



Kate Sommers-Dawes faces the dilemma of choosing between studying Spanish surrounded by the chic dynamism of Barcelona and the alluring mystery of Andalucía



Barcelona

Along Spain's northeasterly coast lies Cataluña, the region that, perhaps somewhat unfairly, lays claim to both the urban center of Barcelona and the Costa Brava, or "wild coast," with its rocky coves and turquoise Mediterranean vistas. The autonomous region is also the birthplace of surrealist icon Salvador Dalí and located just outside Barcelona is the museum that honors him, a fanciful burgundy structure crowned with enormous egg sculptures.

Barcelona, Cataluña's capital, is fêted as cosmopolitan and sophisticated, and evidence in support of these monikers abounds: its Park Güell is only one of Gaudí's countless architectural marvels with its circuitous benches and slanting colonnades. Santa María del Mar, a medieval Catalan gothic cathedral, was commissioned in honor of the capture of Sardinia, and its construction lends itself impeccably to the occasional concert that takes place inside. The bustling boulevard Las Ramblas is an outstanding example of the spirit of Barcelona, where numerous stands selling flowers, newspapers, or birds and an abundance of street performers, cafes, and terraces enrich the landscape. The exceptional climate and its sandy beaches make Barcelona an attractive tourist proposition year round.

The Catalan language is the pride of its people despite the suppression of its use until the 1970s under Franco's dictatorship. Thriving in spite of such historical subjugation, this romance language can be heard abundantly throughout the region and is an official lan-

guage alongside Spanish — its success gives outsiders prime insight into the resilience and determination of the Catalans.

Schools in Barcelona

abcCollege

Students can take 20 or 25 lessons per week for as long as they like, starting any Monday. Classes are held from Monday to Friday during the mornings or afternoons, and have an average of eight students. abcCollege is located in a modern building, custom-built to guarantee effective and comfortable language learning. All classrooms are equipped with audio-visual facilities. The school also has a large conference hall and a computer room with free internet access, as well as a penthouse bar-terrace with panoramic views of Barcelona.

It's location in the city center, near the Plaza Molina, is well-connected by major metro and bus routes.

Camino Barcelona

Located in the center of Barcelona, Camino Barcelona provides on-site accommodation and offers a wide variety of courses in well-equipped classrooms with a maximum class size of ten. All classrooms are air-conditioned and it has a cafeteria, three sunny terraces, and free wireless internet connection. In the on-site student residence, students have the opportunity to enjoy en suite bathrooms, hydro-massage showers, balconies, modern kitchens, and

Two Sides of Spain



Beachriders in the south of Spain

flat-screen televisions in every apartment. The school is located in a lively street in the Eixample neighborhood, a ten-minute walk from Plaza Cataluña and Las Ramblas. Eixample is famous for its many shops, restaurants, and bars — where there are endless possibilities to meet people.

ESADE

For two years in a row (2006, 2007), The Wall Street Journal picked ESADE's MBA program as the best in the world. There is no question that the school owes its reputation mainly to its business programs. However in addition to the business school, tourism, and law schools, ESADE has a prestigious language center. ESADE's Executive Language Center offers Spanish intensive language courses, not only to foreign students already enrolled in any of the law or business programs, but to anyone interested in Spanish learning. One strong selling point of ESADE-ELC is its Barcelona location. The building was initially meant as a language instruction facility and now hosts both the MBA programs in addition to the language school. Another key to the success of the ELC is the quality of the professors; Delia Castro, head of the Spanish Department, was formerly the Head of the Master's Program for Teachers of Spanish as a Second Language at the Universitat de Barcelona. The school policy allows a maximum of 10 students per group, facilitating individual attention. ESADE is also open to establishing tailor-made summer programs for foreign universities, which could include Spanish classes, company and cultural visits, and business-related topics, taught in either English or Spanish. Foreign students at ESADE experience life in one of the most beautiful cities in the world while studying Spanish at a prestigious business and language school.

IH Barcelona

International House offers a wide range of top quality Spanish language courses in a number of Spain's most exciting locations. These include Barcelona, Córdoba, Palma de Mallorca, Madrid, San Sebastián, Sevilla, Valencia, and Vejer (Cádiz).

Apart from the language courses themselves, each school also provides a long list of other services including an airport meeting and transfer service, accommodation placement, engaging programs of social and cultural activities and opportunities to meet people from the local community. The details of the courses and other services on offer vary to an extent from school to school, but the quality of service is guaranteed by the fact that all the schools share the same rigorous and externally verified standards.

IH Barcelona is located in the center of that sensational city, within easy walking distance of all the most famous landmarks including the gothic quarter, the Ramblas, Gaudi's most famous buildings, and the city's sandy beach.

The school has an international reputation and is one of the largest teacher training centers in the world. Every year thousands of students and hundreds of trainee teachers take a course at IH Barcelona.

Students can follow an entire study program at IH Barcelona, or they can combine a period of study in Barcelona with a period spent in one of the other IH centers in Spain. In both cases, full time students from the U.S. can usually obtain study credits for the course from their own university or college.

inlingua Barcelona

At inlingua, students begin speaking Spanish from their first lesson. Spanish lessons use the inlingua method and focus on specific language skills such as speaking, grammar, listening, and pronunciation.

