

ARRUF International Ambassador's Notebook

Viqui Arbizu-Sabater May-June 2020

Here in Spain the state of alarm came quite suddenly and rapidly. And, even though, the first three weeks were really scary it was very impressive to see how citizens heeded the advice and cared so much for their community. Supermarkets never lacked supplies, pharmacies were always available, and people only left home for real emergencies. At the start of May, people were allowed to walk in family groups (up to five) and professional athletes could go to practice. Now, in mid-May small shops have open, people can gather with family members (up to ten), and one can travel within one's province (county). It is nice to see the community slowly adjusting to normalcy. Universities and schools have been working online with students and will continue to do so until the end of school year. It has been a stressful time, but I can see that even though there will be changes in our everyday lives, we will come out strong.

Since I moved back to Spain, I was able to rediscover Seville. It is such a cosmopolitan city with all the great things Europe offers, sophisticated and culture-filled, with the old and the new right next to each other, yet very welcoming and does not feel overwhelming. Up until the state of alarm in mid-March, we enjoyed Seville and the Andalusian region. We visited with friends in outdoor cafes, enjoyed world-renowned performances, museums, and conferences, as well as quaint villages with great local cuisine and wine in the cool mountains of Grazalema. Once the confinement started, we read a lot, caught up with some movies, and cooked a lot. I rediscovered some old recipes from my grandma's kitchen like *Pollo a la pepitoria* (Chicken in almond sauce) and *Albóndigas en salsa española* (Meatballs in Espagnole sauce). We also had fun trying new recipes, burning a few, but mainly enjoying new flavors. We were also able to participate in many webinars and videoconferences based on travel and tourism in this new situation to reframe our vision for our new venture as tour operators and to help us plan for the coming future. You are all welcome to visit our website <https://www.yugenduende.com>

As you all know, ARRUF Spring trip to Seville this May had to be postponed. The pre-planning meetings with the University of Seville were successful, and there were a lot of high expectations for this first encounter. It was an honor to work on this project. The University of Seville was excited to host us and to show off its privileged location in the middle of this wonderful city. I am looking forward to retaking this project next year to finally host our International ARRUF trip. I will keep you posted with my notes in this newsletter. Meanwhile, enjoy these two video clips:

<https://youtu.be/gpflOaQ89oE> ; <https://youtu.be/6Y-fK-rBP5Y>

Dr. Victoria Arbizu-Sabater is ARRUF's Honorary Ambassador in Spain