

My Experiences as an Exchange Student in Mannheim, Germany

Name: Srichitra Wacharapairoj

Home Country: Thailand

Home University: Mahidol University International College

Field of Study: Business Administration (Marketing)

Guten Tag !!

My name is Srichitra Wacharapairoj. You can call me "Belle". Every person in Thailand has nickname. As you can see from my name, it might be too long and hard to call each other.

I was a senior student when I did an exchange program with University of Mannheim. Baden Wuerttemberg foundation gave me an opportunity to spend the semester here in Germany. Thank you to the scholarship, to Mahidol University, and to University of Mannheim, which gave me the chances to open to the new world.

First of all, after landing, I was so impressed with the country. It was so cold at that time (in February) when compared to Thai weather. Moreover, language all over the places is German. Therefore, I needed to get use to that and try to learn them day by day.

The transportation here is very convenient. Fast train or ICE from Frankfurt airport to Mannheim is only 35 minutes. First day in Mannheim was a bit hectic for me. I have done all many things in the same day such as enrolled as a student, applied for my insurance, opened bank account, registered in Foreign office, and moved to my room. After that I began to get to know Mannheim.

Mannheim has a nice landscape. It is very easy for people to walk around with its quadrant shape. It has no street name. However, people can find the place by calling every block from A to Z.

University of Mannheim is a baroque palace. It is very beautiful, that I have never thought that this kind of palace can be one of the places to study. I took only a few

subjects, which are German language, International Marketing, and Managing International Markets. University also offered “Buddy Program” and tried to arrange many activities for international students, so we could meet new people and new friends. Therefore, you will never be alone there if you hang out and do activities with them. Furthermore, other places or other Western European countries are within easy reach when you are in Mannheim. You can also travel all around with many cheap options either you travel alone or with your friends. You can purchase “Bahn Card” or discount card for trains or if you are an early bird, you can buy the ticket for a reasonable prices.

Moving to a bit of German culture, People are friendly and willing to help especially old people. There are many people that came to me and asked whether they can help me or not when they see me had some doubts. In addition, you should know some German language in order to get around better. Bread is a common food here. And you can find many bakery shops all around Germany. I love bakery shops here a lot. I think they are very unique with no one else around the world has. The tastes of bread here are very nice. You will miss it after you have tried them such as Broetchen mit Kaese (Cheese bread). In addition, Bratwurst (grilled sausage) and beer here are very popular. Supermarkets and shopping mall are opened until only 8 pm and they are closed on Sunday. So everyone needs to be aware of that. Don’t forget to buy what you need before. For me, it is very strange because in Thailand every shop is opened every day and opened until 10 or 11 pm. Moreover, you can eat all day Thailand because many restaurants are opened until morning. Germany also has many palaces and museums that you can visit. Different parts of Germany are also different. So it is very interesting to explore.

Even though, I needed to adapt to new culture a lot, I would optimistically say that this time is one of my best memories in my life. And I would not regret of my decision.