AJ INTER JOURNAL

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Living Life

ESC Journey of Yagmur and Nesij

Sanlúcar trip with ESC volunteers

ESC Volunteer Selection "Next Chapter"



Erasmus+

A.J. "Inter"

EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS

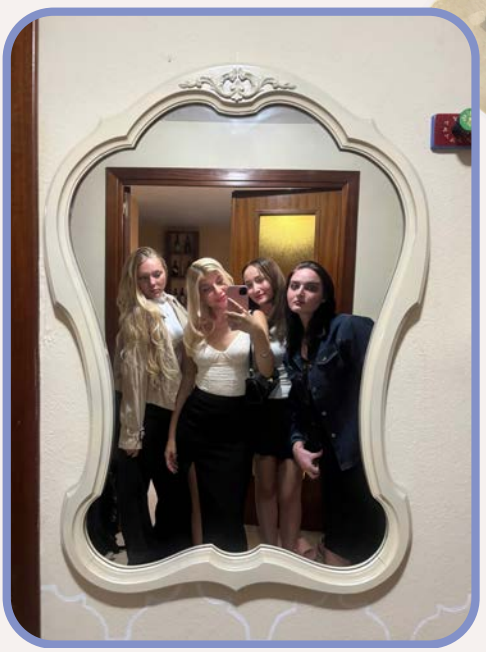
goodbye article

yagmur



goodbye, jerez

When I look back now at my first days in Spain, I remember wondering how on earth I would fill two whole months in Spain. And yet here I am, watching how fast that time has actually flown by. It's time for me to say goodbye to Jerez de la Frontera and an amazing Spanish summer.





My first week in Spain was intense in every sense of the word. I had to get used to a new home, to living with other volunteers, to a different way of living life. The Spanish lifestyle is quite different from that of Turkey. The Spanish people like to live life until really late. But it was still fun to observe them and adapt at the same time.

When it comes to Andalusian food, I can say that it's pretty flavorful. As a vegetarian of 5 years, I even tried the seafood here, but I just couldn't resist. Still, my favorite Spanish food is vegetarian: Patatas Bravas. I also fell in love with Jerez's narrow streets, ice cream shops, bars, and above all, the warmth of the Andalucian people who decided to call it home.





During my 2 months of volunteering, I took part in a lot of things that challenged me and pushed me outside of my comfort zone. What I enjoyed the most among my tasks and duties was creating social media content. I was always curious about how influencers edit their posts, and I always wanted to take a peek behind the scenes. AJ Inter gave me the opportunity to do so.



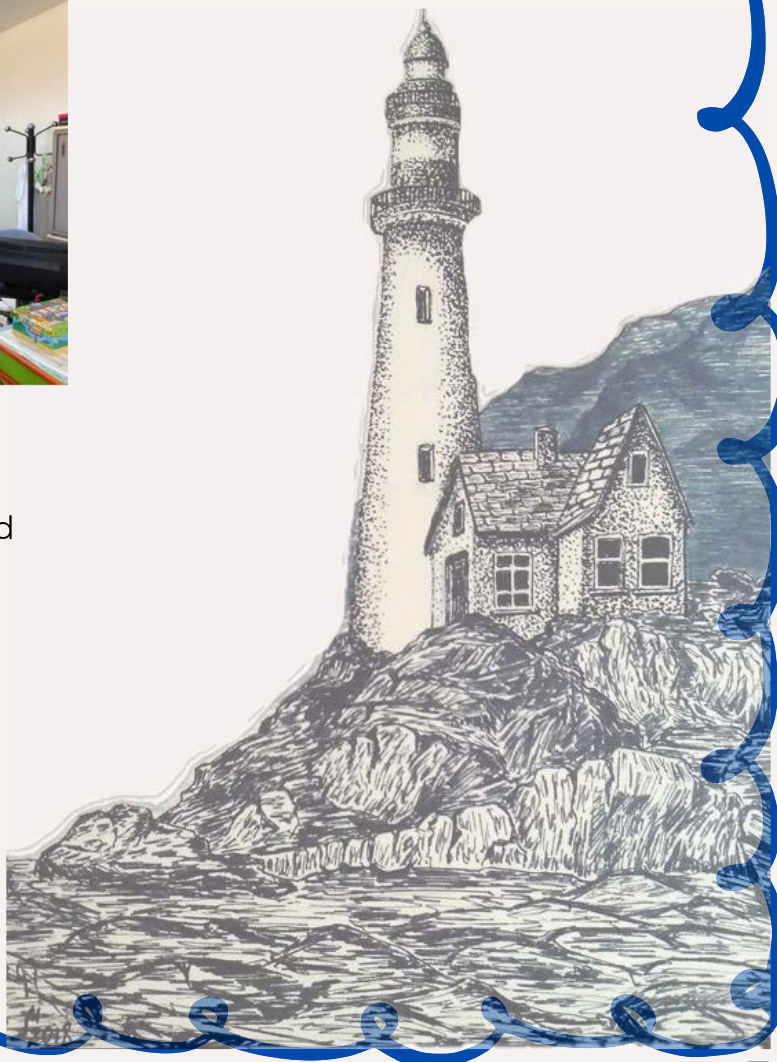
Another thing that I really enjoyed was supporting Madre Coraje, a Spanish organization built on the values of recycling and volunteering. I helped with the preparation of clothes to be sent to Peru and Mozambique. It was magical to know something I touched would travel across the world. It gave me a feeling of purpose.







