

# Spain



SECRETARÍA DE ESTADO DE TURISMO

T U R E S P A Ñ A

MINISTERIO DE INDUSTRIA, TURISMO Y COMERCIO





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# TRAVELLING TO SPAIN

OVER FIFTY MILLION TOURISTS VISIT SPAIN EACH YEAR, MAKING IT ONE OF THE THREE MOST VISITED COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD. TO TRAVEL TO SPAIN IS TO EXPERIENCE SUN, SUPERB FOOD, HOSPITALITY AND *JOIE DE VIVRE*, AND YET IT IS ALSO TO DISCOVER THE COUNTRY'S RICH HERITAGE OF MONUMENTS AND SIGHTS, THE IMPRINT OF THE DIFFERENT CIVILISATIONS THAT ONCE MADE IT THEIR HOME, OR TO JOURNEY THROUGH ITS SINGULAR AND BREATHTAKING COUNTRYSIDE AND DELIGHT IN THE STUNNING, STARKLY CONTRASTING SCENERY, STUDY THE CUSTOMS OF ITS PEOPLES AND TOWNS, AND SHARE IN THEIR LOCAL *FIESTAS* AND TRADITIONS.

TO TRAVEL TO SPAIN IS TO OPT FOR DIVERSITY, TO BE THE CENTRAL CHARACTER IN WHAT IS SURE TO BE A TRULY UNFORGETTABLE TRIP. THIS IS WHAT MAKES SPAIN SUCH A PRIZED DESTINATION WORLDWIDE, AND WHY THE VAST MAJORITY OF THOSE WHO VISIT IT ONCE, RETURN...

IN ORDER TO SHARE IN THE ENJOYMENT OF A CLIMATE, COUNTRYSIDE AND CULTURE WHICH EMBODY A RATHER SPECIAL WAY OF LIFE.

## SITUATION

Spain straddles the greater part of the Iberian Peninsula that juts out at the south-western tip of Europe. With a surface area of 505,955 square kilometres, it ranks as the third largest country in continental Europe, after Russia and France. Most of this surface area (493,484 sq. km.) consists of mainland Spain, to which must be added the island groups of the Balearics to the east (4,992 sq. km.) and the Canaries (7,447 sq. km.), lying over one thousand kilometres to the south, just off North Africa's Atlantic coast. Lastly, there are the two city enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, perched on the shores of North Africa itself.

Seen within a European context, the position of the Iberian Peninsula gives it a certain closeness to Africa, from which it is separated by a mere 14 kilometres, and –on the Atlantic side– to America, thus lending it a special strategic value. This explains why it has been such a crucial crossroads in the history of cultures and civilisations. Spain is therefore an integral part both of the southern European mainland and, in a somewhat special way, of the Mediterranean world.

## POPULATION

With forty million inhabitants, Spain has an average population density of around eighty inhabitants per square kilometre. The uneven distribution of the population has created an imbalance between regions, which register different and widely contrasting density levels.

Major cities excepted, there is a growing trend towards concentration along the coastal strip and depopulation of inland areas, as a consequence of the twin processes of industrialisation and urbanisation.

## POLITICAL STRUCTURE

Under the terms of the 1978 Constitution, Spain is a democratic State subject to the Rule of Law, politically structured in the form of a parliamentary Monarchy.

The country's capital is Madrid, which is the seat of both the Royal Family and the Government. Also centred here are the legislative (Senate and Lower House) and judicial branches.

At present, Spain is made up of seventeen Autonomous Regions (*comunidades autónomas*) and two city enclaves –Ceuta and Melilla– each governed by a Statute of Autonomy.



Seville. La Giralda tower

## TRAVELLING TO SPAIN

AUTONOMOUS REGIONS		
<b>ANDALUSIA</b> Almería Cádiz Córdoba Granada Huelva Jaén Málaga Seville	<b>CANTABRIA</b> Cantabria	<b>GALICIA</b> Corunna Lugo Ourense Pontevedra
<b>ARAGON</b> Huesca Teruel Zaragoza	<b>CASTILE &amp; LEÓN</b> Ávila Burgos León Palencia Salamanca Segovia Soria Valladolid Zamora	<b>LA RIOJA</b> La Rioja
<b>BALEARIC ISLES</b> Balearic Isles	<b>CASTILE-LA MANCHA</b> Albacete Ciudad Real Cuenca Guadalajara Toledo	<b>MADRID</b> Madrid
<b>BASQUE COUNTRY</b> Álava Guipúzcoa Vizcaya	<b>CATALONIA</b> Barcelona Girona Lleida Tarragona	<b>MURCIA REGION</b> Murcia
<b>CANARY ISLANDS</b> Las Palmas Santa Cruz de Tenerife	<b>EXTREMADURA</b> Badajoz Cáceres	<b>NAVARRRE:</b> Navarre
		<b>PRINCIPALITY OF ASTURIAS</b> Asturias
		<b>VALENCIAN REGION</b> Alicante Castellón Valencia
		<b>CEUTA</b>
		<b>MELILLA</b>

The range and scope of the respective Autonomous Regional Authorities is determined by the Constitution, with the Constitutional Court designated as the competent body for settling any conflicts which may arise between the Central Administration and the Regions.

#### THE REGIONS

Every region has its share of Spain's richly diverse array of geography, climate and scenery, and, to boost their individual tourist industries, they at times join forces to highlight their common features and attractions. Thus it was that *Green Spain* came into being, born out of the combined efforts of Galicia, Asturias, Cantabria and the Basque Country to enhance the shared traits of their countryside, climate, cuisine and tourist attractions, namely, sea and mountains, sports and rural tourism.

The best developed sea-and-sun tourist areas are Andalusia, Murcia,





# ESPAÑA

## TRAVELLING TO SPAIN



Cuenca. Hanging houses (*casas colgadas*)

the Valencian Region and Catalonia, which are endowed with a wide range of top-quality facilities, while other regions of *Inland Spain*, such as Aragon, Castile & León, Castile-La Mancha and Extremadura, hold out the promise of historic cities—many of which are officially designated World Heritage sites—artistic and monumental treasures, delicious food and settings of great natural beauty. Other autonomous regions, such as La Rioja, Madrid and Navarre, possess the appeal and charm of towns and villages positively alive with tradition and character, offering the visitor a wealth of cultural and scenic attractions. *Island Spain* is, without doubt, one of the top tourist destinations: the Balearic Isles, in the heart of the Mediterranean, offer visitors a splendid coastline for beach-going and water sports, whilst the Canary Islands, lying out in the Atlantic off the coast of Africa, are a genuine paradise, with their beaches, volcanic National Parks and exceptional year-round climate.

The city-enclaves of Ceuta, on the North African coast astride the Strait of Gibraltar, and Melilla, on the African shore of the Mediterranean, are equally attractive propositions, thanks to good connections from the mainland which put their beaches and bargain-priced goods within easy reach.

### LANGUAGES

Spanish is Spain's *lingua franca* and official language of State. Other languages usually spoken and granted co-official status in the country's regions are Catalan in Catalonia and the Balearic Isles, Galician in Galicia, Basque in the Basque Country and part of Navarre, and Valencian in the Valencian Region.

### TIME ZONES

On the Spanish mainland and Balearic Isles, local time is one hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time in winter and two hours ahead in summer. The Canary Islands are on GMT, except during the changeover to summer time when the clocks are put forward one hour, with the result that island

time is always one hour behind mainland and Balearic time.

### RELIGION

Freedom of worship is guaranteed under the Spanish Constitution, though the great majority of the population are nominally Catholic.

### CURRENCY

As from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2002, the Spanish currency, like that of most European Union countries, has been the euro. There are eight different coins, worth 1, 2, 5, 10, 20 and 50 centimes, and 1 and 2 euros. One euro is divided into 100 centimes. Similarly, there are seven different banknotes, having the following denominations: 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500 euros.

Foreign currency can be exchanged at all banks—open Monday to Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. (except in summer, from June to September, when they close on Saturdays)—as well as at exchange bureaux in the main cities. A good number of hotels and travel agencies will also change money. In addition, traveller's cheques and leading international credit cards are accepted by most hotels, restaurants and shops.





## TRAVELLING TO SPAIN



Segovia

## PASSPORTS AND VISAS

On entering Spanish territory, travellers are required to present a passport or, in its absence, an identity or travel document recognised by international conventions, in accordance with standard reciprocity criteria. Presentation of a National I. D. Card will suffice in the case of citizens of EU Member States, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, and the Principalities of Andorra, Monaco and Liechtenstein.

In compliance with the regulations of the European Union, of which Spain is a member, visitors proceeding from a certain number of countries are required to hold a standard visa, application for which must be made at the Spanish Consulate in the applicant's country of residence.

Drivers from all non-EU countries except Switzerland, must hold a Green Card, the insurance policy covering the cost of assistance in case of accident.

There are seventeen border crossing points from France, with the busiest being Irun on the west, Puigcerdà in the Eastern Pyrenees, and La Jonquera and Portbou to the east.



Burgos. Cathedral

The Seu d'Urgell border-crossing is the most popular with visitors proceeding from Andorra from north to south, whilst the Tui, Verín, Fuentes de Oñoro, Caya, Valencia de Alcántara (Badajoz) and Ayamonte frontier points are the most popular for travellers passing between Spain and Portugal. Apart from a few specific dates, formalities are handled swiftly and smoothly, enabling travellers to cross from one country to the other effortlessly and without any unnecessary waste of time.

## TRANSPORT &amp; COMMUNICATIONS

**Telephone**

A sophisticated telephone system provides coverage nation-wide. Apart from booths (*locutorios*), there are the standard street-corner public telephones, from which calls can be made to any part of the world, using coins or phone credit cards which can be bought at all branch post-offices (*estafeta de correos*) and tobacconists (*estancos*).



## TRAVELLING TO SPAIN

To phone abroad from Spain, first dial 00 (international) and then dial the country and city codes, and lastly, the subscriber number. Should you wish to place a call to Spain, kindly dial the country code, 34, followed by the subscriber number. It is important to note that the number to dial for directory information is 11818.

Internet use is widespread in Spain and access is now available in a great number of hotels.

### Mail

The Spanish Post Office possesses a network of over 10,000 branch offices located around the country (in cities, railway stations, airports and harbours). At any branch post-office, the visitor can send mail, receive correspondence by simply hiring a P.O. Box (*apartado postal*), and send or receive money orders, parcels and any other kind of mail item. Similarly, most branch offices also provide telegram, telex and fax services. In all towns and cities there are corner pillar boxes (yellow or red) where letters can be posted for collection.

Valladolid. Magdalena Church (Mary Magdalene)



Castro Urdiales (Cantabria). Fishing harbour

In Spain, the sale of postage stamps and bills of exchange, along with cigarettes, cigars and the like, is channelled through shops known as *estancos* which are found throughout the country.

### Land

In addition to an extensive road grid covering close on 340,000 kilometres, Spain has a complete network of high capacity thoroughfares which is scheduled to expand from its existing 8,000 kilometres to over 13,000 kilometres and so make it one of Europe's most modern highway networks by 2010. This highway network, a great part of which is toll-free, makes it possible for the visitor to drive in comfort from the Pyrenees all the way down to Andalusia, either along the Mediterranean coast or, alternatively, inland via Madrid, the nation's communications node by virtue of its central position. A comprehensive network of petrol stations and roadside rest areas offer the widest possible range of en-route services.

The public coach service is comfortable and efficient, with different lines covering long-distance routes on a regular timetable. There is also a good network of bus and coach companies catering for short-distance travel and sightseeing trips.



