



Madrid
SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY
THE AMERICAN JESUIT UNIVERSITY IN SPAIN

Antes de venir...

The Office of Student Life at the Madrid Campus wants to take the opportunity to welcome you to Spain. Over the years, we have seen many American students come and go. Most students sign up for a program like this with similar goals in mind: experience a new culture, learn the language, make Spanish friends, and travel around Europe.

As educators in the Jesuit tradition –committed to the education of the “whole” person, mind, heart, body and spirit–the Student Life staff works to provide you with information and opportunities which will help you achieve your goals.

In what follows, we would like to pass along some suggestions about how to prepare for your time here in Madrid. If you have any questions after reading this, please feel free to e-mail us at studentlife-madrid@slu.edu.

I. Attitude

- Keep an open mind... For you to enjoy the distinct culture which is Spain, you need to be flexible with what you encounter. Don't be surprised if in the early days you feel a little disoriented with the differences between “home” and here. For example, you'll find that the tastes and textures of Spanish food are different. A typical Spanish diet is very healthy: fresh ingredients with well-known nutritional value, with lots of seafood, chicken, lean meats and vegetables.
- Expect to take your academics seriously... We understand that besides going to class, you will want to travel and go out, but remember that you are enrolled in an academic program in a real university. And your grades are real too. About 75% of the student body on the Madrid Campus is made up of permanent students pursuing their college degrees, and our courses conform to the same academic standards as those at the Saint Louis Campus. Often students that come from very competitive universities find our courses to be quite challenging.
- Be self-disciplined, in study habits and in social habits... Madrid social life is very attractive for American students. Be prepared to enjoy it in a responsible way. If you feel that you would like help in managing your time, our two on-campus licensed counselors can offer advice and support (and their services are always free to students).
- Commit yourself to meeting new people... Madrid Campus students represent over 60 countries. Try to interact with everyone, not just the people you already know. And, start off well. Year after year, we find that the students who most enjoy their study abroad experience are those who got off to a great start by participating in all of the Welcome activities and then follow it up by taking advantage of trips, activities and programs sponsored by Student Life.
- Realize that “stereotypes” may impact how Spaniards react to you... Especially in social situations, remember that there are cultural cues that you may not understand. You may also be communicating something unintentionally. Just be aware that there are differences and stereotypes that cause miscommunication. You represent more than just yourself: you represent your family, your country, and your culture. Some stereotypes: all US American girls are blonde, all US Americans travel in groups, wear baseball hats, wear spring summer clothes in winter, are partiers, are really loud, only eat hamburgers and pizza, etc.

II. Safety

Consider filling out and turning in a copy of the Personal Emergency Protocol Card, which provides information that can be helpful in case of an emergency. You should keep the original on you at all times, and we suggest that you make a copy to keep in the Student Life files in case an emergency arises. It is critical that the Personal Emergency Protocol card contain an honest assessment of your state of health; surprises can be very dangerous. To produce a card, go to the SLU-Madrid Campus website, click on Medical Information, and then click on the Personal Emergency Protocol Card to be able to fill it out and print it.

- Provide parents/guardians/families with your contact information in Spain, and keep them informed on an on-going basis, especially when you make plans to travel outside of Madrid.
- Be aware of local conditions and customs that may present health or safety risks when making daily choices and decisions. Promptly express any health or safety concern to the Student Life staff or your host family.
- Remain sensible and vigilant about your surroundings. It is not a good idea to draw attention to yourself. (This usually only becomes a problem when someone consumes too much alcohol.)
- When going out at night, always have a mobile phone available and charged. Share a taxi when returning home late at night. Madrid can be dangerous in the wee hours of the morning, especially if tiredness or alcohol has dulled your level of alertness.
- Behave in a manner that is respectful of the rights and well-being of others, and encourage others to behave in a similar manner.
- Follow policies and suggestions for keeping Student Life staff informed of your whereabouts and well-being.

III. Medical Treatment

- All SLU-Madrid Campus students who are registered for at least one credit are covered by the Sanitas Multiplan Medical Insurance, which provides doctors visits at no cost. The plan does not cover the cost of medicine.
- Always carry on you your Sanitas card, which will be given to you by the Student Life staff as soon as you arrive in Madrid. If you will be studying at SLU Madrid Campus for more than one semester, remember to pick up a new card at the Office of Student Life at the beginning of each term.
- If you become ill, the Student Life Staff can help you to find a general practitioner who speaks English, or you can check on our website: http://spain.slu.edu/student_life/medical_information
- In Spain all medicine (prescription and over-the-counter) is sold only in pharmacies and is relatively inexpensive. Although the ingredients are generally the same, brand names are different. If you develop a persistent cough or cold, you should see a doctor rather than guess the appropriate medication yourself.
- If you take a prescription drug regularly, bring enough for the full semester with a letter from your doctor, in your carry-on luggage if possible. Do not plan to send or receive medicine through the mail.

