

BRAZIL SUMMER SCHOOL 2017



10/13/2017

Personal Report

The report summarises personal experience of the author towards the 3-week summer school at University of Sao Paulo, Brazil. The summer school is the product of the cooperation between University of Surrey and University of Sao Paulo

Brazil Summer School 2017

PERSONAL REPORT

Travelling and staying in Brazil for nearly one month is the most memorable trip I have ever experienced. Travelling is in my genre as I love travelling, meeting new people, discovering new destination and local culture. The passion for travel motivated me to apply for the Brazil Summer school at University of Sao Paulo Summer 2017. It was a trade-off and it was not an easy decision. I have not come back my home country for 2 years before the summer school. Thus, for my last summer of University life, I made up my mind if I had gone to Brazil for one month, I would have spent the rest two months in the UK for job experience. In fact, I went to Brazil, which means I have not come back home for 3 years. It sounded sad for some but to me I would never regret. As above mentioned, the time in Brazil overall was fabulous. Obviously, there was up and down, thick and thin but after all everything I have gone through gave me lessons.

1. BEFORE THE FLIGHT TO RIO

Before the summer school, we have got great support from the International Relations Office of both University of Surrey and Sao Paulo. Fortunately, I have received the 1000-pound grant from Santander bank so I do not need to worry about the accommodation and fee for the summer school but instead I have more concern towards the airfares, living cost and specifically the Visa. It is a bit annoying for me as wherever I want to travel I must get a visa. I get used to the visa application process for any destination I have been to; thus, visa application to Brazil is the same for me. Nonetheless, it was not the only visa I need. Our flight to Rio de Janeiro transferred in New York, that means for an international student like me, a visa to the US is a must despite of just 3-hour transit. I was happy to make the visa as the flight returned to the UK would be 12-hour transit, which was sufficient to do walking tour around the legend city, New York. For anyone who don't prefer extra fee for visa, I would recommend you buy the direct flight from the UK to Rio then Sao Paulo as it is relatively expensive but less troublesome.

We have a group of 12 students across courses and we meant to meet each other before the trip. We arranged the meeting but I could not manage to come to any meeting. Then, I have not met any of my "school mates" except for the two Vietnamese girls I knew before. Subsequently, I met most of my "school mates" the first time at Gatwick airport. However, I still believed later than never.

Before the flight took off, I have never thought it would be the most unforgettable flight I have ever taken. I slept well and watched “La La Land” on the flight to New York but it was late than expected and affected the connecting flight to Rio. It took us 1 hour to go through the Immigration gate at JFK airport and we had 15 minutes to get to the next flight. In fact, it took more than that. Without the help from officers from American Airlines, we would not get on the flights. Luckily, we launched Rio on time, safe and sound but without our luggage. Thanks to the help of Leo from International Relations Office of University of Sao Paulo, we have got our luggage few days later.

2. IN RIBEIRAO PRETO

The unexpected accidents with the luggage to some extend affected our experience at Sao Paulo but... We enjoyed every moment at Ribeirao Preto, the main campus of University of Sao Paulo. Ribeirao is peaceful, quite and green, reminding me of Stag Hill Campus except for the fact that it is around 10 times larger than our campus.



FIGURE 1: BY THE LAKE OF RIBEIRAO CAMPUS, SAO PAULO

The class was interesting and useful as it helped us to know more about the Brazil as an emerging economy and diverse culture. Our Brazilian classmates are friendly and humorous. We love talking with them.

It was not easy to order the McDonald's in Portuguese when you could not speak Portuguese. I felt a bit hopeless as I could not communicate on my own and I must ask for help from translator. Nevertheless, I had stronger motivation to study Portuguese. As the result, I improved. I could not hold a conversation with the locals but I can still speak simple sentences and got what I want. That's why when I went to other cities in Brazil, I still felt confident to go anywhere by myself.

We had class on weekdays and at weekends we travelled around. The first weekend we went to the Magic Garden where we went swimming and playing around like children. The garden reminded me my home land with full of bamboo tree, palm tree and red soil. Everything in Brazil, the weather, the people and the place itself is "same but different". We also went to Ribeirao Zoo where we found out the little Japanese Gardens and full range of tropical animals.



FIGURE 2: AT MAGIC GARDEN, RIBEORAO PRETO



FIGURE 3: BAMBOO TREES AT MAFGIC GARDEN



FIGURE 4: JAPANESE GARDENS AT RIBEIRAO ZOO



FIGURE 5: AT RIBEIRAO PRETO ZOO

Together with classes, we got the chances to visit the local companies and tasted their local products. I love the trip to Cooxupe, the biggest coffee farm in Sao Paulo. It was the best Cappuccino I have tasted.



FIGURE 6: VISIT THE SUGAR COMPANY IN SAO PAULO



FIGURE 7: TASTE COFFEE IN COOXUPE FACTORY



FIGURE 8: VISIT COOXUPE FACTORY AND LEARN HOW THE COFFEE ARE CHOSEN

Company visit is not the best part of the Summer school.

3. CITY BREAKS

In addition to the company visits, we spent few days in Brasília, the capital of Brazil and Sao Paulo. I loved every second in these beautiful cities. By the same token, they are new and interesting but not strange to me.



FIGURE 9: AT PARANOIA LAKE, BRASILIA. SELFIE WITH LEO



FIGURE 10: VISIT THE MESEUM IN BRASILIA



FIGURE 11: HAVING GREAT REST AFTER LONG-HOUR COACH TO SAO PAULO



FIGURE 12: THE BRAZILIAN STREET FOOD RESTAURANTS IN BRASILA

One of the best things in these cities is amazing food. Very meaty but so nice. In Brasilia, we have visited a famous local restaurant with great decors and fantastic ambience. I still miss the Annona and papaya juices. Dessert like “Romeo and Juliet” as well as “Brigadeiro” are outstanding, specifically for sweet lover like me.



FIGURE 13: GIRLS AND FRESH COCONUTS



FIGURE 14: THE TYPICAL BRAZILIAN DISHM AND BRAZILIAN SANDWICH



Our summer school ended in Sao Paulo. At the airport, Leo and Professor Jaao escorted us and said good bye. It was never easy to say good bye and they treated us so nice. I missed Leo, nice and kind guide and Jaao, generous and reliable uncle. I missed the nights we were together not as “schoolmates” but friends. I think it is hard for me to make new friends as it takes time for me to believe in people. Nevertheless, after three weeks in Brazil, I have met amazing and unique people and broaden my mind. Each of us has different paths to follow but we keep in touch and I feel honored to get to know them.



FIGURE 15: LAST GOODBYE TO LEO AND PROFESSOR JAAO