First Draft of Main Article

Ella Denny

Suggested Headline: Healthy Living Abroad / Wellness and Balance Abroad

Living in Valencia, Spain is a break away from life in America. Being here gives access to easier ways to get physical exercise, and some might even say a better quality of life. After speaking with a few individuals about how they incorporate healthy living in Valencia, the results may surprise you.

Oriana Goncalves, the Coordinator of the Cultural Program at the Florida State campus in Valencia, Spain, explains how she prioritizes healthy living through commuting around the city on foot and with the foods she eats. When she’s at the store, she tries to stray away from buying too many sweets and prioritizes buying many fruits and vegetables which she cooks alongside her vegetarian diet. Her main form of exercise during the week is her commute to work, which is a 20–25-minute walk from her home.

“It’s a dangerously clean city” says Brianna Cloutier, a rising senior at Florida State University who is a part of the study abroad program this summer, as she describes Valencia. She claims that when she first got to Spain the ground was so clean she could see her own reflection, describing the ground was almost slippery! Being such a clean city, Bri loves to walk around, find places to eat, and find new shopping spots.

*Stats for walkable city (maybe in a “did you know?” bubble): Did you know that Valencia has 1,100 sets of traffic lights? That’s about one traffic light per 705 residents, giving Valencia the second highest density of traffic lights per capita on Earth after New York City! (explain how this is why people walk so much because the best way to navigate the city is by walking)*

*Stat from:* [*https://www.thinkspain.com/news-spain/33090/fun-facts-about-the-comunidad-valenciana-to-celebrate-its-regional-day*](https://www.thinkspain.com/news-spain/33090/fun-facts-about-the-comunidad-valenciana-to-celebrate-its-regional-day)

*\*Maybe stat about Valencia being awarded being the green capital of Europe\**

[*https://edition.cnn.com/travel/valencia-green-capital-europe-climate/index.html#:~:text=Pedal%20power%3A%20Valencia%20in%20Spain,that's%20now%20a%20communal%20space*](https://edition.cnn.com/travel/valencia-green-capital-europe-climate/index.html#:~:text=Pedal%20power%3A%20Valencia%20in%20Spain,that's%20now%20a%20communal%20space)*.*

Over the weekends, Goncalves’s favorite way to spend her time is through grabbing a group of friends and going on a hike local to the Valencia area. (\*Explain the hike and personal anecdote of her going and add photos of it on the page, explain how she likes to get “lost” in nature-> link to slower lifestyle in Valencia and how it’s normalized to take more time to do things to enjoy it fully, quote how time moves slower at 15:58\*).

*Sidebar: You won’t find me without wearing my watch on my wrist. Like most sports watches, my personal Garmin watch tracks many health statistics including the number of steps I take per day. Since coming to Valencia to study abroad, my 14-day average has gone from a little over 5,000 steps per day to 13,490- almost 6 miles a day!*

As the Coordinator of the Cultural Program, Goncalves is responsible for planning group events for the students which include weekly activities such soccer Mondays, group fitness class on Tuesdays, a cultural activity on Wednesday, and day trip almost every Friday.

Every Monday there is an email sent by Valencia International Programs that gives out information to the students for events that they are able to participate in. (\*Interview information from Megan Santayana going to the functional training class and how she prioritizes walking in her daily routine being abroad\*). Tuesday, July 2, nine FSU students, including myself gathered in the Valencia Riverbed for the weekly group fitness activity, functional training. The workout included circuit training and group exercises that had us all very tired, yet satisfied, at the end as we completed the hard workout as one. According to Beckwith Health Club, group exercising can include many benefits such as the output of endorphins that increases dopamine, encouragement and motivation from the people within your group, and importantly being abroad- meeting new people!

Link to stat: <https://www.beckwithhealthclub.co.uk/8-benefits-of-group-exercise/>

Working out with others can create new bonds and a more comfortable environment which Goncalves explains is the purpose of the cultural programing she oversees, being that the transition from living in the US to Spain can be difficult for students.

End with “choose your better” statement and wrap it up with a good closing paragraph.