

My Study Abroad Experience

During the spring semester of 2023, I embarked on a life-changing journey to Seville, Spain, for a five-month study abroad program. This decision was fueled by my desire to immerse myself in Spanish-speaking culture and enhance my language skills. As a first-generation college student with Hispanic roots, studying abroad in Spain felt like a natural choice. Although I was apprehensive about leaving behind my friends and family for an extended period, I knew the experience would be invaluable for personal growth and language skills.

Upon arrival in Seville, I was immediately struck by the vibrant and unfamiliar atmosphere. Adjusting to the local lifestyle was initially challenging, from adapting to the late dinner times to navigating the unique clothing norms and culinary differences. Arriving in Seville with two of my best friends was a blast, and living together made the whole experience even better. Alongside my studies, I had an internship at a local hospital, which turned out to be an enriching experience. I got to shadow doctors and help out as a medical assistant, which was super exciting and solidified my dream of going to med school. It was hands-on, fast-paced, and different from anything I'd done before, but I loved every minute of it. I worked in different specialties, including emergency room, pediatrics, phlebotomy, and inpatient. Working in a real hospital environment in another country gave me a whole new perspective on healthcare and reinforced my passion for medicine. Plus, it's awesome to be able to say I'd interned at a hospital in Spain!

Exploring the rich culture of Seville and beyond was a highlight of my time abroad. From visiting historic landmarks to trying traditional cuisine, each day presented new opportunities for cultural immersion. Traveling to various cities within Spain and venturing to 11 different

countries, including Italy, Ireland, Austria, Budapest, Morocco, and Switzerland, allowed me to deepen my appreciation for global competence. Not only did I become closer to my Clemson peers, but I also met other people from other universities. I also built connections with individuals from Morocco, France, the UK, Italy, and Spain, including my Spanish roommate Paco, whom I now consider my closest friend.

During my time abroad, I had the chance to soak up the rich history and vibrant culture of Seville and its surroundings, which was incredibly fulfilling. Whether I was admiring the stunning architecture or eating delicious tapas, each moment gave me a deeper understanding of Andalusian heritage. Venturing beyond Seville, I went on unforgettable trips to places like Granada, Cordoba, and Barcelona, where I encountered different landscapes, traditions, and lifestyles. These journeys opened my eyes to the beauty of diversity and the interconnectedness of different cultures.

My journey abroad was not without its challenges, but overcoming them only added to the depth of my experience. Adjusting to the local lifestyle in Seville required patience, especially when it came to meal times and daily routines. However, as I gradually acclimated to the rhythm of Spanish life, I found myself embracing the slower pace and enjoying the moments of relaxation during siesta time. Moreover, embracing cultural customs like the tradition of flamenco dancing or walking everywhere, was fun to be a part of.

My study abroad experience in Spain was nothing short of transformative. It was a journey that not only broadened my horizons but also deeply enriched my life in ways I could have never imagined. Stepping out of my comfort zone and immersing myself in a new culture taught me invaluable lessons about the beauty of human connection. From the moment I arrived in Spain, I was greeted with a whirlwind of new experiences and challenges. Navigating the

intricacies of daily life in a foreign country, from deciphering the language to understanding cultural norms, pushed me to grow in ways I never thought possible. I learned to embrace uncertainty and approach each day with an open mind and a willingness to learn.

As I reflect on my time abroad, I am filled with gratitude for the countless experiences and lessons that have shaped me into the person I am today. I am forever grateful for the opportunity to have embarked on this journey of self-discovery and personal growth. Studying abroad in Spain has left an incredible mark on my life, and if given the chance, I would relive every moment all over again.