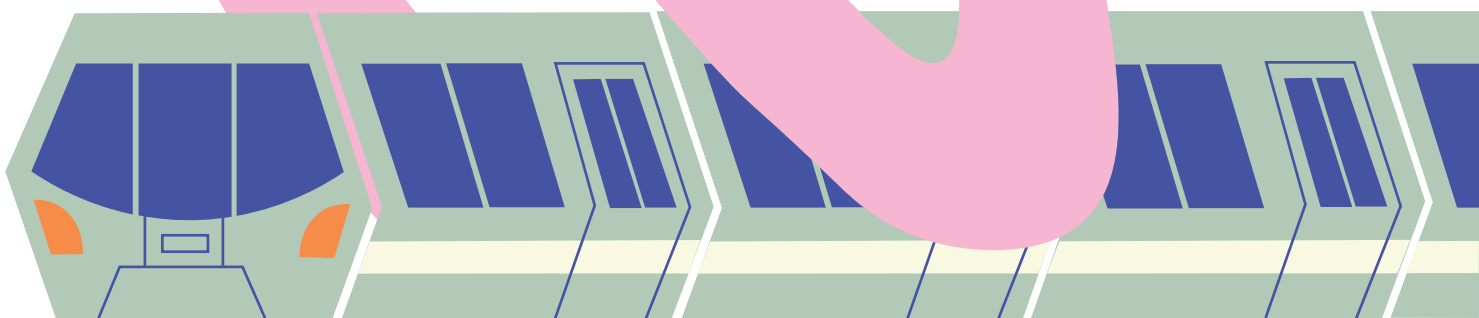
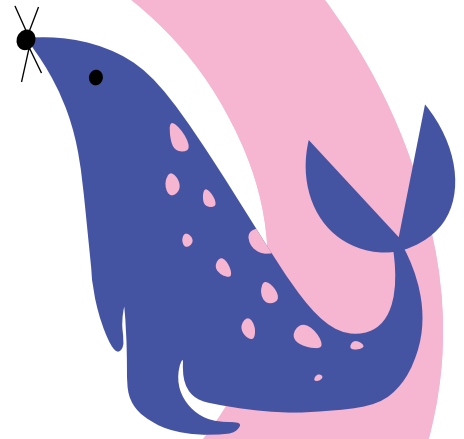
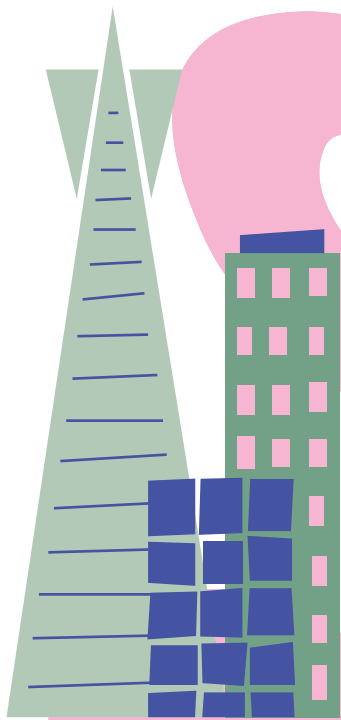
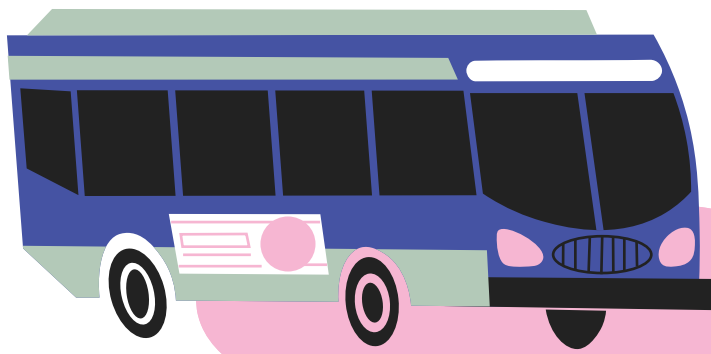


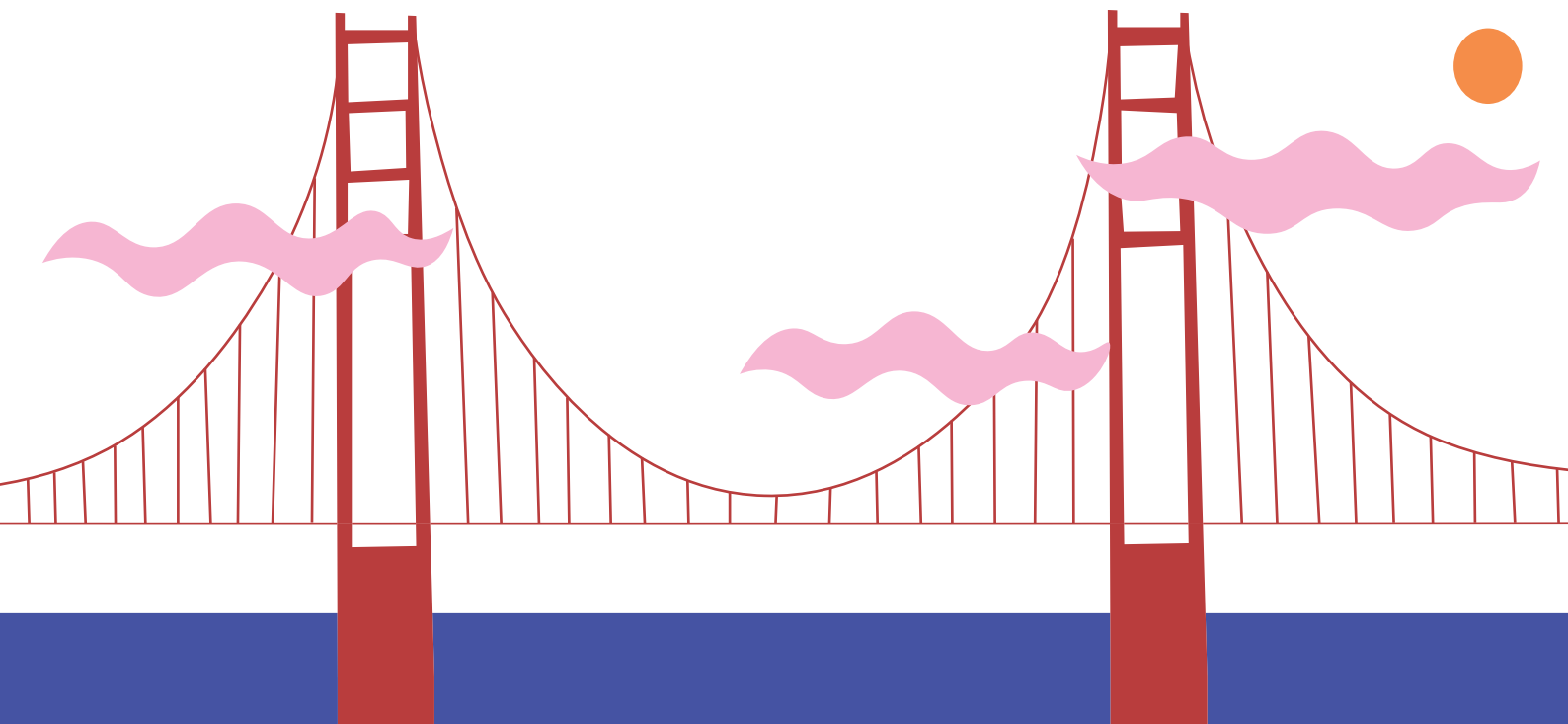
Erasmus Survival Guide



Introduction

Moving to Istanbul for an Erasmus semester at Marmara University is an exhilarating journey, but it is completely normal to feel a bit overwhelmed during your first few days. Stepping into a metropolis where East meets West means adapting to a new culture, a bustling city rhythm, and a different academic environment. However, with the right preparation and insights, this experience will quickly transform into one of the most rewarding chapters of your university years.

