



ATLANTIS DESTINATION GUIDE

Zaragoza, Spain

Welcome!



Zaragoza, Spain

ATLANTIS

We are excited to welcome you to Spain for this season's Atlantis program! The whole Atlantis Team looks forward to working with you as you discover your new home. We trust that your time in Zaragoza will make a significant impact on your journey toward a potential career in medicine.

This program will give you an opportunity to see healthcare through a new perspective and observe how medicine is practiced in a foreign country and culture. We want you to take full advantage of this opportunity to grow and develop a deeper understanding of international healthcare.

This is not designed to be a luxury vacation—this is a challenging and exciting step in your professional development. What you get out of this experience will depend on what you put into it; the more you can prepare and be proactive, the more you will accomplish and learn.

In this guide, you will find specific details on how to prepare for your Atlantis program, and more details will be provided to you as your departure date approaches. We look forward to meeting you and are excited to accompany you on this adventure!

Sincerely,

David Saavedra
Atlantis Regional Director - Spain

Zaragoza



Get to Know Your Host City

Zaragoza is the capital of the Aragón region in northeast Spain, and it is Spain's 5th largest city, with around 665,000 inhabitants. The city is famous for its folklore, gastronomy, and architectural landmarks. Due to developed transportation and proximity to other major cities (as well as the French border), it is hard to get bored here! It is a well-connected city and will allow for comfortable and easy travel in all directions, southwest to Madrid or further east to Barcelona!



Hospital Clinico Universitario Lozano Blesa

The Lozano Blesa Clinical University Hospital is the second biggest hospital in Zaragoza and it is a teaching hospital, working side by side with the medical school and nursing school in the city. This hospital was founded in 1974 and nowadays has over 800 beds. Since it is a teaching hospital, it's a perfect environment for students to shadow and learn from physicians, residents and Spanish med school students.



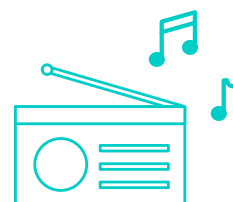
Interacting with your host doctor

As in U.S. hospitals, you can expect to encounter a range of personalities and engagement levels among the doctors you'll be shadowing in your host hospital. While some doctors are very engaging and enjoy explaining procedures to those observing, other doctors may be very focused on their patients and may not talk very much at all. We encourage our students to remain respectful and appreciative of their work, while remaining open to asking investigative questions when appropriate. You are the detective in an amazing opportunity to explore and probe the depths of an entirely new healthcare system—what insights will you take away?

Fun ways to prepare for Spain:

1.

PLAY SOME SPANISH MUSIC!



One artist that you may have already heard of is Rosalia, a native of Catalonia and an up and coming Spanish icon around the world. Due to her Catalan roots, she sings both in Spanish and Catalan. She may not have the easiest lyrics to understand, but you'll hear her music around town for sure!

2.

LEARN TO COUNT IN SPANISH



Learn to count to twenty in Spanish, and count up or down whenever you use the stairs.



Navigating the Language Barrier

Though many people in your hospital may know some English, Spanish will be the primary language spoken in the hospital departments. Being surrounded by a new language can certainly be a challenging part of visiting a new country, but we've found that such a situation also creates a unique opportunity for personal growth and increased cultural competence. To prepare to enter this new language environment and get the most from your time in the hospital, we suggest doing your best to become proficient in common words and phrases before your departure—you'll be amazed at how practicing just 10 minutes a day can add up over time! We suggest starting your practice through a website or app like Duolingo, and adding other modes of learning depending on what works best for you. If this seems daunting, rest assured! Most of our students do not have prior experience in the language of their host country, and there is still a wealth of information and experiences waiting for you regardless of language proficiency.



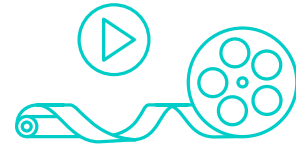
Minding the Time

As a newcomer and guest in your host hospital, being on time to shadow each day has extra importance; doing so ensures that your host doctor is able to attend to their patients to the best of their ability. You are required to arrive at your daily meeting point at least 15 minutes prior to the start time in your assigned department. This being said, the perception and treatment of time in your host country may be different from your own. Though we may typically be used to people arriving on time in our own culture, waits and delays may be more common in the culture of your host country, especially within the hospital environment where unexpected events and patient situations impact scheduling on a daily basis. If this does occur, we would encourage you to embrace it as part of the cultural immersion experience, but still feel free to inquire about the expected timing of events. It can also be common for departments to experience slower days as part of "ebb and flow" of hospital life. This can provide an opportunity for noting any insights about what you've been experiencing and a chance to focus on the more "constant" elements of the hospital — elements that have an immense impact on the patient experience (e.g. hospital design and administrative strategy).

