



## UU Study Abroad Report Form

	Contact info at the IO.
faculty/college	Humanties
level	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Comparative Literary Studies

destination city & country	Helsinki, Finland
how did you travel to your destination?	By plane
name university abroad	University of Helsinki
start date	30 / 08 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	23 / 12 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)

### PREPARATION

#### exchange application process

It was a bit of a rush when I prepared the materials for the first round of application in the middle of block 2. But once I submitted it, things went smoothly. I just needed to follow the instructions.

#### counselling & support at Utrecht University

Overall it's okay. The counseling email response before the first round of application was not very timely, but once I got the spot from UU, it was better.

#### academic preparation

None.

#### language preparation

None. The University of Finland did offer a preparing online course of Finnish, but I didn't take that. Also, basically everyone in Finland speaks perfect English.

#### finances

I survived on my savings and the Erasmus grant. But mostly savings. Prices in Finland are more expensive than in the Netherlands so be prepared.

### STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

#### study programme (content and organisational issues)

I was assigned to Literary Studies as my home programme, but it was actually a Finnish/Swedish programme so I didn't take any course from it nor meet its students. Instead, I mostly took courses from the courses recommended for exchange students in the Faculty of Arts. There weren't many courses in comparative literature, and some of the literary courses were only available for exchange students whose home programme was English Studies. As a result, I ended up with courses mainly in philosophy, linguistics, cultural studies and Indigenous studies, which I enjoyed a lot.

#### academic quality of education activities

I would say the courses were less demanding. Most of the courses were lectures and the final essays were shorter (1500-3000 words).

#### counselling & support at receiving university abroad



The University of Helsinki did a really good job helping exchange students. They responded fast, and the administrative staff were very nice and supportive.

#### transfer of credits

It is still in the process but should be fine. In UH they use course units, which can be passed through different methods such as lecture courses, independent study and so on. One lecture course may be a part of different course units in different programmes. The only problem I encountered is that the lecture course I took were taught to both bachelor and master students so the same course can have different course codes referring to different course units in different programmes. If you are a master student and take a course like this, do remember to use its course code of the course unit for the master programmes, otherwise you will have a painful time proving the level of the course to the Board of Examiners as generally they will reject a course taken on bachelor's level. The staff at UH were very kind to send me and the Board of Examiners an email to prove the level of my courses since the transcript does not include this kind of information.

## STUDENT LIFE

#### welcome & orientation programme

The thing I liked most is that exchange students in each faculty were assigned to a tutor group. In my case there were around 15 exchange students and 3 local students as our tutors who guided us over the orientation week. The orientation itself was a bit messy, but my tutors were super nice and responsible and they helped us to get everything done. They also organized several meetups for us to communicate and have fun throughout the semester. I ended up making good friends with some exchange students in my group. I felt very much welcomed and supported because of my tutors' efforts.

#### accommodation

I applied for accommodation at HOAS when submitting my exchange application to the University of Helsinki. It was highly competitive. I waited until June 30 to receive an apartment offer. It turned out to be a nice and spacious studio near the city center, which was super convenient for commuting to the campus of the Faculty of Arts. That's why the rent was quite expensive (around 600 euros per month) compared with others'. There were other exchange students didn't got an apartment offer, and some of them were scammed when renting a place, so be careful.

#### leisure & culture

If you enjoy taking a walk in the nature, on the islands or along the seaside, Helsinki can offer so much fun for you. Also, short trips to Lapland and Tallin are basically must-do activities for every exchange students.

#### suggestions/tips

Just try different things!

## CONCLUSIONS

#### would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Yes! It was a bit heavy to take 6 courses, but they did offer me new perspectives, particularly the Indigenous studies courses. Also, Helsinki is safe and spacious, and I enjoyed the comfortable distance people have with each other. It would be a good fit for people who enjoy this kind of vibe. But be prepared for the long nights and gloomy weather when the winter comes. Also, stay warm.

