

I completed my internship at the NASA JPL (Jet Propulsion Laboratory) it is an organization connected to the CALTECH (Californian Institute of Technology). The education office of the JPL is responsible for the organization of research stays by interns and other researchers. The person of contact for exchange opportunities is:

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My internship stay at the JPL in Pasadena was frankly speaking one of the best times of my life. I was able to work on topics that might one day help humanity to explore Mars. I had a advisor who helped me whenever I stood in front of problems and always had advice if I got stuck or had to make a decision in which direction my research should head. I was working in a laboratory and was fortunate to do very practical work needing hardware regularly. Even though hardware normally tends to be a scarce resource, the JPL had enough Micro Aerial Vehicle which I needed on a regular basis so that I never had to postpone my experiments and the work flow was never interrupted. The provided computers and screens were far stronger and had a higher resolution I am normally used to.

The campus was quite big and had a good quality canteen where fresh food was served every day. This restaurants served as a meeting point with researchers from other groups. Lunches were a very good opportunity for intellectual exchange and to find friends. After hours when the canteen is closed a self service kiosk provides cold drinks and snacks.

To make first contact with other researchers and fellow interns or students I highly recommend keeping an eye on the JPL internal website "JPL-space" where lunch talks or other events are posted. You can visit talks about the next projects that JPL pursues or hear NASA veterans talk about previous missions and how they influence today.

I can also recommend taking part in Clubs. CALTECH students organize themselves in these interest groups to do their hobby together. You can easily make friends and meet inspiring personalities out of all fields of engineering when taking part. I personally was a member in the CALTECH Alpine Club, the CALTECH debate club and the West Coast Swing club. A list of all clubs can be found here: [LINK](#).

Another good spare time activity is to go to the CALTECH gymnasium. There are affordable monthly subscriptions for JPL interns and the gym has a pool, workout machines and courses in different disciplines.

Housing is a big Problem in Los Angeles because rents are high. This is true for Pasadena

as well. The cheapest places are shared flats with a minimum rent of about 750 euro. I tried to find these flats in facebook groups but was not lucky. I recommend the webpage www.places4students.com. Even though the web page looks old it is easy to find trustworthy landlords to affordable prices.

Concerning the location of the flat when working at JPL my recommendation is to find a place north of CALTECH in Pasadena or Altadena west of Allen Avenue. Then both JPL and CALTECH are in biking distance.

Especially when coming to a new city one normally needs a lot of different new things people normally leave behind when a internship or a short term research opportunity ends. Therefore the CALTECH postdoc association organizes a mailing list to provide for this need. If you want to buy, sell or rent anything the CALTECH postdoc email list is the place to go to. The best is to ask your advisor or the person responsible for you how to enroll and receive the emails.

JPL/CALTECH is a great place to do research and to be as a Student. I envy my successors that they still have their time in Pasadena ahead of them.