

A wide-angle, eye-level shot of a bustling city square in Madrid, Spain. The scene is filled with people walking and talking. In the background, there are several multi-story buildings with balconies. A prominent white building with a pedimented entrance is visible in the center. A red diamond-shaped sign with a white 'M' is mounted on a pole in the middle ground. A construction crane is visible behind the white building. The sky is clear and blue. The overall atmosphere is bright and lively.

ONE FOR ONE SPAIN EXCHANGE

August 26th 2018 – January 3rd 2019

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SCHOOL LIFE

The school in Spain is very different than the school in Canada. It is much stricter than Canadian school and is heavily focused on exams and textbook work. Sports teams and clubs are not provided by the school so students need to look within the community if they want to join extracurriculars. The teacher student relationship is also very different. Students call their teachers by their first names, making it more friendly but also sometimes leading to a lack of respect. My peers were very welcoming and would always help translate for me when needed, and many of the teachers were nice as well. Some of my teachers even had little parties for me during my last week. The 2 other exchange students and I were the first exchange students that El Pintor Antonio Lopez has had, so they weren't very prepared for non-Spanish speakers at the beginning, but the situation got a little bit better with time. Despite not being able to understand the classes in Spanish, going to school in Spain was a great opportunity to see the difference in studies and also to appreciate Canadian school.



My history teacher



My history class

VIDA ESCOLAR

- La educación en España es muy diferente a la Canadiense, se centra más en exámenes y el aprendizaje lectivo con libros de texto. El instituto es mucho más estricto y no hay muchas actividades extraescolares.
- La relación con los profesores también es muy diferente ya que se dirigen a ellos por su nombre en vez de su apellido.
- Mis compañeros y profesores fueron muy acogedores. Me ayudaron a traducir todo aquello que no entendía e incluso me hicieron una fiesta de despedida al final de mi estancia.
- En mi instituto Pintor Antonio Lopez solo había otro estudiante internacional aparte de mí. Al ser esta la primera vez que el instituto acogía estudiantes de intercambio había menos facilidades para nosotros.



Regalos de mis compañeros de clase



SCHOOL LIFE

I lived in Colmenar Viejo which is a bit of a commute to the school depending on traffic. I would drive with my host mom and neighbors in the morning, and after school I would wait an hour in the local library for my neighbors to be done school and go home with them. I could've taken the bus because there are many roundabouts in Spain so I would get motion sick.



SCHOOL TIMETABLE

School starts at 8:20 and finishes at 2:15 or 3:15 depending on if you are French or English bilingual. If you are late getting to school then you have to go to “detention” in the library and you miss your first class. I didn’t like this because I was 2 minutes late one day and had to miss my entire first class. There are more but shorter classes each day. I usually had six classes lasting 55 minutes, except for Thursdays where I had seven. The school day felt longer because of all the classes but in reality it was about the same length.

Hora Time Hour	Lunes Monday Lundi	Martes Tuesday Mardi	Miércoles Wednesday Mercredi	Jueves Thursday Juevi	Viernes Friday Vendredi
8:20-8:45	Musica	Tutoring	Inglés	Inglés	Inglés
8:45-10:10	Lengua (Spanish)	Francés	Lengua	Mates	Francés
10:10-11:05	Inglés	Inglés	Física	E.F.	Valores
11:05-11:30	Recreo	Recreo	Recreo	Recreo	Recreo
11:30-12:25	Biología	Musica	Geografía	Lengua	Lengua
12:25-13:20 (1)	Mates	Geografía	Mates	Biología	Física
13:20-14:15 (1) (2)	Historia	E.F. (P.E.)	Biología	Valores	Mates
14:15-15:20 (2) (3)				Física	20?