IV. Housing (and additional security) Reminders

- If you will be staying with a host family arranged by the University, bed linens, towels and a pillow will be provided.

- When not in use, leave all valuables (jewelry, cameras, money, etc.) locked in a suitcase. The University is not responsible for items that are lost or stolen.
- Pack smart. Travel light. You, your host family, the airlines and the University will be much happier. For a semester's stay you really don't need two or three big suitcases of clothes.
- Housing arranged by the University is closed during Winter Break (December 21, 2011 - January 8, 2012) and Holy Week Break (March 31 – April 8, 2012). During these periods, most students take the opportunity to travel; however, for those staying in Madrid alternative housing (at the student's expense) can be arranged in a nearby hostel.

V. Passports

Most foreign citizens from outside the European Union are required to have a valid passport for travel to Spain and the rest of Europe. Check your own local regulations on how to obtain a passport in your country.

- U.S. citizens may apply for a passport at the nearest post office. Check out <http://www.travel.state.gov> for a complete guide on how to apply for US passport.
- International students from member countries inside the European Union or from Schengen member countries do not need a passport to enter Spain. However, you will still want to bring one with you in order to facilitate other travel, e.g. mandatory academic trips or optional trips organized by the University.
- Note to Fall Semester applicants: Because of the slow delivery of passports resulting from heavy travel in summer, you should apply early.
- NB: Upon arrival in Madrid make two copies of your passport. Always carry one in your wallet and leave the other in a suitcase at your Madrid home. You may also want to scan a copy and email it to yourself. Except when traveling, leave your original passport at your Madrid address.

VI. Student Visas

Once you have been accepted to Saint Louis University-Madrid Campus, you are responsible for obtaining your student visa. A visa is a stamp in your passport that allows you to study in Spain for a period of more than three consecutive months. A long-stay visa also allows you to apply for a *Tarjeta de Estudiante*. The *Tarjeta de Estudiante* allows you to remain in Spain all year.

- Contact the Embassy or Consulate General of Spain under whose jurisdiction your permanent or temporary (university) address falls to request a Student Visa Application Form, a list of all the documentation you need to present, and more detailed information about the application process. Follow your local embassy/consulate's instructions closely. Visa requirements, procedures, and processing times vary from one embassy/consulate to another.
- Following receipt of your confirmation materials and required payments, your admissions counselor on the Madrid Campus will send you an official University letter that you will need to present to the corresponding embassy/consulate. This document is critical. Without it, you will not be able to obtain your visa. You should begin the visa application process as soon as you receive this University document. Do not wait until the last minute! Consulates can take over two months to process student visas.
- For visiting students: If you are certain that you will be spending only ONE semester in Spain, then you should apply for a short-stay (*corta estancia*), non-renewable student visa. Keep in mind, though, that if you choose this option you will not be able to extend your stay another semester. Therefore, if there is even a remote possibility that you will be staying for the entire academic year, you should apply for a long-stay (*larga estancia*) visa. After you arrive in Madrid, the Office of Student Life will help you obtain the *Tarjeta de Estudiante*. This will allow you to stay in Spain

legally for the entire year. If you are a visiting student you should inform your admissions counselor at the time of confirmation that you plan to spend two semesters in Madrid. This way the University can prepare the correct document for you.

- Address all your visa-related questions directly to your designated Spanish embassy or consulate. You may also visit the Embassy of Spain general web site at <http://spainemb.org> for more information. Although Madrid Campus admission counselors want to be helpful, they are not able to assist you in obtaining a visa.

VII. Flying to Madrid

Luggage restrictions vary with each airline and are subject to change. Check out your airline website for information. Most airlines allow only one checked bag and one carry-on on international flights, and they will charge you considerably if you have excess baggage. Keep in mind that there are many things that you can easily get in Spain such as shampoo, toothpaste, soap, hairdryer or alarm clock.

