

**EXCHANGE REPORT****Name****Year and term for exchange**

Liubov

2018, autumn term

Exchange university

National University of Singapore

Degree programme

Sustainable Urban Planning and Design

Same-same, but different: City in a Garden

Before departure

Singapore is long known as one of the “Asian miracles”, and as a great example of a smart city. So, for me as a person learning about urban planning, Singapore was a dream-destination for studies.

Financials

My budget was limited to around SEK 9000 per month, which is the average amount of money I usually spend in Sweden – so, for me Singapore was not more expensive than Stockholm. As I stayed in a student housing in both cities, expenditures for it was more or less the same.

Eating out in Singapore could be same expensive as in Stockholm (or even more costly), but if one goes to food courts / hawker centres or street food ventures (which most people do) – it is much cheaper and more affordable than cooking by yourself (as well as super tasty).

Transportation costs average to SEK 15 per ride (fares depend on a distance, and travellers pay each time they change mode of transport). There are also numerous dock-less bikes and kick-scooters which could be used for transportation at the cost ~SEK 8-18 per 1 hour.

There is a compulsory miscellaneous student fee of approx. SEK 900~1000, which allows student to use various student facilities, including sport gym(s) with tennis courts, swimming pool(s) etc.

Overall, my expenditures were roughly following:

Housing - ~SEK 15 000 per semester

City transport - ~SEK 550 per month

Food - ~SEK 3500 per month

Mobile & Internet - ~SEK 140 per month

Services aka laundry, printing, etc. - ~SEK 120

Entertainment etc. – depends on preferences/budget/ etc., for me it was ~SEK 1000

Travelling – totally depends on preferences/budget/ etc.

Accommodation

I have got a student accommodation, by applying through NUS housing services portal. There are several types of accommodation available for exchange students at NUS: mainly, student residences and colleges. Housing in colleges include compulsory meal plan (breakfast + dinner), residences – no. I stayed at Prince George’s Park House – a part of Prince George’s Park Residences (probably, the oldest housing complex of NUS), which has more community activities (like in colleges) though no meal plan (like in residences). Talking about facilities, PGPR is closer to metro and has “proper” kitchens (with stoves and ovens), even though it is a bit not as lively as UTown area.

There are different types of rooms: - with air conditioning (A/C) and own bathroom; - without A/C, but with a basin in the room (shower/toilet are in the corridor); - without A/C, bathroom in the corridor. All rooms have a ceiling fan though. Mine room was of a last type, and its cost was approx. SEK 15000 per semester. As I am relying on a scholarship, I inquired to split the payment into several (three, to be precise) transactions (by submitting a number of requests and supporting them with the proof of my scholarship).

University and studies

For me, the university is quite big. I was simply amused that there are buses (several routes) running around the campus. Besides, NUS has two campuses: Kent Ridge (bigger campus with the majority of schools and premises located there) and Bukit Timah campus (with Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy and School of Law located there).

Education is in English, and there are various language courses available. Most of the courses open to exchange students are from bachelor levels, though it is still possible to apply for some master level courses. There is a system of bidding for courses – students have to apply for courses they want to take, and the selection is done depending on what number of people are willing to enrol for course as well as on their background.

City and country

To say that I have fallen in love with Singapore is to say nothing 😊

Some people would say that Singapore is the same as many other developed cities with numerous skyscrapers. Maybe it is, in some terms, but still it is much different and unique in its kind. Once, I described it to my friend as “well-organised Asia” – where luxurious multistore complexes neighbour with public housing, concrete-and-steel jungles are surrounded by lush parks, colourful Singapore culture is mixed up with country’s cosmopolitanism. What is more, I feel that it is also much hospitable country, and many Singaporeans are open and willing to exchange various tips about local food, places, travels and other life essentials.

Leisure and social activities

NUS is full of sport and social activities! There are numerous student clubs as well as just one-time events. It is good to check ads placed around the campus, as well as student portals, such as NUS OrgSync, or telegram channels for youth in Singapore, such as @openjio.

Other recommendations and observations

Enjoy time in Singapore and explore the city – it has much more than what could be found in regular travel recommendations and is full of activities suiting any kind of taste! 😊

