



MEDITERRANEAN AGRIBUSINESS SCHOOL (MABS) Summer Program

“Spanish food culture: Mediterranean diet & the agrifood industry”

Zaragoza (Spain), 7 June - 30 July 2021

PROVISIONAL

“A unique opportunity to enjoy a summer in Spain, studying the European agrifood sector, learning Spanish and embracing the Mediterranean diet and culture”

Presentation

This summer program is organized by the Mediterranean AgriBusiness School (MABS), an initiative run by IAMZ, one of the four Mediterranean Agronomic Institutes of the CIHEAM (International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies). The CIHEAM is an international intergovernmental organization – founded in 1962 at the joint initiative of the OECD and the Council of Europe – aiming to develop cooperation between Mediterranean countries through postgraduate training and promotion of cooperative research in the field of agriculture, food and sustainable rural development. IAMZ is supported by the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation and the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

Course description

The program introduces students to the Mediterranean agribusiness environment focusing on the European Union (EU) as well as the culinary and cultural riches of Spain and will include Spanish lessons. It is a varied co-curricular program with study trips to different cities in Spain, as well as visits to successful agrifood companies, and activities in and around Zaragoza. The program lasts 4 weeks with the possibility of staying an extra month to do an internship in a Spanish company. Classes are in English and Spanish (with simultaneous interpreting into English).



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Introductory Spanish language course

Spanish is the second most spoken language in the world, the third most used in the media and increasingly used in business. As part of the MABS program, international students attend a Spanish language course (30 hours). The course aims, from a communicative perspective, to develop the fundamental linguistic skills but also provides specialized vocabulary within the field of agribusiness and gastronomy which is developed in many practical contexts. Students experience Spanish culture and local customs through the cultural and technical visits and have many opportunities to practice their language skills during their stay.



Communication, Marketing & Branding Project

Participants are mentored and guided by a tutor who supervises the development of the projects during the academic part of the program. Students draw up a work plan, select the appropriate tools and methodologies and prepare the final presentations of the project which they deliver on the last day of the course.

Lectures



The Mediterranean diet (Intangible cultural heritage of humanity)

Students address the concept, historical background and main characteristics of the Mediterranean Diet. They learn what attributes make Mediterranean products so attractive and what impact they have on health and nutrition, and discuss their role in the conservation of biodiversity, natural resources, and in social and environmental responsibility.

Consumption of Mediterranean products

Students are offered a global vision of the consumption of Mediterranean products, and discuss shifts in consumption patterns and new lifestyles, healthier eating and fresh approaches to food and gastronomy, which involve new shopping patterns, perception of value and willingness to pay for healthier and more nutritional foods. Students also analyze issues of product diversification and market segmentation, and explore the gastronomic features of different geographical areas and diverse lifestyles.

Mediterranean agrifood systems in the European Union (EU)

Students learn how the agrifood sector works in the European Union, including EU policies related to food safety and quality. They address EU consumer demands and international trade flows of agrifood Mediterranean products.



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Lectures



Spanish agrifood system

This section provides insights into the developments and trends of the Spanish agriculture and food system. It addresses the role of Mediterranean agrifood products in international trade and explains different requirements for trade in domestic and foreign markets.

Food quality and safety

This part describes the main elements in the EU quality assurance systems and food quality and safety programs. Students learn about Protected Designations of Origin and other quality labels used in Europe. They gain insight into consumers' attitudes towards food quality and safety and learn how the traceability and information systems operate.

Value chain for Mediterranean products in Spain: Case studies of wine, fresh fruit and vegetables, seafood products and extra virgin olive oil

Students look into all aspects of the value chain focusing on typical Mediterranean products and their characteristics. The case studies include quality attributes, consumer behavior, domestic and international trade. The technical visits offer first-hand knowledge of how the production and marketing systems operate throughout the value chain.

The miracle and magic of Spanish cuisine

This case study reveals the secrets behind the image of modern Spanish gastronomy worldwide as well as the fundamentals of traditional cooking. It includes a section on modern tapas including show-cooking. Linking the Mediterranean diet and Spanish food culture, students retrace the history of Spanish gastronomy, from traditional times to the modern day, learning why there are so many cultural and regional differences.

Interactive Sessions



Lectures are combined with interactive sessions where an expert presents the topic followed by discussion and a tasting experience. Here are some examples of interactive sessions:

- Tasting session of local products with PDO
- The Gastronomic Society
- A Taste of Spain: pepper experience
- A Taste of Spain: Spanish cured ham experience
- Cured sausage products
- Goya and Gastronomy
- A taste of Spain: gazpacho and tomato
- Exploring roots, herbs and truffles
- Tasting Omega-3: tuna and anchovies
- Lamb and shepherds' traditions: migas and ternasco
- Olive oil tasting session



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Hands-on Experience



Students will enjoy first-hand experience of Spanish life, food and culinary traditions:

- Get-together and tapas tour in Zaragoza
- Show-cooking at “Los Sitios” Gastronomic Society
- Wine tasting
- Ham carving
- Mussel harvesting

Field Trips



Field trips are part of the academic program and focus very specifically on connecting the trip to the curriculum content that students are taking. Visits and learning experiences are all organized around a particular theme. The program includes the following field trips:

Short trips:

- Somontano county (links between culture, tourism and food) visit to an olive oil mill, visitor center
- Various fruit and vegetable farms and processing companies
- Organic mill and bakery
- Traditional brewery
- Organic olive grove and mill

Longer trips:

- Pyrenees (rural start-ups, artisanal cheese factory, livestock farms)
- La Rioja to visit a renowned winery and the Basque Country
- The Ebro Delta, visiting harbor, fish market, mussel farm and rice paddies



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Internship (Weeks 5-8)

A 4-week internship in a Spanish agrifood company (requested upon application). Students that opt for the internship gain work experience in an agrifood company from the wine, fruit and vegetable, seafood, meat, and olive oil sectors.

