

First Days at School for our Auxis!



**Besides teaching, what
can you do your first
month here?**
(Pages 4-5)



**There is no recess
without Spanish
*bocadillos***
(Pages 8-9)



**What the first day really
felt like for Alyssa**
(Pages 10-12)



The first day at school is a mix of feelings.

Of nerves, excitement, and a little bit of “what on earth am I doing here?” You walk through the doors not knowing what to expect, and by the end of the day, you already have stories you’ll remember forever.

Maybe it was the students who couldn’t stop asking about where you’re from. Maybe it was the teacher who instantly made you feel welcome. Or maybe it was just realizing that yes, you actually did it! You’re in Spain.

First days aren’t about being perfect. They’re about showing up, taking it all in, and learning as you go.

So, whether you’re going over what to say, checking your outfit one last time, or just taking a breath to calm the nerves, remember: every *auxiliar* before you has felt the same, and every one of them has found their way.

Here’s to new beginnings, sharpened pencils, and the kind of stories you’ll be telling for years to come.

¡Feliz comienzo!

Tomás

CEO, Multilingual Education Development & Support



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Events *by Remy*



Festivities. Fiesta del Marisco, O Grove



Sport. 113th Jumping Competition, Barcelona



Festivities. Fiestas del Pilar, Zaragoza



Festivities. Fiestas de San Froilán, Lugo



Festivities. Cervantes Week, Alcalá



Culture. Estampa Art Fair, Madrid

October

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	



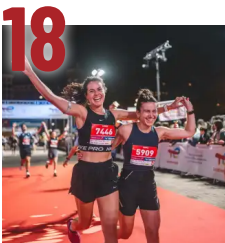
Culture. International Film Festival, Sitges



Music. Love To Rock Festival, Valencia



Sport. Superbike World Championship, Jerez



Sport. Night Running Fest, Bilbao



Sport. El Clásico (RMCF vs. FCB), Madrid



Music. Lady Gaga, Barcelona

Start on the Right Foot!

Classes just started. New country, new flat, new timetable. First days learning names, first *clastro*, first “*profe*, how do you say...?” Maybe you miss your people a little, maybe you feel small and big at the same time. So, let’s put together one simple plan that welcomes you into Spain: Zaragoza for Fiestas del Pilar.



WHEN

October 12. That’s the main day, although the city parties from the 4th until the 13th.

WHAT YOU’LL SEE

During the morning in *Plaza del Pilar*, there’s the *Ofrenda de Flores*: families in traditional clothes, bouquets everywhere, and the basilica that seems to be growing a mountain of carnations. Music, flowers, people crying a little. In the afternoon, there are *gigantes y cabezudos*, street music, *jota* dancers. At night, you’ll find parties around every corner. [Here](#) are all the concerts happening during these festivities.



HOW TO DO IT

Go early if you want to enter the flower offering (bring your own bouquet). Then escape to *El Tubo* for *tapas*: *croquetas*, *ternasco*, whatever you fancy, with a glass of *Cariñena* or *Somontano* wine. After, just follow the noise. Small stages pop up everywhere! And the locals will guide you.

WEAR / BRING

Comfy shoes. A *cachirulo* (red-black scarf) if you want to look local. You can buy one there! And a sweater, it’s always cold at night.

MONEY TALK

Many things are free. You pay for food, drinks, maybe one concert, but the city-wide party is open to all.



Go with your new friends and start your life in Spain on the right foot! Zaragoza in October makes you feel like you are not only visiting Spain, but you are also starting to belong here.

First Days at School

It goes without saying that you'll only be speaking English in your classroom, but you will hear plenty of Spanish throughout your school, from students and teachers. It can be disorientating at first.

Here is some useful vocabulary that you may see and hear in and around school.



Around School

Classroom	<i>Aula & Clase</i>
Board & Marker	<i>Pizarra & Rotulador</i>
Pen & Pencil	<i>Bolígrafo & Lápiz</i>
Notebook	<i>Cuaderno</i>
Backpack	<i>Mochila</i>
Hallway	<i>Pasillo</i>
Staff room	<i>Sala de profesores</i>
Principal's office	<i>Despacho del Director</i>
Playground & yard	<i>Patio</i>

Teacher Talk

Sit down	<i>Siéntate & Sentaos</i>
Stand up	<i>Levántate & Levantaos</i>
Listen	<i>Escucha & Escuchad</i>
Look	<i>Mira & Mirad</i>
Do your homework	<i>Haz los deberes</i>
Hand in a project	<i>Entregar un trabajo</i>
Quiet, please	<i>Silencio, por favor</i>
Pass or Fail	<i>Aprobar o Suspender</i>
Work in pairs	<i>Trabajar en parejas</i>

TV shows set in Spanish schools:



Prime Video
El Internado



RTVE Play
La otra mirada



Disney Plus
Física o Química



Netflix
Merli

Step-by-Step Guide to Approaching Your Classes:

Many teachers will recommend that you don't break a smile in class for the first month of the school year if you want to keep control of your classes. Anyone who's ever met me knows I'd never manage that!

