

Mag *aux* ine

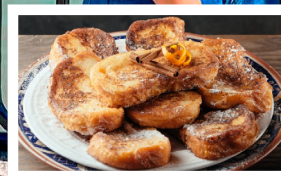
No. 1, May 2025

conversaSpain
Auxiliares de conversación

May brings flowers and ConversaSpain brings you our **FIRST ISSUE!**

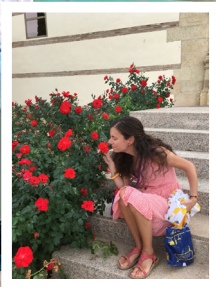


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Torrijas:

A step-by-step recipe to
enjoy this Spanish treat



Lizzie Watt:

From participant to mentor.
An interview full of advice!

H

***ola* and welcome to the very first edition of *Magauxine*!**

If there's one thing we love at ConversaSpain, it's bringing people together. Whether it's in the classroom, at a bar, or now... in the pages of this magazine.

This space is all about YOU: your experiences, your stories, or tips that will be useful for you! It's a place to celebrate the adventure we're all on.

Each edition will be packed with insights, laughs, and the kind of advice you wish someone had given you before you landed. Because this experience isn't just about teaching, it's about exploring, growing, and making memories that'll stick with you long after your time in Spain.

So, grab a coffee, get comfy, and enjoy. Because if there's one thing we know for sure, it's that this journey is best when shared.

Let's make this something amazing. Together.

¡A disfrutar!

Tomás
CEO, Multilingual Education Development & Support



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Events *by Remy*



National holiday.
Día del Trabajador



Festivities.
Los Caballos del Vino



Music.
Viña Rock Festival



Music. WarmUp
Estrella de Levante



Festivities. Fiesta de
los Patios de Córdoba



Festivities.
Feria de Sevilla



Music.
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Music.
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Festivities. Fiestas de
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Festivities.
Zaragoza Florece



Festivities.
Feria de Córdoba

May

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Patios de Córdoba



If there's one plan you can't miss this month, it's *La Fiesta de los Patios de Córdoba*.

I went two years ago and honestly? I was obsessed. This is one of those magical Spanish traditions you can only experience in May. Take note: it runs from **May 5th to 18th**, mark your calendar!

Every spring, the people of Córdoba open the doors of their private *patios* to show off what they've been nurturing for all year: walls completely covered in colorful flowers, pots hanging like art, fountains, mosaics... It's basically a floral dream. And the smell? *Jazmín, azahar*... it's really amazing!

Oh and it's a contest! So people really go all out!

Useful tip, btw! If you're like me and spring allergies hit you like a truck, bring your antihistamines and tissues. You'll sneeze, maybe cry a little but it's so worth it, I promise!

Oops, I almost forgot the best part: IT'S FREE!

Of course, you'll need to get yourself there and maybe book a place to stay for the weekend, but the *patios*? Totally free to visit.

[Here's the map so you don't miss a thing.](#) 📍

I'm sure your camera roll will be full of fun, color, and *flores*! Don't forget to tag us and share your favorites!

You walk around the old town, hop from *patio* to *patio*, and suddenly you're part of something so local, so alive. It's a super chill visit, you stroll through beautiful Córdoba (hopefully with sunshine, though let's be real, the heat is already kicking in by May), sip a Montilla-Moriles (local wine) *fino de la tierra* with typical tapas, catch a few local concerts, and vibe with the city!





I spoke absolutely no Spanish before I came to Spain to teach. If I can learn it, so can you! The best advice I can give you is to get out there and practice what you know, try out new words and throw yourself in at the deep end.

Every month I'm going to be bringing you my top tips to improve your Spanish. I'll be exploring *a dicho* (a well-known phrase or saying), warning you about false friends, and setting you a tongue twister.

Saying

Cuando marzo mayea, mayo marcea.

Literal meaning: When March mays, then May marches

Actual meaning: If it's warm and sunny in March, it's bound to be wet and chilly in May (does not apply in Murcia!!)