This guide is designed to act as your ultimate survival kit, helping you navigate the practical, administrative, and academic steps before departure and throughout your stay. With a particular focus on the vibrant district of Kadıköy—the beating heart of student life on the Asian side—and the Göztepe campus area, you will find essential tips regarding visas, residence permits, public transport hacks, and local student lifestyle.!



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01.

Before arrival

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

- Residence permit basics
- Health insurance
- What to pack?
- SIM card & internet options
- Currency & banking
- Transportation from airport to Kadıköy / Göztepe

Visa Process

Before travelling to Türkiye, students should first check whether a visa is required based on their nationality.

For many Erasmus students from Europe, short stays of up to 90 days may be possible without a visa. However, students planning to stay for one full semester or longer often need additional documentation.

Important documents usually include:

- a valid passport
- the Erasmus acceptance letter from Marmara University
- proof of accommodation
- proof of financial means
(bank statement, scholarship award confirmation)
- health insurance

Students are strongly advised to check the current requirements with the Turkish consulate or embassy in their home country before departure.



Residence Permit

Students staying in Türkiye for more than 90 days must apply for a residence permit (ikamet) after arrival. The application must usually be completed within the first 30 days of entering the country.

Required documents typically include:

- passport and copies
- student acceptance letter
- proof of address (rental contract or dormitory confirmation)
- 4 biometric photos
- valid health insurance
- application fee payment receipt

For Marmara students living on the Asian side, the Pendik immigration office is often the relevant office, depending on the registered address.



Health Insurance

Health insurance is mandatory for all international students.

Students should make sure that their insurance covers:

- doctor visits
- emergency treatment
- hospital stays
- medication costs

Many Erasmus students either use:

- international travel insurance from their home country, or
- a Turkish private insurance provider which you can find online

One of the cheapest ones is Antares Sigorta, which is in Kadıköy - you can either go there in person or text them via WhatsApp.

Link: <https://www.antaressigorta.com>, Phone number: +90 552 830 34 10

It is recommended to bring both:

- a digital copy
- a printed insurance certificate



What to Pack?

For students moving to Istanbul, the following items are especially useful:

Essential Documents:

- passport / ID
- Erasmus documents
- university acceptance letter
- insurance papers
- passport photos

Everyday Essentials:

- power adapter
- reusable water bottle
- comfortable walking shoes
- light jacket for windy weather near the Bosphorus
- medication / prescriptions

For University Life:

- laptop / tablet
- charger and power bank
- notebook supplies • student ID photos

Simple pleasures:

- bring your comfort food which may not be available in Türkiye from your hometown



SIM Card

After arrival, getting a Turkish SIM card is one of the first practical steps, you can find plenty of them near your home, when you walk across the streets or look them up on the internet.

The most common providers are:

- Turkcell
- Vodafone Türkiye
- Türk Telekom

For Erasmus students, prepaid SIM cards are usually the most practical option.

Typical benefits include:

- mobile internet packages
- local calls
- WhatsApp access
- flexible monthly plans

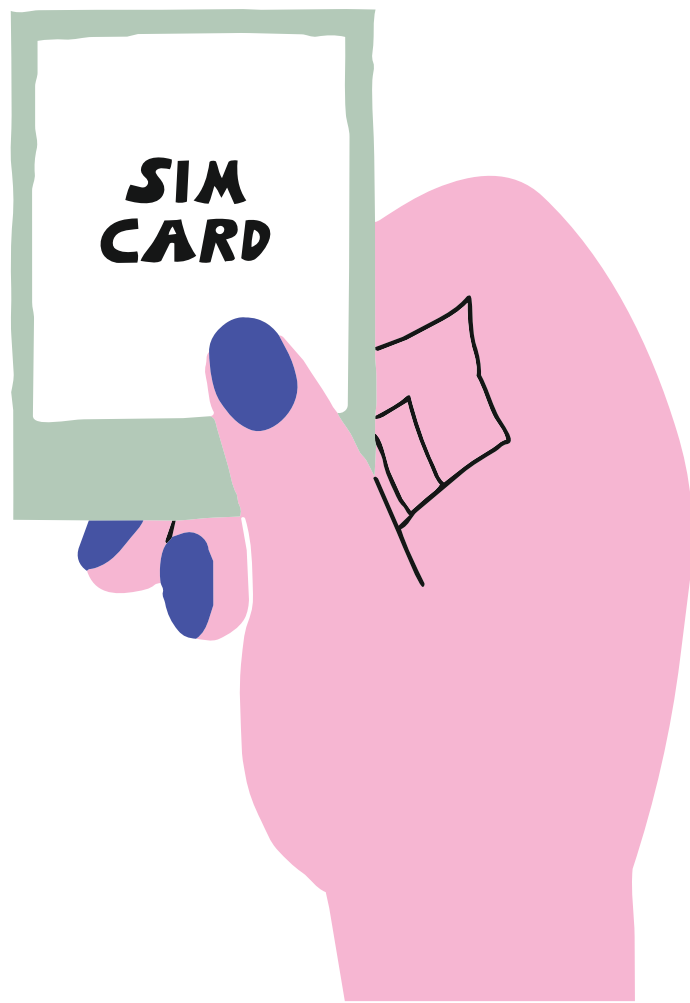
When buying a SIM card, you might be surprised by the price, which often starts at 35 euros or more. This is an unavoidable upfront cost because when you buy a Turkish phone number, you must pay for the physical SIM card itself first, and only then for the actual plan.

To navigate this without overpaying, keep these rules in mind:

- Plan prices can vary significantly depending on the specific store you visit, even if it's the exact same mobile operator. Don't be lazy: check prices at different shops to find the lowest rate.
- Learn a few Turkish phrases in advance. This will instantly make you look more trustworthy and respectful in their eyes, and you might just get a better price.

- Don't be afraid to haggle. Always check the official prices online beforehand so you know the baseline in case they try to overcharge you.
- Don't be surprised if the price of the plan changes every month. According to the shop assistants, they update prices weekly or even daily.
- If the price they quote don't suit you or is significantly higher than what you paid last month, find a Turkish-speaking friend to help work everything out smoothly.

But don't let the "tourist tax" scare you. Once you understand how the system works, you'll become even more resourceful.



Currency & Banking

The local currency is the Turkish Lira (TRY)

Students should arrive with:

- a debit or credit card that works internationally
- a small amount of cash for the first day

Cards are widely accepted in Istanbul, especially in Kadıköy.

However, cash may still be useful for:

- smaller shops
- local markets
- transportation card top-ups
- cafés near campus

Many students also open a local bank account if staying for a longer period.



Transportation

Most students arrive via Sabiha Gökçen International Airport, as it is much closer to the Asian side.

From Sabiha Gökçen Airport (SAW) the easiest way to reach Kadıköy is:

Metro (recommended):

- take the M4 metro line
- direct connection towards Kadıköy
- travel time: approx. 60–80 minutes

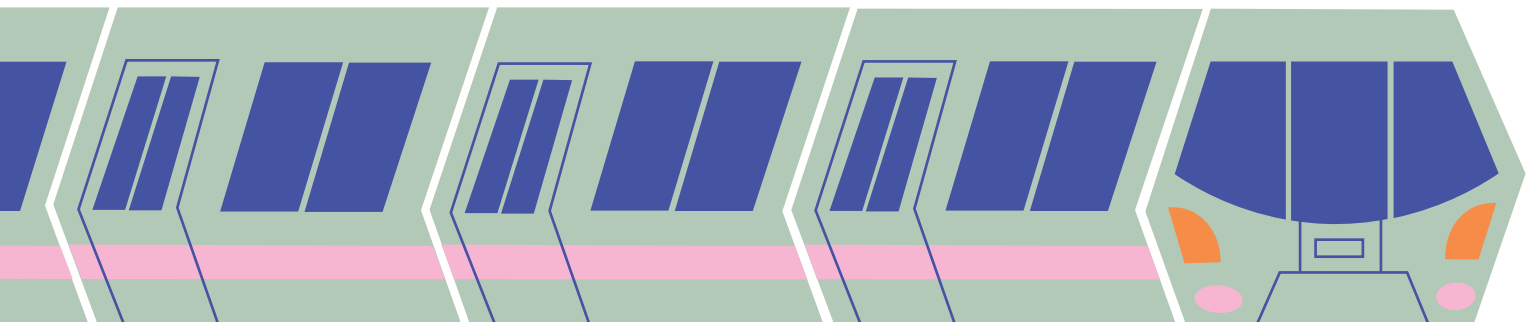
This is usually the most affordable and reliable option.

