

Spending a Semester Abroad in Granada, Spain

Spending a semester abroad in Granada was one of the best experiences of my studies so far. I had a wonderful time, met many great people from around the world, and truly enjoyed the cultural atmosphere of the city. Granada offers a perfect mix of vibrant student life, beautiful nature, and Spanish tradition.

Getting There

Granada doesn't have a large international airport, so the best way to get there is to fly into *Málaga*. From Málaga Airport, you can take an *ALSA* bus to Granada, which takes about 2 hours and is comfortable and reliable. Even though it's not a direct connection, it's definitely worth the effort. There's also a train connection between Granada and cities like Málaga and Córdoba. ALSA buses run frequently and connect Granada with many other destinations such as Madrid, Murcia, and coastal towns, making travel around Spain very manageable.

Accommodation

The University of Granada doesn't offer official student housing. Most students live in shared apartments or studios, which you can find on websites like *idealista.es*. There are also private student residences such as Livensa Living, which offer more comfort (e.g., pool, gym), but they are quite expensive. I recommend living in areas like *Albaicín*, *Ronda*, or near *Gran Vía*, they are centrally located and lively. A popular choice among students is *Camino de Ronda*, a long street with many apartments close to bars and nightlife. Before choosing your accommodation, check which campus your faculty is located on, for example, the Business faculty is in *Cartuja*, which is on a hill and a bit further from the center.

Weather & Climate

The weather surprised me! From February to April it was quite cold, make sure to bring warm clothes. This year it also rained more than usual. From late April onwards, the temperatures started rising, and in May I went to the beach for the first time (although the water was still cold). By July, the weather was very hot, daily temperatures ranged from 33°C to 38°C, and even at night it stayed above 20°C.

University Life & Courses

At the University of Granada, you can choose from different types of courses:

- Courses fully in English
- Courses in Spanish

- “English-friendly” courses: taught in Spanish, but with materials available in English

The course selection was good overall, but I had a few scheduling conflicts. Each course usually takes place twice a week. For example, I had *Public Sector Economics* on Mondays and Tuesdays from 12:30 to 14:30. You can try to resolve conflicts by talking to professors or alternating attendance. Each course is worth 6 ECTS, I took 5 courses in total to receive 30 ECTS credits. Lectures started in February and ended in late May, with exams in June. There is a re-sit period in July if needed.

Culture & Everyday Life

Adjusting to the Spanish lifestyle took a little time, but it was worth it. Spaniards eat late (usually around 9–10 pm) and many shops and restaurants close for *siesta* in the afternoon. The tapas culture is amazing, you get free food with your drink in most places for cheap prices! I highly recommend *Buena Vida* in the city center for delicious tapas.

Social Life & Activities

There are several organizations that plan events and trips for international students. The university-affiliated group is *ESN*, and two popular private ones are *Emycet* and *Best Life Experience*. They organize regular activities like club nights, tapas tours, board games, hikes, and trips to cities like Seville or Gibraltar. It's a great way to meet people and make friends.

Language

One thing that was challenging was the language barrier. Very few locals speak English fluently, so be prepared for some difficulties if you don't speak Spanish. I don't speak Spanish at all, but I managed, it's still helpful to learn a few basic phrases beforehand.

Conclusion

I would choose Granada again every single time. It's a city with a great atmosphere, friendly people, rich culture, and stunning surroundings, between the mountains of the *Sierra Nevada* and the Mediterranean Sea, which is only 50 minutes away. Whether you want to enjoy nature, learn Spanish, or simply have a fun and enriching semester abroad, I can definitely recommend Granada. I have attached some pictures with descriptions below.

ESN International Dinner



Sunset over Granada



View over Sierra Nevada



Granada City Center



Tapas Bars



Parc Federico Garcia Lorca



Playa La Rijana (1 hour from Granada)



Tapas in Buena Vida (2,8€ for one drink + one Tapas included)