This is also a good reminder that the months of the year don't begin with a capital letter in Spanish



Exit/éxito



Éxito does not mean exit. Should you ask for *el éxito*, you're really asking where to find success!

False friend

Tongue twister

Primavera, la prima de Vera espera parada en la vereda, en la vereda espera parada la prima de Vera, Primavera.

Tongue twisters probably won't improve your day-to-day Spanish but they are good practice for pronunciation.

Can you work out what it means?



Telling tales

We all love a good story!

Storybooks can bring your culture into the classroom.

Pick books with relatable characters for your students or tap into their interests such as sports or animals.



Comprehension

What happened?

Who is this?

Why is he sad?

Grammar

Elicit what might happen next using the future or the condition tenses.

Follow-up activities

Acting out the story, drawing and labeling scenes from the book, imagining the sequel, etc.

Activity

Now let's get your students to tell a story



Idea 1

Go round the class asking each student to add the next sentence to a story.

Idea 2

In smaller groups, you could use story cubes or collect up all the new vocabulary from the last few classes.

Idea 3

Let each pair make up their own dialogue and then act them out for the class.

Idea 4

Write 5-word stories about your weekend (eat, shop, beach, party, repeat) that elicit questions to find out more (What did you eat? What did you buy? Did you swim?).

Idea 5

In pairs, take a page from a comic and blank the dialogue in the speech bubbles.



Recipe by Nûpelda

Torrijas: A Sweet Taste of Spain!

Now that Semana Santa has passed, and we have eaten lots and lots of torrijas (typical Semana Santa treat), we're bringing you the ultimate (traditional) recipe.

This sweet treat is perfect for breakfast, dessert or just whenever you're craving something yummy. Plus, it's a great way to use up leftover bread.

Traditionally enjoyed during *Semana Santa* (Holy Week), this simple, delicious recipe is a must-try.

Ready to dig in?

Ingredients

- 1 loaf of day-old bread
- 500 ml whole milk
- 4 tablespoons of sugar
- 2-3 eggs
- A pinch of salt
- Orange or lemon peel
- Olive oil
- Extra sugar and ground cinnamon (for coating)

Method

01 Prepare the milk mixture:

In a saucepan, heat the milk, sugar, cinnamon stick and lemon and orange peel over medium heat. Stir until the sugar dissolves, then remove it from the heat. Let it cool so you don't burn yourself when soaking the bread.

03 Soak the bread:

Place the slices of bread in a large dish or bowl. Pour the milk mixture over the bread slices, ensuring they soak up all that delicious flavor. Let them soak for 5 minutes. In a separate bowl, whisk the eggs with a pinch of salt. This will create a rich coating for the bread.

05 Finishing touches:

Once fried, remove the *torrijas* from the pan and place them on a plate lined with paper towels to remove any excess oil. While they're still warm, toss them in the cinnamon-sugar mixture for that extra sweetness.

02 Slice the bread:

Cut the loaf of bread into thick slices, about 2 cm (1 inch) each. Spanish granny's top tip: using day-old bread is even better, as it will absorb the milk without falling to pieces.

04 Fry the *torrijas*:

Heat some oil in a frying pan over medium-high heat. You'll want enough oil to cover the bottom of the pan. Once hot, dip each soaked bread slice into the egg wash, coating both sides, and then fry them until golden and crispy on both sides.

06 Serve and enjoy!:

¡Y ya está! Your *torrijas* are ready. They are best enjoyed warm, but can also be eaten cold! Pair them with a cup of hot chocolate or coffee for the ultimate Spanish treat.

This delicious treat makes for great comfort food, perfect for lazy weekend mornings or sharing with friends at a gathering but we won't judge if you eat them all by yourself!

So, go ahead and give it a try, and flood your kitchen with Spanish flavors!

¡Buen provecho!



Interview by Ainhua

LIZZIE WATT

Age: 28 years old

From: England

Region of Spain: When I was an *Auxiliar* I lived in Murcia

Role:

Auxiliar from 2021-2023 and ConversaSpain Mentor



“

The support was invaluable, and I wanted to give back.”