#### do you have any additional advice or comments?

If you are a non-EU student who has a temporary EU resident card, you need to follow the earlier deadline for the exchange application to the University of Helsinki (one month earlier than EU student). Also, for resident



**Universiteit Utrecht**

permit, you need to submit a mobility notification to the Finnish Immigration Service. Details can be found here: <https://migri.fi/en/mobility-notification-to-finland>.



## UU Study Abroad Report Form

	Contact info at the IO.
faculty/college	University College Roosevelt
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Liberal Arts & Sciences

destination city & country	Helsinki, Finland
how did you travel to your destination?	Airplane
name university abroad	University of Helsinki
start date	30 / 08 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	23 / 12 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)

### PREPARATION

#### exchange application process

The application process is very easy, and definitely nothing to be worried about. You need to create a study plan, which basically means that you look up courses offered by your preferred university (it's great if you can already find the courses offered during the time you'll be there, but it's very unlikely. So, try and get a general understanding how many courses are offered in your field and which ones you find interesting). You also need a motivation letter, I've written a couple in the past so it came quite easy, but if you haven't written a motivation letter yet, ask friends and family for help and look at examples on the internet to get a general understanding of the structure and what should be included. After getting the study plan passed your faculty (in my case UCR) and UU, and get nominated for your destination, you need to do the same for the University of Helsinki through their portal, but this is also very straight forward. They even include a to-do list for applicants so you can make sure you submitted all the required documents. Very important- make sure to start your application for UH earliest possible, so you can apply for housing. You don't have to submit your entire application already, just the housing part. I would also highly encourage you to apply for the Erasmus grant, which thanks to UU is not that complicated as well. They also send you a timeline with instructions, which makes planning very easy.

#### counselling & support at Utrecht University

Throughout my exchange the communication with UU was very good, whenever I had a question it took them not more than 3 days to get back to me, usually they would reply the same or next day.

#### academic preparation

There was no need for academic preparation- most courses are different anyway, and the professors are very helpful and supportive if needed. I would also say that the workload and level of difficulty is very similar. Because I go to UCR, I was actually used to a more intensive programme, but going to UH was actually a nice blend between more intense courses and easier ones, the professors I got to know were also very kind and responsive. You can also check the workload and content for a course Sisu.

#### language preparation

I only took courses taught in English, and because courses taught at UCR are also exclusively in English there wasn't really any language preparation needed. However, I did take the Russian for beginners course, which also requires another 1 cr course to learn the alphabet before starting the course. For me that wasn't an issue, but I know some students who struggled to learn the alphabet within a week, so you might want to look into it before.



finances
Helsinki is expensive, so make sure you have a general idea how much you can spend in a week/month. The Erasmus grant is definitely helpful, but not sufficient in my opinion. The grant also arrived a couple of weeks after the start of the semester, so that is also something to consider.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
In your orientation week you'll get to know Sisu- which is quite a complicated platform which is used to register for courses and manage your studies. However, once you wrap your head around it (there will be tutors to help you), it becomes easier to use. Through Sisu you also get a better overview of courses that are offered, so I found most of my courses through Sisu and not the UH website. Sometimes the course description is a bit unclear, but you can usually email the professor.
academic quality of education activities
The quality was very good, sometimes including excursions. I personally did not have any problems with keeping up or being underwhelmed. The courses that I took were great, and offered me broader insights into certain topics that I wouldn't get at UCR. The professors also give you a good idea what they expect from you and take feedback very seriously. However, I found multiple courses for my history major, but finding courses in Film, Theater and Media was tough.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
Similar to UU, UH was very responsive and helpful.
transfer of credits
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STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
I was lucky to have great tutors for my orientation week, and I meet most of my friends during orientation. However, the orientation week was quite different from UCR; they help you a lot with administration, getting to know your way around Uni, finding courses etc. but we did go out for drinks in the evening which was very nice. I was quite thankful that we didn't have to play any games or any of that, instead we had picnics, went on trips to Suomenlinna and Porvoo and went for drinks.
accommodation
I lived at Unihome student housing in Vuolukiventie, which is around 30-40 minutes with bus or train to the city centre. Even though the distance is quite far, public transport is really good, and I usually did my reading for my courses in the bus/train. The room was nice and spacious, and I had a private bathroom and shared kitchen- which was perfect for me. I paid around 450€, which I was okay with.
leisure & culture
Although Helsinki is the capital, it is a very calm and cozy city. I'm German, so I didn't experience any culture shocks to be honest. Just be mindful that Finnish people are very reserved and private, so don't you ever invade their personal bubble. Also, if there are other free seats, don't sit next somebody else on a bus, it makes them uncomfortable, but they are way too polite to tell you. In general, they are very nice people, and going for drinks in Helsinki is fun. I would highly encourage you to enjoy the nature as much as possible, I spend a lot of time walking through parks taking pictures. Moreover, I am much more of an introvert, so I was thriving in that city. It really gives you the space and cozy cafés that you need.



