

BEFORE COMING



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BEFORE COMING

As the time to depart quickly approaches, you will find you have a million things to do. You have an overwhelming amount of paperwork to fill in, materials to read, and details to take care of. Your first step, before you start with anything, should be to read this handbook. It will be your guide before your time in Spain.

This is a very exciting time in your life and it will be one of the greatest experiences you will ever have!

¡Buena Suerte!

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From 8,30 am to 9 pm Monday to Thursday. Friday until **7 pm**.

SPAIN

Bullfights, flamenco, the Mediterranean, sangría, paella A term in Spain. Things would be just great if we could always see the world through Don Quixote's eyes. But just as Sancho Panza followed after his master to bring him out of the clouds and back to reality, here we are to give you a preview of things which may make up your own private culture shock, and to answer some of the many questions concerning you, whether you plan to be in Valencia for a week, a month or a year.

VALENCIA, A PERFECT SETTING

Valencia is situated in the heart of the Spanish Levant (east coast). It is a welcoming cosmopolitan city, which historically has been a place where different civilizations have converged and today continues to be a link between the north of Europe and the Mediterranean countries, via its efficient communication network.

As the third Spanish city with a population of 800,000, Valencia has a modern communication network, which makes the city easily accessible by land, sea and air.

The number of European flights has greatly increased over the last few years, thanks to Manises International Airport. The airport, which was built recently, is only 8 kms. from the city and links Valencia to the main Spanish and European cities.

A STEP BACK THROUGH HISTORY

The city of Valencia, capital of the Valencian Community, is located on the shore of the Mediterranean sea. It has a population of 800,000 inhabitants, 1,500,000 including the metropolitan area.

Founded in 137 BC, Valencia has always been a mixture of different cultures; this is reflected in numerous monuments of Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque art. The river Turia flows through Valencia. For the last 20 years, the old river-bed of the Turia has been dry, but it has now been converted into a park. Valencia still maintains its historical center, where most of its government premises can be found, while more modern buildings have been constructed nearer the sea. The maritime districts, such as Cabanyal or Nazaret, which in earlier times were independent villages, are by the sea, next to the beaches of "La Malvarrosa" or "Las Arenas", at present crossed by a new and pleasant avenue. The beaches are visited from April to October, thanks to the Mediterranean climate of warm temperatures and infrequent rain.

MUSEUMS & MONUMENTS

Valencia has many excellent museums. The San Pio Fine Art Museum is considered second only in Spain to the Prado; the Beneficiencia Cultural Centre houses the Prehistoric Museum, the Museum of Ethnology and the Sala Parpallo where touring exhibitions of contemporary art can be seen; the Aim of the Valencian Institute of Modern Art (IVAM) is to exhibit and interpret contemporary art; the City Museum houses archeological collections from pre-Roman times, from the founding of the city and from the Christian era; the Almudín, a Gothic building built over a grain warehouse, is now used for itinerant exhibitions; and the Fallero Museum, the only one in the world, gives the tourist a broad insight to our most important festival. Also in Valencia, there are over 200 art galleries-.

The city, with its 800,000 inhabitants, is a comfortable size. It has an old town when every stone emanates the noble past of a city that was the economic and cultural capital of the Mediterranean during the 14th and 15th centuries.

THE CLIMATE IN VALENCIA

A bright sky, pleasant sun and warm breezes... there are few places in the world which enjoy such an excellent climate as Valencia. A two-month summer, just a few hours of cold in the winter and a long spring, give the Valencian people an uninhibited, extroverted nature and a bustling love of life in the streets on the terraces and in open air spaces.

Temperatures in Valencia December through February, are usually in low 40's. (? less than 10 degrees Celsius) Fall and spring are 50's (10 degrees Celsius) through high 70's (25 degrees Celsius), and are typically the rainiest times. June through September are high 70's (26 degrees Celsius) through high 90's (30 degrees Celsius). The mornings and evenings tend to be a lot cooler than around midday. Also, Valencia is a coastal city, and the humidity seems to deny what the thermometer says, intensifying heat and cold. Good beach weather suitable for bathing suits and swimming lasts from May/June through the last half of October.

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
10°C	11°C	13°C	15°C	18°C	22°C	25°C	25°C	23°C	18°C	13°C	11°C
50°F	52°F	55°F	59°F	64°F	75°F	77°F	77°F	73°F	64°F	55°F	52°F

OTHER RESOURCES

Here are some additional resources that seem worth a look. Happy surfing!

