

Zaragoza Guidebook



Zaragoza, Spain

Summer global health experience in Zaragoza, Spain. A thorough orientation to help prepare you for your experience abroad.

By: Sujung Kim
Class of 2018

Overview

About this Orientation Guidebook

The summer global health program in Zaragoza, Spain is an ideal opportunity for students who wish to experience medicine abroad and improve their medical Spanish. This orientation guidebook has been created to provide an overview of the trip, as well as useful recommendations and important preparatory information to help the program run as smoothly as possible.

Overview of the Experience

The summer program in Zaragoza exposes students to a wide variety of medical specialties, with a special focus on primary care. The program is extremely flexible and allows students to arrange for shadowing opportunities in many fields of interest, such as pediatrics, emergency medicine, and ophthalmologic surgery. The experience is primarily based on shadowing, with occasional opportunities for direct clinical involvement, depending on the assigned physician.

The experience is also an opportunity for students to practice Spanish, both in conversation and in a medical context. By fully immersing in the environment, students practice speaking and understanding Spanish on a daily basis and have the opportunity to greatly improve their Spanish skills and communication.

The program length is flexible, but 4 weeks is recommended. A minimum of 2 weeks is strongly encouraged.

About Zaragoza

Zaragoza is a friendly, safe, and convenient city in Northeast Spain. It is the capital and main province of the Aragón region of Spain. Its location is conveniently between Madrid and Barcelona, and close to many other popular locations, such as Valencia. The transportation system is excellent, including the popular Tranvía tram that runs the length of Zaragoza, and the high-speed AVE-Renfe train that is convenient for traveling to other cities.

Zaragoza is a compact town, optimal for walking, and there is an abundance of grocery shops and restaurants to explore. As Zaragoza is a city rich with history and culture, there are also numerous museums, architectural sites, and monuments.



Clinical Rotations

During the program, you will have ample opportunities to shadow in a wide variety of different specialties, in many clinics throughout Zaragoza (and beyond) (See Appendix A for hospital locations). The program focuses on primary care, so much of our time was spent in family medicine, internal medicine, and pediatrics. However, we were also able to shadow in OB/GYN, ophthalmology, surgery, emergency medicine, and rural medicine. We each spent about 2-3 days at each of these clinical sites.



Organization and Planning: In the months leading up to our arrival, we communicated via email with the coordinators of the program, Dr. Javier García-Campayo and Marta Puebla. During this time, they told us the particular requirements (e.g. student insurance) and helped answer our questions about the more specific details of the program. We confirmed our dates of stay with Dr. García-Campayo and let him know our fields of interest. It was best to communicate in Spanish.

Once we arrived in Zaragoza, our main point-of-contact was Dr. Rosa Magallón, a colleague of Dr. García-Campayo. We met with her at the Centro Salud Arrabal on the first day of our arrival, and each day she set up the shadowing assignments with the physicians. We communicated with her throughout the length of the program, nearly daily via email, and she let us know our shadowing assignment for the upcoming few days.

*Tip: Be prepared to be flexible and open to new opportunities! Sometimes the schedules didn't work out exactly right, but it often turned out just fine.

*Tip: The following paperwork must be completed prior to your trip: Global Health Grant Application Form, Externship Form, registration with Rutgers Global Affairs, and Health Insurance. Christina Rozario from the Global Health office will provide you more information about this.

Hours: In general, the shadowing hours were Monday through Friday, 9am to 2pm. However, they varied depending on each doctor and specialty. For example, the clinic for rural medicine was over an hour away so the doctor picked us up at around 7am, whereas our emergency medicine rotations were during the evening shift. Again, it was all very flexible and so we communicated frequently with Dr. Rosa Magallón and our shadowing physicians via email to set up the specific time and meeting location.



Attire and materials: The attire in the hospital is appropriately casual. Most often, we wore jeans with a nice shirt, or a dress. You will need your white coat and stethoscope each day. Other materials you may want to have with you: reflex hammer, penlight, pen, notebook, Medical Spanish pocketcard.

*Tip: It may be helpful to pack your lunch or bring snacks. In the summer, lunchtime is usually not until 2pm.

