

USA – University of Minnesota

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¹ To update the agenda just click right on your mouse

I. Your overall feeling after your semester abroad

Even though the situation right now is special, I highly enjoyed my semester abroad. I learned about a new culture and other study approaches. I am extremely glad of having had the opportunity to spend one semester in the USA and would not hesitate to repeat this experience if I would go back in time!

II. Before the travel

A. Preparation

1. Visa

To study in the USA a visa is required. I was on a J-1 visa. Your guest university will prepare the necessary forms that you need to apply for a visa at an American embassy. The administrative requirements are quite high. Thus, I would recommend starting early with the application process. Check if your passport is valid and once you received the visa document from your guest university, schedule an appointment with an American embassy to request the visa (in person).

2. The flight

I flew from Paris to Fort Lauderdale (Florida) and from Fort Lauderdale to Minnesota. The first Airline was Norwegian Airline. I would not recommend this low-cost provider. Even though the flight is relatively cheap, there are a lot of additional extra costs for luggage and food (no food and no drinks are included).

3. My luggage

My journey was extremely long! It is thus worth it to put toothpaste, a toothbrush, and fresh underwear in the carrier. Before you leave your home, check the weather conditions at your arrival location to dress accordingly.

4. Bank account

Money transfers from the EU to the USA is extremely expensive. Hence, I opened a bank account at TCF bank. There are various ATMs and TCF offices on campus. Opening an account was very convenient. Each month I withdrew all the money my parents sent to me from my French bank account and deposited it at my American bank account. This was the cheapest possibility for me to get my money transferred to the US.

5. Insurance

At the University of Minnesota, they provide a mandatory health insurance for each international student. Overall costs are 1000\$. However, only some services are covered (ex. teeth emergencies are excluded). Also, the insurance provided here only paid 80% of my medical bills. 20% was at my personal charge.

B. Housing

1. Where to live

The Minnesota campus is huge! There are around 50 000 students. Given the size of the campus and its location the neighborhoods "Dinky Town", "Marcy Holmes", and "Como" are very convenient to live in.

2. Find a flat or a room

I found my flat via the University webpage. I lived in a shared flat in a student housing (Radius). The whole complex is very new and the flats are convenient. However, with 1000\$ per month on-campus housing is extremely expensive and definitely not worth it. To have a more personalized experience I would recommend to look for a shared flat in one of the 3 neighborhoods I recommended in the previous answer. Flats can be found on different Facebook groups like:

https://www.facebook.com/groups/439773589790851/?multi_permlinks=940734999694705¬if_id=1589636789091598¬if_t=group_highlights&ref=notif

or

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/TwinCityRentals>

3. Cost

If you plan to live on-campus (like I did) you should plan to spend around 1000\$ per months. However, you can easily find shared student flats for 400\$-700\$.

III. When I arrive at the university

A. Inscription at the university

The inscription at the university was quite easy. We had a welcome get together, where the international staff of the UofM explained us and went through the inscription process. The applications for classes went through the campus website. Some classes require pre-knowledges and are limited in places. If some requirements don't match and you want to take the class, don't hesitate to contact the responsible professor.

B. Information on the university

1. Class

History of Capitalism:

This class provides a broad overview over the historical development of our current economic system. It is a in person lecture and comparable to the French CMs.

Applied Macroeconomics: Policy, Development, & Trade:

This class provides an overview over the emergence of trade and economic models applied to it (Comparative advantage, absolute advantage, Heckscher-Ohlin model). It was the most ambitious class and micro such as macroeconomic pre-knowledge is overtly important. It was a direct in person class.

Economic Development in Contemporary Africa:

This was maybe my favorite class. It explained economic development issues in a historical context and the importance of institutions in the economic well-being of different societies.

Environmental & Natural Resource Economics:

In this class we applied economic models and calculations to economic issues of environmental nature. This class is very interesting to get an insight in how economic models can be applied to real world issues.

2. Exam

The exams depended on the class and on the teacher. In general, in the US it is not like in France where one single exam provides the grade for the complete course. In the US several small exams are distributed throughout the whole semester. Hence, exams are less intense and more narrow in content.

IV. When I life there

A. Safety

I always felt very safe here! However, public transportations like the metro are not as save as in Europe. It is quite safe to displace yourself by bike. If you go partying at night I would highly recommend to always use an Uber of Lyft to get home.

B. Phone and Internet

When I arrived I directly ordered a sim-card of an American operator. I opted for Mint Mobile which suited my mobile phone and was comparatively cheap.

C. Events

There is a huge offer of students groups on the campus. Becoming friends with locals is the best way to learn about events and be invited to parties!

D. Sports

There is a huge sports center on campus (Rec Center). In general, the use is free. However, there are some offers like climbing or special courses which require a fee. Otherwise,

