

# A New Perspective from a New Student: Paula's Story

by Jen Roslon

With the International Education Center growing more popular, Salisbury is graced with a more prominent international presence in the student body. Paula Alvarez-CascosRico is another international exchange student that decided to see what an American university is all about. Paula is from Malaga, Spain and has made quite the leap to Salisbury University. Malaga is in the sunny, warm region of the south of Spain along the Mediterranean Sea. With a new educational environment comes a new perspective on school and the students residing in it. When I sat down with Paula to pick her brain on her experiences so far, it quickly became a friendly intercultural conversation rather than a professional interview.

**JEN:** "First things first, how did you end up at Salisbury University from the University of Malaga?"



**PAULA:** "I found out about it through my home university and I came over with my friend Pilar, who is also from Spain. We were originally going to study in different places but then we decided we wanted to study in the same place because it would be too hard to visit each other."

**JEN:** "Is this your first time in America?"

**PAULA:** "This actually isn't my first time in America. I have a cousin that lives here and I drove all through Route 66 with my family a couple years ago. I want to explore New York City, Baltimore, Washington DC, and Annapolis while I am here as well."

**JEN:** "Nice, you should

definitely explore as much as possible while you are here! Do you travel a lot in Europe?"

**PAULA:** "I try to travel as much as possible through Europe. I studied for a bit in England as well and have been to many countries all throughout Europe. It is easier to travel there with all the convenient types of transportation."

**JEN:** "What are some of the differences that you've noticed so far between Spain and America?"

**PAULA:** "One of the big differences between Spain and America is the distances. In Spain you can mostly walk everywhere and here you need a car. And like I said, public transport is also easier and cheaper in Spain."

**JEN:** "What about the food? How does that compare?"

**PAULA:** "I can't get over the fast food restaurants! I don't understand how you can have so many! There is so much variety. I am impressed with the food here though, especially with the tips. In Spain you do not tip because it's included. It is so weird to count it out afterwards."

**JEN:** "Yeah I bet that's quite the adjustment. I wish tip

was already included! What do you normally eat in Malaga?"

**PAULA:** "We eat a bunch of tortilla de patatas which is basically potato and eggs. We also enjoy tapas a lot. The plan when we normally go out is to go and get some beer and tapas."

**JEN:** "Is that a typical day for you and your friends then? Getting together over beer and tapas?"

**PAULA:** "Yes, a typical day there would just be hanging out with your friends and having a beer along the seaside. The weather is normally really nice, so you can be outside all year."

**JEN:** "Wow that sounds like a good time. The drinking age must be strange for you here since there isn't one in Malaga. Are you 21?"

**PAULA:** "Yes I am 21. I went to Brew River fro College Night to experience how Americans go out and I couldn't believe how many people were packed into one area!"

**JEN:** "Yeah it gets pretty packed in there! What else has surprised you so far about Salisbury?"

**PAULA:** "I didn't expect Salisbury to be so big! I thought the campus was going to be a lot smaller. I was also impressed with the outlet malls. We don't have

that kind of diversity in Spain with various types of shopping centers."

**JEN:** "Yes, we are definitely not short on shopping options here. Have you found any similarities between Spanish students and American students so far?"

**PAULA:** "I think that there are a lot of similarities between the students in Spain and Salisbury. I think that we have a lot in common like music, movies, and clothes. As I talk to more American students, I realize that we have really similar interests."

**JEN:** "What is your favorite thing you've done so far while studying at Salisbury University?"

**PAULA:** "One of my fondest memories so far being in America is the white water rafting trip I went on with the university. We had a really amazing time."

**JEN:** "That sounds so fun! How are you finding the academic life at Salisbury so far?"

**PAULA:** "I am enrolled in four subjects in Spain as well as four subjects here at Salisbury to be able to graduate on time so I am always very busy with schoolwork. It is more effort but it is worth it for this experience to be here."



**JEN:** "That's incredible that you are able to keep up with all that work. One last question, what is the number one thing you hope to get out of your time studying abroad?"

**PAULA:** "My number one thing I want to get out of my American study abroad experience is to better my English. I want to have a better business vocabulary and speaking English is important for jobs everywhere."

After my interview with Paula concluded, it confirmed my beliefs that what the international students studying abroad at Salisbury University really want is to immerse themselves in the American way of life. I will never tire of hearing how other cultures compare to ours and I fully encourage other SU students to get to know the international students as well.

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