<http://www.24-7valencia.com> .The essential guide to what's on, What's new and what's great in Valencia. All information in English!. Excellent for restaurants, pubs and nightlife.

<http://www.turisvalencia.es> .This is the official Web Page. It is very well presented; there you will find up-to-date information about the most outstanding and exceptional events and news from the local area. It is a good source of cultural and tourist information.

<http://www.red2000.com/spain/valencia/1valenc.html> .Another city guide that, although it hasn't been kept up to date very well, offers a lot of cultural information - history, gastronomy, etc. - and it is abundant with photographs of monuments, museums, places to visit in the surrounding area, etc. It also has a complete English version.

www.comunidad-valenciana.com . This, the site of the Comunidad-wideofficial tourism body, is packed with information, both permanent and ephemeral.

www.valenciaterraimar.org: This is another official site, covering the province of Valencia. Not as rich as the above one, it nevertheless harbours lots of useful information.

Books. There are many, many books on Spain. Some of them are;

Lonely Planet Spain, John Noble (Editor), Discovering Spain: An Uncommon Guide (2nd Edition), Penelope Casas, Iberia, James A. Michener, The Cambridge Companion to Modern Spanish Culture, David T. Gies (Editor), Culture Shock: Spain (Culture Shock Series), Marie Louise Graff, The New Spaniards (Penguin Politics and Current Affairs), John Spaniards Hooper, Spain: The Root and the Flower: An Interpretation of Spain and the Spanish People, John A. Crow.

PASSPORTS & VISAS

EU members: You do not need a VISA to entry in Spain just your passport or ID. Passports are issued at any office of the Passport Agency. Proof of citizenship (birth certificate, naturalization certificate or previous passport), two identical photographs (2"x 2) and proof of your identity, such as a current driver's license with your signature and photograph are usually required.

Non EU members: All travelers between countries must have a passport. The passport is your official identification as a citizen of your country. If you do not have a passport, inquire at your main post office or courthouse for requirements on how to obtain one.

Carry with you (separate from your passport) two extra passport pictures, passport number, date and place issued, and a certified (not photocopied) copy (not the original) of your birth certificate or an expired passport. If your passport is lost, report to local police; get written confirmation of the policereport and, take the above documents to the nearest Consulate and apply for a new passport.

Lost Passport

Losing a passport while you are in Spain is not the end-of-the-world, but it will seem like it, since the procedures for being issued another are very complicated and often extremely time-consuming. If you already have a passport AND IT WILL EXPIRE BEFORE YOU COMPLETE YOUR TIME IN SPAIN, you should apply for a new passport before you depart from your country. Your current passport usually suffices for identification of your birth and citizenship, but new photos and the fee are of course required.

It is important to remember that your passport is your most important legal document while traveling overseas. Make several copies of your passport ID page and other travel documents and leave one copy with a relative at home and bring two copies along with you, keeping them in separate places. Once you arrive in Valencia, you may want to pack your passport in a safe place and carry one of the copies along with you.

DO NOT DELAY APPLYING FOR A PASSPORT. THE PROCESS TAKES A MINIMUM OF TWO TO FOUR WEEKS, EVEN LONGER IN THE BUSY SEASON. DO IT NOW.

In an emergency, you may be able to get a passport within days, directly from a Passport Office (call the Government information operator for a location nearest you), or through a passport service. Visa and passport expediting agencies charge a fee.

VISAS FOR SPAIN

- Citizens from the European Union do not need a Visa and can enter Spain with a valid Passport or ID.
- Citizens from Canada, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland and the USA, among others do not need a Visa if they plan to study and stay in Spain less than 90 days. Check with the nearest Spanish Embassy or Consulate. If citizens from these countries wish to study for more than 90 days, they need a "Visado de Estudios". The Student Visa must be obtained prior to departure from their country at the Spanish Embassy or Consulate.
- If you need a Visa in order to study in Spain we strongly recommend that you apply early in advance, as you may need several weeks to complete the Visa application procedure.



You may apply for visa through the Spanish consulate or embassy. It is an endorsement made in your passport indicating that the intended purpose of your visit is acceptable to the foreign government. If you plan to do ANY travel beyond Spain, you must check the visa requirements for all the countries you plan to visit by contacting the nearest consulate for that country.

• **IMPORTANT:** Before we can send you the confirmation letter of the required course needed for the Visa application, a deposit of 500 Euros is required (deducted from final invoice). In the event the application for a Visa is refused by the Spanish Embassy or Consulate, we will refund the deposit and any other paid fees after the deduction of an administrative charge of 50 Euros/US Dollars, after receiving the refusal letter from the Spanish Embassy or Consulate.