THE SCHOOL BUILDING

In Spain I attended “Pintor Antonio Lopez” bilingual institute in Tres Cantos, Madrid. The School has 3 stories and is fenced all around so you can’t leave without permission. This is good because it is harder to skip classes, but you also feel kind of trapped. There is a cafeteria where you can buy sandwiches, candy and many other things on break. One piece of gum is only 5 cents. Each classroom is the same and for the most part the teachers change classes and the students stay in their class!

VIDA ESCOLAR

Durante mi estancia estuve viviendo en Colmenar Viejo, un pueblo que esta al lado de Tres Cantos (donde iba al instituto), para llegar ahí mi madre de acogida me levaba en coche y para volver a casa esperaba en la biblioteca a que mis vecinos me llevaran a casa

El instituto empieza a las 8:20 y acaba a las 2:30 o 3:30 dependiendo del día.

Las clases duran 55 mins

El instituto esta construido a lo alto y no a lo largo, es decir, tenía 3 pisos. Hay una cafetería donde se puede comprar comida, !se pueden comprar regalices por solo 5cts!

Los estudiantes tienen todas sus clases en el mismo aula, !los profesores son los que se desplazan!





FAMILY LIFE

I could not have asked for a better host family to live with. My host dad Jaime is originally from Spain and my host mom Severine is originally from France, but they met and both lived in England so both speak fluent English. I spoke with them in Spanish when possible but spoke in English as well, especially in the beginning of my exchange. I also had an 11 year old host brother, but he is very shy so we didn't talk that much. My host family always tried to teach me about their culture and Spain and made sure I was happy. My exchange partner Paloma and I also have a great relationship. Our families have already made plans to try and meet up every summer to go on a big family vacation. I also got to meet lots of Severine's extended family in France and Jaime's extended family in Spain.



VIDA FAMILIAR

No podría haber pedido una mejor familia de acogida con la que vivir. Mi padre, Jaime, es Español y mi madre de acogida, Severine, es Francesa, pero se conocieron y vivieron en Inglaterra, así que ambos hablan inglés fluido. Hablé con ellos en español cuando era posible pero hablaba también en inglés, especialmente al comienzo de mi intercambio. También tuve un hermano de acogida con 11 años de edad, pero era muy tímido, así que no llegamos a hablar mucho. Mi familia de acogida siempre trató de enseñarme sobre su cultura y España y se aseguró de que fuera feliz. Mi compañera de intercambio Paloma y yo también tenemos una buena relación. Nuestras familias ya han hecho planes para tratar de reunirse cada verano para irnos de vacaciones todos juntos. También llegué a conocer a muchos de la familia extendida de Severine en Francia y la familia extendida de Jaime en España.



COMMUNITY LIFE

There are many more protestations and demonstrations in the Spanish community. In Madrid there were many protestations with thousands of people involved, and I went to one in Colmenar Viejo as well. The houses in most neighbourhoods are attached and share a community pool that everyone helps pay for. It is closed in the winter but very useful for the summer heat.

Hay muchas más protestas y manifestaciones en la comunidad española. En Madrid hubo muchas protestas con miles de personas involucradas. Fui a una en Colmenar viejo. Las casas en la mayoría de los barrios se unen y comparten una piscina comunitaria que todo el mundo ayuda a pagar. Está cerrada en invierno pero es muy útil para el calor del verano.

https://youtu.be/y_2C9Q4mhSs



CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL LEARNINGS

The majority of the population in Spain is Christian, and the other part is mostly atheist. Church is a big part of the culture and there are many old churches cathedrals, museums, and palaces to visit.

From about 1936 to 1975, General Francisco Franco was a dictator in Spain. He was very conservative and caused lots of political and family division, as well as a brutal civil war.



APRENDIZAJES CULTURALES E HISTÓRICOS

La mayoría de la población en España es cristiana, y la otra parte es mayormente atea. La iglesia es una gran parte de la cultura y hay muchas iglesias antiguas y catedrales para visitar, así como castillos.

