

**Exchange university**

Tecnológico de Monterrey, Campus Guadalajara, Mexico

Degree programme

M. Sc. Sustainable Technology

Incredible Exchange Semester at Tecnológico de Monterrey, Guadalajara, Mexico

Before departure

I applied for the exchange in Mexico because I wanted to improve my Spanish skills and gain experience about the Mexican culture and traditions. Tecnológico de Monterrey is the partner university of KTH, therefore it was also my target university. Before going to Mexico, I expected a wilder country than Sweden with lots of traditions and potential of the country. As a German student, I didn't need a Visa. It was enough to have the letter of acceptance of the target university and a valid health insurance to enter the country and stay up to 180 days. Of course, I had to prove my Spanish language skills to take some courses, but that and the course registration were the only preparation you need to do, Mexico is not listed as one of those areas where you need vaccinations, therefore it was easier and short-term to plan the exchange studies.

Upon arrival

I arrived approximately 2 weeks before the studies started. So I had enough time to find a place to stay. That was a bit of a mess, since "everyone" tries to find a new roomie at that time of the year, but it is easily manageable. One week before the course start, there was an introduction, where you can make new contacts and friends.





Financials

Since Tecnológico de Monterrey is a partner university of KTH, I didn't have to pay for my studies in Mexico. Mexico is less expensive than Sweden, a coffee on the campus costs about 7 SEK, breakfast around 25 SEK and a coffee mug 50 SEK, which you could use the whole semester and during your travels. The price for a locker on the campus is 125 SEK per semester, additionally to this, there are no other costs you have to take care about.

Accommodation

I arrived without accommodation in Mexico. Through previous internet research, I found out that many students or former students rent out rooms to international students and therefore it was easier to find a place to stay than in Sweden. The campus in Guadalajara lies in the north-west of the city. It is generally better to live closer to the campus since the city honestly has a huge traffic problem. I lived in the city centre and had to commute by cab or train or bus between 30 minutes and 1 hour to university daily. The advantage was that I could spend more time to explore the city centre than others, but obviously, the disadvantage was the long time spent in transportation.

University and studies

The campus of Guadalajara has about 8,000 students and offers a broad variety from business courses, architecture and design courses, to technology courses. Since Tecnológico de Monterrey is probably the most expensive University of Mexico and they actively try to adjust their way of teaching, the courses are innovative and the buildings and equipment very modern. A regular day of studying begins from 7 am to 9 am and lasts until approximately 5 pm with 15 minutes breaks between the courses. There is always a bit time for lunch as well if you have a free time slot in between. The majority of my courses have been in English, but I also studied in Spanish.

Courses

I chose my courses according to the courses I needed to take, due to KTH regulations and added a Culture course as well as a Spanish language course as free courses during my degree. All the courses are almost exactly as described in their syllabus. That's good to know for following students. Even the exams, small tests, and presentation dates were correct. The professors were friendly and respectful and actively tried to adjust their courses according to the student's needs. Every two weeks we had very short feedback round at the end of the lecture. That was very useful and made the students feel more valuable.

City and country

Guadalajara is Mexico's second biggest city. It has about 6 million inhabitants and has the reputation of being the hipster place in Mexico. It is partly true. There are some really beautiful and alternative places in the city such as two big parks for running, sports in general or just hanging out; very beautiful streets and places in the city centre; and a very huge canyon in the north of the city called "Barranca de Huentitan". There are definitely a lot of things to do and the flair in some bouncing areas is definitely worth going more than just once.

I didn't feel a culture shock during my stay. Nevertheless, it is quite different to Sweden, and therefore it can happen to be shocked by the impunctuality of the public transportation or some people paired with the over exact claims of punctuality of institutions and the university. The people are very friendly and open-minded.











All photos were taken in the City centre of Guadalajara.

Leisure and social activities

In my spare time, I travelled. I studied during the week and spend my weekends in the bus and places around the city, such as other cities, mountains, canyons, rivers, or the beaches. I was also representative of the university's athletics teams and therefore made new friendships with local students. The training was also time-consuming and I spend around 4 days a week training.

You will meet so many international students in Tec de Monterrey, that it is almost impossible to not socialize. We spent much time together exploring the city and the surroundings. Even exploring the Mexican cuisine took us all the semester and still we are missing so much of it.