

Knighly Adventures Abroad

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If I could do it over, I would...study abroad for a year instead of a semester!

Major(s): Psychology
Minor: International Studies

Years/Term Abroad: Spring Semester 2014



Name of program and why you chose it:

Spanish Studies Abroad- Center for Cross Cultural Studies
I knew I wanted to go to Sevilla and this was one of the only programs that went there.

Describe the Housing Situation:

I stayed with a host family. Best decision I ever made. I lived with a woman who was 69 years old (although you would never know it) and only spoke Spanish. She cooked all of my meals, did my laundry, and cleaned! We were right in the center of downtown which was very convenient. She definitely became my second mom. To say I now have family in a different country where I would be welcomed with open arms when I ever get the chance to go back means the world to me!

Advice to future study abroad

participants: Leave all of your worries and stress in the states. Immerse yourself in the culture and people because before you know it you will be back in the US. You will only be abroad for so long – don't take one second for granted. Make a bucket list before going and do EVERYTHING on it!

Best Memory:

I can honestly not think of just one best memory. It is by far the hardest question people ask me. Some of my best memories are with my friends by the Guadalquivir river, which was basically in my backyard just talking for hours and drinking tinto de veranos con limon. Then on my last night in Sevilla my host mom and I took a shot together after she took me to this lovely pizza restaurant and we talked forever. Another would probably be my host mom teaching me to make my favorite dish of hers which was chicken and vegetables in this wine sauce that she made. Another would be playing with my host mom's five year old granddaughter one day forever up in her tower. Another would be when my roommate and I decided to walk to the Catedral de Sevilla during Semana Santa and we literally were being pushed by these huge crowds that filled the streets to the brim. Talk about up close and personal! I could literally go on and on!

Experiences with Culture Shock or Reverse Culture Shock:

Dealing with beggars on the street was something that was new to me but I definitely became a pro at it by the end. And really just taking everything in. It was overwhelming at times and I missed my friends and family at points but being in paradise made that pretty easy to deal with!

How has this experience enriched your Bellarmine educational experience?

It has allowed me to not only discover the world but myself in the process.

Greatest Challenge:

During my time abroad I would have to say the language. The simplest thing such as getting the courage to ask for directions and then trying to understand them not only ended up improving my language skills but my confidence as well. But my greatest challenge overall was saying goodbye to the family and place that I had fallen in love and called home for over four months.

Pictures are on the following pages....

What you know now that you didn't know before going

abroad: The world contains so many beautiful people, places, and culture than you could ever imagine. Getting just a taste of that by visiting 11 countries and over 20 cities in four months makes me eager to go abroad as soon as I can. I also did not know how well I could manage by myself and how strong I am. I know have a lot more confidence in myself. If I can learn my way around a foreign city in three days and learn to communicate in another language I think I will be okay after Bellarmine.

"Be a traveler not a tourist. It is so easy to get caught up in taking the perfect picture or seeing the "main attraction" that the little local spots, people, and culture can get lost, and after all isn't that what's being abroad is all about? Get so lost in another culture that you bring it into your own. Only memories, not pictures, last a lifetime."

