Hola,

Now that you have officially decided to spend your first semester in Salamanca, it is our turn to help you prepare for an incredible start to your college career. You are probably nervous about spending nearly four months in a foreign country before stepping onto Colby’s campus. However, we are all here to help alleviate that stress and answer ANY questions you may have!

This guidebook is meant to give you a glimpse of what life in Salamanca will be like, along with some other tips so that you can prepare yourself. It was developed by former Colby students who, like you, spent their first semester in Salamanca and know the ins and outs of the whole package. Many of us have stayed with the same host families, taken the same classes at the Universidad de Salamanca and the Cursos Internacionales, and simply, “lived the Salamanca life” as a freshman in college. We hope to cover packing tips, the homestay, homesickness, travel, and even the transition to Colby in January. However, do NOT worry about that yet; our goal is to make you feel more comfortable at the prospect of going to Salamanca and get you psyched for the journey to come. When you come back to Colby in January, you will find that many of your nerves are all in your head and that the transition is a lot easier than you would think. All in all, we would not have wanted to start our Colby careers any other way.

If you have any other questions or concerns, PLEASE feel free to contact ANY of us before you leave the States, while in Salamanca, and of course, in January and throughout the spring semester. We are so excited to hear about your experiences and hope that you have an unforgettable semester!

Keep in touch,
The Salamanca Group of 2017

"At first, everything was a little intimidating, and I thought to myself, "Maybe I shouldn’t be here, this must be a mistake." But don’t let doubts like that creep into your head. Salamanca is now one of my favorite cities I’ve visited, and I wouldn’t consider changing anything. Make sure to soak up the fun, Spain and Europe are beautiful and ripe for exploring, make the most out of this once in a lifetime experience."  
Justin Altman '17
PACKING LIST

What to bring and what to leave at home:
Suggestions from former Colby-in-Salamanca students

Packing for almost four months abroad can be a daunting task, especially when you’re limited to two big bags and X pounds of luggage. Keep in mind that the airport luggage weight limit is 50 pounds/23 kilos. We asked fellow Global Entry Semester Students to list the items they could have lived without and those that were an

Clothing and Shoes:
- A warm jacket, hat and scarves—Salamanca gets cold towards the end of October, around 30-40 degrees Fahrenheit. Make sure you are comfortable walking around in this weather.
- Swimsuit for excursions in the North of Spain
- Raincoat or rain jacket and umbrella (Salamanca gets really cold when it rains outside!)
- Athletic shoes and clothes for working out inside and/or outside
- Clothing to go out in. You’re not “clubbin’”. No need for heels or spiffy shoes. Casual night wear is all that’s necessary. For girls, you’ll be fine with cotton fabrics for skirts and dresses but wearing jeans out with a fun top is good too!
- Slippers for the house. Spaniards always wear slippers!
- Bring about a two - two and a half week supply of undergarments. You want to make sure you have enough so that if your host family only does your laundry once every week/week and a half you’ll be okay!

In general, Europeans tend to wear nicer clothing and footwear than Americans, however jeans with a nicer top is appropriate as well:

“Remember that it is really easy (and fun!) to get clothes there, so don’t stress too much! Bring the basics and you can add to your wardrobe as the trip goes.”—Claire Cahill S’16

“In the morning it will be really cold, but then when you get out of class and walk home in the afternoon you’ll be sweating. A sweater or sweatshirt for the morning is recommended—definitely dress in layers.”—Peter Craig S’12

“It’s good to have a ‘Feel Good Kit’. Put your favorite movies, CDs, books, and magazines in it so that you can distract yourself if you get homesick.”—Hannah Macquarrie S’12

Appliances:
- Adaptors/Converters
- Camera and iPod (and chargers!)
- Headset or webcam for talking on Skype (or if you have it in your computer, that will work)
- Travel alarm clock

School Supplies:
- Laptop!
- A Spanish-English dictionary
- As for binders and notebooks, Spanish ones can be really fun! Wait to buy them at a papeleria when you get there. It is easier than having to pack them.

Money:
- Some students have set up and used Travel Ex cards, however if you call your bank and let them know where you are traveling and for how long then you can use your regular credit and/or debit cards in Spain like you would at home.
- Stores in Salamanca all accept credit or debit cards and usually ask for an ID when you pay so having your name on the card is recommended.
- Be smart about shopping in the city. Remember that you live there and are likely to pass most of the shops every day. If you see something you love, think about it for a bit and then commit!