Study Abroad

Moreover, it is the only school within the inlingua network authorized to perform the DELE-exams, which are the only exams leading to official certification in the Spanish language. The inlingua Barcelona Spanish Department is located in an old, recently renovated building in the city center, and is equipped with all facilities necessary for a modern school of languages.

UAB Idiomes Barcelona

The School of Modern Languages of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), offers intensive Spanish courses running all year with start dates every month and tailor-made programs for groups. Courses enable students to make rapid progress and use Spanish in an effective and practical way. They also introduce students to the cultural and social customs of the country. The school's teaching method is based on a communicative approach with a special focus on practicing oral expression, which includes interactive activities to develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In addition, students learn strategies to continue studying the language on their own. Teachers are qualified and experienced language teaching professionals, dedicated to providing a successful learning experience. The school is in an impressive art nouveau building, part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site in the center of Barcelona. UAB Idiomes Barcelona also offers accommodation, visits to some of the many interesting local sites and events in Barcelona, and exchanges with local students. All courses are certified by the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and are valid for university credits.

Andalucía

Located in the south, Spain's Andalucía region is home to such preeminent cities as Seville, Málaga, Córdoba, and Granada. Due to Andalucía's history of hundreds of years of Moorish rule, its countryside is dotted with spectacular monuments. One such celebrated landmark is the Alhambra in Granada, a medieval palace built by Muslim rulers whose Arabic name means "the red fortress" and whose crimson walls are embellished with ancient Arabic poetry. Another of Andalucía's architectural triumphs is the bell tower of the Cathedral of Seville, known as the Giralda. Originally built in the 12th century as the minaret of the mosque that once stood on the site, the Giralda endures as a synthesis of Almohad and Spanish renaissance architecture.

The Mezquita of Córdoba, another magnet for travelers, is an eighth century mosque of onyx columns and gilded ceilings that is today a cathedral and is characterized by architecture that has been slowly transformed over centuries of invasions and additions. Its belfry's pinnacle offers a spectacular view of the Courtyard of the Orange Trees below and the city beyond.

The region's climate and beaches have made it a popular European tourist destination, but it still retains its mysterious, authentic flavor.

Schools in Andalucía

Carmen de las Cuevas

After traveling through alleys of Granada, visitors to this school reach an ancient gateway with a sign that reads Carmen de las Cuevas. On

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opening the door, students enter a maze of staircases, classrooms, a library, terraces, and patios. A subtle sound of Flamenco music from someone practicing the guitar accompanies the visit while Carmen, who has been running the school for 25 years, hosts the tour. Terrace views include the Alhambra, the centuries-old Moorish fortress. Carmen de las Cuevas is an Instituto de Cervantes-accredited school, and offers courses from a beginner's first words to preparation courses for the official Spanish diplomas (DELE). The school offers an interactive and cross-situational learning environment, where students use their Spanish in activities such as guided visits in and around Granada, horseback riding, or cookery classes, and is also a renowned Flamenco school. Thus, students can combine Spanish classes with Flamenco, be it by dancing or playing the guitar.

Escuela de Idiomas Nerja

Nerja is a town of 20,000 inhabitants situated on the Costa del Sol near Málaga that still retains its traditional Andalusian character. It is surrounded by mountains and beautiful beaches. Its climate, with an average year-round temperature of 68°F, is ideal. Farming, fishing, and tourism are its main income sources. Escuela de Idiomas Nerja, founded in 1980, is situated in the center of the old town in a typical Andalusian house with a large garden, terraces, and patio, only a few minutes walk from accommodations, shops, and beaches.

The school has 16 comfortable classrooms and offers 14 intensive Spanish programs with four to six classes per day from one to 36

weeks. The student population is diverse, and the school has its own accommodation, Club Costa Nerja, which has 28 rooms with private bathrooms. Apartments and host family accommodations are also available. It is accredited by the Instituto Cervantes.

Escuela Montalbán

Escuela Montalbán-TANDEM Granada has been teaching Spanish as a foreign language since 1986, is accredited by the Instituto Cervantes, and is also a DELE examination center. The school facility, with its Andalusian architectural style, friendly classrooms, and beautiful courtyard, retains much of the charm and intimacy of a family home. It is situated in a quiet location just ten minutes away from the city center. An extensive cultural program always complements Spanish courses. Over the last few years, Escuela Montalbán's complementary cultural program for Body & Mind has gained great popularity among students. Students can choose five different options: Spanish traditional cooking classes, dance courses such as Flamenco and Tango, horse riding in the Sierra Nevada national park, or trekking in the Alpujarras. The school is a member of TANDEM International network of language schools. The Spanish in Spain Program gives students the opportunity to study in two different cities in one trip in collaboration with the other schools in San Sebastián, Barcelona, Madrid, Valencia, and Cádiz. ☒

Kate Sommers-Dawes is assistant editor for *Language Magazine*.

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