CÁCERES 17-18

CÁCERES, SPAIN LT-ET GUIDEBOOK

INTRODUCTION TO THE CÁCERES PROGRAM GUIDEBOOK

With your departure for Spain fast approaching, many of you have begun to wonder what it's going to be like in Cáceres. What will you experience living and studying in Cáceres, and traveling to other parts of the country? Are Spanish people as open and friendly with foreigners as they’re said to be? Will the family you’ll be living with accept you just as you are, or will you need to make some adjustments in order to fit into your new household? Will your Spanish be good enough to allow you to do well in your classes and to meet people outside of class? And just how much should you plan to pack in your suitcases? Hopefully, this guidebook can begin to answer these and other questions.

The information that follows is a collection of advice from former participants. The Center for International Programs and Cáceres program staff members have added practical information as well. All information was accurate to the best of our knowledge at the time of printing. When you return, we would greatly appreciate it if you could help us update this guidebook for the next year's participants.

Expect the unexpected. Ultimately, no written materials or any other suggestions are going to fully prepare you for what lies ahead. The best thing that you can do is commit yourself to keeping an open mind, remaining flexible, and being patient with yourself and others as you are adjusting to your new environment.

We would like to thank the former participants from previous years who have shared their experiences and helped with the editing process!

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7/2017
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BEFORE YOU GO….PREPARATION

CÁCERES, SPAIN

Just the mention of "Spain" conjures up familiar images in all of us, whether we've been there or not: visions of spirited bullfighters, crowded, noisy tapas bars, haughty flamenco dancers, sun-drenched castles and beaches, colorful Semana Santa parades. This is the Spain, exotic and romantic, that drew thousands and thousands of visitors to celebrate the World's Fair in Sevilla and the Olympic Games in Barcelona in 1992. Those of us who travel in quest of the Spain of Seneca or of Don Quijote will still find enough of it around to satisfy our most romantic expectations. From the Altamira cave paintings in Santander to the Roman aqueduct in Segovia; from the Cathedral at Santiago de Compostela to the storied walls of Avila; and, from the Moorish Alhambra in Granada to the Prado and Royal Palace in Madrid, the remains of Spain's rich and fabled past are easy to find.

Barcelona, Madrid's long-time commercial, political, and cultural rival on the Mediterranean coast, is thriving as a business and industrial center and it is the focus of a resurgent Catalán language and culture. "Euskera," the language spoken in the region in the north known as the "País Vasco," and "Gallego," the language spoken in the northwest province of Galicia, are flourishing as well after many years of official suppression during the Franco dictatorship. Outside the major cities, media, improved highways and trains, and rapid economic growth have combined to spread modern consumer culture into traditionally isolated areas--with the advantages and disadvantages that typically accompany such rapid growth. If it's true that Spaniards in many parts of the country are materially much better off than they were a generation ago, it's also true that they're now having to learn to cope, especially in the larger cities, with rising crime rates, traffic congestion, and pollution.

Cáceres lays half-way between Madrid and Lisbon and has managed to escape many of the challenges of the larger cities of Spain. Its well-preserved historical center, with many buildings dating from the medieval and renaissance periods, led UNESCO in 1986 to declare it a "Ciudad Patrimonio de la Humanidad." It also served as a set for "Game of Thrones." As home to one of the
four campuses of the Universidad de Extremadura, Cáceres, with a population of some 95,000, combines the charm of life in a provincial city with the night life that one expects to find in a Spanish city with a large and active student population. A number of other historically-rich cities, among them Mérida, with its Roman ruins, and Trujillo, with its castle walls and Renaissance palaces, lie within easy distance by bus or rail.

We can trace much of Spain’s ongoing transformation to the emergence of democracy in 1976 after nearly forty years of military dictatorship under General Francisco Franco.

Today, Spain is a constitutional monarchy. While its new King has little political authority under the terms of the 1978 constitution, his father, King Juan Carlos is generally credited with having saved the young democracy. In 1981 he energetically intervened to help put down an attempted coup by dissatisfied military officers. Now seen in Western Europe and the United States as a stable Western-style democracy, Spain officially ended its many years of political and cultural isolation from Europe when it joined NATO in 1982 and the European Community in 1986.
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>August 31, 2017</td>
<td>Depart US (or home country)</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 1</td>
<td>Arrival in Spain – Note: need to arrive at Barajas airport in Madrid by 12 noon to meet chartered bus to Cáceres; otherwise, will be responsible for traveling to Cáceres on own by either bus or train</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 3-10</td>
<td>Orientation</td>
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<td>September 11</td>
<td>Classes start</td>
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<td>December 20</td>
<td>UEEx and K classes end</td>
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<td>December 21-January 7, 2018</td>
<td>Christmas break (estimated)</td>
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<td>January 26, 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 27, 2018</td>
<td>LT students depart</td>
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PASSPORTS AND VISAS

It is necessary to have a passport for travel to Spain. You must also have a student visa in order to enter the country, as you will be in Spain more than 90 days. The Center for International Programs will help you apply for your visa with the Spanish Consulate, provided you submit the necessary materials by the deadline. When you arrive in Cáceres, you will need to apply for a student card in addition to your visa to be legally in Cáceres for the duration of the program. Of course, since the visa regulations are determined by the Spanish government and by each Spanish region, the process that you will need to follow while in Spain could change at any time. Dra. Pineda, your Resident Director, will be able to assist you in following these regulations.

You should carry a copy of your passport (the first page with your photo and personal information, along with the page that has your visa on it) with you at all times. Carry your actual passport with you only when you need to change money or travel out of the country. We also suggest that you leave a digital copy of your passport with your host family and with your family in the U.S. in case your passport is lost or stolen.

If you have further questions regarding your student visa, or intend to remain in Spain beyond the study abroad program, contact the Consulate General of Spain in Chicago. They can be reached at 312.782.4588. If your passport is lost or stolen while you are abroad, you will need to reapply at the American Embassy in Madrid located at Serrano 75, 18006 Madrid (telephone: (09) 1 5774000).

FLIGHT CONNECTIONS

Please allow yourself plenty of time to check in at the airport. The current increase in security also means longer lines and processing time. Airlines recommend arriving at the airport at least 2 hours early for domestic flights and 3 hours early for international flights. Airlines are also randomly searching checked and carry-on luggage. Keep luggage lock keys, boarding passes and your identification (passport) easily accessible.

Please take care not to miss connecting flights. It is your responsibility to be in the boarding area at the appropriate time. Should you miss a connection, however, please note that you must be re-routed by an airline representative at the airport. Travel Leaders and/or Kalamazoo College can do nothing to alter your airline tickets at that point. Once you have had your airline tickets altered, you should contact Dra. Victoria Pineda (see contact information in the CONTACT section), the Resident Director for your program, so that she knows of your delay and can give you new arrival instructions. If you are unable to contact her, contact the CIP or a member of the CIP staff (contact information can be found in the EMERGENCIES section), and we will try to assist you in informing the on-site personnel of your situation.
MONEY

How much spending money should you bring? You will want to budget some personal spending money for the occasional meal out, night-life, personal travel, etc. People spend money differently, whether in Kalamazoo or in Cáceres. Former Cáceres program participants report having spent widely varying amounts of money during their six-month stay. They spent anywhere from $1500 to $4000! The average amount spent was around $2200 (not counting the cost of a Eurail pass). As these amounts were given by long-term participants, extended-term participants should plan to bring more than that (perhaps $2500-$3000). Overall, prices in Cáceres tend to be about the same as in the U.S. or even a little less expensive. There are a number of ways to cut down on costs, according to past participants. Try to eat with your host family as much as possible. To avoid high costs for traveling, plan in advance.

At the time of printing, the exchange rate was 1.11 euros to the U.S. dollar. You can check the most recent exchange rate on the internet at websites such as www.oanda.com. It’s a good idea to get some euros here before you go (at least $50 or so), just so you have something in the airport when you arrive in Spain.

Some costs are unavoidable. As is the case on nearly all study abroad programs, you’ll need to buy books for your classes in Spain, and you may spend upwards of $50. You should plan to spend about $25 for photocopying materials used in each of your classes as well.

