

4 months are a very short time for any exchange but especially if you go in knowing very little about language or culture. It took me the first few months to get accustomed, so it is true to say that I left just when I arrived. Still I wouldn't trade in these past four months in Madrid. Coming in with no more language skills than "hola" oder "que tal", I repeatedly found myself in the situation of people asking me "Es esta silla ocupado" (is this seat taken) and me only nodding confirmingly to indicate it was free and then hectically waving with my hands when they would walk away. By then I knew I would struggle to find my way but let me wind back to the beginning.

### Accommodation

With a week to spare after final presentations of our studios I started to look for a room in Madrid. I had already booked my flight and was setting up appointments for the my first day in Madrid to look at rooms. I struggled with people not responding but finally got on the right path with **IDEALISTA**. The online portal for accommodation in Spain and I recommend to all future visitors of Madrid. I set up a couple of

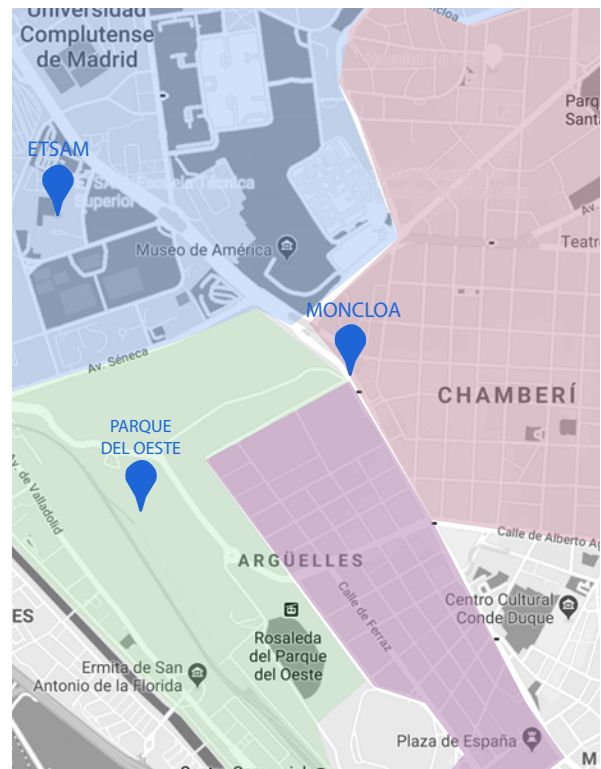


My room

visitations, booked my hostel for the first three nights and started packing.

### Area

When it comes to where to live I would definitely recommend Argüelles or Chamberí because both quarters are within walking distance of the university (ca. 25 min) and are rich in restaurants, shops, parks and all kinds of activities (I later learned being in walking distance to Moncloa is very convenient for traveling by bus).



Map ETSAM area

I know others that lived closer to the center for the walking distance to many bars and clubs but that is usually more expensive. For me it was a question of priorities and I just fell in love with Argüelles when I saw it. I chose a furnished room in a four bedroom apartment with three other girls that cost 490€ a month, plus expenses every two months. Definitely not cheap but reasonable for Madrid. I was lucky to get a contract for 5 months (many landlords demand at least 6 months) and moved in the next day.

## University

After settling down, I spent the next few days going to ETSAM and exploring the city. ETSAM was a little of a bummer because after a first hello speech and a quick tour we were left to ourselves. I wish we would have had more of an introduction week like we did in Liechtenstein as the only way you met people then was by standing in line for the international office, waiting to submit your class papers.

The class selection went comparably smooth and we had our classes assigned that next week. Coming from the 25 people classes in LI, Madrid was a shock to say the least, suddenly sitting in rooms from 70 to a 100 people and not knowing if you belonged was irritating. But we all made it thru that first stage and I was lucky to meet other students thru group assignments.

### Class election

You find a class overview on the website so you can read up on the offered classes before arrival. I elected "Proyectos 5" [12 ECT] as well as three other classes: "Paisaje y jardín" [3 ECT], "Taller experimental: Textile architecture" [6 ECT] and "Comunicacion en ingles" [6 ECT] and a Spanish class that we had two times a week. When you search for language classes, don't let its name confuse you, "Spanish Language Courses Applied to Science and Technology" basically just means a regular Spanish class and I strongly recommend it as they have great teachers with small groups.

"Paisaje y jardín" was my hardest class as I was supposed to take notes on what we learned in class. Well, with my language skills that was impossible and I am so glad somebody finally told me about [WUOLAH](#), an online platform students share their notes on. Check it out, it saved my life.

Proyectos was challenging, with only two or three corrections the whole semester but this also varied from professor to professor. Still the student professor ratio is in all studios relatively high.

As part of the project we went on a trip to Marokko, which was a wonderful experience. You can read up on what each project does before elections (the site should be linked in one of their e-mails). Otherwise all information is found on the website.

I recommend the English class. It was a fairly easy class but that was the intention. There is the option to miss classes and just take a final exam at the end of the semester although I would recommend going to classes. You meet wonderful people and Erasmus students with a great english have failed the exam during my stay since it focuses on the professional english in architecture.



Marokko, Erg Chebbie



Proyectos presentation - 110 students

## Activities, locals & places

I recommend joining a club, taking classes or getting involved with ESN. For me ETSAM was so large, it was hard to make friends. I was lucky we had some group work in proyectos and I got to meet two really wonderful locals students. It appeared to me that the Spanish are a little reserved towards Erasmus students since they already have their circle of friends and I assume due to our short stay but they are really nice and will help you out if you go up to them.

There are many sports and activities to find around Argüelles. I joined a local boxing club (GIMNASIO CLUB DEPORTIVO JOSE VALENCIANO) and met some incredible people there. When you do some sightseeing and visit "Plaza de Olavide" don't forget to check out "Pizza Napoli" we had the best wooden fired pizza there.

## Metro & Travel

Madrid has a good metro deal for students. After getting a personalised metro card (you can order it beforehand online) you are able to purchase a full ticket for just 20 € a month.

The cheapest way to travel out of Madrid are buses. They leave regularly from Moncloa and bring you to any city within a few hours. If you want to travel further there are trains available but they cost a lot more and be careful when packing here, they also do security screenings similar to airports.



Birthday celebration with my wonderful roommates



Cordoba, visiting friends



Pizza Napoli with my Taekwondo girls