Transportation

Flights

There are numerous flights throughout the summer from the U.S. to Madrid and Barcelona, which easily connect to Zaragoza by the AVE-Renfe train (~1 hour 20 minutes from Madrid, ~1 hour 40 minutes from Barcelona). Be sure to book your AVE-Renfe train ticket ahead of time – more information about this below.

Costs: The costs of the flight will of course vary depending on dates, location, and number of layovers. Our trip was from mid-June to mid-July and we each flew non-stop, separately from Newark, JFK, or Philadelphia. Our tickets ranged in price from \$1,200 - \$1,400. There were also cheaper 1-stop flights available for around \$1,000. (More information about budget in a later section).

Website: Try Google Flights and justfly.com as starting points for your ticket search.

AVE-Renfe

The Renfe high-speed train allows you to travel long distances between cities (including cities in other countries).

Website: book your tickets at venta.renfe.com. There are both English and Spanish versions of the site, but we experienced errors and other limitations while using the English version, so we purchased all our tickets through the Spanish site. It was surprisingly straightforward to do so. Still, there were some glitches using the website but after giving it some time we were successfully able to obtain all our tickets through the site.

There are multiple stops within the different cities. For us, it was most convenient to use the following stops:

- Zaragoza: Zaragoza-Delicias
- Madrid: Madrid – Puerta de Atocha
- Barcelona: Barcelona-Sants



Costs: The cost from Zaragoza to Madrid, or Zaragoza to Barcelona is approximately 35-45 euros/person, one-way.

*Tip: There is a discount deal for buying 4 seats at a time. This is for a special seating area for four people, which also has a table. On the website, choose the option: "Mesa". The cost for this arrangement is around €20-25/person, one-way.

*Tip: book your tickets ahead of time, at least a week in advance. Tickets and discounts can run out the week leading up to a date.

Tranvía

The Tranvía is one of Zaragoza's most convenient forms of transportation. It runs the vertical length of Aragón and stops at many of the most popular visitor sites.

Appendix B includes a map of the Tranvía path, which also delineates multiple points of interest.

Costs: The cheapest (and most convenient way) to ride the Tranvía is with the reusable/re-chargeable "Tarjeta BUS" card. Highly recommended! Single-use cards can be purchased at each train stop for €1.35. These cards are valid for a single trip, no transfer. The card expires 1 hour after purchase. The "Tarjeta BUS" card costs €5.00 and each ride costs €0.74, transfer permitted. You can refill the cards as necessary at certain train stops or at ticket machines inside the train. Though these cards are reportedly sold at every newspaper stand, we were only able to find it at one particular newspaper stand – look for a purple/green stand off of the Plaza Aragón stop.



Biking

Biking is another easy and fun way to get around town. Zaragoza has a bike share system called Bizi Zaragoza. There are many stops all throughout the town to pick up and drop off a bicycle, and often the stops are right at the main tourist attraction sites!

Website: At bizizaragoza.com you can find more information about the service, a map of all the bike stations throughout the city, and register for a temporary subscription.

Costs: A temporary subscription costs €5.28 and lasts for 72 hours after activation. The first 30 minutes of each journey is free, and each 30 minute fraction thereafter (up to 2 hours) is €0.52. The penalty for exceeding 2 hours is €3.16/hour. There is also a temporary €200 deposit hold at the time of your subscription purchase, which is returned to your account at the end of the subscription. The €200 is charged only if you fail to return the bicycle within 24 hours of picking up a bicycle from a station. Otherwise, you get that full amount back – this is the same process that you may have encountered for car rentals, for example.

* Tip: We tried this service and, as promised, we got our €200 back after the trial subscription period was over.



* Tip: Unfortunately, several of the bike stations had malfunctioning rental screens, such that we could not pick up or drop off bicycles at that station. Since there were many stations very close by (all nearby locations shown on a map at each station), we eventually found a few that worked. However, this definitely limited which stations we could use and made the service much less convenient. Perhaps the system will be improved in the next few upcoming years.

