

European Option Placement Granada 2016



Why I chose Granada and European Studies

Manchester was my top choice purely for the reason that they offer medicine with a language. I have always had a connection with Spain, having been born in the

Canary Islands and been brought up in Granada. So for me, choosing to study Spanish with medicine was an easy decision. I lived in Granada until the age of 3, and although I don't remember Granada at all, I chose Granada over Madrid from my parents' high recommendation. They spoke about its rich history, culture and ambience all of which sold it for me!

Life in Granada

From my 4 months in Granada, I have become so fond of this city, the culture and the people, that I really did not want to return to England! Granada is quite a small city with only 240,000 inhabitants located in the southern region of Spain called Andalusia. I think Granada has it all - being about an hour away from both the nearest beach and the Sierra Nevada mountain range, free tapas, full of students, great nightlife, beautiful runs and walks and much more!

In comparison to Madrid, you can walk everywhere in Granada being reminded of the stunning beauty of the snow-capped Sierra Nevada at every corner.

The Moorish reign remains poignant in the city, particularly in the Albaicin area, with several North-African inspired restaurants and teterias and of course the incredible Moorish palace, the Alhambra. A beautiful building is the Hospital Real, nowadays one of the university's libraries, offers a quiet place to study for PSA or do portfolio in a beautiful setting, and it has really good strong coffee!

I lived in the Albaicin, the oldest part of Granada, an area rich of history and full of beautiful old buildings. The flat I lived in with two other girls had a wonderful view of the alhambra and a huge terrace, was on the 4th floor of a building full of Erasmus students.

Top 10 places to spend some time relaxing in Granada

- i. El Alhambra
- ii. Mirador de San Miguel Alto
- iii. Carmen de los Mártires
- iv. Albaicin mosque gardens (next to plaza San Nicolas)
- v. Placeta cristo azucenas, Albaicin
- vi. Mirador de San Nicolas
- vii. Parque Federico Garcia Lorca
- viii. Outdoor pool at O2 Centro de Wellness gym
- ix. Hammam arabic baths
- x. Terrace cafe of Hotel Alhambra Palace

Top 10 places to eat (all vegetarian friendly!)

- i. Papas Elvira

- ii. Nido del Buho
- iii. Hicuri
- iv. Babel
- v. El piano
- vi. Paprika
- vii. Papaupa
- viii. Om-Kalsum
- ix. Puerta de Syria
- x. A los Buenos Chicos

Nightlife in Granada

I was pleasantly surprised with the quality and diversity of the nightlife in Granada. With a city of around 85,000 students with 2-3,000 of them being Erasmus students, there was something for everyone, every night of the week!

Booga

For me, the best nightclub in Granada! Its got reggae, funk, dance and blues music nights, with live bands some nights too. Entry is €3 with a free beer. Best not get to Booga before 3am as it will be pretty empty though!

El Camborio

Club with the best view in Granada - of the Alhambra lit up at night. The music is not the best, mostly reggaeton and Justin Bieber on repeat, but it's a must at least once purely for the overall experience! Entry is free until 130/2am with ESN card or screenshot of facebook event. If your pre-drinks goes on too late, don't worry, if you arrive by taxi and present this to bouncer then you can get in free anyway.

Sala el Tren

We were lucky enough to see the Vaccines here on there tour around Spain for only €24! It is on the outskirts of Granada and is a taxi ride away but is a big club with frequent live bands and electronic music nights.

La Copera

Imagine warehouse project but in the middle of nowhere about 10 minute taxi ride from Granada. This place is renown for its electronic music nights and they are amazing. I saw two well-known spanish DJs and a german DJ, Alexander Kowalski. The nights end up being more expensive than those in Granada city, with the cost of taxi there and back (about €3 each way split between four), drinks, etc. On the plus side its free entry before 2am (€15 afterwards) and the music continues until 7am...

Mae West

Granada's biggest club and it truly is an impressive building with several rooms, a stage and a large outdoor area. Every wednesday is 'ladies night' where all those of the female sex get free entry with a free drink! Tuesday nights, however, are apparently the best nights where the place is packed with spanish students and the music is better. It wasn't my kind of place so I only went once but it was very popular amongst several of my erasmus friends.

Copacabana

I am no salsa queen but went here with two friends whose salsa group tend to go here on a Friday night to practice their moves...I watched most of the night and danced my basic steps with a few of the more patient male dancers! But if you know more than the basic steps, this place is club dedicated to salsa. Entry was €3 with a soft drink / beer.