suggestions/tips

If you decide to go to Lapland, consider taking a rental car. You'll be much more flexible to explore the nature, and merely going to Rovaniemi will leave you quite underwhelmed, but the nature is great. Also, once it starts to get dark early, it's best to wait with your uni works until the afternoon when it's dark, when there is sunlight make sure to get your Vitamin D outside with friends. Often, it is very cloudy in Finland, so you won't get to see the sun that often in late autumn/winter.

**CONCLUSIONS**

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Highly recommend! I had a great time and made amazing friends. The city has grown on me, I think it is the people, salmon, architecture and weird language that make this place great, and I am already making plans to return with my friends. The university is also very good, it challenges you with new perspectives but doesn't overwhelm you.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

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## UU Study Abroad Report Form

	Contact info at the IO.
faculty/college	Sociale Wetenschappen
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Psychology

destination city & country	Helsinki, Finland
how did you travel to your destination?	Plane
name university abroad	University of Helsinki
start date	30 / 08 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	23 / 12 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)

### PREPARATION

#### exchange application process

The instructions on the exchange applications process are very clear and you can always call or send an email if you have questions. The only thing I struggled with is finding courses for the first version of my Learning Agreement, when the final information of the offered courses was not yet available. I asked for help with this and then I received additional information. Also, you can always still change your courses, so there is not much to worry about.

#### counselling & support at Utrecht University

The UU organised an online pre-departure meeting with an information session and a chance to meet all UU students going to Helsinki as well. This was very useful and it was nice to already have met some other people. Additionally, the exchange office replies very fast to emails and were always able to help me and answer my questions.

#### academic preparation

There was no academic preparation needed for my classes. I followed master courses while I am still in my bachelors, and I could easily keep up with the level.

#### language preparation

I did not need to do any language preparation. There is an English language proficiency test that must be completed for the Erasmus grant, but this is not too difficult at all. Finnish people speak English very well (especially the young people) and it is not hard at all to communicate.

#### finances

Be prepared for around €500 euro's of rent per month. The groceries are more expensive than in the Netherlands, so shop at Lidl instead of K-market or S-market for the best price. Also make sure you fulfill your Erasmus grant application in time, so you receive the money before going. If you want to make many trips like I did, be prepared to spend some of your savings. Alcohol is very expensive, especially in restaurants and bars. It is a Finnish tradition to get a lot of alcohol when in Estonia, so grab a few bottles when you're there because it's way cheaper ;).

### STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)



I had some struggles with choosing a faculty. I study neuropsychology and it was only possible to do social psychology at the UH, because cognitive psychology falls under the faculty of medicine, which the UU does not have a contract with. Because I didn't want to do social psychology, I chose to follow courses of the Neuroscience master. I also changed my study programme a few times because the Examencommissie did not approve all of the courses that I chose. This was not a problem and my experience is that Finnish teachers are very helpful. I also did a Finnish course for exchange students, which I really recommend!

