

OUR ERASMUS EXPERIENCE - FROM SPAIN TO HUNGARY

From the moment we started university, Candela and I (Sandra) knew that we wanted to go on Erasmus. For us, it was an essential experience that we wanted to have during our twenties.

When we received the lists of possible destinations from our universities, both of us had many doubts. Neither of us could choose capitals like Budapest or Warsaw, so we considered the locations and the opportunities available. We decided on Debrecen.

At that time, we didn't know each other. Candela is from Madrid, and I am from Seville. We first got in touch through a What'sUpp group created for all the Spanish Erasmus students who were going to Debrecen.

Once we got in touch, we started researching the University of Debrecen, doing our learning agreement, buying our flight tickets and organizing everything before our departure.

One thing that surprised us was discovering that the Faculty of Education for Children and Special Educational Needs was not actually in Debrecen. It is in a small town called Hajdúböszörmény, a place of which the name we couldn't even pronounce at first. We knew many new experiences were waiting for us, but we were always excited and kept a positive attitude, believing that everything would turn out well.

Finally, the long-awaited day arrived: September 7th, 2026. We reached our residence "Kossuth Lajos II" – the dormitory where we would spend the next few months living together with around thirty other Spanish students.

During the first few weeks, everything felt completely different from Spain -the food, our new home, the culture, and the country itself were all new to us.

Just four days after arriving in Debrecen, we went to Hajdúböszörmény to meet Magdolna Nemes (Erasmus coordinator). That first day was very special for us because we immediately felt welcomed by the entire teaching staff. Everyone was genuinely happy to have us there.

In Spain, attending university has always felt formal. Professors usually do not know our names and the relationship between teachers and students is quite distant. However, our experience in Hungary completely changed our perspective. The classes were interactive and engaging, and we truly learned practical knowledge that will be valuable for our future careers. We visited

many different schools, gained a deep understanding of the Hungarian education system, and, above all, experienced unforgettable moments.

One of the things that impressed us the most was the close relationship between professors and students. In Spain, we would never imagine having lunch with our professors, going camping with them, talking about life outside university, or going on trips in their own cars. These experiences made us feel truly cared for. Throughout our Erasmus, they supported us in every possible way. They became like parents to us in another country.

In November, we were given the opportunity to extend our Erasmus stay for the second semester. Without any doubt, we said yes.

Also, Magdolna Nemes offered us the chance to complete our teaching placement at the Faculty's kindergarten. There we learned how a kindergarten really works on a daily basis. Our mentors explained everything in detail, answered all our questions, and encouraged us to actively participate in everyday classroom activities.

Throughout the entire academic year, we also had the opportunity to visit a school for children with learning disabilities, autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and Down syndrome. We always looked forward to these visits. Every time we left the school, we talked about how fortunate we were to have had such an experience. We were so glad to celebrate parties like Christmas with them. We realized that even the smallest gestures, such as giving them a piece of candy, could make them incredibly happy. Those moments taught us the true value of kindness, gratitude, and empathy. Children gave us some of the most valuable life lessons we have ever learned.

We are returning home as better people. We have learned so much, travelled to fifteen countries, met incredible people, outstanding professors, and wonderful classmates. We are proud of ourselves for having the courage to choose a city that very few people know. We were incredibly fortunate to receive so much kindness, support, and knowledge during our stay.

Without a doubt, this has been the best experience of our lives. Thank you to everyone who made this journey so special. We will always carry these memories in our hearts.

Sandra (University of Seville) and Candela (Rey Juan Carlos University, Madrid)

June 2026

The school we used to go every Thursday to teach some English lessons:



Christmas market in Debrecen



At the Christmas Market with our classmates - students from Kazakhstan



Trip to a Hungarian village:





Some experiences with professors and Hungarian students:

