

[Spain] – [Universidad de Almeria]

Agenda¹

I.	Your overall feeling after your semester abroad.....	2
II.	Before the travel.....	2
A.	Preparation.....	2
1.	Visa.....	2
2.	The flight.....	2
3.	My luggage.....	2
4.	Bank account.....	3
5.	Insurance.....	3
B.	Housing.....	3
1.	Where to live.....	3
2.	Find a flat or a room.....	4
3.	Cost.....	4
III.	When I arrive at the university.....	5
A.	Inscription at the university.....	5
B.	Information on the university.....	5
1.	Courses.....	5
2.	Advice on “contrat d’étude”.....	5
IV.	When I live there.....	5
A.	Safety.....	5
B.	Phone and Internet.....	6
C.	Events.....	6
D.	Sports.....	6
E.	Eating.....	6
F.	Go to the university : bus, car, bike.....	6
G.	Travels.....	6
H.	Any other information you would have liked to know about.....	7

¹ To update the agenda just click right on your moose

I. Your overall feeling after your semester abroad

My overall feeling after this semester abroad is pure happiness, it's the best experience I have undergone in my life, I don't regret doing it at all, and I certainly don't regret choosing Almeria, which is for me, a hidden gem that needs to be visited, the city is so safe, the people are so kind, the Andalusian culture is a really interesting one, and I feel like in order to really understand it, Almeria is the go to city. There's just something about this city that makes you feel not far from home, I adapted fast. It was a tradition, we used to go to party in Nacional on Wednesdays and in Classica, which is our second home, on Thursdays. We felt that us Erasmus, knew each other and were like a family since we weren't a lot compared to other big cities like Madrid, Malaga, or Barcelona. Given the fact that it's a small city, there are only buses, but its good because we walked a lot. Everything is cheaper here, and you quickly get to know everything. I sincerely think that we had the best ESN (Erasmus student network), they really did a very good job integrating us, doing a lot of trips, linguistic exchanges, tour cities, themed parties, food exchange and many more creative events.

II. Before the travel

A. Preparation

1. Visa

I didn't need to apply for a visa because I was going to Spain, which is part of the European union.

2. The flight

I booked my plane tickets pretty late, 2-3 weeks before, because I took time to find a good apartment, what I did was book a bus ticket from Montpellier to Barcelona with Flexibus because it is cheap, then from Barcelona to Almeria I went by plane, with Vueling, which is known for its cheap prices as well, the whole trip, one way, with one extra luggage, costed 110 euros.

3. My luggage

I took 2 big luggage with me, one of 25 kilos and the other one 20 kilos, I certainly took a lot of unnecessary things because I was scared to need something, but believe me, don't take that many things because you will buy a lot of things abroad (souvenirs, new clothes, traditional food...)

Make sure to ask the proprietary of the apartment you will rent, if the house is equipped with towels, bed sheets and other house tools.

4. Bank account

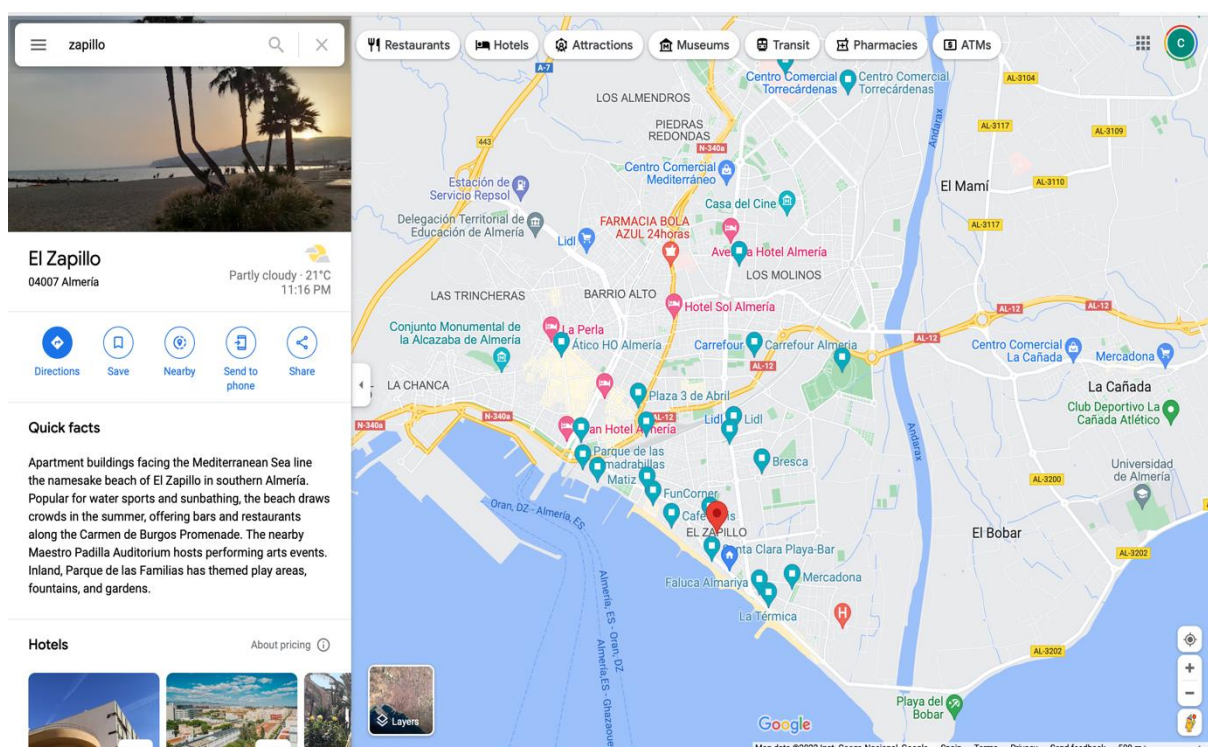
I didn't have to change banks, but there is a good one. Here in case, you want, called Cajamar. All the technical process, such as a new phone number, bus card and other stuff, didn't request, mandatory, a Spanish bank, so you can leave your French one, and it will work wonders.