Madrid

Donostia-San Sebastián.  
La Concha beach





## TRAVELLING TO SPAIN

Highway in Navarra



Barcelona Airport



Atocha Station garden



Bullet train



Barcelona. The Gothic Quarter

Taxis are subject to the fare shown on the meter. In some cities there is a luxury-style service, known as *grandes turismos*, charging higher rates. For this type of hire, it is advisable to settle the fare in advance.

### Air

Spain's strategic geographical situation, taken together with its tourist industry, explains the importance of international passenger travel.

In Spain there are 47 airports, most of which are international.

Airport information: AENA

☎ 902 404 704

[www.aena.es](http://www.aena.es)

Domestic air traffic tends to concentrate on Madrid-Barajas Airport, linked via a shuttle service to Barcelona. The busiest routes, apart from the shuttle, are the Madrid-Balearic and Madrid-Canary Island runs.

The growth of low-cost airlines in Europe has increased international connections with smaller-sized airports.

### Sea

Seaborne passenger transport is of relevance in ports, such as Algeciras, Ceuta and Santa Cruz de Tenerife.

The Trasmediterránea company runs a regular ferry service between the mainland and: North Africa, (from Almería and Malaga to Melilla; and from Algeciras to Ceuta and Tangiers, with daily sailings); the Balearic Isles (from Barcelona and Valencia, with daily sailings); and the Canary Islands (from Cadiz, with weekly sailings). Bookings to all these destinations can be made by calling the following number: 902 454 645.

[www.trasmediterranea.es](http://www.trasmediterranea.es)

### Rail

The Spanish rail network has some 15,000 kilometres of track, part of which corresponds to the high-speed Madrid-Seville (AVE) and Madrid-Barcelona (AVE) links. Another high-speed train is the Talgo 200, which covers the Madrid-Malaga, and Madrid-Cadiz and Huelva routes. As in the case of the road grid, the rail network takes the shape of a spider web centred on Madrid, with the main lines radiating out to cover the country and a series of interconnecting transversal lines (the most important



## TRAVELLING TO SPAIN



Mallorca. Cala sa Font sa Cala

with classic, luxuriously appointed carriages and the full complement of services, side-trips and meals; the Strawberry Train (*Tren de la Fresa*), from April to October, linking Madrid with Aranjuez; the *Cervantes Train* which runs between Madrid and Alcalá de Henares; and, lastly, the narrow-gauge *Transcantábrico* (*Ferrocarriles de vía estrecha-FEVE*), from May to September, with its scenic run along the North of Spain from Donostia-San Sebastián across to Santiago de Compostela. For ticket bookings and information, kindly call Spanish rail (RENFE) at 902 240 202 and the international service on 902 243 402. [www.renfe.es](http://www.renfe.es)

The authority tasked with railway infrastructures (stations, rails, etc.) is ADIF (*Administrador de infraestructuras ferroviarias*). 902 432 343. [www.adif.es](http://www.adif.es)

being the Mediterranean and River Ebro corridors). Depending on the season, there is a series of special fares, thanks to which rail travel becomes a far more attractive proposition.

A tourist card exists, exclusively available to non-residents, giving unlimited travel on all routes, with the possibility of reserving a seat, at a price set on a sliding scale according to the length of the period of validity. The *Euro rail* system is similar, giving the tourist the right to travel from the country of origin, with no limit as to mileage.

Among the special rail itineraries for tourists, mention must be made of the *Al-Andalus Express*, which operates from April to October (excluding July and August) and, over a five-day period, takes passengers on an attractive tour of Andalusia, complete

Valencia. Harbour







# YOUR STAY IN SPAIN

## CUSTOMS

Travellers to Spain are permitted to bring in certain personal effects, a video camera or, alternatively, two still cameras with ten rolls of film for each. Similarly, sports equipment for personal use, personally owned jewellery, and camping, hiking and sports equipment are allowed in. An official receipt may be requested which must then be shown on leaving the country.

With regard to tobacco and alcohol, the maximum allowance per person is: 200 cigarettes, 50 cigars, 100 cigarillos or 250 grammes of tobacco, plus two litres of wine or one litre of any other alcoholic drink over 22° proof.

## Pets

Spain enforces no quarantine period. Nevertheless an international certificate, issued by a vet, is required, stating that the animal in question is in good health and, in the case of dogs, cats and ferrets, that it has been vaccinated against rabies.

## OPENING TIMES

Usual shop opening times are 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. and 4:30-8 p.m., Monday to Saturday. Major shopping malls, department stores and supermarkets stay open without a break from 10 a.m.- 10 p.m. There are also some Sundays in the year when the large department stores and supermarkets open to the public.

Along the coast, during the high season, shops generally keep open until well after 10 at night.

Breakfast time is usually from 8-10 a.m. and lunchtime in restaurants normally from 1-3:30 p.m. Dinner is served from 8:30-11 p.m. Many catering establishments operate a continuous service throughout the day, a common practice in cafeterias and bars, in many of which it is possible to order snack-like servings



*Salamanca. Plaza Mayor (main square)*

(*tapas*), a limited variety of set dishes, rolls and small portions of selected foods (*raciones*).

Pharmacies usually open from 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. and 4:30-8 p.m., though in the bigger cities a certain





number remain open round the clock. There is a rota, displayed outside pharmacies and published in the daily press, indicating which pharmacies are on night-service and/or open at the weekend.

Cinemas also usually operate a flexible timetable, with the matinées beginning at 4:30-5 p.m. and films being shown continuously until the last screening at around 10 p.m. Midnight and morning shows are also a feature at some of the cinemas in the bigger cities. Theatres tend to have a single function, with performances beginning at about 8 p.m.

Nightlife in Spain is in a class of its own, particularly from Thursday to Sunday. Pubs, late night haunts (*bares de copas*) and discotheques normally keep open until 3 or 4 in the morning, and in the major cities there are innumerable night-spots that stay open till dawn.

## DRESS

There is no rigid dress code. Dress changes with season, venue and circumstances. On the coast, owing to the mildness of a climate, it is not usually necessary to wear warm clothing, whereas inland, one should definitely dress according to the weather, since temperature conditions vary from one extreme to the other, being icy in winter and fairly torrid in summer. Spaniards are not hidebound as regards the way they dress when

they go out, preferring to leave it to the place, atmosphere and occasion to set the tone.

## WEIGHTS & MEASURES

In Spain, the units of weight, measure and distance are governed by the decimal metric system.

## ELECTRICITY

Electric appliances run on 220 volts AC. 50 HZ. Standard European-pattern round-pinned plugs are used.

## TIPPING

All catering establishments in Spain include service in their prices. Nevertheless, the custom of leaving a tip, while not obligatory, is the norm in bars, restaurants, hotels and taxis, with the actual amount in each case depending on the generosity of the customer, though usually varying between 5% and 10% of the total bill.

## PETS

In Spain, there are scores of clinics and professional establishments specialising in pet care. Cats and dogs, while usually allowed onto the premises by certain hotels under special conditions, tend to be accepted by very few restaurants and shops.

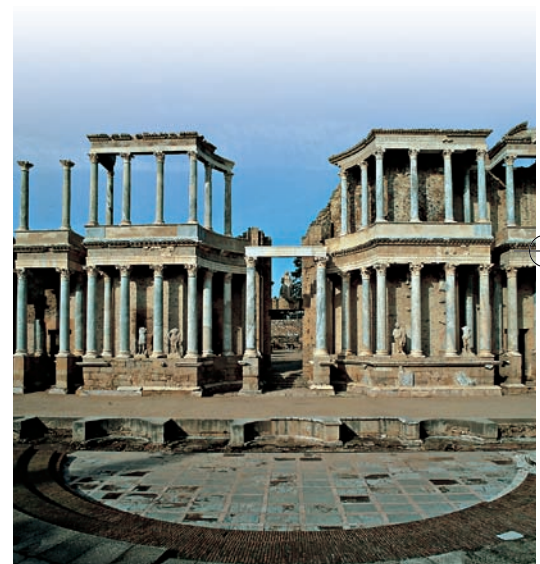
## ENTERTAINMENT

Spain enjoys well-deserved fame as a fun-loving country. Cinemas, theatres, auditoriums, conference centres, exhibition and concert halls provide the visitor with a complete range of cultural activities. Night clubs too offer a varied bill, featuring entertainers and floor shows.

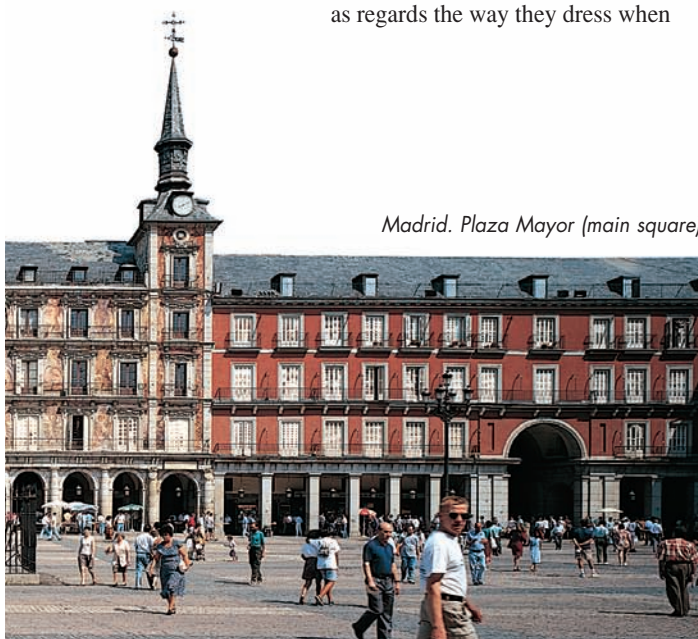
Games of chance are extremely popular in Spain. Lotteries and sweepstakes, such as the *loto* (numbers), football and horse-racing pools, as well as other variations involving periodic drawings and coupons, attract the daily attention of the mass media and the man in the street.



Luzaide-Valcarlos (Navarre). Scenery



Mérida (Badajoz). Roman theatre



Madrid. Plaza Mayor (main square)



Teruel. Mudejar-style tower



## YOUR STAY IN SPAIN



Country hotel. Canary Islands



Santander. Casino

León. Parador Hotel de San Marcos.  
Cloister

Bingo parlours are commonplace in towns and cities, and, in addition to their wide choice of gaming tables (poker, black-jack, dice) the nation's casinos offer music, entertainment and fine food.

## WHERE TO STAY IN SPAIN



The Spanish Tourist Quality Institute awards its Seal of Tourist Quality to parties involved in tourism (hotels, travel agents, ski and mountain resorts, restaurants, camp sites and country cottages, etc.) which have undergone an external audit and duly demonstrated that they meet the required standard of quality.

**Hotels**

Modern and comfortable, equipped with every type of facility and service, Spanish hotels are excellent value for money. Hotels catering to every taste and pocket are to be found from one end of the country to the other. From the most modest (one-star) up to the most sophisticated (five-star de luxe), the traveller will encounter helpful, attentive service and facilities of a standard appropriate to the establishment's category.

Most hotels have a restaurant service on the premises, with the exception of the so-called *hoteles-residencias* (Residential Hotels) which tend to have a cafeteria where breakfast is served.

**Hotels with magic**

Spain's rich heritage of historic and monumental buildings has led to the emergence, along certain routes and in certain cities, of a number of quite singular hotels, housed in castles, palaces and stately homes or set amidst stunning natural surroundings. The traveller will experience no difficulty in locating these in specialised guidebooks.

**Tourist Paradors**

Of special interest in this context are the state-run Tourist Paradors (*Paradores de Turismo*), most of which are located in tastefully restored historic-artistic buildings, rich in architecture and art, or in



Murcia. Mazarrón harbour

settings of great natural beauty. Scattered across Spain, there are over eighty such inns, where the visitor will have the chance of sampling the regional cuisine and marvelling at just how well these buildings fit in with their surroundings.

