

Lockdown diaries: Dan, CV writer & proofreader, stranded up north in the Basque Country

Here's the second story of our new series on what it's like to be in Spain right now during the lockdown. Daniel Catalan is a professional CV builder and writer specializing in career services. He's been living and working in Madrid on and off for almost a decade, and is currently on lockdown in País Vasco, as he was away on holiday there when the state of emergency was declared.

What was your life like a week ago vs. today?

A week ago I was at home in Madrid, attending to a surplus of several clients back-to-back in anticipation of a trip that I embarked on Wednesday morning to San Sebastian. The purpose of this trip was to become immersed in the local gastronomy, to take long walks on the beach and in the nature of the surrounding villages. I succeeded in these objectives during the first two days of the trip before embracing the gravity of the situation. Prompted to prolong the trip, I've been quarantining myself in a comfortable apartment here that I obtained via the online community of *Auxiliares en Pais Vasco*.

What does the street look like?

My window looks out to a nearby store of local Basque products where I'm able to stock up on essentials. The apartment is situated in the Old Town, which I was able to see in its regular lively state on Wednesday and Thursday before the country shut down. I took one of the last Pintxos and wine walking tours of this neighborhood with Devour Tours before they put a pause on all operations and I had a very positive experience. The contrast between then and now is like night and day.

Have you noticed any random acts of kindness or uplifting things recently?

When shopping for essentials at the nearby store, unfortunately, they had no coffee to sell. The store is owned and managed by the staff of a popular pintxos bar called Gandarias which is situated next door. The shopkeeper and I made small talk at a safe distance, and he told me to wait outside for a moment after I paid for my purchases. He alerted the bar owner, who opened the shuttered establishment and emerged with a cup full of coffee grounds, and two bottles of wine which he gave to me for free.



How are you coping?

I have had a good fortune that my work is not interrupted and I can continue to attend to my clients remotely. I cherish the calls with them as they are meaningful interactions that give me a sense of purpose. If I'm being honest, I only feel completely distracted and at peace when immersed in my work. Many educators and tourism professionals have lost their jobs due to these volatile circumstances and have turned to my service for support as they seek to land on their feet. My mission is to provide the support that I wish I myself had received when I was abruptly sacked from a job in the past. Now that we're all in quarantine, this time can be used productively to reflect on aspirations and the finite nature of the human experience.

My days are filled with video calls with my loved ones in their various global corners. I have caught myself being more forgiving and even nostalgic when reflecting on persons from my past who I've consciously or mutually severed contact with over recent years. I have continued to see my therapist remotely, as that was how we would meet prior to this debacle. Rather than simply sharing memes, I've been consciously creating them myself.

My crucial tip to anyone reading this, and I cannot emphasize this enough, is to seize this opportunity to watch HBO's *The Wire*, a masterpiece of a series that had an enriching impact on my life and shaped my worldview when I first watched it in 2010.

What's the first thing you'll do once the lockdown is over?

Breathe clean air in the nature of any of the gorgeous villages that surround San Sebastian.

If you could tell the government one thing right now, what would it be?

To the Spanish government, my counsel would be to place an indefinite pause on the **autonomo* tax to give all freelancers room to breathe. All creative professionals are suffering greatly due to the indefinite pause in their income stream and I think it is unjust to give them an additional strain. Here's a [petition that we're signing](#) to hopefully make this happen.

**for all registered freelancers in Spain, you must pay a monthly fee of €280/month, regardless of income*

- Dan is also one of the most active writers on Naked Madrid, and has helped write several Madrid lockdown diaries. [Check out all his articles.](#)

See all [Madrid Lockdown Diaries](#) here

If you'd like to submit your story, please send an email to daphne@veracontent.com