

Spanish Course in Malaga

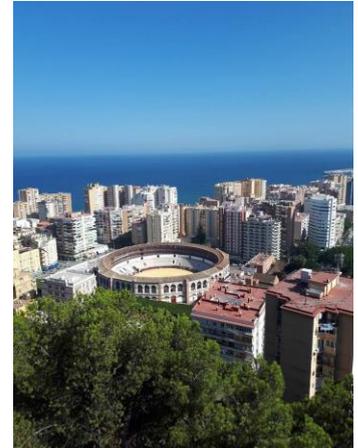
During this summer I got a chance to spend two weeks in Malaga, Spain. The main purpose of my trip was to attend a Spanish language course organised by the Alhambra language school. Based on the tests I took on my first day, I was allocated to the intermediate group, and started classes in an international environment. The classes took place every day, Monday to Friday, and lasted from four to six hours.



The huge advantage of the lessons was the fact that all of the teachers were native speakers, mostly from local towns and villages. This made classes really focused on the culture and created a more authentic experience, because we-students were able to take a deep dive into the culture.

The thing that surprised me the most on my trip was the diversity of the classes, every single lesson was different. We spent many hours working on Spanish grammar, but we also had the opportunity to speak to local people by attending events in the town, or by visiting the local fish market. The teachers also put a lot of emphasis on discussion and the ability to use the language in real world situations. The main purpose was to speak, even if it included mistakes. This made me more open to practicing the Spanish language and thanks to that, this academic year I am taking advanced level Spanish classes at Queen Mary University of London.

Besides the compulsory hours, the school also offered a range of afternoon additional activities. These included sporting events, cultural appreciations, as well as visits to local museums and tourist destinations. The latter activities were really enjoyable, as most of the time, our teachers were our guides, so they were able to adjust the level of Spanish to our knowledge. Thanks to that, I visited the Picasso museum, the local cathedral and castle, and the old city center, while receiving an informative guide in Spanish. The additional activities also nurtured a group spirit, as they were an amazing chance to talk to my classmates and teachers.





The multicultural aspect of the trip was one of the main reasons that I decided to take this opportunity over the summer. My class consisted of eight students, each from a different country, and with different cultural backgrounds. I really developed a strong bond with Klara from Germany, who was a recent economics graduate, with an incredible history of travelling and studying abroad. We are still in touch today. She really impressed me as a person, and as she's slightly older than me, she has almost become a mentor for me. Thanks to her, I am now considering global opportunities as a part of my degree, including a year abroad.

During the trip I really developed my capability of speaking Spanish, not only due to my lessons, but mostly because I was living with a local Spanish family. This experience forced me to use Spanish pretty much twenty four hours a day, as a consequence I became comfortable using the language casually. I also recognised many differences between the Spanish culture, and the culture I was raised with. What is interesting is that these cultural differences are evident within the languages, as in my personal opinion, both Spanish culture and language are more expressive. I have started reading more into this phenomenon.



Besides all of the fantastic experiences I had in Malaga, I also managed to spend a full day in Sevilla, which is one of the most beautiful places I have ever seen. The city itself represents a long history of Spanish culture, and the great Spanish empire. I have plans to return to Spain in the near future, specifically to the Andalusian region.

Overall, Malaga gave me both a cultural and educational experience, that I will never forget. I am very grateful for the possibility of spending my summer there.

This experience I feel is invaluable for students, encouraging them to leave their comfort zone, and to appreciate a different way of life.



Pictures: 1. Bull fighting colosseum in Malaga, 2. Castle in Malaga, 3. Picasso museum, 4. My Spanish Class, 5. Kolombo grave in Seville Cathedral, 6. Sevilla