The easiest way to access your money is with an ATM card, as the majority of money machines in Cáceres, and Europe as well, accept American ATM cards (ATM machines are everywhere). However, check with your bank to ensure that your card will work outside of the U.S and what fees the bank will charge per withdrawal. It is wise to have someone in the U.S. who can check your bank account balance or open an internet banking account, as you will not be able to determine the exchange rate or service charges when you withdraw money. You will want to have all the money you plan to bring with you in either cash or ATM and credit cards or a combination of both, as sending money overseas is a complicated process best avoided.
CLIMATE
Extremadura is an arid region that is generally dry and warm in summer and humid in the winter. Upon arrival in early September, it will be very warm, and very dry. Please give your body a few days to adjust to the heat. Most students report that upon arrival the weather and jet lag makes them feel much more tired than usual. The temperatures shouldn't get below freezing. Winter temperatures are generally mild, but the months of December and January may bring heavy, cold rains. Most of you probably won't need to wear a winter coat, but you should bring a hat, scarf, and gloves, particularly if you want to travel to Northern Europe. The countryside is fairly flat, although there is a small mountain just outside of the city that you may wish to climb to see the great view! Past participants encourage you to bring a rain jacket and waterproof shoes.

PACKING AND LUGGAGE RESTRICTIONS
You will need to check with the airline or your travel form from Travel Leaders (800.633.6401) to determine the luggage restrictions for your flight. As the restrictions change frequently, we encourage you to check with the airline’s website prior to your departure. You are also allowed a small carry-on bag, not to exceed 45” in length, width, and depth (total dimensions). Even if you’re willing to pay overweight or excess baggage charges at the airport, we strongly encourage you to resist doing this and to pack as little as possible.

PACK LIGHTLY!! Few things are as disheartening as dragging around excess or overloaded suitcases while traveling abroad, especially when you could have done without most of it. The best rule of thumb when packing is to pack everything that you think you'll need, take out half, and then half again. Many past participants suggest not packing very much, as you'll most likely want to go shopping once you arrive. Don't bring it if you can't carry it!

Another good packing tip is to carry a change of clothes and essential toiletries in your carry-on bag in case your luggage gets lost. Never pack your passport, money, prescriptions and/or valuables in your checked luggage! Keep those items in a money belt or pouch on your person. Keep your carry-on with you at all times.

In general, the Spanish tend to dress up slightly more than Kalamazoo College students. Be aware that what is perfectly acceptable in a Kalamazoo classroom may earn you a few odd looks in a Spanish aula (although returning students add that you'll get strange looks for everything, not just your clothes). Men dress about the same, but women tend to dress a little neater than they do here (shirts tucked in, sweaters instead of sweatshirts, belts with pants, etc.). Also, men and women tend to wear their clothes tighter than what Americans are accustomed to wearing. Baggy pants particularly earn strange looks. Also, former participants report that white clothes tend to get very bleached out and disintegrate, so they suggest you bring darker clothes and lots of underwear.
You may wish to adjust the clothes you pack accordingly. Whatever shoes you bring, try to break them in before you go.

Since many Spaniards don't keep the heat turned up very high compared to US American standards, you'll need to pack clothing suitable for being indoors as well, especially clothes that you can wear in layers (sweaters are especially useful). This will also serve you well when traveling as you can adjust to other climates by adding or removing the appropriate layers.

Jewelry: It is a good idea to leave favorite jewelry items at home. Never pack anything valuable or sentimental. Costume jewelry is more practical than the real stuff, especially if it is lost or stolen.

Electricity: if you must bring any electrical appliance with you keep in mind that you will need both an adapter and a converter. For small items, such as hair dryers and curling irons, plan on buying them in Cáceres.

PACKING LIST

- Sweaters
- A couple of nice outfits (separates that will mix and match with your more casual clothes)
- Tennis shoes
- Raincoat
- A moderate winter coat, scarf, gloves and hat
- Sturdy walking shoes
- T-shirts (good for layering and to reduce the amount of laundry you do when you travel)
- Warm pajamas and slippers
- Backpack (mid-size is great for traveling)
- Bring plenty of underwear and socks, because in some cases, especially when traveling, laundry access may be limited
- Gift for the host family (see suggestions in "Gifts" section)
- Pictures of your family to share with your host family (including K pictures, home pictures, and friends and family)
- Towel & washcloth (if you plan on traveling as most hostels don’t provide them)
- Plastic baggies (larger ziplock bags are great for holding wet towels and dirty laundry)
• Money belt or neck pouch
• Adapter plugs

Additional items to bring:
• VISA or MasterCard credit cards or an ATM card
• Contact solutions/glasses (and the prescription)
• Study Abroad Handbook (access on CIP web site)
• ICRP Handbook (access on CIP web site)
• Journal
• Notes from your Spanish class, and possibly the book, too
• Prescriptions (in original containers) and other medical supplies (Tylenol, Pepto, etc.)
• Bathing suit (there is an indoor pool in Cáceres)

GIFTS
It is customary to bring a gift to your home stay family, and perhaps for Spanish friends that you meet. Some good ideas include:
• T-shirts, sweatshirts, or other items with Kalamazoo College logos
• Special or mint editions of American stamps and coins
• US-style paraphernalia (i.e., things from Disneyworld, Warner Bros., Mt. Rushmore, World Cup, NBA, NFL, etc.)
• CDs of American music (jazz, blues, etc.)
• Mugs

Show your pictures of home and ask to see theirs. Talk about your country and ask questions about Spain. You will probably find that Spaniards are proud of their country and willing to give you a lot of historical information. Other good topics of conversation include politics and cuisine, as long as you are sensitive to their opinions. Avoid talking negatively about any aspect of Spanish life, especially religion and bull-fighting!

BILLING
The Center for International Programs does not handle the billing for the program. The Business Office issues the bills and will send your bills for the program costs to your home address just
prior to the beginning of each quarter that you are abroad, as when you are in the United States. For specific information please contact Patrick Farmer in the Business Office at 269.337.7226 or pfarmer@kzoo.edu.

HEALTH AND MEDICAL ISSUES
You need to be up to date with your standard immunizations such as measles and tetanus. Please refer to the Study Abroad Handbook for the information on required and recommended immunizations. If you have any questions, contact the Health Center (269.337.7200) or your personal physician, before you go. Of course, be sure to make doctor appointments if you are concerned about a particular problem (i.e., make a dentist appointment for that sore tooth, etc.).

You will find that prescription drugs in the U.S. are often sold over the counter in Spain. So if you are feeling sick, normally you may explain your ailments to the pharmacist and he or she will provide you with medication. It will help to know the generic/scientific names for U.S. brands (i.e., ask for "ibuprofen" when you need an Advil equivalent, "acetaminophen" for Tylenol, etc.).

Common medical complaints include sore throats and stomach aches. Bring aspirin, yeast infection creams, Midol, Rolaids, cold medicine, laxatives, Pepto-Bismol and other medications you generally use. Shampoo, soap, tampons, and sanitary napkins are sold in Cáceres for little more than their cost in the United States. However, if you have a certain brand that you cannot live without, you should take enough with you to last the duration of the program.

If you are ill, please see a doctor. You will be able to have access to the Monfragüe health clinic at the University. The cost of this has been included in your program fee. Sra. Pineda will give you more information regarding this facility and other medical resources upon your arrival in Cáceres, during orientation.

You may have to visit the doctor on your own. Do not be intimidated by this! If you are nervous, you could ask a fellow native Spanish student or your host mother to accompany you.

VEGETARIANISM
For those of you who follow a vegetarian diet: be aware that you may find yourself in situations in Spain where you will be expected to eat meat. Vegetarianism is not common there, and by refusing to eat meat when it is served to you, however infrequently, you risk offending the people that are with you. According to one student, "I found it to be more important for my experience that I tried
everything my madre cooked and respected the time she spent cooking rather than trying to maintain a vegetarian diet there."

No special accommodations will be made for vegetarians during the various field trips. If you require a vegetarian diet and cannot eat what is available during such excursions, you will be responsible for paying for and providing your own meals at those times.