Walking

Many places of interest will be just a walking distance away. Zaragoza is a very walking-friendly city with separate paths for cars, trains, bicycles, and pedestrians. Even at nighttime, walking feels very safe (especially along the Tranvía pathway), as the roads are lighted and there are always people walking around. Luckily, in the summer time, it doesn't get dark until around 10pm!

Housing

A good place to start your housing search is Airbnb. We found several affordable options on this site, and our main deciding factors were cost and location. We decided on a location that was a close walking distance away from the hospital where we thought we would have our rotations. In reality, we shadowed in several different hospitals scattered throughout Zaragoza, so sometimes we walked to the hospital but most times we took the Tranvía.

Costs: Costs will of course vary depending on what you are looking for. To get an idea of the general cost, the price for renting our apartment for one month was a total of \$969, split amongst 4 people. The place had 2 bedrooms, 4 beds, and 2 bathrooms. It came with kitchenware, bedding, towels, and toilet paper. Wi-Fi, TV, and AC were all included in the cost. The picture to the right shows the place we rented. It had everything we needed!



Other considerations: In retrospect, we might have wanted to live a little bit closer to the touristy area. We were a bit away from the main area, though everything was still very accessible – a maximum of 20 minutes away by walking or a short Tranvía ride away. It might have been more convenient to live closer to the tourist spots, but potentially more expensive and less safe. The area we lived was further away but also convenient because we were closer to other helpful locations like multiple grocery stores and banks. Regardless of the location itself, living close to the Tranvía line proved to be extremely convenient (we were a 1 minute walk away from the Plaza de San Francisco stop).

*Tip: Having Wi-Fi at the apartment ended up being very important and helpful. There are but a few places in the city with free Wi-Fi accessible, and thus it was at our apartment that we were able to communicate with friends and family back home, and do research to plan our daily travel routes and weekend trips.

*Tip: Other housing opportunities may be available, such as homestay or living with the college students in the dorms at the nearby university. Speak with Dr. García-Campayo and Marta Puebla to find out what new opportunities might be possible!

Finances

Overall, the costs in Zaragoza were very reasonable, either comparable to prices in the U.S. or less expensive. Check online for the most up-to-date currency exchange rate!

Cash vs. credit card: There are several places in Zaragoza where you can use your American credit card, with or without an additional international fee depending on your bank. Visa and MasterCard were generally accepted, while some places did not take American Express. However, there are also many places that do *not* accept card, especially for lower dollar amounts (ex. at tapas places). Therefore, it is most convenient to have euros on hand.

Converting money: It may be most convenient to convert USD to euros prior to the trip, either at a bank or at the airport. However, there are also (limited) options for converting to euros once you are in Zaragoza. One location is called Titanes, found near the Plaza del Pilar. You will need your passport!



Four-week budget. The table below shows a breakdown of costs for the 4 weeks of the trip. This is only based on the expenses of a single individual and could vary widely depending on personal preferences, weekend trips, etc.

Airfare	\$14,00
Housing	\$275
Food (Restaurants, Groceries)	\$350
Transportation (Train, Bus, Cab, Bike)	\$150
Other (Gym class, etc.)	\$10
Fun/Tourism	\$100
TOTAL	\$2285

*Tip: We saved a lot of money on food because we cooked at home most days of the week and packed our lunches.

Other

Life in Zaragoza

Wi-Fi: Wi-Fi was not available at most locations, including the clinics and hospitals. This made communication challenging so it was helpful to plan out the day together the previous night, and determine a gathering time and location for the end of the day.

Food: Knowing what to eat at restaurants was a little more challenging than expected. We didn't recognize many of the words on the menu and there were not many vegetarian options (if this is a consideration). So, it was most helpful to peruse the restaurant menus beforehand and translate any words if necessary.

*Tip: Don't forget to check out El Tubo for tapas and also the Churrerías!

Siesta: Many locations (grocery stores, banks, restaurants, museums) were closed in the afternoon hours usually somewhere between 2pm and 6pm. Plan for this ahead of time and research opening times online before heading out to dinner, for example.