#### academic quality of education activities

As I said, I followed master courses while being a bachelor student, and I could easily keep up with the level. Many courses don't even have an exam, just learning diary's and some assignments. If you don't pass an assignment or exam, you can re-take it many times and the teacher will always try to help you pass.

#### counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The University of Helsinki is very helpful and replies very fast. In the introduction week the university pairs you up with a tutor and tutorgroup and organises events. They offer very nutritious meals (you can take as much food as you want) for €3 at Unicafé and they always have vegan options. They also send a newsletter before, during and after the exchange, with useful information and updates.

#### transfer of credits

My credits did not yet get transferred, but I passed all my courses so I expect this to happen soon. Your grade does not get transferred, only the credits.

## STUDENT LIFE

#### welcome & orientation programme

You get assigned two tutors that guide you and your tutor group through the orientation programme. This is a nice first step in meeting new people and building connections. The university and the student associations also organise events to meet new people, even before the orientation week starts (so if you're early, you don't have to be all alone).

#### accommodation

There are two main housing providers for exchange students: HOAS and Unihome. Make sure you apply as soon as possible when the application opens. I stayed in a big Unihome complex with many exchange students. There are mostly studio's available, but I stayed in a room. I had my own bed- and bathroom but I shared the kitchen with my floor (10 people total). I personally preferred this, as I had 'floormates' to have dinner with and talk to. If you apply early, you are very likely to get an offer from HOAS or Unihome. If you don't, there are also other options available on the website of the University of Helsinki.

#### leisure & culture

There are many events you can join and trips you can make during your exchange. The two 'close' national parks Nuuksio and Sipoonkorpi are definitely worth visiting. I also went to a few cities in Finland, such as Tampere and Turku. These are nice cities but one day is more than enough to see everything. One of the most fun experiences I had was the Pirates of the Baltics cruise, a three-day trip to Stockholm on a ship. If you like partying this is definitely something you should do. Also the trip to Lapland (I went to Saariselkä) was amazing and you should definitely go if you have the chance. Furthermore, Tallinn and Riga are quite easy to travel to and are also amazing cities. Helsinki also has many all-you-can-eat sushi places for a very good price. Haru+ and Luckiefuns are very good! Lastly, sauna's are a very big thing in Finland, so bring your bathing suit!

#### suggestions/tips

Join ESN!! This is the exchange student organisation and they organize many (very nice) parties, events and trips. They organized the Pirates of the Baltic Sea cruise, trips to Lapland, to the Baltics, Norway, etc. Their





parties are amazing and they also organise other events such as game nights and sports day. You can even join the ESN Uni Helsinki board, like I did :) You help organizing these events and in exchange you can go on some of the trips for free. This is also a nice way to meet new people!

## CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Yes, 100%. If you go in the fall semester you can experience summer, fall and winter in Helsinki. You will meet so many new people and see so many new places. The university is so well organised and it is not too difficult to find housing. Definitely go!!!

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Enjoy your exchange :)



## UU Study Abroad Report Form

	Contact info at the IO.
faculty/college	Natural Sciences
level	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Business Informatics

destination city & country	Helsinki, Finland
how did you travel to your destination?	By train
name university abroad	University of Helsinki
start date	30 / 08 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	23 / 12 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)

### PREPARATION

#### exchange application process

The exchange application process was fairly simple. The steps in Osiris were mostly clear. You just have to read very carefully what you have to hand in and with that you have to communicate with several parties which makes it time consuming. But in the end, the process is easy.

#### counselling & support at Utrecht University

The support of the Utrecht University was really good. I had some problems with the application process, the communication between universities and my learning agreements, but the international office made sure that these problems got fixed or that they gave me proper information.

#### academic preparation

There was no academic preparation, besides the other courses of my master.

#### language preparation

The only preparation that I had to do was a language test in English, but this was actually really easy.

