

## Studying Abroad Experience Report

- 1) **Are we allowed to publish your report anonymously on our webpage (without your name and e-Mail)?**  
 Yes  No
- 2) **Are we allowed to forward your report and contact information to a Viadrina student on request?**  
 Yes  No
- 3) **Please confirm hereby that you did not mention names of a third party (lecturer, landlord etc.)**  
 Yes  No – in this case your report won't be published
- 4) **Please be aware that all the published photos in this report have to be taken by you and are not the property of a third party. By sending this report you are giving us the legal right of use for your pictures (if we publish the report). The copyrights still belong to you after all.**  
 Yes, I confirm that all photos are mine.

### ERASMUS IN MADRID

Going on Erasmus is the best decision you can make during your 20's. We are usually not aware of what this opportunity could bring us at the beginning, since it is something new and it takes us out of our comfort zone, but afterwards you clearly see how it changed you in all the aspects and obviously for the good.

Deciding where to go was not very easy for me, my first option was always to go to Mexico but after comparing pros and cons according to my situation, it was clearly very inconvenient. What I was sure about was that I wanted to further improve my Spanish, so then Spain was obviously the one. When choosing the city, I feel you have to understand and know your priorities and needs. For example, in my case I tend to get bored easily in small cities, repeating the same things, going to the same places, I am a very curious person, and every new thing or experience excites me, therefore small cities were a no go-to.

Madrid was the best choice for me and honestly it is a very beautiful city. Its vibrant culture blends traditional Spanish heritage with modern influences, and it offers a diverse and welcoming atmosphere, facilitating connections with both international students and locals. It was easy to immerse myself into the culture since the people are very opened to talk to you, to help you out and making connections was quick.

Preparing for my Erasmus experience in Madrid was both exciting and nerve-wracking. While I was eager to embark on this adventure, the initial stages were quite challenging due to the lack of responsiveness from the international office of the University in Madrid. On the other side, our university was very helpful and clear on explaining how the process works, they provided a checklist of things before, during and after the Erasmus which I always followed.

Once I arrived in Madrid, I went to the International Office and there everything got sorted out. Just a week after my arrival the university organized a welcoming day (06.09.23) which was not mandatory but was very advised to attend. The whole event was in Spanish, which was a bit inconvenient for some students, but they tried to speak slowly for everyone to understand. They gave us a whole presentation of the university starting from its history, its campuses, libraries, giving valuable insights into the campus life and resources available. I really recommend attending this event as I met my Erasmus group of friends there, just by sitting next to each other.

Additionally, there was a Buddy program which played a crucial role in easing the transition into the new environment for some students, but in my experience, I didn't apply for it.

Talking about the accommodation, since I have many Latin friends in Berlin, I decided to use my Instagram account to let my friends know that I was looking for a place in Madrid and that was very helpful. I stayed the first week in Madrid at the house of a friend who explained me many things about the city, gave me many tips and showed me incredible places. In the meanwhile, I downloaded and registered myself in Idealista.es, it is the main and greatest housing website in Spain. As every other website, it also contains scams, so I would advise to always go check the place out and make sure a contract, with information and contacts about the owner is given. Most of the student apartments are owned by different agencies, that of course charge you an additional fee, but with a bit more effort and time there is also the opportunity to find something without it.

After few intense days full of visits around the city, I finally found the perfect room for myself. It was a beautiful apartment with 5 rooms in total, only for girls and it was located near the metro Arguelles, very close as well to the Complutense and the center too. The rent was € 410 and was very cheap for the area, I really enjoyed my staying there, I felt really cozy and never had trouble neither with the owner of the house nor the roommates. The environment in the house was very international, there was a Chilean, a Colombian, a German, another Italian and me. We all got along and were hanging out altogether too.

Lectures have started right after the welcoming day, the professors were all very friendly and nice. I took 5 courses, some in English and some in Spanish: Principles of Marketing – Comportamiento del Consumidor – Comunicacion Integrada de Marketing – Analysis and Financial Planning and Distribucion Commercial. Overall, I really enjoyed the courses of Marketing, they were very engaging, and I feel I learnt a lot. Classes were not mandatory, but all professors considered at least a 5-10% of the final note with the participation in class. Additionally, each class had a group work or individual work to do which helped me to further practice my Spanish with the other students and through the presentations we were asked to do by the end of each course. The key was to go to class basically and put effort on the group works. Nonetheless, group works sometimes can be challenging too. For example, I had few situations where my colleagues were not really cooperating or were not putting as much effort as I was putting into the work, and I would get annoyed.

