



Holiday Guide

Living and Driving in Spain

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Spain is a vivid country which is hugged by the Pyrénées in the north, with the Sierra Nevada and Penibetic mountain chain to the south. The country is interspersed with rivers and desert plateaux, while the Mediterranean coast stretches from the Pyrénées to Andalucía. Cantabria is the dairy land of the north and is wedged between the mountain range Picos de Europa and a coastline of stunning beaches. Catalonia sits between France, the Mediterranean and the rest of Spain, and proudly flies the Catalan flag. Six million people speak its language in spite of a history of revolts and uprisings. The elegant city of Barcelona is the capital of Catalonia and the town of Figueres, just off the Costa Brava, is home to the museum of surrealist painter Salvador Dalí.

General information

Money and banking

The Spanish currency is the Euro (€) which is divided into 100 cents (c).

Notes: €500, €200, €100, €50, €20, €10, €5.
Coins: €2, €1, 50c, 20c, 10c, 5c, 2c, 1c.

Most banks are open Monday-Thursday 8.30am to 4.30pm and on Friday from 8.30am to 2pm. Bigger banks in the main cities may open from 8.30am to 1pm on Saturdays. A cambio or exchange sign on the street will show you where to change money although commission charges may be a little higher. You will find that credit cards are not as welcome in the country as in the big towns. You should check with your own bank before you travel to see whether you can use the cash dispensers.

Shopping

Shopping usually begins by 10am except in the big cities. The Spanish take a siesta and close up for a couple of hours in the afternoon



– usually from 1pm or 2pm. Most shops will stay open until at least 7pm or 8pm. You can find some good bargains at the weekly open air markets which flourish in many towns and resorts.

Museum hours

Most museums and historical sites will use shop hours as their opening times, although will shorten them during the winter months. Museums tend to close on a Monday.

Public holidays

Spain takes the following public holidays:

1st April
2nd April
1st May
15th August
12th October

Restaurants and eating out

Apart from the traditional restaurant, the best places to taste the real food of Spain is at a Tapas bar. These bars serve a good variety of delicious titbits which you snack on, or eat as your main meal. The Spanish are late eaters and after a substantial meal at 2-3pm, they work until 8pm and eat again at 9pm. Lunch is served at restaurants between 1.30 and 3pm, and dinner from 8pm onwards.

Service is included in the price although a tip of between 5% and 10% is discretionary.

Telephones

Spain has quite a sophisticated telephone system and calls within the country are relatively cheap. Telephone booths on the street are blue.

Calls to the UK

To phone the UK from Spain dial the international code 00 44. You then omit the zero from the start of the area code. You will find it useful to have telephone credit cards which can be bought at all post offices (estafeta de correos) and tobacconists (estancos).

Calls from the UK

To make a call to Spain dial the international country code 00 34, then the number minus the first zero.

Clothing

Spain is hot and sunny during the summer with most of the rainfall to be found along the northern coast. When you go inland you should dress according to the weather, as temperature conditions can vary. The Spanish do not stick to a rigid dress code, as the occasion and place usually sets the code.

Radio World Service

The BBC World Service broadcasts in English 24 hours a day, with World News on the hour which can be picked up on (times in GMT):

From	To	Days	Frequency
00.00	24.00	Daily	648kHz
00.00	05.30	Daily	198kHz
05.00	07.00	Daily	6195kHz
05.00	08.00	Daily	9410kHz
14.00	15.00	Sat. only	12095kHz
15.00	19.00	Daily	12095kHz
17.00	21.00	Daily	9140kHz
17.00	22.00	Daily	6195kHz

Frequency FM, AM or SW

Sunshine Capital Radio - FM 95.8

Language

Spanish is spoken throughout the country and is the language used by the Central Administration. Catalan in Catalonia, Gallego in Galicia, Euskera in the Basque country and Valencian in the Valencian region are the languages spoken in these regions. You will find that English is widely spoken in resorts.

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Driving Information

Speed limits

Unless otherwise stipulated, the speed limits on dry roads are:

- 50km/h (31mph) in built up areas and towns.
- 90km/h (55mph) on roads outside built-up areas.
- 100km/h (62mph) on dual carriageways.
- 120km/h (74mph) on motorways (minimum speed on motorways 60km/h or 37mph).
- Speeding is considered a serious offence in Spain and fines can be high

Regulations

- Children under the age of 12yrs are not permitted in the front seat of a car unless in an approved harness/seat.
- The minimum driving age is 18 years.
- The alcohol limit is 0.5mg/ml (0.1mg/l for new drivers) and random tests are frequent.
- It is compulsory to carry a spare set of bulbs for the car and headlight beams must be adjusted for right hand drive. Headlight converter kits are available from most motoring shops or your car dealership.
- You must carry a high visibility jacket or waistcoat at all times. These must be worn if leaving the vehicle on the carriageway of a motorway or non-urban highway, at any time, day or night.
- It is recommended to carry a spare tyre, spare fan belt, fire extinguisher and first aid kit.
- Drivers who wear spectacles must carry a spare pair when driving in Spain.
- It is a legal requirement to carry two warning triangles for use in the event of an accident or breakdown.
- Use of mobile phones, radar detectors and headphones whilst driving is prohibited.
- A GB/IRL sticker must be displayed at all times.
- A bail bond is no longer compulsory while driving in Europe. However, travellers to Spain should consider asking for one from their insurance company as it can protect your



car from being impounded in the event of an accident.

Emergency numbers and breakdown

- | | |
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| Fire | 080 |
| Police | 091 |
| Ambulance | 061 |
- Or dial 112 which is the European emergency call number and request the service required.
 - Emergency telephones are located every 2km (1¼ miles) on most motorways.

Documents

- A green card is not compulsory but is recommended.
- An old-style green driving licence must be accompanied by an International Driving Permit (IDP). EC format green and pink licences are acceptable without an International Driving Permit. An IDP is available from the AA or at major Post Offices.
- Your driving licence, car registration document (V5) and insurance certificate must be carried at all times when driving in Spain.

Special note

Motorists travelling on the motorway north and south of Barcelona should be on the lookout for 'highway pirates' who target foreign registered cars. Motorists are sometimes targeted in service areas and tricked into stopping on the hard shoulder. The usual ploy is for a passing vehicle to suggest by gesture that there is something wrong with a rear wheel. Ensure you only stop in a well frequented area, and be wary.

Tolls

Tolls are paid on most sections of Spanish motorway (Autopista). On some roads you pay as you enter the 'peaje/peatge' and on others you will be issued with a ticket which you hand in with your payment at the end of your journey on the 'peaje/peatge'. Tolls vary on different roads. Ensure you have a credit card or enough Euros to cover payment.

Translations

Main Road Signs

Spanish	English
Todas direcciones	All directions
Obras	Roadworks
Autopista	Motorway
Carratera cerrada	Road close
Prohibido el paso	No entry
Atención/Peligro	Warning
Mantenga su izquierda/ derecha	Keep left/right
Prioridad a la izquierda/ derecha	Priority to the left/right
Sentido único	One way street
Desvío	Diversion
Enciendense sus luces	Switch on your lights
Salida	exit (from motorway)
Despacio	slow

Fuel Terms

Gasoleo	Diesel
Gasolina sin plomo	Unleaded petrol