YOU’VE ARRIVED!

ARRIVAL IN CÁCERES

When you land in Europe from the US, you’ll be required to pass through passport control. Be prepared to present your passport and the boarding card for your flight to Madrid. The airline should automatically transfer your luggage from your international flight to the airplane to Madrid. It is important to pay attention to the instructions that are given to you on the airplane as you arrive in Europe. It is possible that your luggage will be searched, as immigration officials will be monitoring you as you exit the customs area. In some international airports, guards with trained drug-detecting dogs will be monitoring luggage collection. Do not be alarmed by this, just remember to keep your luggage with you at all times, and do not agree to carry anything that a stranger might try to give you. In addition, keep your luggage keys with you so that you can easily assist immigration agents in opening your luggage, should they need to look inside. Cooperating with all airline and immigration officials is very important and will make your travels more pleasant. If you are asked questions, remain calm and understand that they are there to protect you too!

For those of you who arrive before noon on August 31, you will be met right outside of the customs area in Barajas Airport in Madrid by the Resident Director. They will take you via bus to Cáceres, where you will meet your families.

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

Most of Cáceres is within walking distance and past participants have emphasized that you will walk a lot during your stay in Cáceres, so make sure to bring comfortable shoes. The program does provide students with a monthly bus pass. Taxis are also a good option, especially at night and if you live far from the city center and university, since they usually are not too expensive.

TRAVEL/VACATIONS

When you travel in or out of the country please inform your host family of your plans, indicating where you are going and approximately when you will return. If you are planning on being gone for more than 48 hours, please notify Victoria Pineda, the Resident Director or Dr. Gemma Delicado, homestay coordinator. Please also leave addresses where you can be contacted at
approximately 48 hour intervals. Be sure to check in at the addresses you’ve given, with the Resident Director, or with someone at home during your travels. Should an emergency happen at home or with you, this information will make communication possible. It is also wise to enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP: travel.state.org).

**TIPS ON INDEPENDENT TRAVEL**

- Avoid traveling alone. This will ensure that you don’t have to deal with illness, theft, or emergencies by yourself.

- Take some kind of pouch for documents, money, and tickets. The best rule is never to remove it. Sleep with it and take it in the shower if you have any doubts, especially for those of you planning to stay in International Youth Hostels.

- When traveling, keep documents with you, not in luggage on a train rack or in a checked bag.

- Email your itinerary to the Resident Director. Also, make sure that your Spanish family and someone in the U.S. has a copy.

- Call home and/or your home stay at regular intervals, especially if there is an itinerary change.

- Talk to security personnel concerning where you will enter boarding areas, which plane, train, or bus is yours, etc.

- Be wary of complete strangers who approach you and offer you rides or a place to sleep. As is expected here in the U.S., never accept a ride from a stranger when you are alone. “Couchsurfing“ off of Craigslists should be included in this category. You do not know the person and travelers have reported being victims of sexual assault by the “hosts”.

- Be wary of people who grab your hand to read your palm and ask for money for the "reading"; be prepared to ignore them or walk away to avoid such scam artists.

- Always carry your passport with you while traveling.

**SAFETY**

Cáceres is generally a very safe city (recently voted the safest city in Spain). Use of normal common sense, awareness, and caution will serve you and your money well in this regard: women should get used to holding on to their purses while they walk, and men should not carry their wallets in their back pockets. You should also make photocopies of relevant pages in your passport, including the page on which your Spanish visa is printed. You should carry these copies with you in place of your passport while walking around Cáceres. Also leave a copy of your passport at home at all times, both in Spain and in the States.
Please make sure that you read the “Responding to Physical and Sexual Assault while on Study Abroad” section in the Study Abroad Handbook, to be prepared in case you or a friend are in such a situation. It is always best to be prepared.

Also, for safety reasons it is not a good idea to call attention to the fact that you are foreign (to the extent that is possible). Foreigners are easy targets for pick-pocketing and mugging, so be smart. It’s not a good idea to stand in the middle of a plaza, loaded down with backpacks, speaking loudly in English. Try to speak Spanish as in public as much as possible. A former participant also recommends that you immediately memorize and write down your home stay’s address and phone number, in case you need to seek assistance while in town or tell a cab driver where you live.

If you are drunk or otherwise impaired, you are much more vulnerable to potential safety hazards than when you’re sober. Drinking (even 1 or 2 alcoholic drinks) impairs cognitive function and your ability to judge your surroundings. Drinking may also negatively affect your ability to make appropriate, safe decisions in response to these surroundings. As most of you will be able to legally drink alcohol for the first time, we encourage those of you who choose to drink to exercise this privilege responsibly.

WATER AND OTHER BEVERAGES
Tap water in Spain is generally safe to drink, and many students are able to drink the water from the first day with no ill effect. Occasionally your system may prove a little less adaptable, in which case you may wish to avoid it for a while. When eating in restaurants you may wish to specifically request tap water (agua del grifo) to avoid being given expensive bottled water. If you decide to drink bottled water, request that the seal be broken in front of you (some restaurants continue to use the bottles as containers for tap water).

MAIL
You can expect letters to and from the States to take about two weeks to arrive. Packages can take longer. Make sure "airmail" is specified on all letters and packages - "surface mail" (by boat) will take at least two months. If you must get a message across speedily, you can use email, Express mail (DHL – 800 225-5345 or FED EX – 800 463-3339) or a fax.

Your mailing address will be your host family’s address, which you will receive when you arrive in Cáceres. If someone in the U.S. needs to reach you the evening of your arrival, they can leave a message at the home of our Resident Director, Victoria Pineda González. You may also receive mail in her care at:
Student Name
C/o Victoria Pineda González
Facultad de Filosofía y Letras
Universidad de Extremadura
Avda. de la Universidad S/N
10071 Cáceres, SPAIN
Phone (at the University): 011 34 9 27257400
Phone (home): 011 34 9 27216819 (Please remember that Spain is 6 hours ahead of Michigan)

EMERGENCIES

► In case of an emergency, you should first contact Victoria Pineda (+34629708676), Gemma Delicado (+34686353360), or Diana Villanueva (+34661631452). They will notify the appropriate people on site. The emergency number in Cáceres (911 equivalent) is 112. In case you cannot, for some reason, contact one of them, you can call one the following numbers of the International Programs staff:

Center for International Programs
(voice) 269.337.7133
(Email) cip@kzoo.edu

*Margaret Wiedenhoeft, Executive Director
*Cáceres Program Manager
(cell) 269.267.5800
(Email) mwieden@kzoo.edu

THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

RESIDENT DIRECTORS
Dr. Victoria Pineda is the Resident Director of the Kalamazoo program. She is a professor at la Universidad de Extremadura in the Departamento de Lenguas Modernas y Literaturas Comparadas. She will act as your academic adviser and oversee all aspects of the program. She can be approached about any issue related to your stay in Cáceres.

Ms. Gemma Delicado is the homestay coordinator and Ms. Diana Villanueva is the ICRP coordinator/supervisor. Ms. Noelia Plaza is the program tutor. They are all additional references for you regarding questions about your program.

UNIVERSITY SETTING
La Universidad de Extremadura has two campuses, one in Cáceres and the other in Badajoz. The Facultad de Filosofía y Letras in Cáceres, which houses the History, Geography, Art History,
Literature and Foreign Language Departments, is a relatively new campus providing more library access, course choices, and an even better learning environment. In addition to Spanish students, you will be studying with a number of international students from other European nations who are also studying in Cáceres, providing a window into many cultures. The campus is conveniently reached by local transportation, which you will learn more about when you arrive in Cáceres.

ON-SITE ORIENTATION
Immediately upon arrival you will take part in an extensive on-site orientation: a series of brief courses organized by Victoria Pineda. The two-week orientation will include language instruction and culture-specific information.