Anyway, life on campus according to my experience was very fun, I have always met people I knew around there, and the students are very open minded to talk to you and have you as a friend. I have met a group of Spanish people that were always helping Erasmus students and they were more with us than with any other Spanish groups and I found that lovely. It was a constant exchange of cultural realities, uses, costumes and even funny sayings/jokes. I realized that my Italian culture has a lot of things in common with the Spanish one and I feel that is also why I got along with Spanish people easily. I am very grateful to the people I met, since from day one they have always helped me out and we became very close that hopefully soon they will come to visit me here in Berlin.

As a plus, since the university is enormous, they have various student groups for any sport you would like to do, from volleyball, basketball, swimming, rugby to football and so much more... and that is also another valuable way if you want to make new friends!

Generally speaking, at Complutense University, I found a dynamic campus teeming with energy and diversity. Professors went above and beyond to nurture my academic interests, offering guidance and mentorship. Engaging with fellow students from around the world broadened my horizons and led to lasting friendships. The university's blend of historic charm and modern amenities provided the perfect backdrop for learning. From exploring centuries-old libraries to participating in cutting-edge research, every day was filled with exciting opportunities. Without a doubt, my time there was an unforgettable journey, affirming its status as an outstanding institution.

As regard to my life outside the University, the first two months were honestly very overwhelming, in a good way. I never experienced before to meet so many people in just one month and the fact that we were all there with the same reasons and curiosity to discover more and more the city made the whole experience even more unforgettable. That was exactly the most beautiful thing of the Erasmus, the fact that you might not know anyone at the beginning, but you are not alone, you are always surrounded by people that are there in that same city with the same intentions and energy as you do. You just need to push yourself sometimes to only break the ice and make the first step towards people and that's it.

With my group of friends, we tried to join any cultural, travel, party event that was organized by different platforms both on Instagram and through the ESN. They would organize free visits to the museums, cooking classes, sports events, travels in big groups around Spain, pub-crawls, picnics at the Retiro, etcetera. There was always something cool to do and to discover, as well as the city is very active, people are always outside whether having great tapas and drinking a nice fresh beer, having a coffee at any time of the day or partying somewhere.

Overall, I have to say that I found it a bit more expensive than Berlin, there are not very cheap food options in Madrid and entrances to places are also very expensive. Regarding the grocery, there is a wide range of supermarkets, and the cheapest ones are Aldi and Lidl as in Germany.

Something that really surprised me a lot was the monthly transport ticket. It is only 8 euros per month, and you can take any kind of transport in the city. Obviously, Madrid is not that big as Berlin, and I think that was also a reason why it was very economic.

The best experience I had in Madrid was on my birthday. We started with brunch at Pez Tortilla, where we had the most amazing Tortillas de Papas. Then, we went to a cooking class and learned how to make paella with two chefs. Eating our homemade paella for lunch was the highlight of the day. After that, we relaxed at Retiro Park and ended the night at a cool bar with great music. It was the perfect blend of food, fun, and friends.

**Country: Spain**  
**University abroad: Universidad Complutense Madrid**  
**Beginning of lectures and end of exams abroad: 01/09/23 until 01/02/24**  
**Study path at Viadrina: International Business Administration [X] BA [ ] MA**



EUROPA-UNIVERSITÄT  
VIADRINA  
FRANKFURT (ODER)



On the other side the worst experience I had I think it was at the beginning with the International Office. I was very worried that something related with my Erasmus+ Scholarship would not work, and since it was a step by step process, the fact that they did not answer me made it worst for my beginning in Madrid. The office has always work overload and they never answer the phone and takes long time as well for emails. I highly recommend showing up there for any problem or information you need.

To sum it up, I had a wonderful experience in Madrid and what I am going to miss the most, except the people I met there, is the spontaneity Spanish people have like Italians. This relaxed and genuine way of grabbing a coffee under the sun, having a nice fresh drink while sitting in the middle of the street with so many people passing by, having long walks around the city and the great vibe that dominates the city. All this without really planning it in advance as you have to do while in Berlin for example. You just simply wake up and go and once you're there you call your friends to join you and that's it. As well as the delicious Spanish tapas and the small, yet cute local places where to enjoy them.

In conclusion, my Erasmus experience in Madrid has been nothing short of extraordinary. Immersing myself in the vibrant culture of this beautiful city, I've had the privilege of meeting incredible people from diverse backgrounds, each leaving an indelible mark on my journey. Beyond the academic sphere, I've grown personally and intellectually, gaining invaluable insights and perspectives that have truly transformed my outlook on life. Madrid has become more than just a destination, it's a place where memories were made, bonds were forged, and horizons were expanded. As I bid farewell for now, I leave with a heart full of gratitude and a profound desire to return soon, to reconnect with the city and the people who have become an integral part of my story. Madrid, hasta pronto!