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Experience of studying in Turkey

Great friends. Coming to Turkey, I thought that I would spend a lot of time with the exchange students and some time with the locals, but in the end I ended up spending nearly all my time with the locals. In the beginning it was difficult to get to know the local students – later on I found out it was because of problems with English – but at the end I got a few really close friends who I'm really going to miss.

Free buses for students. On campus all busses are free which is a very good thing seeing as the campus is huge.

Interesting courses. The courses really helped me get perspective to what I want to do in my future. Even though all the courses were general studies, they still gave more insight to the things and helped me make up my mind of what I'd like to do after I graduate.

Before going to Ankara everybody told me that it'll be freezing, there'll be lots of snow and it's dark – even worse than Finland. But in reality all the snow was gone by the end of February and now it's nearly 30°C with the sun shining nearly every day.

Easy connections to everywhere. As Ankara is in the middle of the country, it's easy to get just about everywhere from there. Buses leave from Ankara every 30 minutes and everywhere is within reasonable travel – even east of Turkey is “just” 20 hours away. Also trains connect to the biggest cities of Turkey.

Lots to see in Ankara (even if it is “just” the capital city) – but it's still no Istanbul. Many travellers skip Ankara because they think that there's nothing worth seeing, but it isn't the truth. As Turkey's capital and second largest city, it has many things to offer to people. As it's surrounded by mountains from 3 directions, the view is really beautiful and many historical attractions offer a good way to spend a few days.

Student life: I can definitely say that my student life was incredible mainly due to conveniences and opportunities in the university. To begin with the university itself, its campus has everything in it starting from hospital to banks and hairdressing salon. You can give 100% of yourself to education in this place. Most of my friends who lived in the campus

went to city once in a month, sometimes once in two months. All the basic needs of a student were met in the campus.

Turks towards foreigners: I think Turkey is one of the most foreign-friendly nations. I can assure you that during my study in Turkey, I have never felt myself discriminated because I am not Turk. On the contrary, most of the Turkish people are willing to help whenever you need it. When I entered the classroom, I was able to feel that there was a lot of attention on me. After some time, my fellow classmates started coming to me and asked a few questions. Their questions were typical like where I am from. The other frequent question was whether I know Turkish or not, and my positive answer to this question made most of them very happy. Need to highlight here that Turkish society is highly patriotic. Celebrations of Independence etc. are spread among all people, starting from children in kindergarten to retired grannies. Other than the patriotism, the Turkish society taught me to share, I met many big-hearted people. They are the ones who don't have any dilemma when it comes to sharing with someone they know little about. They pay a lot of attention in celebrating the religious holidays, and I had a few chances to celebrate with Turkish families. It was awesome.

Cuisine: I would say Turkish cuisine is delicious and in getting used to it I did not face much problems since we had similar cuisine in our country. In Turkey it is not different from what I was used to in my country. Food culture in Turkey is also differed from one region to another. The cuisine of the Black sea region uses fish extensively and western parts are rich in vegetables, but all regions in Turkey love sweets and desserts and make them a lot, especially on holidays. In Turkey wherever you go, you will find something special of that region to eat.

Even though I had some difficulties, educational experience of studying in Turkey was life changing for me personally. During my stay, I met very bright and good people who positively affected my way of thinking, students from various disciplines who inspired me for the better future and finally, my friends who stood by me during times of happiness and sadness. I am thankful that I had a chance to study in such a good university. No doubt, I would cherish those memories for the rest of my life.