#### finances

The finances, especially the Erasmus+ grant is a really long and 'difficult' process. It is sometimes hard to find all the information and when certain deadlines/payings occur. This means that it is hard to know when something is going right or wrong. The process in Osiris is pretty good, but hard to exactly know in which stage you are and if you are actually accepted, this also takes a lot of time. You really have to make time to understand all the different regulations, also with additional top-ups.

### STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

#### study programme (content and organisational issues)

The study program was divers and you had several options based on your interest. The problem is that there are a lot of pages from the university of Helsinki that contain so many different links and content that it is hard to keep an overview. Sometimes it was really hard to understand what you had to do to enroll for courses, especially regarding the open university courses. This communication was hard and slow.

#### academic quality of education activities



The quality of the courses was pretty high. The content of the courses was interesting but also sometimes hard to understand and to follow, this was also because of a lack of pre-knowledge from my side. In the Netherlands, I am used to that when they ask for prerequisites that these are also repeated in the first lectures to make a good start. But in my time in Helsinki they skipped these pre-requisites and got straight into the new content.

#### counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The support of the university of Helsinki was really good. There were some problems and I had several questions, but they were able to answer all of them and help me where necessary. They made sure that everything was correctly fixed.

#### transfer of credits

The transfer of credits is a bit strange. In Helsinki you had the grades from 0-5, but we only get pass or fail. This doesn't really encourage you to score high. But transferring the credits was really easy by downloading the transcript and sent it to my home university.

## STUDENT LIFE

#### welcome & orientation programme

The welcome program of the study association was amazing just before the start to get to learn local students and other exchange students. After that, we had the welcome and orientation program which was really good organized. We got the right information and everything went smoothly. For me it was a bit weird that we had to enroll for courses only 3 days before the start, but this is apparently normal.

#### accommodation

The accommodation was perfect! I was able to live with 8 people in total from all over the world, which was amazing. I would recommend to live together with other people. We were making dishes from our home countries and our house was almost like a family. The room itself was really big and not too expensive and the living room was the best.

#### leisure & culture

In my free time I got to enjoy the life of Helsinki, doing sports, hiking and visit different things and cities. When you are living with 8 people, there are always people in the house and most of the time a lot of additional people. Therefore, you can always meet (new) people and do several activities. Finns are more individually focused and they are really kind and open for you. They would never steal for example, I lost my phone and someone brought it back. They also really take their own space. However, they completely change when there is sauna or when they are drunk. They become really social and love to go crazy! Which was a cool experience :)

#### suggestions/tips

I have way too many tips on exchange. But my main goal was: "say yes to everything". This worked out really well and I got to learn so many people and different activities. But also make sure that you keep some me-time. And take Vitamine D, I never did this but this really affected me before taking it by getting really tired. I would highly recommend to go to Lapland, because this is the best! Besides that, make sure that you travel a lot around, also to the baltics. But also visit all the cool places in Helsinki, because they are nice! And make sure to take the sauna and jump in the icy water, Sompasauna is amazing!

## CONCLUSIONS

#### would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

I would definitely recommend the University of Helsinki. The program is very professional and there are several courses to choose from. The quality of the courses are also high. The working hours that you are spending on your courses are really demanding and you have to make sure that you follow the program of the course.



Helsinki itself was really cool, while it is such a different culture. The people are interesting and really nice, but also the nature, sauna life and all kinds of different activities are amazing to experience. I would advice to go to Lapland when on exchange, while this is the best experience ever!

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Go on exchange, because it is amazing!!! You got to meet so many different people with different cultures from all over the world. It is also good to have the experience of living somewhere else than the Netherlands. If you are able, go on Interrail before your exchange and end at your destination. I did this alone and it was a really cool experience.



## UU Study Abroad Report Form

	Contact info at the IO.
faculty/college	Faculty of Geosciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	BSc Earth Sciences

destination city & country	Helsinki, Finland
how did you travel to your destination?	By bus and ferry on the way there, flew back.
name university abroad	University of Helsinki
start date	30 / 08 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	23 / 12 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)

### PREPARATION

#### exchange application process

Compare many different universities. The UU destinations page offers a lot of information, I made pros and cons for each destination. For me, important criteria were level of English, quality of education and good student life / enough to explore.