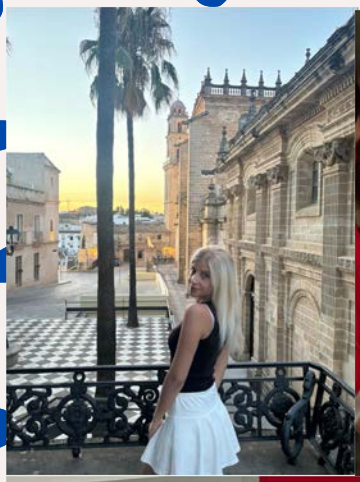
Every Tuesday, one of the volunteers hosted the English Speaking Club, and it became one of the moments I looked forward to most each week. I connected with Spanish locals through games, conversations and lots of laughter.



Honestly, I will never ever forget certain moments I had in Spain. The time we went to Sevilla to witness Spain win the World Cup, the first time I had churros in Madrid, our bike rides in Jerez and countless trips to Cadiz to swim in the ocean and eat tacos. Beyond Jerez, I was lucky enough to see Cádiz, Madrid, Seville, Malaga, and even cross the border into Lisbon.

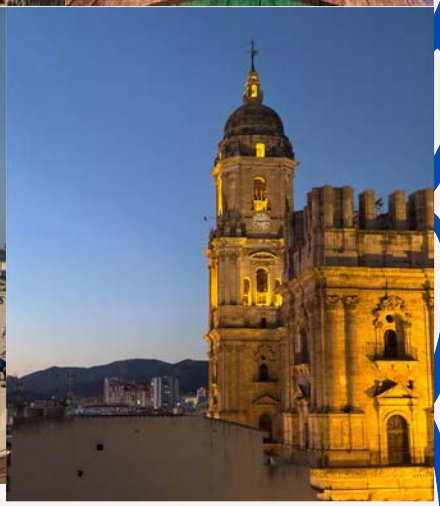
But more than any place I visited, what made this volunteering experience unforgettable for me were the people. I feel obliged to say a thank you to some people. Firstly, to AJ inter for opening their doors for me and to the other volunteers I shared a house with. I enjoyed sharing this little journey with you. I will remember Jerez and my volunteering with a smile on my face for the rest of my life. I hope to see you soon, Jerez!