Festivals

Semana Santa

A week long religious festival with several processions around the city with religious statues being carried through the streets. The possessions literally go on for a week, from 4pm - 4am some days, and they take up the whole street. I would advise to see a few processions but in general avoid the processions if you are in a rush as it is very difficult to pass or overtake them!

Dia de la Cruces

One day festival in Granada at the beginning of May, where large decorated crosses are placed in the large squares in the city. This year, the most impressive was in plaza larga in the Albaicin. There was also live music and flamenco dances all weekend.

Feria del Corpus Christi

This is the most famous festival in Granada which lasts for a week at the end of May/beginning of June. I stayed for a few more days to see some of the festivities, fireworks, horse parades, flamenco - well worth it!

Skiing

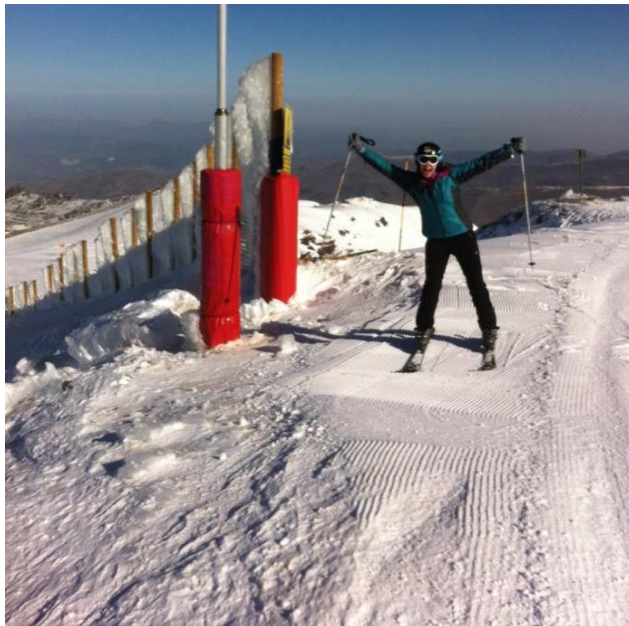
If I could only give one recommendation to future European Option students going to Granada, it would be to go on the skiing trip with the University of Granada. It is a 4 day fully inclusive skiing trip that costs only €200. This includes travel,

accommodation, breakfast, lunch and dinner, ski hire, skiing instruction and ski pass. The accommodation was the University youth hostel at the top of the Sierra Nevada which had a lovely open fireplace in the middle of a big living room. Moreover, they provided lots of food and happily catered for a vegetarian. I went in February with another medical student from Manchester, and there were about 40 students in total, all of a different skiing level. The majority were beginners or intermediate with a few advanced skiers or snowboarders. All the instructors were very friendly and sociable, and I could not believe how much I learnt in just 4 days! I went back to the Sierra Nevada the following week to ski for the day with a group of friends (they had all been skiing since they were children and were of an advanced level). I managed to ski with them for most of the slopes but avoided a few of the red and black pistes that, to me, just looked insane!

In order to go on the university ski trip, you need to be registered with the University's Centro de Actividades Deportivas. This process is explained at an introductory lecture in the first week in Granada. Once you have your username and password, the ski trip can be booked online via the University of Granada's Centro de Actividades Deportivas website.

Here is a link with more information of the skiing courses:

http://cad.ugr.es/actividades/montana/esqui/cursos_esqui



Walks in Granada

There are some beautiful walks that you can do in Granada without needing to leave the city. I will just describe a few of them.

Paseo de los Tristes

This is my favourite walk (and my main training run for the Madrid Marathon!) in Granada and follows the course of the river Darro from the Albaicin to Sacromonte and beyond! It is a pretty easy walk with the vast majority on flat ground, apart from a climb to reach the Abadia (monastery) in Sacromonte. Once past the hustle and bustle in Albaicin and Sacromonte, it is a very peaceful walk during which you bump into a few walkers with their dogs. There are some beautiful cave houses, horses and gardens to see along the way.

Here is a link to a website with a map of the walk:

<http://es.wikiloc.com/wikiloc/view.do?id=4518875>

Dehesa del Generalife

This is another walk that I really enjoyed doing around a national park just past the Alhambra palace. It is a bit more of a challenging walk as there is a climb up to the top of a large hill. The views from here are beautiful though, boasting views of the Sierra Nevada, Granada and Sacromonte. To pick the route up, walk past the Alhambra and there is a road that runs to the left of the cemetery. This is the start of the walk which starts off as a forest walk and opens up later on.