More fun ways to prepare for Spain:

3.

WATCH MOVIES IN SPANISH



Even with the English subtitles on, you are sure to pick up words here and there that may help you in conversation. There are a number of world-famous Spanish series currently on Netflix; maybe you'll end up having a show in common to talk about with your doctor!

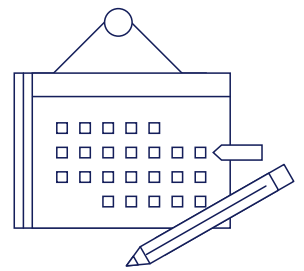
4.

FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH SPANISH WORDS

HOLA, QUE TAL?

Familiarize yourself with the Spanish words for basic anatomy, directions, and food. Have a friend or family member quiz you.

Weekly Schedule



Monday - Thursday

- 8AM** Light Breakfast
- 9AM** Shadowing
- 5 hours per day
 - Switch specialties every week
 - Typically 2 students per department
 - Free time
- 6PM** Group Meal (Monday & Wednesday only)



Friday

- 8AM** Light Breakfast
- 9AM** Cultural Excursion
- Weekly group outing
 - Organized by your Site Manager
 - For example, hiking or visiting a nearby city



Saturday- Sunday

- 8AM** Light Breakfast
- 9AM** Free time

ACTUAL PROGRAM SCHEDULES MAY VARY (E.G. ADJUSTMENTS FOR HOSPITAL AVAILABILITY AND LOCAL HOLIDAYS).



Cuisine

Ah, Spanish food! When in Spain, and especially in Zaragoza, you can expect a simple and yet high quality ingredient list. Popular staple items include seafood, rice dishes, potatoes cooked in many ways, vegetables, and bread. Oh, and coffee. Can't forget the coffee! Tapas bars are ideal for an evening out with friends; order a few different plates and share among the crowd!

Spaniards are notorious for enjoying a long 'sobremesa' after meals, where they might sit around the table for several hours after the meal has ended, nursing a last drink or finishing up with a 'cortado' or espresso with a dash of milk. Ditch the American mindset of flipping tables at restaurants. Rather than feeling like the waiter is trying to rush you out, you might actually have to hunt him down to give you your check! Pro tip: If you can catch your waiter's eye across the room, pretending to sign a piece of paper in the air is the universal sign for 'check please!'

Here are a couple more tips to help you acclimate to a new cuisine:

- Spanish food isn't like American food! In fact, ingredients tend to be fresher and healthier. Be open to expanding your palate to more traditional flavors.
- Espresso is much stronger than American coffee, both in terms of caffeine content and acidity. Your body may protest overindulgence.
- If you order water, you will likely have to pay for it.
- If you have any allergies or food sensitivities, always ask if a food or drink may contain a potential allergen, and bring emergency allergy medication, just in case.
- Learn how to ask if a food contains an allergen: "Esto lleva almendra? Soy alergico." ("Does it have almonds? I'm allergic").



Packing Guide

We recognize that each of our Students has different packing preferences, but here's a list to get you started!

MUST-HAVE ITEMS:

- ☐ Your wallet, with ~\$150 worth of your host country's currency
- ☐ Outfits to wear while shadowing (business casual)
- ☐ Outfits to wear while discovering your host city (casual)
- ☐ Shoes to wear while shadowing (closed-toed, semi-professional, comfortable)
- ☐ Shoes to wear while discovering your host city (comfortable)
- ☐ A copy of your iNext insurance information
- ☐ A piece of paper with emergency info (Site Manager's number, housing address, and the Atlantis emergency number)

OTHER IMPORTANT ITEMS:

- ☐ Plane ticket(s)
- ☐ Your passport and a copy
- ☐ Your ID (and a copy), and student ID
- ☐ A small notebook for shadowing
- ☐ Seasonal clothing
- ☐ Pajamas and Toiletries
- ☐ Phone and charger
- ☐ Plug adaptor and voltage convertor
- ☐ Emergency cold medication
- ☐ Water bottle, backpack, hat
- ☐ Sunglasses, sunscreen, and swimsuit
- ☐ Enough prescription medication for the length of your stay



Excursions

Our program excursions are specially planned to offer a deeper look into your host culture, and we highly encourage participation for both the educational benefit and the pure enjoyment of exploring a new place with others who share your interests in travel and medicine. However, if your travel plans conflict with the events your Site Manager has planned, we ask that you notify your Site Manager several days in advance so that they're able to plan the excursion accordingly.

