

VOICES

Some **assistants** participating in the program share with us their **EXPERIENCES** and **impressions**. Discover **unique places** in different parts of **Spain.**

FOREIGN LANGUAGE ASSISTANTS



GOBIERNO
DE ESPAÑA

MINISTERIO
DE EDUCACIÓN, CULTURA
Y DEPORTE

INDEX



ANDALUCÍA

Cádiz.....	3
Córdoba.....	6
Sevilla.....	7

ARAGÓN

Huesca.....	8
-------------	---

ASTURIAS

Oviedo.....	8
-------------	---

CASTILLA Y LEÓN

Palencia.....	9
Soria.....	9

CEUTA.....

10

COMUNIDAD VALENCIANA

Alicante.....	11
Valencia.....	12

ANDALUCÍA

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María Garzón



Cádiz
Los Barrios

Living in Los Barrios was one of the best things that ever happened to me. Yes it is not Madrid or Barcelona but the best thing about living in a small town like Los Barrios is that you get to experience the south's raw culture. You eat, live, breathe and get to see first hand the typical lifestyle and culture of Andalusia. For example the holidays such as Semana Santa, Feria and Romeria where you get to watch traditional processions, dance flamenco and have great food. The area is also great for travelling and you have places like Seville, Gibraltar, Tarifa and Morocco nearby, which are all very unique. This little town captured my heart not only by its beauty but also by its people. The teachers at school were all so friendly and helped me with anything. I never felt alone and I met lots of people and built meaningful friendships.

My experience teaching in the schools in Los Barrios has been gratifying in many ways. One of them was being able to contribute to the students' path to learning English. Motivating and demonstrating to them the importance of learning English through fun and interactive activities. Enriching their knowledge by talking to them about where I come from, motivated the students to participate and be genuinely interested. The best part is that in their mind you are a friend and they look up to you, which motivated me to be a good example of someone who can come out of their comfort zone to achieve something they never thought they would be able to do. This for me was one of the best things I could do for myself.

My advice for anyone starting a new journey in Los Barrios is to come with an open mind and an open heart. Get involved in everything, don't miss out on anything. There are also many other language Assistants in Algeciras and La Linea that are going through the same thing as you that you can always count on if times get rough.

So I dare you to find the beauty that lies beneath this precious town called Los Barrios. You will not regret it.

”



Cádiz
Ubrique

“

David Hancock

It's sort of a peaceful place to live. I live in a house next to the mountains and in a matter of five minutes I am in the natural park. I go for a hike or any other bunch of options all around. Whenever, I feel in communion with the nature.

”