**Family guest houses**

The *hostal* (basic hotel or hostelry) and the *pension* (guest house) together represent another type of accommodation of a more modest nature, but one that nonetheless can lay claim to a long and honourable tradition in Spain. Here, the guest will find a more family-like atmosphere, since it is usually the owners themselves who see to the cooking and the cleaning of the rooms. Rates tend to include bed and board. This type of lodging is more frequent in small towns and villages, and in country districts.

**Holiday apartments**

In the large cities and in the coastal areas in particular the visitor has the possibility of renting a flat. This kind of holiday accommodation is a very attractive proposition for families or groups. Depending on the number of rooms, apartments sleep from two (studio) to ten persons.

Rates are set according to season, location, in-house services, etc. Rentals are usually weekly or fortnightly. Full information on the range of possibilities available can be obtained from all travel agencies and tour operators.



# ESPAÑA

YOUR STAY IN SPAIN



## Camping

Spain is literally dotted with camp sites which afford the traveller the opportunity of camping at reasonable rates, which vary according to the site's situation and, depending on the category, the services and facilities provided. Uncontrolled camping is forbidden in and around many towns and in many parts of the country. Before pitching camp it is therefore advisable to make enquiries at the local tourist office.

## Youth hostels

Generally coming within the competence of the respective Regional Authority Youth & Sports Departments (*Direcciones Generales de la Juventud y el Deporte*), a comprehensive network of Youth Hostels in cities and the main tourist areas makes it possible for the younger tourist to find decent lodging at very reasonable rates.

## Country cottages

Rural tourism, which has witnessed a spectacular boom in recent years, has led to the emergence of a series of lodgings in small villages and hamlets, allowing the traveller to come into direct contact with Nature and the traditional customs and way of life of small rural communities. Several regions have introduced a rating system to ensure that such establishments are scored with reference to their environment. For more detailed information, and to be sure of finding exactly what one is looking for, the best thing is to pay a visit to the Country Cottage Accommodation Office (*Centrales de Reservas de Alojamientos Rurales*) in the Autonomous Region concerned, or to consult specialised guidebooks.

Orange orchard



Tenerife (Canary Islands). Las Americas beach

## Health spas

A hundred or so spas and hot water springs distributed around Spain receive visitors from all over the world, whether for reasons of health or merely for rest and relaxation. Since the time of Roman rule, these

spa resorts have provided treatment for aches and ails of all kinds, as well as excellent rest cures to combat stress. The existence of hotel and sports facilities in the environs of these spas has led to a whole new tourist boom in this sector.

## PRACTICAL HINT

The Hotel, Camping and Tourist Accommodation Guidebook published by Turespaña at the beginning of each year is the most comprehensive and up-to-date source of information of its kind. In addition, each Regional Authority puts out its own guidebook for the benefit of visitors. Further sources of information:

Spanish Hotel & Tourist Accommodation Federation (*Confederación Española de Hoteles y alojamientos Turísticos*) [www.cehat.com](http://www.cehat.com)

Spanish Federation of Camping & Holiday Park Owners (*Federación Española de Empresarios de Camping y Parques de Vacaciones*).

☎ 914 481 234 [www.fedcamping.com](http://www.fedcamping.com)

Tourist Parador, Central Booking Office. ☎ 902 547 979 and

☎ 902 525 432 - Web page: [www.parador.es](http://www.parador.es)

Spanish Federation of Travel Agency Associations (*Federación Nacional de Asociaciones de Agencias de Viajes*). ☎ 917 264 387 [www.feaav.org](http://www.feaav.org)

National Association of Health Spas (*Asociación Nacional de Estaciones Termales*). ☎ 902 117 622

Regional Country Cottage Accommodation and Information Offices (*Centrales de Reservas y Oficinas de Información de Alojamientos de Turismo Rural*) will furnish details on local lodgings of this kind, information which is likewise available from specialist travel agencies and guidebooks.

Similarly, all Regional Authority Youth & Sports Departments (*Direcciones Generales de la Juventud*) will furnish information on youth hostel accommodation.





# NATURE

**S**pain, occupying the greater part of the Iberian Peninsula and positioned as the nexus between Europe and Africa, boasts a range of widely contrasting natural attractions. Its extensive perimeter of coastline –bathed by three different seas– and its Mediterranean (Balearics) and Atlantic (Canaries) island possessions are eloquent testimony to its seafaring traditions. At the same time however, the distance separating the seaboard from large tracts of the hinterland, along with the mountainous nature of the intervening terrain, act as a brake on this maritime influence and imbue the territory with an unmistakably continental character, relatively isolated from ocean-borne penetration.

A continent in miniature, its link with Europe lies through the mountainous folds of the Pyrenees, an unbroken line stretching for 440 kilometres (273 miles) at an average height of around 2,000 metres (6,400 ft.). In the interior, more than 400 protected natural areas have been set aside to conserve the principal mainland and island ecosystems. Spain's mean altitude is 660 metres (over 2,000 ft) above sea level, far above the European average. In fact, almost half the country's surface area lies at altitudes ranging from 1,900-4,000 ft.

above sea level, with its chief mountain ranges flanked along the coast.

## THE MOUNTAINS

The mountains reach their maximum height in the Pyrenees (north) and the Sierra Nevada (south), the latter system containing the highest peak on the mainland, Mt. Mulhacén, which rises to 3,482 metres (11,425 ft.). These uplands are home to glaciers, alpine lakes and an overwhelming display of flora and fauna. National Parks and Game Reserves, wintersports and outdoor-adventure facilities are just some of the attractions lying in store for the visitor to Spain's high mountain areas.

Numerous mountain ranges and systems criss-cross the mainland, the most notable being: the Cantabrian Range with the Picos de Europa; the Central system with the Gredos massif; and the Iberian and Bética Ranges. Protected areas and natural spaces, abounding in impressive swathes of forest and woodland, act as a wildlife habitat for animals, such as the bear, wolf, wood grouse (capercaillie) and ibex, and a haven for valuable indigenous flora.



*Huelva. Doñana National Park*

## THE CENTRAL PLATEAU

Thanks to its central position, the Central Plateau or *Meseta*, the largest of its kind in Europe, has played a dominant role throughout the country's history. It is an essentially agrarian region where Spain's time-honoured classic crops are still grown, i.e., winter cereals (wheat, barley), grapes and olives.



*Ciudad Real  
Tablas de Daimiel National Park*





entire gamut, from beaches to mountains, from arid deserts to lush valleys.

From its readily accessible coasts, dotted with white sandy beaches, to the heights of its snow-capped peaks, Spain embraces a surprising wealth of Nature, in which broad bands of wetland, semi-desert areas, bleak moors, mountain ranges and river valleys highlight the differences in splendid degrees of nuance, shading and tone.

### SCENERY

Spain is a land of contrasts, with marked differences in natural surroundings, climate, culture and lifestyles. This plurality is equally evinced in its scenery which, to the eyes of the traveller, seems to change with startling swiftness.

### Green Spain

Starting in the north, almost like some prolongation of the French countryside, the Basque Country awaits, with its evergreen meadows, its hilltop *caseríos* (country houses and outbuildings), its beaches, and its fishing harbours which still retain their strong local flavour.

A close resemblance is to be seen in the Cantabrian cornice, though here at times the contrasts grow violent, wild and truly majestic in the *Picos de Europa*, the mountain chain walling

To the north and east of this Meseta lies an extensive stretch of mountainous country and a coastal fringe washed by the waters of the Bay of Biscay and the Atlantic Ocean. This is the area known as Green Spain, a lush wet area with abundant rainfall, mild temperatures and verdant, leafy, woodland vegetation.

### THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

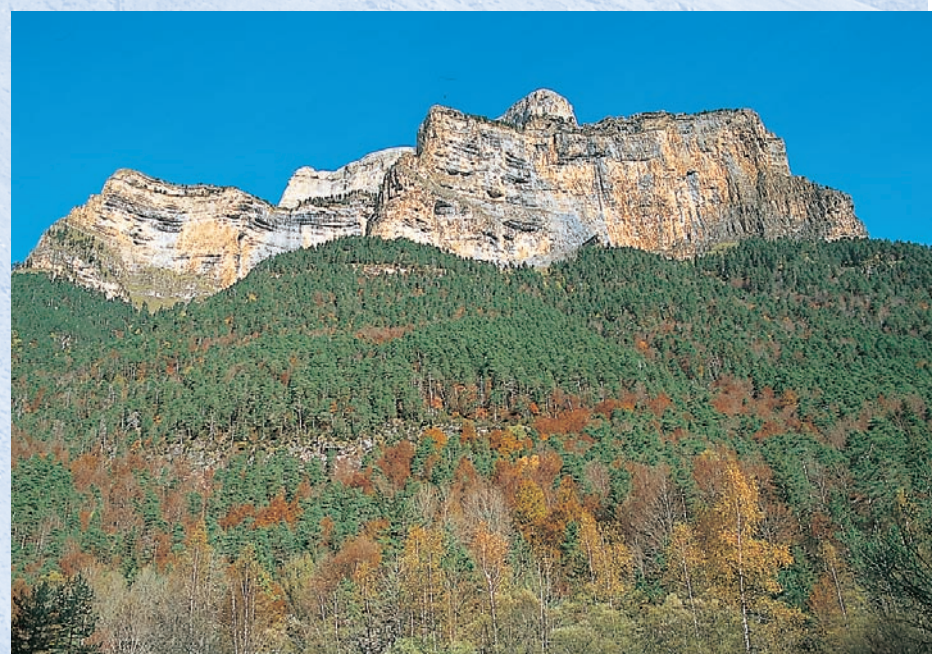
To the east, against a backdrop of serrated mountains, *Mediterranean Spain* opens out, an alternating strip of sandy flats, salt marshes (the Mar Menor and the Albufera of Valencia) and sheer cliffs (Costa Brava, La Nao). The area's traditional agriculture, wheat, grapes and olives –now supplemented by modern irrigation systems that yield vegetables and citrus fruit– co-exists alongside a prosperous industrial sector.

The south too reveals sharp contrasts: a shoreline, Mediterranean for the greater part, sown with crops suited to the varying micro-climates and terrain, buttressed by a folded mountainous region that is given over to animal husbandry (cattle, pigs, horses and fighting bulls).

Out in the waters of the Mediterranean, the Balearic Isles are singular in being

blessed with an interesting and changing coastline, birdlife of note and matchless scenery. Lying off the western shores of North Africa, the Canary Islands, with their volcanic topography and unique species of flora akin, in many cases, to living fossils, not only account for four of Spain's thirteen National Parks but run the

Huesca. Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park





# ESPAÑA

## NATURE

off Castile & León from the Cantabrian and Asturian coastal strip, site of elegant cities and smooth crescents of beach curving along towns that nestle in glorious natural settings.

Galicia, lying at the country's north-western tip, possesses all the essence of a landscape contoured by a sharply indented coastline, hills stippled with traditional architecture, and *rías* (fjord-like inlets) where tongues of sea penetrate far inland to wash up against the towns and cities.

Ocean and mountain in perfect symbiosis, local architecture of great richness and diversity, seaside cities and a wet climate that cloaks the land in greens of all hues, these are the area's trademarks.

### Inland areas

Occupying the entire central portion of the Iberian Peninsula, a high plateau, the *Meseta*, opens out onto another of Spain's most powerfully expressive and distinct areas of scenery. Running across the centre, a mountainous watershed bisects the land into two well-defined physical and historical units. Throughout the length of Castile—structured nowadays into the Autonomous Regions of Castile & León, Castile-La Mancha and La Rioja—this vast plain, along with the farmlands of Extremadura, offers the traveller vistas of wide open horizons, seen across flowing fields of wheat and other cereals, river valleys, and tiny villages which, together with cities steeped in history, house a veritable treasure-trove of art and monumental sights.