Excursions range from historical tours to culinary and cultural explorations. Your Site Manager will inform you of the different excursions they have planned during your program orientation.



Safety

Though a program abroad is an exciting opportunity to have fun and discover a new part of the world, it's important to be especially mindful of safety given your unfamiliarity with the surrounding environment.

Pickpocketing is much more common in Europe than in the United States. We advise keeping an eye on your belongings and using across-the-body bags with zippers to protect against pickpockets. Make sure you know Spain's emergency phone number (112), and always travel in groups. There are many beggars in Zaragoza, but you need not feel intimidated by them; simply be cautious.

A Few More Tips

THE SPANISH CULTURE SHOCK SURVIVAL GUIDE:

- Air conditioning is less common in Spain. Your room might not have one, or (in the event that it does) it might run warmer than your typical American unit.
- There is (almost) always room for one more person on the bus/metro. Personal space? What personal space.
- Americans are culturally loud; try to speak and laugh quietly.
- You may have to pay to use the restroom. Keep some euros on hand—and tissues.
- It is fairly common for the Spaniards (transportation operators, nurses, etc) to go on strike. If you find yourself stranded in another city, contact your Site Manager.
- You don't have to pay 10 euro for a flimsy umbrella! It is acceptable to haggle with street and market vendors. Don't try it with shopkeepers, though. (Check with your Site Manager for more tips on this.)
- You don't have to tip your waiter, taxi driver, etc!



Currency

The currency in Spain is the euro. Euros generally have a higher exchange rate than US dollars (one euro is equal to more than one US dollar), but we encourage checking the exchange rate before your departure to become familiar with what you might expect to pay for meals and other items.

Unlike the US, Spain is a “cash-based” country, which means that paying by credit or debit card might not always be an option. We recommend bringing the equivalent of 150 USD, already converted into euros. Your Site Manager will show you where you can find the nearest ATM to your housing, so that you’re able to continue withdrawing money during your stay.



Communication

While on your program, you’ll primarily be communicating with your Site Managers and the other students in your group through WhatsApp, an international communication app that allows you text and call for free using wifi. If you use WhatsApp outside of wifi, standard charges may apply. You can download WhatsApp for free through the App Store.

For all other communication you will be provided with an international SIM card or simple phone when you arrive at your program site, to use during the duration of your program. We HIGHLY recommend looking into purchasing an international data plan for the couple of days before and after your program, so that you’ll have a way to use data while you’re traveling to and from your site. International plans can be purchased on a day-today basis from most cellphone companies.

A Few More Tips (Cont.)

THE SPANISH CULTURE SHOCK SURVIVAL GUIDE:

- Dress conservatively, especially if you want to visit churches; they have dress codes! (Shoulders must be covered, no shorts or short skirts, etc.)
- You will walk A LOT. Be prepared to quadruple your average steps on American soil. And bring durable, comfortable shoes—the cobblestones are unforgiving.
- You don’t go to the “bar” to get beer; bars are where you go to get coffee and pastries. Long, leisurely meals are a way of life in Spain (none of this flipping tables business)! If you want your bill in a hurry, you may have to ask for it: “La cuenta, por favor!”
- The Spanish are friendly and humble people. While Zaragoza is an international city and has a heavy tourist presence, it is also a city for locals. You will mostly hear Spanish in the streets, and will find many neighborhoods practically untouched by tourism. Keep this in mind if out and about at night-- keep it quiet!
- There is an “art” to everything, even crossing the street. Let the environment (ancient buildings, historical spaces, and cultural attitudes) inspire you to carry yourself and to live with dignity.

As you prepare to embark on your Atlantis program, we highly encourage spending some time researching your host city. We're incredibly excited to help you prepare for this time of exploration, adventure, and growth in one of Spain's cultural treasures.

**“Travel and change of place impart
new vigour to the mind...”**

—SENECA

atlantis

4301 N Fairfax Dr. #701
Arlington, VA 22203
[Updated November 2019](#)

Copyright ©2018 St. Mary's Institute for Educational Excellence, LLC.
All rights reserved. Do not distribute or copy without express written permission.