Shuttle Bus:

- The Havabus shuttle offers a direct route to Kadıköy and is convenient for students with much luggage.

Taxi:

- Taxis are available 24/7 but significantly more expensive.





2022.

First week in Istanbul

SURVIVAL MODE

- How to get an Istanbulkart
- How to reach Marmara University Göztepe Campus
- Campus entrance procedures
- International Office

Istanbulkart

How to get an Istanbulkart?

The Istanbulkart is a travel card that works on all forms of public transportation, including ferries, and even in some public restrooms. Two types of cards will be available to you:

- **Anonymous Card:** As soon as you head down to the metro from the airport, you'll see yellow Biletmatik machines; they're at every metro station. There, you can purchase your first red Istanbulkart, which costs around 150–200 TL (the price changes periodically).
- **Student Card:** This blue card will be available to you as soon as you receive your Student Proof Paper and your YÖK number from the International Office. This will allow you to ride for almost free. Don't forget your passport and Letter of Acceptance (you can bring your biometric photos if you wish, or they'll take your photo on-site), and head to the Istanbulkart Kadıköy Application Center. The student card costs 100–120 TL to issue, and a single ride costs 20.50 TL.
- **Top-up:** Via the same Biletmatik machines, with cash or a card, or through the Istanbulkart app (requires a Turkish card or Mastercard/Visa).

My personal tip: When topping up your student card, don't switch the interface to English—keep it in Turkish. That way, you can purchase a monthly pass for 593 TL, which includes 200 trips (less than 3 TL per trip).



Marmara University

How to get to Marmara University Göztepe Campus?

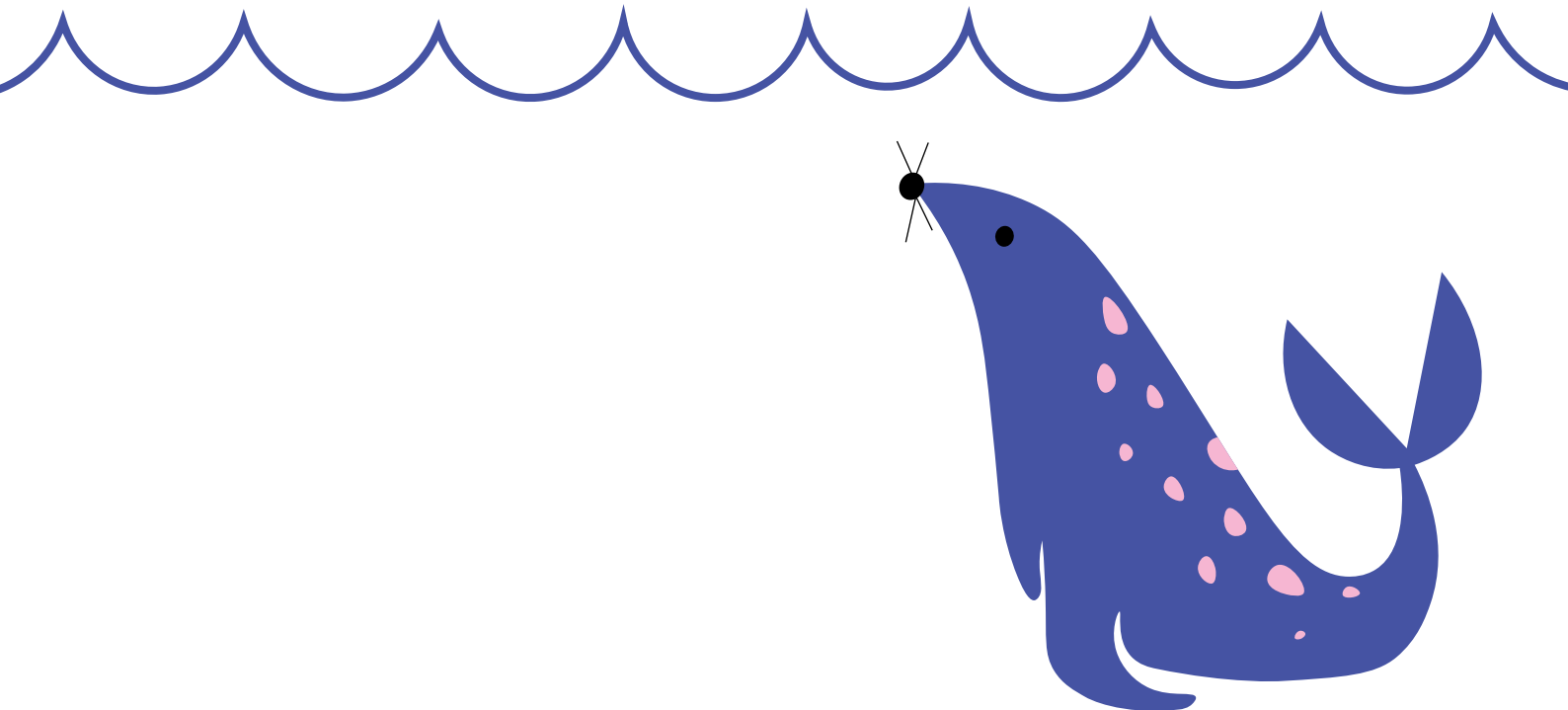
The campus is located on the Asian side, specifically in the Kadıköy district.

From Istanbul Airport (IST): Take the HAVAİST bus (HVİST-14) to the Kadıköy stop, then take a taxi or bus (e.g., 19F).

From Sabiha Gökçen Airport (SAW): The fastest option is the M4 metro to Göztepe station. From the station, it's about a 15–20-minute walk to the campus or a 5-minute ride on any bus heading toward "Fikirtepe."

If you live in Kadıköy, the easiest option is to take one of these buses: 19F, 19S, 8E, 15CK, 14SB, 14ES, 20K.

In general, for getting around the city by public transport, I recommend using Moovit or Yandex Maps; if walking, Google Maps will also work but always check that the route is up to date.



Campus

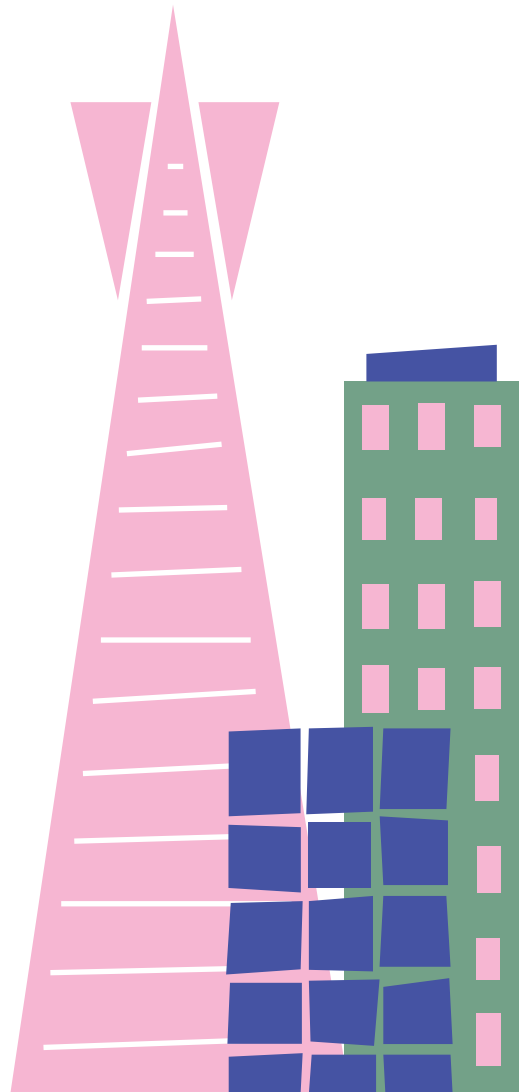
Campus Entrance Procedures:

Universities in Istanbul have strict security measures in place.

