

From February to September 2022, I performed an internship at the Institut für Virologie of the Charité University Hospital in Berlin. I did research on the poorly understood immune system of bats in the laboratory of Marcel Müller, who is an expert in this field. Bats host a wide range of viruses, such as the now very famous coronaviruses, that can be harmful for humans. Intriguingly, these viruses cause little to no pathogenesis in bats, which is what my group aimed to understand. Specifically, I focused on a molecular pathway called RNA interference and its importance for antiviral immunity in bat cells. The Institut für Virologie was a great place to work: I had colleagues from all over the world, there was a very supportive atmosphere, and a lot of contact within and between the labs. All in all, it was a fantastic educational and enjoyable experience.

Besides my scientific work in Berlin, I had a good time exploring the city. Berlin has so much to offer: great museums, an interesting history, and delicious food. Although the size of the city overwhelmed me at times, I felt it was really special to live, rather than only visit, Berlin. On my way to work, I would cycle by the East Side Gallery, and in my lunch breaks, I would walk by the Reichstag. Every week, my colleagues and I played beach volleyball at Beach Mitte, and of course I could not skip the tradition of ‘Bier und Pommes’ afterwards. In my international student house, I learnt to cook great Indian food, and in return I taught my newly made Asian friends how to bake brownies. I was invited to Jena, Potsdam and Hamburg, and went on a great trip to Dresden as well.

Unfortunately, life in a capital city in Europe is quite a bit more expensive than living in Nijmegen. Therefore, I am grateful to the support of the Nora Baart Foundation. I came to Berlin as a Master student; I left feeling ready for my PhD.



← German culture = an FFP2 mask
in all public transport



↑ Cake at the Fernsehturm

← Beach volleyball in the city