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## How to Experience Everything, Really!

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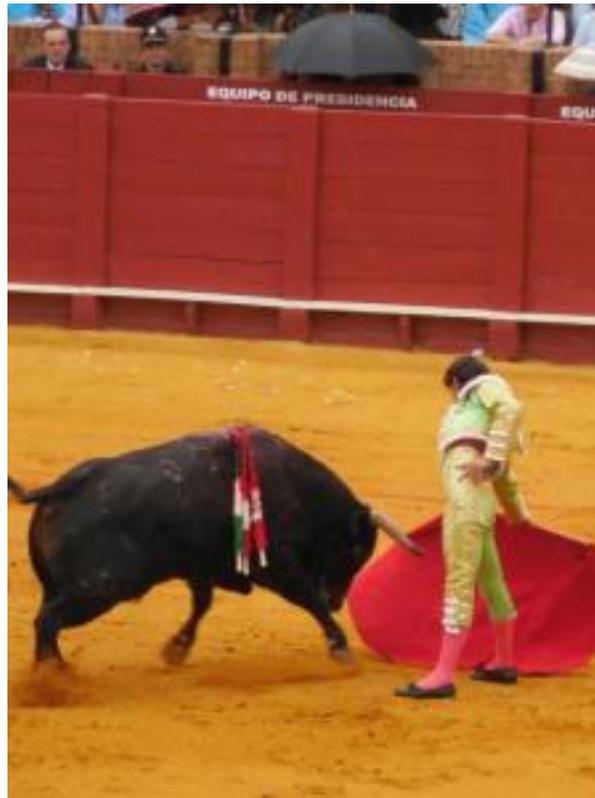
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# How To Experience Everything, Really!

11/06/2013



*Corrido de los Toros*

Spanish Studies Abroad is a program that offers you a million different experiences, each one cooler than the last, and not all of them exclusively “Spanish.”

Spain has a unique location and history. Nowhere else in the world will you find the blend of Spanish and Muslim culture as you find it here. Because of this mix, I am receiving some of the most unique information that I can imagine.

In order to fully appreciate Spain, it's important to mix travel with culture. It's easy to be a tourist, listening to the bare minimum of information and moving on, but it's hard to be a *traveler*. I mean traveler in the deepest sense that you can make that word—it's not about taking photos and being excited in a new place, it's about closing your eyes and realizing that the places you visit hold significance for the culture. So, in order to be the ultimate traveler, you must visit the most touristy of places, but you have to mix it with the contemporary—the raw, the real.

Here's a rundown of my tricks to being a traveler and not a tourist. Be in the know—google constantly. Take the fliers that people hand you in the street. Be prepared constantly to come across an event. Walk everywhere. Do as much as you can, sleep when you are dead. Talk to the locals (never be embarrassed by your language skills, you run with your Spanish and never look back!). Two weeks ago, I was sitting in an auditorium with Españoles listening to the oldest and most established symphony in Spain. The weekend before that, I watched women dance the dance of Sevilla—the sevillana. I attend the processions, where the devout of this country come to watch the slow march of their virgins through

the streets. Visit the most famous structures and close your eyes, feel the lives that they have seen. Be prepared to see protests--after all, you are staying in a country that has a history, and politics, where people care. Learn what the people care about, and then you care too. Be a world citizen, not just an American.

Leap into every adventure with your whole heart. Morocco? Do it! Ride a camel? Do it! Weird food? Try it and love every minute of it. As a 20 year old, I am living my wildest dreams. This whole experience is about learning, so take those opportunities and run with them. Do things that your parents would cringe at (within reason...) and your friends will celebrate. Take these last opportunities to be free of responsibility and be that backpacker that you always wanted to be.

Honestly, your dreams should be huge. They should scare you with their enormity. Then, as soon as you have imagined the biggest dream, say... perhaps... living in a foreign country for a year... go do it. Be the world traveler, be the global citizen. Ignore the tiny voice in your head that doesn't believe in you, know that you can do this. Just remember, mix yourself. Don't be a tourist, be the learner and the observer. Come home with information, with opinions and ideas, not just pictures.

Nos vemos!

Jory