First few days: Be sure to carry your passport and Acceptance Letter or student certificate in PDF format. Show them to security at the main entrance.

Permanent Access: You will later be informed which app to download so you can pass through the turnstiles without having to repeatedly tell security that you are an Erasmus student.

Visitors: Access for non-students is restricted, so always keep your documents with you.



International Office

Most administrative matters are handled here. The International Office will be one of your main points of contact throughout your Erasmus experience. It's located on the second floor of the brahim Üzümcü Building. Enter the building, turn left toward the stairs, go up, then turn right—that's where you'll find the International Office.

For anything related to administrative matters, Erasmus registration, obtaining documents for a residence permit, or consultations—they're always there to help you with that.





03.

Academic life

AT MARMARA

- Academic life
- Courses
- English friendly
- Add-drop period
- Attendance
- Exams
- Communication
- WhatsApp culture

Academic Life

Assignment Structure = what your workload looks like:

At Marmara University, courses usually combine several types of assessment instead of just one final exam. It may differ from your home university, so it is essential to fully understand the grading system.

Typical structure consists of:

- Midterm exam (Vize) – ~30–50% of your grade
- Final exam (Final) – ~40–60%

Assignments/projects/presentations – sometimes included (depends on the course).

What to expect:

- Some professors are very theoretical (lecture + exams only);
- Others are more interactive (presentations, group work, essays);
- Group projects are quite common, especially in social sciences.

Important: Even if a course looks easy at first, the final exam can be quite detailed, so don't ignore lectures.

Warning: You cannot retake midterm exams, so it is highly important to attend them and come well prepared. If you miss a midterm exam, sometimes it is not possible to attend the second term!

In case of sickness or any other issues – try to obtain an official medical report (from a doctor or a hospital) so you can submit it to your department's office and have a chance to retake the exam.

Courses

How to Choose Courses? Choosing courses can feel chaotic at first - but here's how to approach it:

1. Check the course catalogue at Faculties at Marmara University website
2. Review each faculty site for courses that you may be interested in (you should use a translator most of the times)
3. Compare it with your Learning Agreement
4. When you obtain access to BYS system, enroll in preferred courses (the available ones may differ from the ones you planned to take or put in your LA)
5. Attend different classes during the first week to establish your preferences
6. Talk to:
 - other Erasmus students
 - Turkish students
 - Erasmus coordinators
 - Professors

Reality check: Course availability may vary from semester to semester. In some cases, the language of classroom interaction may differ depending on enrollment and teaching arrangements.

Best strategy: Go to classes in person during the first week and decide based on real experience, not just the system.

Warning: The time of enrolling to courses is limited in the system, be aware that after that period you may not be able to change it (check point 4).

In case of any problems, remember to contact Marmara International Office (either in person or through mail).

Add-Drop Period

(VERY IMPORTANT) This is your safety net.

Usually takes place during the first 1–2 weeks of the semester. For detailed information you should check the Marmara University Academic Calendar.

During this time, you can:

- Change courses
- Drop courses
- Add new ones
- Fix schedule conflicts

Best strategy: Attend as many classes as possible at the beginning. Don't commit too early.

Choose your courses based on:

- teaching style
- language
- workload

After this period > changes are usually NOT allowed.



Attendance

Attendance rules vary by professor, but generally: 70% attendance is required (official rule).

Some professors:

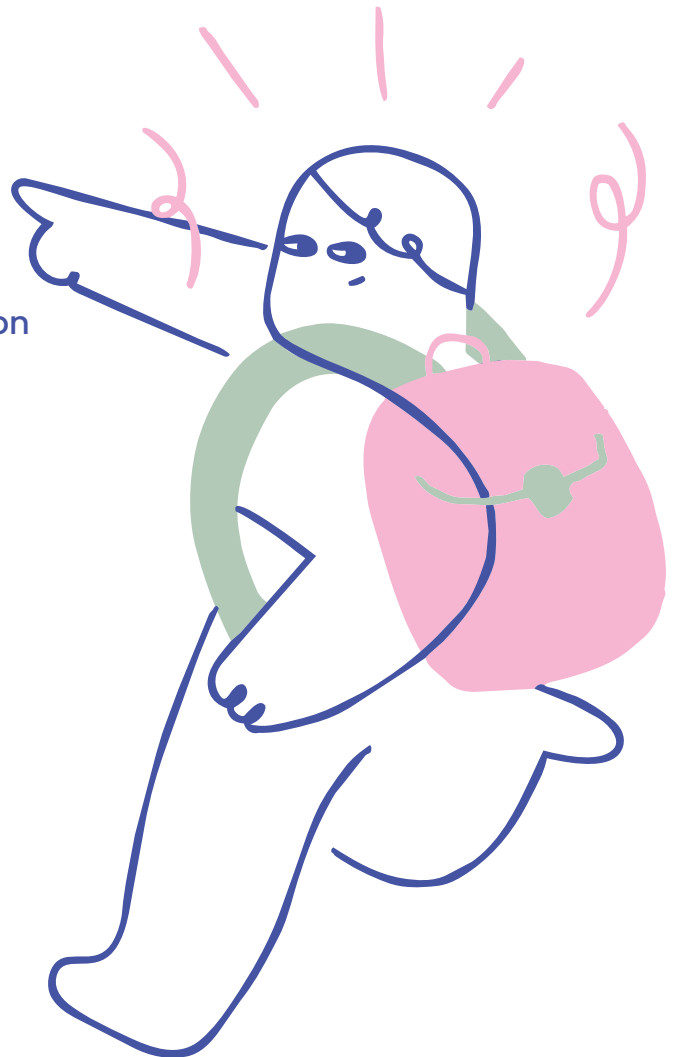
- strictly check attendance
- others don't care much

You should listen to your professor's rules and expectations and talk with your classmates.

Important: If attendance drops too low > you may be rejected from taking the final exam.

Erasmus reality:

- Many professors are flexible if you:
- inform them early
- explain travel plans or Erasmus situation



Exams

Midterms:

Usually held around week 7–8 (ask your professor or/and classmates). It is often not possible to get a second term without a valid reason (such as an official medical report).

Exams can be:

- multiple choice
- open-ended
- essays

Finals:

At the end of the semester. Ask your professor/classmates for an official date. The final exams are often harder and more detailed. They mostly require literature knowledge. Usually cover ALL material from the semester.

Grading:

Turkish system is usually:

- out of 100%

then your score is converted to letter grade from each course in the end (letter grade = midterm + final + (optional) other required assignments).

Important differences vs many EU countries:

- Finals and midterms really matter
- Memorization is often required
- Some exams are very theoretical



Communication

Overall vibe: respectful but approachable. Make sure that your English is friendly but not too informal. Otherwise, it may feel disrespectful to some professors.

How to communicate:

- Email (the official way)
- After class (very common and quick)
- Sometimes via assistants (especially when it comes to exams or assignments)

Tips:

- Be polite and formal: "Dear Professor...", "Dear Sir/Madame..."
- Please allow reasonable time for e-mail responses, especially during busy academic periods.
- For urgent matters, meeting instructors or administrative staff in person is often the most effective approach

Good to know: Professors are usually helpful and understanding toward Erasmus students (make sure to not overuse it). If you show effort, they often become more flexible.



