

Roksana's Erasmus experience.

Erasmus student at the Department of Preschool Education at the University of Crete during the academic year 2016/2017

I had no idea that I will love Erasmus at Crete so much when I applied for that. I was very nervous about whole trip and how will I settle my life there. The plan was to spend in Greece winter semester... but I didn't know that this semester is going to be one of the most important experiences in my life.

I arrived to Rethymno two weeks before academic year began, so I had time to organize my life there and meet other Erasmus students. There were only about 40 other guys – and actually I'm very glad about that. It gives you an opportunity to meet everybody and know better each other. It feels like in a school class, everybody integrated very quickly and soon we had this feeling, that we are one big family.

Rethymno is the best place to live. I am coming from Cracow, which is way bigger and I found Rethymno a very nice change. Everything is close; in order to go from one part of city to another you won't walk more than 25 minutes. Although, I would really recommend finding accommodation close to city center – some of us had flats on the suburbs, and it was a little bit irritating to have this half hour walk to home, while others had only 5 minutes.

The city is very beautiful and has lots of attractions. Main one, especially for people coming from cold countries, is beach! There is also beautiful promenade with palms among the coast. Old town is unique and has its own charm. You may find there a lot of delicious restaurants and cool pubs. Not long after beginning of Erasmus we settled up our favorite places, with good prices and inimitable atmosphere!

Crete University is outside of Rethymno, it takes around 10 minutes by bus to go there. It is placed on the hill, so you can enjoy very nice sea view from windows of library. At the very beginning International Office organized special meeting in order to explain everything connected with student life – from Learning Agreement to Greek mentality. We met a lot of Greek students, who became our friends and were also ready to help us with any kind of problems. Crete University offers classes of Modern Greek, which I really recommend to attend. Teacher was brilliant and in only one semester you might be able to communicate in Greek language.

Once we organized everything related with University, we could start enjoy Crete. This island has so many attractions, that even during one academic year it is hard to see everything! I would advice everybody to rent a car (it's cheaper that organized trip from travel office and you can share costs of rent and fuel with friends) and discover amazing places like Balos, Matala, Preveli, Spinalonga, Elafonisi and many, many more. From Crete you can also flight to visit Athens or you can take a boat to places like Santorini or Rhodes – everything for very good price!



Balos Lagoon



Enigma Escape Room in Rethymno



Omalos



Hiking from Thira to Oia, Santorini

Some tips from me for coming students:

- Although usually weather on Crete is very nice, during the winter (especially December, January) it might be very **rainy, windy** and, because of that, **cold**. Don't forget to take umbrellas and jackets!
- In order to find **accommodation**, write a lot of e-mails to **hotels** in city. Don't worry about price list they have on the webpage. Very often they offer special prices for long-term rent.
- Eat **pita**. Pita is love, pita is life.
- Don't be unsure of you **English language skills**. Sure, at the beginning everybody is trying to be super correct, but after some time... you will realize that the most important goal is to communicate! So don't be shy to talk with others!
- Don't leave all your work for last moment. Try to **organize** it wisely and don't plan to write 5 essays in two weeks. You will regret it a lot... Don't repeat my mistakes...



Our Winter Erasmus Family ☺

As a summary of my experience I will just emphasize one thing – after first semester I decided to extend my Erasmus here and stay also for summer semester. That shows how much I enjoyed my experience in Rethymno ☺