Learn your students' names, not just the naughty ones. Try the Alliteration Game: My name's Kit and I'm kind, her name's Natalia and she's nice, and so on, all around the class.

Use ice-breaker games such as This or That or Two Truths and a Lie to help your students feel less self-conscious and allow you to assess their ability.

Get comfortable with your students by exchanging information about your lives. Be friendly but not a friend, and set boundaries.

Coordinate with your teachers to work out a system for communication and class content. Talk about your expectations on both sides.

Ideas for celebrating Halloween:

You might be brand new at your school, but a Halloween project is your chance to shine!

- Use crafts to create displays or make masks
- Tell ghost stories and sing spooky songs
- Throw a costume party
- Give a presentation
- Show how you celebrate back home
- Set up a haunted house with typical games





Recipes by Nûpelda

Bocadillo: the King of Recreo

The best way to understand Spanish students is by taking a peek inside their backpack... and we don't mean textbooks.

Around 11 am, Spanish playgrounds come alive with the unmistakable sound of foil being unwrapped to reveal their most prized possession. No, it's not a sandwich, this is a *bocadillo*.

Whether sweet or savory, *bocadillos* are more than just snacks, they're a school-day ritual. Here are four classic *bocadillos* to try during your break at school.

The "Fantastic Four" *bocadillos*

- *Bocadillo de chorizo*
- *Bocadillo de Nocilla*
- *Bocadillo de paté*
- *Bocadillo de jamón*

Bocadillo de chorizo

A bite with attitude

Chorizo in Spain isn't all the same: Pamplonica, Alejandro... each type has its own flavor. Slice it onto crusty bread or grab convenient pre-sliced packs. You'll smell this one coming from across the *patio*. That's part of the charm.



Bocadillo de Nocilla

The sweetest recess

A simple sandwich with creamy Nocilla (the Spanish version of Nutella) spread. Something sweet without being overwhelming. A snack you can make in seconds. Nocilla comes in dark, white and mixed varieties.

Bocadillo de paté

Creamy nostalgia

If you ask any Spanish kid about paté, La Piara will come up. Just spread it on your bread, and you've got a classic snack ready to go. Nothing fancy, just a simple *bocadillo* that works anytime.



Bocadillo de jamón

Classic that never fails

Jamón is everywhere in Spain for a reason, and *bocadillos* are no exception. While most people reach for *Jamón Serrano*, you can also try it with *Jamón York/Cocido*. We definitely recommend *serrano*, though!

Interview by Ainhoa

ALYSSA DUNSINZER

Age: 25 years old

From: Ohio, USA

Region: Galicia

Role:

3-year auxi in primary and secondary schools.
Newest ConversaSpain member!



“

My first day of school changed everything. After that, I knew I could do it!”

The night before her first day as an *auxiliar*, Alyssa had her outfit ready, her presentation polished, and her route to school memorized. Still, nothing could prepare her for the mix of nerves and excitement that comes with stepping into a Spanish classroom for the very first time.

Now, years later, Alyssa has joined ConversaSpain as our newest team member. Who better to welcome new *auxiliares* than someone who's lived it all herself?

First days at school can be A LOT. How were you feeling the night before?

I was both excited and nervous! At that point, I had only heard from my school coordinator once, early in the summer (around June, I think), so I had no idea what to expect from my first day.

I had already mapped out my route several times, created a “Get to Know Me” presentation, and picked out a first-day-of-school outfit, so I was ready to go! But no matter how much prep I could do, I was still going to have those first-day jitters.

More than anything, I didn't know what to expect because I had never taught high school and didn't have much experience with that age group in general.



So, when you finally walked in... what was your very first impression?

My school was much bigger than I expected. It was three stories, with two or three class sections per grade. I remember being intimidated, but I was also comforted by the size—it really wasn't much different from my high school in the States!

My second year, I returned to Spain as an *auxi* in an elementary school. Everything was bright and colorful and new. It was also much louder, in a cozy, warm way. I could hear singing coming from the preschool classrooms, and it made me really excited for all the songs, crafts, and creative projects that lay ahead of me.



