

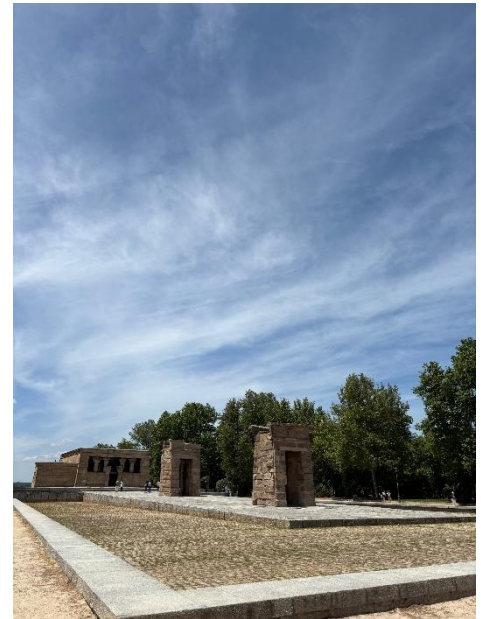
My Study Abroad Experience in Madrid, Spain

Studying abroad is one of the most enriching and exciting experiences a student can have. My time in Madrid was full of learning, adventure, challenges, and unforgettable memories. In this text, I will share my journey, from preparation to settling into everyday life, studying, and exploring the beautiful city of Madrid.



Planning, Organization, and Application to the Host Institution

Before going to Madrid, I spent a few months preparing for my semester abroad. I researched universities, checked course compatibility with my German university, and gathered documents like my transcript, language proof, and learning agreement. The application process was simple but required attention to detail. I also stayed in touch with the host university's international office, which helped ease my nerves. Besides academics, I arranged practical things like my flight, health insurance, and international bank card to be ready for life in Spain.



Travel and Arrival in Madrid

Getting to Madrid was more stressful than expected—my flight was cancelled due to bad weather, and I had to wait seven hours at the airport for a new one. It was frustrating, especially traveling alone for the first time. Once I finally boarded, I felt relieved. Arriving in Madrid was exciting but also overwhelming. Everything was new, but the airport was well-organized, and I reached the city center easily. I felt a mix of exhaustion, nervousness, and excitement as my adventure began.

Accommodation: From a Bad Start to a Great Experience

At first, I booked an Airbnb as temporary accommodation. Unfortunately, the place was dirty and uncomfortable, far from what I expected. I quickly realized I needed a better and more permanent living arrangement. That's when I discovered **Idealista**, which turned out to be the best website for finding long-term apartments in Spain.

Thanks to Idealista, I found a shared apartment with three other girls. We were all from different countries, including the USA and South America. Living together was a wonderful experience. We shared stories, cooked meals from our cultures, and practiced languages with

each other. I improved both my English and Spanish skills significantly through our daily interactions. Our apartment quickly became a warm and supportive environment, and I'm still in touch with my roommates today.

Studying at the Host University: Courses, Academic Life, and Support

Academically, the courses at the host university were like those in Germany in terms of content, but the atmosphere was more relaxed. The professors in Spain were friendly, approachable, and very supportive. At first, it was a bit difficult to adapt to a new academic system and language environment, but after the first few weeks, everything became much easier.

The welcome day organized by the university was especially helpful. It was a great way to meet other international students and start building connections. However, it's completely okay if you don't meet your best friends on the first day. I made most of my connections gradually, through classes and study groups. Eventually, I found friends to study with and even grab a coffee after class.

Credit transfer was handled smoothly with the help of my academic advisor. The learning agreement made it easier to ensure the courses would be accepted by my home university.

Everyday Life and Leisure Time in Madrid

Life in Madrid was vibrant and full of possibilities. I had plenty of free time to explore the city. I spent my weekends visiting historic landmarks, charming neighborhoods, and beautiful parks. I especially loved walking around Retiro Park or having tapas in La Latina with friends.

I also joined a local gym to stay active and went swimming at a pool near Montargal. Watching football games was another highlight—experiencing a Real Madrid or Atlético Madrid game live in the stadium was something I'll never forget. The passion of the fans and the atmosphere were truly unique.

Madrid is a city that never sleeps, and there was always something to do, whether it was visiting a museum, attending a concert, or just relaxing with friends at a local café.

General Experience, Credit Transfer, and Final Thoughts



Looking back, my time in Madrid was one of the best experiences of my life. Of course, I had moments of doubt and homesickness, especially at the beginning. But that's completely normal. The most important advice I can give to other students is: *don't give up*. Be open to new people, step out of your comfort zone, and trust that good times will come.

One of the biggest lessons I learned is how valuable it is to connect with people from other cultures. You can make deep and meaningful friendships with people you never expected. Some of them may even become lifelong friends.

In terms of academics, credit transfer went smoothly thanks to careful preparation. I recommend other students to sort out their learning agreements and course compatibility in advance to avoid problems later.

Tips for Future Students – Dos and Don'ts

Do's:

- Start your preparations early.
- Use Idealista for apartment hunting in Spain.
- Attend the welcome events.
- Explore the city and get involved in local life.
- Learn the local language → helps a lot!
- Tio Pio Parque

Don'ts:

- Don't isolate yourself; try to meet new people.
- Don't worry if things don't go perfectly in the beginning.
- Don't hesitate to ask for help—from professors, classmates, or locals.

