Korel Seville 2014
Semester Abroad in Seville

A random meadow we found while hiking thru Ireland. The photo does no justice, you have to see it in real life!!!
#dreamland #wanderlust
#get_lost_in_nature (at Connemara, Ireland)

Feels good to be back in Oahu!!
#home #sunsets #my_beautiful_lyfe
#country #secluded #at_peace (at Secret Beach, Kahuku)
Semana Santa en Sevilla (Holy Week)

Semana Santa is one of the most important cultural and religious events that take’s place in Spain. It is a Catholic tradition that is celebrated during the week following up to Easter. The purpose of Semana Santa is to celebrate The Virgin Mary and the sacrifice or passion of Christ for the people’s sin.

Whether your religious or not, Semana Santa is a truly amazing cultural and religious event to see. Thousands of locals and tourists flock the streets of Sevilla and stay there all day and night to watch the Processions. The processions are large wooden floats displaying sculptures of the grieving Virgin Mary or The Crucifixion of Christ. The processions are carried from their home church and make their journey to The Cathedral in the center of Sevilla. The processions enter the Cathedral for a rest and then make their return journey to their home church.

At the beginning of each Procession is the Guiding Cross (Cruz de Guía). Followed by the Nazarenos. The Nazarenos wear caps and pointed hats that resemble the KKK. They are not the KKK and they have been wearing these pointed caps centuries before them. The pointed cap represents their penitence towards heaven. They cover themselves to show their penitence. The Nazarenos walk bare feet and wear colors, which represents the brotherhood of their church. The alter boys and Procession are then followed behind. A band plays music behind the Procession followed by penitents that wear a non-pointed cap and carry a cross.

There are about 58 processions and about 8 come out each day. One of the most famous processions is the Virgin of Macarena, which comes out on Thursday, and Good Friday. I woke up at 4am to watch this procession. If you are a student studying abroad in Sevilla, I recommend you stay a few days in Sevilla to see Semana Santa and use the rest of the time to travel. The beginning days of Semana Santa are less crowded with tourist. The ending days have more tourists, but also features the Virgin of Macerena. Don’t expect a spectacle on Easter Sunday. Easter Sunday is pretty mellow and there is only one procession that comes out. Also, wear nice clothes if you’re going to view Semana Santa.
This weekend was just what I needed. So in my element. Snorkeling, swimming in caves, picking up shells. BTW me and Cierra Salzano killed it at kayaking today!! (at Praia Dona Ana- Lagos, Portugal)
La Sagrada Família en Barcelona

It’s official name is the Basilica i Temple Expiatori de la Sagrada Família. The La Sagrada Familia is an unfinished church which was first constructed in 1882 by Josep Bocabella. Although, the design of the church is mostly influenced and illustrated through the vision of the late Catalan art nouveau architect Antoní Gaudí. Gaudí’s Neo-gothic design for the church makes this building one of the most beautifully designed and aesthetic architectural structure you could ever see. The church is still under construction and reaching new heights. They estimate the La Sagrada Familia will be completed in 2041. If you are in Barcelona, you have to visit this historic site. I recommend you buy the tickets
Studying Abroad in Sevilla: The challenges I’ve faced

Studying abroad in Sevilla, Spain has been interesting. I came here to experience a culture very different from mine and to put myself in new and unfamiliar situations. Boy.... did I get what I asked for!! My study abroad adventure has been great. I’ve felt, “On Top Of The World” and some days I find myself asking why, “I am here?”

Do not base my study abroad experience on your experience. Everyone’s experience is unique. What I’ve felt or encountered is going to be different from others. I’m just writing about the challenges and the high points of my journey.

One of the biggest mistakes, I made was not learning enough Spanish before I came here. The most awkward moment was the first hour I arrived to my host family’s house and we had our first meal together. The dinner was so awkward because my host family didn’t speak English and my roommate and I barely spoke Spanish. We tried using Google Translate, but it felt weird and the conversation didn’t flow. We ended up just staring at each other silently. I couldn’t wait to be done with dinner. I highly recommend you arrive to your host family’s house with questions already prepared to ask them. Make sure, the questions are accurately written in español and if you can’t remember them just read them off the paper.

It took about a month, for my roommate and I to feel comfortable talking to our host family. We use hand motions and I speak in broken Spanish to help communicate. The Spanish speak very fast. Also, people who live in the Andalucía area of Spain speak with a lisp and they pronounce Spanish words differently than the rest of Spain. For example, “thank you” in español is pronounced, “Gracias.” In Sevilla and the Andalucia region they pronounce it “Gracia.” They drop the “s”. My biggest advice in learning the language is to have confidence. You need to get over the fact that you probably sound funny and you will make mistakes. The best way to learn a language is to get out there and speak, speak, speak!!!