Behind every great experience abroad, there's someone who's been there, done that, and is ready to help. That's where Lizzie comes in!

After two years as an *auxiliar* in Murcia, Lizzie took her love for Spain and turned it into something more—becoming a ConversaSpain mentor and helping our future *auxiliares* navigate their own journeys.

Lizzie, thank you for sharing your story and for being part of this community in and beyond Spain. Chatting with you and hearing about your previous experience is what makes our job worth it!

Read the full interview to hear how she went from *auxiliar* to mentor!

So, tell me about your journey in Murcia as an *auxiliar*. When did you get here, and where did you teach?

I arrived in October 2021, and I was so excited! Living in Spain had been a dream for years, and despite the stress of visas and COVID, I finally made it. It was hands down the best experience of my life.

I worked at three primary schools over two years—one in a mid-sized town, another in a tiny village, and the last in Murcia city. Having multiple schools was great; I met more people, had varied experiences, and got to be creative with my lessons. I especially loved sharing British culture with

the kids, like holidays they don't celebrate in Spain.

It really is an exchange, isn't it? You teach English, but you also learn about Spanish culture.

Exactly! And I fully immersed myself, living in Murcia city with Spanish speakers. I already knew Spanish from school, so it was the perfect way to improve.

Murcia has a strong accent. How did you handle it?

Honestly, it wasn't too difficult. I'd been exposed to different Spanish accents over the years, so I adapted quickly.

You moved back home in 2023 and now work at a nursery school. But you stayed connected with ConversaSpain as a mentor. What made you say yes?

I loved my experience with ConversaSpain! The support was invaluable, and I wanted to give back. When I started, I didn't have a mentor, and while I managed, it would have been great to have someone to ask those little questions. Plus, I just love talking about Spain!

So, what's one piece of advice you wish you'd known as a first-year *auxiliar*?

If your visa is delayed, don't panic! That was my biggest stress, but in reality, some friends arrived late, and their

schools were fine with it. The key is communication—talk to ConversaSpain and your school if there are issues.

Great point! How did it feel going from being an auxiliar to mentoring new ones?

Not weird at all, actually! It was so interesting to hear everyone's backgrounds, why they were moving to Spain, and what they were excited about. It was fun sharing recommendations, especially with people heading to Murcia.

Any unexpected or funny questions from your mentees?

The most surprising one was, "What should I wear to school?" I also got a lot of questions about housing, transportation, and whether they could take on other jobs—which, of course, I told them to check with ConversaSpain!

Those small details can feel like huge questions when you're moving abroad. If you had to prepare an 'Auxiliar Emergency Kit' for these kinds of things, what would be in it?

Three things I couldn't have survived without... First, Google Translate's lens feature—just point your phone at a menu or sign, and it translates right there. Lifesaver.

Second, a list of things to do in your city—literally how I made one of my best friends. I found a list of museums, dropped a message in the *auxiliar* WhatsApp group, and we just went.

And speaking of, that WhatsApp group? Essential. Housing, private tutoring opportunities, last-minute plans—it was all there. I told all my mentees to join because, honestly, I don't know what I would've done without it.



And beyond sharing that information with them, what did you do as a mentor?

The first thing I did was email everyone to introduce myself and explain my experience in Spain. I also organized some online events. I had set times, but I told everyone I was flexible if they needed adjustments, especially with the time difference for American and Canadian participants.

I got lots of replies—some people just wanted to chat about their situations, others had specific questions. It was such a mix of backgrounds, which was fascinating. Those email exchanges continued until the meetings, where we got to know each other better and talk more in-depth about the experience. It was really rewarding to help others navigate this journey!

It's great to have those kinds of networks and connections. I'm glad that made everything a little easier.

Yeah! The first couple of weeks I was in Murcia, both years, there was a picnic organized for all the *auxiliares* in the region. It was very informal—someone just picked a day, and we all met at the local park. But I made so many friends! It was amazing.

I always tell people, especially mentees, how fantastic those events are because there's no pressure—everyone is looking to make friends, and nobody really knows anyone yet. It's just a really nice and easy way to connect. That picnic was shared in the group chat too, so everything just kind of came together naturally.

