

Bethany

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I went into my Year Abroad with a pretty advanced level of Spanish (or so I thought at the time), but actually hearing people speak at a natural pace - very fast - completely overwhelmed me at first. But once I got to know my mentors at the schools, my comprehension skills seemed to just kick in and before I knew it I was heaps better than I was before, and still improving. Being surrounded by people encouraging me to speak Spanish, and equally wanting to practice their English with me, was really helpful and a lot of fun at times.

Something I struggled with was feeling quite alone sometimes. Living alone in a very small town meant it was a lot harder to socialise, especially with people my own age. Something I gained from that is a huge sense of independence and the ability to completely look after myself, even in a foreign country. A mistake I made was not telling my mentors that I felt lonely until later on, because as soon as I did tell them, I was invited to anything and everything they hosted! From quick shopping trips, and days on the beach, to days out and huge birthday parties - they even hosted a surprise birthday party for me!



If I were to give just one piece of advice to future Year Abroad students, it would be: be open with people about how you're feeling. Overall I would say just relax; everything falls into place bit by bit. Do of course be organised, but know you don't have to sort absolutely everything in one go.