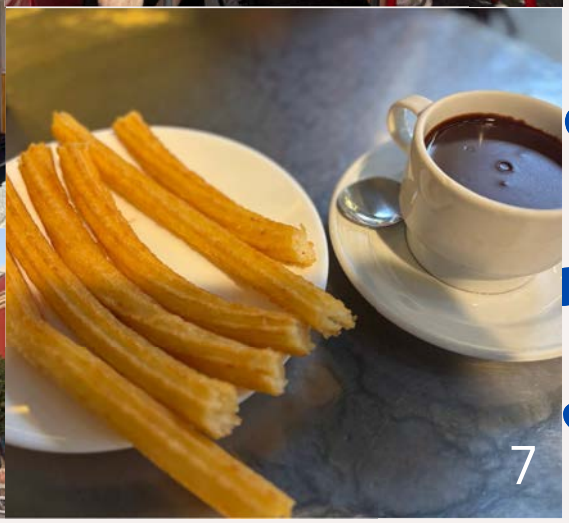






MEMORIES






GOODBYE NESİJ

more than a volunteering experience



When I first learned that I would spend three months in Spain as an ESC volunteer, I felt many different emotions at the same time. I was excited because I was about to start a completely new chapter in my life, but I was also nervous. It was my first time travelling abroad alone, my first long stay away from my family, my first experience living in a shared house with people from different countries, and my first volunteering experience through the European Solidarity Corps. I knew this journey would teach me many things, but I never imagined how much it would change me.

Looking back now, I can honestly say that this experience has been one of the most meaningful and unforgettable parts of my life.

During my time at AJ Inter, I had the opportunity to take part in many different activities. I created content for social media, designed posters, brochures, and visual materials, supported the promotion of Erasmus+ and ESC projects, participated in local and international events, and contributed to the AJ Inter e-journal. Every task allowed me to improve not only my design and communication skills but also my creativity and confidence. It was inspiring to see how even a small design, a social media post, or an event could reach people and encourage them to discover new opportunities.





One of the most memorable moments of my volunteering experience was participating in a television program on Onda Jerez TV during the Europe Week celebrations. Speaking about our volunteering experience on local television was something I had never imagined doing. At first, I felt nervous, but afterwards I felt proud. It reminded me that stepping outside my comfort zone often leads to the most rewarding experiences.

Beyond the activities and responsibilities, the people I met became the most valuable part of this journey. Living with volunteers from different countries taught me much more than I expected. We shared meals, celebrated birthdays, travelled together and supported each other through both happy and challenging moments. These everyday experiences helped me understand different cultures while also discovering how much we all have in common. They showed me that friendship does not need the same language or the same background; respect, kindness, and openness are enough.





This experience also changed the way I see myself. Before coming to Spain, I often questioned whether I was ready for such a big step. Living independently in another country, solving everyday problems on my own, adapting to a different culture, and communicating in English every day made me realise that I am much stronger and more capable than I believed. I became more independent, more confident, and more willing to try new things without being afraid of making mistakes.





Professionally, this project helped me gain valuable experience related to my field of study. Working in an international organisation allowed me to use and improve my skills in communication, graphic design, content creation, and teamwork. At the same time, I learned how important volunteering can be in creating positive change within a community. It gave me a new perspective on active citizenship and inspired me to continue participating in international projects in the future.

Personally, this experience gave me something even more valuable than professional skills. It gave me memories that I will always carry with me, friendships that crossed borders, and countless moments that made me smile, learn, and grow. It reminded me that some of the best things in life happen when we have the courage to leave our comfort zone.

AJ Inter became much more than the organisation where I volunteered. It became a place where I discovered new abilities, gained confidence, met incredible people, and created memories that will stay with me forever. I arrived in Spain expecting to contribute to a project, but I am leaving with so much more than I ever imagined.

I would like to sincerely thank the entire AJ Inter team for their support, kindness, and trust throughout these three months. Thank you to every volunteer and every person I met along the way for making this experience so special. You didn't only help me become a better volunteer—you helped me become a better and more confident person.

Although this chapter has come to an end, I know that everything I learned, every friendship I built, and every memory I created will always remain a part of me.

Thank you, AJ Inter, for giving me an experience that truly changed my life.



















What is European Solidarity Corps?

The European Solidarity Corps is an international volunteering program by the European Commission for young people to go individually or in teams to another country, usually from one European country to another, to work for a non-profit cause.

MISSION

The European Solidarity Corps brings together young people to build a more inclusive society, supporting vulnerable people and responding to societal challenges. It offers an inspiring and empowering experience for young people who want to help, learn and develop.

The European Solidarity Corps is open for young people between 18 and 30 years old from Europe and "partner countries" of the European Union. It offers two ways for young people to get active:

- as volunteers abroad in other usually European countries
- as volunteers at home in "solidarity projects" that they set up themselves

What is European Solidarity Corps?

What's covered for volunteers?