WhatsApp Culture

This is a HUGE part of student life in Turkey. Be ready to explore a whole different way of communication from your home country (if you do not use WhatsApp daily).

Almost every course has its own WhatsApp group. Sometimes it consists of only students, but also professors can be a part of the group. Check it before you become too comfortable on the group chat.

What happens in there:

- Notes and slides shared
- Announcements from classmates & professors
- Exam info
- Last-minute changes

Reality: Sometimes the WhatsApp group is more useful than the official system.

How to join: Ask your classmates to add you to the group chat (if there is one) and stay informed.

Pro tip: Stay in the group even if you don't talk. It can save you from missing important info.

The key to surviving (and enjoying it):

- Be proactive
- Go to classes early
- Talk to people (not only Erasmus students)
- Use the add-drop period wisely



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04.2

Daily life

AT KADIKÖY AND İSTANBUL

- Best cafés to study
- Restaurants
- Markets
- Safe neighborhoods
- Cultural places
- Cultural awareness

Best cafés to study

1. Idea Kadıköy

- Library + café vibe
- Great for long, focused study sessions
- Quiet and structured

2. Küff Kolektif

- Creative, alternative atmosphere
- Good for studying + feeling inspired

3. Benazio Coffee

- Cozy, affordable

4. Story Coffee

- Bright, modern, laptop-friendly
- Good Wi-Fi + long stays okay

5. Montag Coffee Kadıköy

- Quiet corners + good coffee
- Popular with students

Tip: In Kadıköy, it's normal to stay for hours – just order occasionally.

Libraries/study spaces:

1. Idea Kadıköy

- One of the best study spots overall

2. Kadıköy Ferry Station Library (iskele Kütüphanesi)

- Amazing sea view
- Very quiet and focused

3. Moda Pier (Moda iskelesi)

- Beautiful aesthetic + sunset view
- More relaxed vibe

4. Müze Gazhane library

- Modern, spacious
- Combines studying + culture



Restaurants

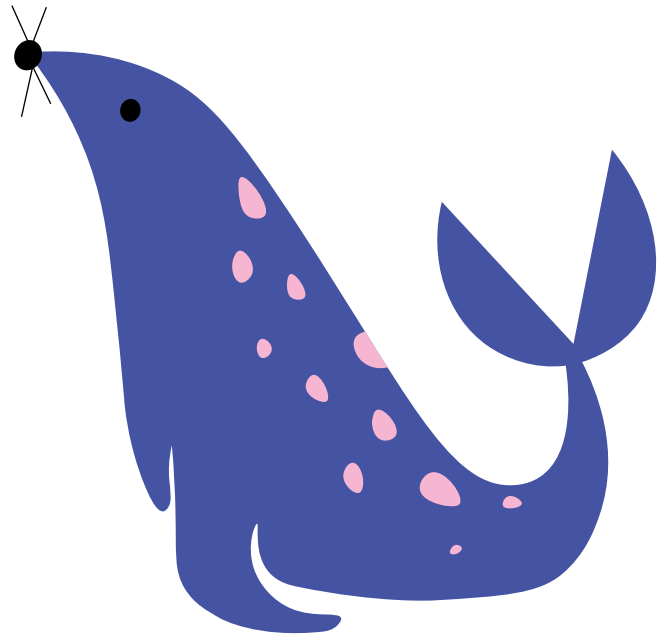
In Kadıköy there are a lot of food options that are affordable. It is recommended to go to the restaurants to find your own taste and to explore the food culture and places:

1. Esnaf lokantası (local restaurants)

- Cheap, homemade Turkish food
- You choose dishes > very budget-friendly

2. Kadıköy Çarşı area

- Many student-friendly places
- Wraps, pide, soups
- Simit, dürüm, gözleme, pilav
- Very cheap and quick



Markets

1. Kadıköy Market (Tuesdays & Fridays)

- Huge mix of clothes + fresh food
- Can be overwhelming > go early & bring cash

2. Grand Bazaar

- Touristic but iconic
- Great for souvenirs, tea, spices

3. Spice Bazaar (Egyptian Bazaar)

- Smaller, more food-focused
- Amazing smells + atmosphere



Safe neighborhoods

1. Kadıköy (Moda, Yeldeğirmeni)

- Very safe, young, student vibe • Acıbadem
- Quiet, residential, safe

2. Yeldeğirmeni

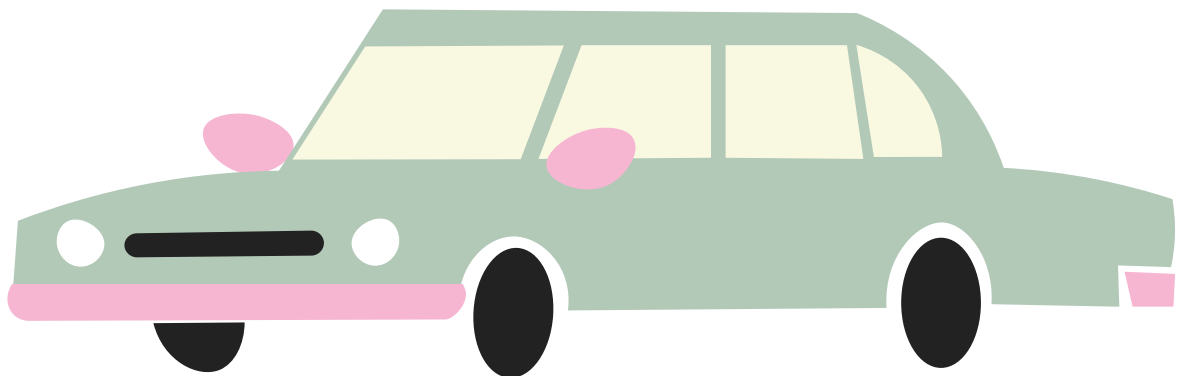
- Artsy, alternative

3. Cihangir

- Trendy, international crowd

4. Beyoğlu

- Lively and central
- Safe but busy > watch belongings at night



Cultural places

1. Moda seaside

- Chill, local lifestyle
- Perfect for sunset

2. Kadıköy center (Bull statue area)

- Social + cultural hub

3. SALT Galata

- Museum + library + study space

4. Hagia Sophia

- Must-see historical site

5. Topkapı Palace

- Ottoman history + architecture



Cultural awareness

1. Eating & drinking

- In conservative areas > avoid eating/drinking in public during the day
- In Kadıköy/Moda > more relaxed

2. Restaurants

- Some closed during daytime
- Very busy at sunset (iftar)