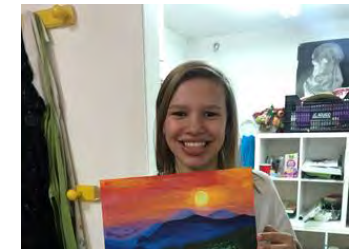
De aproximadamente 1936 a 1975, el General Francisco Franco fue un dictador en España. Fue muy conservador y causó mucha división política y familiar, así como una brutal guerra civil.



RECREATIONAL PURSUITS

Soon before I went to Spain, I had ACL reconstruction surgery so wasn't able to participate in sports. This forced me to expand beyond my comfort zone and try things I wouldn't have tried if I could've been playing soccer. Soccer has always been a big part of my life, so not being able to play was very tough initially. But, it gave me the opportunity to try new things. I joined a painting class on Tuesdays. I really enjoyed this class and all of the people I met through it. I didn't know how much I would like painting but now I want to continue it at home. I took a Spanish class at my house on Monday nights which really helped me to learn the language faster and things I wouldn't have learned just by talking. I went to the gym twice a week with my host dad which was a good way to get my exercise in without soccer and get closer to my host dad. I also had physio once a week for the majority of the time for my rehabilitation. And lastly, I started taking a scrapbooking class to make a scrapbook for Spain, but it wasn't what I thought it would be so I stopped going.

Mi profesora de pintura Mi y mi amiga Emma



Mi y mi amiga Lola



My Paintings



ACTIVIDADES RECREATIVAS

Poco antes de ir a España, tuve cirugía en la rodilla por lo que no podía participar en deportes. Esto me obligó a expandir más allá de mi zona de confort y probar cosas que no habría intentado si hubiera podido jugar al fútbol. El fútbol siempre ha sido una gran parte de mi vida, por lo que no poder jugar fue muy duro inicialmente. Pero, me dio la oportunidad de probar cosas nuevas. Me uní a una clase de pintura los martes. Disfruté mucho esta clase y de todas las personas que conocí a través de ella. No sabía cuánto me gusta pintar, así que ahora quiero continuar en casa. Tomaba clases particulares de español en mi casa los lunes por la noche que me ayudó a aprender el idioma más rápido. Iba al gimnasio dos veces a la semana con mi padre de acogida, esta era una buena manera de hacer mi ejercicio sin fútbol y de acercarme a mi padre anfitrión. También tuve fisio una vez a la semana para mi rehabilitación. Y por último, empecé a tomar una clase de Scrapbooking.

NEW FRIENDS

At the beginning of my exchange I hung out with Paloma (my exchange partner's) friends. It was really good to have such welcoming and including friends as soon as I arrived in Spain. After I started school I made my own friends in my class and started hanging out with them on the weekends instead. With my friends we would often go shopping or walking in Madrid, but sometimes we would just stay around Tres Cantos. A very popular spot to go on Fridays is the Carrefour which is a mall in Tres Cantos. Some of the names of my friends are: Irene, Laura, Marina, Sandra, Lucia, and Ana.