Do you remember who welcomed you first?

Because I didn't know what my coordinator looked like, I just walked up to the first adult I saw. He kindly led me up to the staff room, where my coordinator was rushing around preparing for my arrival. I later found out that the man was the *secretario*, or the person in charge of welcoming the students, dealing with maintenance, etc. It was nice to have a familiar face to greet me every morning when I came into school!

Then, after that, I was handed off several times to different teachers who introduced me to everyone in the building throughout the day.

I bet you met a lot of people that day. Any funny/awkward moments that still make you laugh?

On my first day, I had an off period scheduled pretty early in the day. At that point, I wasn't comfortable on my own yet, so my advisor handed me off to a group of teachers to grab a coffee in the cafeteria. The whole time, I just smiled and nodded, totally lost in the conversation. I walked away a bit embarrassed at my Spanish level.

By the end of the year, that group of 5 teachers became my best friends, and we treasured those Tuesday morning coffee chats! Looking back at it, I must've looked so shy and scared that first day.



What about the school itself? Was there anything that really surprised you?

That's a hard question. I truly came in with no expectations. Although I had taught in informal settings (volunteer ESL classes, tutoring, etc.), I had limited classroom experience, so I only had my own school upbringing to draw upon.

If anything, Spanish classrooms are definitely loud! It took a while to get used to the noise level to manage the classroom effectively. Other aspects were more laid back as well; for example, the students used my first name and were much more tactile than in the United States.

The differences in the classroom reflected the general cultural differences between the two countries.



I bet they were loud when they met you. How did they react?

They were really excited! Of course, what "excited" means differed between my two schools.

My first year as an *auxiliar*, I was with high school students, so they were really interested in the US and about my personal life. They asked a million questions about everything from prom to my favorite musician.

My second (and third) year, I was in preschool and elementary school, and I was immediately swarmed with drawings, hugs, and "I love yous" within the first hour. They all wanted to play with me and tell me their birthdays and favorite colors and show me what they brought for a snack...



That's so sweet. We are sure there were challenges too, though. What was the hardest part?

The hardest part was learning all my students' names! I had an alternating schedule, so I only got to see the majority of my students once every other week. In total, I had almost 300 students... And, on top of that, there were nearly 100 teachers and staff members I had to get to know that first week, too!

Everyone was so friendly and welcoming that I felt bad when I couldn't match names to faces right away. My coordinator gave me a folder with pictures of all my students which helped a lot. Besides that, things went very smoothly, and I felt well-supported and well-integrated.



And on the flip side, what made you go home smiling?

My favorite thing about teaching is that no two days are alike. There's always a fun story to tell! Either students said something out of the blue, a presentation went better than expected, or my Spanish came out a little more fluent than the day before when chatting in the teachers' lounge. The list goes on and on.

If you could go back, what advice would you give yourself for that first morning?

Honestly, I felt very prepared. Although I was nervous, I was ready to go, with all my documents in order and a positive attitude.

I would remind myself to bring a snack, though! Lunch isn't until after school, and as someone who was used to eating lunch at 11am, I was starving by the time I got home. Usually, the teachers only bring something small to eat (nuts, fruit, etc.), but don't be shy! Eating something different is a good way to be a cultural ambassador!

