

IMMUNOLOGY IN PARIS – SEPTEMBER 2016 - MARCH 2017

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My seven months internship and stay in Paris have been a truly wonderful and valuable experience!

INSTITUT NECKER ENFANTS MALADES In Paris I have performed a research internship at Institut Necker Enfants Malades, which is part of the French national institute for medical research (INSERM). Here I have joined the group of prof. Peter van Endert and worked on a project on the intracellular trafficking of MHC class I molecules and antigen cross-presentation in dendritic cells. Understanding these processes better will eventually aid in the design and development of new vaccines. Often I have spent long days in the lab working on my project, which I found to be both interesting and challenging, though sometimes exhausting. Overall I have gained experience with several techniques, developed my critical and scientific thinking and learned a great deal on planning my own experiments and working independently.

The group that I joined was a lively and varied one, consisting out of mostly women, about half French, half international (Russian, Italian, Brazilian and Canadian, to name a few). Shortly after I arrived I was invited to join an overnight retreat, which was a nice way to get to know my new colleagues! I felt they were always willing to offer help and input, which I have gratefully accepted.



VIEW FROM THE RESEARCH INSTITUTE & OUT WITH FRIENDS IN A BAR (IT'S ME IN THE MIDDLE)

CITÉ UNIVERSITAIRE To my pleasure I have found housing at the large international campus (CIUP) in the south of Paris city, at Collège Franco-Britannique. Here I have met and made friends with students from many nationalities. We have enjoyed many great evenings in the shared kitchen, always tasting each other's dishes, while having all sorts of conversations in *français*. Occasionally we joined one of the many parties organized all over the campus or went for a drink in a (hidden) bar.

LA VIE FRANÇAISE Paris itself I have experienced as very beautiful and extremely crowded in one. In my weekends I loved taking a Velib' and exploring one of the city districts by bike. The grandeur of the whitish stately buildings with their zinc grey rooftops, overloaded with red chimneys, kept amazing me. It was lovely to stroll along the Seine on a sunlit Sunday morning or through the charming streets of Montmartre or le Marais on a free night or afternoon. I have also greatly enjoyed my visits to several of the many museums that Paris has to offer, especially those with exhibitions on impressionistic art. As for the language, my French has certainly improved, but maybe not so much as I might have hoped beforehand. During and after a long day of work it turned out to be quite tempting to switch back to English...

Overall I am very glad with the fantastic opportunity to perform this research internship in Paris and I would like to thank the Nora Baart Foundation for their financial support.