My class friends



Second day in Spain

Halloween



NUEVOS AMIGOS

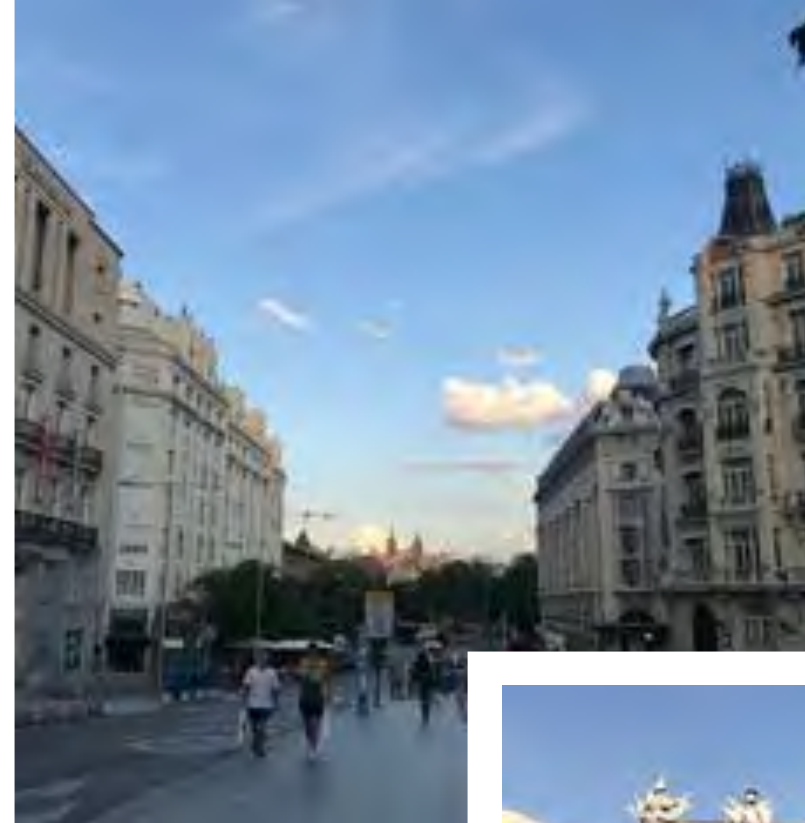
Al principio de mi intercambio me quedé con los amigos de Paloma (mi compañera de intercambio). Fue muy bueno tener amigos inclusivos y acogedores al llegar a España. Después de comenzar la escuela, hice mis propios amigos en mi clase y empecé a salir con ellos los fines de semana. A menudo me iba de compras o de paseo por Madrid con mis amigos, pero a veces simplemente nos quedábamos alrededor de Tres Cantos. Un lugar muy popular para ir los viernes es el Carrefour, que es un centro comercial en el pueblo. Algunos de los nombres de mis amigas son: Irene, Laura, Marina, Sandra, Lucia, Ana, Paula, y Saida.



MADRID

La Comunidad de Madrid is the province I lived in, and Madrid is a city within the province. On the weekends I would often go to Madrid with my friends and go shopping. It was really cool to see all the palaces and old buildings because Canada is much younger than Europe so we don't have any.

La comunidad de Madrid es la provincia en la que viví, y Madrid es una ciudad dentro de la provincia. Los fines de semana a menudo iría a Madrid de compras con mis amigos. Fue muy guay ver todos los palacios y edificios realmente antiguos porque Canadá es mucho más joven que Europa, así que no tenemos.



CULTURE - FLAMENCO



Flamenco is a traditional style of dance in Spain. The women and sometimes men wear long skirts and loud shoes. Women often use fans while the men use castanuelas. I went to a flamenco show with my host father and my exchange student friend Maggie who was visiting. The guitar played during the flamenco dance is also very beautiful.

