

10 April, 2022

Dear future Auxiliar de Conversacion of EOI San Roque,

Congratulations, you've won the "jackpot" of placements! EOI San Roque offers a professional, welcoming environment conducive for learning and...learning to teach! The instructors and staff are incredibly friendly and will go out of their way to make sure that all your needs are met. San Roque is a quaint, charming town with narrow, cobblestone streets and views that overlook lands of three nations : Spain, Morocco, and Gibraltar (British territory). It is sandwiched between nearby cities of La Linea and Algeciras.

In terms of teaching structure, my experience has gone as follows: I've had a 3 week rotating schedule in which I visit 31 classes (typically 3 a day) ranging from level A1 to level C1.2. It is quite a wide range of level (7 years), which may be an adjustment at first, but is ultimately a fun and useful learning experience. I visit the classrooms of 12 instructors, each of whom has their own teaching style. For the most part I am the one speaking and engaging the class, and the teacher is always there to facilitate conversation and to provide translation. I also lead two conversation club meetings a week, one for level A2-B1, and the other for B2-C1. These have been some of my favorite experiences, as it is completely free for the students and I to decide what to speak about and do. One student even brings his guitar occasionally and we sing slow-tempo English songs. One of the aspects I appreciate most about the placement is that this is a school for adults. The students attend at their own accord and are genuinely eager to learn. Each classroom has its own dynamic, and it is interesting to see how it changes from one to the next. Some classes are very talkative, while others are more reserved, and everything in-between. This has encouraged me to find different ways to engage classes, but in a way that does not force anyone to speak (discussion wheels on Wordwall have been a lifesaver for this- see in recommendations at the bottom). Over the course of the year, I've witnessed the students' growth as English speakers, and it has been inspiring for me to further my own language skills. The school has classes Mondays through Thursdays, which means many long weekends! My schedule is mostly evenings, though there are a few days that I work mornings. The English department affords you much freedom to explore your personal style as an instructor, from the content you wish to speak about, to the way in which you engage the class. A typical class for me entails sharing a presentation that I created, and attempting to engage the class with questions throughout, then finishing with games and discussion questions. The department has been flexible and accommodating with my needs and requests, and all the staff have, as I've mentioned before, been truly kind and wonderful. Instructors and staff (students as well) are from all over Spain, and the world, really, making for a rich, global perspective. The instructors are constantly furthering their expertise through weekly meetings, personal study, and Erasmus trips where they partake in specialized educator courses.

On a walk to work, one might smell the sweet, almost spicy aroma of orange trees filling the air during and after rainfall. One might hear the rhythmic clapping of hard-heeled shoes meeting wooden floors while passing the open window of the dance school. Passing cars blast upbeat Reggaeton and melancholic Flamenco music. One might observe boisterous pigeons flapping their wings, competing for the remaining piece of mollete left by patrons of a restaurant, and hear the trill clinking of a tiny spoon stirring sugar into a glass of café con leche. While walking up the stairs and into EOI San Roque, natural lighting melts into the halls and classrooms. The school is cascading with vibrancy and life, from the plants that grow in the halls and window sills, to the holiday decorations lovingly created and displayed by the consejeria, to the excited, multi-lingual chatter amongst students and instructors between classes. One's senses are constantly engaged in this lovely town and school, drawing one into the present moment.

For me, this has been a truly valuable experience. I cannot express enough how rewarding a position this is. Now, I would like to offer some brief points of information and recommendations:

Logistics:

- Finding a space to live longterm took me a few months and a few attempts. The good news is that someone always knows someone who has a place up for rent, so there is always a place to stay. I rented an AirBnb for a month before arriving, and this was too long. I would recommend 1 week, 2 at most, while you look for a space while in Spain. I've stayed in places ranging from €200 for a small studio to €500 for a 3 bedroom, and ultimately found my sunny dream apartment through Idealista.com. Other auxes have shared a flat with others (each having their own room) and coordinate through groups on Facebook.
- I have always been paid on time (actually, usually a few days early).
- Get registered in the system of the local health clinics to receive some health care locally (vaccine boosters, PCR tests, etc).

Tips:

- There is a local market Sunday morning/afternoons by Mercadona. They have fresh produce, olives, tons of goods, and second hand clothing!
- The best produce I've had comes from the fruterias, **Fruteria Carmen**, in particular! Typically the most flavorful & best priced.
- Local bus tickets are 90 cents when you load rides onto a card at the kiosks in the center of town.
- Prepare for any weather, and one piece of advice that I've found to be useful is that if you have long hair, always carry a hair tie - the wind is strong!
- Try to secure obtaining your TIE as soon as possible (many blogs and Youtube videos break down the process).

Websites & Recommendations:

- If you haven't already, I'd recommend joining groups on **Facebook** such as Auxiliares de Conversacion Andalucia, Auxiliares de Conversacion Cadiz, etc. The information shared on these pages is immeasurable. **Reddit** is also extremely useful.
- This link is for the local bus routes (https://siu.ctmccg.es/es/movil/horarios_lineas_tabla.php?linea=11&from=#), refer to this, not Google maps! And I'd recommend **Avanzabus** for regional trips. **BlablaCar** is another affordable option, it is a carpool app with trip options across Spain.
- **Idealista** for finding an apartment (there are also postings on **Facebook** Marketplace), and ask around, someone always knows someone who has a place for rent.
- **Wallapop** and **Vinted** for buying or selling second hand.

- **Toogoodtogo**, an app which minimizes local food waste by showing meals and specials of local restaurants before closing each day.
- My favorite plant-based place to eat is **La Linea Verde**, in La Linea, right near the border with Gibraltar. Some local favorites in town include **Don Benito** and **El Depor** (tapas and meals), **La Ermita** (for breakfast and merienda), **Cerveceria Cruz Blanca** (great for people watching in the center of town, in la alameda) and **El Caracol** (a funky bar). Always check hours of operation ahead of time, and I'd go as far as calling ahead to check that a place is open.
- Some useful teaching resources include **Wordwall** (for creating interactive games for class, EOI San Roque has a school account), **ISLCollective** (powerpoint database from which to derive ideas for your own powerpoints). **ESLDiscussions.com** (tons of topics with many questions, though some of which are a bit dated).

I wish you all the best on this wonderful journey that is beginning to unfold. You are in good hands.

Sincerely,
Jenna