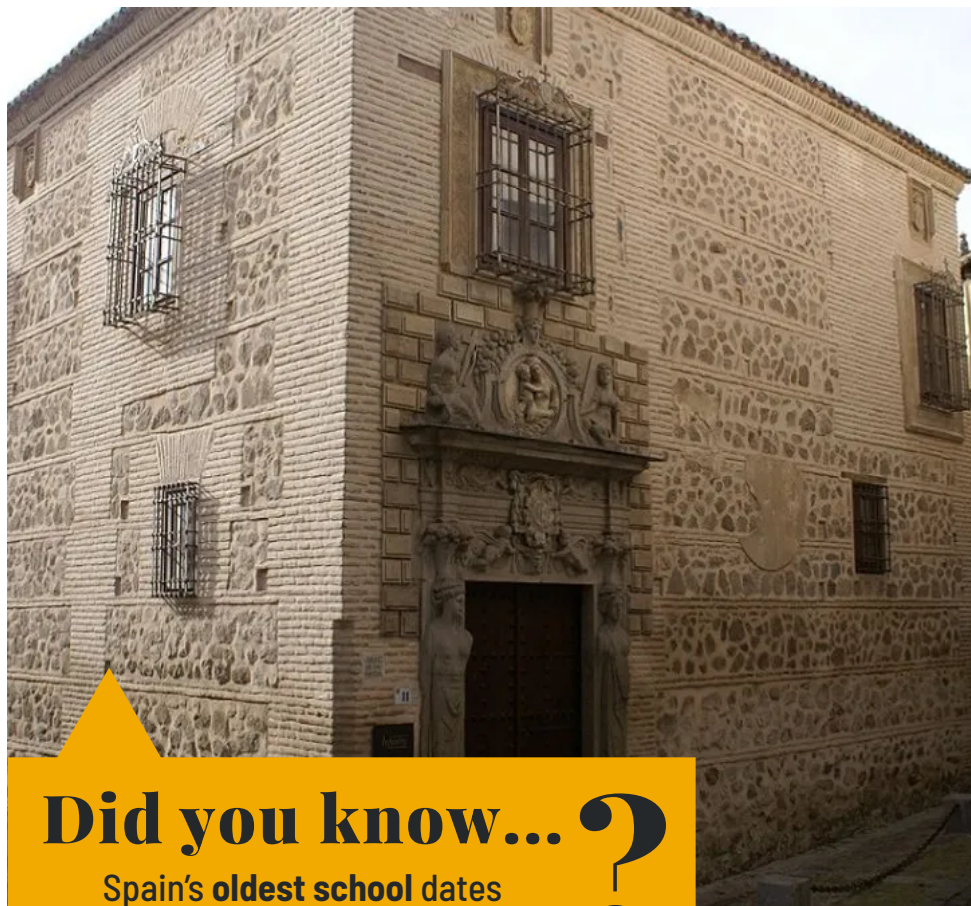


Looking back now, how do you think that first day shaped the rest of your experience?

My first day of school changed everything. After that, I knew I could do it! Meeting all the wonderful teachers and standing in front of the class without "making a fool of myself" showed me that I was more than capable of being a successful *auxi*. There was no longer anything standing in my way of having fun and *aprovechando* all that Spain has to offer.

Hope your first day at the office was as good as your first day at school! We love hugs as well, so get ready!





Did you know...?

Spain's **oldest school** dates
back to the **6th century**

The “Colegio de Nuestra Señora de los Infantes” in Toledo was **founded between the years 522 and 531**, making it the oldest school in Spain. Its origin lies in the cathedral schools of the Visigothic Era, first mentioned at the Second Council of Toledo in 527. Back then, about forty boys between 8 and 10 years old attended the school.

From its Visigothic beginnings to its 16th-century foundations as a formal institution, and through countless reforms and expansions, the “Colegio de los Infantes” has been **teaching its way through history for nearly 1,500 years**. Today, it has more than 1,400 students.

Activities for Your First Days at School (Part 1):

Starting at a new school can feel exciting and overwhelming for both students and language assistants. One of the most powerful ways to create a calm, connected classroom is through simple mindfulness and movement practices.

This hands-on guide gives you 4 ready-to-use activities that require little to no materials, take just a few minutes, and can be adapted to almost any age group. These practices help students feel grounded, focused, and more at ease in their learning environment (you too!).

Balloon Breathing

Calm nerves and improve focus | 1-2 min | All ages

Ask students to sit or stand with their hands on their belly.

Say: “Let’s imagine we are blowing up a balloon in our tummy.”

Inhale slowly through your nose, exhale through your mouth. Repeat.

Yoga Freeze Dance

Move your body and build awareness | 5 min | Primary to lower secondary

Teach them a few yoga poses: tree, mountain, warrior, etc. and play some gentle music.

Ask students to dance slowly. When the music stops, they freeze in a yoga pose.

Have them **observe** the different poses, in silence, without moving.





Color Your Mood

Emotional check-in and self-awareness | 5-7 min | Primary

Prepare a **simple chart**:

- Red = Angry or frustrated
- Blue = Sad or tired
- Yellow = Happy or excited
- Green = Calm or okay

Ask, “What color is your mood today?”

Students **draw** something using that color and say it out loud.

Grounding Game

Calm anxiety and focus on the present | 3-4 min | Upper primary and secondary

Guide students through the steps, speaking slowly.

Steps: “Name 5 things you can see”, “Now 4 things you can touch”, “3 things you can hear”, “2 things you can smell”, “1 thing you are thankful for”.

Pause briefly between each step to let it sink in.

Start Small and Stay Steady

You don’t need to run a full yoga session or meditation.

Just one mindful moment a day can make a big difference and act as a reset button. Use the same activity for several days in a row, as kids love routine, and familiarity builds confidence.

It genuinely takes no more than five minutes of your day, but those few intentional moments will definitely help relax the classroom energy and create a peaceful space for both you and your students.

