

*Garlic Merchant*  
Ávila, Spain



He caught my eye and smiled, gesturing toward my camera. I was embarrassed for looking like a tourist in this quaint event, but, nonetheless, he proudly lifted the ropes of garlic for me to snap a shot of him between sales and small talk. Earlier that morning I had found out about the weekly market from a local gentleman while I was in the post office. Open-air markets are a European tradition that I adore and have sought-out through my travels. They represent fresh, high-quality products that, in the most romantic sense, were harvested by the man standing before you. Amidst the strewn about boxes and plastic bags, hands exchange coins for produce and people still make a living under these tents. In small towns like Ávila they are the gathering place where you catch-up with your neighbors while waiting in line for the best pickled olives. As I exited the plaza, I looked over my shoulder and smiled back at the garlic merchant who was still smiling at me.

*Wooden Staircase in Torre degli Asinelli*  
Bologna, Italy



The day was no exception to the week's cool, foggy, drizzly weather. The stairs were slick and sneaker sole-polished after nine centuries of traversal. Young and old alike had to brave the stairs for the panoramic view of the medieval university town since there was no elevator. Just as the tower was no longer upright, leaning four feet, the steps had also lost their perpendicularity. Each step was like a child's plastic bucket seat, dipping down and slopping in the middle from the deliberate foot-placement they required. If it weren't for the platforms, I would have slid down all 498 wooden stairs.

*Flag Bearer*  
Cuenca, Spain



His gaze was steady and dedicated for he represented his *hermanidad*, the first in the Viernes Santo procession in Cuenca. He is not squinting (because the sun is behind him), but simply proud—proud to be wearing the red military-like suit with gold buttons and brimmed cap, proud to carry their flag with white-gloved hands, and proud to be a part of the yearly tradition commemorating the death of Christ for his and our sins. Given that Cuenca is such a small town, one of the *nazareno* women told me that many people march more than one day, but this dose not seem apparent to the flag bearer. In our Music of Spain class we have discussed the importance of tradition and religion in today's Spaniard's life. Not all Spaniards are serious about maintaining the past celebrations, but others are determined to keep them alive. This man's expression never changed.