CURRENCY

The Spanish currency used to be the peseta. Today, EU have a common currency: the Euro (1 Euro = 166.386 pts.) From the 1st January 2002 existing national currencies in these countries have disappeared and all transactions are made in Euros. Foreign currency can be exchanged for Euros at all banks –open Monday to Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. (except in summer, from June to September, when they close on Saturdays)– as well as at Exchange Bureaux in the main cities.

MONEY MANAGEMENT

It is difficult to estimate how much spending money you will need in Spain as everyone lives differently. It depends if you eat all your meals at home or at residence, you may sometimes eat out, and even if you do not, you will have some other personal expenses all participants encounter. You might spend as much as 450 € to 550 € per month eating out, going out, and traveling if you are not careful with your money. You are likely to spend at least 400 € per month if you travel at all. Remember the cost of living in Spain and travel to other parts of Europe is high. Other students in Spain have said that they changed money every few weeks in amounts ranging from 200 € to 500 €. They carried from 50 € to 80 € on them and extra money in travelers' checks when out of town.

There are various ways to finance your stay in Spain, all of which are listed here. **It is not a good idea to bring much money in cash.** The bank rate exchange for foreign currency is often worse for cash than for traveler's checks; it is also much more dangerous to travel with cash. Cash is not insured, so if you lose it, it is gone. Traveler's checks, however, can be replaced.

The easiest way is to bring all the money you will need with you in traveler's checks. The checks can be cashed and the money exchanged into Euros a little at a time. You may also be able to use the local ATM machines. Otherwise, if you cannot bring all the money you will need with you, you may have to open a bank account or use credit cards to obtain cash, but these methods are likely to be more difficult or expensive.

If you plan to use an ATM card, find out if you can use your current card in Spain, because you may need a different card and/or a different PIN. Start the process of getting a usable ATM card by asking your own bank about their services in Spain. If you bank at a savings bank rather than a commercial bank, you will probably need to open a new account. AIP recommends that you consult the central office of any major bank where you have an account or your credit card issuer if you intend to carry

such cards as , Visa, MasterCard, American Express, etc.

Traveler's checks

When you come to Spain it is best to bring your money in Traveler's Check, which can be changed into Euros at any bank in the city. Bear in mind that if you were to lose your traveler's checks they could be reissued from your country, as long as you report the loss and give the serial number of the checks.

You may need a passport in order to cash traveler's checks abroad.

Keep two records of your travelers checks numbers. Give one to a relative at home, and keep the other one separate from the checks. Keep accurate records of what travelers checks you cash and where.

Credit Cards

VISA and MasterCard are the most widely accepted credit cards. If you go shopping it is always better to pay by credit card, above all because that way you do not need to carry much cash on you, which avoids unnecessary loss or theft.

Leave other credit cards not useful to you abroad at home.

Keep all receipts of purchases, credit card and ATM transactions in a safe place.

To report loss or theft of credit cards: VISA/MasterCard: 91 519 6000 or 91 519 21 00 (24 h.), AMEX: 91 572 0303 or 91 572 03 02 (12am.).

For long stay students - More than 4 months -

Most students wait until arrival in Spain to establish a bank account, we will tell you how to do this. This lets you become acquainted with the various banks and the services and with the different types of bank accounts and to find the branch office closest to where you will be during banking hours. Many banks have their own bank cards, allowing you to make withdrawals from their ATM's. While there are advantages to having your own foreign bank account, it is also possible to use VISA or MASTERCARD at all banks, to get cash in euros, drawing on money you or your parents have deposited. If you have a credit card or bank card that is on e.g., the CIRRUS network, you should be able to withdraw money from most bank machines in Europe.

INSURANCE COVERAGE

.- Health insurance: It is mandatory to have a health insurance that covers you during your stay in Spain. You must contact your health insurance company to know what paperwork will be required for you to use while in Spain (detailed bills, diagnoses and treatments clearly spelled out in case of a visit to Hospital occurs).

European Union citizens are covered through the state insurance fund but it is necessary obtain all documents before leaving your country (Form E111)..

Non EU citizens should have a private health insurance. If not **AIP** can facilitate a private insurance, valid for students at all ages, which covers general and major medical expenses, medical evacuation, repatriation, 24 h. accident cover, civil responsibility cover, death and invalidity benefit, etc.