Teaching methods

- Lectures
- Class discussions
- Guest speakers
- Interactive sessions
- Hands-on experience
- Field trips and visits to relevant companies

Learning goals and objectives

Upon completion of the program students will:

- Be acquainted with the Spanish and European agrifood models in a global context
- Understand the workings of the main value chains for Mediterranean food products
- Be familiar with the most relevant food consumption patterns and trends in Spain
- Be aware of the importance of Spanish food culture and the Mediterranean Diet within the framework of a healthy lifestyle
- Be able to understand local development strategies which integrate typical and traditional food products and culture legacy.



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Guest speakers

Instructors are leading experts from universities, international institutions, government agencies, regulatory bodies, ministries, and local, national and international businesses in the food industry.

Assessment

Ongoing assessments and individual tutoring sessions are provided throughout the course and a final presentation from students on a topic related to the course are delivered on the last day.

Admission requirements

This program is targeted to undergraduates, recent graduates or young professionals who are interested in learning about the agrifood sector in Spain and Europe and about Spanish food culture and the Mediterranean diet.

Additional information

The organizing institution

The program is organized by IAMZ, an international intergovernmental organization with 50 years of solid experience in postgraduate training, scientific research and international cooperation in the agrifood sector. Training is a core activity at IAMZ where each year over 400 participants and 250 guest lecturers are welcomed from around 80 countries. IAMZ's approach is international and multidisciplinary and is recognized worldwide as a partner of excellence in training; collaborating with universities, companies and other international organizations (EEAP, EFSA, EU, FAO, ICARDA, IOC, OECD, UN, WTO, etc.) through projects and networks to design and tailor courses and training activities according to the needs and objectives of our partners, and also to help them disseminate the outcome of their projects and network activities.



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The host city

IAMZ is located in Spain (the 13th largest economy by nominal GDP and the 8th largest exporter of agrifood products in the world), in the warm and inviting city of Zaragoza, strategically located between Madrid, Barcelona, Bilbao, Valencia, and Toulouse in France. It is the fifth biggest city in Spain with around 700,000 inhabitants. Its more than 2000 years of history make the city one of the greatest historic and artistic legacies in Spain. Zaragoza is capital of Aragón, one of Spain's leading industrial regions. Because of its strategic location, Aragón is especially competitive in logistics, hosting the biggest logistics park in Europe (13 million m²), and ranks among the world's leading logistics clusters together with areas such as Singapore, the Netherlands, Dubai, Sao Paulo or Chicago (2012 World Economic Forum). Besides, according to the European Commission, Aragón belongs to the group of Europe's most innovative regions together with northern Italy and most of France, Germany and the UK. It is a pleasant place to work and live with very diverse landscapes, particularly for skiing in winter with almost 400 kilometers of slopes, a rich cultural heritage and great food (Mediterranean Diet); but above all, the Aragonese are famous for their firm character and determination and for their friendly, outgoing nature. This is one of the reasons why year after year Zaragoza is one of the favorite European destinations for thousands of international and Erasmus students.

Moving around

Zaragoza is a pleasant city and it is easy to get around on foot, by bike, car or public transport. The city has a network of buses with 31 regular lines, two scheduled routes, six shuttle buses (one free), and seven night buses operating on Fridays, Saturdays and festivities. A tram line crosses the city from North to South. A card can be purchased and topped up in ticket machines at tram stops, newsagents, shopping centers, etc. and is valid on the Zaragoza tram and all bus lines.

Zaragoza boasts an ever-expanding bicycle lane network which connects the various neighbourhoods and makes it possible to explore the city and be more eco-friendly. Bicycles, scooters and motorbikes can be hired via App.

The city is connected by motorway with the main cities in central and northern Spain, including Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, and Bilbao, all of which are located about 300 kilometers (200 miles) from Zaragoza. The railway and coach station is called “Intermodal Zaragoza Delicias”. The high-speed train AVE connects Madrid (75 minutes) and Barcelona (90 minutes). The coach services to all over Spain and various European destinations are efficient and economical. Zaragoza airport is located 10 kilometers from the city center and offers flights to European destinations as well as domestic flights.



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Accommodation

The MABS team will help students find the most suitable housing option for them. (Halls of Residence, shared apartments or host families). Most options are located in some of the most vibrant neighborhoods of the city with easy access to all that Zaragoza has to offer. There is a free bus service between Zaragoza and the MABS campus.:

- Host family: This is a good option if you want to improve your Spanish, and get to know the Spanish culture and customs and enjoy home-made local cuisine.
- Shared Apartment: Most students in Zaragoza choose to share apartments with other students. There are many shared apartment browsers or the MABS team can help you find the right flat for you.
- Hall of Residence/Dorms: Since Zaragoza is an important university city, with a large student population. There are several Halls of Residence offering single and shared rooms (with en-suite or shared bathroom). Some include meals in the price and others offer cooking facilities.

Health and safety

Besides their own International Insurance policy, participants in the MABS Summer School benefit from medical and accident insurance for the duration of the whole program.

Emergency numbers

Once you are registered you will receive a complete list of contacts. Bilingual staff will provide 24/7 assistance for emergencies.