

Brazil Summer School 2018 – Report

Before applying to the University of Surrey, I had made a thorough and intense research about different opportunities that the university had to offer, as well as its really good academic and research performance. However, on top of that, as soon as I have discovered that Surrey has so much university partners and international links around the world, I knew that this was the university I wanted to attend. But, the fact that I could go to Brazil, live there, explore the culture, and study there as a part of my Summer School was something that I could've never dreamed of. Thankfully, the Santander Grant was there in place, and it had definitely, without a doubt, helped me to be able to do something that I couldn't even be dreaming of. Therefore, I am going to tell you a little bit more about my experience in this wonderful country, and how it changed me, as a person.

My overall experience of the Brazil Summer School program, the people, the country, the food, and the culture, was simply out of this world! Every day was something different, and the rest of the people in the group and me were definitely not bored. We attended lectures about Brazilian economy, financing, agriculture, and we also learned about the Brazilian culture. All of these classes were interesting, as it was something different than what I study at the University of Surrey. However, out of all of these, I did not mention the lessons of Portuguese, but there is a reason for it; I believe that they were the most interesting and entertaining ones. I like learning new languages, and the professor Daniela made sure that we were taking an active part. As the dates went by, I felt like my Portuguese was improving, and I really enjoyed using the language, even if it only involved single words and simple sentences.

Food in Brazil is delicious, and I wanted to try all of it; I think that at the end, I still did not try all of it as there is simply so many varieties of food and, funnily enough, I cannot even remember the names of them (but trust me, it was great!) People in Brazil are really friendly and open. But what I found really nice and fascinating at the same time was how close to each other they are there. I consider myself an open person, but all of the people treat each other there as a family, and I really loved it. There is no 'one' or 'two' meters 'personal space' there! – everybody is really supportive, and it was pretty impressive to me.

We had plenty of trips organized for us, and I really enjoyed looking at how the companies use new technologies to fulfil their orders or production, and it was also interesting to see their links to other parts of the world. We also had entertaining activities organised for us, a trip to São Paulo, Capoeira dance lessons, and so much more. All the professors and USP students were also really friendly and close to us. I had certainly made new friends, and I am actually still in touch with some of them!

To summarise, words cannot really describe the experience that I had in Brazil and how it changed me, as a person. After the trip, I became more mature, and started to look at things from different angles. This report could've been much longer, but I believe that words sometimes are not enough, and that some of the things you can only experience by actually being there and seeing it. My final piece of advice is: if you hesitate whether you should go to Brazil as a part of your summer school, please do not. Such opportunities are not

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available to everyone out there, and you stand with a chance of experiencing things that you will certainly remember forever. Go for it!