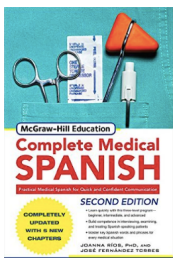
Weather: At the time of our trip, the weather was extremely hot. For a week, the temperature averaged around 100 degrees F. Take this into consideration when packing clothes and looking for a place to live (air conditioning!).

Safety: We always felt very safe in the city, especially along the line of the Tranvía. The sun stayed up late (setting around 10pm) and many people are often walking around.

Spanish

Medical Spanish Elective: Learn as much Spanish as you can throughout the year, especially in Medical Spanish. You will learn very helpful medical terminology and practice applying your knowledge via role-play scenarios, which is the best practice you can get for interacting in Spanish with future patients.

Tú vs. usted: Many of us learned in our high school Spanish classes to use the "usted" form to show respect and formality. However, in Zaragoza, we were taught that the usted form feels overly formal, and thus we used the tú and vosotros forms often (even with patients and doctors). It is helpful to look over the vosotros form to remember these conjugations.



Spanish Study Book: A supplemental Medical Spanish resource may be beneficial for self-study during the program. We studied Complete Medical Spanish by McGraw-Hill, and this proved to be a helpful resource, especially with vocabulary that we could use in the clinics.

Clinic Notes: We often took notes during clinic hours, jotting down unfamiliar words to look up later that day. This helped us continually develop our vocabulary especially as it pertained to the patients we saw in the clinics.

Medical Spanish Tutoring: Medical Spanish tutoring is available through the program at an additional cost. If this is something in which you are interested, you can work with the program coordinators to set up weekly lessons. At the time of our inquiry, the price was approximately 10 euros per student per hour.

Spanish Healthcare System

Overview: The healthcare system in Spain is known as the *Sistema Nacional de Salud (SNS)*. In 2007, the World Health Organization ranked the Spanish health system to be #7 in the world. In fact, Spain citizens have one of the highest life expectancies in Europe: 82.2 for women and 77.8 for men. The SNS is a free, universal system, enjoyed as a constitutionally guaranteed right. Its organization is decentralized, meaning that each of the 17 Autonomous Communities (AC) of Spain function relatively independently via individual regional health ministries, with oversight by the National Ministry of Health and Social Policy.

The system is primarily funded by citizen taxes, and predominantly operated within the public sector. There are no out-of-pocket expenses, except for prescription drugs, in which individuals under age 65 pay a 40% copayment. Though there is no option to “opt-out” of this system, citizens can also choose to pay additionally to receive care through private voluntary insurance (PVI). Approximately 10% of people choose to do so, typically for access to services such as specialist care in case of long waiting times within the public system, or for services such as adult dental and vision.

*Tip: Take some time to speak with the physicians to gain their perspectives and opinions on their healthcare system. It is interesting to hear their thoughts on what they believe to be the strengths and weaknesses of a universal system. Some factors thought to be strengths of the system are the availability of free, universal care for all people, ample choice of doctors, and ability to see doctors as frequently as needed. Some factors thought to be areas for improvement are long waits to see specialists and to receive certain procedures, and notable variability in quality of care and access to certain types of care among the 17 communities.

Miscellaneous

Planning: As mentioned previously, Wi-Fi was not easily found throughout the city. Thus we often planned ahead of time at our apartment, especially for planning out travel routes. We found the Google map stars (used for ‘saving’ locations) extremely helpful for finding our way around town. You can use the stars to mark out multiple locations on the map, and these remain available even when there is no Wi-Fi available, so they can serve as landmarks for navigation.