3. Behavior

- Dress modestly, especially near mosques
- Be respectful of fasting people

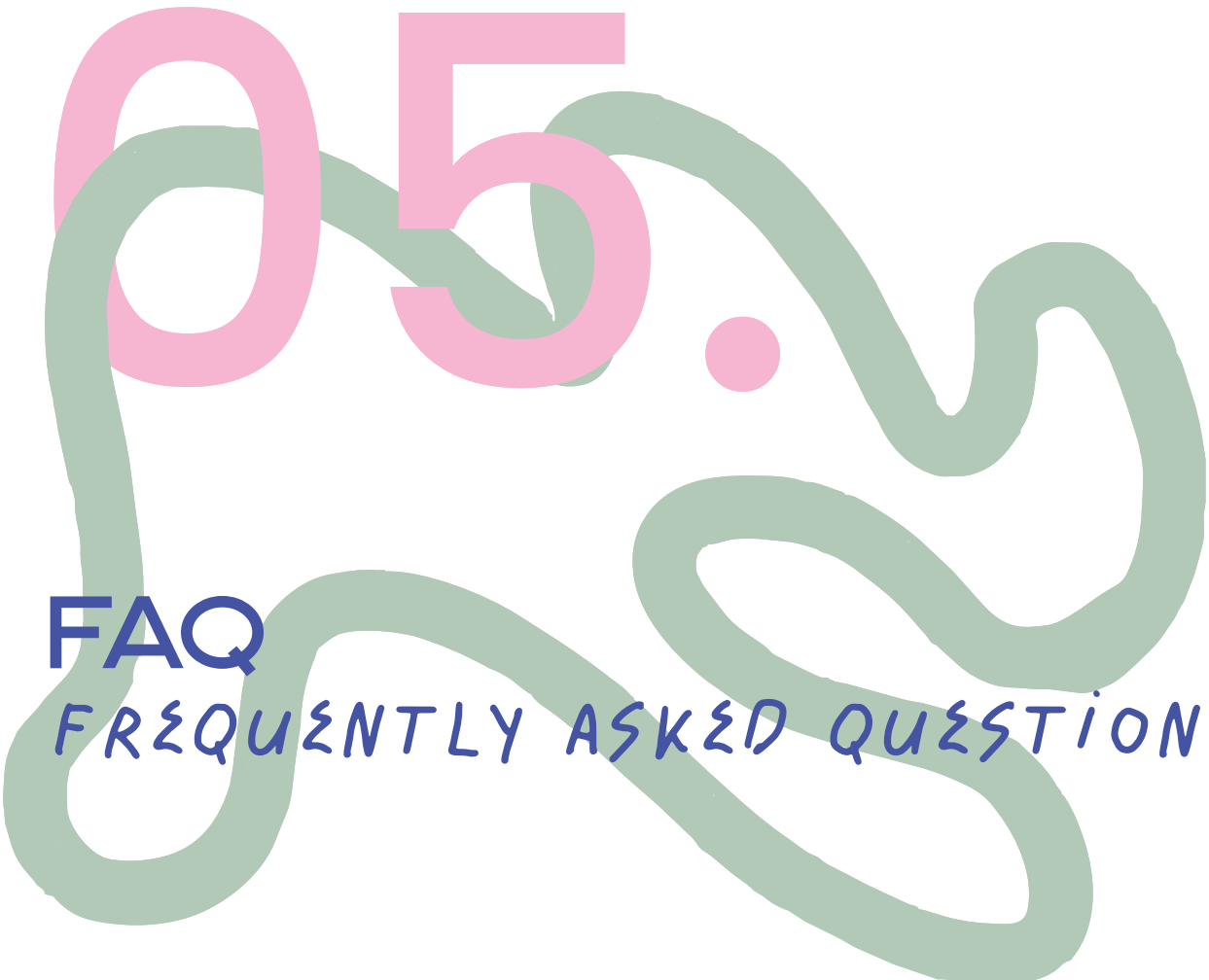
4. Daily rhythm

- Quiet days, lively nights
- Streets fill up after sunset

5. Mosques

- Visit outside prayer times
- Cover shoulders/legs (headscarf for women)



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05.5

FAQ

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

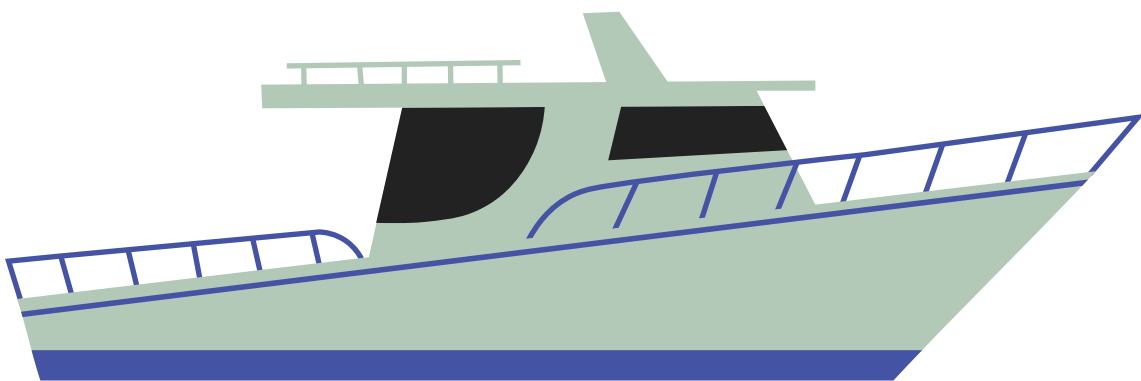
- Public Transportation
- Studies in English
- Accommodation
- Food Expensive
- Travelling
- International Students
- Erasmus Parties
- ESN Buddy
- Student Life
- Residence Permit

Public Transportation

Is public transportation easy to use in Istanbul?

Yes, it is highly efficient and user-friendly. Navigating the city requires an Istanbul Card, and exchange students should apply for a student version immediately to get massive discounts. There is a monthly student subscription offering around 200 rides for roughly 600 TRY, which is incredibly cheap.

Since most Marmara University Erasmus students live in Kadıköy, commuting to the Göztepe campus by bus is straightforward. Other campuses can be reached via a mix of metro lines and the Marmaray train. For crossing between the Asian and European sides, the ferry is highly recommended—it is practical and doubles as a scenic boat tour of the Bosphorus. While the metro, Metrobus, and Marmaray are fast and reliable, local buses are often delayed by Istanbul's notorious traffic. For daily navigation, Moovit generally provides more accurate routes and real-time data than Google Maps, though the free version has quite a few ads.



Studies in English

Do universities in Istanbul offer courses in English?

Yes, but the reality on the ground can vary. At Marmara University, many courses are officially listed in English. However, most of the students are locals, professors sometimes switch to Turkish to clarify complex points. This can be frustrating if you do not speak the language.

Additionally, schedule changes and course name confusion are common during the first few weeks, so academic flexibility is essential while finalizing your timetable. On the bright side, the international office and professors are remarkably supportive. They respond quickly to emails and genuinely try to help international students resolve any academic issues.

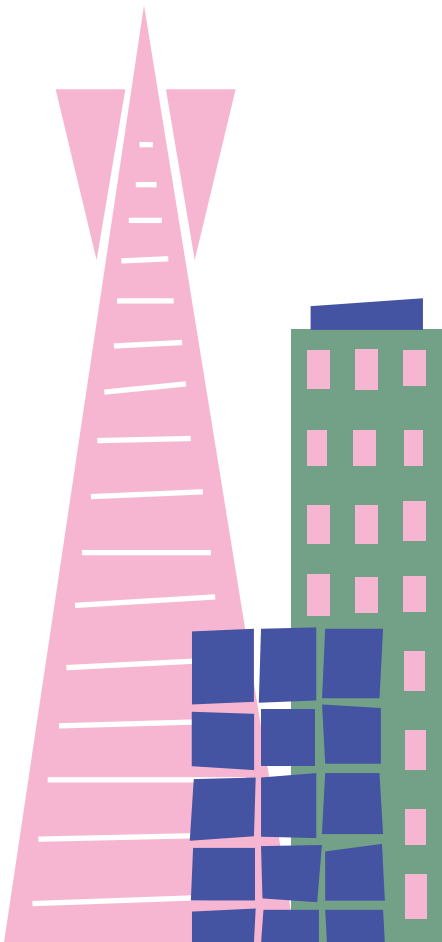


Accommodation

What is student accommodation like in Istanbul?

Most exchange students opt for shared flats rather than dormitories, concentrating mostly in Kadıköy. This district is the hub of student life on the Asian side, packed with cafés, bars, and Erasmus social events.

Housing is typically found through Facebook groups (like "Your Best Flat Istanbul") or agencies specializing in international student rentals. Flats are usually shared among three to six students. While these rooms are generally more expensive than renting a private apartment directly from a local landlord, living with other Erasmus students provides an instant social circle. On average, students pay around 400 euros per month for a room. It is best to start searching about two months before arrival; most students find a suitable place within a week. Landlords often set up group chats for flatmates beforehand, making it easy to connect before moving in.



Food expenses

How expensive is food in Istanbul?

