Personal information

Name: Gabriel Green
Major: Plant Science
Name of host university: Wageningen University
Period/Time of Exchange: Spring 2019
Address of blog if you had one: @gabrielgreen on Instagram

Practical Advice

Visa
They have “residence permits” instead of Visas which allow you to stay in the country longer than 4 months. You can do it through the school when you arrive or in the nearby city Utrecht later on. Don’t forget to do it or they’ll harass you on your way out of the Europe 😊.

Housing
Wageningen has tons of cheap housing around campus through Idealis. I payed around $300 a month for my solo dorm room on the 14th floor with a great view of the little city. It’s comparable to American dorms but people tend to have a more communal attitude and cook dinner for the floor and such.

Arrival
They set you up with a “buddy group” and will put you in a group chat with them prior to your arrival. A lot of people make their good friends through this group. It’s a bunch of mostly European non-Dutch students with a couple Dutch students to lead you. They’ll think you’re cool for being American even though you’re not. They’ll organize some social stuff for you and take you to parties. Make friends with non-Americans.

Academics

The University
Wageningen is widely considered the best life science university in Europe. If you want to actually do school while you’re abroad, you’ll appreciate that.

Courses

There’s a pre-enroll pretty similar to Cornell. If you mess up your class selection or want to switch in/out of a class, you usually can.

Difference between studying at Cornell and at your host university
Generally speaking, Wageningen is less work than Cornell, but it’s demanding in a different way. If you’re used to not going to lecture and just reading the lecture slides before the prelim, I suggest you check yourself before you wreck yourself. Most classes involve labs, group assignments, practicals, etc. on a regularly scheduled basis that you pretty much need to go to. Most classes assign little to no work to be done outside of class, so the learning is supposed to happen during the class, funny enough.

Life Abroad

Language
Everyone speaks English. I learned how to say please, thank you, and “I am a strong independent woman” in Dutch.

Health and Safety
Safest place on Earth.

Overall exchange experience
Wageningen parallels Ithaca in a lot of ways. Much like Ithaca, you can make whatever you want of it. When it is warm, people gather at the Rhine River instead of the gorges, the one club is Luca instead of Level B, there’s “student associations” instead of frats, they drink fancy beers instead of keystone light. Instead of being an hour from Binghamton, it’s an hour from Amsterdam which is great. Go to Bourbon Street for live music in Amsterdam. Belgium, France, and Germany are all pretty close and cheap to get to. Have fun god bless.