5. Insurance

I subscribed to Maif's insurance; I didn't need to pay anything. I also had the Ameli insurance of course, as well as the European card.

B. Housing

1. Where to live



As you can see on the map, the ideal place to live and where all the Erasmus people live, is Zapillo, its near to the beach and to the university. And every Erasmus student do plans there. The clubs and the famous restaurants and tapas bar are in the center, which is more in the Nueva Almería region.

At the very beginning i wanted to go to Civitas, but I really advise you not to, all my friends who lived there didn't really like it because they felt that they didn't really get to experience the Erasmus sharing cultures because they were alone in the dorms, it was way more expensive than the Zapillo apartments, and the region is not that good there.

Even if you don't like sharing a flat with anyone, in really advise you too, and with people with different nationalities than you, because it really thought me a lot of new things about other countries and how they are, and you get to taste their food as well;) I was with a German and a Polish roommate, and I had the best experience with them.

2. Find a flat or a room

In Spain in general, they use Idealista a lot to search for houses, I really advise you to use it, it's so good and so helpful. I found a flat thanks to it, and I also was in contact with a housing agency, called inmobiliaria santa Isabel (+34 633 79 16 81), they are a really pertinent and trustworthy agency.

3. Cost

The cost of the apartments or rooms are really cheap here, you can find a room in Zapillo for 230 euros with everything included, there are even cheaper ones, like 180 euros but then the house will not be modern. My apartment was directly in front of the sea, very modern, very good view and big, and I used to pay 330 euros without the charges, with the charges it went to 360 euros approximately.



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III. When I arrive at the university

A. Inscription at the university

I had to take an appointment on the UAL site, then once the appointment taken, you go, they explain to you everything, they sign your starting journey paper and all the other things that must be done.

B. Information on the university

1. Courses

I took 5 courses of 6 credits each to be able to have 30 credits in total. I chose:

Company organization: The format of this content is a little bit like the strategic management one, we studied from the same book, fundamentals of strategic management, there is the final written test of 40% and the working groups of 30%, with 10% participation. It was a good course, and the final exam wasn't that hard.

Introduction to marketing: The final exam was 50% and working groups 40%, 10% participation. This course was interesting and quite basic.

Enterprise creation: one final exam of 55% and one presentation to do by group of 45%. I really liked this course; the business plan was creative.

Organization design: one final exam of 50% and 30% working groups, 20% individual work. The content wasn't as interesting, but it was an overall good course.

Strategic Management II: final exam 35%, working groups 50%, 15% participation. This course's final exam was so hard, very few people passed it from the first time, the course is interesting but needs a lot of work.

2. Advice on "contrat d'étude"

I recommend to really read the exams description and the content of the course. And to be sure they're not really changing courses from other domains for the coherence of the timetable.

IV. When I live there

A. Safety

Almeria is so safe. I always walked alone in the middle of the night, and not even once, someone talked to me, or I felt the need to go by taxi or something. There are no thefts or fight problems that I know of.