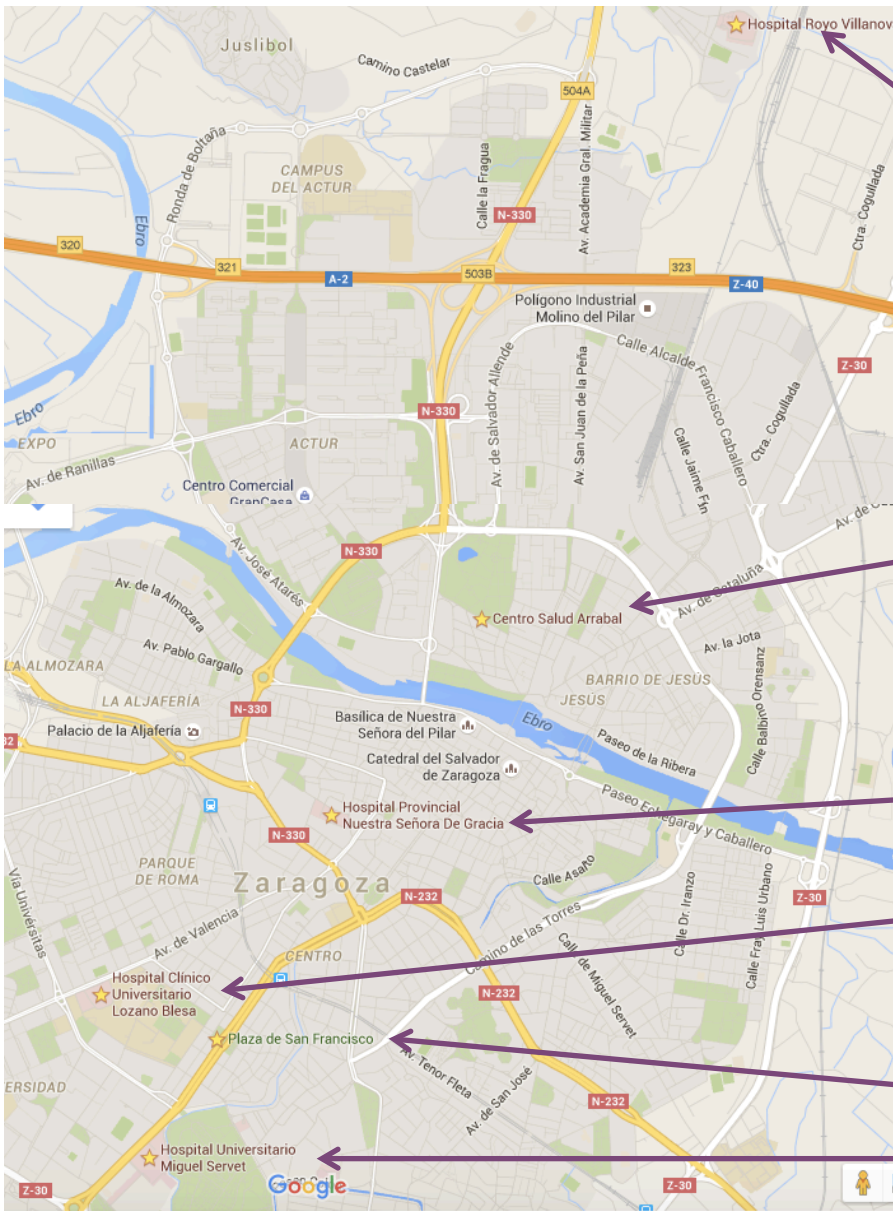
Journal: You may find it valuable to keep a journal throughout the experience, good both for self-reflection and as a memory keepsake. It may also serve useful for a future Independent Project. WordPress is one of many free blog sites available online.

People: We found that the people of Zaragoza were extremely friendly and understanding. Take this opportunity to practice speaking Spanish as much as possible!

Feel free to contact me at sujungkim.sk@gmail.com with any questions. Have a safe and fun trip!

Appendix A. Hospital Locations

The following map marks ('stars') the various hospitals at which we rotated. The notes on the side detail the various specialties we shadowed at that particular location.



Hospital Royo Villanova: emergency medicine

Centro Salud Arrabal: internal medicine, pediatrics. (This is also where you can meet with Dr. Rosa Magallón.)

Hospital Provincial Nuestra Señora De Gracia: gynecology surgery

Hospital Clínico Universitario Lozano Blesa ("El Clínico"): internal medicine, pediatrics, ophthalmology, gynecology

Plaza de San Francisco: Our apartment

Hospital Universitario Miguel Servet: ophthalmology, general surgery

*Not pictured: rural medicine site. We shadowed rural medicine at two separate locations, which were about an hour drive out from our apartment.

Appendix B: Tranvía Map