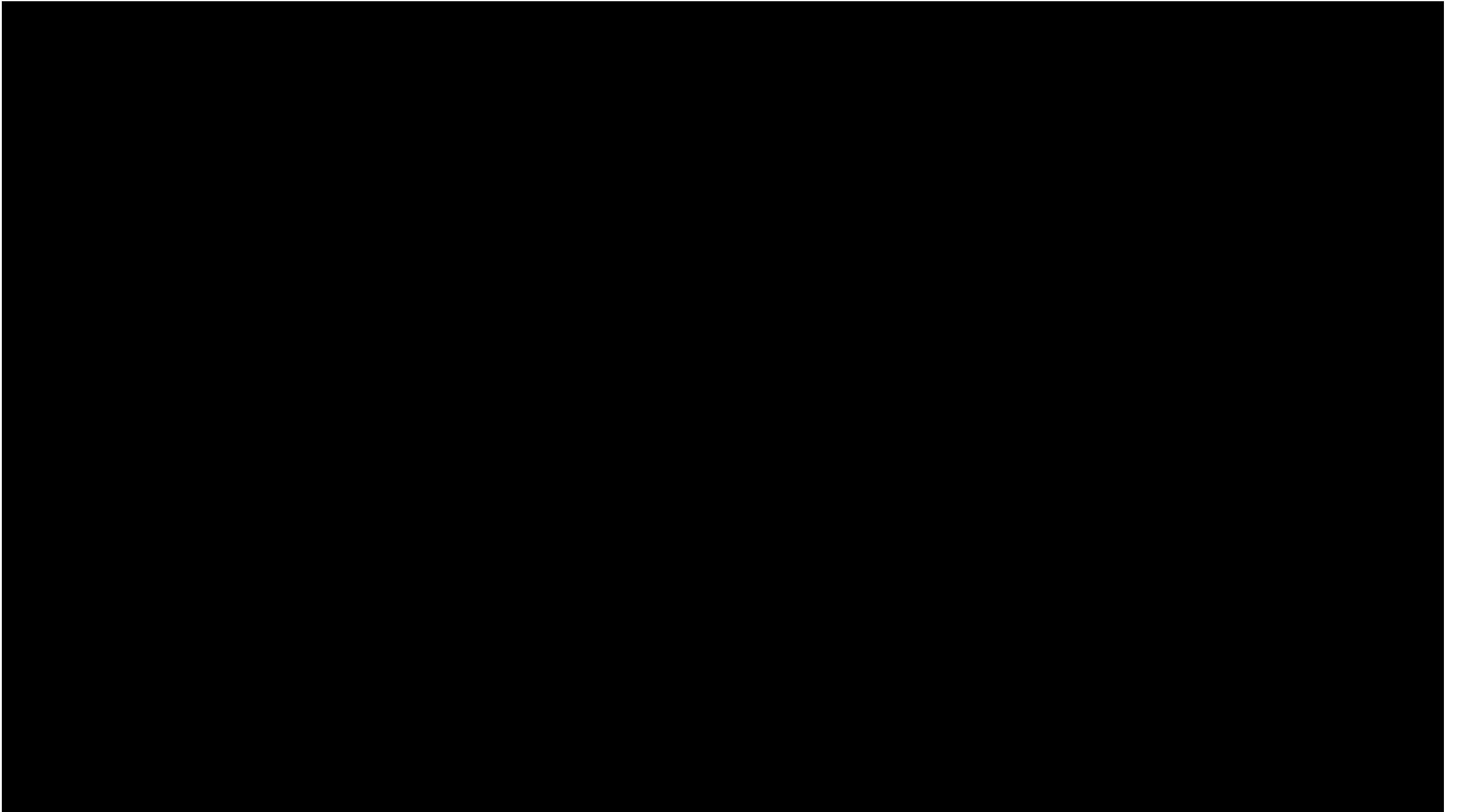
El flamenco es un estilo de danza tradicional en España. Las mujeres y a veces los hombres usan faldas largas y zapatos ruidosos. Acompañan el baile con palmas. Las mujeres utilizan a menudo los abanicos mientras que los hombres utilizan castanuelas. Fui a un espectáculo de flamenco con mi amiga de intercambio, Maggie, que me vino a visitar. La guitarra interpretada durante el baile flamenco también es muy bonita.

<https://youtu.be/PI60tcbZNOM>



VIAJE

Visité muchos lugares durante mi estancia en Madrid. Fui a Francia dos veces; una vez en octubre y otra en diciembre, y también viajé por toda España. Fui a Santa Pola, Santander, Chueca, Segovia, y Alicante.



SANTA POLA, SPAIN





PIERREFEU AND HYÈRES FRANCE

From December 28th to 31st we went to France to visit Severine's family. It was a little tricky to communicate because her family didn't speak any Spanish and very little English and I can't speak any French.