Note: You are not covered for damage or loss caused by you to household effects in your host family's home. You will be directly responsible to the family for reimbursement or replacement of said items, including the cost of changing locks as a result of losing house keys through negligence or theft.

THE STUDENT LIFE

The **AIP Language Institute** is located near the center of Valencia (1,5 km.) and it is within walking distance (10 min.) to our 2 University campuses in Valencia, which offers you the opportunity of living in the university environment.

Apart from the many activities scheduled by AIP, we will keep you informed about local entertainment, festivals, etc., and we'll try to keep up a system of language partners whereby interested Spanish students would be able to give you extra insights to university life or exchange Spanish for English conversation. Please understand, though, that this is strictly on a volunteer basis on behalf of Spanish as well as foreign students. The number of students available for this will vary continuously.

You will have lectures with high-skilled professors who are experienced in dealing with foreign students. You will probably find the system different. You will be getting a syllabus of class lectures for each course you take and a suggested bibliography, but you must keep in mind that your professors will expect that you to do a lot of studying on your own. Spanish professors do not usually give day-to-day or even week-to-week reading assignments. You are expected to pace yourself. It can be easy to fall into the misconception that academics here are not demanding. But if you do that, your exams could end up worse than expected.

YOUR TRAVEL PLANS DURING SPAIN

If you plan to travel to other parts of Europe, you should get an international student I.D. card, either in your country or in Spain.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT IDENTITY CARD (ISIC)

There are a number of special privileges and discounts available to students throughout the world, including such things as reduced or free admission to museums, theatres, concerts, and cultural as well as historical sites. To qualify for them you have to be able to confirm your student status. The ISIC does this, wherever you go.

It is the most widely recognized confirmation of your student status. Other ISIC benefits include low airfares, and other discounts while travelling.

EURO<26

The EURO<26 youth card is available to all young people aged under 26. You don't have to be a European citizen to obtain it. The card is valid for one year and can be renewed each year until you reach the age of 26. The card is issued in 37 European countries. Wherever the card is issued, it carries the EURO<26 logo, which is used to mark the places offering advantages and discounts. More information: www.euro26.org/

EURAIL PASS

A railpass is a must-have for anyone planning to travel to more than one country while in Europe. For those who will be under the age of 26 on their first day of travel, the Eurail Youth Passes or Eurail Youth Flexipass are the best bet. They offer travel either unlimited or semi-limited second-class travel on the national railways of 17 European countries. Do not be frightened by 'second-class travel'. Most second-class sections are very comfortable and provide the perfect atmosphere to meeting other travelling students from all over the world.

PART II - USEFUL INFORMATION

**Can I feel safe in Valencia?
What kind of clothes should I take with me to Valencia?
Help! How to pack all my stuff?
Pre-departure checklist by Bill Hoffa
Anticipate and Avoid Travel Stress**

CAN I FEEL SAFE IN VALENCIA?

According to Interpol figures, Spain have a high rates of non-violent crimes (pick pocketing, general theft, snatch & run, etc.). If you anticipate problems (without becoming paranoid!), you can plan for personal safety. Here are some general ideas we've accumulated over the years.

When travelling carry your true essential items with you, on your person: passport, tickets, most traveller's checks, credit cards, and cash (distribute some for safekeeping). Preferably you should carry these items under your clothes in a money belt, document pouch, or inside jacket pocket.

When you're out, always be aware of your environs and keep an eye on your possessions. If you put something down, put it between you and a wall and maintain contact with it (foot on top or against it).

Thieves often work crowd scenes like bus stations, outdoor events, phone lines, airports, etc. They thrive on the confusion inherent in such places and target those who look vulnerable.

Don't keep money or valuables in your back hip pocket or a dangling handbag. Wrapping rubber bands around a wallet makes it more difficult for a pickpocket to remove it. If you carry a handbag or pouch, place the strap over your head as well as your shoulder and then put your jacket or sweater on/over the bag. A fanny pack strapped around your waist under your clothes is great for keeping valuables.

Travelling Solo

Travelling solo is like taking a voyage into you. You will either thoroughly enjoy it, learn much about yourself, and thrive on your discoveries, or you will want to back out quickly.

Participating in this course provides you with interaction with the locals, witnessing day-to-day life in Spain, and opportunities to learn the language. When you travel with someone, you'll have a tendency to slip back into your old patterns and speak in your own language.

Common sense is the key to success for the solo traveller. "The less you appear to be an out-of-towner, the better off you'll be."

