

Study Abroad Experience: Julia Egan

Studying abroad is an amazing, once in a lifetime experience that I hope every college student can experience. After studying in Avila, Spain for four weeks, I now have a different perspective on Spanish language and have a first-hand experience of being immersed into the culture.

Ever since I was in junior high school I had begun taking Spanish classes and continuing them throughout high school and college. It has been a dream of mine to study in a Spanish speaking country and learn what it is like to live in a foreign country. Since my program was a homestay, I had experienced first-hand what it is like to be a native in Spain and speak, learn, and immerse myself in the Spanish language. Since my family spoke only Spanish I had to adapt and communicate solely in Spanish for four straight weeks. Along with speaking Spanish in my home, I also took three Spanish classes in Spain that counted for two ISU courses to finish my Spanish minor. These classes included a Spanish conversation course, Spanish culture, and lastly, a Spanish linguistics course. These classes were taught in Spanish and little to no English was spoken in these courses. This was extremely helpful and improved my Spanish in just a four short weeks!

Before leaving for Spain I was a little nervous to be half way around the world, but the second I got there that fear disappeared as I really this was an amazing opportunity and that I needed to take full advantage of. Since I was in class Monday through Friday, I took the weekends as opportunities to explore different cities and get the most out of my trip. In just four short weeks I had covered five of Spain's major cities and saw some of the most ancient and well-known cathedrals and monuments Spain had to offer. The four weeks flew by and at the end of them I did not want to leave such a beautiful country. Since ISU offers such an array of study abroad opportunities students can pick from studying anywhere from four weeks to a whole semester abroad.

My favorite part of my whole trip was trying all the new food Spain had to offer and all the beautiful sites I got to see. My new all-time favorite food is Paella, and it is a common dish in Spain with rice, chicken and vegetables made into one. The amount of information I learned in eight years of Spanish classes does not compare to the amount I had learned in just four short weeks in Spain.

I am very grateful for the opportunity ISU gave me to study abroad in a foreign country and am so thankful my dream has finally come true of studying abroad in a Spanish speaking countries. I will forever remember the memories and never forget the people I met or the culture I learned.