CLASSES AND CREDITS
The Cáceres program is a university-integrated program, which allows Kalamazoo College students some flexibility in course selection. All Kalamazoo College students enroll in specially designed courses at the Universidad de Extremadura that include: History of Islam in Spain (HIS/REL); Spanish Literature (SPAN), Spanish Art and History (ARTX), and Intensive Spanish/Advanced Spanish Language (SPAN) and the Integrative Cultural Research Project (ICRP). Upon arrival, students are evaluated and assigned a placement in a specific Spanish language course. Spanish Literature (SPAN) is only available for students who have completed SPAN 301 on campus. For the remaining two units, students choose from courses offered at the University. The Resident Director will take the student’s language proficiency into account when giving approval for university courses. Students who choose to participate in the extended-term program will follow the long-term program courses, but complete the ICRP during the second semester while taking three university courses.

According to past participants, the Cáceres course structure has a more formal class environment than the United States. Most classes don’t have homework, just exams at the end of the term. One student suggests taking as many university courses as you can instead of "K" classes. This will help you become more involved with the local culture. Also, get to know your professors; they are a great and lasting resource during your time abroad. They can also help you in getting involved in extracurricular activities (such as clubs, groups, and volunteer opportunities). Getting involved in these things early is a great way to become integrated quickly and a great way to meet people. One past participant explained, "you will have to work hard and take a lot of time in order to get involved in many things. You will make mistakes when you talk but don’t let that intimidate you from doing anything." It takes effort, but it is worth it.
Grades from all study abroad courses will appear on the Kalamazoo transcript but are not included in the Kalamazoo grade point average. The transcript will list the title of the course, the appropriate discipline, and a translation of the local grade into the Kalamazoo “A, B, C” grading system. Students must earn the equivalent of a “C” in the local grading system to receive credit for course work completed abroad. Attendance at all classes is mandatory. Failure to attend classes will result in lowered grades and possible dismissal from the study abroad program. All course work, including the ICRP must be completed before the end of the academic program, or no credit will be awarded.

The grading scale is as follows:

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ATTENDANCE POLICY
Attendance and punctuality are mandatory for all classes and program activities, including excursions, visits to museums or historical sites, Spanish conversation activities, etc. It will be necessary to hand in a doctor’s note or a valid justification of another nature for an absence to be considered excused.

- Two tardies of more than 15 minutes will be considered an absence.
- Late papers will count as half an absence as well.
- The grade of participation will be lowered as follows:
  - One unexcused absence - 10%
  - Two unexcused absences - 20%
  - Three unexcused absences - 30%
  - Four unexcused absences - 40%
  - Five unexcused absences - 50%
  - Six unexcused absences - 75%
  - Seven unexcused absences - 100%
  - Eight unexcused absences - FAIL GRADE IN THE COURSE

INTEGRATIVE CULTURAL RESEARCH PROJECT
For your integrative cultural research project you will choose some aspect of Spanish culture that you wish to research in a more direct, experiential manner. Conducting such a project offers you a
way to get to know the host culture using a variety of methods and in a more intimate fashion. How productive and fruitful your experience is will depend on how much time and thought you put into the planning and how much you choose to commit yourself.

**Six distinctive features characterize the ICRP projects,** regardless of where they are completed, and should guide you in the selection and implementation of your particular project—

1. **Emphasis on “hands on” human interaction**—your project should allow you to interact with local people outside of the usual academic environment in a systematic, integrated way.

2. **Choice of the Project Topic, Type, and Scope**—the project should reflect your own goals, interests, and skills. Although you will need to consult with the local project coordinator who will ultimately approve your topic, you may exercise wide latitude in selecting the sort of project you wish to pursue in the host city; however, the project should give you an opportunity to apply what you are experiencing to your academic experience and to interact with a diverse group of people within the local culture.
   
   a. Service and volunteer projects
   
   b. Cultural externships or internships—participation in some facet of the local culture
      
      Life histories

3. **Choice of Methodology**—in consultation with the project coordinator, you’ll have wide latitude with respect to the information-gathering method(s) you choose to employ in your project.

4. **Systematic Research** (cf: Describe, Interpret, Evaluate, Validate, Act)
   
   a. Consistent journaling
   
   b. Painstaking interpretation

5. **Cultural Insight** (cf: DIEVA)
   
   a. Insight into the particular cultural activity or aspect you’ve selected
   
   b. Insight into the larger culture and/or social structure of the host country
6. **Advising and Mentoring**—from a local project coordinator and also a site supervisor

   a. Selection of topics and methods
   b. Introductions and first contacts
   c. Review of journal notes
   d. Interpretation

**GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR ICRPS**

- What is the main activity of the placement? What was produced?
- What are the goals and mission of the organization?
- Where does this particular organization stand in relation to similar ones in the city? In the region? In the state? In the country?
- Whom does this organization serve?
- How do people view this organization and its mission?
- What problems and tasks are to be accomplished?
- How was this done?
- How successful is the organization?
- What are the basic skills and knowledge needed to work for this organization?
- What would be a typical day or week in the organization?
- What were your responsibilities?
- What contribution did you make to help the organization achieve its goals?

The project can consist of a collection of life histories, a study of some facet of the local culture, a service project, or some other form. Start thinking early in the fall about what aspect of the culture you would like to study. In discussing your plans with Dra. Pineda and Ms. Elekes, you will receive more specific instruction. You will need to determine the focus of your project during orientation and have a site selected by mid-October. The ICRP must be conducted in Cáceres, and you will be required to keep extensive notes of the time you spend conducting your project. In the past, students have selected service-learning projects such as volunteering to work with children with learning disabilities and women’s organizations.
The following pages provide a sampling of recent Caceres ICRPs, including the locations and activities that students performed and discussed in their final papers.

### Spain, Cáceres

**Placement Limitations:** K students cannot work in medical/hospital settings. Volunteer work is not as popular in Spain (therefore) ICRPs are not always available in the field of medicine or science.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>ICRP Title</th>
<th>Abstract/Synopsis</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fundación Igualdad Ciudadana</td>
<td>Not provided</td>
<td>My ICRP work was carried out at the Fundación Igualdad Ciudadana. It’s a local NGO in Cáceres that does work for human rights in Extremadura, specifically geared towards lessening the inequalities among society. My goals for my project were to observe the work atmosphere of non-profit work in Spain and compare it to my previous experience in Kalamazoo, as well as to indoctrinate myself as well as possible into the culture and inner workings of an NGO in Cáceres.</td>
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<tr>
<td>La Fundación Secretariado Gitano en Aldea Moret</td>
<td>Los niños gitanos” or “The Gypsy Kids”</td>
<td>My project involved working with a foundation that provides various services to the Roma population of Spain. The foundation has a center in Cáceres and I volunteered there in an after school support class. I helped kids ranging from age three to age thirteen with their English, math and science homework. In addition, we also did arts and crafts projects and played games.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical Barragán</td>
<td>”Spanish Guitar and Music”</td>
<td>For my project, I worked at Musical Barragán, a local music store that specializes in guitars. I helped with normal daily business operations and learned a great deal about a plethora of instruments that are sold there. I also learned a lot about Spanish guitars: the technique, the history, and even how to clean them. Julio, the owner’s son, taught lessons for various instruments, and I sat in and observed some of them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Las Hermanitas de los Pobres</td>
<td>”The Lives of the Elderly in Las Hermanitas”</td>
<td>For my ICRP, I volunteered at Las Hermanitas de los Pobres, an elderly residence in the center of Cáceres, Spain. The home is run by the Catholic Church, therefore we worked with nuns and other volunteers. However, it was not necessary to be Catholic as I am not. My main job was serving the dinner every night, and helping to get the dining hall ready for the next day. In addition, I interviewed two of the residents, and became a personal computer tutor for one of them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ágora Institute</td>
<td>”Learning English in Cáceres”</td>
<td>For my Integrative Cultural Research Project I was an assistant in a commercial English class at a secondary institute in Cáceres, Spain, El instituto de educación secundaria Ágora. The classes were in the evenings and the students ranged age from 18-45 years old. Most of the students were pursuing a degree related to business. All of the students had different levels of English knowledge and familiarity. As an assistant to the professor I would participate in the classes by teaching sections on American culture and customs and also by helping the students with pronunciation and grammar.</td>
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My ICRP Project was done at the Fundación Secretariado Gitano, which is an organization created to help the Roma community within Spain. It is government funded and receives funding from social help organizations as well. The FSG provides many programs that focus on areas where the community needs help. Their main focus is on improving the education of the children. Therefore, when I met with Inma, the head of the organization, she placed me in one of their programs for children. I worked in the after school center for kids ages 3 to 12. The center offers a place for the children to go from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. after lunch to work on homework and have fun.