WATCH VIDEO

ANDALUCÍA

José Luís Contreras

Cádiz

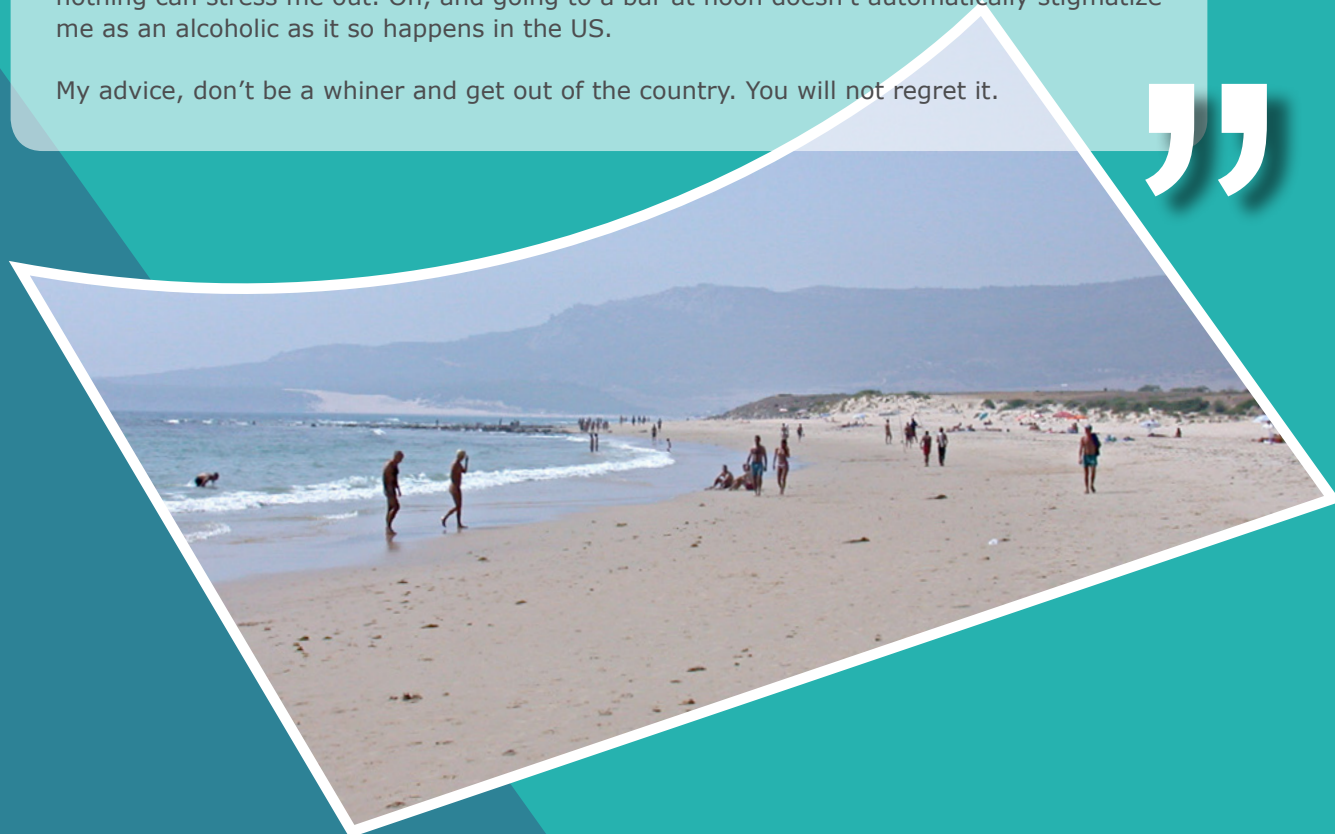
Prado del Rey

My personal experience was composed of living two years in a small town of roughly 30,000 inhabitants called Arcos de la Frontera in the province of Cadiz, and two more years (currently on my fourth) in an even smaller town of 5,000 inhabitants called Prado Del Rey, which is just 30 km away from Arcos. This was important to me as I still keep in touch with the friends I have in Arcos de la Fra. My first impression was completely novel. I had seen pictures online of the town Arcos and it looked gorgeous. When I got here my expectations were met based on what I had seen online. People were very nice and I quickly found myself

acquainted with the school staff. They are the first group of people you really get to know. As time passed by I was invited to various hiking trips in the nearby Sierra de Grazalema, skiing trips in Sierra Nevada, and trips to the beaches which were an hour away. I love outdoor activities, so I had found my spot. The small towns of the Sierra: Benamahoma, Grazalema, Benaocaz, Villaluenga del Rosario among others, are really a sight to see. The beaches such as Playa de Bolonia, Caños de Meca, and El Palmar are untouched beaches just waiting to be explored. When the time came to renew, I had no doubt I wanted to spend another year. The deciding factor was the friendship I had attained amongst the staff, and the many activities that I participated in. Each January I made the decision to renew at the same place. However, as I understand, they only let you be in the same place for two years. I was fortunate enough to be given Prado Del Rey, which allowed me to start anew in a different place while keeping my ties with Arcos.

I learned a lot about the country's history including the obscure era of the Dictator Franco, which most people are unaware of. I learned about the old currency they used to use, and the cost of living and how it has changed. I learned about their political system, political parties, and their views on the bullfights. I learned that they like to sit down and have a coffee and not think about what you have to do next while you are having your coffee. Needless to say, they are not lazy just because they take siestas. They have a different work schedule, and they put a lot of effort into enjoying the present. In a nutshell, they have a slower pace of work which eventually reduced my mental stress by about half, they have made me rethink my life objectives and now that I will be going back to the U.S. in this new Trump era, nothing can stress me out. Oh, and going to a bar at noon doesn't automatically stigmatize me as an alcoholic as it so happens in the US.

My advice, don't be a whiner and get out of the country. You will not regret it.