You were one of the few mentors supporting *auxiliares* from the UK while actually being in the UK, since most of the others are still living in Spain. How did it feel to stay connected to Spain from afar? Did it make you want to go back?

Definitely! It was so nice to carry on that connection. Unfortunately, speaking Spanish isn't a big part of my life anymore—I have one Colombian friend at work who speaks Spanish, but that's about it. I really miss it. I try to stay connected to Spain as much as I can. I actually went back to Murcia last year while living in the UK, which was fantastic.

One of my best friends, who I met as an *auxiliar*, now lives just 45 minutes away from me in England! So, that's really nice. But to actually do something active—like mentoring—that let me talk about Spain so much was brilliant. It really brought it all back.

Once you've lived abroad, you can't stop talking about it! When I came back home, I wouldn't shut up about my experience. Did mentoring give you an excuse to talk about it without feeling like that annoying person who won't stop reminiscing?

Exactly! I do sometimes wonder if I talk about it too much. So, having a reason to discuss it was really nice. I love talking about Spain!

Is there anything cultural or a way of doing things that stuck with you from Spain?

Oh, absolutely! I really miss the relaxed way of life in Spain. Just going to a sunny café in the afternoon, having a coffee—it was so nice. And I really miss the food. I actually tried making paella a few months ago.

How did it turn out?

It was good! I'm vegetarian, so it wasn't traditional, but I was happy with it. Also, I try to bring a more relaxed approach to life, but it's not as easy here. I work much longer hours, and well... the UK is much grayer and gloomier!

I always say that in Spain, we work to live, not live to work. Would you say you've tried to bring that mindset back with you?



“
*I really miss the
relaxed way of life in Spain.*”

I try to! It was definitely easier in Spain. But actually, today is a great example. I used to take a lot of day trips to explore. So today, I have the day off, and I'm taking the train to Bath for a little getaway—trying to recapture some of that Murcia energy!

That's great to hear, have fun today! You might say that this experience changed your life...

It really did. It was my dream to live in Spain, and ConversaSpain made it happen. It wasn't easy, but because it was difficult, I appreciated it even more. The support I got made such a difference.

That says a lot about you! Instead of giving up when things got hard, you pushed through.

Thank you! It's actually changed my future plans too. I'd love to live abroad again and I'm now considering teaching English as a second language in the UK. So, this experience didn't just change my personal life—it also gave me a new career path to consider.





Did you know...

some
flowers have
the amazing
ability to
"listen"



According to a study published by National Geographic, some flowers have the amazing ability to "listen". Specifically, they can perceive the buzzing of bees and react in a surprising way: they produce sweeter nectar in a matter of minutes. This is due to the shape of their petals, which act as small antennae capable of picking up sound vibrations.

The result? A silent and efficient communication system between flowers and pollinators. The flowers reward the bees with better nectar just when they need it nearby, and the bees, in turn, are more attracted to it. It's as if nature had invented its own perfect match long before apps.

The gratitude adventure jar



Grab a Jar (or Box, or Whatever You Like)

Find something to hold your gratitude notes—a jar, a box, a cute tin, even an old shoebox. It doesn't have to be fancy!

Decorate It

Make it **yours**! You could: wrap a ribbon around it, cover it in stickers, paint it like a treasure chest, throw some glitter on (if you don't mind finding glitter everywhere forever), or keep it simple—whatever makes you happy!

Start Filling It Up

Every day, write down at least three things you're grateful for. Big or small, it all counts. Some ideas:

- "My morning coffee was **extra** good today."
- "Had a **deep convo** with my best friend."

Write each one on a little slip of paper and toss it in the jar!

Mix It Up!

To keep things interesting, try different ways of writing your gratitude:

- **Doodle it!** (Stick figures are 100% acceptable.)
- **Write a tiny story.** (One or two sentences is fine!)
- **Make it a secret note.** (Fold it in a fun way—origami heart, tiny scroll, whatever.)