WHAT KINDS OF CLOTHES SHOULD I TAKE WITH ME TO VALENCIA?

Wearing layers that you can add or remove as the need arises is the wisest way to plan your wardrobe for Valencia. During the day you will find the sun nice and warm outside, and the house cool inside. It is a great system in the summer and something to come to terms with during the rest of the year, since few homes have central heating.

Lightweight clothes for summer-month stay. But remember to include a sweater or two, or a lightweight jacket for evenings, an unexpected cold spell, and for transatlantic plane travel.

Fall and Spring semester students should include lightweight things and warm winter clothes. From November to March, warm winter clothes and p.j.'s, robe and thick-soled slippers are all in order. Most apartments have ceramic or stone tile floors, and most are heated either by gas or electrical space heating units, which people turn off at night to sleep. Even centrally heated apartments turn the heat off for a good 12 hours a day. All this keeps winter indoor temperatures quite low. Be prepared to wear sweaters around the house.

Duck shoes and other lightweight rain protection are a good idea for fall and spring. And if you plan to travel, remember that Valencia will be one of the warmest places you'll find in Spain and Europe during the winter.

The clothing question confuses many students. Casual wear is usual. Slacks, skirts, bermudas, shirts, T-shirts, jeans and dresses are fine. Clothes that can be dressed up with accessories are good. You will probably do a lot of walking, so comfortable shoes are important. Do not forget your bathing suit and beach towel of course, you will find high-quality, ready-to-wear and custom-made clothes and footwear of all kinds in Spanish stores.

Pack light is the key for no matter what time of year you will be here. At the risk of getting sick and tired of wearing the same clothes all the time, you will appreciate having kept things to a minimum whenever you have to cart those suitcases around. Many people end up accumulating a lot of things during their stay here, and literally have to pay the consequences in overweight when it comes time to go home. Summer term students should get along on a supply of clothes for a week to 10 days. Fall students should pack clothes for a week to 10 days in the summer-early fall and a week in the winter. Spring semester students will need more warm winter clothes than lightweight clothes; although some warm weather clothes should be included. It starts getting warmer around the middle of March.

Do not bring a lot of gold jewellery. Do bring a backpack. Bring a Walkman or radio if you enjoy listening to music. If you plan to bring any small appliances, bring dual voltage (110/220V AC, 50/60Hz). Plug adaptors and converters can be bought inexpensively once in Valencia. Any appliance that has 60Hz only, will not work properly in Europe, e.g. clock radios.

Bring along a supply of any medication you might need regularly. Things like aspirin, Tylenol, stomach and cold medicines, and contact lens solutions can be bought over the counter at any pharmacy here. Remember to pack your dictionary.

HELP! HOW TO PACK ALL MY STAFF?

Planning Your Wardrobe

The age old advice to the packing dilemma is as follows: Take the lightest suitcase you can find, fill it with the least amount of clothing that your courage will allow, close your eyes and remove half of what you have packed and then rapidly depart.

Your freedom of movement and peace of mind will depend to a great extent on what and how much you take. **The inexperienced traveller is unable to move without the aid of taxi drivers, porters, and passers-by.** Seasoned travellers carry one light suitcase and enjoy their travels to the hilt. Do not spend time packing, unpacking, choosing, searching, wrapping, washing, ironing until you are in a state of frustrated exhaustion.

Most lodging rooms are small, with a 12" closet and small two-drawer dressers. Problems increase as you buy souvenirs, gifts, and more clothing abroad that may better fit the climate and ambience. If you followed the advice above and your elimination technique has been too thorough you can always make inexpensive purchases here to remedy your errors.

Suggestions on How to Pack

- Check the zippers, buttons, seams etc., of all the clothes you are going to pack. Make sure they are in good repair.
- Put plastic garbage bags on the bottom of the suitcase and between different layers to reduce wrinkling. They're also great organizers while abroad.
- Stuff socks into your shoes and put the shoes in a plastic or cloth bag.
- Roll up undergarments and fit them into the corners of the suitcase.
- Place the heaviest things on the bottom of your bag such as shoes, belts and books. Follow that with jeans, sweaters, heavy skirts, sweatshirts, etc. Next add light but bulkier items like dresses, jackets, light skirts, sport shirts, and blouses.
- Follow with wrinkle-prone, light items.
- Do a trial pack. Weigh your suitcase(s). If it's heavy now, it will feel three times heavier by the end of a long journey. Streamline before you go.

