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My name is Sabrina Godinez, and I am currently studying Industrial and Systems Engineering at Tecnológico de Monterrey Campus Mexico City. From the moment I was accepted in this exchange, I was very excited and happy because Germany has always been a country that attracts me a lot of attention. I had previously had the opportunity to go on vacation and that was also one of the reasons why I chose this place for my exchange. I have also been very interested in learning German for the last 2 years, because I find it a complex but interesting language and one of my goals is to be able to speak it fluently. Although I already had basic knowledge of the language because I had already attended classes before, this was an opportunity to improve the language because I was going to be living with native speakers and I was going to hear it everywhere.

From the beginning of the process the international office and the buddies got in touch with us to give us all the relevant information before our arrival and I must say that there was always a very good communication, because they solved any doubt that we had. Personally, I really liked that each of the international students were assigned a buddy, because they were helpful in the whole process of the exchange. In general, the preparation process is a little long but not complicated. First, there is the whole Visa process, which takes a lot of time, because you must wait for your appointment and once you take it and hand in all the necessary papers, it takes about 1 month to get it. In between all that time, I started to see everything related to the stay, the flights and everything necessary to pack. The stay is also a simple process, because DHBW has an affiliation with an organization of residences where they assign you a dormitory, you just must fill out an application and be aware of all the steps you must do to stay there. I sincerely believe that this is the best option to choose, although you can also look for a place on your own, the dorms that we were assigned seem to me to be a very viable option in relation to location, price, and comfort. The selection of subjects is not complicated at all, because DHBW has a variety of subjects that in my opinion are very interesting and useful regardless of the career you are studying. Having all the documents, the visa, the suitcase, and the flight, I was ready for my arrival. On the first day I arrived in Stuttgart, the first thing I did was to go to the dormitories to get my keys and the room where I would be living for the next few

months. On the way I met my Mexican roommates with whom I was going to share this experience and between the 3 of us we looked for each other's rooms and to my surprise, my friend Ana and I were on the same floor, but in a different apartment. That day I unpacked a bit, and, in the afternoon, the other Mexicans and I went to eat our first Kebab, as we had been told that it is a very popular food in Germany and of course we had to try it. That same night the buddies organized an outing to the Matahari bar, where we met most of the buddies and everyone in the group. It was very cool that night because we had the opportunity to talk to each other and to know where we were coming from, we were Mexican, Ecuadorian, Spanish, Finnish, Korean, Taiwanese, French, Danish and of course German. That is one of my favorite nights because that was when it all started, and I was very happy and excited to meet people from different countries who would now be my new friends. The buddies were also very cool, they asked us where we were from and started to tell us tips and different things about Stuttgart that will be helpful.

The first week was very nice because both the international office and the buddies organized several activities for us to get to know each other and get to know more about German habits. We had the opportunity to go to the Porsche Museum, the TV Tower, Laser Tag, Pub-crawl, go to typical German restaurants and many other activities in which little by little we were getting closer to each other. In general, I think that this kind of activities are very helpful for the beginning. Also living with the buddies was very helpful for us to know more about what life is like in Germany, where we can go, how we can do certain things etc.

After that week, I started the first course which is the intensive German course, in my case there were 3 different groups depending on the level, I really enjoyed this course because although I already knew a little of the language, now being there I could put it into practice by being out of the classroom. After that course the other courses that I had enrolled in started and something that I really liked about the DHBW model is that the classes are not like the traditional way of all the classes at the same time, etc. Instead, it is one course at a time and something that I really liked is that they are not all in a row, some weeks we had days off and even full weeks without classes, depending on the courses you have selected, I really liked that

because many of us took advantage of those days off to go on trips to other places or do other things. Now about the classes, they are not heavy at all and on the contrary, each one of them is very interesting. One of my favorites was Intercultural Training Germany, because it is a subject in which we compare different aspects of each country with Germany and it is really very interesting everything you learn there, besides the teacher Matar is very nice and with her we did a lot of fun activities. Another of my favorite subjects was the Business Simulation Game, because it is a very dynamic class in which we learn how business really works with different activities and the best thing is that we use a simulation game. Another of my favorite subjects was the Business Simulation Game, because it is a very dynamic class in which we learn how business really works with different activities and the best thing is that we use a simulation game. Also, the Applied Market research class is very interesting with the project we did and in general the topics we learn are very useful for our professional life.