ANDALUCÍA



Cádiz

This year I'm lucky enough to be working as a language assistant in Cádiz, in two schools - one primary and one secondary. Cádiz is a gorgeous ancient port city at the southern most point of Spain, home to buzzing streets, old plazas and sandy beaches. I live in the old town - or the casco antiguo - which is where I spend the majority of my time because my schools are here too.

On my very first day in Spain, my coordinator Angustias gave me such a warm welcome with a paseo around the old town. A week or so later was my first day at the secondary school, Cornelio Balbo, where I was given a tour by some students. They were confident, friendly and keen to talk to me... and it really made me excited to get going and start leading classes!

My responsibilities and level of involvement vary from day to day. One day I might be sat by the side of the classroom, occasionally correcting pronunciation, and the next I might be leading a whole session with something I'd prepared earlier. The teachers here are always flexible and happy to help you out.

I developed my own bank of popular classroom activities, the most successful of which either involve music, moving around the classroom or some kind of competitive element. The students are also involved in a lot of extra curricular activities like surfing, local sporting competitions and music - there's a local junior conservatoire where students study dance and music outside of school.

Every day they make me smile with their cheeky wit and fiery Spanish 'duende.' Despite their feistiness they're also incredibly affectionate, and I'm equally as lucky with my colleagues, all of whom welcomed me with open arms - after first mistaking me for a student in the staff room! One of my highlights so far was going to the staff Christmas social where we spent the evening eating canapés, drinking cervezas and dancing salsa!



Charlie Reston

Cádiz's location, together with my 12-hour week, monthly 700€ salary and Erasmus grant allow me to travel guilt-free. In the four months I've been away, I've been to Morocco, Córdoba, Granada, Madrid, Seville, Málaga and Aracena, with plans to go to el País Vasco and Valencia soon!

If you're lucky enough to be able to choose a specific school, I urge you to choose one of mine...that's Cornelio Balbo if you're interested in secondary teaching, or Celestino Mutis for primary.



ANDALUCÍA



Córdoba

Lucena

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I was able to visit cities on the weekends, and in the end, I am glad that I did in that way, that I live in a pueblo and visit to the cities. If you live in Cordoba,

Sevilla or Granada, you are guaranteed to be hanging out with a lot of people, a lot like you, speaking a lot of english, doing things that you cant just easily do back home. So if you want and authentic experience, if you want to really get to know Spain, Andalucia, I would encourage you to consider a pueblo.

(...)

That is where the real Spain, the real Andalucía, is. That is where you are really going to improve your spanish, that is where you are going to make conection friends that will last a lifetime.



WATCH VIDEO

Charlie

”



Guiri problems with NiTosha Billman.

Proyecto Bilingüe Cervantes.



WATCH VIDEO

You'll Never Walk Alone.

Proyecto Bilingüe Cervantes.



WATCH VIDEO



Córdoba

Puente Genil

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It really push me out my comfort zone and encourage me to meet other people, speak spanish everyday, which is something i wouldn't find the chance to do if I was living in a bigger city.

”



WATCH VIDEO

ANDALUCÍA

Sevilla

Elise Davis



<http://myadventuresabroadelise.blogspot.com.es/>

“

that I CAN go to social events where I don't know anybody, and also that I am enjoying my work in the secondary school and am able to learn from my mistakes, put the bad days behind me, and focus on the good ones, which are definitely the majority.

[...]

I have also been really enjoying the social life that I have found in Sevilla as I have been spending a lot of time going out to parties with my friends, going out to try various Spanish cuisine, going to the cinema, relaxing in the beautiful parks in Sevilla, and generally really making the most of living in such a lively, exciting, and sociable city.

[...]

I have a big trip to Morocco and the Sahara Desert coming up in just three weeks time and I will also be posting about my experiences of the Easter week in Sevilla and La Feria de Abril as these are both very beautiful and fascinating experiences to have in Sevilla. For this reason I would like to share them with you and also post some pictures so that you can see some of the traditional festivals and customs of Sevilla.



”

Augustus Thomas



<http://ceipsansebastian2006.blogspot.com.es/>

“

A day in the life of an auxiliar de conversación in San Sebastián (Albaida del Aljarafe) is fun. Whenever I enter a class all the children know that Teacher Gus has come to play games, share stories, and be a stickler for pronunciation.

