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Studying Abroad at San Francisco State University

By Nadia Stomp

Student Perspective From:
University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands



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How difficult/easy was it to obtain a US visa?

It was not hard to get a US visa as an exchange student. You only have to be aware that the USA Consulate is busy during July and August, so it can take a while before you can make an appointment. Do not bring your phone to the Consulate! You are not allowed to bring that in.

Where and how did you find temporary housing when you first arrived? How much did it cost? Describe your experience.

I booked a hotel (Casa Loma Hotel at Fillmore) back home at www.bookers.com and it was not expensive. It was \$355 for 8 days and I split it with another girl from the Netherlands.

Where and how did you find permanent housing? How much rent do you pay? Are you happy with where you live? Describe your experience.

I checked craigslist.com every day and made appointments to visit houses. I bought a phone first at T-Mobile, so I was able to call the landlords instead of e-mailing them. I was looking for a place to live with a friend, and we wanted to live together. It was hard to find 2 private rooms in one house, and now we are sharing a room.

I live in Haight & Asbury and I love this area. I live in the International House and there live 11 other students (from all over the world). We live in a big Victorian house. I pay \$ 750 a month and that is a lot for sharing a room! I was in a hurry when I was looking for a place because I was planning a road trip. I would not recommend planning trips before you find a place that you really like. Also, I would not recommend living in Ingleside, very depressing over there!

How difficult/easy is it to get around? What mode of transport do you use primarily (public transport, bicycle, car, walk)?

I use the public transport to get to school and pay \$60 a month. I have not bought a bicycle, because the hills would kill me! Cabs are not expensive over here compared to Amsterdam, so I take cabs often...

How do you access your money? Did you open an American bank account? If so, was it worthwhile?

I have not opened an American bank account. Every time when I get cash I use my Dutch bank pass and I have to pay \$ 3. I have a credit card as well for emergencies.

Did you obtain a California driver's license? If so, was it worthwhile?

No, I did not.

Did you find San Franciscans to be helpful if you were in need?

They are very helpful!

Where did you obtain furniture for your room?

My room was already furnished.

Primarily, do you buy groceries or do you eat out? Where and why?

Groceries are very expensive and I prefer to go out for dinner. On Haight Street there are many nice (not expensive) restaurants and I really like the Marina and the Mission district as well. The food in San Francisco is great and I am definitely going to miss that!

How difficult/easy was it to make friends? Describe your experience.

It is very easy to make friends. People are very open, and invite you to their place, parties etc. They love foreigners and especially people from Amsterdam.

Via the IEEC, it is also very easy to meet people. Every Thursday they organize a Thursday Night Socialites (TNS), and you can party with other exchange students. The IEEC organizes events as well that you can go to.

I choose to hang out with many American students and I met the most of them during class or at my place (The International House). Many people

only hang out with other international students, but I would recommend hanging out with Americans. They know the city well, and can show you around!

What IEEC commitment did you choose (flyering, tabling, language exchange, country ambassador, IEEC officer, special contribution)? Describe your experience.

I choose to be a Country Ambassador. The Study Abroad Fair was a lot of fun!

Were you able to enroll in the classes you wanted?

Something went wrong with my application, and I was only allowed to enroll myself in IR classes. My major is Communications (graduate student) and I crashed the most of my classes. It worked out well, but it was a little bit awkward.

How to crash a class: You send an e-mail to a teacher and he/she tells you there is no place anymore. You ignore this message and show up early. You sit at the front row, smile and let the teacher know that you care. They do not find it rude that you ignored their message and appreciate it that you are trying so hard! I told them that I was sure that I would add something to the class, because I was an exchange student and have a different point of view...

Before you sign up for classes it is worthwhile to check out your professors at www.ratemyprofessor.com.

How do your classes at SFSU compare to your classes at home?

The classes over here are much easier than the classes at the University of Amsterdam, especially the undergraduate classes, and it reminds me a bit of high school. The graduate class that I am following is a bit harder and challenging (in a good way).

Students over here speak up more and there is more competition during class. Over here you can follow classes at another department and that can be very interesting!