

# My Erasmus trip to Barcelona

It all started a bit hectic on my first week of my newly started education. On top of the fact that I was accepted into the education, from a waiting list, a few days before start, the announcement of the two-week Barcelona trip was within the first week of the education. Even though I hardly knew any of my classmates and only got what felt like 2 or 3 days to decide whether I wanted to be a part of said trip, I gladly raised my hand and threw my name in the pool of students who wanted to attend the Erasmus project. I saw it as a great opportunity to learn a great deal. Obviously getting to know my fellow classmates who also decided to join the project was on the list of things to learn. Also, traveling to other countries is a great way of expanding your cultural knowledge and learning about how people live and thrive in other countries.

Luckily the selection of the 6 students was an easy task and without risk as only 5 of my classmates and myself raised hands when asked about the trip. And so, we were off to Barcelona.

After landing in the Barcelona airport, we went looking for our rental car which was going to transport us around to many different locations throughout the stay, including the school we were going to be attending, several coordinated trips and generally around the city. A black mini-bus capable of transporting all of us including our teacher, who was the one driving. We arrived at the 3-star hotel located in the middle of Barcelona. Although a challenge to park the minivan in the usually very tiny parking garages, we managed and checked us into the hotel where we stayed in rooms of 2.

The day after arriving we had our first day of school. Instituto Público Marianao was located on the outskirts of Barcelona in a small city called St. Boi about a 30 minutes' drive from the hotel. The first notable thing about the Catalan school we were introduced to was the time of which the students clocked in. Different to my usual daily routine in Denmark the routine in the Catalan school had their meeting hours very late. And notably so with our first day being from 11:45 – 13:45. To my surprise this ended up being the earliest time of day we attended school as we throughout the week had school from around 15:00 to latest 18:00. Going to school later in the afternoon was an interesting concept to try and it ended up giving the day a new structure. Being able to do stuff before school gave a different approach to the day, whether it was eating big breakfast and relaxing in the hotel-room or sightseeing in the city of Barcelona.

Obviously the first day of school was a bit nerve racking being placed in a room with complete strangers talking a different language, with no insight in their daily life and routines. However, once most of the anxiety had lessened and we got to talking with the students I quickly realized that we had a lot of common interests and hobbies. Although having a lot to talk about, the conversation usually was slowed down a bit by the language barrier. Despite being taught English some of the Spanish students still struggled to maintain a conversation without falling out because of lack of vocabulary and understanding. Spanish being the second-most spoken language in the world only trumped by mandarin obviously has a huge saying in this matter. Even with the language barrier we still managed to communicate and understand each other. The main topics of

most exchanges circulated around our different lives and daily routines. How are we different? How are we the same? What are our common beliefs and so on. Ultimately this gave me a greater understanding of how everything works in a different European country. Also, it greatly widened my knowledge of the beautiful cultural traditions of the Catalan people, their food, their spirit, and their values.

The following days of school I met Veronica and Juan who spoke brilliant English. We had great conversations, and they took a lot of time out to show me all the locations they recommended we went to during our stay. Everything from an Amusement Park 2 hours south of Barcelona to an Aquarium near the Barcelona beach. They also showed me places to go for drinks and food and in extension of that where not to go for drinks and where not to go at all.

We ended up going on several trips during the trip. Many of them preplanned from home such as going to Andorra in the mountains between Spain and France. It was a 3-hour drive from the hotel we stayed at, however it turned out to be well worth it. The time spent driving didn't really represent the distance we travelled but rather the twisted roads that took us up the side of mountains to get an overview from one of the highest points in Andorra.

We were also able to visit a lot of landmarks in the city on foot due to our very centralized hotel. It felt like everything was 30 minutes away in any direction which made it easy to experience a lot and visit a lot of interesting buildings and locations.

In conclusion I am very happy that I chose to raise my hand and go on the Erasmus trip. I learned a lot of valuable things and I even got an email from one of the students at the school in Saint Boi where she expressed her gratitude and wish to stay in touch even after the program, to which I happily replied yes to. I made a lot of good memories and new friends.

