

Internship in Brazil 2015

From the 10th of August to the 2nd of October I was doing an IAESTE internship at the UNICAMP in the Brazilian city Campinas.

Allocation of the internship

I am a member of the IAESTE local committee at my university in Germany. Through this I got the Excel-sheet with all the possible internships in the end of January. This file included app. 1000 internships all around the world in different fields of study. After deleting all the not-matching opportunities (period, language, topic) I could choose two out of the few remaining internships. End of February I got the first confirmation that I can go to Campinas this summer. Subsequently I completed my official application. After that it took a long time until I got the official confirmation of the Brazilian university – four weeks before the internship started.

Flight and arrival

I was very lucky that I found a pretty cheap flight to Brazil. It was a non-stop night flight from Frankfurt with TAM Linhas Aéreas. Because of the time difference I landed in São Paulo-Guarulhos at 4 o'clock in the morning. I was told to take a coach for the two hour drive to Campinas. Then an IAESTE-volunteer picked me up at the bus terminal and drove me to my housing. This is in the district called *Cidade Universitária* – the area around the University campus.

Housing

My housing was a typical Brazilian República – a house rented and shared by students. I shared my room with another Indian IAESTE-intern, and the house with six Brazilians and a young dog. My Brazilian flat mates were pretty chaotic, that was the reason why there was a lot of disorder in the house all the time. The good thing was: There was a cleaning lady coming every week to clean the most important places (kitchen, toilets, bath rooms...). The house itself was in a rather noble neighborhood close to the University. The way to my working place was less than one and a half kilometers. It was also quite close to bars and the supermarkets in the district *Barão Geraldo*.

Language

I met a lot of English speaking people around the university. Surprisingly many Brazilians learn German as well – most of them see chances for a place of work somewhere around Germany and Europe. Beyond the university it's more difficult to find someone to translate, because the biggest part of the local population only speaks

Portuguese. This is the reason why I would suggest to learn a few words in Portuguese to help yourself.

University and work

The *Universidade Estadual de Campinas* (abbreviation: UNICAMP) is one of the biggest and most known universities in Brazil and South America and has more than 41,000 students and 2,000 professors. Most of the students are in different engineering faculties. My internship was at the Institute of heat transfer and fluid dynamics at the *Faculdade de Engenharia Mecânica* (the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering).

At the time when I arrived it wasn't sure which topic I should work on. This was the reason why my professor showed and explained the different research areas of his institute to me. After that I had some time to choose one topic. I decided to do my project about the usage and implementation of phase change materials (PCM) in brick walls and energy calculations of double glass windows. I analyzed the use of PCM for heat and cold protection for buildings. These were theoretical topics, that's why my normal working day was full of literature research and reading specialist books and scientific papers. I often had the chance to discuss with other PhD-students about my topics and issues. Furthermore I attended in ongoing experiments at the laboratory. A good thing was that I was free with my time. I was able to start work when I wanted and also take some time off for coffee breaks. The food at the canteens (in Portuguese: *Bandejão*) was very good and free for the IAESTE students.

(Night)life in Barão Geraldo and Campinas

Besides the work at the university we (the IAESTE students) tried to go to bars and pubs around *Barão Geraldo* as often as possible. Because my República was very central it was really easy for us to meet in a bar for a (few) beer(s) after work. Due to this lots of students in the district the pubs were very crowded even during the week. Brazilians are very sociable and open for different cultures, that's one reason why you always meet new acquaintances there.

We also have been to Campinas itself. The size of the city is comparable to Munich or Hamburg (inhabitants: 1 million; metropolitan area: 2.8 million). The problem is: The city doesn't have a historical city center or a central place at all. That's the reason why there is not much going on in Campinas. The only cool thing there was a public park with a small zoo.

Traveling around Brazil

I wanted to see as much of Brazil as possible. That's the reason why I didn't spend much time at home on the weekends. At my first weekend I travelled with a few other

IAESTE students to Santos and Guarujá. Both are port cities at the Atlantic coast, mostly famous for their beaches. Unlike in Europe you don't have a train railway network in Brazil. So as an alternative you have to use coaches.

The next important places to visit were of course Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. In Rio we went to an IAESTE organized four-day trip with all the tourist attractions (Copacabana and Ipanema beach, Christ the Redeemer statue, Sugarloaf Mountain, football match in the Estádio do Maracanã...) and a lot of partying. In São Paulo there was no such a trip, so we went on our own to see the city center, the skyscrapers, famous graffiti art and so on.

Despite smaller city trips I went to a hiking tour with one of my roommates and a few of his friends for a weekend. We went on top of the Pico dos Marins (a 2420 m high mountain at the border between the states São Paulo and Minas Gerais) and this beautiful countryside. At the last weekend I was at the famous Iguaçu waterfalls close to Argentina and Paraguay.

Résumé

I enjoyed the two month internship in Brazil very much and I can only give the strong advice to spend some time there too. Besides the warm Brazilian way of life the country itself with all the different facets is outstanding.



Sunset in Santos



Typical ice cold beer



Christ the Redeemer statue



The bay of Rio de Janeiro