### The Mediterranean coast

From the Pyrenees to Andalusia, Mediterranean Spain is a shifting kaleidoscope of sand flats, marshland (the Valencian *Albufera*, the *Mar Menor* in Murcia) and plunging cliffsides (Costa Brava), where the steep rocky coast is broken here and there by a sprinkling of small coves and huddled fishing villages. Away from the coast, typical Catalan farmhouses (*masías*) and vineyards preside over a landscape which, moving southwards, takes on new colour, in almond groves and orchards of oranges and lemons, and softens along the shoreline, opening out into beaches of fine white sand.



Asturias. River Saliencia. Somiedo Nature Park

On reaching Andalusia, through olive groves and salt marshes, the scenery shimmers with light and the sun reigns supreme in towns and beaches of dazzling white. Soaring mountains (the Alpujarras and the Sierra Nevada) strike an awesome contrast, as do the desert dunes and wastes of Almería, moulding areas of great diversity and beauty.

Perched on the African continent, Ceuta and Melilla are two warm and pleasant cities.

### The island groups

In addition, lying in the Mediterranean are the Balearic Islands, one of the leading tourist destinations due to the combination of their cultural and scenic wealth.

Situated in the Atlantic Ocean, the Canary Islands, with their spectacular

volcanic backdrop and tourist developments, offer a scenic display that is at once unique and impressive.

From one end of Spain to the other, the terminology used to describe the home-grown architecture is diverse and peculiarly localised, e.g., *caserío* (Basque country house and outbuildings), *hórreo* (Asturian and Galician stone granary set on stone piles), *masía* (Catalonian farmhouse), *casona* (mansion), *cortijo* (Andalusian whitewashed, ranch-style house set around a central courtyard), *pazo* (Galician manor house), *barraca* (Valencian rural dwelling) and many more such local variations, which lend a defining and distinguishing element to the country's scenery.



# NATIONAL PARKS

**S**pain boasts a wealth of National Parks, aimed at delimiting spaces that are representative of the different natural systems whose conservation is judged to be in the interests of the country.

The 1,200 land- and approximately 7,200 sea-based hectares of Galicia's **Atlantic Islands National Sea & Land Park** cover the Cíes, Ons and Onza, Sálvora, Cortegada and Malveires archipelagos, as well as other nearby islands. Highlights of the land area include beaches, dunes, rocky cliff and bluff biotopes, and wildlife, which features Spain's largest breeding colony of shag (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*). In the case of the marine area, special mention must be made of the abundance of species of kelp and seaweed which serve as habitat and support for a rich community of invertebrates.

Set in the mountain systems in the north of the peninsula are the following: the **Picos de Europa National Park** which, with over 64,000 hectares distributed among the Autonomous Regions of Asturias, Cantabria and Castile & León, features forests of beech, oak and birch, and the chamois as its most representative animal; the **Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park**, which stretches over 15,608 hectares in the very heart of the Pyrenees in an area belonging to the Aragon Autonomous Region, and includes the Pineta cirque, with its hanging glaciers, and the deep karst gorges of Añisclo and Escuin, plus a wide variety of Pyrenean fauna; and the **Aigües Tortes and Estany Sant Maurici National Park** in the Catalan Pyrenees, its high on 10,000 hectares constituting a magnificent microcosm of the central, essentially



Lanzarote (Canary Islands). Timanfaya National Park

continental, Pyrenees, with winding streams and waterways, lakes and fir-trimmed crags.

In La Mancha there is an abundance of endorheic lakes, some more permanent than others, and seasonally waterlogged areas as a result of the complex hydrological mechanism which combines the region's aquifers with its rivers, the Guadiana, Cigüela, Záncara and Riansares. The **Tablas de Daimiel National Park**, with its 2,000 hectares, is home to a considerable numbers of

waterfowl and waders, due to its importance as a haven, nesting site and stopover point on the migratory route. The **Cabañeros National Park**, also situated in the Castile-La Mancha Autonomous Region, covers a total of 40,000 hectares and is made up of Palaeozoic hill country alternating with wide plains and areas of dense thicket. Situated in the province of Cáceres, **Monfragüe National Park** with its 18,100 hectares (70 sq. miles) represents one of the most extensive and characteristic swathes of Mediterranean

León. Valdeón Valley. Picos de Europa National Park





# ESPAÑA

## NATIONAL PARKS



Lleida. Aigües Tortes and Estany Sant Maurici National Park

forest and scrub. Crossed by the Rivers Tagus and Tietar, it is home to an important variety of biotypes.

Farther south, the **Doñana National Park**, declared a UNESCO World Heritage site, is the most outstanding of Spain's natural spaces and one of the most important in Europe. With its 50,000 hectares and extensive buffer

Tenerife (Canary Islands). Teide National Park



protection zone, it has a complicated seepage system of rivulets, underground streams and marshlands adjoining the banks of the Guadalquivir, together with the river mouth itself and a 30-kilometre coastal strip. Beaches, shifting dunes, undergrowth and hill scrub play host to a multitude of species of waterfowl, waders and birds of prey, as well as being the last refuge of endangered species, such as the lynx, Purple Gallinule, Imperial Eagle and Crested Coot.

Stretching over an area of 86,000 hectares in the provinces of Granada and Almería is the **Sierra Nevada National Park**, a combination of high mountain and Mediterranean habitats featuring high-altitude desert, sub-alpine steppe, forests of conifer and other types of vegetation.

In the Balearic Isles, the tiny archipelago of Cabrera is one of a score or more island worlds that bring life and beauty to the Mediterranean Sea. Located here is the **Cabrera Archipelago Sea & Land National Park**, an area of 8,703 hectares of Mediterranean limestone with stunted vegetation, which has inestimable ecological value owing to the importance of its birdlife (Shearwaters, Cormorants, gulls, raptors).

As a group, the Canary Islands are the most protected natural area in Spain. They lie in the bio-geographic region known as Macaronesia, a zone of volcanic origin. Towering above Tenerife, the largest and most important island, is the mythical and awesome Mt. Teide, which, at its summit, rises to a

height of 3,717 metres (12,195 ft.). The mountain stands at the centre of the **Teide National Park**, an area of 13,571 hectares lying at many different altitudes. This variation in altitude makes for a whole range of climatic and vegetation layers or levels, which in turn renders the park a paradise for native flora and fauna, such as the violet, the yellow-blossoming broom-like clumps of *hierba pajonera* (*Descurainia bourgaeana*), the kestrel, the shrike, and a local species of lizard, the *lagarto tizón* (*Lacerta galloti*).

The **Caldera de Taburiente National Park** is situated on the Island of La Palma. Here, the interior of a crater that is one of the biggest in the world (8 km. across at its widest point and over 1,000 m. deep) reveals the oldest rock in the archipelago (basal complex) and, in the torrents that pour down the sheer rockfaces, the miracle of water. It conserves the best instance of the Canary pine ecosystem, a great quantity of indigenous plant life and a fauna rich in island birds. The park extends over an area of 4,690 hectares.

On the Island of Lanzarote is **Timanfaya National Park** (area: 5,107 hectares). This is the genuine mountain of fire which, with its more than three hundred craters formed over the different periods when it was in eruption, is eloquent evidence of the volcanic nature of the Canaries. The park is very popular, thanks to the fascinating play of colour, the ingenious way the islanders grow their crops in shallow pits sheltered by semi-circular dry-stone walls, and certain examples of local fauna, such as the Haría lizard, the Egyptian Vulture and different varieties of Shearwater.

**El Garajonay National Park** on La Gomera covers 3,984 hectares and is a UNESCO-designated World Heritage Site. It affords an invaluable example of Canary laurel forest, the very formation which millions of years ago constituted the vegetation of the Mediterranean Basin and North Africa, as well as fauna dependent on the forest, such as the indigenous pigeons, the *rabiche* and the *turqué* (*Columba junoniae*), and insect-life.

Visitors to National Parks have to comply with certain formalities, information on which can be obtained at any tourist office.



# SEA, SUN AND SAND

Over 7,000 kilometres long, the Spanish seaboard has a rather singular coastline, in that it is washed by the waters of the Mediterranean Sea (on its eastern and south-eastern flanks), the Bay of Biscay (to the north) and the Atlantic Ocean (along the west and south). With more than three hundred days of sunshine per year and a mild climate, average temperatures being in the order of 18° C - 30° C (64° F - 86° F), its sunlit beaches receive millions of tourists from all over the world each year.

The **Mediterranean**, the legendary “mare nostrum”, has sculpted a landscape of great character along the *Costa Brava*, where a steeply rising shoreline is indented with superbly scenic coves and lovely beaches.

Southwards, along stretches of coast eloquently dubbed *Costa Daurada* (Golden), *Costa Azahar* (Orange Blossom), *Costa de Valencia*, *Costa Blanca* (White) or *Costa Cálida* (Warm), it is a calm and peaceful sea that laps against beaches of golden sands, well served by a series of nearby cities and holiday resorts of renown.

In Andalusia, the *Costa de Almería*, *Costa Tropical* and *Costa del Sol* are another three favourite destinations for tourists in search of sea and sun. Marbella, the undisputed holiday capital of the Malaga coast, similarly receive a spectacular influx of visitors, drawn by the local beaches, leisure and entertainment facilities, shops and boutiques, and the presence of world-famous personalities.

The Strait of Gibraltar, with the African coast visible through the haze on the opposite shore, links the Mediterranean to the **Atlantic Ocean**. Andalusia's Atlantic coast is lent real personality by



Marbella (Malaga). Beach

the presence of Cadiz and Huelva, with the so-called *Costa de la Luz* (Light) stretching along as far as Ayamonte on the Portuguese border. Way up in Spain's north-eastern corner, it is this same Atlantic that batters the coast of Galicia, carving a spectacular landscape of deeply incised shores, small beaches and fjord-like inlets (*rías*), where the sea flows deep inland amidst scenery that is truly exquisite. The entire Galician coast, with an altogether wetter, less torrid climate, is a much sought-after summer holiday spot.

The **Bay of Biscay**, curling along the northern coast of Spain, has given rise to one of Spain's most impressive and spectacular stretches of shoreline, the mountainous corniche. Elegant portside cities, such as Gijón, Santander and Donostia-San Sebastián, their beaches set against natural backdrops of great beauty, the local architecture and an agreeable climate that paints the horizon a glistening green, serve to make the fringe of coast from the Basque Country through Cantabria and Asturias to Galicia, another of Spain's busiest summer tourist Meccas. Surrounded by the translucent waters of the Mediterranean, the **Balearic Isles** feature a series of characteristics which give the archipelago a personality all of its own. Cliffs and secluded coves, protected areas and beaches where the sun can be enjoyed to the full, lend shape and form to islands which,

in turn, boast a wide range of supplementary leisure and entertainment facilities.

Situated off the western coast of North Africa and over 1,000 kilometres from the Iberian Peninsula, the **Canary Islands** are volcanic in origin. The exceptional year-round climate and magnificent beaches make the islands an ideal spot to enjoy sea, sun and sand at any time or season of the year. The resort town of Puerto de la Cruz and the beaches in the south of Tenerife, the Playa del Inglés and Maspalomas Beaches on Gran Canaria, Puerto del Carmen on Lanzarote and Corralejo on Fuerteventura are just some of the places that receive the greatest influx of tourists.

Calella de Palafrugell. Girona



Benidorm (Alicante). Levante beach











# ART

**S**pain is made up of a pot-pourri of cultures belonging to civilisations which, down the centuries, gradually came to settle on Iberian soil and make it their home. This historical legacy draws its strength from the very variety of this mosaic, the wealth of nuance and the ultimate fusion of the respective contributions. Added to this is the fact that all the major currents in culture and art have found their echo in a native creative talent of true relevance.

