Foreign Correspondence

This semester I have had the life changing opportunity to study abroad in Barcelona, Spain, and now I understand why people always talk about their semester abroad as being the time of their life.

In this short time, I made some amazing lifelong friends and shared many exhilarating experiences with them. And I have experienced many different cultures as well.

My time abroad has presented many new activities and opportunities that have pushed me out of my comfort zone, and I feel so much more prepared for challenges I will encounter in the future because of these experiences.

I am particularly glad I chose to study in Barcelona, partially because I missed the Wisconsin winter this year, but also because I experienced such an exciting and vibrant culture.

One particularly exciting moment was being able to explore the Gaudí architecture at La Sagrada Familia and Casa Batlló that first caught my eye when I was in middle school.

I have also lived as though I am a Spaniard which has consisted of spending a lot of time on public transportation, utilizing siesta time, and adjusting to a different mealtime schedule.

Eating dinner before 9:00pm is now a struggle, and I can find my way around any metro station without a problem.

When many people think of Spain, they think tapas and flamenco, but living in Catalonia presented me with so many newer cultural experiences.

Catalonians are very proud, and they speak mostly Catalan, which has been a little hard for me to learn, though they still speak some Spanish. To me, Catalan feels like a mix between Spanish and French.

Some Catalonians continue to want independence from Spain, and it is common to find independence protests in the streets and Catalan flags flown from balconies.

I could not live in Barcelona for a semester without sampling Spanish food. While it may not be my absolute favorite, I have been able to try some amazing tapas, and I learned to make them too.

At the beginning of the semester, I participated in a tapas workshop that taught me how to make the perfect “pan con tomate” (bread with tomato and olive oil). My roommates and I make it often because it is easy, and the groceries are cheap.

Traveling outside of Barcelona has also brought me new cultural experiences. Each European city has its own charm, even throughout Spain. My favorite Spanish city apart from Barcelona is Seville with its beautiful architecture.

I also saw more than just the area of Barceloneta, where tourists crowd the beaches, by visiting the beautiful nearby Mediterranean beach towns.

Though I greatly enjoyed my weekend and spring break travels to exciting places, like Norway, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands, I was always drawn back to the relaxed culture and comfortable feel that Barcelona provides.

My experiences will stick with me forever, and I encourage anyone who has the ability and urge to travel and learn about different cultures to study abroad.