Miranda Chebahtah, “Spanish in Spain” Summer 2015

My Time in Spain

Before my trip to Spain, I have the typical American mentality that the United States had everything and that venturing out is not needed. I had always wanted to travel around the world but I was always afraid as well. I had grown accustomed to all the comforts of our country, which made me doubt my readiness to travel. Spain changed that mentality, instantly.

Sevilla was this amazing city that was rich with culture. There was so much history wrapped in every building and street. I had the opportunity to visit the Alcazar and the Cathedral as well as other historical sites in various other cities. We visited Madrid, Cordoba, Carmona, and other cities. Before my eyes, my history classes became alive as we visited a new city or monument. It was amazing to see how the different conquests of Spain molded the country into what it is today.

In Spain, I walked the streets every day and became a part of their culture and people. I mingled with the people and painstakingly worked my way through the language as much as I could. Every day was a new adventure that I could not wait to conquer. I became friends with people from all over Europe and other parts of the world. Studying at the international school helped expand my comfort zone because I had to step out, not only to make friends but to also speak with my fellow students in another language. I built so many relationships with so many different people from Germany to Australia. I lived with a kind Argentine woman who moved to Spain nine years ago. She cooked authentic food from both Spain and Argentina that had the most fantastic flavors. While she could not speak any English, she was very kind and encouraged us to practice Spanish at all times. She treated us as her own and created a bond with us. I could not imagine my experience without her.

One of the most amazing things I experienced was the language. It made me realize that we take English for granted. It is easy to forget that language is a way to communicate with other people. I loved communicating with other people who did not know any English. Speaking to non-English speakers broadened my vocabulary of Spanish and my outlook of languages in general. It was an eye-opening experience to talk to people from other countries who knew Spanish, but almost no English. It just firmed the concept that the world is huge and does not revolve around America.

Growing up in America, we forgot about what lies beyond our borders. While I knew of other places, Spain still reminded me that this world is enormous and wonderful; we should not waste it by only learning about it in books. Spain became my gateway to the world. It taught me to be open minded about other cultures as well as to appreciate my own. I learned so much by simply sitting in a chair and watching the people in the streets. My time in Sevilla taught me to always stray from my comfort zone, and to treat every day as an adventure. But more importantly, it reminded that the world is a huge place full of people and different cultures. Experiencing the world will be the most thrilling adventure yet, and to not experience it will be one of the most terrible tragedies.