

First month in Innsbruck

Innsbruck is a stunning small city in the middle of a valley in the Austrian Alps. A two-and-a-half hour distance from the Munich airport, or a direct landing into the city's airport, where you can also find good airfares.

After a long flight with two connections and a bus ride from Munich to Innsbruck, the taxi took me to a *Villa Blanka* residence on the side of the Alps at an altitude of 600 meters and about a 15-minute walk from the Inn river, which flows along the city.

In the early days, when I still did not have a semesterial bus ticket, I went from the dorm to the university or the city center by foot, an experience in itself when it takes about fifteen minutes on a hillside with shopping from the supermarket.

The residence is in one of the city's rich neighborhoods right next to the Alpine zoo and with an amazing view worth the damn stairs!

Here are some facts I've gathered for you about Innsbruck:

First fact about Innsbruck - Sport! Everyone here is sportive. You'll see people with hiking shoes and sports clothes everywhere! Old people hold sticks for hiking instead of old walking sticks. Pretty amazing!

Fact # 2 - It is not always cold here! I brought too many sweaters and less T-shirts. Mistake. But it will pay off in winter time.

Fact # 3 - There are many shopping centers here. This means it's O.K to take a cheap Low Cost flight and buy whatever you need here. Besides, there are several second hand and vintage stores selling warm coats and cheap winter clothes.

Fact # 4 - This is also a tourist town. The shopping centers in the old city of *Altstadt* are relatively expensive compared to the ones in the other areas (anyway, everything is very close).

Fact # 5 - The Innsbruckers are nice and lovely people, plus they know English! (Might be connected to fact number 4). This makes life in Innsbruck almost super easy for the non German speaker student.

Fact # 6 - If you love hiking - you win! From the city itself you can start a lot of hiking trails in the Alps. Note the higher altitudes and the lower temperatures on the mountains. No less important - what is considered here as an *easy/family* trail is actually not that easy. It's certainly not easy when the definition for hiking for European students is to walk as fast as you can up the mountain without stopping for a moment. (What about the view people?!) So, note that you are out there walking with people in a similar shape to yours.

A seventh and important fact about Innsbruck - This is a student city. The university is divided into several campuses. The only campus that is a little far from the center of the city is the Technic, where the computer science and architecture departments, for example, are located. Next to it is the city's airport. The bus from the city center will take you there in about 10 minutes.

Fact # 8 - There are really good Cinematheques here! The big one is right next to the main campus. Check out the many film fests that take place there.

Fact # 9 - There are many restaurants here. If you hike you will find huts that serve delicious food on the mountains. Even about half an hour's walk. This means - good food can also be served to lazy hikers. Some huts are farther away, and then sitting in one of them feels like a prize that was really worth going all the way for.

Fact # 10 - There are many Erasmus students here and many students events, so if you come alone or you want to know people it's a great place to get to. Although there are many residences for students, you need to book your place there a long time in advance.

Innsbruck is stunning in every aspect. The only thing that can disappoint people is that it is not a party city - well it's not a big city, and the time to go out to the bars is relatively early. But relative to its small size it is full of entertainment possibilities and

one does not get bored for a moment. It's a winning combination of a great city and beautiful nature.

The staffs at AIANI's office are the best thing that can happen to you. They take you hand in hand to all the things you have to do in the first few days. There are monthly trips and meetings and there is definitely a feeling that there is someone there for you.

My warm recommendations are to bring with you enough money in advance to buy the semester ticket (about 130 Euros in Innsbruck and about 180 including Tirol) if you think you will. It takes time to open a bank account and pay the conversion fees to Euros is not fun.

The second and last recommendation is to leave everything I wrote here and just allow yourself to get lost in a beautiful new city. Innsbruck is accessible and safe and allows everyone to find themselves in it. No matter whether you ski or not, love the Alps or not, speak German or not, Innsbruck is a great place to experience student exchange.

Cheers!
Inbar



A perfect ending for a hiking day in the Alps

My first but not last Käsespätzle



Photos and Report by Inbar F.