Mas:
- Books, magazines, TV shows, and movies
- Pictures from home to show your family and decorate your room
- Housewarming gift from your city or town
- Getting medical help is easy, but if you take any medication regularly, make sure you bring enough for your entire stay
- Weekend bag for excursions (a SMALL rolling bag is better and easier than a duffle)
- A Journal to document
- Your favorite snacks! If you love peanut butter, bring some! It’s hard/nearly impossible to find in Salamanca

*** Try not to over-pack! Overweight bags can be very expensive at the airport and you’ll probably do some shopping (airport luggage weight limit is 50 lbs/23 kilos). Parents, keep in mind you can always ship cold weather clothes to your kids later because they will not need them right away. Or if you visit your kids, you can take clothes they don’t need home with you.
BEFORE YOU GO

Important things to know before you head to the airport!

Although packing your suitcases is half of the pre-departure planning, there are some other things that you should add to your to-do list before you head off to the airport.

1. Get Your VISA: The Visa process was one of the most time-consuming parts of planning to study abroad. Read the information that Colby gives you regarding visas carefully, and give yourself (and the consulate) plenty of time. Do not put this off! Going to the consulate a week before will not be enough time for them to process your request. Make form checklists so you don't forget anything.

2. Plan a Visit: Many students have their families visit during the fall break. Talk to your parents about travel plans and make a list of places to visit so that you have enough time to book flights and hotels. The earlier you make these arrangements the less money you will spend!

3. Plan to Communicate: Make arrangements with your family and friends about communication. Pick days and times to talk on the phone and set up Skype so that you can call home easily.

4. Meet Your Group: Check out the Colby Global Entry Semester Fall 2018 Facebook page!

5. Other: Notify your bank that you will be living abroad—make sure they won't charge you for making purchases overseas and that they know you're traveling and should expect charges abroad.

Language Prep: How to prepare for life in another language...

Language proficiency is what you make it. Some students arrive in Salamanca with 10+ years of immersion training, while others have only completed the required few years of grammar-based instruction in high school. Ask someone in the latter group and they will tell you that despite the fact that their Spanish was not the greatest upon arrival, they never found it too difficult to express themselves. Even if you struggled your way through oral presentations in high school, you will find yourself picking up the language very quickly if you pay attention during meals with your family and ask your teachers questions. That said, there is little expectation that you practice your Spanish before you go. While looking over your notes and key phrases can never hurt, there is no need to stress. If you plan to make the effort to speak Spanish while you are abroad, there is no need to make a significant effort before you leave. Most importantly, don't be afraid to speak Spanish while you are abroad—even if your grammar isn't perfect, most people won't care and will appreciate the effort. Your host family will quickly notice your Spanish level, but they're more than willing to help you when you get stuck.

"The language barrier was easier to overcome than I anticipated, your host families understand the position you are in and are super patient as you are first figuring out how to communicate. There is also definitely a moment when it all clicks and communicating becomes easy and you figure it out which is awesome."  -- Anna McKeen '16

"Talk to your host family! I know it's awkward at first and maybe you'll be self-conscious about your Spanish, but the amount of improvement you make in the language directly correlates to how much you are willing to speak it."  -- Grace Dickinson '18

The academic part of studying abroad...

Although your experience studying at Universidad de Salamanca will be nothing like that of your friends at "real college," you really have nothing to complain about. Although you are taking four classes, most of the learning that happens in Salamanca takes place outside of the classroom, according to past Global Entry Semester Students and the Office of Off-Campus Study. You will have reading for the director, but it will likely be less schoolwork than you had in high school. While the formal workload is generally light, you will be "working" on your Spanish 24 hours a day. Make the most of it and talk as much as you can! Generally, all of your classes will be taught in Spanish at a level that is appropriate for you, though the director's seminar is taught in English at times. Your USAL class will be composed of students from all over the world. It is important to reach out to these students, too. You'll learn a lot about their cultures, which can be really interesting.
For many students, living with a Spanish family was one of the best parts about Salamanca. All the host families are either previously interviewed by the director or are close acquaintances. In general, the director tries to match students with the best host families possible. If the arrangement doesn't work out for one reason or another, there is always the opportunity to change.

You won't move in with your host family right away—you get time to adjust to the time zone and get acquainted with the city first. However, there are a few things that you should know before moving in with your family. Colby guarantees that you will have your own room with a bed and a desk, and that you will be provided with breakfast and dinner during the week and meals on the weekends unless you are away. You will also have access to laundry—many of the host mothers will want to do your laundry for you. You will be given keys to the house so you can come and go as you please, but try to let them know when you are arriving or leaving just as you would at home. Also, if you don’t plan on coming home for dinner, make sure you tell your family far enough in advance. Often they never mind, but they definitely appreciate your politeness. Privacy in the Spanish culture is different—the home is a private space. When meeting friends, Spanish people tend to go to a restaurant or a café instead of inviting them over to their house. In other words, if you want to invite friends over, ask your host family first. Chances are they will say yes—most would love to meet your friends and some might even urge you to invite people over for dinner—but don’t assume that it is ok. Always ask first.

