



## An experience I will cherish.

### Before departure

When the opportunity for me to go back to Brazil I looked into it right away, as I speak the language and am somewhat familiar with the culture this was something I wanted to do to connect to my roots and to practice the language. (I haven't lived in Brazil in 17 years.)

Both the location as well as the project could not have been any more suitable for me. Florianopolis is a beautiful city located on an island with plenty of beaches and amazing scenery. With two major universities on the island the whole city is full of students. It is also the city in Brazil with the highest HDI which is a hugely positive aspect.

The project was genuinely interesting to me, and it is a subject with plenty of relevance to the UN's sustainable development goals.

I did not prepare much other than taking precautions with choosing where to live. For this I talked to my supervisors in Brazil. As a citizen I did not need to get a visa.

### Upon arrival

I arrived on the weekend before the start of the project and during this time I toured the island and went to socialize on campus. Once the first day of the project came around, there was an organized reception and show around in the lab by my supervisors.

### Financials

It was less expensive to rent a place to live, eat at restaurants and take Ubers. However, since I was living as a tourist, doing activities and not staying home for most of my time, I spent more money than I would have spent in Sweden. This was however no surprise.



### Accommodation

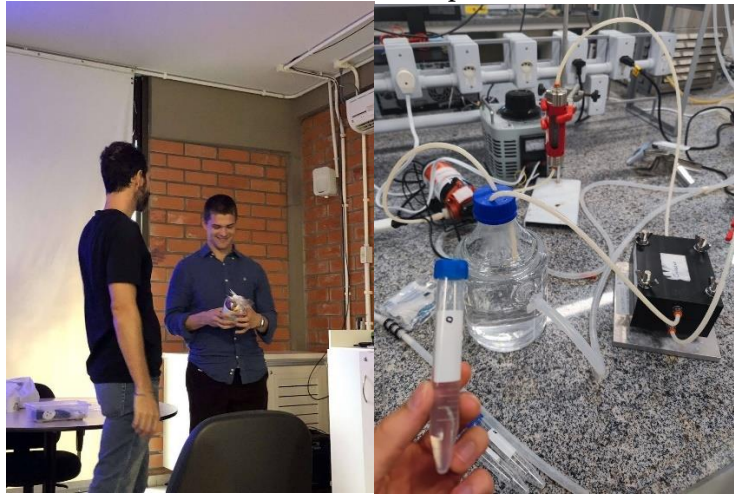
Accommodations were acquired through Airbnb as they charge less for whole months, and I was going during off season (right after carnival). I was advised in where to live by my supervisors. I paid around

4400 SEK monthly for 30 square meters with kitchen, bathroom and bedroom, 6 minutes walking distance from campus.

### **Project**

The project was about membrane modification for micropollutant removal for clean drinking water. By modifying the membranes in a so called *janus* configuration. One side of the membrane was modified to be hydrophobic while the other was modified to be hydrophilic and photocatalytic. These modification were made in order to find and optimize improvements to the membrane distillation process.

The project may help in future endeavors as membrane technology is and will be relevant in many applications in different industries. A typical day involved me working in the lab with processes such as spray coating, running tests on equipment such as goniometers and spectrophotometers, measuring and mixing different solutions, membrane distillation, and running photocatalysis tests. When help was needed I had plenty of it from postdocs working at the lab as well as from my supervisors. On my final days I presented the work to the researchers and supervisors at the lab.



### **Country**

The people in Brazil are social and getting to know new people is not challenging, however without knowing Portuguese this may be harder as some Brazilians do not speak English. However, Brazilians who know English really enjoy speaking and practicing their English.

### **Leisure and social activities**

For leisure there was always so much to do that I would spend every free night or day at a new place. Some notable things included hikes, waterfalls, beaches and clubs, jazz bars and student events.

I got to know a group of about 40 international exchange students by chance on my second night, and we stuck together for the whole duration of my 8 weeks and we grew very close, spending time with each other nearly every day. The internationals were mostly from Spanish speaking countries, with a few from Europe (UK, France, Italy) but about 85% spoke fluent Spanish & Portuguese. I got to know a lot of Brazilians through social events and ended up making a lot of friendships that I will cherish dearly.



### **Sustainability**

I did not travel in an environmentally sustainable way as I had to fly about 20 hours to get to my destination. Normal day to day activities included transport by car and most of the activities partaken in Brazil are inherently not environmentally sustainable. My project was connected to the global sustainable development goals in every way possible as it pertains to clean water which is a global issue and it is worsening every year.

### **Other recommendations and observations**

Practice some Portuguese and get to know the internationals. Visit the sights and go to social events where there are students, they will have a higher chance of being proficient English speakers.