**Origins.** The Altamira Cave (Cantabria), with its wall paintings dating from some 15,000 years ago, is only the most outstanding among a whole series of archaeological sites and caverns. Bronze-

Cordoba. Medina Azahara Palace



age stone towers (*talaiots*), altars (*taulas*) and mausoleums (*navetas*) in a good state of preservation are to be seen in Menorca, while the earliest examples of Iberian art dating from the Iron Age, such as the weathered animal figures in the foothills of the Gredos, known as the *Toros de Guisando* and the stately head of the *Dama de Elche*, are to be found in other points in Castile and the so-called Levant region (Valencia/Alicante area).

The Phoenicians, venturing in from the Mediterranean, set up colonies and left the imprint of their culture along the shores of Andalusia (Adra, Cadiz), the Levant region (Cartagena) and Ibiza. The Greeks founded colonies at points along the Levant (Ampuries, Roses) but it was the Roman conquest of the Peninsula in 218 A.D. that signalled the contribution of a vigorous civilisation.

So pervasive and profound was the process of **Romanisation**, that Spain produced its share of emperors, intellectuals and military men, and in return received a legacy of large-scale infrastructures and civil-engineering works (roads, mines, quarries, aqueducts, bridges) as well as the creation of a number of cities (Tarragona, Barcelona, Merida), which still conserve their heritage (hot springs, baths, amphitheatres, circuses), plus the ruins of many more in Cordoba, Cuenca, Soria, Seville and Malaga. The sheer wealth of their collections makes the Merida and Tarragona museums fundamental reference points.

Once in Spain, the barbarian invaders from the north who had spelt an end to the Roman Empire, sowed the seeds of a fertile culture, the Visigothic, with Toledo acting both as capital and principal point of diffusion.

**The Medieval Age: crucible of cultures.** The invasion of the Moors in the year 711 and their ensuing sway for eight centuries, was to create a civilisation of great splendour and establish a formidable bridgehead between East and West. **The imprint of Islam** was so profound as to even impregnate the Christian style, giving rise to two new schools: Mozarabic, the style of the Christian minorities and Mudejar, that of the Moorish minorities. **The Jewish community**, the third culture present in Spain for a number of

centuries, in many ways emulated the artistic forms favoured by Islam. The Jewish Quarters (*juderías*), ritual baths and synagogues (Tránsito and Santa María la Blanca Synagogues in Toledo, and the synagogue in Cordoba) are notable examples of the mark left by this community.

**Christianity** led to the emergence of the Romanesque School in the wake of the pilgrims as they trod the Way to Santiago (the Church of St. Martin in Frómista, St. Isidore's Basilica in León, the Santiago de Compostela Cathedral) and to the Style's subsequent evolution under Byzantine (Zamora) and French influences (Catalonia). Castles and monasteries lent expression to an era that was to reach a pinnacle of aesthetic glory during the age of Cathedrals. The 13th and 14th centuries signalled the pre-eminence of the Gothic Style, the most important examples of which are to be seen in the churches built in Burgos, Toledo, León, Palma and Girona. With the advent of the 15th century, the Perpendicular Style was to leave works of the stature of Seville Cathedral, the Royal Hospitals of Santiago, Granada and Toledo, San Juan de los Reyes Monastery (Toledo) and the Infantado Palace (Guadalajara).



Gijón (Asturias). Sculpture by Chillida





Santillana del Mar (Cantabria).  
Altamire caves

In the 10th century, under the Caliphate, Moorish art attained its greatest splendour. The Cordoba Mosque and the Royal Court-City of Medina Azahara, nearby, are the period's most representative works. Dating from the reign of the *taifa* kingdoms or factions (11th century), are the Malaga Alcazaba (Fortress) and the Zaragoza Aljafería (Moorish palace), and from the subsequent Almohad period, the Giralda and Torre del Oro (Golden Tower) in Seville. In the 14th and 15th centuries, Nasrid art in the tiny kingdom of Granada was to leave exquisite examples of intricate ornamental work, culminating in the complex formed by the Granada Alhambra and the Generalife Gardens.

**The Age of Discovery and the Golden Age.** The discovery of America (Indies Archives - *Archivo General de Indias* in Seville) and the humanist Renaissance

which inspired a style based on classical forms that came to be known as Plateresque, left behind a series of splendid examples in the 16th century, such as the façade of University of Salamanca, the cathedral and palace of Charles V in Granada and, in keeping with the austere Herrera style, the Monastery of San Lorenzo de El Escorial.

Artists such as Morales and El Greco and sculptors such as Berruguete were to be the

precursors of the period known as Spain's Golden Age (*Siglo de Oro* - 17th century), thanks to the universal stature of sculptors of religious imagery (Gregorio Hernández, Martínez Montañés and Francisco Salzillo) and artists (Diego Velázquez, Zurbarán, Ribera and Murillo).

Through colonial art, the Baroque explosion made its presence felt in the Americas (Mexico; Cuzco and Lima, Peru; La Habana, Cuba), while in Spain the movement left a legacy of buildings of singular beauty, such as the royal palaces of La Granja (Segovia), Aranjuez and Madrid.

**On the threshold of modernity.** The return of Neoclassicism left its mark on buildings such as the Prado Museum in Madrid and heralded the appearance of the artistic genius of one, Francisco de Goya, a genuine forerunner of contemporary art. The eclecticism of styles in evidence in the 19th century looked to Romanticism for themes of an historical bent or those depicting customs and manners (Benlliure, Sorolla), and the appearance of Modernism in the closing years of the century spelt renewal at the hands of the Catalan architect, Antonio Gaudí (Church of the Holy Family, Güell Park in Barcelona).

In the present century, the artistic avant-garde found a genius of universal appeal in the person of the Malaga-born artist, Pablo Ruiz Picasso, while Salvador Dalí and Joan Miró played key roles in the Surrealist and Abstract movements. Spanish contribution to art in recent decades has come from outstanding architects (Sert, Bofill, Calatrava) painters and sculptors (Tàpies, Antonio López, Barceló, Chillida), who have set their seal on works of great individuality.

*San Vicente de la Sonsierra (La Rioja). Church of Santa María de la Piscina (St. Mary's)*



## MUSEUMS

### Madrid

- Prado Museum
- Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum
- Centro de Arte Reina Sofía National Museum
- Gallery of the San Fernando Royal Academy of Fine Art

### Barcelona

- National Gallery of Catalanian Art
- Joan Miró Foundation Gallery
- Picasso Museum
- National Gallery of Contemporary Art

### Other Museums

- National Archaeological Museum. Madrid
- National Sculpture Museum. Valladolid
- Gallery of Fine Art. Seville
- Gallery of Fine Art. Valencia
- City of Arts and Sciences. Valencia
- National Gallery of Roman Art. Mérida (Badajoz)
- Guggenheim Museum. Bilbao
- Gallery of Abstract Art. Cuenca
- Dalí Theatre-Museum. Figueres (Girona)
- Picasso Gallery. Malaga

*Madrid. Prado Museum.*

*Goya: «La vendimia» (The grape harvest)*



*Figueres (Girona). Dalí Theatre-Museum*







# CITIES

**T**he diversity and contrast that go to mould the character of Spain are likewise in evidence in its cities. Celts, Iberians, Phoenicians and, at a later date, the Greco-Roman civilisation laid the first cornerstones of urban settlements which, to this day, bear the marks of their passage through time.

During the Middle Ages, Arabic, Jewish and Christian cultures, singly and through a process of mutual cross-influence, gave rise to the birth of cities which have come to house an historical-artistic heritage of incalculable proportions.

Tradition alone does not suffice. Modernity too is essential, and this was something certain Spanish monarchs –Charles III for one– managed to successfully apply during their reigns in order to beautify townscapes, like that of Madrid, with parks and landmark monuments, thereby instilling the city with a spirit of renewal. It was this element of urban renewal that became even more evident at a later date, in the form of townplans designed to extend and enlarge the leading cities, and the construction of graceful buildings which, in keeping with the shifts and changes in architectural tastes, have helped shape the identity of Spain's cities over the last two hundred years.

This contrast is also to be seen in the individual heartbeat of Spain's cities, where surroundings, climate and daily lifestyles harmonise to lend each its own typical character and atmosphere. Some reveal to us a testimony to a glorious past and a monumental heritage; others, an exuberance of light and colour; and others still, the mysteries of wreathing morning mists and a horizon mantled in eternal green. Whether cosmopolitan or provincial, locked in time or flourishing and go-ahead, they are fascinating in the wide spectrum of realities and possibilities that they hold out to all who visit them and enjoy their warm hospitality.

## THE BIG CITIES

The country's two largest cities, Madrid and Barcelona, are further evidence of this diversity. **Madrid** is



*Avila. Partial view*

open and endearing. Bustling, unpretentious, its old quarter is a winding maze of simple harmony, surrounded by elegant civic buildings, parks and boulevards, landmarks of the modern city. A byword in art thanks to its galleries and museums, it enjoys a well-earned reputation as being an open-hearted city where all newcomers can be sure of finding a niche and a warm welcome, a city where the most disparate trends and attitudes somehow manage to co-exist.

**Barcelona** is the Mediterranean metropolis par excellence and yet at the same time open to all cultural influences flowing in from beyond the Pyrenees. Its harbour and commerce have served to foster the city's prosperity over hundreds of years, while its well-ordered and symmetrical town grid has given us quarters of unrivalled beauty, such as



*Barcelona. Church of the Holy Family*



*Madrid. Alcalá Arch*





the Gothic Quarter, Las Ramblas and the modernist Paseo de Gracia. Site of the 1992 Olympics, Barcelona underwent a thorough facelift, with the result that it is today an elegant and harmonious city, waiting to be enjoyed to the maximum.

#### THE WORLD HERITAGE CITIES

Bonded by the universal recognition accorded by UNESCO in acknowledgement of their natural, scenic and monumental appeal, *Spain's Group of World Heritage Cities* is the most important in any one country in the world and is composed of thirteen historic core units in so many cities. These cities have not only kept their natural settings intact but, along with an impressive heritage in the form of monumental buildings and sights, have at the same time managed to retain the richness of their local architecture and a way of life in which the past is all too palpably present.

From Galician mists and pilgrims' offerings to the Apostle James in **Santiago de Compostela**, the heritage list ranges across to **Cordoba**, the capital of the Omayyads and once the gem of the known world, which, in its mosque and old quarters (the *judería* and San Lorenzo areas), possesses an extraordinary monumental heritage, infused with the very essence of Andalusia in its alleys, lanes and gardens. From the learned Renaissance cloisters of **Salamanca**, one is then taken via walled and mystic **Avila** where the passer-by still seems to hear the wandering tread of St. Teresa de

Jesús, and on to **Segovia** of Roman and 16th-century "Comunero" insurgency fame, its mansions proudly emblazoned with the coats-of-arms of the Castilian nobility.

In similar vein, **Cuenca** and its wonder of Nature await, defying orthodoxy, hanging bewitched, magically suspended above the twin ravines gashed by its two rivers, while **Cáceres** proves a revelation in each and every street of its Old Quarter, a Quarter as splendid as it is well-preserved.

**Toledo**, the medieval capital of Spain, rises from the banks of the Tagus like some rambling, old house in which the history and jewelled perfection of ten centuries lies waiting to be discovered, and not far off is **Alcalá de Henares**, seat of one of Spain's most glorious



Valencia. City Hall Square

universities and birthplace of Miguel de Cervantes. Island Spain is home to two world-renowned tourist sights: **Ibiza** (Balearic Isles), founded by the Carthaginians, whose walls enclose a beautiful Old Quarter with its maze of streets; and **San Cristóbal de La Laguna** (Canary Islands), whose historic city centre preserves an open concept of town layout and a noble artistic heritage that served as an example for the colonies in the New World.