B. Phone and Internet

I took a Spanish phone number from Vodafone, 20 euros per months for 40 GB and the house internet is from Movistar, 600 Mb, 29,90 euros per month, it's a good one and it's enough.

C. Events

As I said before, the ESN group is so pertinent, they communicated everything via WhatsApp mainly but there was also in Instagram and Facebook. There was also travel agencies such as Bestlife and Emynetviajes, who organize many travelling trips to Portugal, Ibiza, Feria de Seville and many others, I went with them a lot, they are cheaper to do with them than alone and you have more fun because all the Erasmus go with them as well.

D. Sports

There's a lot of sport facilities in the university, if you take the card, which is only for 30 euros the whole semester, you have access to the gym, the jacuzzi, paddle tennis, the indoor swimming pool, and there are also canoe, horseback riding and more, but you need to pay a little bit more.

E. Eating

I mainly cooked and ate at home, but I used to go eat tapas outside with my friends often, because fun fact, Almeria and Granada are the two remaining cities who still give free tapas with the drink you take. You must go eat in: La Consentida, Real 31, San Francisco 26, El burro triste, el robles, la mala, jovellanos, nuestra tierra. Another fun fact, you will find every Erasmus student in front of café Paris, always. Even when they want to go to the beach, they go in front of it, it's like the meeting point.

F. Go to the university: bus, car, bike

There are only buses here, so you need to get a bus card, I took the one that costed 28 euros per month, unlimited travels, because I used to use a lot the bus at the beginning, a lot of people here took bicycles, and it's easy to find one, b because every time there's a lot of students selling them. But a new were getting to the end, I didn't use the bus much, and I walked a lot, so I changed my subscription to the card of only 10 travels which costs 5 euros.

G. Travels

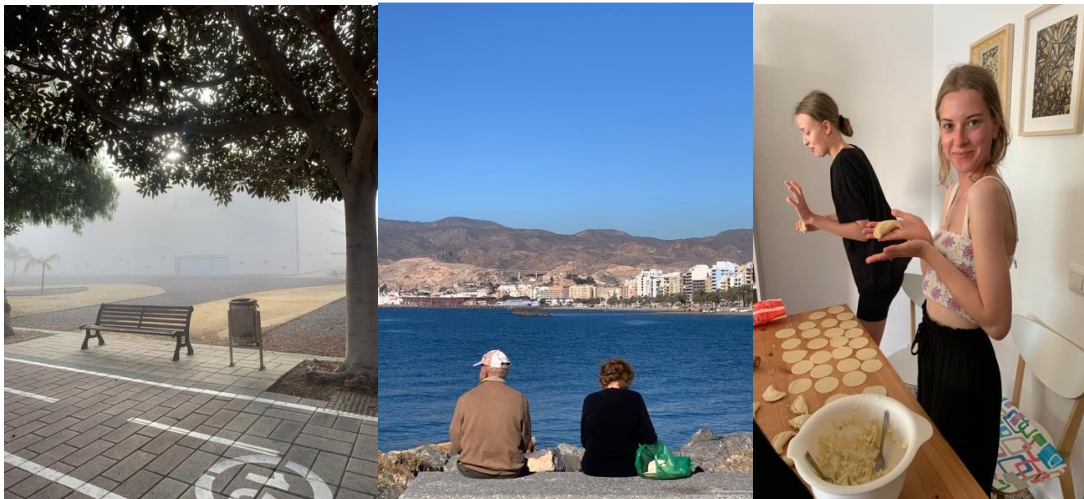
I really recommend visiting Portugal, Algarve with emynetviajes; it was one of the best trips, I also recommend the Valencia trip with bestlife. Seville, Malaga, Granada, and