”

Sevilla Albaida del Aljarafe



Alexandra Rayo

<http://blogsaverroes.juntadeandalucia.es/auxiliaresconversacionsevilla/2017/02/03/relatos-de-auxiliares-4-a-letter-from-a-language-assistant-in-estepa/>

“

My time at IES Ostippo in Estepa has been a positive experience thus far. It's my first time in a small Andalusian town, and it's definitely been interesting! Each day starts off with me hiking up a steep mountainside, passing through the small pueblo of white houses, and feeling the brisk breeze through my many layers. Once I arrive at work I'm usually greeted by both students and coworkers alike with a friendly, "Good morning, teacher!" And so begins my day.

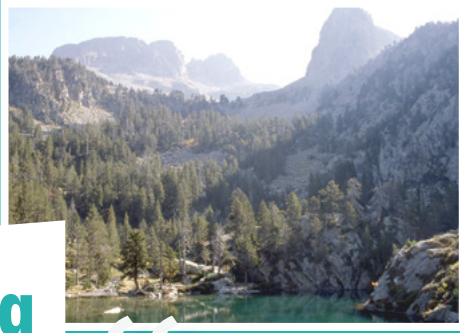
Sevilla Estepa

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ARAGÓN

Catalina Hoadaley Lawrence

Huesca
Benasque



I have been living in Benasque for almost four months and I have been able to adapt well to the village. I feel fortunate that I was able to come here to Benasque because the people here are friendly, kind, and are willing to help. I believe these qualities make Benasque a special place and as a person who is from a different country, this makes life here so much easier and enjoyable. Furthermore, I am working in both the primary and secondary schools and my experience has been great. Not only has it been a pleasure for myself to help and work with the children of all age groups, but working with teachers who are passionate about what they do is an inspiration to me.

ASTURIAS

Benny Ussyshkin

Inspired by the notion of wanting to experience life in Spain in a different light, I opted to change provinces this year. I currently live in Oviedo, the capital city in the northern province of Asturias. Living in a medium sized city has proven challenging in its own ways. Making friends, and/or finding other English speakers is certainly not as easy as it was in Madrid, so if this is a priority for you, take note. Living here also comes with a host of benefits: incredible landscapes, mountain/beach access (which I've benefited from by going outdoor climbing/surfing, for the first time in my life), an authentic subculture/language (Asturian/Bable, with only about 100,000 native speakers), friendlier people (sorry, Madrid!) and ease of movement (you can walk anywhere).

Oviedo



WATCH VIDEO



CASTILLA Y LEÓN

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Elisabeth



Palencia

Guardo

Cuando llegué a Guardo, nunca imaginé que mi vida iba a ser así. Desde el primer día me sentí como en casa, aunque Guardo es muy diferente de donde vengo. Al llegar aquí, me quedé impresionada por la naturaleza del lugar. Después, cuando fui al instituto y al colegio, los alumnos fueron muy simpáticos conmigo. Un día, fui con dos de mis alumnos y su familia a comer un cocido típico de la zona. Otro día, fui con otro padre de un alumno a pasear por la montaña. También con los otros profesores conocí el pueblo y hicimos cosas como pasear, ir a comer, etc. Me encanta mi trabajo en el instituto y uno de los colegios en Guardo. Ellos me dan la oportunidad de realizar las actividades que quiero, como hablar de los temas que a mí me interesan, realizar manualidades y muchas más cosas. En conclusión, estoy muy agradecida por la oportunidad de vivir esta experiencia.

”



Soria

You will have the opportunity to know our history, heritage and nature.



WATCH VIDEO



“

CEUTA

Charlot Chanabier

Bonjour les filles et les garçons,

Moi c'est Margot, je suis étudiante en Sciences Politiques et suis assistante de Français à Ceuta pour l'année scolaire 2016-2017. Alors, Ceuta c'est une enclave espagnole dans le nord du Maroc, à 1h de Tanger. Si le destin, enfin l'administration du ministère, te propose Ceuta comme destination pour l'année prochaine, je t'en prie lis ce billet !

