

MONEY WHILE ABROAD

It is broadly estimated that students should budget €50-100 per week (€200-400 per month) for living expenses, including snacks and personal expenses. Your program fee includes accommodation, three daily meals, and textbooks.

Read below for considerations related to managing your finances while abroad.

Getting Cash

ATMs

The least expensive and quickest way to get cash in Spain is through one of the many ATMs located throughout the city. Staff will show you the ones closest to your housing during the Discovery Week neighborhood walking tour.

Whenever you can, use ATMs that have an indoor vestibule (connected to a real bank), and try to go to ATMs from national and international banks, like Santander, BBVA, La Caixa, ING, or Bankinter. These banks will charge lower withdrawal fees than ATMs that cater to tourists.

Before you depart the U.S., find out whether your bank has a 'sister' bank in Europe that will give you lower withdrawal fees (i.e. Bank of America has a sister bank called Deutsche Bank). You should also ask your bank about any other fees associated with withdrawing cash abroad so that you are aware.

Exchanging Money

If you would like to arrive in Spain with cash to spend, we recommend contacting your bank at home and ordering Euros before departure. However, if you prefer to exchange your U.S. Dollars for Euros in Seville, you can do so at exchange kiosks as well as any national or international bank that offers this service at the counter.

Remember that every establishment charges a commission on top of the exchange rate. Before you agree to the transaction, decide if it is a good deal for you. Prior to going to the exchange counter, research how much money you *should* be getting in exchange for your dollars on that day according to the exchange rate (you can find this by googling!). You may visit various establishments to see which one offers the best deal.

Creating and Keeping a Budget

Preparing an Emergency Fund

When you set up a budget for your time in Seville, start with preparing an emergency fund. Ideally, you should not touch this money for the entire duration of your time abroad.

Your emergency fund may look like a set amount of money that you leave in your bank account, or you may leave a portion in your bank account and keep a portion in cash in the form of euros. Remember that if you travel with a large amount of cash, it's a good idea to divide it and store each portion in different places (don't forget where!) in the case that your wallet or bag is stolen.

A good amount of money to keep in your emergency fund is at least €100-€150. This may be used to travel to the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate, pay for a night at a hostel or hotel, or any number of necessities in case your wallet or bag is stolen.

In order to prevent dipping into your emergency fund, we recommend that you do not carry all of your cash and cards with you when you go out. If you take all forms of payment with you, you are placing yourself at a higher risk if your wallet is stolen.

If you need financial assistance while abroad with Verto, please reach out to Verto Staff. If you're traveling independently before or after your Verto experience, the U.S. government advises you first contact friends, family, or your banking institution. The U.S. consulate or embassy can help you establish contact if you are unable to do so. [Here is more information](#) regarding what to do in case you need financial assistance while traveling abroad.

Preparing Your Spending Budget

After you've set up your emergency fund, you may want to set up budgets for the following areas:

- Travel and sightseeing
- Dining and nightlife
- Shopping
- Beauty and wellness

Give yourself a set amount of money that you are able and willing to spend in these areas each week or month, and keep track of how much you spend.

Here are a couple of highly-rated apps used for budgeting:

- [Goodbudget](#): The Goodbudget app is based on using the envelope system, known as Kakeibo, which means "household account book" in Japanese. The envelope system is designed to let you know how much money is allocated to each expense, along with how much is saved each month.

- [Mint](#): Mint is a free budgeting app that allows you to connect all of your financial accounts in one digital space so you get a high-level overview of your financial health. The app also allows users to track spending and savings and set and track budget goals.

[Watch this video](#) to hear from Alumni about budgeting during your experience abroad.

Personal Expenses

Bear in mind that the bulk of your living expenses while in Seville are already included in your Verto program fee, like your room and board. This means that your housing fee is paid for the duration of your program, plus three meals a day, seven days a week. Should you need a picnic lunch because you plan to be out all day (class, out with friends, on an excursion), the residence hall or your host family will provide that for you upon request.

Also, all Verto activities will include transportation and entrance to any relevant monuments or sites. You'll be able to bring a picnic lunch with you or dine out if you choose.

Thus, the cost of living during your experience abroad in Seville can be very low since there are very few vital purchases that you will need to make. But even so, there are a few things that you will most likely need to purchase once onsite:

- Phone Plan
 - If you do not have an international phone plan with your carrier in the U.S., you will need to purchase a SIM card once you get to Seville. Monthly plans that include data and national calls (to Spanish numbers) cost between €15 and €30 per month.
- Laundry
 - Students staying at the residence hall will have access to pay-per-load washers and dryers in your building, so you'll need to set aside money for using the washer and dryer as well as laundry detergent.
- Toiletries or apparel
 - You may plan on purchasing some toiletry items and clothing or apparel once you arrive in Seville to save space in your luggage, or if you forget to bring something.

The rest of your expenses are discretionary, meaning that you decide how much you're willing to spend. Some common ways in which participants choose to spend their money:

- Gym membership (€25-50 per month)
- Public transport (€0.38 one-way bus fare with bus card)
- Sevici bike rental service (from €2.59/day, €13.33/month, €33.33/year)
- Taxis or Ubers
- Miscellaneous items for room at residence hall (floor mat, storage bins, hamper)
- Entertainment: museums, monuments, concerts, performances
- Dining out
- Nightlife
- Souvenirs

- Clothing and accessories
- Independent travel outside of Seville

Seville for Cheap or Free

Here are examples of activities available to you on site that are low-cost or free:

- **Open Mic Nights** and **Spanish-English Trivia Nights** at local spots like [Lady Drama Indie Rock Bar](#)
- **100 Montaditos**: restaurant with 100 types of *montaditos* (little sandwiches) near the University of Seville. Wednesdays and Sundays are “Euromanía” days, where all sandwiches are €1.
- **La Carbonería**: Free flamenco shows Monday-Sunday starting at 8:30 pm. Book readings and other courses announced on their Facebook page.
- The **Festival de las Naciones** runs from the end of September through October. This festival has nightly concerts and shows, plus food stands that serve dishes from around the world and shops where you can purchase many types of artisanal goods. Entry during the day is free, and it only costs €1.50 in the evening.

Keep in mind that students enjoy their time abroad on a wide range of budgets. Ask Verto Seville Staff about the many cheap or free activities to enjoy in Seville!