Google Translate is handy, but don’t rely on it for everything. It’s not very accurate. It doesn’t always have the right translation and it uses the wrong sentence form. In English, we would describe an item by stating the adjective first and then the noun. For example, blue shoes. In español, they say the noun first then the adjective. For instance, shoe blue
(zappatos azul). I gave up on using Google Translate with my host family because they couldn’t understand the pronunciation.

Before, I came to Spain, I thought I was going to arrive in Sevilla and make a lot of Spanish friends. I had this image of Spanish people standing out on the corner and me walking up to them and us talking to each other as if we known each other our whole lives. My expectations were unrealistic and naïve.

First off, when I arrived in Sevilla it was 50 ° F. No one was standing outside because it was too damn cold. Secondly, I some how forgot about the language barrier. I came to Spain not knowing how to speak Spanish. How was I supposed to make friends if I couldn’t speak to them? Also, there are a lot of students in my program who speak a sufficient amount of español, but some of them are having problems making friends with the Spaniards in Sevilla. Besides the language barrier, there are other social challenges, which stop the Spaniards from interacting with foreigners.

Sevilla is very different from Madrid and Barcelona in terms of it is not an international city and it is very traditionally old time Spanish. The Spanish here don't know how to react to foreigners and it is not because they are unfriendly. They are very proud of their city and very proud to be Spanish. For a very longtime, Spain was ruled under the control of the dictator Francisco Franco. It wasn’t until the 1970s when Spain adopted a democracy government. You have to understand Spain has only been freed from Franco's control for almost 50 years. The country is still dealing with how to handle their freedom and the influx of foreigners in there cities.

Other cities in Spain have adjusted well to the changes. Sevilla is slowly becoming more culturally and socially acceptable. My intercambio and the high school girls who I teach say it is almost impossible to get a good job in Spain if you don’t speak English. More than ever, the younger generation is recognizing they need to broaden their perspective and explore different cultures.

Since Sevilla is still very traditionally Spanish, it is the best city to study abroad in if you want to immerse yourself in the Spanish culture and practice your español. Studying abroad in Madrid and Barcelona you will find you can get by with not speaking any español at all.

Before I leave, I am not trying to say you won’t make any friends in Sevilla because that is not true. I have made 2 friends from Sevilla and they are awesome. I would just point-out to take advantage of any opportunities you have to make new friends with the people from Sevilla. Get yourself an intercambio, meet people at a volunteer program, meet people at the gym, join a painting class, go to a bar, or club. Just get out there and say, “Ola!”

**El Museo De Bellas Artes**

The Museum of Fine Arts in Sevilla. A truly remarkable museum full of artwork from the 15th century mediaeval period, the renaissance period in 16th century, and up to the 20th century. Originally, it was the Convent of La Mereced. It was a monastery for priests until 1839 when they converted it into a museum. Several of the paintings were originally in the building when it was a monastery.
Morocco: Truly amazing and eye opening. The people of Morocco live in various living conditions. Some homes and streets in Tangier looked like Southern California. In the more rural and small town areas, people lived in small huts and in less adequate living conditions. If you have the chance to drive through the rural area of the country, I highly recommend it because it is something to see. You will appreciate the simple things like having clean water and a bed to sleep on. The people are also very nice. A store keeper chased me down 2 blocks because he forgot to give me 20 cents back. Morocco will leave you in awe.

Survival Guide for Studying Abroad and Living in Spain

Before I embarked on my study abroad journey, I spent hours researching the cheapest flights and the best ways to save me money. Now that I'm in Spain and through trial and error, I have picked up some tips and advice on living in Sevilla, Spain. So save yourself the
time and learn from the mistakes of others and myself and read my tips on studying abroad and living in Seville, Spain.

1. Student Discount Airline Websites

If you are a student or faculty member there are student airline websites that offer you discounts on flights. These sites can save you hundreds of dollars compared to other travel sites. You don't even need to be booking a flight for a study abroad trip. You can book a flight on these websites for a vacation as long as you are a student/faculty member of an educational institution. Compare all three sites to each other and other travel sites to find the best price. Also, these travel sites offer online coupons that can save you an additional $10 - $30 off your ticket.