- insurance
- support services such as linguistic support and trainings
- basic costs: your travel to and from the project, accommodation and food/money for food
- pocket money for personal expenses
- costs related to specific needs e.g. additional help, reinforced mentorship, disability, visa, etc.

What can a volunteer gain?

- In-Demand Soft Skills: Master teamwork, problem-solving, communication, adaptability, and leadership in real-world environments.
- A Global Network: Connect directly with fellow volunteers, community leaders, local hosts, and international NGOs.
- Your True Passion: Discover your path through hands-on work in youth education, environmental advocacy, arts, inclusion, and mental health.

<u>You Get Recognized – with a Youthpass!</u>

Every ESC volunteer receives a Youthpass certificate, which outlines your learning achievements and competencies. It's a professional tool that you can attach to your CV, show during job interviews, and include in applications for studies or jobs.

WE ARE LOOKING FOR NEW ESC VOLUNTEERS

OMG!



AJ INTER IS NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR NEW ESC VOLUNTEERS! IF YOU`RE INTERESTING IN VOLUNTEERING WITH US THORUGHT THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS (ESC) CONTACT US!

The application deadline is 10 September



Contact us!

info.ajinter@gmail.com

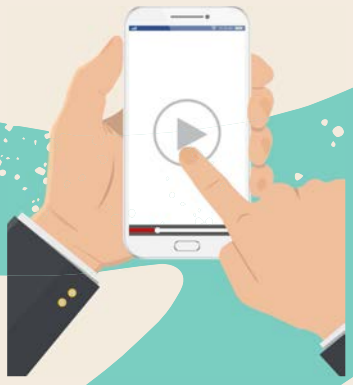
EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS

3 STEPS

OF THE SELECTION PROCESS



1 APPLICATION FORM



2 PASSION PROOF VIDEO

3 ONLINE INTERVIEW

Contact us!

info.ajinter@gmail.com

EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS

HOW AJ INTER SELECTION PROCESS WORKS

1 STEP

First, you'll fill out our Google Form.

If your application meets our selection criteria, we'll invite you to the second stage by email.

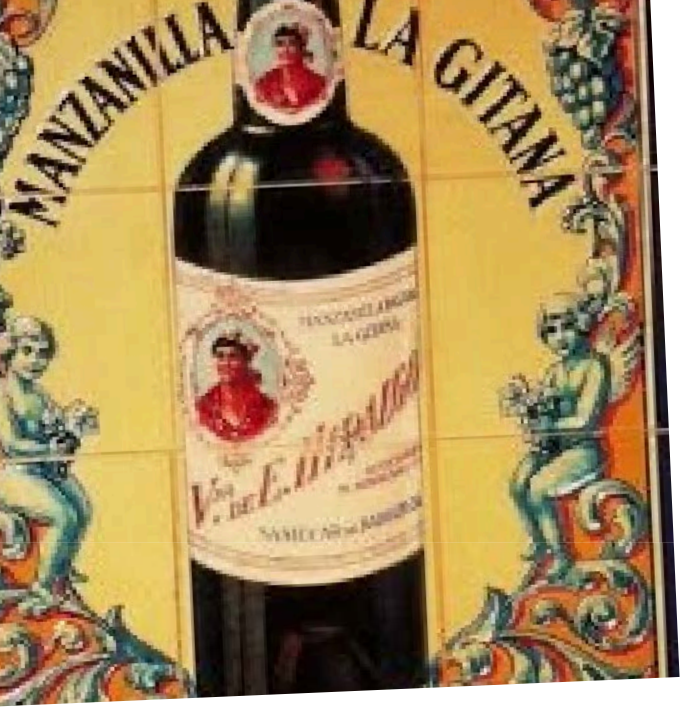
2 STEP

In the second stage, we'll ask you to create a 2-minute creative video.
Don't worry — we'll tell you exactly what we'd like to see in the video.

3 STEP

If you successfully complete the second stage, you'll move to the final step: a Zoom meeting with our mentors, tutors, and current volunteers.

Don't worry, be yourself. You can do it
We look forward to meeting you!







THE SANLUCÁR CHRONICLES VOL.1

SANLÚCAR DE BARRAMEDA IS A CHARMING COASTAL TOWN LOCATED IN THE PROVINCE OF CÁDIZ IN ANDALUSIA, SOUTHERN SPAIN. SITUATED AT THE MOUTH OF THE GUADALQUIVIR RIVER, IT IS FAMOUS FOR ITS RICH HISTORY, BEACHES, AND EXCEPTIONAL GASTRONOMY.