- Easily identifiable SLU-Madrid staff be at the International Arrival sections of T1 and T4 of Madrid-Barajas airport from 7:30 am to 6:00 pm on Arrival Day to greet you and assist you in getting a taxi to take you to your housing assignment. Students should go directly to their housing on move-in day instead of going to campus. If you choose to pre-arrange your own transportation, you may want to check out these shuttle services that our students have used in the past: <http://www.mad-shuttle.com> or <http://www.aerocity.com>.
- In any event, be sure to inform the Madrid Campus of your travel plans as soon as you know them so that your safe arrival can be verified. You may do this by visiting the SLU-Madrid Campus website, clicking on Arrival FAQs, and then clicking on Arrival Form. You will then be able to fill out an electronic form and send it directly to the Office of Student Life.
- You will be responsible for arranging your own transportation to your housing accommodation once you arrive at the airport. For those who are not very familiar with Madrid, we strongly recommend you use the taxi or shuttle service option, rather than using the metro. You should go directly to your housing assignment on move-in day instead of going to campus.
- Taxi service from the airport to the city should cost no more than 50 Euros, which includes the extra fees for airport pick-up (about 5.50 Euros) and holiday or night service. Taxis in Madrid are white with a diagonal red stripe. The taxi stand in the airport is just outside the waiting area. Make sure the meter is running when you get in the taxi. Also keep in mind that taxi drivers in Madrid are not allowed to apply a luggage surcharge. All fares should be published and in plain view inside the taxi cab. If you choose to travel by metro, you can find helpful information at www.metromadrid.es.

VIII. Mail

- If you are having packets or important documents sent to you from the U.S., we encourage you to use a courier service (e.g. UPS or FedEx), even though it is more expensive than the regular U.S. mail. Their services are faster and more reliable, and shipments can be tracked. U.S. Postal Service Express mail promises five to seven day delivery to Spain, but that doesn't mean to your door. It goes into the regular Spanish mail system and there is no way to track its progress. Some students have waited for months to receive packets sent by their families through regular mail. Do not send medication. A full description of the contents must accompany the package. For information on how customs fees are assessed, please visit the English version of the Spanish Post's website, www.correos.es.
- If you live in University housing, you may have your mail sent to:
Your Name,
Avenida del Valle, 34
28003 Madrid.

(This is the Madrid Campus address). All students are invited to have any packages – that is, anything that requires a signature, or anything larger than a letter – sent to yourself at that same University address. There is always someone to sign for it at the University, and we will call to let you know that a package has arrived for you.

- All other students should have mail sent to the address at which they reside in Madrid.

IX. Communicating from Spain

- Once in Spain, the easiest way to communicate with family and friends back home is through email. On campus each student has internet access through the University's computer labs, and wireless throughout the buildings. University host family assignments offer wireless internet access as well.
- Students staying with host families will only be able to receive incoming calls on the family's phone. Students can purchase cell phones with international access from the Madrid Campus Finance Office.
- Students usually purchase cell phones since, believe it or not, they are cheaper to purchase than to rent. Keep in mind that the phone purchased in Spain does not work in the U.S., only in Europe, Africa and the Middle East.
- The cheapest way to call the US from Spain is by using a calling card. Cards may be purchased in the Madrid Campus Finance Office, or around Madrid. Do not bring one from the U.S., as they usually do not work from Spain.

X. Laptop Computers

You are encouraged to bring your laptop to Spain. However, you need to keep a few things in mind:

- You will have to bring the laptop on the plane with you as a “carry-on” baggage, and you may have to open it and turn it on when you go through airport security.
- Please take time to read carefully the Computer Policies at <http://plantilla.madrid.slu.edu/itweb/index/index/c/11>. This link contains excellent detailed information regarding computer/laptop support, internet connectivity and useful computer/laptop advice.
- Notebook computers need to be equipped with an Ethernet Card (PCMCIA) 10/100 and a cable with a RJ45 adaptor. To use the internet connections, ensure that your computer has a free Ethernet connection with an RJ45 socket. This connection may differ on and off-campus though. If you have any hardware or software questions, please email support-madrid@slu.edu.

Voltage:

Most desktop and portable computers are able to support a voltage of 220V. This is the voltage in Spain. For confirmation of this, you should consult an approved vendor.

Don't forget to buy a plug adapter for your portable computer's battery charger before you come.