Gratitude Check-In

Once a month (or whenever you're feeling a little blah), take a few notes out and read them. Instant mood boost!



Bonus: Weekly Gratitude Challenge!

Want to take it up a notch? Try adding a challenge each week:

- **Go on a gratitude walk.** Find three things outdoors to appreciate.
- **Write a surprise note.** Leave a gratitude note for someone else (a friend, coworker, even a stranger) and secretly give it to them.
- **Theme week!** Focus on one area, like “Things I love about my home” or “People who make my life better.”

Before you know it, you'll have a whole jar full of reasons to smile—and a little habit that makes life feel **extra** good.

Plus if you're ever feeling a bit low and need a quick mood boost, just grab a few notes from the jar to remind yourself of all the awesomeness around you!

Cultural trivia:

How much do you know about Spain?

02

When is it typical to eat torrijas?

- A) New Year
- B) Summer
- C) Semana Santa

03

What is spring like in Spain?

- A) Cold and rainy
- B) Mild and sunny
- C) Snowy and freezing

01

What do people in Córdoba do every spring?

- A) They plant flowers in public parks
- B) They open their private patios to display flowers and decorations
- C) They build new patios for the festival

04

Which flowers bloom in Spain during spring?

- A) Tulips and almond blossoms
- B) Cactus and palm trees
- C) Only sunflowers

06

Which fruit is common in Spain during spring?

- A) Apples
- B) Watermelon
- C) Strawberries

05

How much does it cost to visit the patios during the festival in Córdoba?

- A) €10 per person
- B) It depends on the patio
- C) Nothing, it's free

Answers

1. B) 2. C) 3. B) 4. A) 5. C) 6. C)

Word search

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| F | G | A | U | W | L | Z | Z | T | E | A | R | A | M |
| Q | T | H | B | Y | K | A | M | C | P | V | K | T | Q |
| R | A | R | E | D | J | H | K | K | T | L | O | I | K |
| H | P | L | U | K | E | A | A | Z | C | X | T | O | C |
| K | A | F | O | B | P | R | C | V | M | J | E | J | A |
| M | E | U | K | F | B | M | A | C | E | T | A | B | F |
| I | K | E | H | J | C | V | I | O | L | E | T | A | B |
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| R | G | T | T | V | V | R | G | Q | P | Q | A | P | K |
| G | L | E | I | M | D | H | V | A | G | E | N | E | Z |
| I | C | L | A | V | E | L | G | Z | G | E | K | Q | A |
| Y | J | G | X | V | A | Z | R | S | V | A | D | Q | W |

TAPA

FUENTE

CLAVEL

VIOLETA

MACETA

PATIO

AZAHAR

LIRIO

What's Your Perfect Spanish City?

Count how many As, Bs, or Cs you pick and find out where you belong!

01 Your dream weather is...

- A) Warm and sunny, perfect for a swim
- B) A bit of everything: seasons make life exciting
- C) Cool and fresh, sweater weather vibes

02 You can't live without...

- A) Rays of sunshine
- B) Meeting new people
- C) Breathing fresh air

03 Your perfect day includes...

- A) A long lunch by the sea
- B) Walking around the city
- C) A hike with breathtaking views

04 Your go-to drink is...

- A) A *tinto de verano*: refreshing and fun
- B) A glass of red wine: classic
- C) A *sidra*: high above your glass for the full experience

05 When it comes to food, you're all about...

- A) Fresh seafood
- B) *Jamón*, cheese, and all things hearty
- C) Warm stews and homemade comfort food

06 Your ideal night out is...

- A) Dancing until sunrise
- B) A tapas crawl through the city
- C) A chill night chatting for hours

07 Your ultimate Spanish bucket list item is...

- A) Take a road trip along the coast
- B) Immerse yourself in Spanish culture
- C) Hike the Camino de Santiago

08 If you had to pick just one Spanish tradition to experience, it would be...

- A) The Feria
- B) Semana Santa
- C) The local festivals

The answer is...



Most A's
Cádiz



Most C's
Oviedo



Most B's
Salamanca

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Spanish Regional Education Authorities



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