LIVING IN CÁCERES

THE HOMESTAY EXPERIENCE

Please familiarize yourself with the "Housing Definitions and Regulations" as stated in the Study Abroad Handbook.

Typically, all Kalamazoo College students live in private households in Cáceres. For most of you, these living arrangements will be very different from what you've experienced in living with your family in the U.S., or in living in the dorms or in apartments here in Kalamazoo. The custom of taking students into private households in Cáceres dates back to the establishment of the university in 1973. Spanish students themselves are usually housed in a similar environment rather than American-style dormitories and many of you may be living with Spanish student-boarders.

The heads of households receiving K students tend to be señoras, many of whom have adult children who have already moved out of the house. In other cases, the household will resemble a "pensión" run by a señora who takes in several students as boarders. Most of these households are accustomed to having American students living with them during the academic year. As is the case with all private households that receive Kalamazoo students anywhere in the world, the College compensates them fairly for their willingness to take international students into their homes.

The majority of past participants recommend getting to know your host family as best as possible. They are a great resource and a good way to practice your Spanish. Don't be afraid, they are used to students fumbling over their words! One student suggests, "Take time to make your relationship with your host family a strong one -- you are there for many months! Ask a lot of questions and be willing to spend time at home with them, rather than going out with friends every night. Take advantage of meal times every day to spend time with them."
Your Resident Director staff will make every effort to place you in the sort of household you’d prefer, but you need to keep in mind the fact that she may not be able to perfectly match you with the situation you’re seeking. In this regard, as in many others where life in Cáceres is concerned, you'll need to be prepared to be flexible and make some adjustments to a different way of living. If you are having problems with your family in Cáceres, please discuss them with Dra. Pineda and Sra. Elekes. She will help you in solving miscommunication problems or speak with your family if necessary. If the difficulty cannot be resolved, Dra. Pineda will move you to another home stay.

HOUSING IN CÁCERES

Most of you will be living in apartments known as "pisos", as very few Cáceres residents live in individual houses. Most homes in Cáceres do not have central heating. Instead, there are individual heaters or braseros, in several rooms. This results in a lower indoor temperature than that to which most Americans are accustomed, so you should be sure to bring warm clothes for sleeping (see the suggested packing list). In a few cases, water will be heated with small gas heaters which must be lit prior to each shower, and the head of household may object if you take long showers since energy costs in Spain are very high. No matter what type of heating system you have, ask about what time of day it would be most convenient for you to shower. The heads of households are responsible for feeding you throughout the week (21 meals), and you should be sure to be home on time for those meals. If you need to miss a meal, inform the head of household that you’ll be absent. You’ll then be responsible for paying your own expenses for the meal(s) you eat out of the house.

MEALS

Spaniards take special pride in their cooking. Your host mother will appreciate sincere compliments, and the important thing to remember is to be clear about your food dislikes from the beginning. Be very specific about what you will and will not eat and how much. Any extra expenses incurred because of special dietary needs, including additional food for those who are "big eaters," must be borne by the student. One former participant has said that the food contains a lot of meat and fish, even for people who are not vegetarians. The food may also be somewhat greasier than that to which you are accustomed, so be prepared!

Always leave your hands above the table when eating; not to do so is considered rude. Rest your wrists on the table -- no elbows. Do not touch your food; use the bread as a pusher. The Spanish almost always have bread at every meal.

Spain is famous for its paella, a saffron rice dish which generally contains chicken, peas, and shellfish. Spaniards enjoy jamón serrano (dry, thin slices of ham leg) or tortilla española (an egg, onion and potato omelet sliced like a pie) on thick slices of French bread. Other popular items include cocido, a stew made of chicken stock, ham bones, garbanzos, and several vegetables. This
soup is generally served in two courses. The broth is served first, followed by the meats and garbanzos.

Desayuno: Spaniards tend to eat a small breakfast. This generally consists of a cup of café con leche or cola cao (a hot chocolate drink) and a roll or muffin. Some Spaniards choose to drink their café with a few cookies/crackers and dip these into their drink.

Comida (almuerzo): Spaniards eat lunch, the biggest meal of the day, around two or three o’clock in the afternoon. This is the meal when everyone usually eats together as a family. Lunch generally consists of several courses. The first course might consist of a soup or salad, followed by pasta or vegetables, the main course, and then a postre (sweet). The postre is often a piece of fruit or yogurt. After lunch, expect to spend some time with your host family talking over a cup of café. Do not rush from the table immediately after eating. The host family will expect you to visit with them casually.

Merienda: This is a light snack, usually eaten about six o’clock in the evening. It may be a piece of fruit, a roll, or even a small sandwich.

Cena: Dinner is typically a light meal served late in the evening, at about nine o’clock. A bowl of soup, left-overs, or a sandwich is usual dinner-fare. Don’t expect a huge meal, so fill up at lunch time. Sometimes, family members will manage for themselves (according to a former participant), and not necessarily eat together, as at lunch.

**TELEPHONE USE**

Most families have phones and will allow you to receive phone calls, but rules about calling out will vary. Regardless of your host family’s policy about phone usage, be courteous. Spanish phone bills are itemized and you will be expected to pay for all outgoing calls, including local ones. Unless you are given explicit permission otherwise, plan on using a pay phone for all outgoing calls (even local calls are expensive).

A large number of Kalamazoo College students have decided to purchase cell phones while abroad and find this to be a better way to make domestic and international calls as well as receive calls at any time. Text messaging is a cheap way to make plans with fellow students and other friends you’ll make. Speaking with past participants about this is a good idea, to learn about the plans available and what was most economical. In fact, some returnees may have cell phones to sell to you that they cannot use in the U.S.

Before you leave, it is a good idea to spend some time with your family in the U.S., teaching them some simple Spanish phrases. It is very possible that you will be living with a family that does not speak English. To avoid frustration, it is a good idea to teach your family in the United States how to ask for you, and some of the responses that they may receive if you are not home or available.
Also, remind your family and friends that Spain is 6 hours ahead of Michigan, and to be courteous of the family accordingly.

**LAUNDRY**

Your señora will inform you when you arrive how laundry will be arranged in the house. You may or may not be able to do it yourself. Again, if you don't know what to do, don't hesitate to ask. In general Spaniards line dry their clothes and then iron most items of clothing. Over the course of many washings, your clothes will tend to lose color. We advise you not to bring your favorite outfits to avoid them getting ruined. It is best to bring durable, comfortable clothing and layers in case the weather fluctuates.

**LEAVING YOUR HOMESTAY AND DESIGNATED VACATION PERIODS**

As a matter of policy, you'll be able to stay in your households only when classes are in session. When the academic program ends, you must vacate the household the morning of the second day after the end of classes. Please don't place the heads of households in an awkward position by asking them to let you stay with them after that date. It's true that in the past some heads of households have invited individual students to spend some more time with them; however, you shouldn't presume on their hospitality by asking if you can stay, or even hinting that you'd like to stay. The home stays are informed by Dra. Pineda that they won't receive their normal fee for housing you after the conclusion of classes and to ask your host family to take you in could obviously create a very embarrassing situation.

**ADAPTING TO SPANISH CULTURE**

**HELPFUL HINTS FOR A POSITIVE CULTURAL EXPERIENCE**

While common sense will get you through a lot of potentially awkward situations in an unfamiliar culture, you should be aware of a few cultural differences that exist between Spain and the U.S. You should bear in mind that Spaniards tend to be more formal in social situations than most Americans are, and that if you're willing to adapt to your new culture by observing some of the Spanish norms, you'll run into fewer problems at home, in the classroom, and elsewhere:
- Speak in Spanish at all times in the home.

