

Guide on How to Sustainably Prepare for Your Semester Abroad

Getting ready to prepare for your semester abroad is such an exciting time to immerse yourself in a completely new culture, gain new perspectives, and make memories that will last a lifetime. One thing you might not think of but that is very important is how you can still be sustainable throughout your time abroad. By prepping ahead, you can continue to help our world become more sustainable while still having an amazing experience.

1. Sustainable Packing Tips
 - a. Pack Light and Smart:
 - i. I struggled not to overpack, but vintage and thrifting in Europe are some of the best you will find. Limit your luggage to essential items like versatile clothing that can be mixed and matched so you can leave room for a couple of new items while also looking stylish!
 - b. Eco-friendly Products:
 - i. You can always opt for eco-friendly toiletries such as bamboo toothbrushes, solid shampoo bars, and natural deodorants. These reduce plastic waste and are often lighter to pack! I was also able to find lots of these products in Seville.
 - c. Reusable Items:
 - i. Bring reusable items like a water bottle, shopping bag, and utensils. These will help you avoid single-use plastics!
2. Researching Host Country Sustainability Initiatives
 - a. Understand Local Sustainability Efforts:
 - i. Government Initiatives: Research the host country's government policies on sustainability. Spain, for instance, has various initiatives focused on renewable energy and waste reduction.
 - ii. Local Organizations: Identify local NGOs and community groups dedicated to sustainability. In Seville, I found groups like Ecologistas en Acción work on various environmental issues.
 - iii. I also found a big emphasis on recycling in Seville, so I was careful in sorting my waste to ensure I was following the standards!
3. Sustainable Transportation:
 - a. Public Transit:
 - i. Familiarize yourself with the public transportation options. Seville has an extensive public transit system, including buses, trams, and a metro system. I took them to school every day! Almost every country in Europe will be either extremely walkable or have a great public transportation system.
 - b. Cycling:
 - i. Seville is known for its bike-friendly infrastructure. There are e-bikes in a lot of places, and one of my friends even bought a bike while we were in Seville!

Again, while there are so many things you can do to be more sustainable, here are a couple I found very helpful during my time in Europe! Even the smallest things can make a big difference!