

Experiencing Itálica and Córdoba

This past weekend was full of exploring new places! On Friday, we all met up at the Plaza de Armas bus station and hopped on the bus to Santiponce, a small city located about 30 minutes out of Seville. It was fun to look out the bus window and view all the city that passed us and also a little of the countryside around Seville. At the end of the ride, we hopped off the bus and it looked like it had dropped us off in the middle of nowhere. There was a little gas station and what looked like might be a few restaurants down the road a bit but that was it. Thankfully, one of ICS's professors, John Boyle, was there to lead us across the street and down a short road to the gates of Itálica. Itálica was a huge and important Roman town back in its day and today, you can go and see some of the ruins that are excavated.



It was really cool to be able to walk amongst the ruins of this city and know that over 2,000 years ago people lived there in these buildings. It surprised me that beautiful and detailed mosaics on the floors of the buildings could still be there in most of their entirety. One of the highlights of Itálica is definitely the amphitheater. Professor Boyle told us how it is actually the third largest Roman amphitheater around today and how in its day it was used for all of the important events from gladiator fighting to giving out important information to the city. It saddened me that he said that quite a bit of the amphitheater had been dismantled and vandalized over many years, but it was still a huge and amazing structure to see.

The next day we all woke up early and piled onto a nice charter bus, excited to go explore Córdoba. Unfortunately, it was too foggy to really enjoy the Spanish countryside so we all napped instead. Once there, we all headed to the Great Mosque of Córdoba and the Mezquita and met our tour guide.



The tour guide gave us so much interesting information about the mosque's history and how Córdoba used to be one of the most important cities in Spain. The tour guide also walked around with us through the streets and told us how now Córdoba is now mainly known for its amazing patios, nice leather products, and silver. Almost all the shops around the city had beautiful leather purses and intricate silver jewelry. After walking through the cute little streets, we headed to Córdoba's Alcázar de los Reyes Cristianos which means Castle of the Christian Kings. This Alcázar was completely different from Seville's and that was mainly because this one was constructed by Christians instead of the Moors. Something that I did find intriguing about this castle was that it was one of the main locations that the Inquisition took place. Also, the palace has beautiful and amazing gardens. I can't imagine how gorgeous they must be in the spring and summer when they are filled with colorful flowers.



After the Alcázar, we all had some free time to shop and eat and a few friends and I went off in search for Pastel Cordobés. Pastel Cordobés is a traditional pastry of Córdoba that is made of puff pastry and ‘angel hair jam’ which we later found out is spaghetti squash jam. You would never realize this except for the texture while eating this treat because it was sweet and delicious. The rest of the afternoon was spent exploring the narrow streets and doing some shopping before we all met up at the bus to make the journey back home. Thankfully, the fog cleared up and we were able to see the beautiful rolling green hills of Spanish countryside on the way back. It ended up being a pretty busy weekend, but it was full of exploring new places and learning about those that lived here thousands of years before.

