

ESADE University
2015 Semester 2
BCom

A little bit about Spain

Barcelona was hands down my favourite city in Europe. It is an absolutely beautiful and vibrant place filled with history and fantastic people. The way of life is slow – be prepared to be eat late and live on Spanish time whereby everything will take longer than it should in the most wonderful, relaxed way.

Spain is also considerably cheaper than other European cities. The bon preu supermarket was visited on a daily basis by flat mates and myself and much of the produce was cheaper than New Zealand even after converting to NZD. The amount of olives you can consume is astronomical. Some venues in Spain also give you free tapas if you order drinks too.

The weather in Spain is considerably warmer than Dunedin. This was one of the drawing factors for me to go there. The sun shines almost every single day and the temperature never really dropped below double digits even in winter.

Barcelona is also a fantastic place to party any day of the week. Generally pre drinks start at 12am and you will arrive to the clubs around 2am – if you arrive any earlier the club will be empty but hey, it means you can stay till 6am. Upon arrival in Spain, sign up to the Aashi guest list on facebook. Aashi generally adds all the exchange students to his guest list so you can enter any club he is promoting that night for free. If you tell him it's a friends birthday you will be allowed into the VIP section and receive champagne, giant sparkles and occasionally grey goose. Aashi never checks that it's actually your birthday so we used it multiple times.

Favourite place for coffee: Can dende or anywhere that sells Nomad coffee

Favourite tapa: Potato Bravas and Croquetas

Favourite walk: walk up to the Bunker of Carmel. It is my favourite viewpoint of the city when the sky is clear. It is also a wonderful place for a picnic.

Best place to run: the boulevard along the beach

Favourite place to people watch: watch the skateboarders outside the MACBA museum. While you're there head around the corner to Munns for an empanada. They are incredible. Highly recommend the one with caramelized onions.

Favourite suburb: Gracia and el Born

Best market: Palo alto market. This is held once a month and is by far the best market in the world. This is a must do activity.

Accommodation

I highly recommend living in a flat in Barcelona rather than living in the ESADE student accommodation at Sant Cugat.

I lived with the two other students from Otago who went to ESADE. We went into a real estate agency on Passeig de Gracia and they found us a home. We lived near Sagrada Familiar. It was a wonderful apartment and rent was 412 euros which was reasonable.

I would recommend finding a house in Gracia. The neighbourhood there is a bit more lively and always a lot going on there. It is also one train ride away from University so you should be able to get to ESADE in around 45-50 minutes.

A lot of people organize their accommodation and flat mates before arriving in Spain so be aware of this.

You may not have any exams in December, in which case you will be free all month so I would recommend ending your rental contract before then so you don't have to pay for the month.

Courses and workload

Grades are largely based on participation and group work. Classes are three hours each and worth less credits than Dunedin papers so you will be required to take around 6 papers. The content isn't too hard and some papers were really interesting, especially the classes taught by Alex.

Don't worry if you don't get into the papers you want at registration. The classes fill up really fast and are filled on a first come, first served basis. However, I was initially registered for classes all taught in Spanish – of which I don't speak – but managed to switch them all in the first two weeks of September to meet my paper requirements.

The intensive Spanish course is really worth taking. This is where you meet a lot of exchange students and start to get a grip of the Spanish language. This was my most challenging paper but definitely worth it.

Websites I found useful;

Time out Barcelona – it's a bible. Covers everything you could want and tells you what events are on each week.

Foundafavourite – food blog. Tried almost all the places the curator had covered at the time of my exchange and rated them all very highly.