A space saving idea from backpackers is to roll your clothes into neat cylinders with layers of plastic or tissue paper in between. This works well in suitcases, since you will end up with a lot of tight rolls that fit together well. If you roll several items, or outfits together, you will end up with less wrinkles.

Suggestions & Tips

- Beach towel
- Calculator (for calculating conversion rates)
- Cold remedy
- Flannel night gown/pyjamas
- Some money in cash for emergencies
- Notebooks and pens
- Pocket knife w/opener & screwdriver
- Rain gear and/or umbrella
- Rubber shoes for the shower, beach
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Suntan/Sun burn relief lotion

Vitamins
Warm sweater
Document case or belt (to go inside your clothing) for passport, money, air tickets, extra passport photos, emergency addresses, etc.
Small notebook (for recording daily events, expenses, names)
Currency guide, list of sizes relatives wears, and size conversion chart.
Travel alarm clock
Camera
Sunglasses, prescription for your corrective lenses, extra eyeglasses if you wear them, extra contact lens solution, etc.
Small towel and washcloth,
Guidebook (look over the large stock and take along your favourite)
Bilingual dictionary and possibly a 501 verb wheel or favoured grammar text
Avoid electrical appliances such as razors, hair dryers, and curling irons. They're heavy and tend to be temperamental when in use.
Women, wear minimal make-up and plan on a simple, easy to care for hairstyle.
A small gift for your host family

PRE-DEPARTURE CHECK LIST By BILL HOFFA

To all governments, your national 'identity' is of major importance. If any such authority should have questions about who you are or where you come from, you must be able to answer them. What follows is a guide to how to acquire and secure the essential verification documents needed for trouble-free travel and return.

Before departure you should have done ALL the following:

A. ADMINISTRATIVE THINGS:

-Copy down all names, phone numbers, postal and e-mail addresses of people with which you MIGHT need to have contact during your time away.

B. PROGRAM PREPARATION THINGS:

- Apply for your passport. If you already have a passport, make sure that it is valid well past the date of your anticipated return; if it is not, renew it ASAP.
- Make flight arrangements.
- Collect documents required for your visa.
- Apply for and obtain the visa.
- Collect any other entry documents you are required to take with you (e.g. entry documents, immunization records, etc.)
- Pay all required fees to AIP. Discuss any doubts with your local agent.

C. LOGISTICAL AND ECONOMIC THINGS:

- Plan a budget. Bring an emergency fund (minimum: 250 €)
- Arrange with your bank to have a minimum of 100 € to bring with you.
- Make sure you have the credit cards, bank cards, telephone cards, etc, which you are planning to use.
- Arrange for 'power of attorney' for the person handling your financial affairs in your absence (if not parent or guardian).
- Make sure you understand how your Health Insurance plan covers you, actually works.
- Arrange for absentee voting in any election which will occur before you return (where you are registered to vote).

- Bring all medication, prescriptions, saline solutions, extra glasses or contacts, etc

ANTICIPATE AND AVOID TRAVEL STRESS

The Partnership for Improved Air Travel, a consortium of frequent flyers and travel suppliers, has some suggestions to make travel more tolerable. In general, plan ahead and plan for the worst possible scenario. Have "what if" alternatives thought out in advance. Verify and re-verify everything. Here are some specific ideas for you to consider:

BEFORE YOU TRAVEL

At least 72 hours prior to departure, call the airline(s) to reconfirm your flight(s), and information given you as it pertains to items 1-4 above. Some airlines will cancel your space if you do not reconfirm. Ask if there have been any flight or schedule changes.

- Know your flight options. Assume the worst will happen to your schedule, so delays or cancellations won't be so stressful.

- Budgetary... Plan some extra cash or credit line just in case the worst happens, i.e. needing an airline ticket, or a night or two in a hotel.

- Bring along something to do... A favourite book, cassette player with headphones and tapes, travel diary, foreign destination guide books.

- Pack lightly and smartly... Pack special medicines, a change of underwear and socks in your carry-on just in case your luggage does not arrive with you. If you have checked luggage, bring along a folding luggage carrier on wheels. Know your ground options... Best laid plans for ground transportation can get all fouled up when planes are late or diverted.

