

[ESPAGNE] – [Universidad Rey Juan Carlos]

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¹ To update the agenda just click right on your moose

I. Your overall feeling after your semester abroad

I would say my experience abroad was very beneficial, to say the least. When I look back at the overall picture of my Erasmus semester, I realize how self-evolving the whole process was, and how it completely reshaped my perspective on life, but also on myself. I got to explore a new city and a new culture that's completely different from what I've been used to before. The challenges that I was put through, either when it comes to the language or just the adventures of life, really shaped me into the person I am today.

If I could go back in time, I would make the same decision. The university has a great reputation not only in Spain but also worldwide. There are, of course, some things that bothered me in the teaching/learning process, especially how different both are compared to the learning experience in France. But overall, it has been a very useful journey.

GRADE: 3,5/5

=> 0 (I do not recommend this semester abroad to my best friend) - 5 (I totally recommend this semester to my best friend)

II. Before the travel

A. Preparation

1. Visa

As a foreign student in France, I did not need a Visa to go to Spain, and I don't think anyone who also comes from France will need to go through the Visa process to travel to Madrid, as it is in the European Union, which makes the travel 10 times easier.

2. The flight

*I took my flight from Morocco as I was there during the holidays. My flight was a direct one from Marrakech to Madrid → **Marrakech Ménara Airport** to **Adolfo Suárez Madrid-Barajas Airport**. If the traveler is coming directly from France, there's no need to take this route since there are so many flights that connect airports in France to the Madrid airport.*

*I took my flight approximately a week before the start of my courses. On the 18th of January, I flew from Marrakech to Madrid with the company **Iberia**. I highly recommend this company as it's safe and committed, but also offers a range of services and a sort of comfort that's enjoyable for a low-cost company*

 Madrid



 **IB3621**

Marrakech - Madrid

RAK
12:45

—  —
18.JAN..2024

MAD
14:45

 x1

3. My luggage

I am very used to traveling back and forth between France and Morocco, so I knew exactly what to bring with me to Madrid, coming from experience. A piece of luggage is a very personal matter, but I would suggest bringing some clothes that fit into the Madrid weather. If the traveler is planning his/her trip at the beginning of the year, as I did, I suggest bringing some warm clothes for the first two to three months when it's really cold. Then, once the end of Mars hits, the weather is much warmer so you can bring your chilliest clothes.

I would also recommend bringing some bed sheets, it depends on how picky you are, but generally, I only stumbled upon rooms in Madrid that didn't offer brand-new bed sheets.

4. Bank account

I absolutely did not have to change my bank when I first came to Spain, I am actually a client at LCL – Le Crédit Lyonnais and it works just fine. No requirement on the bank account was needed. I was able to pay and receive money normally.

5. Insurance

I was subscribed to an insurance that my dad pays in Morocco. It's called Atlanta Sanad, but any other insurance company works for the Erasmus in Madrid. It just must cover the essentials.

B. Housing

1. Where to live

I highlighted the places I recommend in green and places I don't recommend in red.



2. Find a flat or a room

I struggled first to find an apartment. I was renting a room in a house first to figure out where I should live. It was a proper rent; it didn't cost much but I knew I wanted to change. The location was bad, it was at Mostoles, approximately 40 minutes away from the city center and even further away from the university, which made it hard throughout the days, but I couldn't find better. I stayed for two weeks before finding my new home on **Spotahome.com**. I recommend this app since it makes everything easier and works as an intermediate between you and the landlord.

My rent cost 450 euros per month + 60 euros of surplus charges, which cost 510 euros per month. It was located closer to the center and the metro was just some steps away. If you're willing to rent in Madrid, my experience taught me that you should start ahead of time to not find yourself in the same unpleasant situation as mine in the first weeks or so, I recommend using well-trusted apps like **Spotahome** or **Idealista** and choosing the right location. Renting in the city center is a really good idea, but often, you find big apartments with 7 rooms, and you end up living with way too many people and paying way over price. I recommend **LaLatina** as a very hyped and cool neighborhood to live in, cheaper than the center, and even nicer.

Living next to the university is also a bad idea. The Vicalvaro Campus is so isolated from the actual city and the minimum metro trajectory to get there is about 35 minutes minimum. I understand how it's then more tempting to rent an apartment next to it, but it will be so hard to have a social life as the center (where everything happens) is miles away.



3. Cost

A reasonable price to plan for the rent is around 400-600 euros, 700+ euros if it's in the center, of course, you're going to have flatmates. For solo apartments or studios, I think someone should plan to pay more for the cost of living alone.

III. When I arrive at the university

A. Inscription at the university

I received an email from URJC informing me that I can do the official inscription online. I just followed all the steps and made sure to upload the documents that they asked for. They give you then the necessary user information to have access to their platform and the school mail.

B. Information on the university

1. Class

These were my classes for the semester:

- *Management Information Systems: I liked this course, even if it wasn't a subject I am passionate about, the teaching methods were good, and I enjoyed learning more about it.*
- *Human resources: This course I liked a little less because it was mainly group discussions and continuous exams but very confusing and not much theory.*
- *Financial Management II: This course was well taught and made me learn a lot of things.*
- *National and International Economic Environment of the Firm: This course was my favorite. It was very interesting to follow all the classes, the subjects of learning and discussion sparked my interest. There was also this book that we had to read which was refreshing in the learning process.*
- *Strategic Management and Corporate Politics II: This was my second favorite course. I recommend it. It puts you in the perspective of someone who gets involved in the working environment of the firm. The teacher is also great.*
- *Balance analysis: I would say this one was interesting but not very interactive.*

2. Organization of the Class

Each class lasts about 2 hours, some of them end a bit before. I had a schedule from 9 am to 1 pm every day, from Monday to Friday and I honestly really liked it because it put

structure and left room to enjoy the rest of the day. The volume of work is light, except for the courses where you must prepare something for every week, which I think is a good initiative. It keeps you updated.

