

ISCTE Winter School Program

<Classes>

The classes were conducted entirely in English, with approximately 24 students in each class. Rather than being lecture-based, the classes followed a highly interactive format in which the professor asked questions and students actively shared their opinions. When I first joined the class, I felt quite intimidated because it seemed as though everyone around me spoke English fluently, and there was an expectation to respond in English at all times. I was especially nervous about making mistakes or having poor pronunciation.

However, as the weeks went by, I gradually became more accustomed to the environment and started to gain confidence in speaking and giving presentations. What impressed me the most was that no one reacted negatively or dismissively toward students who were not fluent in English. Instead, my classmates listened patiently, spoke more slowly to help me understand, and were genuinely supportive. Through this experience, I realized that speaking with confidence is far more important than being afraid of making mistakes.

The course content was divided into two main topics. The first focused on cultural differences and communication styles across various countries, and the second dealt with negotiation skills that can be applied in real-life situations. Learning through practical examples rather than theory alone made the material easy to understand, and many of the lessons were applicable to both everyday life and business contexts.

Assessment was mainly based on the PPT materials used during class. The exam consisted of both multiple-choice and short-answer questions, with a total of four written questions. The overall difficulty was not high, and students who attended classes diligently and reviewed the PPT slides could achieve good results. Overall, the course was not overly demanding and was especially meaningful for building confidence in English through active participation.

<Campus Life>

At first, the campus buildings were more complex than I had expected, and I had some difficulty finding my classroom on the first day. Since there were not many signs, it can be confusing for newcomers, so I would strongly recommend arriving early on the first day.

After classes, various activity programs were offered almost every day. On the first day, students could choose which activities they wanted to participate in and pay in cash. I joined only two activities: a Lisbon city tour and the Cristo Rei tour on the final day. There were many other options available, such as surfing, treasure hunts, escape rooms, and sports days, so I felt it was

best to choose activities based on one's interests and physical condition.

On the last day, a farewell party was held where students could check their grades and enjoy dinner together. This event was not just a closing ceremony but a meaningful opportunity to reflect on the time spent together and say goodbye to friends, which made it especially memorable. I would also highly recommend joining any after-parties with friends if possible. Most international students are very open to social gatherings, and spending time together outside of class helps build friendships much faster. It was more enjoyable than I had expected and allowed me to create many lasting memories. Most importantly, interacting with friends from diverse cultural backgrounds made me realize how limited my own perspectives and values had been. Although the program was short, it was an invaluable experience that broadened my outlook beyond just language learning.

<Daily Life>

I stayed for about two and a half weeks in an Airbnb located approximately a 20-minute walk from the campus. After reading many reviews about European accommodations, I was initially concerned about cleanliness and facilities, but the place turned out to be much more comfortable than expected, and I was very satisfied overall. Since many parts of Europe use hard water, I strongly recommend bringing a shower filter to protect your hair and skin. I personally noticed a clear difference after using one.

Lisbon in winter was also much colder than I had anticipated. Although it is in Southern Europe, many homes lack proper heating, making indoor temperatures feel quite low. Bringing an electric heating pad was one of the best decisions I made. I especially recommend a foldable one, as it does not take up much space. Having a washing machine in the accommodation was another major advantage, as it allowed me to do laundry regularly and pack fewer clothes.

Food was one of the greatest pleasures of living in Lisbon. The city is famous for its three most well-known nata shops, and if time allows, I highly recommend visiting all of them. Portuguese egg tarts are on a completely different level compared to those in Korea. The egg tarts sold at the café on the first floor of the campus were also excellent, and I often enjoyed one with a cappuccino. Another must-try dish is polvo(octopus). Although I usually do not enjoy octopus, the polvol had in Lisbon was incredibly tender and flavorful. Pairing it with wine or sangria greatly enhanced the overall experience. Portuguese wine is also very affordable, making it easy to enjoy without regret.

<Travel>

Before the program began, I arrived in Lisbon about four days early, which allowed me to explore

the city at a relaxed pace. This extra time helped me experience not only the major tourist attractions but also the local atmosphere, and it made adjusting to the program much easier.

During the program, I took a day trip to Porto over the weekend. Personally, I found Porto even more impressive than Lisbon. Watching the sunset while enjoying wine at a famous night-view spot was one of the most romantic and memorable moments of the entire trip. Porto's signature dish, Francesinha, is also a must-try. Although it looks very filling at first, it was surprisingly delicious. Porto is also known for its colorful packaged jams, often referred to as "paint jam," which make excellent souvenirs due to both their taste and cute design. I ended up purchasing several as gifts.

Although the school offered weekend programs to Sintra, I would personally recommend visiting Porto at least once instead. Even with a short stay, Porto provides an incredibly satisfying travel experience. After the program ended, I continued my journey to Madrid and Barcelona, enjoying a trip through Spain as well. Visiting Spain in addition to Portugal made the overall European travel experience much richer and more fulfilling.