Waves, Sun & Serenity

And lucky for us our precious mentors organized a Sanlucar trip for us the ESC volunteers! After work, José and us hopped on our bicycles, rode to the bus station, and after a one-hour journey, we arrived in Sanlúcar. Then we met with Mercedes,she is also from here Sanlucar! The main square was bustling. We tried to get in line for the most famous restaurant in town, but it was far too crowded, so we queued up for another spot instead. Once seated, the appetizers arrived: potato salad with tuna and a fresh seafood salad. Although I rarely eat seafood, the dishes here were beyond compare.

If you think the feast ended there, we were just getting started. Next came the fried shark (cazón en adobo) and calamari. It might sound surprising to go from avoiding fish to suddenly eating shark, but it was easily the best fish I have ever had—the vinegar-and-spice marinade was perfection. Then came the real test: whole, unpeeled local prawns (langostinos). Seeing the heads intact was initially a bit intimidating, but tasting them was absolute heaven.



FOOD







Strolling further, we passed the old town hall, which now serves as a public library. Outside, there were portraits and inscriptions on the wall—one honoring Ferdinand Magellan. Magellan set sail from Seville on his historic circumnavigation journey, once reached right up to the older buildings, meaning what sailors first saw centuries ago was quite different from the coastline today. It is fascinating how sea levels and coastlines shift; someone returning from centuries past would hardly recognize the waterfront.

We wandered through the narrow streets and came across Sanlúcar's oldest church, the 14th-century Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de la O, built in the Mudejar style over the foundations of an ancient fortress







No history of Sanlúcar de Barrameda is complete without Luisa Isabel Álvarez de Toledo (1936–2008), the 21st Duchess of Medina Sidonia. Known as the "Red Duchess" for her defiance against the Franco regime and her defense of civil rights, she was also a dedicated historian who transformed her residence, the Palacio de Medina Sidonia, into an unparalleled research sanctuary. Perched over the Guadalquivir, the palace houses the Archivo General de la Casa de Medina Sidonia—one of the most important private historic archives in the world, spanning over eight centuries and more than six million documents. Rather than letting this heritage scatter, the Duchess spent decades cataloging the collection herself and established the foundation that preserves it today. We stopped outside to admire the palace, fascinated by its legacy, though we could not go inside this time.



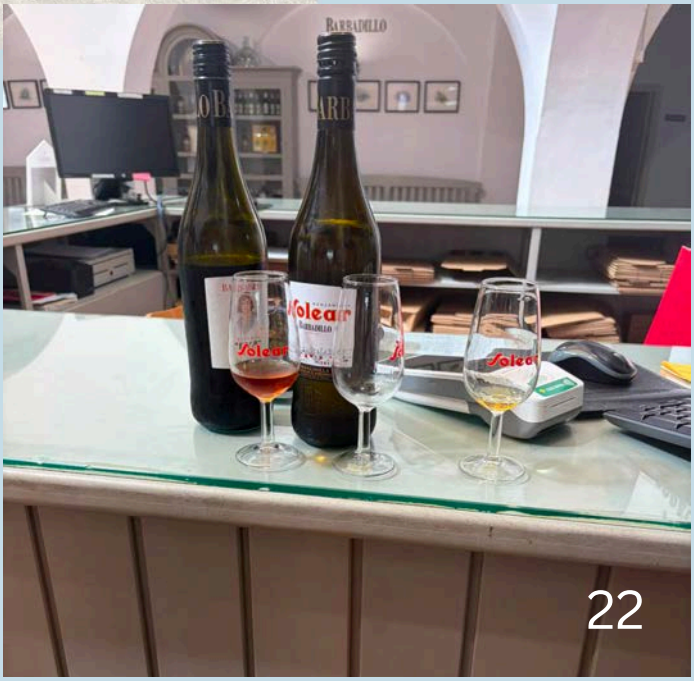






As the afternoon heat picked up, we sought refuge in a local wine museum and bodega. We learned all about the traditional solera y criaderas aging system, which blends different vintages under a protective veil of yeast (flor) to give local Manzanilla and fortified wines their signature complexity. Downstairs, we began the tasting: rich, sun-dried Pedro Ximénez, followed by lighter summer varieties and a refreshing herb-infused wine. The kind host even gifted us a few collectible wine bottle labels from her collection.