- Before inviting people over to your home, ask the head of household if it's all right to have a guest.

- If you do have guests, treat the señora of the house with respect. Introduce her to your friend and try to engage her in conversation for a few minutes before you leave.

- If you want to take a guest into your bedroom, ask the señor's permission first—especially if the guest is a member of the opposite sex.

- Respect people's privacy at home. The Spanish often regard certain areas of the house as a place where they can retreat in order to be alone.

- Make sure you know the rules for using the shower and water in your home. For example, don't just assume that it is permissible to wash out socks in the sink.

- Avoid wearing a hat in the house or in class (baseball hats on women or men earn strange looks).

- Don't take off your shoes in public or walk around barefoot at home (though this varies between families).

- Don't put your feet on furniture, whether at home or in class.

- When in bars, do as the Spanish do. Enjoy the company of the people you're with rather than absorbing yourself in the act of drinking as an end in itself. Despite the more open consumption of alcohol, drunkenness is not socially acceptable.

- Avoid smiling at people on the street, as it may be interpreted as a "come-on" rather than as a sign of general friendliness (especially at night, less so during the day).

- Don’t be offended if a Spaniard doesn't smile at you; relatively few cultures in the world smile as much as Americans do.

- Don’t be offended if Spanish students don’t immediately introduce themselves and offer to teach you about their culture. Remember, you are the guest and you will need to take initiative when trying to make friends. This is hard to do on study abroad but remember to always give yourself credit for trying. Be outgoing! This is a skill that will serve you well throughout your life.

- Joining a group or a club is a great way to meet local students. Even if you haven’t played a sport since high school, consider trying to join a team at the university. There are drama clubs, music clubs and other activities as well. Just go out and get involved!
• If you go outside wearing very short shorts, you may attract some unwanted attention. However, shorts are certainly acceptable in the spring and summer.

• Spanish women tend to wear pants to class more often than skirts, saving their dressier attire (skirts and dresses) for church, weekends, clubs, or other social activities.

• People who stare at you because of physical differences (blonde hair, darker skin tones, height etc.) are not necessarily being rude, they're just attentive to deviations from the Spanish norm--this goes for young and old, women and men, everyone. Remember, Cáceres is far more homogeneous than Madrid.

• Do not be surprised if you find that communication in Spain tends to be louder compared to the States (dinner conversation, TV viewing, etc.).

Of course, there’s no guarantee that if you do fail to observe some or all of these norms, you’ll be openly criticized. However, many Spaniards will regard a failure to acknowledge these sorts of norms as proof that you aren’t particularly bien educado (well mannered). As their culture is one which places great value on exhibiting proper degrees of respect and self-control in socializing, they won’t be as inclined to meet you or to spend time with you if you seem unwilling or unable to observe what they regard to be normal standards of conduct.

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

Over the period of your stay in Spain you will probably learn the most from daily living in a different culture. In the day-to-day experiences -- the morning trip to the university, a trip to the market, a meal with Spanish friends -- lie the real challenges, frustrations, and joys of living in a new cultural environment. It is an immensely rich and rewarding experience, and one that you can anticipate with pleasure.

However, everyone has bad days once in a while, and some people have them more than others. It is normal to feel like you just want to go home -- everyone has felt that way at some point in his or her travels. Students who have been abroad in the past offer the following advice:

• First of all, be prepared to have unhappy days and know that they will pass.
Remember that the Spaniards have bad days, too. If someone is having a bad day, don’t take it personally and automatically think they’re unhappy with you.

Accept that you’re going to make mistakes.

Keep yourself open to making friends with different kinds of people, including the people in the K group.

Talk to others in your group, perhaps with someone who’s having a good day but who can relate to your feelings.

Try doing something that will involve you in the present; simply doing something can work wonders. For example, if you have nothing to do one Saturday and are feeling homesick or miserable, give yourself a task that will help you to get to know the host culture better -- like going to a local church, searching for a specific item in the market, going to a café in a different part of town, etc. Immerse yourself and keep busy.

Sometimes, though, you might find that you need to be away from people and/or the local culture for a while, so you might choose to hole up with a book, listen to music, or write letters.

Keep a journal -- even if you never have kept one before, it’s a great way to release tension and let things spill out, and it’s one of the best mementos you’ll have when you return to the U.S.

Be patient with yourself. There will be times when you feel you are the only one who is miserable and having a bad day -- you’re not!

Lastly, just tell yourself that you can do it. You can survive in a different culture.

You’ll learn that everyone has her or his own way of coping in a different culture, and what might help some people some of the time, won’t help everyone all of the time. But this learning process, coming to really know yourself in a way you haven’t before, is part of the adventure.
DOING WITHOUT

In addition to adjusting to the conditions mentioned above, there are things you will have to give up to live in Spain—and this may be hard at first. Eventually, though, you may realize that you don't necessarily “need” what you thought you did. Not everyone misses the same things and different people react differently to the sacrifices they must make. For some people, not having their own car may prove frustrating since possibilities for travel will be limited. For others it might be the unavailability of certain foods, or not being able to maintain a vegetarian diet. For some people it's hard to find clothes or shoes that fit or suit their taste.

You will also have to adapt to a new city and a new community. This means using a map to learn where things are and making use of public transportation. In a new community where you don't know anyone, your usual support systems will not be available. It's important to consider beforehand how you will cope in such circumstances. Your routine will be different. You may find structure where you don’t want it and none where you do. This is a normal part of cross-cultural learning and adaptation.

SPAIN: THE SECOND CULTURE

In addition to adapting to Spain as a country, you will be learning to adjust to a second culture. Learning to live in a new culture requires a great deal more than a list of do’s and don'ts, or a brief description of the cultural traits of a society. For one thing, any culture is much too complex to narrow down to a definitive description. Descriptions can describe general characteristics, but they will not explain each specific encounter. Secondly, and more importantly, adaptation has as much to do with understanding oneself and one’s own culture as it does with understanding a different culture.

As individuals, we are cultural beings with ways of behaving and perceiving which we do not always identify as springing from our culture. It is when we attempt to understand, or become a part of, another culture that we come to see that many of our values, beliefs and behaviors stem from our own cultural background. Interaction in a new cultural environment can cause conflict both within oneself and between oneself and the new culture. Some of this conflict is inevitable. However, by understanding yourself as a product of your own culture and of your own personal background, you will have a much easier time observing your interactions and learning to adapt to a new set of behavioral ground rules. The task of culture learning requires a high tolerance for ambiguity and a patient willingness to work through culture shock in a constructive manner. Students must be willing to learn from situations where they may have miscommunicated or failed at communication. They will be expected to examine how their own cultural expectations may have interfered with interpretation, to use their observation skills to pick up on other clues as to what may be happening, and to reserve judgment while remaining tolerant of ambiguity until they reach understanding.
Learning a second culture not only affords students an understanding of the new culture derived from first-hand experience but also gives them an awareness of their own culture than they never have had before. With familiar surroundings and friends taken away, students are led to examine not only their culture, but themselves as well. One student participating in an intensive study abroad program wrote, “I'm learning to enjoy being with myself, independent and alone from lifelong cultural props. It's great!”

Such awareness of one’s own culture and self ultimately allows students to live more responsibly as members of the global community.

**BECOME FAMILIAR WITH SPAIN AND THE U.S. BEFORE YOU GO**

**GETTING TO KNOW SPAIN: TALK TO YOUR FELLOW STUDENTS!**

One of the best ways to start preparing for your experience is to do some background reading and research on Spain. Familiarize yourself with the current political situation and educational systems, historical background, current events, customs, and cultural norms. Go to your library or ask to talk to a faculty or staff member who has had experience in Spain. Check out the information on the [CIP website](#). Or, arrange to talk with one of the students who have studied there in the past -- you have had the opportunity to do this during your orientation, but often times individual conversations are extremely helpful. Former participants and the current Spanish students on campus will be your best sources of information. Please contact the CIP to get a list of names of past-participants who would be willing to speak with you. They know what it’s like to be in your shoes as you try to imagine what in the world the next months will hold. Don’t be shy about contacting them -- they expect and want to talk to you!