Ceuta n'est pas une ville comme les autres c'est indéniable. La situation géographique te permet d'aller au Maroc comme si tu allais faire tes courses chez Carrefour, c'est dingue non ? Envie d'aller manger du poisson frais dans un petit port de pêcheurs ? Envie d'aller visiter les villes impériales et te perdre dans les médinas parmi les plus belles du monde ? Envie de manger une tortilla et du chorizo a la plancha le midi et un tajine le soir ? Bienvenue chez moi. D'un point de vue scolaire, tu es quand même là pour être professeur(e), le public est extraordinaire. En toute honnêteté, les élèves sont curieux, respectueux, et encore curieux ! La majorité des élèves parlent deux langues, le marocain, le darija, et l'espagnol. Quoi de mieux qu'être professeur(e) face à des élèves qui représentent l'avenir de notre société, soit la diversité culturelle et linguistique ? A Ceuta tu pourras en apprendre davantage sur le contexte migratoire qui est également très présent dans cette ville européenne sur le continent africain. Beaucoup de réfugiés qui passent par Ceuta sont francophones, alors personnellement, j'ai des copains qui viennent de Guinée Conakry, du Cameroun, du Bénin, du Sénégal, du Maroc, de l'Algérie... sans parler des ceutis et de leur accueil chaleureux.

J'espère que, comme moi, tu viendras voir cette ville qui a été berbère, portugaise, espagnole!

”



In Ceuta, Yes.

Promotional video, produced by "JJ Producciones", "Creativos" and "The Corner Shop Cervantes."



WATCH VIDEO

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Ceuta

Pam

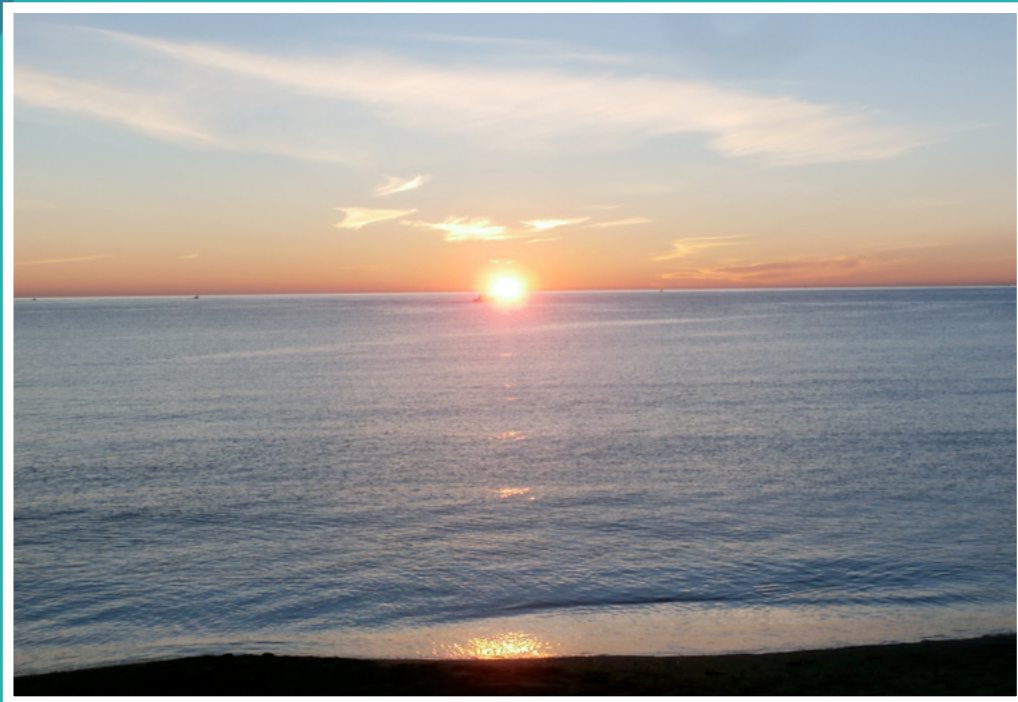
I choose ceuta because it is quite different from other parts of Spain. Has lots of unique aspects, being so close to morocco. I think it's a very underrated part of spain. I think is a good choice.



