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## Person to Person in Spain

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11/5/19

## Living In Spain

One of my best friends I've met in Spain, Tatiana (or Thai), is eight years older than I am. I still have three semesters of my undergraduate education to complete, while she finished her master's degree a couple of years ago and has been working as a teacher ever since. She lives with her fiancé who she's been engaged to for a few years, and I've been bouncing around between home, dorms and apartments ever since starting college. Before coming to Spain, I wouldn't have guessed that someone from a different culture and at a different stage in life from me would become my best friend from abroad, but according to Thai, age has very little to do with determining friendships in the Spanish culture.

Thai said it's common for people to have a 10-year age gap in their friendships and relationships in Spain because what's most important is that people have things in common and get along well with each other. To me, this seems like a more natural way of forming friendships, rather than limiting them to people within a couple of years of your own age.

It also surprised me to learn that people in Spain tend not to move very far away from where they grew up. Thai is from Sevilla and said she couldn't imagine living anywhere else permanently, although she loves to travel, has visited dozens of other countries, and studied abroad in England and Ireland. She said people are very close to their families and friends they grew up with and feel a strong sense of belonging to the region in which they grew up.

Even though we come from different cultures, Thai and I have more in common than I expected. We're both competitive swimmers and love hiking, the beach, dogs and Harry Potter to name a few. Getting to know Thai has made me realize that although Spain and the U.S. have some distinct

differences, connecting with people from other cultures isn't difficult, as long as you share some common interests and keep an open mind.