Host Institute:
Institute of Chemical Process Engineering
(Institut für Chemische Verfahrenstechnik)

Home University:

THE UNIVERSITY
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Project: Membrane Modules for Environmentally Friendly Processes
Europe I am coming!

In mid March, I received THE email that confirmed my summer plan, I am going to Europe for the first time!! I was so excited when I got the news and told it to all my friends and family. Since then, I have been reading travel blogs, Germany lives etc. to prepare myself for this.

Germany

Once I came out of the arrival hall at Stuttgart airport, my buddy Stefan greeted me with the biggest smile. He helped me to settle down for everything I need, from transportation to housing. As a person who have zero knowledge of German, it was really helpful and ease my transition to living in Stuttgart.

Sundays in Germany is very different than in Canada. Shops does not open on Sunday at all. The whole city is very quiet. Although it is very inconvenient to travel around or to shop, I honestly appreciate that Germans value their work-life balance a lot more than we do.

Drinking culture is huge in Germany. 14 is the minimum age to consume beer with a custodial person. Every place I have been to pretty much have their own brewery and the locals are very proud of their own beer. My grad student even showed me a brewery keychain from his town! If you don’t drink beer, non-alcoholic beer is also an available option!

Festival

Germans love festival. There are numerous festivals going on in the city all time and everywhere. I have been to a few and they are very fun to be in. It is also great to explore different parts of the city.
Fish Market:

This festival was located at Karlsplatz and last more than a week. There were over 30 food vendors in the square with a variety of seafood, desserts and beer (of course 😊). Herring sandwich is made of fermented herring with pickles in a bun. It gives a slimy texture and surprisingly I enjoy it. It is a great way to experience seafood in Europe!

Christopher Street Day (aka Pride Parade) :

This was one the biggest festival in town!! The parade started at 3 in the afternoon and continue until evening. Music blasted from these trucks and people dressed up for the event. I had so much fun just by being on the street.
Sommerfest

A group of drummers performing

There was music performance, food vendors, and radio shows at Schlossplatz all the way to Eckensee. The festival was huge and it’s perfect to learn more about Stuttgart! There were a variety of food, so it is a good choice for dinner!

Transportation

U-Bahn in Stuttgart is one of the quietest transportation medium that I have taken, possibly due to the fact that Stuttgart has a prosperous automobile industry. I’m actually surprised that I can hold a regular conversation without shouting to the other person. On U-Bahn and S-Bahn, you need to press a button to open the door when the train stopped at the station. This is a very new concept to me because doors open automatically back in Vancouver.

Institute

I was partnered with Institute of Chemical Process Engineering supervised by Dr. Andrej Grabowski. The institute is located at the city center, which makes commute very convenient. This building was for textile/clothing industry then turned into the current institute, therefore the building is long and narrow. The lab that I worked in is a chemical lab. My main task is to modify the current design for the membrane stack endplate.
I came up with a new design that fits our requirements such as metal free, cheap etc. Then I proceeded creating some engineering drawing using SolidWorks and requested quote from supplier for cost estimation.

The whole setup for electrodialysis experiment

The complete membrane stack setup

Endplate
Travelling

One of the biggest perks of being in Europe is that travelling is cheap and easy. Budget airlines and Flixbus have been my partner for the whole summer. The €9.99 ticket from Ryanair is the best thing ever! This summer, I have been travelling in more than 20 cities, and a lot of them are with the SUPER program participants.

Short day trips such as Heidelberg, Tübingen are very easy to plan. These cities are perfect for weekends. If you want to travel to other countries, make sure to go during the long weekends!

Tips:
- This blogger updates monthly for events and festival in Stuttgart. It is perfect when you have nothing planned for weekend and hit all those places up. (Flea market is one of my go-to) [https://living-in-stuttgart.com/]
- Step out of your comfort zone might be very hard, so ask yourself "When will you be in _____ again?"
- Plan travel early to get the best deal.
- Commas and periods are the opposite for European numbering system.
- Figure out the national day for the countries you want to visit, they usually throw big festivals and make your visit more joyeous!