Food is quite affordable, and prices can easily accommodate a student budget. Local street food is a cheap and delicious way to experience Turkish cuisine. Interestingly, the price gap between dining out at casual local spots and cooking at home is not as wide as it is in many European cities.

For those looking to save money, Marmara University's student cafeteria serves highly subsidized, budget-friendly meals. When grocery shopping, discount supermarkets like BİM, ŞOK, and A101 are found on almost every corner. While they are small and have a limited selection, they cover all the basics cheaply. Larger supermarkets are available for a wider variety of brands. While imported goods and meat can be pricey, overall food expenses remain highly manageable.

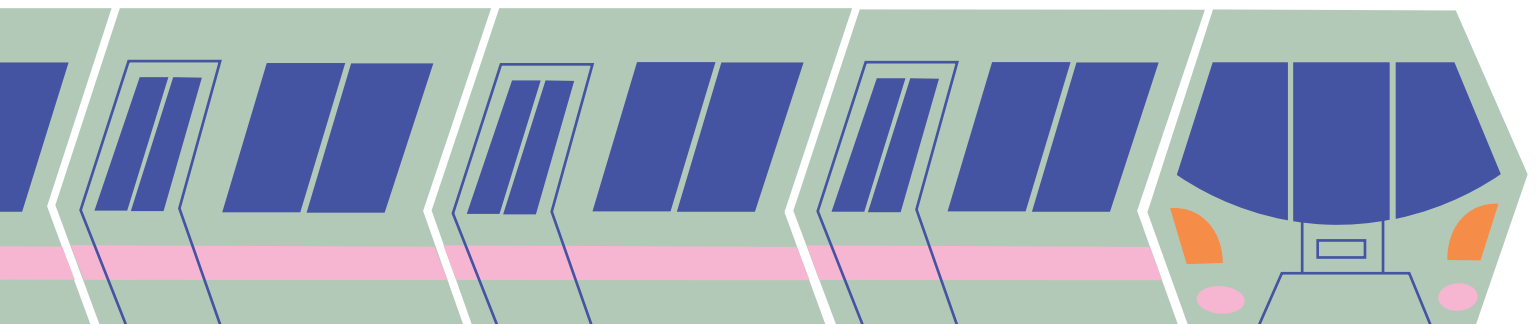


Travelling

Is it easy to travel from Istanbul to other cities?

Traveling around Turkey is a major highlight of the Erasmus experience because it is both cheap and easy. Students use domestic flights, long-distance buses, or road trips with friends. Cappadocia is a top destination, and the university's ESN (Erasmus Student Network) frequently organizes all-inclusive group trips there covering transport, housing, and activities.

Many students also plan independent trips. Southern coastal towns like Antalya, Fethiye, and Bodrum are highly popular, and because they are far from Istanbul, flying is the best option. Outside of peak holidays, domestic flights can often be found for under 100 euros. For closer destinations like Izmir, comfortable intercity buses are a great alternative.



International Students

Are there many international students in Istanbul?

Istanbul hosts thousands of exchange students every semester, creating a massive international community. Students arrive from all over Europe - including Spain, Germany, France, and Slovakia - as well as non-European countries like the United States.

Kadıköy is the main gathering spot for this community. It is nearly impossible to go out there without hearing multiple languages or running into other exchange students, making it effortless to build a diverse social network. While there are also many international students living on the European side, they tend to stay in their own neighborhoods, so daily interactions across the Bosphorus are less frequent.



Erasmus Parties

What are Erasmus parties like in Istanbul?

Nightlife is a massive part of the exchange experience here. While the official welcome parties are concentrated at the start of the semester, ESN hosts nightlife events throughout the year, with many of the largest clubs located on the European side.

A favorite student venue is Ritim Roof, which plays mostly pop music and attracts crowds from various universities. Entry fees generally range between 300 and 500 TRY. ESN also organizes unique events like the ESN Boat Party on the Bosphorus. Tickets for the boat party cost around 800 TRY and usually include a free drink, which most students agree is well worth the price for the experience.



ESN Buddy

How helpful is the ESN buddy system for new students?

The buddy system is an invaluable resource, particularly during the initial arrival phase. Erasmus students are matched with a local student about a month before the semester starts, usually connecting first via WhatsApp to sort out immediate questions.

Buddies offer practical boots-on-the-ground support with housing searches, university bureaucracy, and navigating local culture. The nature of these relationships varies; some students become lifelong friends with their buddies, while others maintain a strictly practical, helpful relationship. Either way, having a local contact significantly reduces the stress of moving to a new country.



Student Life

How active is student life outside of university classes?

Social life outside of lectures is incredibly vibrant, largely driven by ESN's packed calendar. They organize everything from Turkish Culture Nights and Beer Pong tournaments to daytime workshops, museum tours, and activities like mandala painting.

The first few weeks of the semester are exceptionally busy as everyone looks to make friends. The ESN Instagram page is the primary tool for staying updated on upcoming plans. Thanks to this constant stream of events, running out of things to do during a semester in Istanbul is virtually impossible.



Residence Permit

How hard is it to get the residence permit (ikamet)?

Getting your residence permit (ikamet) is a bureaucratic and time-consuming process, but it is not inherently difficult. It involves gathering specific documents, paying state fees, getting fingerprinted, and submitting your file. It is highly recommended to start this paperwork within your first few weeks in the country.

Students have a three-month grace period after arrival to complete the application, which leaves plenty of time to get organized. Furthermore, the university's international office is well-versed in the process and ready to assist with any questions. Ultimately, the application requires patience and attention to detail rather than dealing with unexpected complications.





Communication Student *TIPS*

- Media Culture
- Social Media Trends
- Turkish news
- Cultural Differences
- Academic Etiquette
- Challenges in Istanbul
- Conclusion

Media Culture

The Turkish media landscape is highly dynamic, emotionally driven, and sharply polarized along political lines. For communication students, this market presents a compelling case study of a shifting media ecosystem:

- Traditional television still maintains massive audience retention, largely fueled by the cultural phenomenon of diziler (TV series) which run for over two hours per episode and serve as a powerful tool for the country's global soft power.
- Strict state regulation and censorship of legacy broadcasting and print media have forced progressive journalism and alternative political discourse entirely into the digital sphere.
- Independent YouTube channels, crowdfunding-backed journalism, and alternative podcasts now command far higher trust and engagement among younger audiences than traditional media conglomerates.



Social Media Trends

Istanbul ranks as one of the world's most digitally active metropolitan areas, where social media dictates regional pop-culture trends through specific local habits:

- Instagram has effectively replaced Google as the primary search and discovery tool for younger

demographics, who utilize the platform as a functional directory to verify menus, cross-check

real-time pricing and discover hidden cultural hubs in districts like Kadıköy and Moda.

- Digital content production focuses heavily on high-production cinematic storytelling, characterized by warm color grading, Golden Hour lighting, and lifestyle blogging.

- Short-form video content on TikTok and Reels—ranging from spontaneous street interviews to viral community narratives centered around the city's street animals—drives the local digital subculture.