When it comes to the teachers, they're all nice and helpful. However, I feel like in Spain, students are more independent and don't rely much on the teacher's way of doing things. There's an autonomy that exists within the work environment and both parties accept it.

3. List of courses and recommendations

- Management Information Systems: I found this course a bit easier than what we do in France, and a lot more theoretical as well, but it remains very informative.
- Human Resources: Also easier than the Human Resources course that we're used to in France because it's mainly things to memorize and a lot of theory to remember. The group work puts everything into concrete but it's still very easy.
- Financial Management II: This course I find a bit more difficult than what we did before, I also think it's a continuation of the first chapter that I didn't have the opportunity to attend, but overall, really good course.
- National and International Economic Environment of the firm: This course differs from anything I've had before that's related to Economics. It goes deeply into the what's and how's of macro-economy and dives into deep factors over the years. I find it really interesting. Highly recommend it if you're curious about the beginnings of everything.
- Strategic Management and Corporate Politics II: This course was also a bit hard to assess but nothing impossible to do. I liked attending the classes and I found all the subjects important for one's experience in the work industry.
- Balance Analysis: Very easy course, beginner level in Accounting.

4. Exam

The exam was over two weeks, we had a separation of 1 day to revise. We passed under good conditions; I think a lot of it was easy and true to whatever we had in class. I advise the students to go over the exercises and try to do past exams. The format is similar to what we have in France, so there would be no problem regarding that. Each exam has its own duration, and normally the grades are published by the teachers pretty fast on the platform. I remember getting my grade the same day for 2 courses or more.

IV. When I live there

A. Safety

To be honest, I did not have the safest experience in Madrid. I first got my bag stolen in the metro station and then a lot of stuff happened afterwards that made me enjoy this whole experience a bit less. All I have to say is to be careful, especially in the metro/train stations and crowded places, and always pay attention to your belongings, especially at night.

B. Phone and Internet

Normally, the companies in France let you have access to this service if you want to keep your French SIM card. It honestly depends on the subscription. I personally kept paying for the French SIM card, but I also bought a new Spanish one for unlimited calls and 5G. Honestly, sometimes you don't even need it to be unlimited because they offer big Giga octets in their cards with a price range that's close to 10 euros. You'll be able to call and have access to the Internet whenever you want. The school also has free unlimited WIFI, so I advise you to ask for that.

C. Events

The best way to know about the events is to follow the ESN Madrid account on Instagram and get added to the WhatsApp group. The account is **@esnurjc** and basically, everything related to Erasmus happens there, all the parties, hikes, and sport activities... literally everything. To get added to the private group, maybe ask the account or go directly to the ESN office that's located in the Vicalvaro Campus as well. You'll get all the details about everything.

If you want something that's outside of the ESN group sphere, there's an app called FEVER that basically tells you all the events that are happening in your location area. You can also get tickets there.

D. Sports

There are a lot of sports activities within the ESN group agenda. I had the opportunity to go on a hike and it was very organized. However, I don't have much information about this. I think asking the ESN office would be useful.

E. Eating

For me, eating local Spanish food was such a good experience. I often shopped at Mercadona or Aldi, as they were the closest to my apartment. I also recommend both if you want to buy your groceries. You can find cheap alternatives. You also have the option to shop at small businesses and markets on the street. Usually, they have fresh produce and it's cheaper. (better to go in the morning)

If you want to eat out, there are so many great places to try. I just went on social media every time and searched for good spots with good food. The price range changes if you want something simple or a whole dining experience, it depends.

The ESN group also organizes a lot of international buffets at a reasonable price, which is really fun. Highly recommend.

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

I only used the metro when going to the university. For me, I had to take two lines: the lines 6 and 9. Usually, every person will have to use line 9 because it's the only one that goes to Vicalvaro. But to get to the metro station that contains line 9, either you take the 6 or the 2. I recommend taking the time before to go over all the lines and memorize which one you'll have to use depending on your housing, but normally, there's no Bus involved.

G. Travels

I honestly didn't travel a lot in Spain during my semester and I kind of regret it. I was so caught up with what happened to my bag, and I had to redo all my papers. However, I got the chance to experience Valencia and I highly recommend it. Honestly, I liked it more than Madrid itself. But again, that's only my opinion.

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

Something I would've liked to know is that Spanish people who live in Madrid don't all speak English, because I went with this idea that it's a capital city so everyone must be so used to foreigners. Not at all. Spanish people who speak English are pretty rare. The top experience is learning Spanish but unfortunately, I didn't do it. If I had to go back in time, I'd make some time for it.

You will definitely be surrounded by a lot of English speakers at first or even French speakers because the international classes are very diverse and there's an emphasis on that. But once you experience the world outside of university and what it holds, it gets very tricky. Make sure to do it all, and make some Spanish and International connections.

V. After your semester abroad

A. What are you planning to do?

I am planning to move to Paris to continue my studies in Business, mainly Management of Luxury Brands.

B. Did you apply for a master?

Yes, I got accepted into the Paris School of Luxury for my first year in Master's.

[remember to fill in the excel : https://lnkd.in/eUt_xB54]