Recently incorporated into the Group, **Mérida** and **Tarragona**, with their well-preserved Roman remains, offer us images of almost unrivalled beauty.

Innumerable routes lie open to the visitor, waiting to acquaint him/her with the major world movements in art (Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque), waiting to reveal the living traces of History.

Zaragoza. Pilar Basilica  
(Our Lady of the Pillar) and River Ebro



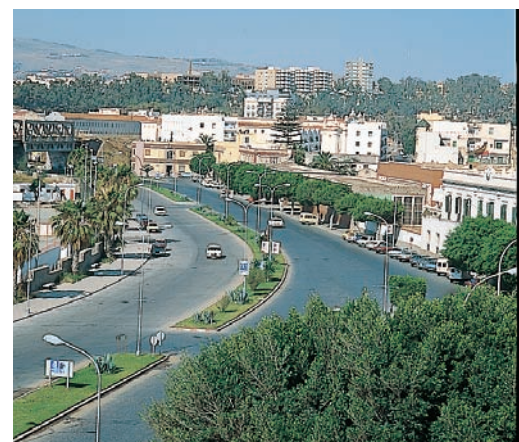
Corunna. Avenida de la Marina

#### THE COASTAL CITIES

And there are still other cities, cities that look out to sea and are confronted by the mirror image of their own beauty. Shoreside cities, elegant and charming, like those of the north: **Santander**, set in a bay which frames it in one of Spain's loveliest panoramas, with wide curving beaches and romantic seafront walks; **Donostia-San Sebastián**, alluring and aristocratic, which stretches along and towards the sea between its sheltering headlands and which, in its old Quarter, retains all the traditional festive fervour that makes it so unique; and **Corunna**, garden city of the Atlantic seaboard, with its white glassed-in frontages, elegant districts and bustling business sector.

Seafaring cities, which on the Mediterranean are pearls of iridescent light shimmering in a thousand colours and facets, where industrial and tourist industries thrive in fragrant and enchanting natural settings. **Valencia** is

Melilla. Partial view





## CITIES



*Ibiza (Balearic Isles). Cathedral seen from the harbour*



*Ceuta. General view from the sea*



*Granada.  
View of the Alhambra*

the prototype of the big Mediterranean city: fertile, productive, luminous and commercially astute. The monumental lives cheek by jowl with the traditional, and the city's prosperity is well epitomised in its explosive fiestas.

**Alicante**, capital of the Costa Blanca, one of the country's most important seaside resort areas, is a picturesque city which retains the appeal of its relaxed, unhurried lifestyle, while **Palma**, capital of the Balearic Isles, combines an old quarter, rich in Moorish remains and Gothic art, with a modern yacht basin, marina and tourist trade.

In the south, **Malaga** too is the focal point of another key tourist area, the Costa del Sol. A city of light and gaiety, it retains its commercial drive and ability to benefit from the twin bonanza afforded by its climate and the beautiful sweep of bay on which it stands. **Melilla** and **Ceuta**, sentinels perched on the other side of the Strait of Gibraltar, conserve the melting pot of cultures and religions within their walled bastions, whilst **Cadiz**, festive and forever linked with Antillean discovery, looks out onto the Atlantic from its bay, with that eclectic mix of architecture and lifestyles which is so much part of it. Similarly Atlantic in feel are the Canary Island towns of **Santa Cruz de Tenerife**, **Las Palmas de Gran Canaria** and **San Sebastián de La Gomera**, towns that are quaint and modern by turn.

#### THE INLAND CITIES

Situated on the banks of important rivers, Zaragoza on the Ebro and Seville on the Guadalquivir are two high-profile cities, as much for their geographical position and wealth as for their sights. Strategically located, **Zaragoza** is the capital of Aragon and, apart from the Basilica of Our Lady of the Pillar, possesses marvellous examples of the Mudejar School, whilst **Seville**, the Andalusian capital, is a colourful, elegant city with its landmark Giralda Tower and its world-renowned feasts, both religious (Holy Week) and profane (April Fair).

There are many more mainland cities with tales to tell of the country's history and its different regions.



*Murcia. Cathedral*

Going from north to south, mention must be made of: **Bilbao**, pivotal industrial centre and pioneer in urban reclamation and art (the Guggenheim Museum); **Pamplona**, the capital of Navarre, which combines the redolence of its medieval quarters with the universal attraction of the annual running of the bulls during the fiestas of San Fermín; **Oviedo**, the capital of Asturias, which has rehabilitated and restored its Old Quarter to its former glory; **Logroño**, the capital of La Rioja, famed for its gourmet cuisine and wines; **León**, the erstwhile capital of the Kingdom of Castile & León, with its spectacular Gothic Cathedral and Romanesque and Renaissance churches; **Valladolid**, on the banks of the River Pisuerga, cultured and vigorous; **Burgos**, as steeped in the history of Castile as it is ennobled by the beauty of its Cathedral and monasteries.

In Spain's Levant region, surrounded by market gardens, **Murcia** greets the tourist with its 18th-century Baroque and Mediterranean prosperity, while **Granada**, at the foot of the Sierra Nevada range, surrounded by a prodigiously fertile plain, distils the very essence of Moorish culture in the sumptuous Alhambra Palace and Generalife Gardens.

The passage of time and the hand of Man have impregnated the cities of Spain with such beauty and character that it is necessary to walk them, exploring every nook and cranny to glimpse all the magic and charm which they possess in their infinite variety of skylines, silhouettes and contrasts.





# THE CLASSIC TRAVEL ROUTES

## THE PILGRIMS' WAY TO SANTIAGO

"The only pilgrim is he that travels to or from the house of Santiago".

**Dante Alighieri.**

The network of Jacobean pathways leading to **Santiago de Compostela**, acknowledged as the **First European Cultural Itinerary**, due to its role in the spread of cultural ideas and in establishing a common identity among the diverse peoples of Europe- was doubtless the first great route that brought voyagers from every part of the world through the northern reaches of Spain.

For the space of more than eight centuries, the cult engendered by the figure of the Apostle James (Santiago) has resulted in an endless flow of pilgrims. This flow becomes more intense in Jubilee years, and tends to have a spiritual element that surpasses and prevails over the wealth of experience afforded by a journey marked by the wide cultural variety of regions and districts passed en route, the hospitality of the local people and the long litany of impressions of scenery, events and anecdotes.

The overland route par excellence and, at the same time, the one that is best known, maintained and served, is the *French*



*Santiago de Compostela (Corunna). Cathedral, Obradoiro façade*

*Pilgrims' Way.* It enters Spain as two routes, via the passes of **Somport** and **Orreaga-Roncesvalles** in the Pyrenees, to come together as one at **Puente la Reina**. Traversing Navarre and La Rioja, the route takes in landmark points of the stature of **San Millán de la Cogolla** and **Santo Domingo de la Calzada** before reaching

venerable Church of St. Mary Royal and site of a popular pilgrimage excursion (*romería*) commemorating the miracle of the Holy Eucharist. The path takes the traveller to Santiago past a number of gorgeous abbeys (San Xulián de Samos, Vilar de Donas, Sobrado dos Monxes), pre-Romanesque and Romanesque churches and chapels (San Antolín de Yoques, San Pedro de Mélide, Santiago de Barbadele) and ancient roadside hostals where the original wayfarers once lodged (Palas de Rei, Leboeiro, Castañeda), till finally reaching Lavacolla and Monte do Gozo on the city outskirts. All that remains is to continue the last stage on foot and prostrate oneself before the Saintly relics in the Cathedral precincts.

The city of the Apostle is a city of sights, and the best thing is to explore its streets (known by the Galician term *rúa*, rather than by the standard Spanish word, *calle*), squares and hidden corners before succumbing to the delights of Galician cuisine and purchasing an example of the renowned local gold- and silverwork and/or handicrafts as a memento of one's stay. The main feast days are 24th and 25th July, in honour of the city's patron saint, Santiago.

Another interesting route offering monumental sights of note is the *Northern* (or Asturian) *Way*, which traverses the Basque Country, Cantabria and Asturias.



*León. St. Isidore's Basilica*

**Burgos**, with its monumental Gothic Cathedral and Las Huelgas Reales Convent.

Thereafter the trail meanders through the Palencian countryside with its treasure-trove of Romanesque remains (**Frómista**, Villalcázar de Sirga, **Carrión de los Condes**), past Sahagún and San Pedro de Dueñas, and on to **León** with its Cathedral, suffused with the radiance of its majestic stained-glass windows, and the Churches of St. Isidore and St. Mark, splendid examples of Romanesque and Plateresque, respectively.

Onwards now, through **Astorga** and the El Bierzo hill country, the Way winds into Galicia via **O Cebreiro**, home to the



## THE CLASSIC TRAVEL ROUTES



Gijón (Asturias). Marina

## THE SILVER ROUTE

The **Silver Route**, Roman in origin, was a traders', miners', cattle drovers' and military highway running from Gijón to Seville.



Seville. View of Itálica



Conceived from ancient times as a *Via Lata* or Wide Highway to link the regions lying in the west of the peninsula along a north-south axis, the Silver Route became important as an adjunct to the cattle trails (*Cañadas*) used by the guilds or associations of livestock breeders (*Mesta*) to drive their flocks and herds to the winter and summer pastures. The bedrock of cultural and commercial exchange, it received a boost with the appearance of the railway and is nowadays an attractive tourist route, both on the stretches paralleling the N-630 national and A-66 roads, and along their branches and byways, affording enjoyment of scenery of exceptional beauty and a marvellous tour of the sights that mark its passage through towns and cities.

Going from south to north, the starting point of the route is **Seville**, Andalusian city par excellence and *Hispalis* of yore. Thanks to its fusion of cultures and privileged geographical situation, Seville is one of Spain's gems, boasting sights such as the Cathedral and its landmark Giralda bell-tower (formerly the minaret of the long-vanished Great Mosque), the Lonja, with the Indies Archives and Royal Fortress (Alcázares Reales), plus charming old districts, like the Santa Cruz Quarter, the famous María Luisa Park, and Cartuja Island, site of the 1992 World Fair.

From Seville, past the ruins of Itálica, ancient city of the Roman Baetica (named after the River Baetis, later known as the Guadalquivir), the route takes one via **Zafra** and Almendralejo to **Mérida**, the so-called *Roma Hispánica*, on the banks of the Guadiana. Here, the Theatre, Amphitheatre and Roman Museum, all situated in the archaeological heart of the city, are the leading sights.

Continuing, one finds oneself bound for the walled city of **Cáceres** and its splendid 15th- and 16th-century Old Quarter, serenely beautiful in style. Still in the Cáceres region of Extremadura, **Plasencia**, with its superb Cathedral and medieval quarter is yet another important milestone en route, as is the

Jewish District (*judería*) of Hervás, whence one travels on to Castile and the town of **Béjar**, which possesses an important historical heritage in its ducal palace and 16th-century churches.

The route now leads to **Salamanca**, cradle of one of Europe's great universities. The old part of town has to be one of Spain's most outstanding treasures, with the Main Square (*Plaza Mayor*), Cathedral, House of Shells (*Casa de las Conchas*) and University being a "must".

Heading constantly northwards, the architectural feast on display in **Zamora** will again astound the traveller, particularly as regards the profusion of Romanesque churches and palatial medieval mansions. Fields of wheat and small lakes take one on to **Benavente** and thence to **Astorga**, capital of the Maragatos country (*Maragatos*: a people who settled these parts in bygone times), with its exquisite Cathedral and Episcopal Palace designed by Gaudí.

