

Italica, Cordoba, Paris, oh my!

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Hello, hello! It's Gabriella back with another update from the International College of Seville. What a time it has been. Students have traveled to places wide and far, had yet another 2 weeks of school, and went on two amazing visits to Italica and Cordoba. Every week here is packed; I love it! There is the perfect amount of free time and then exploring with the school.

Italica will always hold a special place in my heart. It was the first time in Spain that the idea of me standing on history every day really sunk in. To think I stood where Julius Caesar once stood is unfathomable! That's what I love about studying abroad, I am getting these chances to do things my childhood self only dreamt about. I am getting to go to these outstanding places, and I don't want to take any of it for granted. Standing in the middle of the amphitheater was quite an experience. Was I really standing where all of these crazy stories took place? I was standing in a place where Romans lived their normal lives as well as the amphitheater where almost unmentionable events were held. The fact that I was able to stand on the ruins and hear what happened there really enhanced my learning about Spain and culture. A textbook can only get you so far.



The absolutely incredible amphitheater at Italica! Can't forget the photo credit to Geraliz Jimenez.

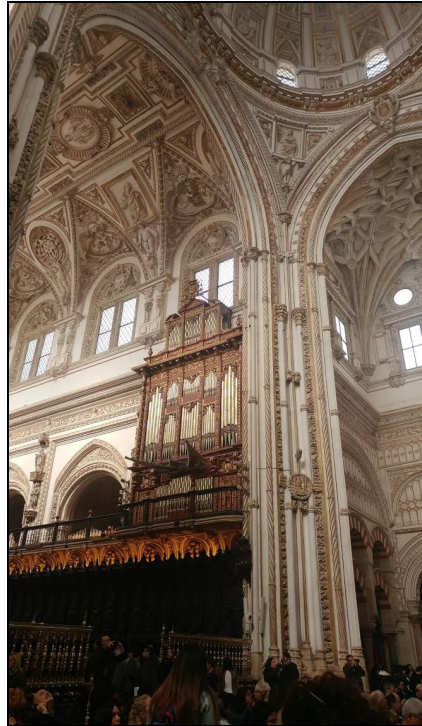
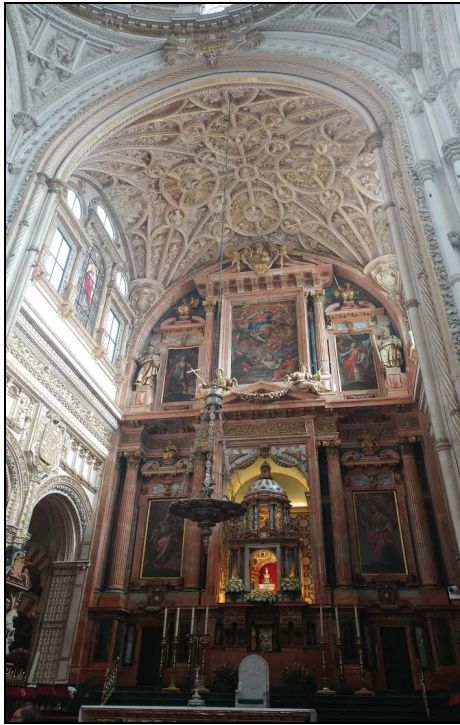
I highly recommend Italica when you come to Seville. The Romans used to hold “games” at the amphitheater where thousands of prisoners and animals would be killed. It sounds so gruesome and I’m usually not one for violence, but this was what happened in history. I think it was important for me to visit a place where I had a bit of a reality check of some not-so-nice events in human history. It was even more incredible to learn that this wasn’t looked at as such an atrocity, rather just how normal life flowed. We walked through the caves where prisoners would have their last night before they were killed. The people would party to their heart’s content and “live it up” before it was over. Crazy, right?!

And oh boy, Cordoba. I fell in love right as I got off the bus! It was a bit touristy, but rightfully so! The mixture of three cultures: Judaism, Islam, and Christianity was in full motion. We visited the Mezquita de Cordoba, which is the 3rd largest mosque in the world! You might have seen pictures like this one:



Let me tell you, any picture you see does not give this masterpiece (even that’s an understatement) justice. We learned that each marble pillar was hauled in from the North and South of Spain. Every other pillar was a different color and each color came from either part of Spain. Thinking about hauling a few hundred tons just for ONE of the hundreds of pillars makes me rethink my infrequent attendance at the gym.

The most amazing part of the mosque, ironically, had to be the cathedral, built over a 300 year span, right in the middle of it. I don't think I have ever seen a structure so detailed and beautiful. Here are a couple pictures below, I feel as though words just can't do it justice.



As you can see, both Italica on Friday and Cordoba on Saturday were both packed with excitement, learning, and aesthetic enjoyment. We visited the Jewish quarter in Cordoba on Saturday as well. We visited the synagogue, statues, and saw remnants of different Hebrew sayings throughout the streets such as the gold lettering in the ground saying "Sefarad," which means Spain in Hebrew. This was to represent the Spanish Jews in the area living there before Isabel and Ferdinand expelled the Jews, thus making the Christians convert the synagogue into a church. The same thing happened with the Mezquita de Córdoba No Jews live in Cordoba today, which is very sad. Although it was lovely to see what once was. It was important to see how all three cultures and religions took their course in Cordoba.

A week of school went by very quickly. Sadly, I was sick so I was not able to see all the action. Although I did have a trip to PARIS this past weekend!!! WOW. What a city! It's

crazy traveling while studying abroad. When you come back, the city you are in really feels like home. When I got to Seville after traveling for far too long, I almost wanted to cry when I saw my amazing roommate and knew that dinner would be coming up shortly. I am halfway across the world but it feels like this is my home now, especially after a big trip like Paris. The pastries were to die for. I saw so many museums my brain was about to melt! I went to the Picasso Museum which was probably the highlight of the trip. 300 of his works are featured there and the museum takes you through his life and different phases of art. Thankfully, everyone in Paris was super nice, helpful, and didn't hate me like everyone said they would! All around amazing weekend and I cannot wait for Granada this upcoming weekend. A blog will be coming up shortly about our overnight school visit to the beautiful Granada! Check back next week for more information and advice on your future travels. Hasta luego!