Here is a link to a website with more information about the walk:

<http://www.turgranada.es/ruta/dehesa-del-generalife/>

Walks around Granada

Monachil

Monachil is a beautiful place to spend the day walking. It is a small village about 8km away from Granada that is a relatively undiscovered gem. Moreover, it is incredibly easy to get to and the price of a bus ticket is only €1.50. All in all, there's no excuse not to go! The walk around Monachil includes large hanging bridges over gorges, waterfalls, caves, tunnels and large open spaces. I would say that if you have a fear for heights or suffer from vertigo, then this walk might not be best for you!

We had a bit of difficulty finding where to pick the bus up from Granada as it gives the wrong bus street online. The bus stop is on Paseo de los Basilio, just where

Puente Arabe crosses the Genil River. If unsure leave 15 minutes more to find the bus stop and ask the locals!

Here is a link to the timetable for the bus from Granada to Monachil:

<http://www.huertadellaurel.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Autobuses-Monachil.pdf>

Las Mimbres

This was a walk recommended to me by from my mum from when she lived in Granada, as it was a very popular walk amongst the locals. Las Mimbres is a forest walk in the Sierra de Huetor. It is a fairly easy 3 - 4 hour walk with some beautiful views of the surrounding mountains. I attempted to arrive there with a group of friends using public transport, and we got as far as the national park it's in but the bus dropped us off 20km away from Las Mimbres! So I have not actually walked round Las Mimbres and I would only recommend this walk if you are hiring a car / get to know a group of people with a car.

<http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/medioambiente/servtc5/ventana/mostrarficha.do?idEquipamiento=19775>

Places to travel to if you rent a car

Las Alpujarras

There are several beautiful villages in the Alpujarras, a mountain range between Granada and Almeria, that are easier to reach to by car. A friend of mine enjoyed a road trip of the villages, stopping off for several walks and tapas along the way.

Otivar Waterfalls

These are a beautiful collection of waterfalls in Otivar, a small town near Almunecar. It is a lovely walk with several waterfalls along the way that you can jump into or swim in. There are not many tourists there and it's more of a popular spot amongst the locals to gorge walk. There is an entrance fee which is 5€ per person and a further 5€ for the car. There is a number to ring to check its open that day: 680493629 or 680493907.

<http://www.spain-holiday.com/Otivar/articles/junta-de-los-rios-otivar-granada>

Caminito del Rey

Unfortunately, I ran out of time to make it here, but have heard amazing things about this place. It is a cliff side path, 100m above the gorge, popular amongst those that are into extreme sports and rock climbing.

<http://www.caminitodelrey.info/en/>

Cabo de Gato

A stunning national park near on the coast past Almeria. It has several beautiful beaches and small bays to chose from. We visited the area twice, once to playa de los Geneveses and the other time to playa de San Pedro. Both beaches are at least a 30 minute walk from the car park, have nudist sunbathers and lots of dogs. I think they both have real character but I think the views from the walk to San Pedro were particularly beautiful.

Almeria

My family have a house in a village near Almeria and a group of went to the house twice. Almeria itself is not as pretty as Granada, but does have a 'mini Alhambra' called the Alcazaba which is free to enter and nowhere near as busy. The view from the top of the fortress is pretty impressive - you can see the whole of Almeria, the port and the sea. It is worth to note that it is closed every Monday.

Trips to do – Best Life Experience, Emycet, ESN

These are companies that organise good trips and nights for Erasmus students. There are trips around Spain to beaches, carnivals, mountains and trips further afield such as to Morocco and Lisbon. I went on a few of the trips and they are well worth it as they are well organised and at really reasonable rates.

Language classes

With two other european option students from Manchester and an Austrian medical student, we had Spanish classes at Granada Language School. Each lesson lasted 1.5 hours and they were very flexible with the time and day, we opted for 1400 - 1530, Tuesday and Thursday. The language school is very close to the hospitals so we would leave hospital around 1230 these days to go for lunch together before class. The language school is a very modern building with young and enthusiastic teachers. Our teacher, Maria Garcia, was a 26 year old from Granada who was very keen for us to improve our Spanish and enjoy our time in Granada. For a 3 month B1 level course, it was €250, which the University of Manchester confirmed they will cover. At the end of the course, we had a B1 exam, which we all passed with 80 - 90% (!) and received a certificate which will act as evidence for Manchester to reimburse course fees.

<http://granadalanguageschool.com/>

Another option for a Spanish course is the Centro de Lenguas Modernas in Realejo. They offer a more intense course with twice weekly 3 hour lessons. However, the groups are much larger with up to 30 students in each class and all with varying levels of Spanish.