- **Send a fax or write an email to AIP office indicating what are your plans and the exact time and place where you arrives in Valencia. Wait for the confirmation. You have to be sure we have received the notification. Do not wait until last minute. If you change your plans, inform us with enough time. If it is necessary call us to note that everything is right. Please, take note of this 2 emergency phone numbers: +34 96 339 15 66 or +34 687 58 58 09. Take it with you, it will allow you to contact us 24 h. once you are in Spain.**

The last three notes

- . - Before you leave for Spain, know where you are going. Get out a map and your old intermediate level culture book and read about Spain and it's regions. Be able to show interest in and a minimal understanding of your new host country.

- . - Carry with you (separate from your passport) two extra passport pictures, passport number, date and place issued, and a certified (not photocopied) copy (not the original) of your birth certificate or an expired passport. If your passport is lost, report to local police; get written confirmation of the police report and, take the above documents to the nearest Consulate and apply for a new passport.

PART III - ACCOMMODATION

The host family
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THE HOST FAMILY

In AIP staff opinion, the best way to complement your studies of the language is to live with a Spanish family. With them you will learn more about our country and all those expressions which you usually learn in an academic environment, but which are very attractive and tell you a lot about our way of thinking and our culture.

All the host families have already worked with us and we have complete faith in them. The criteria of our thorough selection process was, apart from location (in the urban centre of Valencia and with easy access to the place of study) that the house should be clean and well equipped, but above all the hospitality of the members of the family. We have chosen open-minded people, who have a lot of experience dealing with students from all over the world and who are prepared to adapt to anything. They will respect you and your things as if you were another member of the family. In order to return this respect you should bear in mind certain customs and details which they will take as the first step towards a good friendship.

A concern of many students is the fear that living with a family means losing independence. You will find it is hard to feel independent when you need advice on the simplest things: how to get on a bus, turn on hot water, mail a letter... and it is hard for a host family to know how much "help" you want or need. Over time, your needs will also change. Try to be patient as your relationship develops.

Although you will need to spend time with the family to form a successful relationship, you will find ample time to go out and to travel on weekends. All families realize you are mature students and treat you as adults and expect you to act like independent adults. In general, students are well satisfied with the amount of liberty they have in a host family. You will have a key and can come and go as you please; always be courteous as you come and go. Mealtimes are important; meals are usually when the family gathers to discuss their day and touch base. This is a time to get to know your family and also to learn about Spanish culture and current events. Your host family has been told that mealtimes will be established according to the family's own preferences, so you have to show up on time. Be sure you give ample notice for meals missed or travel plans.

BASIC CONDITIONS OF THE HOUSE

- Full or half board (dinner and breakfast) all week with three meals a day (breakfast, lunch, dinner).
- Daily shower with hot water
- Heating in the bedroom during the winter
- Two local telephone calls a day of up to five minutes each

- A set of keys to the house
- Personal laundry
- Use of house linen (towels and bed linen)

In the event that there should be a clear lack of services rendered by the host family, the student affected will be able to rescind his/her housing contract without paying indemnity.

Diet restrictions

Obviously, if you have allergies or religious reasons for not eating specific foods, you must make those things known in advance. Ensure that you mention them in the housing questionnaire you will complete before family placements are determined. Students who are vegetarians might have a problem, but as time goes by this is less of an issue. Be specific on your housing form and reiterate your needs once you get settled in with your family. Some families will be very receptive and will be able to come up with a variety of tasty vegetarian meals; others will not. Be patient and help them learn by preparing meals with them. All students should try to get as involved as possible in mealtime matters. This could mean that once in a while you will get to fix your favourite meal for your family. It helps you share your own culture, and you get to eat something you know you like!

Gifts. To take gifts from home and suggest small, light, generic items such as hometown candy, specialty food or recipes, unusual regional spices, anything imprinted with an attractive local or regional emblem or team (lighters, t-shirts, cards, etc.), pictures of hometown, area or family/friends.

GENERAL COMMENT ON HOMESTAYS

What is a home? It may be an apartment. The occupants may be a family with children, a retired person living alone, or a young professional with a room to let. Some people are always busy; out and about others seem to always be home. Most homes have 1 bedroom available (a few have 2 or 3) and accept foreign students regularly.

You will probably not be within walking distance to the school; but public transportation is very easy to use. The family should provide you with a set of keys, and let you come and go as you wish. Always remember to let them know where you'll be and when you'll return - simple courtesy will make you stay that much more pleasant.

Your room will have a table or desk for study and adequate storage space for your belongings. You will notice that most Spanish homes are kept immaculately clean. You are expected to keep your own room neat. Even normally messy people must be neat in Spain. Keep your things picked up. If you do not keep things really neat, your señora will probably "organize" your things one day while you are out. She is not trying to invade your privacy; in her mind, it's just part of her job as your señora.