01

What do Spanish kids call their mid-morning break?

- A) Descanso
- B) Recreo
- C) Almuerzo

02

How are Spanish schools divided?

- A) Infantil, Primaria, Secundaria
- B) Elementaria, Junior, Senior
- C) Grades 1-12

03

Where do students usually play during their break?

- A) Aula
- B) Laboratorio
- C) Patio

04

How is the school year in Spain usually divided?

- A) Semesters (2 terms)
- B) Trimesters (3 terms)
- C) Quarters (4 terms)

06

What is a *comedor* in a Spanish school?

- A) The library
- B) The lunchroom
- C) The gym

05

How long is a typical morning break?

- A) 30 minutes
- B) 1 hour
- C) 10 minutes

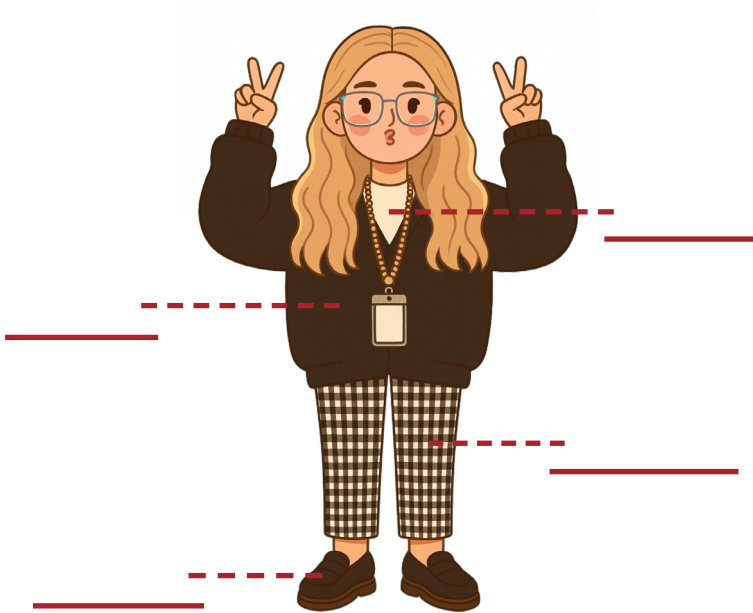
Answers

Cultural trivia
1) B, 2) A, 3) C, 4) B, 5) A, 6) B
Matching Game
Pantalon, Mocassines, Camiseta, Jersey

Fill in the Gaps

First Day Outfit

Match the word to each item of clothing inspired by a perfect first day outfit.



Vestido

Pantalón

Zapatos

Falda

Tacones

Camiseta

Camisa

Jersey

Bufanda

Chaleco

How ready are you for your first day at school?

Choose your answers, add up your points, and check your score to see how ready you are for day one.

01 Have you thought about your first-day outfit?

- Weeks ago, have a plan A, B, and C → 3 pts
- I will decide the night before → 2 pts
- Whatever's clean that morning → 1 pt

02 How are you getting to school?

- Route tested, map saved, and 15 minutes early → 3 pts
- Will check Google Maps the night before → 2 pts
- I will check that morning → 1 pt

03 What's in your survival kit?

- Everything: notebook, pens, water, snack... → 3 pts
- The basics: phone, notebook, one pen → 2 pts
- Just what fits in my pockets → 1 pt

04 What's in your backpack?

- Fully-organized folders → 3 pts
- A bit messy, but ready → 2 pts
- Half empty and full of hope → 1 pt

05 How did you practice introducing yourself?

- Written down, rehearsed, ready to go → 3 pts
- A quick mental check → 2 pts
- I'll improvise in the moment → 1 pt

06 How many activities did you prepare?

- At least two versions + a backup icebreaker → 3 pts
- One general idea to break the ice → 2 pts
- Zero, I'll see how it goes → 1 pt

07 The night before looks like:

- Mental run-through of greetings and activities → 3 pts
- A quick scroll for ideas on TikTok → 2 pts
- Falling asleep thinking, "I'll just wing it" → 1 pt

08 Your mood before walking in:

- Nervous, but checklist complete → 3 pts
- Some butterflies, but optimistic → 2 pts
- "Whatever happens, happens" → 1 pt

8-12 pts: Go with the flow

Your strategy is charm and adaptability. Spoiler: it'll work more often than you think.

13-18 pts: Getting there

You've covered the essentials, even if a few details slip through the cracks. A nice balance of prep and flexibility.

19-24 pts: Super ready

Checklist in hand, you've got a plan A, B, and even a plan Z. If something goes wrong, you've probably prepared for it.

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