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Major: Accounting

I studied abroad because...

before studying abroad, I understood Spanish well but didn't speak much. I wanted to study in Spain to master the language and experience Spanish culture.

One of my biggest challenges before studying abroad was...

I was worried about being alone. I wanted to be able to experience my time abroad with friends, but I didn't know anyone on my program. I'm glad I took the risk because I ended up making new friends from UF, Spain, and other universities around the world.

A typical meal I had while studying abroad:

Breakfast was usually fruit and coffee on the way to class. Lunch was either something simple that my roommate and I would cook at home or *tapas* at a local bar. Our house moms (who were from Spain and Colombia) cooked us dinner, which was usually a typical Spanish or Colombian dish. A favorite snack is *huevos rotos* (must try).

My favorite spot in my host city was...

a natural swimming pool at the end of a hiking trail in Cercedilla, which is a little outside of Madrid. From this spot, there are beautiful views of the mountains and the city.

One cool event I got to experience while abroad:

I went to was a music festival in Madrid called Mad Cool. I met people from around the world who came to Madrid for the festival and saw some of my favorite artists, including Arctic Monkeys, Odesza, Franz Ferdinand, and James Bay.

The most memorable experience for me while abroad was...

a day that I spent in Biarritz, France. I had spent the weekend in San Sebastián with other students from UF, and before driving back to Madrid, we decided last minute to stop in France because it was so close.

A habit I picked up while abroad:

Every Sunday night, we had "Movie Night" at home with our house moms, and we would eat pizza and watch an episode of a Spanish show on Netflix. Now, I love watching Spanish shows.

What I found most challenging while abroad was...

the language barrier. I overcame that challenge by taking every chance that I got to speak in Spanish and tried to learn from my mistakes rather than be embarrassed.

What surprised me most about study abroad was...

I thought that I wouldn't celebrate my birthday because it was a few days after I arrived in Madrid, but my house moms and my roommate surprised me with a cake. This made me feel confident that I was going to make meaningful connections and feel at home in Madrid.

My last bit of advice:

Living abroad and experiencing a new culture is an opportunity that you may never get again – so take this chance! Embrace all of the challenges and obstacles that you believe you may face abroad. Trust that you will overcome all of them, and learn and grow from the experience.