



# Country Information

## SPAIN

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## About the country

### General

**Name of the country:** Spain

**Area:** 505,984 sq km

**Population:** 46 million

**Capital:** Madrid (5.3 million inhabitants)

**Government:** Parliamentary monarchy since 1978.

**Geography:** On the west, Spain borders Portugal, on the south, it borders Gibraltar and Morocco, through its cities in North Africa (Ceuta and Melilla). On the northeast, along the Pyrenees mountain range, it borders France and the tiny principality of Andorra. Spain also includes the Balearic Islands in the Mediterranean Sea, the Canary Islands in the Atlantic Ocean and a number of uninhabited islands on the Mediterranean side of the strait of Gibraltar. Along the Pyrenees in Catalonia, a small exclave town called Llívia is surrounded by France. The little Pheasant Island in the River Bidasoa is a Spanish-French condominium.

Mainland Spain is dominated by high plateaus and mountain ranges, such as the Sierra Nevada. Running from these heights are several major rivers such as the Tagus, the Ebro, the Duero, the Guadiana and the Guadalquivir. Alluvial plains are found along the coast, the largest of which is that of the Guadalquivir in Andalusia.

**Language:** Spanish is the official language, but English is widely understood in areas frequented by tourists. Catalan, Galician and Basque are spoken in the relevant areas.

**Time:** Local time is GMT +1 (GMT +2 between the last Sunday in March and the Saturday before the last Sunday in October). The Canary Islands: GMT (GMT +1 in summer).

**Religion:** There is no official religion, but the majority of the population is Roman Catholic.

**Electricity:** Electrical current is 220 or 225 volts, 50Hz. European-style two-pin plugs are standard.

### Money

**Currency:** Spain is one of 16 European Union countries whose common official currency is the euro.

1 Euro is divided into 100 cents. The coins come in denominations of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20 and 50 cents, and 1 and 2 Euros.

The notes are differentiated by their size and color and come in denominations of 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500 Euros.

**Exchange Rates:**

Currency Exchange Rates*			
€1.00 =	US\$ 1. 32451	£ 0. 90588	CHF 1. 51040

\* Date's rate: 24 April 09

**Credit cards:** American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted.

**Banking hours:** Generally Mon-Fri 8:30-13:30.

**Tippling:** Service charges and taxes are usually included in hotel bills. It is also customary to leave a tip for the waiter. Restaurants include service in the bill and a tip is discretionary. Tip taxis 2-3%.

## International travel

### International airports

Spain boasts over 30 international airports ([www.aena.es](http://www.aena.es))

Madrid (MAD) (Barajas) is 13km northeast of the city. Bus and underground services depart to the city regularly. Taxi service is available.

Barcelona (BCN) (del Prat) is 3km southwest of the city. Bus and underground services depart to the city regularly. Taxi is available.

Alicante (ALC) (Altet) is 12km southwest of the city. Bus services runs to the city regularly. A taxi service is available to the city.

Málaga (AGP) is 10 km southwest of the city. Buses and trains run regularly throughout the day. Taxis are available.

Valencia (VLC) (Manises) is 8km west of the city. An airbus takes passengers into the city. Other buses travel to the city frequently throughout the day. Taxis also run.

### Passport/Visas

Visas are NOT required for passports of any of the following countries, regardless of purpose and/or length of stay in Spain:

- The European Union
- Iceland
- Norway
- Switzerland

Passports of all these countries are valid to visit or stay in SPAIN up to the last day of their validity.

For visits not exceeding ninety days, visas are not required for:

- Holders of valid passports issued by the following countries or dependencies:  
Andorra, Anguilla, Argentina, Australia, Bermuda, Brazil, British National Overseas, Brunei, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Hong Kong SAR, Israel, Japan, Korean Republic, Liechtenstein, Macao SAR, Malaysia, Mexico, Monaco, Montserrat, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Romania, San Marino, Singapore, St. Helena, The Caiman Islands, The Falklands Islands, The Virgin Islands, Turks & Caicos Islands, Uruguay, USA, Vatican City, Venezuela.
- Holders of Travel Documents issued under the Geneva Convention of July 1951, by the following countries:  
Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Norway, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.
- If you hold a valid residence permit in any of the Schengen member states, you are entitled to re-enter the Schengen area without a visa on production of your proof of residence and your passport.

The following nationals must apply in person for their Spanish Visas: Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Burundi, China, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ecuador, Egypt, Frandesspas Document, Indonesia, Iran , Iraq, Jordan, Kazakstan, Kosovo, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Nigeria, N. Korea, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Philippines, Qatar, Travel Document holders, Tunisia, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Surinam, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Vietnam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Time required to issue a visa: Schengen, tourist or business visa applications must be submitted with a minimum of 15 days in advance.

Visas are not granted on the spot and should be applied for well in advance in order to allow enough time to process them. The foreign national must collect his or her visa within two months of being notified that it has been granted. In the case of a resident's, work, or student's visa, the holder must obtain a foreign national's identity card within one month of his or her entry into Spain.

## Venue

Hotel Silken Al-Andalus Palace Sevilla

<http://www.hoteles-silken.com/hotel-al-andalus-palace-sevilla/en/>

## Hotel Booking Form

[www.ibo.org/events/w014dpsevi09/documents/HotelReservationFormAlAndalusPalaceDPNovember2009.pdf](http://www.ibo.org/events/w014dpsevi09/documents/HotelReservationFormAlAndalusPalaceDPNovember2009.pdf)

Participants are responsible for their own travel to and from the event.

## Health & Safety

Spain has a reciprocal health agreement with most EU countries, providing emergency health care on the same terms as Spanish nationals. EU travelers should take a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). Note that the scheme gives no entitlement to medical repatriation costs, nor does it cover ongoing illnesses of a non-urgent nature, so comprehensive travel insurance is advised. Comprehensive insurance is advised for all other nationals.

## Climate

Due to Spain's geographical situation and orographic conditions, the climate is extremely diverse; it can be roughly divided into four areas:

A Continental Mediterranean climate in the inland areas of the Peninsula (largest city, Madrid)

A Mediterranean climate region extends from the Andalusian plain along the southern and eastern coasts up to the Pyrenees, on the seaward side of the mountain ranges that run near the coast (largest city, Barcelona). They get warm winds from the Saharas called Leveche, also known as Sirocco.

An Oceanic climate in Galicia and the coastal strip near the Bay of Biscay or (largest city,) Bilbao; this area is often called Green Spain.

A Subtropical climate in Canary Islands is a very humid place and the islands have palm trees and beaches.

## Communications

The international access code for Spain is +34. The outgoing code is 00 followed by the relevant country code (e.g. 0044 for the United Kingdom). City/area codes are in use, e.g. (0)93 for Barcelona and (0)91 for Madrid.

## Useful links

- Visa and Passport Information  
<http://www.visahq.com>
- Spanish Tourist Office  
<http://www.spain.info>
- World Travel Guide  
<http://www.wordtravels.com/Travelguide/Countries/spain>