

My Global Experience

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Abstract

Trying to understand some of the issues facing a country or area from an outsider's perspective can be extremely difficult. By becoming fully immersed in life in a certain country or area, one can gain a much deeper understanding of what life there is like, and a better perspective into some of the issues facing the area. This poster discusses my experience studying abroad in Spain and how it helped to further my understanding of global issues.

During the summer of 2018, I spent a month studying abroad in Alcalá de Henares, Spain. Through living with a Spanish host family and taking classes on Spanish history and culture, as well as Spanish film, I gained a deeper understanding of what life in Spain is like, some of the issues facing the country today, as well as a deeper understanding of our world. My experiences in Alcalá de Henares, Madrid, Toledo, and Málaga all helped to shape my understanding of the country, and what it was like both historically and in modern times. After completing my study abroad, I returned with a deeper understanding of Spanish culture, and a desire to learn more about the rest of our world.

The Classes

I took two classes and earned six credits. One class was on Spanish civilization and culture, and another was on Spanish film. When studying civilization and culture, I learned a lot about Spanish history, as well as how major world events affected Spain. When studying history here, it has mostly been American history, and even when studying world history the focus was on Europe as a whole and not Spain, so it was very enlightening to see another perspective on things. The class on Spanish film was probably my favorite. I didn't have a lot of experience with foreign film before taking it, but we watched a lot of great movies and I finished the class wanting to know even more about foreign films. Classes were also taught completely in Spanish, so I had the opportunity to practice language learning as well.

In Málaga

- Swam in the Mediterranean Sea
- Toured the Alcazaba, a medieval fortress overlooking the sea that dates back to the 11th Century
- Visited the Picasso Museum, dedicated to his works, as the city is famous for being his birthplace
- Rose the Mirador Princess, a Ferris wheel offering a view of the city
- On the way back to Alcalá we also visited Ronda, a city famous for its hills and gorges, as well as Puente Nuevo, a stone bridge crossing the gorge



What I Learned

My global experience overall was very enlightening. I learned a lot about Spanish culture by being completely immersed in life there. Through my classes I learned about Spanish film and Spanish history. Learning about the history of Spain was particularly interesting, as we also discussed some aspects of Spanish culture today and some issues facing the country, and knowing the history helped to understand how modern Spain was formed and how some of the issues facing the country today have been shaped. This helped me to realize how difficult it is to understand global issues from one perspective, and how gaining a different perspective can really expand your worldview.



Another thing that I took away from this global experience is how much history the world has. I had never really thought of the United States as a young country, but walking past such old and elaborate building everyday and attending a school that is more than 500 years old really helped put in perspective how much history there is in our world.



Lastly, this trip helped me gain independence. It was the first time I had traveled on my own, but now that I know I can do it, this knowledge will allow me to continue traveling, having global experiences, and understanding global issues.

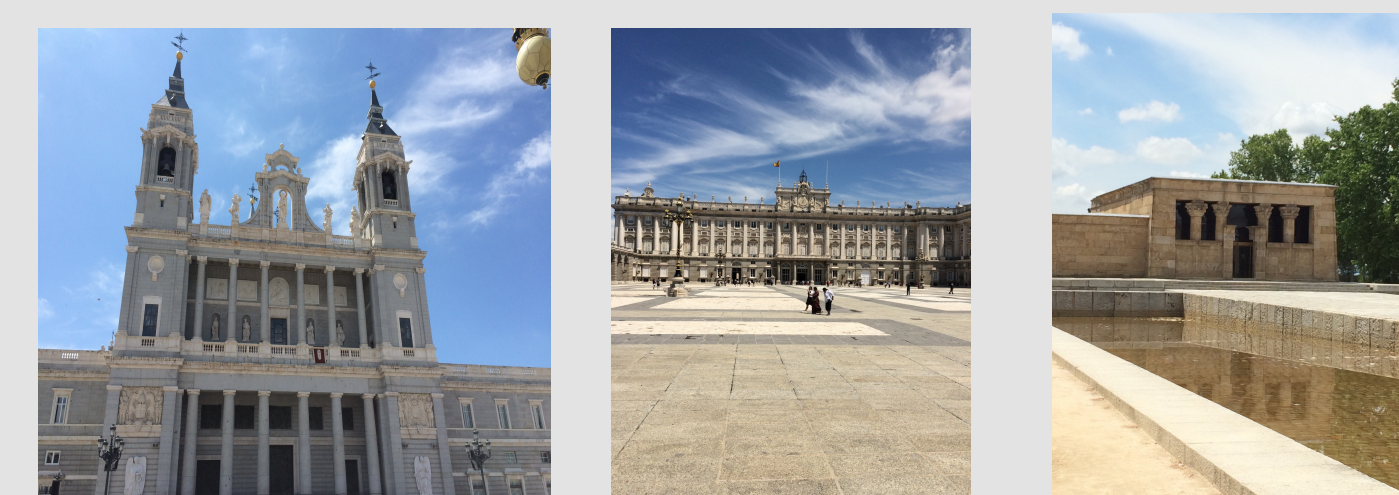


In Alcalá & Madrid

- Stayed with a host family and experienced life in a Spanish home
- Visited the birthplace of Miguel de Cervantes (author of Don Quixote) which the city is famous for
- Studied at the University of Alcalá founded in 1499
- Visited Cathedral for a view of most of the city from the tower
- Host family took me to Casa de Hippolytus, Roman ruins just outside the city



- Madrid was only a forty minute train ride away, so I also got to visit the capital city
- Visited the Prado and the Museo de La Reina Sofía, art museums in the city
- Also visited Spain's royal palace and the Cathedral de la Almudena
- Ate churros in La Plaza Mayor, the city's main square
- Visited Retiro Park, one of the largest parks in the city
- Saw the Temple of Debod, an Egyptian temple originally built in Aswan and relocated to Madrid



Introduction

During the summer of 2018 I completed a study abroad in Spain. I spent June staying with a host family in Alcalá de Henares (about 30 kilometers or 19 miles from Madrid) while taking classes at Instituto Franklin at the University of Alcalá. I went through the study abroad organization CIEE, and they also organized a weekend trip to Málaga, and the university led a day trip to Toledo. Though only a month long, it was a great opportunity to practice my Spanish and expand my understanding of the world.

