

# maggiebrinley

seville, spain



— Maggie Brinley begins her 10-minute trek to class from her home on a weekday morning. When she first arrived in Seville, Brinley felt like she was in another world. “There was nobody who spoke English, not even the program director, but everyone was very helpful.”

**MAGGIE’S MAJOR(S):** English and sociology with a Spanish minor

**YEAR/TERM ABROAD:** spring 2003

**REASON YOU CHOSE THIS PROGRAM:** I had taken up to S250, so my Spanish was pretty good but not fantastic. I wanted to go to Barcelona initially, but it was too modern. Sevilla was smaller and more traditional, and I wanted that. It wasn’t too big or too small, and it’s a pretty safe city

**FAVORITE CLASSES:** art history; grammar & communications

**DESCRIBE THE HOUSING SITUATION:** I lived with a señora. Her youngest daughter lived down the street. It was good to have a señora because I’m a vegetarian and she made meals tailored for me. It was also nice at dinner to have her to talk to instead of a big family where there’s lots of interaction. This way, I had one-on-one interaction and could really learn the language.

**BEST MEMORY:** First getting dropped off by the taxi at what I thought was my señora’s place. The taxi driver dropped me off at a building down the street, but the señora and her family were looking out for me and they saw me. They were very welcoming, and the granddaughter helped me unpack. Also, just being in class everyday, the instructor, Juli, made it fun.

**GREATEST CHALLENGE:** Having an intercambio [a language partner] and meeting with him. Sometimes I didn’t want to meet because he would always correct me, and his English was better than my Spanish, but in the long run, it was a good thing. Also when you went out on outings with other Americans, it was a challenge to interact with the Spaniards yourself instead of letting someone else in the group do it.

**EXPERIENCES WITH CULTURE SHOCK OR REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK:**

The showers were freezing cold; you had to remind the señora to turn on the heater before a shower. With reverse culture shock, I felt like we abuse things, like keeping lights on when we’re not using them. My señora didn’t have many things; here everybody has so much stuff, things we don’t even need.

“Our daily lives are so different from people across the globe. To learn about how other people live their lives, it makes you think about how you want to live your life. It’s character building.”

**ADVICE TO FUTURE STUDY ABROAD PARTICIPANTS:** Take advantage of the CIEE office they have there. They have a lot of pamphlets and information on outings that are good cultural excursions. And as much as you may not want to, keep a journal.