

Here's my Study Abroad Story

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**Sweet Briar College: Junior Year in Spain
Seville, Spain**

Major: International Relations and German (dual)

Program: The JYS program site is located in the historic center of Seville next to the beautiful Guadalquivir River, the Torre del Oro, and the immense Cathedral of Seville. The JYS program in Seville is a very small program with only a few professors and 40-60 students, which allows you to get to know all the students and make close friends. The small size of the program does not limit you at all when choosing classes. You can take courses at the program site with JYS professors, at the university with other international students, and lastly, you can take regular university courses with other Spanish students.



With the JYS program, you not only get to know Seville really well from multiple field trips, but you also get to know the rest of Andalucía and the surrounding southern provinces. There are multiple excursions to cultural sites in Cadiz, Granada, Cordoba, etc.

Typical Day: I would be out and about in Seville from morning 'til night. I would get up around 9 AM and have a small breakfast (usually just cereal or toast) then head off to the center. I would first go to my regular university classes, which tended to be in the morning until lunch time. At this point, most Spaniards go home for the typical long lunch and siesta, but for international students, classes tend to be throughout the day like a normal U.S. schedule. This meant that I would take a sandwich (*bocadillo*) from home for lunch. After classes, I would grab a small tapa with friends since dinner usually wasn't until 9 PM. I joined a couple of clubs and volunteer groups while in Seville, so before going home for dinner, I would stay in the center for any events or meetings that I had. I would finally get home around 8 PM and be ready to eat my big dinner with my host mother and roommate. Spaniards usually have a small dinner and a big lunch, but because of our schedules, my host mom accommodated for us.

On the weekends, there were almost always events or fieldtrips. Every week, we would get an email from JYS with cultural events that were happening around the city. My friends and I would get a group together to check out as many of them as we could. They ranged from flamenco dancing at a small bar to going to see Beauty and the Beast, the musical, in Spanish. Most of my time was spent exploring the city.

Highlights: I love to run, and Seville hosted multiple mini-marathons around the city. I found these to be AMAZING experiences. Each race was held in different neighborhoods, and I was able to see parts of the city that I may not have been able to see otherwise.



Challenges: A challenge that I had to work with when I was in Seville was the financial limitations that I had. I am used to working on campus at CMC, and it was difficult to not have this source of income while being abroad. Luckily, our home stays through JYS provide three meals a day for us. Regardless, I also wanted to eat out and explore the city. As the semester progressed, I learned how to budget weekly outings and also found cheaper places to go that weren't the tourist traps.

Advice: 1) Explore the city on your own! It's fun to go out with your friends from the program, but don't miss out on interacting with Spaniards and trying to navigate on your own.

2) On a similar note, make Spanish friends! It's tempting to just stick with your American friends from JYS, but nothing gets you better cultural immersion than making local friends.



3) Need help befriending a local Spaniard? Check out the night hang out spots (la Torre del Oro, Alfalfa, etc.). There are a ton of international and Spanish students that hang out there who are extremely friendly and welcoming.