Kayak: I am a student option

http://www.kayak.com/flights

Student Universe:

http://www.studentuniverse.com/

Statravel

http://www.statravel.com/

2. Best time and tips to find the cheapest airline tickets

If you are planning on studying abroad or doing an exchange program, I highly recommend you start researching and recording the prices of flights 3 - 4 months before your ideal flight date. This will give you an idea of how prices fluctuate and if you're getting the best deal on a ticket. Flights with an arrival date between Tues – Thurs are usually cheaper. If I was researching flights on a Sunday night, I noticed the prices were higher. A good time to buy an airlines ticket is 1 – 2 months before your travel date. Prices tend to drop as it get’s closer to your flight date because airlines are trying to get rid of their seats. Take advantage of price alerts. Kayak has a price alert. All you do is enter your destination and arrival location, your ideal travel date, and the max price you are willing to pay. I have friends who used price alerts and scored round trip tickets from HI to CA for $170.

3. Protecting your money and valuables

I’m going to put this in caps. **DO NOT TRAVEL AROUND WITH ALL YOUR MONEY!!** Some students for some reason want to avoid bank and ATM fees then they decide to withdraw thousands of dollars out of their bank and carry it around or hide it in their hotel. If you carry all your cash and all your cash get’s stolen you have no money. Do not hide your money in a hotel or hostel because workers can enter your room and take it. Trust me they do this on the regular and they know all your hiding spots. The best way to protect your cash is to withdraw only a day or two worth of money and carry that amount on you. An ATM fee of $4 is better than hundreds or thousands of dollars getting stolen.

Travel wallets and purses
Do not put your money, cards, cellphones, and valuables in your pockets. There are professional pickpockets in the world. Spend the money and buy a protective traveling wallet or purse. Girls there are money pouches that clip onto your bra. Guys there are money pouches that clip to the inside of your shorts or pants. You can fit money, keys, and cards in them. When buying a travel bag/purse consider buying one with strong straps that can’t be cut off. Buy a purse that has a zipper inside, a zipper to seal the purse, and a purse flap to cover the zipper. This will make it harder for pickpockets. Carry your purse with the strap going across your body and the purse in front of you. If you wear it that way it is harder for thieves to grab your. A boy in our program had his credit card information stolen from RFID scanners. There are purses and wallets made with material that block RFID scanners.

4. Smart chip and credit cards with no traveling/foreign transaction fees

If you’re traveling to different countries you are going to need a credit card and a debit/ATM card. Majority of hostels and hotels will not let you book a room without a credit card. Most will let you pay with cash but they need a credit card on file as a deposit just in case you trash the room. You won’t be able to book flights without a card. But did you know most credit and debit/ATM cards charge you a fee for using a card outside the USA? These are called foreign transaction/traveling fees and they can bite you. Good news is there are credit and debit/ATM cards that have no foreign transaction fees. Capital One has great credit cards and debit cards with no foreign transaction fees for college students and those with bad or no credit. I recommend the Capital One Journey credit card. No annual fees, no traveling fees, and 100% fraud protection. Awesome credit card for building credit.

Their 360 checking accounts are also great. You don’t need money to open an account, debit/ATM card has no foreign transaction fees, and you can withdraw all your money out. The best card to travel with is the BankAmeriCard Travel Awards card from Bank of America. This is the best credit card because it has no annual fees or traveling fees and it has a smart chip. In Europe credit cards have smart chips and require a pin and not a signature. Smart chips are better than American credit cards because it offers better security. Some places in Europe won’t accept American credit cards without a smart chip. Avoid the embarrassment of having your card declined and get the BankAmeriCard.

5. Bring Toilet Paper

In Spain and in other countries in Europe, you will notice the lack of toilet paper in the restroom stalls. Always bring extra toilet paper with you. If you find a stall with toilet paper takes some tissue before you leave and stay clean.

6. Lower your expectations

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This is the biggest advice I could give anyone who is studying abroad or traveling. Lower your expectations of a country or city. Don’t make presumptions that a city is going to be like this or your experience is going to be like that. I say this because you don’t want to be let down if a city doesn’t meet your expectations. A part of you needs to go with the flow.
Don’t base your expectations off of someone else’s experience. Remember, you can read blogs and research a city, but you won’t experience a city/country until you get there.

The Alcázar of Seville. The Spanish th Reales Alcázares de Sevilla or Royal Alcazars of Seville. The oldest palace in Europe still in use. A mix of Moorish Christian, Gothic, and Jewish architecture.
I would like to say thank you to the Shidler College of Business, the UH Study Abroad Center, the Hawaii Association of Certified Public Accountants, and the Hawaii Association of Public Accountants. A big and very special Mahalo goes to William R. Johnson of Johnson Machinery Co. Thank you for your generosity. Because of your support I am able to travel to a different country for the first time. Your kindness will help me gain a broader perspective on life and the global economy. Mahalo Nui Loa!!