

國立東華大學
National Dong Hwa University
姐妹校國際交換交流學生心得報告
International Inbound Exchange Student Report

姓名 Name	Marta Basañez	國籍 Nationality	Spain
學號 School No	W10530401		
交換系所 Host Department	Management Science and Finance		
原學校 Home University	Universidad Pública de Navarra		
原系所 Home Department	Economía y Administración y Dirección de Empresas		
交換交流期間 Exchange Period	自 From 2006 年 year /09 月 month 至 To 2007 年 year /01 月 month		

I am Marta, a Spanish student who came to National Dong Hwa University for the fall semester in 2016, and I would like to share with you my experience in these five months.

When I was told that I was coming to Taiwan I was excited and nervous at the same time.

I thought how beautiful that place was and what a wonderful experience it could be, but at the same time I thought about the culture shock and the language barriers. Some weeks later I was assigned a volunteer to help me, and really, that person saved my life.

She answered all my questions super quick and was so helpful that all my nerves went away. When I arrived, I was shocked. It was so hot, so humid, and none spoke my language.

However, people were super nice and even if they did not know English they tried to understand me by signs or google translate (that last one was my savior). At the beginning, I had to get used to eat with chopsticks every day at every time, to see Chinese characters around me, or listen to conversations that I had no idea what they were talking about. However, when time passed by it was a nice feeling.

Some days later, the classes started and I started meeting new people and taking my Chinese classes (I was so excited about these last ones). My roommates were so nice and even if their English was not that good, they did an effort to make me feel comfortable. A different story was the one in the restaurants. Trying to understand those menus with google translate was impossible so we had to take risks and select an aleatory meal. When the meals were served, we had to guess who had asked for what and decide how to distribute it. Sometimes we asked for things that we really didn't want to order, but after some weeks we started to learn how to ask for what we wanted. The main question was: noodles or rice? There were not many options in the menu. You could choose chicken or pork with any of them but that was all. It was so different from my home town, but I started to get used to it and even like it.

Another topic worth to mention is the bike. I bought a second hand bike since I was only staying for five months, and for some weeks it was my best friend. I used it for every trip like going to Liyu Lake and some more, and to go to school or Zhixue. However, it started making really weird and loud noises. Probably it was missing its previous owner so it decided to ditch me in many occasions. My friends were making fun of me all the time and they even bought me a wrench for Christmas.

Regardless, what I liked the most was traveling around the island and Asia and experiencing the different night markets in the country. Since we came, the first thing we heard about was the stinky tofu, but I have not been brave enough to try it. That smell kills

me every time I pass by. However, I will try it in few days (I cannot leave Taiwan without trying it). Other things that I will always remember are the trips:

We have gone many times to Taipei. It's such a wonderful city, there is a lot of life and the MRT is very convenient. It also has some incredible places such as the 101 tower, the memorial, and if you like more the nature you can enjoy a hike in the elephant mountain or other places around. It also has a lot of night life and there are many places to go dancing if this is what you like. There are many international people in them, and it's very easy to meet new people. Moreover, I found nice how the country in general is very safe. I have never felt in danger or with high probabilities of being robbed., which I found a very nice thing.

Another city that I loved was Kaohsiung. We went there for a weekend and even if it's a bit far from Hualien it is totally worth it. The Lotus Pond with the pagodas or the Giant Buddha are places that in my opinion everyone should visit if you stay in Taiwan for more some month.

But the one place that everyone should visit with no doubt if you are studying in the National Dong Hwa University is Taroko. All those green mountains around you make you feel so small in this world, and it's a good feeling. We rent some motorbikes and we could visit almost all Taroko so I totally recommend it.

But let's stop talking about travels (even if it is one of my favorite topics and I travelled much more) and talk about Taiwanese people and the classes in the National Dong Hwa.

There are two types of classes. The ones in which the teacher is very good at English or the ones that you feel that you are in a Chinese class even if it is English. However, in both cases all the professors are very nice and helpful. I was surprised with the relationship student-teacher, because in my country there is more distance between us. Let me explain: When I came here, we could not have a class one day, so the professor decided to invite all of us for dinner so that we could have a practical class instead, and see a real case example. I could not imagine this happening in Spain at all! Another example would be that for our last day of classes a teacher invited the whole class to her house to have a tea party. It was so nice of her and we had a wonderful time, but again, such an unexpected event for my culture. So, if you come here and these types of things happen, don't worry, go with the flow and enjoy, you will have a wonderful time.

Finally, I would like to talk about Taiwanese people. They are the kindest people I have met in my life. Even if they are super shy (they are very shy), if they see you with a weird face in the train station, in 2 seconds someone will be next to you offering help, which is something that I was very thankful for. They also love having dinner with you and taking pictures of you. In the beginning, I felt like a pop star with all those people wanting to take pictures with me, but then it was a normal thing. Moreover, in dinners with Taiwanese people you learn a lot. I was very surprised that they translated me absolutely everything

so that I would feel comfortable being the only non-Taiwanese in the table. The same happened in one of my classes, where I was the only foreign person and the teacher sometimes spoke in Chinese. This girl sitting next to me, looked at me with my face of “I don’ t understand anything she is saying” , and she started translating me everything that she said.

So, to sum up, Taiwanese people are very kind and helpful, and you will feel very comfortable when you are with them. If you stay in dorm, they will also be very respectful, at least this is what I learned from my experience of sharing a room with four Taiwanese girls. They are very silent, and in the beginning I was afraid of not being able to sleep with four people in the same room with different timetables; however, they are very silent and respectful so it was easy sharing a room with them. I mean, in my country if you put four Spanish girls in a room, we would be talking all the time, unless we go to sleep, or we should study, but here, even if two of them were friends since the primary school they didn’ t talk between them much not to bother the others. I was very surprised about this since I would not be able to be that quiet with my best friend in the same room, but of course, I was very pleased.

In summary, in this year I learned more than I could imagine. I learned about myself while immersing myself into Taiwanese culture, I made a lot of friends, visited so many interesting places, improved my language skills, ate very good and unique food, and learned about interacting with people of other cultures, so this is an experience that I

would recommend to anyone that wishes to have some new adventures in his or her life and wants to grow as a person, and due to the amount of international people and the people in this country, I believe that Dong Hwa is a good place to come.