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I've never been an adventurous person, or one to spontaneously decide that one day I will spend eight weeks in Europe studying abroad. Not only studying abroad but staying with a host family. Little did I know I'm eight short weeks Spain would become my second home, and my favorite place on earth. Little did I also know that I would gain a second family as well, my host family. I decided to study abroad because of my middle level education English as a second language (ESL) endorsement. What better way to dive into your profession than doing it in another country and at a school that specializes in ESL. Now, I will begin my story from the very beginning. I ate breakfast with my family and my parents drove me to the airport where the one-minute-long group hug felt like one second. I waved goodbye to them one last time, watched the car drive away, and anxiety set in. Was this what I was really meant to be doing? What if it's awkward with my host family? What if something bad happens? Was this even a good idea in the first place. It was too late to turn back now as I had eight weeks of study abroad in front of me.

Fast forward an eight-hour plane ride, the university picked me up on a bus and took me to my host family. I was welcomed with warm hugs and big smiles. To know that my host family wanted me there and made that obvious made the culture shock and adjusting to Spain without my real family easier. I got to my host families house and unpacked my bags in my room. It was warm and welcoming and everything a person needs when they are feeling out of place. As far as teaching goes, I had the opportunity to teach Spanish speaking students English and what an experience that was. To be exposed to other cultures and different people is the best way to learn. By the time eight weeks had gone by, I felt like I blinked, and it was over. I didn't want to leave. I didn't want to leave this beautiful country full of beautiful people I made connections with. I wasn't ready to say goodbye to my host family. But I was ready to take the experience I had the opportunity to experience and share them with others. I don't know what I was expecting Spain to be like, but it was better than I expected. Take this from someone who is often sheltered and keeps a small circle of friends. Take this from someone who is a picky eater and quite frankly gets a little homesick going to a different state just for a week. I learned more about myself than I ever imagined I would in my life. I learned how smart I am and how capable I am. I learned how independent I am. I learned that my fears and anxieties are smaller than what I thought they were. I learned to take the leap and step out of my comfort zone. So, I encourage you to take the leap and step out of your own confront zone as well.