**KNOW WHAT’S GOING ON IN THE U.S.**

Some people have had the embarrassing experience to learn that people abroad seem to know more about U.S. history and politics than they themselves do. You can expect to be asked your opinion about current events and U.S. politics -- you can also expect to hear the opinions of others, and not all of them will be complimentary of the U.S. Should such a situation arise, the best advice is to remain respectful, even when disagreeing, and to resist the temptation to criticize Spain, as you are a guest. Start keeping abreast of current events and continue to do so while you’re in Spain.

**SPEAKING SPANISH**

Probably all of you are feeling Spanish-language anxiety -- relax! It will be OK if you walk off the plane and don’t understand a word your host family says to you. Everyone who has been abroad
where another language is spoken has lived through that experience. There are, however, some great opportunities to practice your Spanish before you go. Some ideas for practicing Spanish include: renting Spanish movies, listening to Spanish music, and practicing your Spanish with the Spanish-speaking students on campus.

CASTILLIAN SPANISH

Spanish in Spain has its own variations. The most noticeable shift in pronunciation is the substitution of “th” for the soft “c” sound (for example: Cátheres). The “tu” and “vosotros” forms are also much more common than the “Usted” or “Ustedes” forms. It’s polite to address strangers older than yourself in the “Usted” form when first introduced, but unless there is a marked difference in age or position, you can probably lapse into the “tu” form as soon as they do. Also, in spoken Spanish, the past perfect form is much more widely used than the preterit. For example, one would say "Yo he hablado con ella" rather than "Yo hablé con ella". They also tend to drop the “d” from words which end in “-ado,” which then sound like "-ão." There is a tendency to drop the final "s" from words, as well ("Carlos" becomes "Carlo"). You will also acquire some new vocabulary (like "zumo" for "jugo," and many others).

GENDER RELATIONS IN SPAIN

While in recent years Spanish women have gained an ever more active voice, traditional male machismo is still present. At home there are clearly defined spheres of men’s work and women’s work. Most married Spanish women take their primary pride in a well-kept home and family, leaving career concerns second-place. Dating patterns are similar to what you see in the U.S. Don’t be surprised, warn former participants, if you see people publicly displaying their affection for each other in parks, etc. (especially at night).

Women should expect a certain amount of overt attention, and should not take it personally if they receive unwanted stares or comments in the street. Such comments are called piropos, and are generally accepted by Spanish culture. As they are almost always non-threatening, the best advice for dealing with them is to simply ignore them, as Spanish women do.

SEXUAL HEALTH

Issues of sexuality can be complex in your own cultural environment, and much more so in one with which you are less familiar. While living in a culture that is not your own, it is more challenging to evaluate situations and to assess risks for emotional distress, disease, and assault as a result of intentional or non-intentional sexual contact. Sexually transmitted diseases are prevalent everywhere in the world, and the HIV virus can lead to death. We strongly recommend that students educate themselves on safe sex practices, pack condoms from the U.S. when they are traveling abroad, and be cautious about their sexual activity while abroad. For further information
regarding HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, please consult with Kalamazoo College’s Health Center or your physician.

Learning about your host country’s culture with regard to acceptable and safe sexual behavior, is one of your responsibilities as you prepare for and experience study abroad. It is also very important that participants understand the local norms and cultural patterns of relationships between genders. What are the local dating patterns? Is it the custom for females to have male friends (or vice versa) or is that considered unusual? If you accept a drink or some other “gift”, are you tacitly consenting to sexual activity? If you invite a member of the opposite gender into your living space, is it culturally and/or legally acceptable for him/her to expect intimate contact? Is the legal definition of “consent” different from the definition in the U.S.?

At a minimum, you must be aware that some behaviors that may be culturally and legally acceptable, and seemingly safe, at home may not be in your host country – and vice versa. Certain behaviors will also communicate different messages in your host culture than they do in the U.S. Resident Directors and other program staff members will give you guidelines to the local cultural norms for relationships between genders and laws regarding this issue.

YOUR RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES

YOUR RETURN FLIGHT TO THE U.S.

The airlines require that any change after departure must be done in person directly with the airline or Travel Leaders. If you have any questions about this process, please call Travel Leaders (800.633.6401) before you go.

Chris Le Blanc looking over countryside of Trujillo
~ Karen Farwell K’10
PREPARE FOR YOUR RETURN

As the end of your program approaches, you will likely experience a wide range of emotions and reactions. Just as you needed to prepare for your stay in Cáceres before leaving the United States, you will also need to take care of many important details as your program comes to an end. As you are preparing to leave, please remember the following:

1. Do not take back items made of animal hides or any agricultural products, as you will not be able to pass through U.S. customs.

2. Don’t forget to set aside some U.S. cash for the trip home.

3. Remember: when completing customs forms, a trip to the country with your host family does not constitute time spent on a farm. Answering otherwise on the customs form when re-entering the U.S. will make for a long chat with immigration officials concerned about parasites, etc.

4. Remember to write your host family a thank-you note when you get back to the States.

Also, the Center for International Programs’ Peer Advisers – seniors who have returned from studying abroad that organize campus events and help advise students on their study abroad experience – put together a list of recommended things to do several weeks BEFORE you leave for the US, and before you do any post-program travel. These are great things to do to prepare yourself for the end of the program and for the reverse culture shock you may experience when you return to the United States. The Peer Advisers, who have experienced the reintegration process, wish that they, themselves, had done the following:

- Take photos of your campus, living space, neighborhood, and surrounding areas so you can remember them and share them with your family and friends back home.

- Definitely set time aside for thorough ‘last’ goodbyes with friends and host families.

- Enjoy some of your favorite foods that you may not be able to get in the United States.

- Re-visit a place you went to when you first arrived and reflect on how that place feels differently now.

- Start thinking of ways to be upfront with your family and friends back home about how you are feeling – write emails or make phone calls to share what you will miss from study abroad and ask them to be patient with you when you have ups and downs as you reintegrate.
**RETURNING HOME**

Going home is usually a very exciting prospect. Most students look forward to seeing family and friends they have missed, eating food they haven’t had for so long and enjoying activities that may not have been possible during study abroad.

Remember that returning home is also a transition very similar to your arrival in Spain. Just like your arrival, you can expect to feel frustration, anxiety and confusion at home, on your campus and with your friends. Craig Storti puts it this way in The Art of Crossing Cultures:

“The problem is this word home. It suggests a place and a life all set up and waiting for us; all we have to do is “move-in.” But home isn’t a place we merely inhabit; it’s a lifestyle we construct (wherever we go), a pattern of routines, habits and behaviors associated with certain people, places and objects—all confined to a limited area or neighborhood. We can certainly construct a home back in our own culture—just as we did abroad—but there won’t be one waiting for us when we arrive...In other words, no one goes home; rather we return to our native country and in due course we create a home.”

At the foundation of this transition is the task of determining what to do with the changes that have occurred while you were away and the changes that have taken place within you as a result of your time in Spain. Life for your family, friends and teachers probably will not be the same as when you departed, and you were not there to gradually adjust to those changes with them. And they have not been able to get used to the things that are different about you.

Hardly anyone avoids the discomfort of this period of growth, but the good news is you will eventually find a way to include your new ideas, skills and outlook in your life back in the U.S. Here are a few questions to consider before your return. Your answers may help you recognize the changes that have occurred during your sojourn.

- What have I learned about Spain’s culture that I did not know previously? In what ways has this changed my view of Spain?
- By being abroad and able to compare my culture with a different culture, what have I learned about the history, values and traditions that make up my home culture?
- While I was away, what significant events have occurred in my country, my family, in my hometown, among my friends and on campus?
- How have my personal values changed because of my study abroad experience?
- In what ways have my stereotypes or biases changed?
What new skills have I developed (e.g. adaptation skills, second language proficiency, sensitivity, etc) and how might I maintain them?

How can I express these changes to my friends, family and teachers?

What might I do to continue to deepen my understanding of Spain?