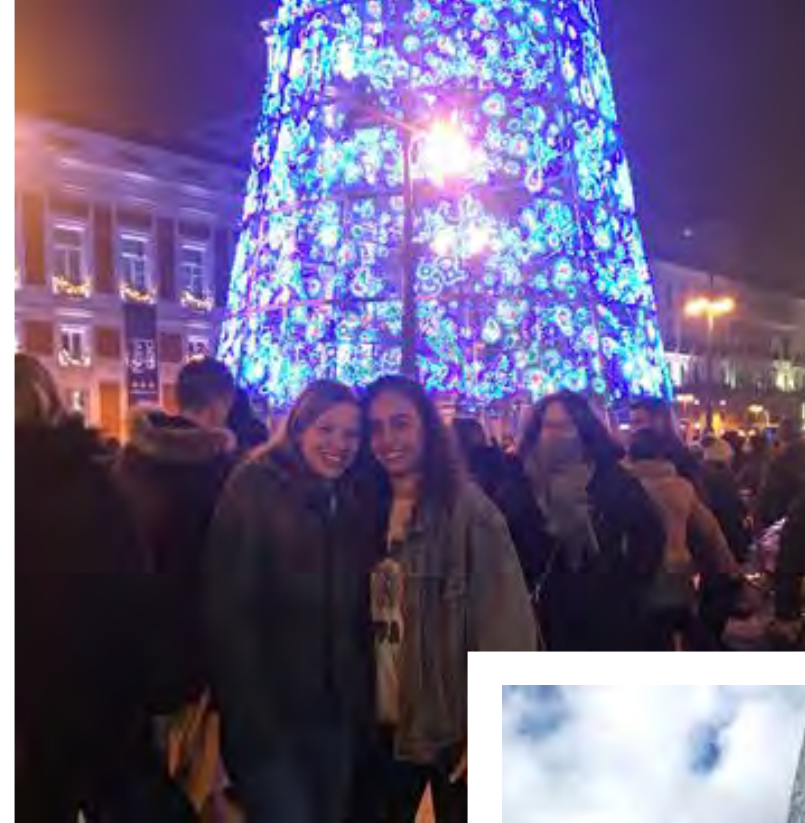
📍 HYÈRES PORT SAINT PIERRE

NAVIDAD

Celebrating Christmas with my host family in Spain was an amazing opportunity to compare Canadian culture and Spanish culture. Reyes Magos are the traditional gift bringers in Spain and Santa or "Papa Noel" is a more recent.

Celebrar la Navidad con mi familia anfitriona en España fue una oportunidad increíble para comparar la cultura canadiense y la cultura española. Reyes Magos son los tradicionales portadores de regalo en España y Santa o "Papa Noel" es un más reciente.

https://youtu.be/_12JR0LYXt4





New Years dinner



NEW YEARS

I celebrated New Years very differently this year in Spain than I have in Canada. At around 10 I had a fancy dinner with my host family. At midnight I was still at home with my family and celebrated with them. In Canada, we typically watch the Times Square New Years, but in Spain we watched something in Madrid on TV. The countdown was from 12 and for each second you eat 1 grape and make a wish. You make 12 wishes because there are 12 months of the year. At around 2 Paloma and I arrived at the party and stayed all night until around 7 when we went for chocolate and churros for breakfast. I ended up going to sleep at 8:00am, which was super fun.

TYPICO ESPAÑOL COMIDA



POLVORONES



TOURON



PESCADO



JAMÓN



PAELLA

WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT MYSELF

I became way more independent while on my exchange. Being without my friends and family and anything familiar was really hard at first but overtime it got way easier. I learned that I can do anything because I completed my exchange and stayed for the whole 4 months. I also learned that I am capable of learning a new language and making new friends in a different language.



WHAT THE FUTURE WILL BRING

In the future I hope to visit my family in Spain and travel throughout Europe. I will continue to speak Spanish with Paloma and my Spanish friends. My ability to speak Spanish will help me if I want to learn another language such as French or Italian. I also want to travel to other Spanish speaking countries such as South America.

