

Erfahrungsbericht

University of Bergen (WS 23/24)

This little report collects some information about the exchange to the University of Bergen (Norway) based on my personal experiences there. It should help the reader to get a first overall impression and some valuable information and links regarding studying and living in Bergen.

Just a few words about me, I am studying Scientific Computing and did the exchange via the math department (in case some SC students are wondering how an Erasmus could work for them) in my 4th master semester. A very good overview with all information you need for the beginning can be found here:

<https://www.mathinf.uni-heidelberg.de/de/outreach/internationales/erasmus-outgoing>

University of Bergen:

Since I only joined math lectures at the University of Bergen (UiB) I will just report facts regarding the math department. The latter is relatively small, especially the master's program. I had two different classes and most of the students I met there did an exchange. Nevertheless, there is a big variety of courses offered by the math department and most of the master courses will be taught in English. So, it should be very easy to find suitable courses. The following list collects all courses and one can find information about them by clicking on the course code:

https://rapport-dv.uhad.no/t/UiB/views/Emnelisteforinnreisendeutvekslingsstuderent/Coursesforexchanges_tudents?%3Aembed=y&%3AshowAppBanner=false&%3AshowShareOptions=false&%3Adisplay_count=no&%3AshowVizHome=no&%3Atoolbar=no&%3A

The lectures are often easier as they are here in Heidelberg since the pace is not so fast and fewer topics are covered within a lecture, for master students this

can sometimes be confusing and a bit annoying. Bachelor students should not hesitate to choose master courses, as they are often comparable with the bachelor courses here in Heidelberg.

In general, the whole university not just the math department is very organized, you will get structured information regarding your exchange and questions will be answered very quick. I didn't have any problems regarding organization.

I did the autumn semester at UiB that starts mid-August and ends before Christmas, so you will usually be done with all exams and projects before Christmas.

Housing:

You will get guaranteed housing when applying for an exchange at UiB. The organization that is responsible for housing and more is called Sammen (<https://sammen.no/en>). When you have applied for an exchange, you can set up an online account and choose some preferred student accommodations. But it is very likely that you get a room either in Fantoft or Alrek Studentboliger. I got a room in Fantoft and enjoyed it a lot. It is not in the city centre, but you get there by tram that stops in front of the accommodation within 25 minutes. Going to the university will take you roughly 15 to 20 minutes. In Fantoft you have all you need, a grocery store, very nice gym, there are common rooms and a music room. Within walking distance (20 min.) there is a beautiful castle called Gamlehaugen with a little park directly at the fjord, very nice for some swimming sessions.

The only drawback is that there are shared rooms and if you stay for just one semester it is very likely that you will get one. There are mainly two types of shared rooms, double shared room with a small kitchen and own bathroom, so you basically share a little apartment (15m²) with another person or a shared sleeping room within a big 16 people flat, where you share a big kitchen and living room with everyone (I would recommend applying for that option since you going to meet way more people and there is just more space as in the 15m² shared apartment). The prices for the rooms range from 300 to 400€ depending on the size and if it's a shared room or not.

Moreover, the rooms are not equipped with a lot of stuff. You need to bring your own blanket and pillow or buy them there. Most people do a trip to IKEA on their first days.

If you are not interested in guaranteed housing, you can try to find a private flat on <https://hybel.no/> or <https://www.finn.no/>. The apartments are usually way nicer, very big and clean but pricy (500€ and more).

Bergen:

For people that enjoy nature and outdoor activities but still want to spend some time in nice pubs and bars, Bergen is the perfect place. The city is surrounded by mountains that are perfectly suitable for quick evening hikes or longer trips on the weekend. Since it is the rainiest city in all of Europe, you should definitely bring good raining gear and be prepared for a lot of rain. I was very lucky because we had a sunny autumn with fewer rain than in Germany, so expect it to be rainy, but it can also be very sunny if you get lucky.

On the other hand, Bergen has a very nice bar culture and many Norwegians are out on Friday and Saturday night to visit bars and clubs. I recommend to sign up for the welcome week event (information for that will be send to you soon enough by UiB) where you will meet other people from your department and check out the best bars and places in Bergen.

Culture:

The Norwegian culture can be compared to the German culture. The people are calm and more introverted than extroverted. That should not be interpreted as being rude and disinterested, if you get in touch with Norwegians, they are usually very polite and helpful. Getting in touch with locals can get challenging sometimes especially if you live in Fantoft because many international students are living there. Even though it is possible to get through the country without a single word of Norwegian (almost all Norwegians are fluent in English) a language course can be worth it. If you really would like to dive into the culture and meet Norwegians you should try to find a big private flat, so it gets easier to connect with new people. Otherwise, you can easily get stuck in the 'Erasmus- Bubble'.

More useful stuff:

Here I will collect some more useful links regarding life in Bergen or Norway in general:

- Public transport: download the vy app (like Deutsche Bahn app)
- Public transport in Bergen and surrounding: download skyss app
- Weather app that should work best in Norway: yr
- Outdoor store where you can rent a lot of equipment for free:

<https://www.bua.no> (you need a Norwegian phone number for registration but then you can make reservations for a lot of cool stuff online)

Overall, I enjoyed my exchange semester a lot, you get to see a new university, new people and you can explore a beautiful country. I would encourage everyone to plan and do such an exchange and not back off because of planning and paperwork, it is definitely worth it and the responsible people from Heidelberg and Bergen are very supportive and helpful.

If you have more questions, just reach out to me via mail:

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