

## **The Experience of Motherhood in France by a Spanish Mom**

In this new interview, we wanted to change things up a bit and, this time, ask our questions to Silvia, a Spanish mom living in France. She shares her perspective on motherhood in France, cultural differences, what surprised her... In short, it's fascinating to see how motherhood is perceived in our country!

---

### **Can you tell us about your journey? How long have you been in France, and what is your family and professional situation?**

I arrived in France in 2009... for love (yes, classic!). Since then, I've moved around quite a bit: Bourg-en-Bresse, Bordeaux, Castres... and now, we live in Haute-Savoie.

On a personal level, we are a family of four: my partner, me, and our two daughters.

Professionally, I founded my online school, ProfeOlé, in 2016 to help French-speaking expats speak Spanish fluently.

Before that, I taught Spanish in French high schools for seven years, so I know the education system here quite well.

And otherwise... I am the eternal foreigner! In France, I'm "the Spanish one," and in Spain, I'm "the French one." A classic, right?

---

### **Before becoming a mom, what was your vision of motherhood? Did it change once you had your daughters?**

I thought I had a realistic vision, but... no. 😊 I've always been surrounded by children because, before coming to France, I was an early childhood teacher in Spain. I was used to the rhythm of families with kids.

But being a mom is not the same as working with children! What changed immediately when my first daughter was born in 2015? Time management. You no longer belong entirely to yourself. Your priorities, organization, routines... everything is turned upside down. The first two years feel like a marathon!

---

## **As a Spaniard, did you have any preconceived ideas about what it would be like to be a mom in France?**

Not at all! Before getting pregnant, I had never even thought about it. When I arrived in France, I was more focused on integrating, social relationships, the way of life... but motherhood? That wasn't on my priority list at the time.

It was only once I was pregnant that I started to observe and compare with Spain.

---

## **What surprised you the most about how motherhood is experienced in France?**

The length of maternity leave: 16 weeks, but in reality, only 10 to 12 after birth, since part of it must be taken before. Leaving a 10-week-old baby with a nanny or in daycare? I was shocked!

In Spain, we often see France as being "more advanced" socially. But in this case... no. Spain is much more progressive in this area!

---

## **Were there things you didn't expect that really stood out to you?**

Yes! The fact that moms stay alone at night in the maternity ward. 😬 In Spain, that's unthinkable! There's always someone with you: the dad, a mother, a sister... No one is left alone in the hospital, especially not a mom who just gave birth!

But in the end, I found it nice. When I gave birth in France, I was alone with my baby, and it felt natural. It just goes to show, we adapt!

---

## **If you compare with Spain, what is really different in terms of support for mothers?**

I don't think it's a question of country, but more about mindset and evolution. In Spain, there is more of a "tribe" mentality: everyone adapts to the baby, and there's strong family support.

In France, I've seen families where babies sleep alone very early. But that is changing! Nowadays, in France too, there is a greater focus on listening to the baby's needs and supporting the mother. It just proves that borders don't define everything!

## **Would you have preferred to experience this in Spain, or are you happy to have gone through it in France?**

I can't compare because I've never been a mom in Spain.

What did I miss? My family, my friends. I wish they could have seen my daughters grow up day by day.

But paradoxically, being far away allowed me to experience a calmer, more serene motherhood. I'm a very dynamic person, and this little bubble of peace did me good!

---

## **Did you feel well-supported even though you weren't French?**

Yes! My Spanish family and my French in-laws weren't close by, so I didn't have an immediate "tribe." But I never felt alone.

I was lucky to have kind and attentive professionals: midwives, doctors, gynecologists... I never felt judged or treated differently as a Spaniard.

Really, it was a great experience! 😊

---

## **Did you notice any differences in how moms support each other in France and Spain?**

Women support each other everywhere; it's universal! 💪💜 But in Spain, asking for and offering help is more spontaneous. In France, it can be more... reserved. People wait to have a real relationship before daring to ask for help.

But support exists on both sides of the Pyrenees!

---

## **Your husband is French. Were there any cultural differences in raising your children?**

Honestly, not really! I had clear principles from the start, and my husband agreed with them. What amuses us are the differences in politeness rules.

For example, in France, people say "thank you" for everything. In Spain, if a child thanks their grandparents for a meal, they will say: "Why are you thanking me? It's normal!" 😊  
A funny little cultural clash!

---

## **Have you incorporated aspects of Spanish parenting into your children's upbringing in France?**

Oh yes! The importance of talking. 😊 In our home, we talk a lot. Not just "How was your day?" but real conversations. My daughters are very expressive and communicative. That's 100% Spanish.

---

## **What has been your biggest challenge as a Spanish mom in France?**

Passing on my culture and language while they grow up in a completely French environment. I try to compensate by traveling to Spain often, connecting them with my family and friends, and maintaining Spanish daily. It's not always easy, but it's my challenge!

---

## **And your best surprise or favorite memory?**

My best surprise? My eldest daughter was born on my husband's birthday, three weeks early! 🎂💕

My favorite memory? When my eldest daughter met her little sister at the hospital. A moment I will cherish forever. 😊

---

## **What advice would you give to a Spanish mom about to give birth in France?**

- 👉 Focus on the positives, not the differences.
- 👉 Build your own tribe! Even far from family, support exists.

👉 Ask for help, talk about your doubts.

👉 Trust yourself.

And most importantly... listen to yourself, listen to your baby, and everything will be fine. ❤️

