

Madrid 2011

By Treise Moran, Laura Carroll and Lucas Cronin.

Our trip began on Wednesday 27th April at 7:00 am in Mounthawk School as the forty-five students and five teachers gathered to get on the bus to head for Madrid for the next six days. Although everyone was tired they were very excited for the days ahead. On the bus we got a booklet with Spanish phrases to help us order food or buy clothes etc.

We arrived in our hotel (Hotel Mediodia) in Madrid. We were given time to freshen up after our long day traveling. We gathered in the hotel lobby and set off walking through the busy city for dinner at Fresco. We took our time walking back to the hotel through the city and saw entertainers making their trade such as the man on stilts, the nine heads and excited Barcelona fans screaming as Messi scored two goals for them against Real Madrid that night.

On Thursday morning we were up early for breakfast and met in the lobby once again at 8:45 for our guided tour of the city by our tour guide, Iris. The day was very sunny and warm. We also saw many things such as the Palacio de las Comunicaciones, the Botanical Gardens. We got lunch and set off on our bus to the Bernabéu Stadium where we saw a lot of silverware, the dressingrooms, the dug-outs, the media room and walked through the tunnel that all the famous players have walked through in the past. Even people that don't like soccer enjoyed it. We had time for shopping in the Official Real Madrid Shop where you could get a lot of Real Madrid Merchandise. We got on the bus again and went to a huge shopping centre where we had some well earned shopping for three hours and I think everyone got something. That night we went to a very nice steak house for dinner. Again we slowly walked through the busy city to get a taste of the night-life in Madrid. We saw more entertainers trying to earn money on the streets.

Friday brought us to the UNESCO heritage city of Segovia. We saw a huge, amazing Aqueduct which has been standing for hundreds and hundreds of years without cement. We took our first group photo there and even met the Governor of Bangkok. We walked around the little streets and saw some beautiful ruins. We then went to Valle De Los Caidos (Valley of the fallen) and the Basilica, the burial place of Kings and Queens for many centuries. Francisco Franco is buried in the cathedral. Then we went on a short journey to El Escorial. We ate in Fresco and then went to an Arcade/Bowling Alley. We finished up late (as usual), and to bed to get some sleep before the next early morning.

We went to another UNESCO city - Toledo (the old capital of Spain). It was built on a hill for protection and can only be accessed via bridges. The river Tagus surrounds the city. We could also see the different time periods from which the city was built from the magnificent architecture, Muslim, Gothic and Moorish. We then went into the city and entered the beautiful cathedral. (This was a huge relief as out of the blue it started raining but soon blew over.) The outside of the cathedral itself was decorated with statues e.g. The Last Supper and The Twelve Apostles. The inside was indescribable with its pure gold altar and fresco painted ceilings. We then went to the Spanish Gardens in the centre of Madrid to relax and get away from the hassle of the city. Then we went to the Prada Museum and saw some famous beautiful paintings such as Saturn Eating His Son by Goya. We then ate in Fresco and met up with our tour guide Iris who brought us to a Flamenco show. It was amazing and everyone enjoyed it, especially the girls! It was our latest night yet. We crawled into bed after our long but enjoyable day and after meeting in the conference room to be told the plan for the next day.

On Sunday we went to see some beautiful gardens in the train station across the way from our hotel. We went back to the hotel and got on a bus to the Warner Brother Theme Park which was amazing. We were there until about 6pm and there were five roller coasters, a lot of games to win prizes like teddy bears and water rides that we got soaked in and forgot we had our phones in our pockets. We were given advice not to go to a Spanish Haunted House because you don't know what their saying and no one jumps out at you to scare you. Everyone agreed it was the best day of the trip. After we left the theme park we went again to eat in Fresco like every other night. When we got back to the hotel we went to the conference room and we presented Sr. Bernadette with a present thanking her for being so good to us and organizing the wonderful trip that everyone enjoyed. We also had a quiz on all the information that we learned on the trip and room 104 came out on top after a close tie-breaker with room 529. The winners were Laura Carroll, Iseult Daly and Clodagh Carr. In room 529 was of Lucas Cronin, Sean Dukes, Colin Doody and Patrick Walsh. We went back up to our rooms and packed for the next day.

Our last day was sad as we were going to miss the nice weather and the lovely city. We visited the Reina Sofia that morning before we left which was very near our hotel. We went to see Gurnica by Picasso which was very nice. We had some time to look around and then we set off again to the Placio Real. It was very big with a lot of rooms. We went to the armory where there were paintings of children going into battle. There was also armour for the horses and for the children who rode the horses. We got lunch and went back to the hotel to get our bags. We got on the bus to head for the airport and unfortunately our flight was delayed by nearly two hours. When we arrived in Dublin and got on the bus everyone realized just how tired they were from all the traveling and the time difference. Most fell asleep on the bus at some stage and everyone was happy to finally see their families again and go to sleep in their own bed.

A big thanks to all the teachers that went on the tour especially Sr. Bernadette who organized the whole trip. The teachers were Sr. Bernadette, Ms. O' Carroll, Ms. Hunt, Mr. O' Roarke and Mr. Nutley. It was thoroughly enjoyed by all.