

Feb 15, 2020

First let me introduce myself: I am Annette, and I invite you to discover Lisbon with me. The Erasmus exchange program gave me an outstanding opportunity to spend 2020 Spring semester at Politecnica de Lisboa University in Lisbon, Portugal. The point of this exchange is to get out of your comfort zone. It is about building connections with people and experiencing a city in a local way.

After arriving at the airport in Lisbon, I embarked on a quick jaunt into the city. Lisbon is arguably most famous for three things: its waterfront, its seafood, and its beautifully handcrafted doors. I must add that its cafés really stuck out after having walked around for an afternoon.

I am by nature a brunch person and not particularly an early riser. As a result, I tend to wake up and have a list of places that I would like to check out. It was day two and I was excited to check out places off a list I received from my hip landlord. After getting ready I already felt the need for food in my belly. Having already discussed our differing morning routines the night before, my roommate Jenn had assured me that she would not resent me at all if I were to go to choose a random close-by café that was on the list to eat. After leaving the door, I realized that I forgot to pack my camera. I scurried 3 flights of stairs and threw a lens, camera, battery pack in my bag. Jenn and I were now ready, and happily and hungrily arrived at the Nossa Cafe, a quaint local Lisbon cafe. Here I ordered a coffee and a bowl of thick, creamy yogurt with walnuts and honey: a simple, tasty and light start to the day. Jenn ordered a garlicky, parsley-flecked, savoury and cream mushrooms sauce that was poured over and soaking into thick-cut sourdough bread. It was a good start to the day. Afterwards we walked around the narrow streets in the district of Alfama and just hang out in this marvelous and lively city.

Day three was spent for the touristic activities, first on the list was to check out the MAAT, a beautiful white museum right on the waterfront. I still have a couple days before starting classes, so I decided to do just this while I have free time. I had a new list of underground art cafes and street art-filled alleys, I could feel the excitement of adventure that day. The weather was pretty remarkable, I mean blue Skys and 16 degrees in February is pretty luxurious if you come from usually experiencing the cold North East winters in the US. After snapping many photos and speaking to many locals on the street, I am happy to call Lisbon my home for the next 4 months.

Day 4 was a day to relax and gather myself before starting my classes. I had written several people about tandem and it was the day to start. I had never tried this out, but why not right? For those who might not know, this is a method of language learning based on mutual language exchange between tandem partners, where ideally each learner is a native speaker in the language the other party wants to learn. Joao came to the flat and over coffee, we started trying this method out. I would speak to him in my Portunol (Spanish/Portuguese mix) and he would answer in Portuguese. After doing this and speaking about banal things like

weather, food, movies we changed to English. He spoke in English with me and we kept that flow going using sayings.

It resulted in learning new words and helping feel more able to speak Portuguese. I can recommend finding a sparring partner to speak another language to very much.

The first couple of days have been lovely and very exciting. I hope you enjoy the photos and you will hear about the start of the classes and university next.

You can also check out my works here: www.annettemonheim.com

