

Erasmus experience in Ireland

Deciding to go abroad for a certain amount of time is very exciting but the decision often comes with many questions and obstacles that have to be tackled.

One of the most important issues is the one of financing the whole stay. Ireland is an expensive country. Going by bus, going to the movies, going out, all those 'small' things are quite expensive in Ireland. Groceries cost sometimes even twice as much as in Germany. There are student discounts and you can do many things for free as well but it must be said that all in all, you pay much more for everything in Ireland than you do in Germany.

This is also reflected in the prices for rooms or flats. It is very tough to even get a room in Maynooth itself because the town is tiny and there are way more students than there are rooms. The landlords exploit this situation with ridiculously high prices for the tiniest rooms. I paid 420 € for a small room with 5 roommates and a dog in a small house. So the Erasmus grant went fully into the rent I had to pay. Also the housing conditions are nothing like German ones, the houses are not very well isolated and sanitation are often quite old. Still I really enjoyed living in this house and I became very close friends with some of my roommates.

I lived in Ireland for 9 months and I can only recommend it to anyone who is interested in spending some time abroad. I studied at the National University of Ireland Maynooth and also lived in the little town. It's just a one hour bus ride away from Dublin and has that very unique atmosphere of a small Irish town while offering everything you would expect from a university town.

Studying in Ireland is very different from studying in Germany. While I made the experience that the expected quality standard is not as high as in Germany, they expect much more quantity. This means essays, tests, presentations and exams at the end of the term. I would recommend not to take too many classes (which I did) as you will be working all the time because everything despite the exams is due during the semester. Still I really enjoyed all my courses, I even did Gaelic and German courses, there is a great variety you can choose from. The university itself is simply beautiful, the old campus is often compared to Hogwarts while the new campus is very modern. There are loads of clubs and societies one can join and the members will soon become your close friends. The Irish are the nicest people I

have ever met. They will be glad to help you with anything so do not be shy to just start chatting away with them, they will be more than pleased to hear about your life and what has brought you to Ireland.

I can highly recommend spending a year abroad in Ireland, the landscape, the people, everything is simply beautiful. Although it is very different from Germany in many aspects, it will not take long until you feel fully at home and the Irish will make it very hard for you to leave the country again.

The only thing that might bother you will be the constant rain, but you will learn to cherish the sun more than ever and as the Germans say: "There is no bad weather, just wrong clothing" so pack anything that is rain repellent and enjoy a wonderful time. Sure, it will be grand!