

GRANADA, SPAIN

ASAMI SAKAI

Program: UIUC Spanish Studies in Granada, Summer

Asami's Major: Nursing

Academic Life: The classroom experience during this program was one of my favorite parts of my study abroad experience. Our classes normally only consisted of anywhere from about five to fifteen students, which is smaller than anything a student at UW would experience. The teachers were all native Spaniards who understood our backgrounds in our language acquisition and they always tried to use that to construct their classes in a way that would best help us understand the material. I loved this atmosphere because I always felt comfortable contributing and asking questions in class.

Advice for Someone Considering Granada: Granada is so perfect for a study abroad experience in Spain for so many reasons. One of its big advantages is its size. It's a smaller city so it's easier to really get to know as opposed to a larger, more metropolitan city, where English is also much more common so it's harder to practice your Spanish. Also, living with a host family is such an amazing part of this program because it allows you to experience daily life of a typical Spaniard. It gives you the perfect opportunity to practice Spanish, since it's not really an option to use English at home.

Cultural Differences: One of the more noticeable cultural differences between Spain and the United States is how straight-forward the Spaniards tend to be. They say what they're thinking without really sugar-coating anything, but also without any intention of insulting you. It's just a part of how they communicate, but being from a culture where "please" and "thank you" are said constantly and opinions or requests are posed in a more indirect way, it can seem rude or insensitive at first. After being around it for a little while, it becomes less uncomfortable and you begin to notice yourself not being as "polite" in an attempt to fully immerse yourself in the culture.



Asami (right) visiting Las Alpujarras, a part of the Sierra Nevada mountains in Granada.

“Even though we only lived in Spain for seven weeks, I think it was enough time for a sense of home to develop.”

