

Student report

1. Your study programme or your internship programme

I went to Aruba in my bachelor. I already finished all the mandatory courses in Groningen, but I wanted to have more choice in courses, so that's why I went in my bachelor. I am very happy I did this, because now I had 2 master courses and 2 bachelor courses, which was nice because I could choose the ones I liked and it was nice to see the differences between the bachelor and the master program in Aruba. And that difference is big, because the classes in de bachelor courses are like 20-30 people, and in the masters at one course we were with 6 and the other we were with 10. So, it's totally different and a lot of variety!

The courses I followed in the first block were 'Intellectual Property Law' (master) and 'Arubaans Burgerlijk Procesrecht' (bachelor 3). And in the second block I had 'Sanctierecht' (master) and 'Arubaans Verbintenissenrecht' (bachelor 2). 'Intellectual Property Law' was given by a professor from the University of Maastricht, but the course was in English. It was just for 2 weeks. We had to make a case note paper and we had an exam. For 'Arubaans Burgerlijk Procesrecht' we had a lawyer as a teacher. This course was in Dutch and we had an exam for it. For 'Sanctierecht' we had to do a presentation and we had to write a big paper. We discussed in the class about the issues in Aruba. The last lesson we visited KIA (the prison in Aruba). This course was really interesting, so I highly recommended this one. For 'Arubaans Verbintenissenrecht' we had to make pleading with a group of 4 people and had to debate. And at the end we had a final exam. This course was really intense, because it was for 12 credits (the others were just 6), so we had class 4 times a week. All in all, the courses were nice, interesting and different from home. Different because of the small classes and the interactive way. The University of Aruba is really nice. It's small and you feel home immediately.

2. Language

The language everyone on the island speaks is Papiamentu, a mix of Spanish, English, Portuguese and Dutch. A lot of people in Aruba speak 4 languages; Papiamentu, Spanish, English and Dutch, but by far not everyone. Some people only speak Spanish, because there are a lot of Latin-America people in Aruba. But with Dutch and English, most of the time, you can communicate. At the law faculty at University the main language is Dutch. So, most of the classes are in Dutch. Only some master courses are in English. A lot of other exchange people don't speak Dutch, so when you think you can only speak Dutch you're wrong. The good thing is that you will improve your English, even on the Dutch Caribbean.

3. Finance and other conditions

In Aruba, they have the US Dollar and the 'Arubaanse Florin'. Aruba is an expensive country, because they have to import almost everything. The supermarkets are really expensive. You have a lot of Dutch products here (even the Jumbo and Albert Heijn brands), but the prices are double or triple the amount you would pay for the same product in the Netherlands. Also going out is expensive, a beer is like 5/6 dollars when you're not in the happy hour. Going to the cinema is something that's cheap in Aruba, especially on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Also, gasoline is not expensive. Another point what you should keep in mind is that you need a car to go everywhere. If you share it's not that expensive. We paid 500 dollars in total for the rent for the car (so that's about 220 euros each)

4. Preparation and contacts with the faculty before, during and after your stay

The contact with the University went very easy. The contact person is very friendly and wants everyone to have a great stay. She responded quickly and send us a lot of information about housing etc. During my stay, I could always walk in her office to ask things. They organized two introduction days (half of august). I highly recommend going there, because you meet all the other international students there and it was really fun.

5. Housing

There are a lot of housing options in Aruba. You have like 4 big parks where they offer longterm housing. Blue Village, Perle d'Or, Sebrina's resort and Montaña-park apartments. Via Marktplaats, Facebook or Airbnb you can also find a lot of houses. I shared one apartment in Montaña-park. We paid 1500 florins for the apartment (so that's about 360 euros each) and like 50-75 euros each for electricity, so in relation to a room in Groningen it's not really cheap. We didn't know before, but it turned out that almost all exchange students lived here, so that was really fun! And very useful because we could carpool a lot. The apartment was a little bit poor and the Wi-Fi didn't work almost our entire stay.

6. Culture

There is not a specific culture on the island, because there are a lot of foreigners there. A lot of people from Latin-America, but also Dutch people. And the tourists are most of the time people from the United States, so there is a lot of American influence on the island (fast-food!). But overall there is one common culture thing on the island: people are lazy.

7. Free time

Especially in the first period I had a lot of free time. I had class for 4 hours a week, besides the weeks we had 'Intellectual Property Law'. These weeks where really busy. The second period I had class for 12 hours a week, so that was busier. The earliest classes at the law faculty start at 2 PM, due to a lot of working people who studying law in Aruba. And because of the small classes you have to prepare all the classes very good, so that costs time. But you don't have to be afraid you don't have enough time to see the island and to relax on the beaches.

8. Travelling

During my stay, I went to Curacao and to Miami. After my stay in Aruba I travelled for two weeks to Panama. After Panama, I went to New York for 10 days. And from New York I flew back to the Netherlands. So, I didn't buy a retour ticket from the Netherlands to Aruba and back, and I highly recommend that. I was ready in Aruba at the 15th of December, and I have to be back in Groningen in the beginning of February to start with my master, so I had enough time to travel. You need a forward ticket from Aruba to your next destination for your visa, so it's smart to think about this before you leave.

9. Other

I really enjoyed my time in Aruba and I wish the same for everyone!