Who screens the homes? The AIP coordinator selects homes. Their primary concern is safe, reliable housing. All homes are paid. However, compensation is invariably low in reference to hotels and the cost of living in Spain.

What are minimum expectations? Expect a safe, courteous environment with the stated number of meals daily and sheets changed weekly. Basic services should function (lights, shower, toilet etc.) within capabilities of local utilities. If any of these basics are questionable, or if you are made to feel uncomfortable in the home, speak with the housing coordinator to resolve the problem in a rational way.



What shouldn't I expect? Don't expect a private bathroom, air conditioning, central heating, pool, wall-to-wall carpeting, chauffeuring, bilingual assistance, large rooms, or breakfast in bed. A typical "home" may be 2-3 bedrooms, one bathroom, a living and dining room, and kitchen. Closets and dressers tend to be smaller. Most visitors find lodging adequate but not luxurious.

LIVING IN A RESIDENCE

The experience of living in a relaxed and trusting atmosphere as part of a Spanish family is as important for your studies. We offer the students the choice to live in a student's residence too, but we strongly believe that living as part of a Spanish family is the most direct way of becoming fully integrated into the culture and customs of Spain.

It's a mixed university residence with all the amenities and comforts of a modern residence; an ample living room with a TV, laundry room, Internet access, air conditioning, rooms with telephones and en-suite bathrooms. You stay in single or double rooms with breakfast, half board or full board.

Under a dynamic and youthful management, this residence has a comfortable, friendly environment with different atmospheres suitable for leisure and study. There is the possibility that the residence may be full from October to June, so to avoid this we advise that you register in enough advance.

SHARED APARTMENTS

You share an apartment usually with about 3-4 course participants of different nationalities. You share the kitchen, dining room, bathroom and toilet. Most apartments have 2 bathrooms, 2 toilets, a washing machine and TV. Normally bed linen is not provided, we recommend you to take one with you. With this kind of accommodation you are completely independent, and in addition, this is usually the cheapest alternative.

Students are expected to pay small expenses in the apartment such as soap, cleaning material, etc.

We will facilitate you a telephone number of the person in charge of the keys. You should contact this person some days before arrival to tell him/her approx. time for arrival. Students are supposed to arrive on Sunday afternoon, before 11:00 pm.

Distance from student rooms to School can be very different, from 10 minutes walking to 40 minutes by public transportation. All student rooms have a bus or subway stop nearby. Distance to the school will not be a reason to change the original address you received. We advise long-term students to book the first four weeks and, once in Spain, extend the renting of the student room. There are double rooms available on request for two people coming together.

Apartment price include all expenses (gas, electricity and water). A deposit of 100 Euros per person is required in advanced and a minimum stay of 2 weeks.

Notes:

- 1 Accommodation for relatives or friends of students plus 15 %.
- 2 Search of a hotel or hostel under participant require (not available in our price list).
- 3 Apartments, hotels and student rooms are paid for the booked period and the School will not be held responsible for any refunds due to cancellation or change of accommodation.

- 4 There will be a daily extra charge for early arrivals or late departures.
- 5 **Arrival information is required for all students, whether or not an airport transfer is required. This is necessary to ensure that someone will be at home to greet the student when he or she arrives. Students must call, e-mail or fax at least one week in advance to give us the information.**

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

"Piropos", "bonobuses", "estancos", using the metric system, city living, smokers everywhere, and loads of other little things will strike you as cute, funny, maddening, or maybe downright incomprehensible while you're here. Even if you've lived in a foreign country before, you can expect to experience some degree of culture shock. It's a normal feeling when moving into a new situation.

Useful advises

The most important thing to remember when studying abroad is to try to assimilate and integrate into the culture, which can be very difficult but has gratifying rewards. The whole point of studying abroad is to experience another culture, and in this endeavor, a little effort can go a long way.

You should try to integrate as much as possible into the culture. It's very easy to separate yourself from the culture, particularly when there is a language barrier. It's good to move beyond these barriers, to really experience the customs of the natives.

This is not always easy. Complete immersion can be a lonely process. You have to be assertive in order to get the most out of the experience.

It would be comforting for us to say that these several pages tell you just what you'll experience while in Spain. There are so many personal twists to the experience of studying abroad, that by the end of your stay, you'll probably be able to give us even more suggestions to improve this ever-growing publication.

In the meantime, remember that if you have any questions to ask, no matter how insignificant you feel they are, please ask us.