Finally, we made our way to the beach for the main event: the historic Sanlúcar Horse Races (Carreras de caballos de Sanlúcar). These races rank among Spain's oldest and most unique sporting traditions, taking place each August along the beaches of Sanlúcar de Barrameda. Officially organized since 1845 by the Sociedad de Carreras de Caballos de Sanlúcar de Barrameda, it stands as Spain's second-oldest English-style horse race—preceded only by the Alameda de Osuna races of 1835—and is a key fixture on the national equestrian circuit alongside Seville, San Sebastián, Mijas, and Dos Hermanas. Designated a Fiesta of International Tourist Interest, the event draws global crowds who gather along the Guadalquivir riverbank at low tide to watch thoroughbred racing set against vibrant evening sunsets.

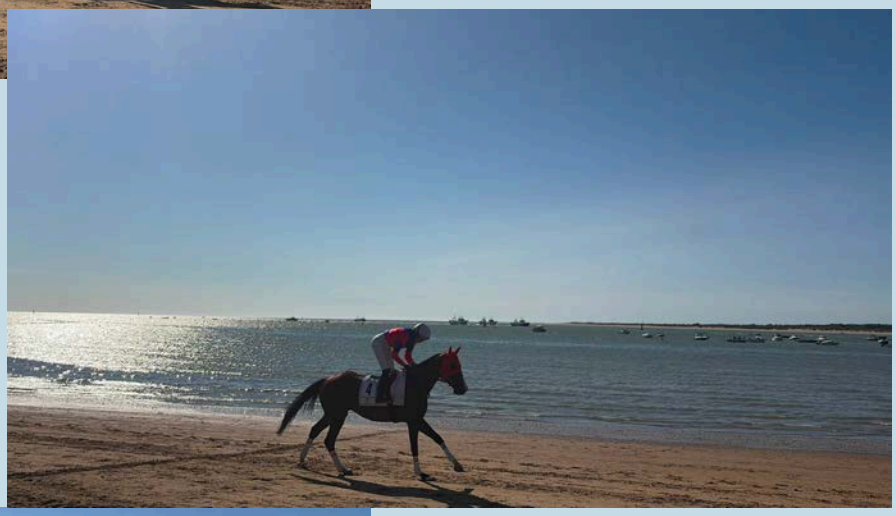


As we waited along the shoreline for the horses to thunder past, I put my full support behind number five, "Big Bad Wolf"—my Stark loyalties running as deep as ever. Unfortunately for my luck, Big Bad Wolf did not take the win, but the energy along the sand was contagious. Once the race concluded, the crowd returned to the water while we slowly made our way back into town.

We stopped by a cozy café to enjoy a nice conversation before heading to the bus stop. With the three bottles of wine we bought from the museum after our tasting safely packed with us, we rode the bus back home.

HORSE RACE

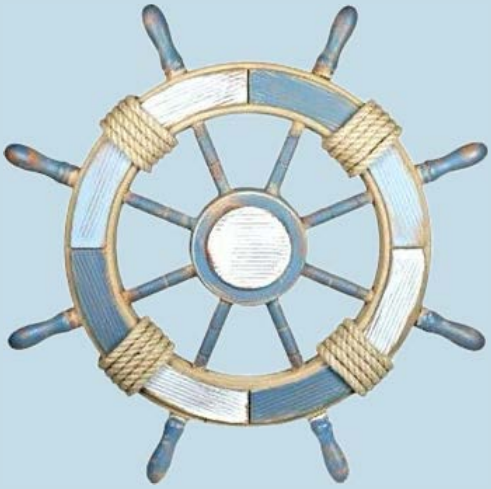
















Sanlúcar may be compact, but its history, flavors, and traditions are truly remarkable. In the next chapter of The Sanlúcar Chronicles, I will share our experience of the Virgin Mary festivities.





Special thanks to Mercedes and Jose for making this day possibility and creating a unforgettable day!

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Ask any questions!

info.ajinter@gmail.com

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