The most important thing to remember when living with a host family is to BE FLEXIBLE. Try to let them know of your plans—it is simply a nice thing to do.

Families might ask students what they would prefer to eat for breakfast when they arrive. If you don’t like something they offer for breakfast, don’t just say yes for the sake of it, because they may stick with it for your entire stay. Most students get a very small breakfast that usually consists of strong coffee and a cookie/biscuit—if you think you’ll get sick of it, don’t worry. Spanish food has a reputation of being nothing less than absolutely delicious. However, if you are going to be living there for an extended period of time, there may be some things that take getting used to. For example, some meals may consist of more meat than you are used to. The Spanish also tend to really like ham, though for sandwiches, there are usually other options. Some host families will feed you until you feel like exploding. If you’re full just let them know and don’t feel obligated to finish everything all the time! If you absolutely cannot eat something, write it in the form that you send to Colby AND tell your host family when you arrive. However, definitely try to at least taste everything that is offered to you. If you don’t know what something is, try it anyways! If you don’t like something, be honest. They won’t mind. It’s all part of the experience!

Fun Fact: when eating bread with their meals, the Spanish place it on the table, to the side of their plate and also rip off new pieces with their hands.

“Be prepared to conduct yourself as they do, try not to have any preconceptions going into it. Be respectful, and helpful. Most families are welcoming and are happy to have you there, make sure they know that their hospitality is appreciated. Keep your room tidy, because it is a sign of respect to the family that you appreciate the room in their home that they’re providing for you. Spend time with your family too. If you do, you’ll come home feeling really good about the past three and a half months you spent in someone else’s home.”—Sammy Sturchio ‘12
HOMESICKNESS

Advice from former Global Entry Semester Students on how to deal with it if you do experience it.

Although life in Salamanca may seem like an adventure to some, there are times when one may find themselves thinking about and maybe even missing home. Just as the transition to college is harder for some than others, adjusting to life abroad can be equally challenging. Homesickness, when you’re far away from your friends and family and trying to speak a different language, can be very real and difficult to deal with. We’ve asked past Global Entry Semester Students how to avoid homesickness and what to do when and if it hits you.

1. Practice: Students who have rarely been away from home generally have a harder time with homesickness. Try to spend some time away from your family over the summer, even if it’s just for a few days or nights.

2. Bring Mementos: Just like you would hang in your dorm, pictures of family and friends make great decorations. Photo albums don’t take up a lot of weight and are also a great way of breaking the ice with your host family.

3. Prepare for Down Time: Pack for down time; movies and TV shows are great to watch when you have time to relax. Books in English are also really nice, especially if you need a break from total Spanish immersion.

4. Make it Through Week Two: The most common response we got to the homesick question was that after the first couple weeks, being away from home gets much easier. Give yourself time to adjust to your new home.

5. Keep in Touch: Plan to talk to your friends and family. Try to write letters—getting mail is always fun and stamps aren’t hard to get—Katie Chow ’16. Long group emails are also a fun way to stay in touch.

6. Make New Friends: In the past, groups that have gone to both Salamanca and Dijon have come back as very close friends. Although this is not always the case, finding people in your group that you enjoy spending time with is a great way of combating homesickness.

7. Stay Busy: “Being busy is a really good way to forget about your homesickness.” —Simone Goldstein ’11. Getting out of the house and being active is usually a sufficiently pleasant distraction with the bonus of endorphins. Before you know it, you will be back on the flight home and even if you didn’t expect it, you might not be ready to go home. Time flies when you’re having fun, so seize the day—go out and have fun with friends and embrace the Spanish experience, because soon enough, you’ll be in the U.S. looking east across the ocean and wishing you were back on the other side.

“Try to contact different people every couple of days so you’re not talking to the same ones all the time... that just makes you even more homesick.” —Molly Nash ’12

“There are definitely times when you will miss home, but recognize that this experience is something unique. If you feel homesick, it is okay to admit it! Facetime your family, and hangout with your friends! I loved going to the Colby center to watch American movies and eat yummy snacks with friends when I was feeling homesick. Thanksgiving is a weird time to be away from the U.S., but Colby does an awesome job of making it a fun day and something you will always remember.” —Kara Zimmerman ’16

“Get a gym membership, go to the library, find a special “signature” café – adding little things like this into your daily routine will make Manca feel like home even faster.” —Grace Dickinson ’16

“I think the best way to deal with homesickness is to be social with the other people in your group and finding a convenient way to contact friends and family. Since everyone is going through the same things, they are your best outlet or support for getting over homesickness.” —Allic Phillips ’12
INSIDE SALAMANCA: Places to visit, things to do, and restaurants to check out in Salamanca!