ADVICE FROM PAST-PARTICIPANTS

RECOMMENDED THINGS TO DO

“Climb the mountain”

“Wednesday night is usually ”Erasmus” night at numerous bars, meant for foreigners”

“Spanish men often call out ”piropos” (catcalls or pick-up lines) to women- it is best to ignore them or make a joke out of it (You should NOT get angry or yell at them!!!).”

“If any students going on this program are interested in singing, they should join the choir in the music school at the university. It’s really fun, and the people there are the nicest ones I met during my whole trip. Students interested in dance should talk to Denise about taking Sevillanas classes with Carmen. That was really fun and life changing.”

“There’s a really cool medieval festival in Cáceres. It was the coolest thing to do in the city by far. There were so many vendors and performers and food…”

LIVING IN CÁCERES: CULTURE AND CITY LIFE

“Strangers who start talking to you are not creepy- they’re Spanish.”

“Three Kings Day is in early January, and it is when they exchange gifts. There is a big parade through the city.”

“The Spanish are very proud of their ham. Also, everything is cooked in olive oil.”

“Waiters are usually not friendly, and they do not expect tips.”

“During my first week in Cáceres, I found myself a little bit frustrated when the entire city was closed down from 2:30 until about 5:30 in the afternoon. I kept thinking, “How are we supposed to get things done?” But after a few weeks it became something I looked forward to; the big meal at lunchtime followed by relaxation and a nice nap. Now that I am back in the states I yearn for siesta.”

“Cáceres is in Extremadura, the poorest region of Spain; you can buy food for less money, go to different places for less money, and people are usually more helpful, especially in Cáceres. Also, the region has its own
dialect, and how people pronounce things, which if you pick up on and use in your Spanish, you’ll surprise people in other regions of Spain when you open your mouth to speak Spanish.”

“My initial knowledge of coming to Cáceres was that the people wear a lot of neutral colors. However, when I got to Spain I was clearly mistaken! They dress their best every day, in bright colors! To go out at night took a lot of preparation and I noticed that the majority of the Spanish people dressed very nicely in leggings or tights and dresses.”

“Wear slippers in the home stays. In Spain the people believe that if you are not wearing slippers while in the house that you will catch a cold.”

“Host families can be very useful. They give you good advice about local things, take care of you if necessary, and allow you to see what daily life is really like. I loved mine, and we keep in regular contact. However, you are living in someone else’s home, and you have to be flexible enough to adapt to their rules and customs.”

“The Spanish tend to drink frequently, but they very rarely get drunk. The dancing is less suggestive.”

“People don’t celebrate birthdays the same way in Spain. You’re expected to buy presents for your friends on your birthday and not the other way around. Students shouldn’t be offended if their host family doesn’t do anything particularly special.”
THOUGHTFUL RESPONSES

“I’m not going to lie; the first couple of months with the host family were really hard. But something great blossomed after that struggle. Of course it is going to be hard in the beginning because you are getting used to an entirely different Spanish accent than you are used to. There were many times I had absolutely no idea what my family was saying to me. But once you get past that initial struggle stage, all of a sudden you understand more and more and can actually communicate and joke around and show your true personality that has been waiting to come out.”

TRAVEL ADVICE

“Travel is not difficult—there is a bus and a train station in town.”

“It is better to travel with Spanish friends because they are more familiar with the cities and customs.”

“About once a month there is a “puente,” which is an extended weekend. These are the best times to travel (but buy tickets in advance!!!).”

“Go to Cadiz because it’s one of the oldest cities in Spain, and is awesome to tour through on a sunny day (there is a beach)!”

“Asturias is a great region to tour”

“Oviedo is a city worth traveling to since it’s full of a different type of culture - they were never invaded by the Moors; there is a very Catholic feel.”

“Granada is also a must see when in Spain - go with a group and definitely get tickets in advance to see the Alhambra.”

“For Spain sightseeing, I would recommend visits to Segovia, Toledo, Cordoba, Granada, and Barcelona. A lot of other major cities are covered in the program planned trips. In Barcelona, students should go see Montserrat (temple in the Pyrenees). A lot of people loved going to Lisbon also. It’s easy to travel by train or bus. I recommend only using Autores buses because they’re the nicest, but if you can afford to, riding the train is MUCH nicer and more scenic.”

COURSES AND SERVICE-LEARNING

“Arabic is VERY difficult - I do not recommend it! The program’s literature class was fantastic, as was Islam.”

“There are two levels of grammar that you can take depending on how rusty your Spanish skills are when you arrive.”

“Take a philosophy class with Andoni. He speaks both Spanish and English, so if you have questions about the lectures, you can ask him in his office hours. This really helped our Spanish - he spoke so fast that we
needed the clarification, but by the end of the term, we could understand him really well. This is also an intro level class, so it’s not so hard that you feel totally overwhelmed.”

“I really liked the Imagenes de Espana Contemporanea and the Islam courses - they are Kalamazoo College courses. The prof for Islam is the best one in the college I think, and the Imagenes course is the most relevant to the study abroad experience.”

**FOOD**

“I miss not having fresh bread at every meal! I loved having bread at every lunch. Just be careful, if you eat too much bread at one meal because you didn’t like the meal, your madre will know!”

“You have to try the paella at least once. There are lots of different versions that you may or may not like, but definitely try it out.”

“Keep your hands on the table when eating!”

“Lunch is the biggest meal of the day, and is usually around 2 or 3pm. Dinner is lighter and is usually after 9pm.”

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

You will want to take a guidebook with you—perhaps one from the “Let’s Go” series, “Lonely Planet” series or a Rough Guide.

[http://allabroad.us/resources.php](http://allabroad.us/resources.php) - Contains resources to help find funding opportunities, information about making study abroad support career development, reasons to study abroad, information to support diversity in study abroad, and information about discrimination abroad.

[http://www.diversityabroad.com/](http://www.diversityabroad.com/) - “…connects talented diverse and underrepresented students and graduates to international education and career opportunities that prepares them for leadership in an interconnected world.”


https://travellatina.org and @TravelLatina on Instagram


[https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/go/lgbt.html](https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/go/lgbt.html) - U.S. Government’s resource guide for travelers who identify as LGBTQ

https://baniamor.com/ - Bani Amor
Blogs, interviews, and posts that revolve around identity, place and the colonial nature of travel culture; Has a series of interviews with travelers of color and an article listing travelers of color to follow

http://matadornetwork.com/bnt/7-things-latino-travelers-understand/ - Luis Guillermo
7 Things Only Latina Travelers Understand

http://www.browngirlsfly.com/ - “A Melanin-Infused Perspective on Travel”


http://www.expatica.com/nl/moving-to/Moving-home-Reverse-culture-shock_104957.html - Article on Reverse Culture Shock

http://www.ediplomat.com/np/cultural_etiquette/cultural_etiquette.htm - Cultural etiquette by country

https://www.gooverseas.com/blog/6-things-wish-knew-studying-abroad-african-american - “6 Things I Wish I Knew Studying Abroad as an African American

Books


Gass, Susan. “Women Studying Abroad” in Transitions Abroad,


http://globaled.us/safeti/v1n22000ed_voicing_concern_about_discrimination_abroad.asp

Various. Diversity Issues in Study Abroad, 
https://www.brown.edu/academics/college/special-programs/international-study/student-resources/while-abroad/diversity-while-abroad
Collection of quotes from study abroad participants from Brown University who are from historically disenfranchised communities.


**LGBTQ RESOURCES**

http://overseas.iu.edu/living/glbtr.shtml - NAFSA’s Rainbow Special Interest Group’s website. Includes numerous web links and a bibliography.


https://www.outrightinternational.org/ - The Outright Action International is an association of individuals and organizations dedicated to building a free and peaceful world, respect for individual rights and liberties, and an open and competitive economic system based on voluntary exchange and free trade. They currently have members and representatives in over 100 countries.

http://studyabroad.isp.msu.edu/forms/glbtr.html - Covers some of the issues a LGBTQ student may wish to research before departure.

http://www.lonelyplanet.com/thorntree/index.jspa - Includes both general travel information and a special discussion section (Thorn Tree Forum) for LGBTQ travelers.