I would recommend Granada Language School as our class was made up of us 3 students and so we all felt comfortable interacting and talking in Spanish. I would, however, advise pushing for a B2 level course as the B1 was a bit easy!

Medical placements

Registration

Before you start your placement, you need to register and sign some paperwork at the faculty of medicine office. This building is unfortunately quite far out, about an hour's walk from the city centre or a 30 minute bus journey. The two buses that go there are the SN4 and U3 lines. The office is labelled 'relaciones internacionales' and is on the 2nd floor of the building. If it is empty, ask for Raul Lugo at the main reception desk on ground floor and they should help you find him.

Placements

In general, the medical placements were a lot more relaxed compared to those in England. A typical day on placement would be from 9am - 1300 with a coffee break at about 1130. For placement, you need a white lab coat (bata), however I didn't have one and found it easy enough to borrow one during the placements. I had two placements at Virgen de las Nieves hospital and two at San Cecilio hospital. The two hospitals are pretty much next to each other and it takes about 20 minutes to walk from Plaza Nueva, where I lived, to the hospitals.

Of note, the doctors and medical students do not perform any clinical skills as these are the job of the nurses. This made getting UPSAs signed off a bit trickier. However, it was possible to arrange to perform the skill with a nurse and ask your supervisor to observe you perform this.

A&E

Dr Fernando Sabio Reyes - a god! Very relaxed supervisor who was keen to practice his English and talk about Granada and other interests.

Cardiology

Dr Juan Jimenez Jaimez - cardiologist that has worked in London before and keen to teach and practice his English.

Internal medicine

Dr Nuria Navarrete - young female doctor who included you in ward rounds and keen to get medical students involved.

ENT

Dr Juan Garcia Valdecasas - a young male doctor who took on two medical students at a time and let us examine patients during clinics.

New hospital

I also had occasional clinics at the new hospital, part of the Parque Tecnológico de la Salud in Granada. This is part of the same complex as the faculty of medicine building, located on the outskirts of Granada. The new hospital may be opening and acting as the principal hospital in Granada next year so your placements may be located at this building in the future. This will mean that you will have a further commute and may want to think about buying/renting a bike, or buying a bus/metro pass.

<http://www.ptsgranada.com/docencia/>

What I have gained personally from my time in Granada

I was very sad to leave Granada and I think that you should be prepared for feeling low returning to Manchester; to grey skies, the cold, end of life care, portfolio review etc! But I left knowing that I will return which made it a bit easier!

Granada has been my home for the last 4 months, I have met some amazing people from all over the world and seen some beautiful cities and beaches around the south of Spain. My Spanish has improved immensely and was regularly appraised by Spanish people for my speaking ability!

Compared to when I arrived, I feel a lot warmer towards the Spanish and in fact, quite respect their openness, disinhibition and lack of reservation. Nevertheless, I do not think I could work in Spain as a doctor - the mañana culture would irate me too much!

In the future, I would like to continue with my medical Spanish by volunteering for an NGO such as MSF or Red Cross in South America. I also aim to use my Spanish with the army reserves and have already enquired into the possibility of deployment to a Spanish speaking country.

Few practical tips:

- Bring your white lab coat
- Stay in an airbnb for the first 2 weeks, don't rush into accommodation, chose the area and people you want to live with wisely
- Get a post office card as they charge less for withdrawing money
- Get a credit card if you don't already have one (lot more easier to rent a car with a credit card)
- Bring skiing clothes
- Increase bank account overdraft!
- Go on the meet-ups organised by ESN / best life experience at the beginning of the semester to get to know other erasmus students

Practical issues

To get to and from the bus station take the SN1 bus. Alsa is the biggest bus company in Spain and was the company I used to travel around most of Spain. Most flights are cheaper from Malaga and to get there you can either buy a bus ticket which takes about 2 hours or get a blabacar.

To get to Granada airport, you can pick up a bus from Gran Via (it says near the cathedral but it is a far way down the street just before Plaza de Triunfo)

Groups to join on facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/ErasmusEsnGranada/>

<https://www.facebook.com/ErasmusGranadaTheBestLifeExperience/?fref=ts>

<https://www.facebook.com/Erasmus-Granada-20152016-Emycet-148046515370373/?fref=ts>

Useful contacts

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<http://www.begranada.com/>

Granada Language School

<http://granadalanguageschool.com/>

O2 Centro de Wellness Neptuno Gimnasio

<http://www.o2centrowellness.com/msite/Home.aspx?ID=NEP>