

MADRID, SPAIN

JULIA BAIRD

Program: WIP Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spring

Julia's Major: Spanish

Academic Life: The WIP program involved a very rigorous academic experience. Each student was enrolled in five Spanish classes designed to accelerate one's comprehension of the language. Three of the courses were with Americans and were instructed in a similar manner to classes at UW-Madison. The other two courses were taken with Spaniards studying at Complutense and were at a much quicker pace and for a longer duration. All of the classes were taught by professors at Complutense, but the courses varied in structure. Although the style was by far the most challenging education I have experienced yet, it was effective in helping me improve my ability to speak the language.

Be Involved: During my time abroad I became actively involved at an international church in Madrid. I soon found myself helping out with their outreach program on Wednesday nights. It was an incredibly eye-opening experience to be able to use the Spanish skills I had acquired. I further developed my passions to fight social injustices, and was inspired to promote change back at home in similar ways as to the outreach I had done in Madrid.

Benefits of Study Abroad: I have become more open-minded to the world around me. I have a grand appreciation for the beauty of many languages and diverse cultures, as well as an itching desire to continue seeing more of the world and finding out how I can play a part in furthering global unity.

Finding Home: From the moment I took my first steps off of the plane, I had left beside all of my doubts and fears about the experience ahead, and replaced them with excitement and eagerness to make the most of my time abroad. It was completely different than any place I'd ever seen before. The charm of the city and friendliness of the people could not be missed. It wasn't long before I had fallen absolutely in love with my new home.



Julia on a walk through the colorful streets of Madrid.

“Some of the greatest decisions made in life are made when we take a leap of faith into a world without comfort and watch as our lives transform.”

