

Participant: Clélia Warunee from Fribourg (Switzerland)
Duration of the stay: one semester
Place: San Agustín de Guadalix (Madrid)

Dear Reader,

Thanks to Openmind I lived the time of my life in Spain!

If you read this, it means that you're interested in going for a year (or less) to Spain.

Firstly, you need to ask yourself why you want to go there and if you're brave enough to face a time far away from home, because Spain won't be like you're imagining it. In my text I'm going to talk about a small village called San Agustín de Guadalix-30km away from Madrid.



Clelia, her family, and Kristin

A big difference between your country and Spain is that Spanish people «take their time». You need to know that work starts at 8a.m. and ends at 2p.m. Then all the shops close and all the afternoon is «free» for the students.

The dinner is served only at 10p.m, so don't panic if you get very hungry on the first day. The best would be to get used to it little by little.

Spanish people have the feeling that we have time for everything and for this it might disturb/annoy you that it isn't like at home. For example, the mail service: they work until 2.30p.m. For you it can be annoying, and you'll think that they are lazy, but this is part of the culture of Spaniards.

People that are more «energetic» with work will find it disturbing, but **on the other hand it'll do you good to take your time for a while.**

When the summer comes, it's especially pleasant with the sun and the «free» afternoons. It gives you the feeling of holidays all the time and I will miss this. **People there are very sympathetic and helpful. Some of them give you the love for the language or the country.** For example, my Spanish teacher has helped me so much! At the beginning I only had marks like 4/10. Then she supported me so much that now I'm having 9/10 in Lengua. And this only through kindness and support.

I also began archery courses and now I love it. The teacher was very patient and extremely friendly and now I bought a bow from him. Now to the sports. **It's especially easy to sign up to small courses to try something different.** Most of the time there are 10 lessons or less (that's why when you're interested in *Sevillanas*, you can go there 10 times and learn with a class that has the same level as you). **In addition, it isn't very expensive. I will miss this variety of quick available sports.**

What concerns school, **I found so some good friends! Happy!**

I like this experience very much! I improved my Spanish, I learned about a new culture and I became more mature. Yes, I think that an exchange abroad for the youth will help them become adults. You win confidence, you learn to get along with your environment, you'll become more independent and you'll be more «openminded».

To conclude I'd like to give you some advice: well, Spanish people speak very fast (at least you'll think it when you arrive), so no panic, use the «más despacio, por favor». And then at the beginning it will be extremely hard for you, **so instead of putting away your habits at one time, change them little by little and keep being openminded! Time flies! Tempus fugit so Carpe diem!**

