

Travel Report

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My stay abroad

What was it like to study at the university?

I'm not sure... I was only there like 10 times.

I decided to go abroad during the COVID-19 pandemic, which I don't regret at all, but it did make my stay somewhat atypical.

Because of the pandemic, I was not able to stay in the dorm, so I ended up staying in a little place called Hanyang Habitat. The Habitat, as we call it, made my trip. The owner is greedy, the kitchen is always dirty, and the drunk inhabitants *will* wake you up at 3AM, but I wouldn't trade it for the world!

There was a great sense of unity at Habitat, and most days, I didn't even see my room, as I basically lived in the kitchen. We did everything together.

I wholeheartedly recommend staying somewhere with a lot of people. The few people, I met living by themselves, always regretted it.

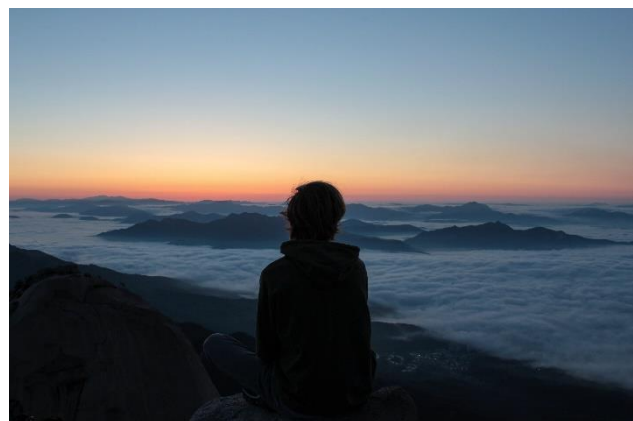


Academic life was less interesting. Korean teaching methods seem to emphasize theory over practice, so if you don't like memorizing formulas, most classes are gonna be a bit boring. There were no group projects and although there were some good assignments, all the exams were focused exclusively on theory.

What was your initial motivation?

When I decided to go to Korea, it was out of pure boredom. Having spent a year inside doing nothing, experiencing nothing, I *needed* to leave.

I wanted to go somewhere completely new, as far from Denmark as possible. I wanted to speak a different language, with a different alphabet in a different culture.





Korea ticked all these boxes and more. And Seoul is in the centre of it all. You can take a subway to anywhere. Want to go to an ancient temple? How about a majestic palace? Maybe hike a mountain? It's all just a few stops away.

Meeting people is harder. Koreans are often shy, and it can be hard to make a connection, but if you manage it, it's incredibly gratifying.

I spent the previous semester teaching myself Korean and it was so cool to have conversations, however

simple, with real Koreans. Due to our difference in culture, we often had different views on things, and it was interesting to see their perspective.

Most of my interactions were not with Koreans, but with the other exchange students. I didn't even have to step outside to experience new cultures. My best friends were Brazilian and French, and we spent most of our time playing a Russian game, taught to us by Germans.

Living with so many different nationalities, was an amazing experience and I think I might've learned just as much Italian as I did Korean.



Courses

Finding courses can be a pain. The portal is slow and buggy and when the courses have a description, it's either too ambiguous, in Korean, or just completely wrong. Basically, the whole process is a pain, but using other people's courses as a template, helps a bit.

Hanyang University

IT University of Copenhagen

Principles of Programming Languages	Funktionel Programmering
Computer Graphics	Elective
New Venture Creation	Softwareudvikling i større grupper
Information System Analysis	Systemudvikling og projektorganisering
Introductory Korean Level 2	N/A

My courses

Principles of Programming Languages was the surprise winner. It has a heavy course-load and will swallow a lot of your time (we literally learned 3 languages), but it's also the only one, that'd I'd say is equal to ITU standards. The assignments were great and the teacher, Jeo Siwon, was great at answering questions and using examples.

Computer Graphics, while an extremely interesting topic, was somewhat disappointing. The teacher would just regurgitate theory without any consideration for practical applications. One time I sat through an hour-long lecture, without figuring out, what the subject was supposed to be used for.

In case you want to take this course, you should know that the info on the portal is completely wrong. You will not use Java or C++, but Python (doesn't say anywhere). Also, although the professor never mentions it, he will expect you to be good at Linear Algebra.

