

sonyalucki

Alicante, Spain

SONYA'S MAJOR(S): communications and culture, criminal justice and LAMP

YEAR/TERM ABROAD: spring 2003

REASON YOU CHOSE THIS PROGRAM: I first wanted to choose Barcelona but they didn't have classes for someone who had only one semester of Spanish. With Alicante, I could fulfill all my requirements for foreign language. It's a nice community, a beach town.



The main beach in Alicante, where Sonya Lucki would often hang out, provides the perfect backdrop. Lucki traveled to other small towns along the coast of Spain, but the island of Ibiza stood out as one of her best memories.

DESCRIBE THE HOUSING SITUATION: I lived with a family: a 50-year old mom, 31-year old son and 26-year old daughter. I am a vegetarian, and my mom cooked all my meals to fit that. Since the language barrier was so strong, our relationship was just on the surface, but it definitely helped me learn Spanish. I met others who had apartments, and they could have friends over, whereas I couldn't, but they didn't learn Spanish as well as I did.

GREATEST CHALLENGE: The language barrier. In class, they group you in different levels so you have people that can relate to you. At the same time, the language part was so exhilarating: when you could go to the grocery store, speak a totally different language and be understood.

EXPERIENCES WITH CULTURE SHOCK OR REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK: The eating patterns. You'd have a cappuccino in the morning and not eat until 4 p.m. I felt like I was starving. That was a really big shock.

GOING ABROAD VS. STAYING ON CAMPUS, DISCUSS: The campus will always be there. Studying abroad is definitely something you have to do. By going away, you learn to appreciate things more. This is also the time to do it, when you're with students who have the same goals as you do, who want to travel cheap. Your friends will be here when you get back.

WHAT YOU KNOW NOW THAT YOU DIDN'T KNOW BEFORE GOING ABROAD: It makes you appreciate what you have. Once your language is taken away, you have to figure out different ways to problem solve.

"After traveling to other cities in Spain, I thought that Alicante was the best because no one spoke English. *You had to really embrace the language.* It was also closest to Morocco."

ADVICE TO FUTURE STUDY ABROAD PARTICIPANTS: Make as many Spanish friends as possible. Discover all the little coffee shops, the theatres. Don't pass up any opportunities: I volunteered at an elementary school teaching English.