

STUDY EXCHANGE REPORT

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Exactly one year ago, I got the study exchange result to spend one semester at INHA University in South Korea – my first option. Although the preparation requires a pile of paper and documents, it has been one of my best decision ever. Four months in Korea have become the most beautiful memory I have. Thank you LUT for giving me this opportunity.

In this report, I am going to recap the most highlighted things about school, living and cultural experience at INHA as well as Korea in general. I hope this report will be beneficial for those who want to apply to Korea.

About INHA University and Incheon Metropolitan City

Located in Incheon (pretty close to Seoul), INHA university is a diversified university and the biggest one in Incheon. INHA prepared well for the incoming exchange student by organizing Korean buddy, welcoming party, orientation, etc. INHA staffs are always willing to help new international students.

Language seems to be a big barrier in South Korea in general. Although some courses are listed in English, the main teaching language is Korea. Korean students are not confident in speaking and discussing in English, even when doing the team work. Most Korean professors can speak English really well. The studying style in Asia is totally different from Europe with heavy workload and exams. So be prepared for that 😊

Incheon is a metropolitan city which is close and easily accessed from Seoul. That's make the city vibrant, open and modern. From INHA university, you can easily take public transport to Seoul or other provinces at really cheap price (compared to Finland). Public transportation in Korea is well – developed and easy to commute as all signals are written in Korea, Japanese and English.

The back gate area of INHA is truly a great area for students with shops, cafes, food stalls, restaurants, bars, etc. You can find all the most signature dishes of Korea here with a reasonable price.

Accommodation

I applied to stay in the dorm of INHA – which is located inside the campus. It is a room for 4 girls/boys with the bed above and a desk with cloth closet underneath. It is not spacious but enough for me. There is a common toilet and bathrooms in each floor. One thing that might disturb you that you have to be at the dorm before 12 midnight. If you are late, you get 1 black mark and with 3 black marks, you are expelled from the dorm. That's the reason why many international students choose to live off – campus. The rent is a little bit higher but there is no restrictions.

Living and cultural experiences

The price living level of Korea is a little bit cheaper than in Finland but here, you have lots of places to spend money. So be prepared for the money issue. Cards are accepted widely so don't worry. The Korean culture is very unique and worth exploring. Korean in general is all kind, helpful and honest – even when they cannot speak English to you. Some places in Seoul might be too touristic, but, trust me, you never get bored in Korea.

Korean has four distinct seasons. Summer lasts quite long until beginning of October, so if you arrive in August, you still have the chance to enjoy sunshine and hot weather. Autumn is the most beautiful one with red and yellow leaves. Korea food is spicy to the Westerners and has more seasoning. In Korea, it is typical and normal that many people share food together or eat the same portion together. There are some specialties you cannot finish alone, for example, bingsu (Korean traditional ice flakes dessert). So be prepared for that point, except you go for fast food.

INHA University organizes many off – school activities for foreign students to get to know more about locals, such as traditional market visiting, port harbour visit, wearing Hanbok (Korean traditional dress), etc. Grab this chance to make friends with other Korean and foreign students. Furthermore, Seoul has lots of interesting free activities and festivals all year around.

In conclusion, INHA University and South Korea is such a great destination for those who want to discover the Asian culture. South Korea has great access from all over the world (especially from Europe where almost every airline has the direct flight to Seoul). During break time, you can easily visit other nearby countries, such as China, Philippines, Singapore, etc. I regret that I only had four months there. I left when I fell in love already with the country. It is good that you can learn some Korean in advance. It is good when coming to restaurant, order food or read the menu as not all Korean can speak English. I hope my few tips written in this report will be helpful to you. I wish everyone who decides to come to South Korea will have many good experiences like I have.

Finally, thank you LUT for giving me this one – in – a lifetime experience!