**León**, capital of the ancient kingdom of the same name, is home to three architectural masterpieces: St. Isidore's Basilica, prototype of the Romanesque Style; St. Mark's, once a pilgrims' hospital and now refurbished and refitted as a Tourist Parador, and the Cathedral, one of the world's prime examples of Gothic splendour. The city also has its typical old part and a tradition of fine food. Campomanes and **Pola de Lena** are the first Asturian outposts to greet the traveller before getting to Mieres and **Oviedo**, the capital of Asturias, endowed with a handsome Old Quarter, in which the Cathedral is the *pièce de résistance*. Journey's end is **Gijón**, with its typical streets, museums and close ties with the sea, which make it a favourite with tourists.

The Silver Route, throughout the length of its 800 kilometres, is a scenic, cultural, gourmet and essentially human itinerary, as rich in contrast and nuance as it is in history.



## THE CLASSIC TRAVEL ROUTES

## THE DON QUIXOTE ROUTE

Of the paths charted by literature, Spain's *Don Quixote* route is doubtless the one with most universal appeal.

**Don Quijote de la Mancha**, the immortal work by Cervantes, serves as the basis of and "excuse" for a delightful tour through the land of La Mancha, with its promise of windmills, castles built by the medieval Military Orders of Knights and the possibility of tasting the local fare.

Leaving Madrid by the A-42 highway in the direction of Toledo, turn off at the 35-kilometre mark or thereabouts to get to **Esquivias** and there visit the Cervantes house and museum. Returning to the main road, carry on to **Toledo**, the nation's capital in the Middle Ages and now an exquisite monumental showcase in which the Cathedral, churches, palaces, synagogues and mosques should on no account be missed.

After joining the N-401 national road, one travels on to **Ciudad Real** and, via the CM-412, to **Almagro**, which boasts a charming and unusual Main Square, churches, convents and monasteries of note, and the best conserved, still-functioning 16th-century theatre (*Corral de Comedias*) in Spain. Taking the N-420, one arrives in **Puerto Lápice**, an important point of reference in Cervantes' book, whence the same road leads to Herencia, Alcázar de San Juan, Campo de Criptana, **El Toboso**, Mota del Cuervo and **Belmonte**, all in the



Puerto Lápice (Ciudad Real).  
Venta Don Quijote



heartland of La Mancha, a world of country inns and windmills through which the gentle knight wandered on his quest for adventure.

This same road carries on to **Cuenca**, the enchanted city, a veritable prodigy of Nature and culture, whose Old Quarter is one of the most spectacular in Spain. Milestones marking the fictional adventures of Don Quixote do not end here but continue through the hills of Molina de Aragón to Zaragoza and Barcelona, which also provided the backdrop for some of our hero's escapades.

The traveller will discover Spain to have countless routes catering to individual tastes and interests. The mix of cultures and civilisations will take him/her down the **Al-Andalus**, **Sefarad** or **Castle** routes, where the nation's history will come alive. Among others, the **Wine**, **Art** (regardless of School or Style), **Traditional Architecture**, **Gourmet** and **Nature** routes are well publicised, and more specific up-to-date information can be found in tourist brochures and pamphlets.

Toledo. General view







## LOCAL CUISINE

One of Spain's greatest attractions is, without a shadow of doubt, its cuisine, which is one of the best in the world for both quality and variety. Accurately speaking, one cannot talk of a national cuisine but rather of a multiplicity of regional cuisines influenced in each case by the climate and local way of life. Spanish cuisine is distinguished by the traditional use of olive oil as the vegetable- and lard as the animal fat in the preparation of dishes, as well as the inclusion of a wide variety of fruit and vegetables introduced by Moorish culture, plus other ingredients, such as the potato and tomato imported from the New World.

Then again, the considerable development in Spanish cooking in recent years has also been due to the emergence of a clutch of first-class chefs who have successfully managed to reinterpret traditional dishes and recipes in tune with present times, endowing Spanish cuisine with a new dimension in presentation and flavour.

### Northern cuisine

The north is a wet and rainy region which makes for a cuisine that is not only very tasty but varied as to both meat and fish. The **Basque Country** leans towards seasonally-biased home-type cooking, with local specialties like *marmitako* (potatoes with bonito) and *txangurro* (spider crab).

**Asturias** has a similar cuisine, though with local touches worthy of mention, such as the *fabada* (stew of haricot beans and pork), the regional cheeses and famed apple cider. **Cantabria** offers diversity in a cuisine that blends sea and mountain, with top-quality ingredients, including beef, anchovies and dairy products. Among the choice dishes of **Galicia** are the *pote* (potage made with ham bones, haricot beans and, depending on the chef, turnip tops), the *caldeiradas* (akin to bouillabaisse, but served in two parts: first the broth and only then, the fish), *pulpo* (octopus), dairy products and pastries.

Varied and delicious are the terms that define a cuisine that is simple, hearty and natural, that relies on the excellence of the local produce, and that is to be found in **Aragon**, **La Rioja** and **Navarre**. The fertile valleys across this belt of Spain are a paradise for fruit and vegetables, and the locally-grown asparagus, peppers, borage, *cardos* (cardoon - a celery-like vegetable), peaches and pears enjoy well-deserved fame for their superb quality. Potatoes, cabbage hearts and platters of mixed

vegetables or tender legumes, such as *pochas* (haricot beans allowed to ripen and swell in the pod) are starters or form the garnishing for dishes featuring trout from the nearby mountain streams and speciality meat marinades (*chilindrones*) and conserves (*confits*), a taste acquired from the French. Desserts, in which the stars are cheese, milk puddings (*cujada* - curd) or fruit, either fresh, chocolate-coated or preserved in syrup, and a long tradition of fine breads, put the finishing touches to a highly-regarded cuisine.

### Mediterranean cuisine

The Mediterranean cuisine, associated with the famous Mediterranean diet that has been shown to be so beneficial for the health, is based on the "Holy Trinity" of wheat, the olive and the vine, with other important ingredients being: rice and legumes; garlic, greens and vegetables; cheese and yoghurt; fish, meat and eggs; and fruit. This is a school of cuisine which is as varied as it is complete, and which, in the Mediterranean areas of Spain, is interpreted with local differences and twists.

Ever since the Middle Ages, **Catalonia** has enjoyed a delicious and refined cuisine embracing plain, sea and mountain, a cuisine which on the coast has recourse to a wide array of fish, and inland, to typical dishes such as *escudella* (a meaty broth with pasta, usually followed by *carn d'olla*, a hearty stew) and roasts.

Great individuality and contrast likewise mark the **Valencian cuisine**, which combines typically Mediterranean dishes - fish, green vegetables and fruit- with those of the upland plateau, such as potages and game stews, and which assigns rice, served dry, moist or in *paella*, the leading role in an endless list of specialties. Sweetmeats, nougats (*turrón*) and ice creams keep the Arabic influence very much alive. **Murcia** too displays this same character, namely, a cuisine of the sea and of the land, shaped by the merging of cultures.

Besides the fluffy pastries known as *ensaimadas* and the original and now world-famous mayonnaise (*salsa mahonesa*), **Balearic Isle** specialties rely on greens, fish (*caldereta* - seafood stew) and pork (*sobrasada* - a spicy red sausage spread).

### Meseta cuisine

The cuisine on the Central Plateau is the product of a harsh climate that is unforgiving and demands hard and continuous toil. In **Castile & León** the

cooking is based on legumes: haricot beans (La Bañeza, El Barco), chickpeas (Fuentesaúco) and lentils (La Armuña). Pork which, in the case of the Iberian pig reared on acorns and chestnuts, attains a peak of quality and flavour, and game are also basic to the typical regional specialties (*botillo*, the mountain sausage from León, savoury bloodsausage or *morcilla* from Burgos, and the red Segovian sausage known as *cantimpalo*). Baby lamb, kid and sucking pig -deliciously roasted- are the star dishes, fish comes in the form of trout and cod, and there is a great variety of local cheeses made from goat's, ewe's or cow's milk. Sweets and pastries, such as *yemas* (meltingly soft sweetmeats made from egg-yolk) and *hojaldres* (puff pastry), are in the most refined traditions of Arabic cuisine.

These same characteristics are also to be found in **Extremadura**, in a range of dishes and foodstuffs in which Iberian ham and pork reigns supreme. There are *calderetas* (stews) and *cochifritos* (lamb seasoned, garnished and casserole in an earthenware dish), cold *escabeches* (marinades), wild vegetables (mushrooms, cardoons, leeks) and a wide choice of handmade cheeses to be had at the hearthsides of famous monasteries and convents (Guadalupe, Yuste) or in typical local eating houses.

The cuisine recreated in the story of Don Quixote of stockpot, *salpicón* (salmagundi) and *duelos y quebrantos* (a cattle-drover's and shepherds' dish, traditionally associated with St. Peter's Day rivalry, consisting of a fry of eggs, bacon and brains, thought to be good by Sancho



Madrid.  
Tavern





## LOCAL CUISINE



Haro (La Rioja). Wine cellars

Panza and eaten by Don Quixote on Saturdays) serves to bring us to **Castile-La Mancha**, with its saffron, La Alcarria honey and Manchego (ewe's milk) cheese. A country cuisine which in its *gazpachos* (not the better-known Andalusian gazpacho but a shepherd's *torta*, a rough-and-ready dough made from flour, salt and water, eaten with game meat) and *morteruelos* (chopped pig's liver braised with seasoning and breadcrumbs) retains the flavour of the old sheep-herding ways, and in its roasts (lamb, kid), the mouthwatering aroma of the hill country, rewarding the sweet-toothed with the ultimate delight of the exquisite Moorish-inspired marzipan of Toledo. Like an island, **Madrid** contributes with the singularity of some of its typical dishes, such as *cocido madrileño* (a hearty stew for those with big appetites, where the broth is served first, followed by the soup-meat, chick-peas, potatoes and greens), cod and *callos* (tripe). The sticky *torrijas* (sweet fritters), desserts and sweetmeats are yet further local specialties.

forged its culinary heritage. In tune with the local surroundings, one finds a cuisine of market-garden and field, a cuisine of country-style winter stews, and a Mediterranean cuisine along the coast. In addition, there is the region's fine line in confectionery and pastry, again an Arabic legacy, and a variety of dishes based on pork and ham, epitomised in the ritual, colourful climax of the *matanza* (an annual event, often in late autumn, when families gather to help in the slaughter and butchering of a pig or two). The various *gazpachos* (cold Andalusian soup of diced tomatoes, cucumber and green peppers in olive oil, vinegar and garlic, usually served with a sprinkling of croutons) and soups, *frituras* (servings of small fried fish) and stews are just some of the individual items in a school of cooking that boasts a long and well-established cultural tradition.

The **Canary Islands** enjoy a very personal cuisine, with *gofio* (a local ball-shaped bread with flour made from toasted cereals), legumes, tropical fruits and the famous *mojos* (hot sauces spiced with paprika and coriander) being just a few of the local attractions

years production has spread to other areas, such as Castile.

Today *beer* is an increasingly popular drink in Spain, especially as an aperitif to accompany the popular *tapa*-style snacks in bars. Spanish beer is of the light-coloured lager type, pleasant on the palate and usually served ice-cold.

In Spain *spirits and liqueurs* also have their local counterparts worthy of mention. Brandy is fundamentally produced in Andalusia, whilst *aguardientes* (natural alcohols, 80%-strength maximum) and *orujo*s (fiery spirit distilled from grape skins and pips) hail from all parts of the country, inspiring the celebrated Galician *queimadas* (speciality made by setting *aguardiente* alight in a china- or earthenware bowl, in some cases with the prior addition of roasted coffee beans) as well as other different varieties of all kinds (dry, herb-, cherry- and honey-laced). Anisette (*anís*), *pacharán de endrinas* (bilberry liqueur) from Navarre and schnappes-like fruit liqueurs are the most popular drinks with the public.

