



The morning I was to leave Beaufort for my seven week venture abroad in Europe and Africa, my father held out his hand with three small, white and black-speckled pebbles, asking me to choose one. "Take it with you wherever you go and bring it back," he told me. The other two were for him and my younger sister Chloe who was coming with me for the first three weeks in Europe. My parents have always supported our passion for world travel, but with the message of never forgetting where we come from.

This series of articles on my travels promises not to be your typical account on wining and dining abroad. For one, I am a low-budget traveler – the less money, the more adventure. Besides, I'm broke. Also, I intentionally try to plan as little as possible as far as my itinerary goes. When I'm traveling with a destination in mind, sure, I'll buy my bus, train and plane tickets in advance; but the more I travel the more I find it necessary to be open to the locals I will meet and their recommendations. Experiencing, say, Spain, is about immersing myself in the local culture as a traveler and not a tourist because, after all, traveling is about understanding our big world through the eyes of many others.

I landed in Madrid, the capital of Spain, on a Sunday afternoon with my sister Chloe, our child





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