New Venture Creation & Information System Analysis (with Ook Lee) are both bad courses. The professor filmed the screen with his phone and somehow managed to have the audio be out of sync. He just reads the slides and never says anything of value. Completely useless and boring classes. I can only recommend them if you want a blow-off class. After the midterm, I ignored both classes completely until 2 days before the final and still got 89%.

About grades

I can't find it written anywhere, but all courses seem to be graded on a curve, meaning you don't necessarily need a certain percentage to pass. It's very easy to pass most courses, so don't stress out if you get a very low score on the midterm.

Arranging your stay

There are lots of options for housing with varying costs. The dorm is extremely cheap and might be a good option after COVID dies down. Goshiwons are another popular choice and are usually fairly cheap. In goshiwons you typically have your own room, but a shared kitchen.

I ended up going with Hanyang Habitat, which is an expensive goshiwon. The rooms there are very small, and a lot of people had issues with the shower, sinks, etc. The accommodation itself is not worth it at all, but the people are. There's also no curfew, which is common in other places, and the manager is very helpful in all things, even outside strictly Habitat related questions.

No matter which option you go with, I recommend finding a place, where you can live with other people.

Don't stress about accommodation. It's very easy to find cheap airbnbs and even in Habitat there were extra rooms available during the entire semester. You could wait until you land in the airport to book accommodation if you really wanted to.

Resources

- Hanyang Habitat <http://www.hanyanghabitat.com>
- Dwell <http://www.dwellstudent.co.kr>
- Ablehouse <http://www.ablehouse.kr/eng>
- Facebook Group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/HYUHousing>
- Facebook Group 2 <https://www.facebook.com/groups/seoulhousing>
- Goshi Pages <https://goshipages.com>
- Airbnb <https://www.airbnb.com>
- Craigslist <http://seoul.craigslist.co.kr>
- Sublet <http://www.sublet.com>
- Share House <https://www.thecomenstay.com/en>

Expenses and Financing

Food

The groceries are incredibly expensive. Especially meat, vegetables, and fruit. Because of this, you'll probably spend a lot of time eating out, which is fine, because it's usually quite cheap. You can easily find good meals around 20-50DKK.

Cash

It's a good idea to always keep some cash on you, as you can't always use foreign credit cards. It is also common for food stands and such to only accept cash.

SIM Card

Don't buy a prepaid SIM card. It's a complete scam. Instead gather some friends and go to Chingu Mobile (친구통신). They always have group offers, and I ended up getting 4 months of unlimited data for 50.000 KRW, which is very good compared to a single prepaid month being 40-45.000 KRW.

My budget

I really tried to be cheap but ended up spending too much anyway. I've heard horror stories about other student's bank accounts. To give you a reference point, I've included my expenses for the whole semester below.

This also includes expenses, that are probably not relevant to you, like the mandatory quarantine, but I hope it'll give you an idea of how expensive Korea can be.

March

Category	Total
ARC	240,45
Books	299,85
Eat out	376,88
Groceries	1354,74
Misc	340,71
Withdrawal	1852,63
Pr day	144,04
Total	4465,26

April

Category	Total
Eat out	303,83
Fun	360,04
Groceries	982,14
Misc	429
Small	73,82
Withdrawal	1764,08
Pr day	130,43
Total	3912,91

May

Category	Total
Drinking	29,82
Eat out	248,31
Groceries	950,05
Misc	164
Unknown	110,24
Withdrawal	1474,09
Pr day	96,02
Total	2976,51

June

Category	Total
Eat out	502,55
Groceries	416,35
Misc	101,57
Travel	2434,54
Unknown	60,05
Withdrawal	309,72
Pr day	110,74
Total	3322,23

Daily expenses

Category	Total
ARC	240,45
Books	299,85
Drinking	29,82
Eat out	1431,57
Fun	360,04
Groceries	3703,28
Misc	1035,28
Small	73,82
Travel	2434,54
Unknown	170,29
Withdrawal	5400,52
Pr day	124,42
Total	15179,46

Other

Item	Total
CPH - ICN	3246
ICN - CPH	2234
Total rent	16400
Quarantine	8800
Laptop	
battery	1100
Visa	420
Insurance	1.740,00
Total	33940,00

Total

Everything	<u>49119,46</u>
After SU	<u>27119,46</u>