WATCH VIDEO

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COMUNIDAD VALENCIA



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Amandine Jacques



Alicante

Almoradí

Este es mi segundo año como auxiliar de francés en el instituto Azud de Alfeitamí, situado en Almoradí, un pueblo pequeño ubicado a unos 40 minutos de Alicante. El día de mi llegada en el instituto, todo el mundo me acogió con entusiasmo, como si formara parte de la gran familia de profesores que ya se conocían entre todos desde años.

Con la otra auxiliar de inglés, nos invitaron a comidas de profesores a principios del curso, nos propusieron excursiones para visitar un poco los alrededores, y algunos nos invitaron a su casa para comer. Son personas muy amables y acogedoras.

En cuanto a las actividades en mi tiempo libre, varían mucho. En efecto, he visitado bastantes lugares alrededor del pueblo en el que vivo. Tengo que admitir que el pueblo en el que vivo está muy bien situado, porque está rodeado por ciudades bastantes grandes como Torrevieja, Elche, Alicante... y dado que vivo a 5 minutos de la estación de autobuses, es muy fácil y cómodo desplazarme para irme de compras, para pasear cerca del mar o irme al cine... También tengo amigos que estudian en Valencia, así que algunas veces me voy de viaje allí y como no trabajo los lunes y martes, me da tiempo irme de viaje y volver.

Los jueves por la tarde, voy a casa de la directora para dar clases particulares a su hijo y sus amigos. Es otra experiencia muy enriquecedora, tanto para mí como para ellos, porque así permite crear vínculos más cercanos y desarrollar otro método de aprendizaje.

El primer año de trabajo, con los profesores y la directora del insituto, nos fuimos una mañana al ayuntamiento para conocer al alcalde de Almoradí. Nos acogió en su despacho, y hablamos de la experiencia como lectora de lengua. Fue muy amable. Sigo muy contenta con haber renovado este curso, los profesores y la gente del instituto es maravillosa, y creo que lo que más importa cuando estamos en un país que no es nuestro, es sentirse como si estuviéramos con nuestra familia.

”

COMUNIDAD VALENCIA



Alicante

Denia



Gabriel Pena

I encourage you to choose Valencia community because it is well communicated to the rest of the Spain because of the train system, so even if you are pretty far from Madrid and Barcelona, there is a train that stop here in Denia and in most of the other smaller cities. It is well communicated with the rest of the country. (...) During the weekends that is what I like to do, travel to all these coast cities.



WATCH VIDEO



Jemma Packham

Me llamo Jemma, tengo veinte años y vivo en Inglaterra en una ciudad que se llama Reading. Estoy trabajando en un colegio de infantil y primaria, CEIP Balmes, que está en un pueblo pequeño que se llama Guadassuar a unos 30 Km de Valencia.

Vivo en un piso en el centro de Valencia muy cerca de la estación del Norte. Lunes, martes y miércoles voy en tren a la escuela. El tren es muy barato con un abono mensual y el viaje dura unos treinta minutos más o menos. El pueblo no tiene una estación de tren y por lo tanto uno de los profesores me recoge cada mañana, y me acerca a la estación por la tarde. Trabajo lunes, martes y miércoles. Lo cual me permite disfrutar de un fin de semana muy largo y hacer muchas excursiones por toda España.

Durante las clases, trabajamos en grupos de cuatro o cinco niños, hablamos en inglés, hacemos y contestamos preguntas. A mediodía como con algunos profesores en el comedor escolar. Para mí, es muy útil porque me permite mejorar mi español y aprender nuevas palabras. Todos los profesores son muy acogedores y amables y me ayudan en todo lo que necesito.

En mi tiempo libre, doy una clase particular con dos niños pequeños una vez a la semana, voy al gimnasio, me reúno con otros auxiliares que están trabajando en Valencia, exploro la ciudad y mis amigos y yo hacemos varias escapadas, por ejemplo un día alquilamos un coche y fuimos a Málaga para pasar el fin de semana. Además, en verano podremos pasar más tiempo en la playa durante nuestros días libres.

Valencia es una ciudad con mucha vida nocturna y mucho ambiente tanto de día como de noche. Moverse por toda la ciudad es fácil y barato con el sistema de transporte público, por ejemplo con el metro. La arquitectura de la ciudad es preciosa y todos los edificios son grandes. Debo mencionar la comida también, la paella valenciana y las tapas son típicas en España.