Before you finish your semester in Salamanca, make sure you visit these places for nights out, cultural adventures, or afternoon ambles with friends! Julia and Miriam will also offer weekly cultural activities to fulfill your "cultural passport". Although only five activities are required, many of us attended most if not all of them! These activities are a great way to get to know and see Salamanca well, while not spending any extra money! Additionally, Colby will pay for half of any cultural activity that you are interested in. Below are suggestions from former students, so you can be sure it will be worth it!

St Patrick’s: If you’re a soccer fan or just a sports fan in general, this is the spot for you. Serving bar style food, and equipped with 8 televisions scattered about, this is the best place to watch sports. People would go 2-3 times a week for the food and atmosphere.

The River Park: Make sure you check out the park that runs along the river on the outskirts of the city. It is a great place for fresh air and a nice run or walk. It’s really safe at all times of day but recommended to run or walk with a friend at night!

Pan y Agua: This is a Colby in Salamanca MUST for a night out. Most of our nights would start at Pan y Agua. The bartenders end up knowing the Colby students and are really awesome to talk to and practice your Spanish in a relaxed environment! It’s also an awesome place to go in a huge group to just dance around and have fun all together!

Plaza Cafes: The Plaza is an incredible place to sit and relax with a group of friends, or even on your own. The people watching can’t be beat and on a nice day it’s the cafes on the border of the Plaza are the best places to enjoy the sun and beautiful blue sky. Throughout the semester the Plaza has events like book fairs and public appearances. Walking to and from the Colby Center and Cursos Internacionales you should definitely stop and take a peak at what’s going on!

Corte Ingles: If you ever lose anything, think you forgot something, or just want to shop in general, Corte Ingles is the place to go! If you picture a Bloomingdale’s with a grocery store in the basement then you can definitely imagine this super store! They have everything you could possibly need.

Irish Theater: This is another Colby all-time favorite! You will walk by the Irish Theater on your way to classes. This pub is in a centralized location, just off of a Buca Mayor and Casa de Las Conchas, which makes it a great meeting location. They have seats outside while it is still warm in the fall, and karaoke on Wednesday nights. Spaniards as well as Colby students gather around the stage to sing popular American tunes. We went every week!

Calle Torro: You’ll walk this street a million times. When you have a few moments to spare, stop into some stores along the way! Not only do they have stores specific to Spain but also some familiar brands like H&M that carry different European lines.

“There are a lot of really incredible cafes around Salamanca that we all loved to hang out or do homework in. Places like Erasmus, La Tajona, or Cuatro Gatos were my favorites.” -- Anna McLean ’16

Advice about International Travel

Planning to go jetting around Europe during your breaks can be either stressful or a piece of cake, depending on how you do it. Having the opportunity to see Europe in a long weekend or over Fall break is not something to pass up, but make sure you plan carefully. Here are some things to keep in mind!

Getting Train Tickets or Booking Flights: Madrid is the closest airport to Salamanca and more often than not the easiest means of traveling is by plane. There is an affordable two-hour bus ride from Salamanca to Madrid. The bus even has WiFi! There is also a train station in Salamanca that is walking distance from every house. All the ticket arrangements can be made online which is recommended. No matter whether you are booking a flight to somewhere a little farther away or just taking the train, getting your tickets early is essential in order to save money.

Lodging: Hotels are often very expensive in Europe—many students choose to stay in youth hostels instead. These hostels are usually a great way to meet people from all over the world and also safe!

DO NOT FORGET YOUR PASSPORT!

Students have traveled to England, Italy, Portugal, the Canary Islands, Switzerland, Amsterdam, Germany and more! Take advantage of the cheaper deals when you’re abroad! See the world!!