#### counselling & support at Utrecht University

I attended a few lectures in the information week. Even if you don't need their information, they offer some useful tips and files to organise your search. Furthermore, I asked a lot of questions by email whenever I ran into trouble with the actual application.

#### academic preparation

No special preparation. I chose courses which aligned with the ones I have previously done in Utrecht, therefore no additional preparation was necessary.

#### language preparation

Again no preparation. My English was already sufficient.

#### finances

Used a nice spreadsheet given by the exchange services to estimate the costs beforehand. This was a good indication on what I wanted to spend. Be careful that if you don't just go to study, you'll spend a lot of money on trips (best part of exchange) and partying (alcohol prices...) which was a bit more than I anticipated.

Furthermore, Erasmus+ grant is very important. Large sum of money. I wasn't eligible for any other grant. The UU had quite strict conditions to get the grant, so make sure you follow them (you have to get a lot of EC's).

### STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

#### study programme (content and organisational issues)

I did 3 physics courses, 1 computer science and 2 Finnish courses. I advise to prepare your course choice well. There are enough courses in English (at least for bachelor in faculty of science), but not infinite. I liked choosing a lot of variety in my courses. I personally did the courses more for fun, not integral to my studies, but I know many of my friends did courses that they still had to do at home. Finnish courses were really fun as well. Learn



not only language but also some important culture. Otherwise you might stay in the international bubble too much.
academic quality of education activities
It is a good university with a high level of education. Organisation is very smooth. Difficulty of the courses is comparable to UU. Homework and lectures can be pretty hard and a lot of work. Don't take too many courses if you want to have enough time to travel during exchange. Exams on the other hand are pretty easy. They don't give too much value to exams, therefore they are not as hard to pass or get a good grade.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
There is more than enough support. In the orientation week you get tutors (Finnish students) that you can ask a lot of questions. Teachers are approachable and easy to talk to.
transfer of credits
Not completed yet at the time of writing this report.

## STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme
First week there is more than enough stuff planned. You get a group and tutors and together you get to know each other and the city. I strongly advise to be actively present during this week, as it is the best way to meet other students (who are also looking for new friends) and I was really lucky with some amazing people who I stayed close friends with for the whole 4 months. After orientation week, there are still many activities planned by various student organisations, but you need to have some company to go with yourself.
accommodation
I stayed at the HOAS complex at Linnoituksentie. Great, spacious apartment with 2 roommates. Bit far from the city centre, but public transport connections are really good, so you even get home in the middle of the night. There was even a free sauna and gym in the building. Definitely apply for a room at HOAS or UniHome, other options also possible but this is the easiest (and cheapest probably).
leisure & culture
Every other week there is some big party organised by a student organisation. Furthermore you can hang out with study association or just in some pub in the city. Furthermore at the Finnish equivalent of Olympos it is easy to exercise or join some group (ball)sports. In the weekends I loved travelling with my friends. Rent a car and drive to explore Finland's beautiful nature (most cities apart from Helsinki are not much). Stay in the cabin in the middle of nowhere, without running water or electricity (but with a sauna of course) or see some cute towns. We went east to the many lakes, west to all the islands (Turku archipelago), north to the magical Lapland and south taking a boat for a daytrip to Tallinn.
suggestions/tips
See section above. Other suggestions: sompasauna for the ultimate Finnish experience, visit Tampere, one of many good museums in the city and Nuksio National Park. For partying, good to the Irish pub (cheapest beer) or Apollo (good club).

## CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
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I definitely would recommend and exchange in Helsinki. I had a great time with so much fun. I loved both partying and travelling while also doing useful, high-level, studying with high quality of life.
do you have any additional advice or comments?
Wherever you go, meet a lot of people, make some good friends. Because together is always more fun than alone.