

Removes Spanish study and cultural trip to Salamanca

As we left Bancroft's on a particularly rainy Sunday, I was filled with excitement about what we would see in Salamanca - and hopes of some lovely Spanish sunshine! The weather turned out to be almost as cold as London, but our wonderfully busy trip certainly didn't disappoint. I did wonder what the elegant small city of Salamanca would make of 16 rather loud Removes, but it turned out that Salamanca had welcomed Spanish language students for many years. It was a little nerve-wracking at first to meet our hosts, especially when we realised that our family spoke lots of Spanish sentences we don't know, very fast, and no English in between - but they were incredibly kind and helpful, and surprisingly we seemed to be able to communicate really well, despite our limited vocabulary - thanks to the patience of our family-(and a little Google translate!) We were all feeling a bit tired to go to school everyday during the holidays, but it turned out Mester school was extremely fun, especially when we misunderstood each other (which we did a lot), and through this we learnt so much Spanish and really bonded with our group and teachers. It seems being 'thrown in the deep end' with a language really works - and is super enjoyable! After school each day, we were treated to tonnes of great cultural activities: we learnt how to salsa dance, sampled delicious authentic 'chocolate con churros' and tapas, visited the famous Plaza Mayor, Cathedrals and the Calisto & Melibea Garden, as well as the very cool Art Deco museum. Our tour of the city with our friendly guide really showed us how vibrant and historic Salamanca is - the old architecture was beautiful and peaceful while the students from the University (one of Europe's oldest!) gave a really energetic vibe. My favourite sight was the stunning view of golden Salamanca from the Cathedral, I could certainly see why so many legends were based on this majestic historic city. To top it off, we even crammed in a day trip to Segovia on our way home (thanks to Mr Urreaga and Ms Bogado's amazing organisation!) Here we were treated to views of the beautiful castle, 'Alcazar of Segovia' - a fairytale castle in real life - which is said to have inspired Disney, no less! Coming back to our full-on London really was a bit of a shock after our dream-like visit, where we lived in a different house, went to a different school, walked everywhere and where everyone spoke Spanish - it really was an amazing experience, and I'm sure we will all treasure our trip to 'La Dorada', the magical 'Golden City' of Salamanca.

Amber RNb