

Universidad Regiomontana (U-ERRE) Monterrey

September 2019- June 2020

End of August 2019 I left for Mexico, as the tetra was supposed to start in the first week of September.

On the way to Monterrey I spent 2 days each in Mexico City and Cancun to get some first impressions of the country as well as the culture.

Standing on top of the pyramids was a powerful experience and also Cancun was important for me to realize that I wasn't interested in the party life, for which many teenagers and students travel to Mexico.

My first days in Monterrey were interesting, because I had booked a week in an Airbnb which was located in the center of Monterrey, an area where you normally do not live as a student.

I didn't have any bad experiences but most people I talked to mentioned, they wouldn't recommend living there as it could be dangerous leaving the house after 10pm.

I was lucky that my Airbnb was at walking distance to the university, so that I made it to the introduction day events within 10 minutes.

The introduction days are very useful to get some orientation of the 3 buildings of the university and to get in touch with the other exchange students as well as the Global Crew, which is a group of Mexican students that organizes events and helps you with any questions.

As I mentioned before, I wasn't really looking for parties to get wasted, but these guys organized some good events and parties to get to know fellow students.

It took me 3 weeks in my Airbnb until I found my first flat, which was close to the TEC campus in Nuevo Sur, where most students live as it is supposed to be one of the safest and most comfortable places for foreign students.

The prices for the rent of these apartments are somewhere between 250 and 400 Euros per month and if you are going to Monterrey by yourself, I can highly recommend moving in with Mexicans instead of moving in with other exchange students as you will have a completely different experience.

I am saying this because it is so much easier to get to know the city and the locals which will show you places, you wouldn't normally visit or even know of.

The Mexican university system is very different from ours and reminds more of a system as we know it from school, as you have tasks you have to deliver and there are exams every end of the month.

Personally, I enjoyed that system as I could collect points every month and there wasn't too much pressure on the last exams as I already had enough points to be sure I passed the course.

In my opinion it is much easier to pass courses in Mexico than in Germany and my grades were much better than in Frankfurt in my program "International Business Administration".

Especially the first weeks are a bit messy and don't be upset if a teacher doesn't show up or is 30 minutes late.

Also be prepared that some classes are not taught in English but in Spanish even though the subject had an English title, which is why it is recommended to have a basic intermediate level of Spanish before you go.

You can take Spanish classes at the university but talking to locals or having small talk with UBER drivers will boost your Spanish skills much faster and you will get used to the "Mexican Spanish".

Talking about public transport: Most students are sharing Ubers, which is as cheap as 2 Euros per ride, and they pick you up wherever you like 24/7, it took me 4 months to understand the public transport system, which consists of buses that cost 50 cents per ride.

Be prepared to jump in and jump off the bus as there are no proper bus stops as we know them in Germany, also ask the bus driver where he goes as it is not always clear.

If you have time, that is an interesting way to explore Monterrey as you will end up in random places due to the fact that there are no applications that show you which bus number goes where.

I highly recommend audio books on those cheeky journeys.

If you catch the right bus, it will take you around 15-20 minutes to get from the TEC region to the university in the center.

The rooms of the university are pretty small and are pretty cooled down with air conditions so that some students wear jackets and scarfs, but you will get used to it.

The teachers are amazing and very friendly and approachable, and as exchange students, most of them will know your name and help you out if you feel like falling behind.

The Global Crew helps you with anything else and they will organize trips and parties every tetra to unite all students.

Some of the local students are also part of the basketball or soccer team or are using the gym at the university, which is free for every student, so you can just join them or go to any of the HIT classes they offer.

The movement community of Monterrey is huge and very welcoming, and you will find lots of groups doing calisthenics or yoga in the parks of city.

For anyone interested in sports and being bored by lifting dumbbells, I highly recommend checking out Forza Gravity Gym in Las Torres which is just the best place to do bodyweight workouts.

The community is absolutely amazing as well and they will invite you for barbecues and breakfast to become part of the movement family.

Another opportunity to become part of a movement family is by joining the local climbing gyms (Mad complex, Delta or Rock art) and make connections with the climbing community, which will then take you out on the real rocks. Most entry fees for those climbing gyms are around 3 to 4 Euros, so it is much cheaper than in Germany.

Monterrey as a city might not be the prettiest, which is why you should take advantage of all the outdoor opportunities around like climbing, hiking or canyoning.

The surroundings have some of the best climbing areas worldwide (La Huasteca, El salto, Portero Chico) and many professionals are coming there every year to make use of it, and they are willing to share all of their knowledge.

All the hikes around Monterrey are for free and among the most amazing hikes I have done in my entire life.

Chipinque is pretty easy and you have an amazing platform with a nice view at the end of the trail but if you want to bring it to the next level, then you should try Cerro de la Silla, which is the highest and steepest hike around and the view is breathtaking.

Many teachers will be very easy going if you tell them that you are missing some classes because you want to travel the country, so I went to Holbox and to Tulum two times for a week during the semester, other students went to Guadalajara or Oaxaca to experience the more traditional side of Mexico.

For Christmas I took advantage of Monterrey's location being close to the USA and I visited a friend in California from where we visited Arizona and the Grand Canyon as there was a 4 week break between the two tetras.

After all I can really recommend Monterrey as an exchange destination and it was an incredible experience.

As I already said, to boost the experience it makes sense to stay around locals as they can show you places you would never find as a tourist.

If you want to improve your grade point average, you will most likely be able to do that in Mexico, without sacrificing too much free time for other activities.

The Visa is running for 180 days, and if you plan to stay longer you simply need to leave the country and come back for another 180 days on your visa.

Mexico is amazing and relatively cheap with an amazing kitchen and if you are patient enough you will fall in love with the relaxed lifestyle and the warmth of the local communities.

Should you be interested in more information before you head off to Monterrey, please let me know.