“Don’t be scared to talk to people wherever. Going out and living in the city like any other person is part of the experience. Use your Spanish and don’t be shy! People in Salamanca are used to foreign students and really patient!” --Peter Wirth ’12

“Try to have a Spanish experience in Spain, rather than an American experience in Spain. It will make the whole adventure more rich.”-- Sam Ari Bloomstone ’16
ARRIVING AT COLBY

Coming Back to Campus:
General Information about the transition

One of the hardest things to imagine as you are getting ready to travel overseas is making your way to Colby come January. However, if you’ve thought about it already that is perfectly reasonable, too. Worrying about making the transition during JanPlan is a rational but easily negated fear. Making the transition to Colby, just like making the transition to France, is all about effort. You will meet plenty of people and hopefully avoid hibernation from the cold weather and introduce yourself! Get to know your classmates and the people in your dorm, and join clubs and teams. During the month of January, you will have both a mid-year orientation and Sed COOT. Both of these opportunities will give you the chance to make new friends—including many students who did not go abroad who volunteer to go simply because they are interested in meeting you! It is also during January that you will get to know your LINK leaders: the former Global Entry Semester Students who have been working together to make this booklet. We will do our best to take you around town, carpool up to Sugarloaf and make our own crude versions of French crépes for a welcome dinner or two. If you are having a hard time meeting people during JanPlan, keep in mind that once the semester starts up (and the weather gets warmer) you will have no shortage of things to do and people to do them with!

Choosing Classes: How to fill your JanPlan

JanPlan at Colby has a dual reputation. The month-long semi-semester is a perfect way to get rid of distribution requirements but also a perfect time slot if you’re looking to enjoy the snow and take a non-credit class—for example photography—that you may not have the time to take otherwise. Most Global Entry Semester Students are advised to take English 115 if they haven’t tested out of it already. There are various sections to choose from, some with more work than others, so read the course book carefully. If you are not a science person, you might want to consider taking a lab course during JanPlan. These classes are generally geared towards non-science majors and are an excellent way to satisfy the requirement. You many want to consider the kinds of students that are going to be in your class. Do you want to be in a class with more non-Global Entry Semester Students or would you rather get a requirement like EN115 out of the way? Although course selection may sound daunting at the moment, Salamanca GES students get visited by a Colby professor who helps during the course selection process.

Housing: FYTs about choosing your roommates

In the end of November you will be asked to fill out a housing form. The form is the same one that all Colby freshmen receive before they head to campus in the fall. You will have the opportunity to room with someone who has either been on campus since the first semester or someone who, like you, went abroad the first semester of their freshman year. Colby’s Campus Life office cannot guarantee that roommate requests will be honored—there is simply not enough housing on campus to do so. However, rooming with someone who was not on your trip has a lot of benefits; it’s a great way to introduce your Salamanca friends to either Dijon students or existing Colby students. Your roommate and all the people living in your dorm become a great support system—and an instant new group of friends—for your transition onto campus.

"It was really nice getting to request a roommate that was either on your own trip, or on the France trip. I was able to room with Bennett who was in the Dijon group who I met through high school ski racing. Rooming with someone from the France trip was really beneficial for both GES groups. When you all get back to Colby, our groups bonded quickly, and our room provided a space where we could all hang out together easily. This helped us create a great big group of friends"—Tim Weeks '16

"Be outgoing. Introduce yourself and tell people you are a GES (they eat it up). In terms of JanPlan, take something that is moderately challenging, with many freshmen so you can get to know people fast. Make sure to seem inviting and not closed off. Participate in class, and make a name for yourself early."

—Eliza Appleton '13
The LINK program was created by Susannah Hatch '11 and Aleah Starr '11 to facilitate your transition into life at Colby. We hope that this guidebook will help prepare you for your exciting semester abroad. All of the information is based on feedback from Global Entry Semester students who have spent time in Salamanca. The guidebook was created with assistance from the Off-Campus Studies, Admissions, and Student Life Offices. Contact any of us with questions you may have. You are about to have the time of your life, embrace every moment! We are thrilled that you have chosen Salamanca as your next adventure, and we can’t wait to meet you in January when you return to Colby!

Tu Amigo,
Justin Alvino S'17

What to expect from LINK...

The LINK program was designed to help you and other Global Entry Semester students feel connected to Colby before and while you’re abroad and also once you arrive at Colby. The purpose of this guidebook is only part of the first half, and we hope that you’ll find it helpful. You will also soon be in contact with former Global Entry Semester students. They will continue to be in touch with you while you’re in Salamanca and also at Colby. We’re here for you and are more than willing to answer questions about Salamanca or Colby.

In January, when you come to campus, you will meet everyone running the LINK program. We have already begun planning your Iced COOT, along with LINK broomball, dinners, and other LINK sponsored activities. We’re so excited for you and can’t wait to hear about your amazing adventure. Contact us with any questions. Have a wonderful time and enjoy every moment. Before you know it, you’ll be packing for Maine! Good luck!