives classes. There is a large variety of classes there and I found most of my classes very interesting and contributing. I've focused on two kinds of classes – 1. Finance Accounting. 2. Soft skills.

There are classes both in English and in Spanish.

I had to choose my classes before I arrived to Madrid, but during the fourth term we had an opportunity to change the classes for the fifth term – And so I did.

Each session is an hour and a half and you have 3 kinds of classes: 5 sessions, 12 and 20. The class can be done in a day, a week or all through the term, so you should check the schedule. You could ask the Israeli who are doing the full program for recommendation, regarding specific lecturer or a subject, but the administration office is pretty lenient towards the students, so they allow changes to be made.

- **Recreation**

You go out almost every night. It's a very happy city and most of the students who come to the exchange are looking to party – usually it's a break for most of them from their other busy lives.

There are many museums and big parks in Madrid. You get a short tour in the city from the University, and they also bring you some recommendations for the city and for daytrips and weekend trips outside the city.

During the break between the terms and even during the second term – since the classes are flexible – I traveled with my friends to other countries in Europe. Since you're already there, the transportation cost is relatively cheap.

- **General experience**

they are serious when they say about an exchange semester to be “a one in a life time experience”. My initial focus was mainly academic, and although I do feel that I've learned a lot and developed in that field, I also feel that I've gained so much more in other fields. The constant interaction with foreign students who share the same experience as you is very enlightening. This time is sort of a pause from life, but a high speed pause, in a way that this new atmosphere sort of drawing you in. I'm still in touch with friends from Madrid, both the Israeli students and off course, both the other foreign students.

- **Tips & important things to be aware of**

You should sort the housing issue before you arrive to Madrid or at least take some days in advance because it might take some time.

If you are planning to improve you're Spanish, be ready to take some classes by yourself outside the university. It's an international school, there are other Israeli

students there and it's pretty easy to get along with the Spanish people – and so, you don't feel that it is crucial to learn the language.

Watch out for pickpockets – wallets and smartphones. During my stay there, 2 or 3 of my friends got their phones stolen – one time it was by kids who distracted him with a brochure – they covered his iPhone, and once they were gone there was no iPhone.

If you are looking to get the most of the experience, learn more about other attractions in Europe during that time – for example, many of the students flew to Germany during Oktoberfest – and prices are going sky high as time goes near so you should plan in advance.