XI. Money

- Before you leave the U.S., exchange \$150-\$200 to Euros in order to have some cash on hand for your first few days in Madrid. Contact your local bank for details on how to exchange currency.
- Normally, banks will need two to three days to obtain the Euros for you. Upon arrival in Madrid, you will also be able to exchange your money in the airport, but the commission will probably be

higher.

- Obtain a debit card or credit card with a PIN. Withdrawing money from ATMs in Spain is the easiest and cheapest way to get money from the US, and ATMs provide the best exchange on the day of the transaction. Be sure to call your bank before you leave the U.S. to authorize overseas withdrawals. Remember that this is the best way to obtain Euros once you are in Spain. Exchanging dollars in Spain has become increasingly difficult and expensive.
- Always keep your money and debit/credit cards in a safe place and do not share your PIN with anyone. Sadly, most of the fraud that takes place at the Madrid Campus is because students share their PIN with friends. Those students who are planning on staying in Madrid for a year or longer, may want to consider opening a bank account.
- Do not bring Traveler's Checks. They are not widely honored and can be very difficult to use.

XII. Academic and Cultural Trips

- University-sponsored trips must be paid for in Madrid. Trips can be paid for in U.S. dollars, euros, credit cards, or personal checks. Please note that trip fees are non-refundable.
- The University reserves the right to change the dates or destination of trips due to scheduling conflicts.

XIII. Important e-mail addresses:

IT:	Fairouz Medjahed	support-madrid@slu.edu
Housing:	Margarita Casado	housing-madrid@slu.edu
Registration:	Patricia Blockmon	registrar-madrid@slu.edu
Academic Advising	Jaime Ortiz*	ortizj2@slu.edu
Counseling Services:	Eduardo Fernández-Cruz Sarrate	efernan6@slu.edu
Other questions:	Student Life	studentlife-madrid@slu.edu

* If Jaime Ortiz cannot answer your question, he will refer you to the person who can.

XIV. Madrid Campus Emergency Contacts:

- **During business hours (9:00 am – 6:00 pm Madrid time): (34) 91 554 5858**
After-hours health and safety emergency number: (34) 638 763 758
Counseling crisis number: (34) 609 269 323
- For life-threatening emergencies: 112
- In case of a national emergency in Spain, the U.S. Embassy will provide updates which will be linked to the Madrid Campus web page (<http://spain.slu.edu>).

XV. Tips for packing

Madrid has the highest number of cloudless days of all European capitals. The weather between September and May is cool to brisk (30° to 50°F/0° to 10°C).

The rainy seasons are usually November/December and March/April. June through August tends to be hot and dry (70° to 105°F/22° to 40°C).

DO BRING:

- Clothing for evenings out (Young people dress up more in Madrid.)
- Good walking shoes
- Warm pajamas and slippers (Buildings turn off the heat at night... it can get chilly. Also walking barefoot in the house is not appropriate.)
- A full supply of any prescription medicine you will need during your stay in Madrid (along with a copy of the prescription)
- Spare pair of glasses or contacts
- Alarm clock
- Camera
- Winter clothes (down coat, scarf, gloves, sweaters, jackets). Remember that it can be cool until May.
- Lighter clothes for warmer weather. It can be hot until mid-October.
- Swimsuit.
- Your friends' addresses and an address book to add new ones

YOU MIGHT WANT TO BRING:

- Umbrella (It does rain on occasion.)
- First-aid kit
- Fanny pack/money belt (much safer than carrying money in your backpack or bag)
- Sewing kit (scissors, thread, needles, safety pins, buttons)
- Small calculator (not graphing)
- Gift for host family or roommate (great ice-breaker)
- Customs information from your country to know what you are allowed to bring back
- International Student ID Card (ISIC)

DO NOT BRING:

- Expensive jewelry or other "tempting" valuables
- Pets (Believe it or not, a few students have tried!)
- More than what is necessary (Remember: you'll want to buy some things when you travel)

XVI. Budgeting: Typical Student Items

Food

Nearby cafeteria (lunch or dinner) 10 €
Sandwich at nearby shop 4 €
Lunch at University Cafeteria 7-8 €
Restaurant 10-30 €
Tapas/snacks 20 €

Entertainment

Movie 8 €
Theater 50 €
Bullfight 15 €
Soccer game of Real Madrid 20-100 €
Flamenco show 35 €
Weekends (drinks, food, club, cab home)
25-40 €

Trips

Day trips 40-45 €
Weekend trips:
Spain 150 €
Europe 300-500 €

Monthly Phone Expenses 80 €
Textbooks more than 200 €