



Beyond the Bubble



I've had a great experience during my study abroad in Seville. I've made new friendships and memories that will last a lifetime. The ICS Study Abroad program is very unique because we are a small group of students who do homestays in close proximity. Though this is great and convenient, and I enjoy frequently running into my ICS friends and classmates, sometimes you just need to step out of the ICS bubble.

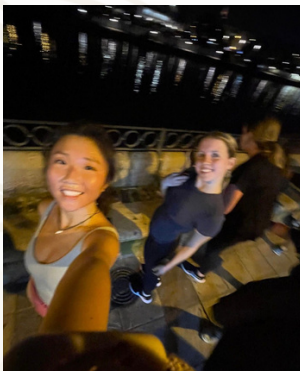


At a local language exchange



Out with the running club

Stepping outside of the ICS bubble has helped me create new friendships that I never would have been able to make otherwise, especially with the local community. I think everyone should challenge themselves not to get too comfortable during their study abroad, as it can limit the opportunity to form new and exciting friendships and memories.



Evening running club

Here are some tips on how you can step out of your comfort zone, connect with new people, and make the most of your study abroad experience:

Join a sport or club.

Towards the beginning of the program, I joined the Seville Run Club and did a few runs with them. People of all ages, nationalities, and occupations participated. This was really fun, as I got to meet and see new people not only outside of the ICS program, but from all different backgrounds, including locals.

Another one of my classmates, Victoria, joined a local soccer team. She has expressed how that experience helped her fully immerse herself in the local culture in a way that would not have been possible by just going to her classes. I highly recommend that students find local communities to join.



Enjoying our weekly Sevillanas dance classes



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Part II

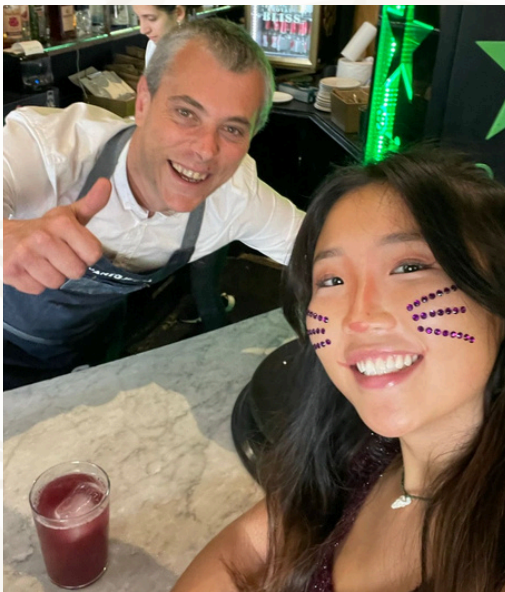


Attend activity nights or the Intercambio Language Exchange.

ICS plans many activities at night throughout the program. I want to specifically highlight the language exchange at Cafe Tarifa. The people who attend are a mixed group of all ages and nationalities. Since it is a language exchange, people are very open to talking to new people, and it is a relaxed and easy way to meet a bunch of them. I have personally made new friends and connections here from the local Seville community and recommend others attend with an open mindset.



Making new friends at the intercambio



Hanging out with the locals

Interact with the locals.

This may seem like obvious advice, but I have a funny story to go with this one. There is a restaurant around the corner from my homestay that I started going to almost daily. I slowly started talking to the staff there, and over time, even with my really limited Spanish, I made friends with them. My ICS friends also built friendships with them, and we have all hung out outside of the restaurant. This is a great example of how being friendly and open can lead to meaningful and unique friendships.

I think it is not only exciting and fun to meet new people and step outside of your comfort zone, but also extremely refreshing. By doing this, you can enhance the experiences you have within the ICS bubble too, as it will not start to feel repetitive or stale.

At the end of the day, stepping outside of your comfort zone does not just lead to unforgettable experiences. It also helps you grow in ways that make your time abroad even more meaningful and fulfilling.