Now, talking about my whole stay and experience in Stuttgart apart from school, I loved the city, and it is really very different from the city where I live (Mexico City), because here I used to go everywhere walking, using the bus, the ubahn or the sbahn. Something that I loved and really enjoyed was the system and the good quality of transportation and the connectivity that there is all over Germany. In all the time I was in Stuttgart I really enjoyed all the places I went to, because despite being more of a city, it also has a lot of green spaces where you can go with your friends or just to have a good time. Talking about the weather, I would not say that it is very changeable, when I arrived in September it was still very hot and the days were very sunny, in October it was still warm and cool, starting November with rains and already a little cold and what is December and January is completely cold and even snow. Something that impressed me a lot was the time it gets dark from November to January, because of the time change, it gets dark at 5 in the afternoon! I didn't know this, but I was surprised when it started to happen, because even emotionally it affects me a little bit because of the lack of sun, because most of the days it is cloudy. However, it is not a bad thing, I would just advise you to be prepared and not think that there is nothing to do, on the contrary, you can organize plans with your friends

or make plans in closed places to not necessarily be outside in the river weather. Talking about the food and drinks in Germany, beer is the most delicious thing I have ever had in my life, any brand tastes great, also when the Christmas markets start at the end of November, you can't miss all the food they sell there, let alone the Glühwein, which tastes delicious. Bread is also one of their strong points and you will find bakeries on every corner, my favorite without a doubt is the Pretzel. The German dishes that you should try to live the full German experience are the Schnitzel, Spätzle, Maul Taschen, Flammkuchen and Curry Wurst. In the same way you cannot miss the Christmas markets, Stuttgart is one of the most beautiful of all Germany and in general the whole Christmas season in Germany feels very nice, because they decorate all the streets with lights, and everyone goes out to drink mulled wine and eat at the Christmas markets. The wine and beer festivals are something you can't miss because it's something very German and everybody goes. The Cannstatt Volksfest is the biggest beer festival in all of Stuttgart and many foreigners travel just to attend, it is a very fun festival with an awesome vibe, besides the delicious liters of beer that you obviously must drink, the music, the costumes, the food, and the fair is the best. I had the advantage of living only 4 subway stations away from the festival and I went with my friends more than 3 times, the best thing is that the festival lasts 3 weeks and it is a plan that you cannot miss with your friends. Although I spent most of my time in Stuttgart, thanks to the central location of Germany, it is very easy to travel to other countries, I had the opportunity to visit Switzerland, Amsterdam, Austria, France, and Italy, but there are many other countries you can go to! My favorite will always be Stuttgart :)

Below is a list of recommendations:

Tips of my stay in Stuttgart:

- As soon as you arrive in Stuttgart try to go through the registration process.
- Don't miss any of the Buddies or DHBW events, they are a lot of fun and you get a chance to meet a lot of new people.
- Buy the Deutschland Ticket 49€ for you to move around all Germany.
- Go to the Biergarten with your friends when the weather is sunny and warm.

- To buy clothes you can go to the stores in Königstrasse, Milaneo or go to the Outlet in Metzingen.
- Go to visit Esslingen, Tübingen, Eibsee, Lindau, Lake of Constance, Schiltach, Heidelberg, Karlsruhe and of course Munich, Berlin, Hamburg, Köln, Düsseldorf, etc.
- Go to the pumpkin festival at Ludwigsburg Castle
- Go to the authentic Oktoberfest in Munich.
- Visit different Christmas markets, all of them are beautiful.
- If you want to try typical German food, you should go to the restaurant Sophies Brauhaus or Carls Brauhaus.
- If you like bars, don't miss Sky Beach, Sausalito's, Matahari and Krauftpaule.
- The best clubs to party with friends are Mica, Proton, Pure, Schocken and Kowalski.

My whole experience was incredible, and I hope this is helpful for yours. Do not hesitate to contact me if you want to know more or the international office that is always there to help us 😊