Turkish News

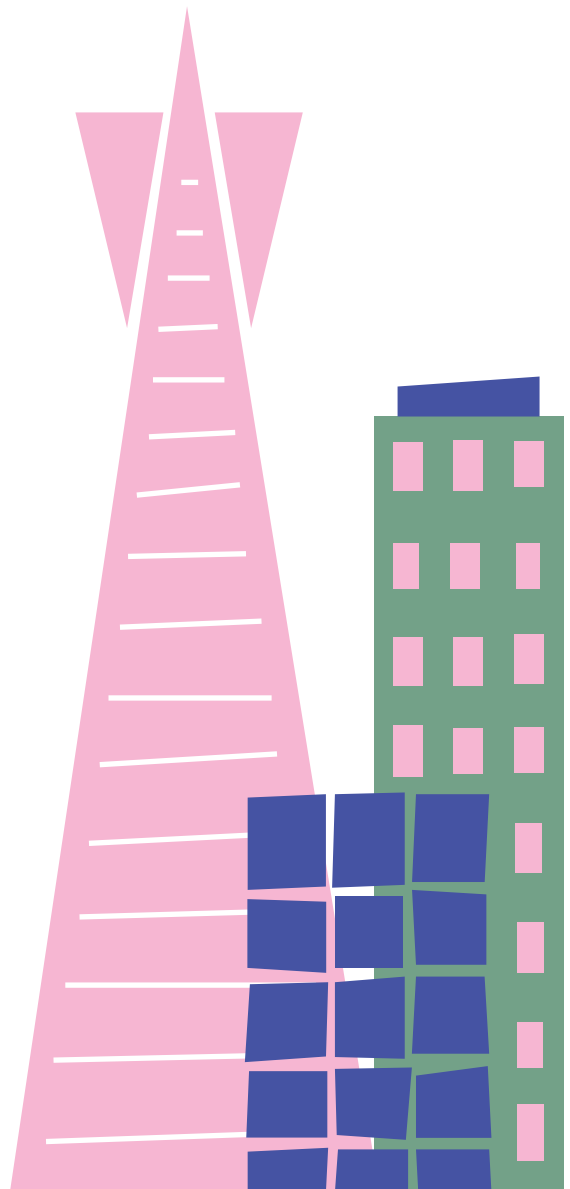
How to Follow Turkish News? Navigating local news as an international student requires a strategic approach to avoid biased communication silos and misinformation:

- To gain an objective view of current events, look to independent platforms like Duvar English and Bianet English, which provide critical coverage on human rights and social movements.
- State-funded platforms like TRT World and Anadolu Agency are useful specifically for analyzing the official state narrative and foreign policy.
- While X (formerly Twitter) remains the fastest network for breaking news and national trending topics (TT), it is highly susceptible to rapid disinformation campaigns. Media students should actively cross-reference viral social media claims with established local fact-checking platforms such as Teyit.org or Doğruluk Payı.



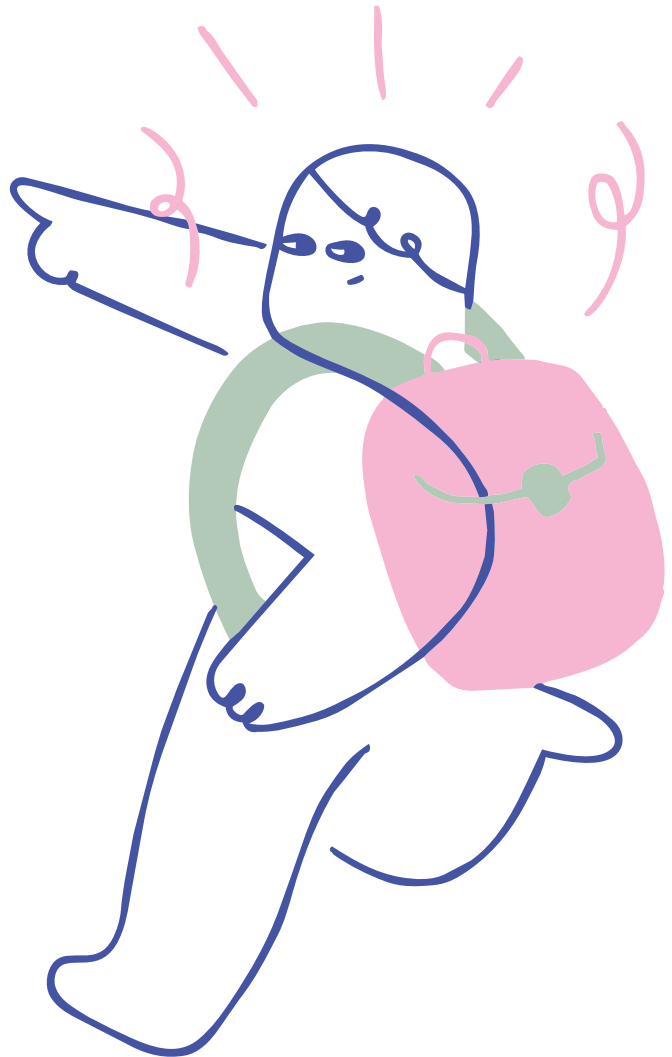
Cultural Differences

Cultural Communication Differences in Turkey is often warm, expressive, and relationship oriented. People may use emotional language, gestures, and indirect communication, especially in sensitive situations. Hospitality and politeness are highly valued, so showing respect and openness can help build positive relationships. Since Istanbul is culturally diverse, you may notice differences between more conservative and more liberal environments. Remember to always stay open and respectful!



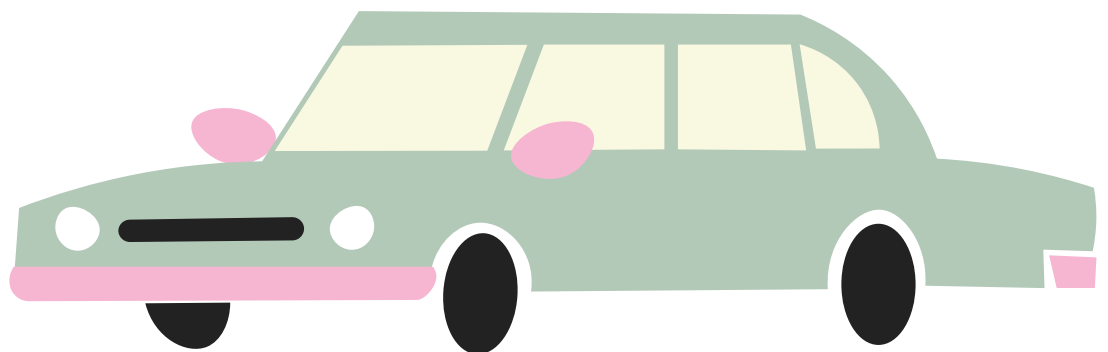
Academic Etiquette

Turkish university culture places importance on respect toward professors and punctuality. Students are generally expected to attend classes regularly, participate respectfully, and communicate formally with lecturers. Group study and social interaction with classmates are also common parts of student life, especially in communication-related fields.



Challenges in Istanbul

International students may experience challenges such as heavy traffic, language barriers, culture shock, and rapidly changing living costs. Istanbul can feel crowded and fast-paced, especially at first. To adapt more easily, you should use public transportation apps (such as Google Maps, Moovit, Otobüsümnerede), learn basic Turkish phrases (for example use Duolingo, attend Turkish A1 course at Marmara University), manage your budget carefully (use apps for it such as Revolut, Tricount), and give yourself time to adjust to the city's rhythm. Spending time in calmer places like Kadıköy's seaside areas can also help reduce stress and improve balance during daily life.



Conclusion

In conclusion, spending an Erasmus semester at Marmara University in Istanbul is an exciting and culturally rich experience, but it requires students to be active and flexible. Navigating the initial administrative steps—like getting a residence permit (ikamet) and health insurance—takes patience and care, but the university's International Office and the ESN buddy system offer great support to new arrivals.

Academically, life at Marmara University might be different from your home country, as you must adapt to strict attendance rules and a grading system based on both midterm and final exams. Fortunately, the add-drop period allows you to fix schedule conflicts, and joining course WhatsApp groups is a great way to stay updated on last-minute changes.

Living in student-friendly neighborhoods like Kadıköy provides a safe and vibrant lifestyle with plenty of study cafés, cheap places to eat, and affordable public transport thanks to the student Istanbulkart.

Ultimately, Istanbul's huge size and fast pace can feel overwhelming at first, but learning some basic Turkish phrases, respecting local traditions like Ramadan, and managing your budget wisely will help you blend in. If you stay open-minded, you will easily overcome challenges like the language barrier and enjoy an unforgettable semester.



created by: Mariia Chorna, Petra Benediktiová,
Isabella Girgzdeies, Weronika Kuziora, Róza Török