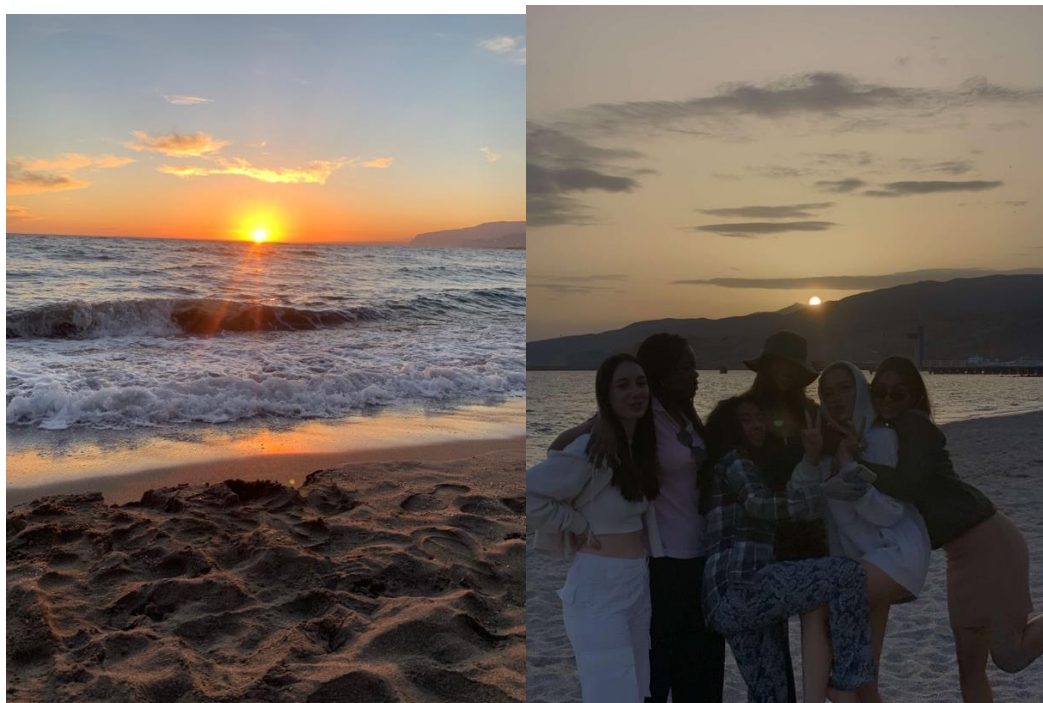
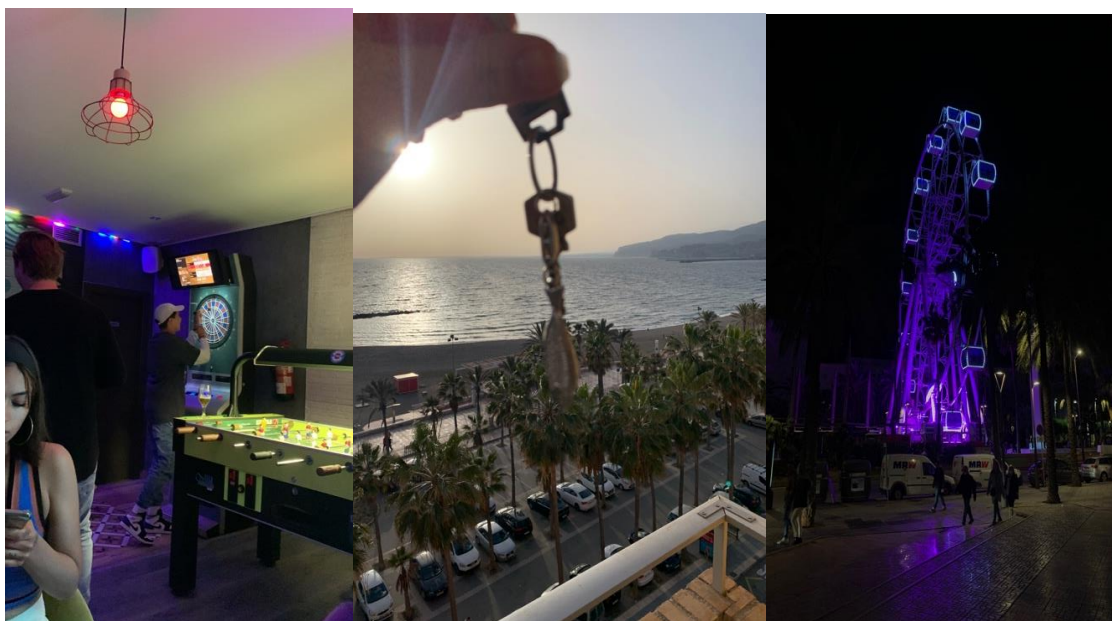
Marbella are a must too, and of course the Canary Islands and the Balears islands, because they are close and cheap to travel to from where we are.

H. Any other information you would have liked to know about

Before coming here, I was excited but at the same time I was scared that I would not like the city, but since the very first hour I stepped out of the airport, I fell in love with it, with its people, with its places and everything. I really appreciate the fact that it's a small city, and everyone here does too, and they said that their Erasmus would have been so different if it was a big city (in a bad way), all those 5 months, we felt that we were at home. I only would have liked to know that all the exams are MCQ questions with negative points, which is a system that I'm not fond of at all, but it was good because there was also working groups that covers 45% of the grade.

V. Photos





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