

Croatian Calm & Club Chaos

My Accidental Erasmus Masterpiece

By Mukedis Abdella Jul 31, 2025



Me at the city center, pretending I'm not cold and confused. Shoutout to General Jelačić for the vibes tho.

Post-trip rant

Bok, beautiful people! It's almost been a year since I'm back in Turkey, still vibrating from six months of Croatian caffeine, rakia, paperwork

marathons, and dorm parties that sounded like an Airbus doing reggaeton.

This document is the long version—the one with every glorious, awkward, life-shaping detail you asked for (and a few you didn't know you needed).

January 2024 | Bursa, Turkey — The “One-More-Erasmus” itch

I'd already chewed through two Erasmus semesters in Poland, but my inner adventure gremlin wanted dessert. I sprayed hundreds of internship e-mails across Europe. Replies trickled in; none felt right.

Then I saw the University of Zagreb on my partner list. One click, one fast reply, and suddenly I was on a video call with Ivana & Tamara, who talked like real humans, not HR robots. They cared. I said yes before my Wi-Fi finished buffering.

Pre-Flight Reality Check

Actual Croatia knowledge:

Mirko Cro Cop highlights on YouTube.

Dinamo Zagreb & Luka Modrić (my brother's rants).

Google images showed beaches and cities I'd never heard of.

Turkish coworkers swore Croatians were “chill and welcoming.” Decision locked.

Ticket bought (Erasmus discount ftw). My buddy Oumar was headed to Rijeka—bonus hype.

Touchdown — First 72 Hours

Plane: Sat next to a tall Croatian who politely answered all my rookie questions.
Confidence level: 42%.

Dorm check-in (21:30): Tiny, flawlessly organized room—home for six months.

Roommate reveal: Gonzalo from Spain. Within ten minutes we were laughing about laundry disasters. Best roommate ever.

Morning #1: Zagreb's streets felt like a deep breath—quiet, spacious, effortlessly humorous. I hadn't felt that calm in years.

Night #2: Met neighbor Robbie (Lithuania). He handed me Vilnius chocolate that lasted two weeks. That same night Robbie, Berke (Turkish friend), and I queued for a club. Seven local guys in front joked about an under-age friend; I chimed in, "They're right, I know him." Laughter → introductions → first shot of Rakija. Instant proof Croats = humorous + open-minded.

Dorm Life — Small Room, Big Lessons

Gonzalo: master of turning mundane days into an adventure; taught me spontaneity.

Robbie: "calm adventurer," carbonara mentor, living example of controlled cool.
Berke: ESN WhatsApp buddy turned exploration partner.

Suleiman & Uso: met mid-semester, became 5 a.m. post-club philosophers—taught me not to sweat the small stuff.

Communication rule: no passive-aggressive nonsense—everything straight, simple, and respectful. I learned more emotional intelligence than any textbook offered.

Locals Who Rewired My Map

Ana & Andrea: first-week guides who explained un-Google-able Zagreb hacks.

Lana & Dora: runners who lent me their bikes without blinking; showed me how casual generosity can be.

Emma: smart, considerate, and hardworking girl—road-tripped to Zadar, Rijeka, Pula; shared sunsets, playlists, and sanity checks for months.

Internship — “Learn, Don’t Burn Out”

Ivana & Tamara ran the international office like a support squad:

Chinese Cultural Day: I arranged artwork and guarded dumplings.

Document duty: sorted Erasmus files, processed OIB/residence forms.

University Presentation Days: badge on chest, fielded questions (“Is Erasmus a person?”).

Flex policy: many tasks remote—answered emails in sweatpants, delivered on time. The workload was light by design; they wanted me exploring, not drowning.



Nightlife & Parties

Zagreb may look small; nightlife says otherwise.

Rakhia Bar Mondays: weekly Erasmus reunion, never the same twice.

Štefan Radić dorm party: thousands jumping, building vibrated like a speaker.

Airport warehouse rave: danced under retired airport lights till sunrise.

Rule of thumb: if music played, I was already inside.



Rakia Mondays—who even needs clubs?

Struggle Log

Money: excitement spending + cheap dorm \neq balanced budget. I survived, learned.

Bureaucracy: dawn queues for residence cards; patience level upgraded.

Zagreb isn't utopia, but attitude decides everything. Stay open, the city opens back.

Running, Hammocks, Perspective

Evening runs along the Sava River = free therapy. Weekend buses/drives to the coast, hammocks instead of hotels = cheaper, better stories. I arrived restless; I left calmer, more curious, and determined to keep my lifelong self-upgrade rolling.



Hotels are cool, but hammocks by the Adriatic hit different.

Closing Thanks

Ivana & Tamara: You turned an internship into a life chapter.

All friends named here (and a few I surely forgot while fighting my old HP keyboard): hvala, danke, gracias, teşekkürler. You made the adventure real.

Massive love,

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