

After 43 days sheltering at home amid pandemic, kids venture out in Spain

By Lorraine Derosa, Washington Post, adapted by Newsela staff on 05.28.20

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Image 1. A boy wearing a face mask plays with a scooter in Barcelona, Spain, on April 27, 2020. In Spain, kids were not allowed to leave their homes for 43 days, from mid-March until April 26, as residents were ordered to stay home to slow the spread of the coronavirus. Photo: Emilio Morenatti/AP Photo

Around the world, families are sheltering in place because of the coronavirus pandemic. But not all kids' quarantine experiences are the same. In Spain, where the virus has taken an enormous toll, kids weren't allowed to leave their homes for 43 days, from mid-March until April 26.

Now, children may take daily one-hour outings, within about a half-mile of their homes. Several kids in Spain shared their thoughts and experiences living through this challenging time.

"I felt like I got the keys to my cage," said Teal Chandler, 12 years old, who lives in an apartment with her family in Barcelona. Teal has been pet-sitting a spotted gecko named Spike during the pandemic.

"The most I had gone out for six weeks was to take down the recycling," and to run, below her apartment, in the underground garage that "smells like diesel," she said.

Teal said she was taken aback by the changes in her neighborhood since her last outing.

"Now everything is different. People are wearing masks and gloves. There are special lines so you don't bump into others. ... Shops and restaurants are closed."

Being stuck indoors made Teal appreciate just being able to walk out her front door.

"You never realize how much time you usually spend outside, going to school, getting on a bus, having sleepovers with friends," until that freedom is taken away, she said.

Farther down the Mediterranean coast in Valencia, Sarah Bailey, 15 years old, reports that the long confinement has been "really boring." The first thing Sarah did when she was allowed out was to walk to the little convenience store down the road.

"No one was out; it felt really eerie, like a super-scary zombie movie. But it felt really cool, too, because I hadn't been able to just walk outside for so long," Sarah said. "When I heard I could go to the convenience store, I was way more excited than I thought I ever would be."

Sarah's big purchase: a pack of gum.

The Tasker family's first excursion in Valencia on May 3 was a walk across a bridge and a field, then back home. Despite working out twice a day indoors, doing push-ups and other exercises during the six-week lockdown, Daniel Tasker, 12 years old, found that "when you go out for the first time in ages, your legs feel weird and they hurt, because you haven't been properly walking in ages."

Jess Tasker, 11 years old, said she first "felt a bit lazy from staying inside all these weeks."

But once outside, she enjoyed "being in the fresh air and seeing something different than what's outside the window, for a change," Jess said.

Other kids said that, despite what the government allowed, they worried about leaving home.

Three brothers living in an apartment in Madrid, where the novel coronavirus has hit hardest, shared their family's choice to remain inside for now.

"There's no need to go out. There are still a lot of cases [of the virus], and the number can rebound," said Pelayo Cosmen, 14 years old.

While at first Pelayo thought being at home all the time was "kind of cool, a new experience," after a couple of weeks, he said, "it started to feel repetitive and boring."

Pelayo said he hopes they may be able to leave home by the end of May, "if we're lucky."

For now, he offered a few words of advice for other kids: "Be patient and take care."



Quiz

- 1 Which answer choice accurately characterizes Sarah Bailey's reaction to going outside after 43 days inside?
- (A) She felt calm and peaceful in the quiet streets at first, but then returned home because she felt it was not safe to go out.
 - (B) She felt depressed seeing all the closed shops at first, but then was grateful to freely wander around for hours.
 - (C) She thought it felt exciting and thrilling at first, but then she felt a little worried about being outside when no one else was.
 - (D) She thought it felt strange and spooky at first, but then she felt more enthusiastic about her trip than she had expected.

- 2 Read the following selection.

Around the world, families are sheltering in place because of the coronavirus pandemic. But not all kids' quarantine experiences are the same. In Spain, where the virus has taken an enormous toll, kids weren't allowed to leave their homes for 43 days, from mid-March until April 26.

Why did the author include this information?

- (A) to explain why Spain decided to ease the lockdown restrictions
- (B) to explain why kids in Spain were in lockdown for so long
- (C) to show the different experiences kids in quarantine had around the world
- (D) to show that most kids around the world had a quarantine experience like Spain's

- 3 What does the phrase "taken aback" suggest as it is used in this sentence?

Teal said she was taken aback by the changes in her neighborhood since her last outing.

- (A) She was grateful to see so many changes in her neighborhood.
- (B) She had a hard time adjusting to the changes in her neighborhood.
- (C) She was surprised and shocked by the changes in her neighborhood.
- (D) She had watched the changes in her neighborhood slowly happen.

- 4 What is the definition of "rebound" as used in this selection?

"There's no need to go out. There are still a lot of cases [of the virus], and the number can rebound," said Pelayo Cosmen, 14 years old.

- (A) move backward
- (B) go back up again
- (C) continue back down
- (D) bounce back and forth