## EATING OUT IN SPAIN

Eating out in Spain is one of life's most enjoyable daily rites. The sheer variety and range of the cuisine and Spaniards' weakness for good food, make it a simple task, whether in the big city or in some small country village, to find a place where one can have a good meal. Ranging from traditional home cooking all the way up to famous five-star restaurants (maximum rating on a scale of one to five), travellers will have no difficulty in finding best value for money in terms of personal tastes and preferences.

Meal times tend to be approximately one and a half hours behind the European average, though the range of restaurant opening times is so generous that individuals will find it possible to more or less keep to their customary eating habits. A menu listing the prices is usually displayed at the entrance to restaurants, which also usually offer a daily set menu at a somewhat reduced and/or fixed price.

Service is included in the price shown, yet it is usual (though not obligatory) to leave 5%-10% of the bill by way of a tip. Most restaurants tend to close one day in the week (Sunday or Monday), but there is any number of establishments open 7 days a week where one can have a bite at any time.



Badajoz. Market garden produce

## Southern cuisine

Southern or **Andalusian** cooking takes its inspiration from the crucible of cultures that together

As an element, wine is a fundamental to each and every one of Spain's regional cuisines. The Romans introduced the art of viticulture, thereby making Spain into one of the world's leading producers of wine. Spanish wine has earned itself a well-deserved reputation for quality, an aspect that, nowadays, is subject to stringent controls and official demarcations (up to sixty different wine-making districts).

Among these, mention must be made of the *Rioja* wines, which, on the merit of their bouquet, taste and body, have won international acclaim. Other highly-prized seals of origin are *Ribera del Duero*, *Penedès*, *Somontano* and *La Mancha*, all of which have recently witnessed great advances in the quality of their wines. Sherry (*vino de Jerez*) is a fortified Andalusian wine which enjoys great international prestige, particularly in Anglo-Saxon countries, and comes in a range of varieties to suit different tastes, e.g., *fino* (dry and light, usually drunk chilled), *manzanilla* (a pale, dry *finá* from Sanlúcar de Barrameda), *amontillado* (amber-coloured full dry or semi-dry), *dulce* (sweet) and *oloroso* (dark, full-bodied). *Cava*, Spain's sparkling wine made by the champagne method, is mainly bottled in the Penedès region of Catalonia, though in recent



Paella





# SPORTS

**T**he mildness of the climate, the more than 7,000 kilometres of coastline and the country's mountainous backbone make Spain the ideal venue for sports of all kinds.

## WATER SPORTS

Water sports have always been traditionally popular in Spain: sailing, especially in the Mediterranean; angling; scuba-diving; and windsurfing, with Tarifa, a legend in its own right. Over one hundred yacht clubs and marinas are scattered around the country. Spanish Sailing Federation - *Federación Española de Vela*. ☎ 915 195 008 [www.rfev.es](http://www.rfev.es)

Tunny fish and shark in Atlantic waters are two attractions beckoning the deep-sea fisherman, whereas the river and lake angler can look forward to salmon, trout, barbel and other species.

The Medes Isles in Catalonia, along with inshore areas around the coasts of the Balearics and Canaries, are a real paradise for scuba-diving, a sport which in Spain enjoys ideal conditions insofar as clarity of light and water temperature are concerned.

## OUTDOOR SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES

Nature, in all its changing faces, favours sports such as hiking, amidst natural surroundings of great beauty, with pony- and horse-trekking, closely tied in with traditional culture, and cycling, particularly mountain-biking, becoming ever more widespread. Spanish Mountain Club - *Federación Española de Montañismo* ☎ 934 264 267 [www.fedme.es](http://www.fedme.es)

Rock-climbing, whitewater rafting and canoeing are yet more fascinating adventure sports, a category which necessarily includes aerial sports, with over 50 flying clubs around Spain. In addition, ultralight aircraft can be flown and both para- and hang-gliding enjoyed under equally favourable conditions, depending on local climate and topography. For information kindly contact the Spanish Aeronautical Federation - *Federación Española de Aeronáutica* ☎ 915 475 922 [www.rfae.org](http://www.rfae.org)

## Hunting

From Autumn to Spring, Spain's mountains and hunting reserves fill with hunters eager to bag chamois, red and roe deer, moufflon, ibex and wild boar among the prizes in the bigger game category (*caza mayor*) and rabbit, partridge, duck, egret, woodcock and quail among other species of smaller game (*caza menor*). Spanish Hunting Federation - *Federación Española de Caza* ☎ 913 111 411. [www.fecaza.com](http://www.fecaza.com)

In view of the size, extent and importance of the facilities available for their enjoyment, golf, tennis and skiing will be dealt with separately:

## Golf

Around 200 clubs, the vast majority provided with 18-hole courses, are a sure guarantee of round-the-year golf and represent the possibility of over half a million hours of total playing time per year. Modern course-landscaping and -design, with the promise of varied layout and the pleasure of superb scenery, topflight sports equipment, expert course-professionals and ancillary services (gyms, swimming pool, saunas, etc.), taken together with the warmth of a climate that ensures the visitor 300 days of sunshine and golf a year, make

Spain a Garden of Eden for the keen golfer. Spanish Golf Federation - *Federación Española de Golf* ☎ 915 552 682. [www.golfspainfederacion.com](http://www.golfspainfederacion.com)

## Tennis

Hundreds of clubs and tennis courts in the thousands are dotted around the country. Clay courts, in which the Spanish specialise, offer the chance of playing on a surface which has taken Spanish players into the ranks of the world tennis elite. On the premises of almost all hotels of certain standing, the tourist is sure to find one or more courts for hire, as well as tennis coaches and even invitation tournaments for guests. Spanish. Tennis Federation - *Federación Española de Tenis*. ☎ 932 005 355. [www.rfet.es](http://www.rfet.es)

## Skiing

From the Pyrenees in the north down to the Sierra Nevada Range in Andalusia, Spain's ski resorts cover the country, with top quality installations and hotel and leisure facilities to match. A wide spectrum of packages and rates accounts for the unprecedented boom in this sport in recent years. Spanish Wintersports Federation - *Federación Española de Deportes de Invierno* ☎ 913 769 930 [www.rfedi.es](http://www.rfedi.es)

## COMPETITIVE SPORT

Keen interest surrounds competitive sport in Spain. Football, basketball and handball clubs and championships rank among the best in Europe, and volleyball, waterpolo, hockey, swimming and athletics are not lagging far behind. Spain has been chosen as the venue for sports events of world relevance.







# FESTIVALS & FOLKLORE

**S**plendour, gaiety and the imagination of the nation as a whole are the basic features of the Spanish fiesta. The year's festive highlights turn the public into active participants and passive spectators who are nevertheless aware of being both things at once.

Fiestas, a phenomenon that gives expression to a peculiarly Spanish vitality, take place almost uninterruptedly in different places and at different times of the year, so that the traveller will always find an occasion to witness one of these magical, spectacular happenings that alter the daily routine of Spanish society.

## Carnival

In February, masks, clowns, *gigantes* (giant pasteboard figures), grotesques and devils are the central characters in Spain's first festivity of the year. The carnival in Lanz (Navarre) with its mythological figures (*Ziripot* and *Zaldico*) speaks of a thousand-year-old tradition, as does the fiesta in Villanueva de la Vera (Cáceres) with the burning of the effigy of *Pero-Palo*. The carnival assumes an air of satire and buffoonery in Cadiz, with its *charangas* (bands of street musicians) and explodes into a spectacle of dance and fireworks in Tenerife and Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, which rival each other in and beauty.

**Fire and gunpowder** take centre stage in March. Valencia celebrates its traditional *fallas* (from the Latin "facula" or "fax", meaning torch) during the week leading up to St. Joseph's Day, bringing to the fore all the ingenuity, hullabaloo and passion which this universally famous celebration implies, in the

Almonte (Huelva). El Rocío pilgrimage



Pamplona. Fiesta of San Fermin

climactic burning of the *ninots*, the satirical papier mâché effigies.

## Religious feasts

Holy Week is the religious feast par excellence, in which tradition is timeless and unshakeable. The Easter processions of the *cofradías* (guilds or brotherhoods) and the sublime beauty of the floats or *pasos* assume special relevance in places like Seville, Valladolid, Zamora, Murcia, Malaga and Cuenca.

## Traditional fiestas and pilgrimage excursions

Spring brings an explosion of light and brilliance in festivities like the Murcia fiestas and the classically Andalusian April Fair in Seville, a week given over to the local colour of the city's folklore and to unrestrained expression of joy and happiness. Equally spectacular and colourful is the celebration of the *Moors and Christians* fiesta, to be seen at its most sumptuous and authentic in the town of Alcoy, in Spain's Levant region.

Pilgrimage excursions (*romerías*) or country fiestas are found by the score across the length and breadth of Spain. There are those with a long tradition, such as *La Caballada* of Atienza (Guadalajara) and *A rapa das bestas* (the rounding-up and trimming of manes of wild stallions) in the La Groba hill country (Galicia), yet the *romería* that is without rival for noisy popular fervour and beauty is the *Rocío* in Almonte (Huelva) in honour of the Virgin Mary.

Another religious feast of consequence is the celebration of Corpus Christi in Toledo, where the solemn splendour of the procession is movingly accompanied by

the ancient guilds. Impressive Corpus Christi celebrations are also held in Granada, Camuñas (Toledo) and Berga (Barcelona).

## The rites of summer

St. John's Day in June brings the typical night-time festivities, known as the *paso del fuego* (leaping over or running a gauntlet of flames), which takes place in San Pedro Manrique (Soria), and the famed exhibition of horsemanship, *Caragols*, in the Menorcan town of Ciutadella.

July is, above all, the month of the Sanfermines in Pamplona. The city's famous running of the bulls (*encierros*) and the public's mass participation is an image which has gone round the world. Fairs and pilgrimages, such as that of Ribarteme in Galicia and its *resucitados de Santa Marta* or the Asturian *boda vaqueira*, underscore the profusion of fiestas in Spain rooted in the rites of harvest.

Elche, in the south of the Province of Alicante, provides the setting for yet another well-known fiesta in Spain, the *Misteri d'Elx* (Elche Mystery Play), which is staged in August and re-enacts the Assumption of the Virgin Mary.

## Major fiestas and folklore

Another typical feature of life in Spain are the *Fiestas Mayores* held in La Alberca (Salamanca), Vejer de la Frontera (Cadiz), Toro (Zamora), Ondarroa (Vizcaya), Logroño, and a host of other towns and villages, from August to October.

Christmas signals a close to the yearly festive cycle and in Spain is given a distinctive touch with the traditional display of nativity scenes and processions to mark Epiphany (popularly called *Reyes Magos* in Spain, in honour of the three Magi, it is the day when gifts are exchanged in preference and, increasingly, in addition to Christmas Day).

*Folklore* is the expression of the most cherished and deeply felt emotions and folk wisdom of the Spanish people. Almost all the different regions possess a rich store of dance and song which serves as inspiration for many a public performance. Among the best-known examples of Spanish folk-dances are the Galician *muiñeira*, the Aragonese and Valencian *jotas*, the Catalan *sardana*, the Basque *zortziko* and the Andalusian *sevillanas*.





# FESTIVALS & CONCERTS TRADE FAIRS AND CONVENTIONS



*Spanish Radio and Television Orchestra and Choir*

## FESTIVALS & CONCERTS

In Spain, the festival calendar which covers a range of performing arts (music and dance, film and theatre) has much to offer. The names of leading artists and soloists of international standing, orchestras of the first order, actors of all types and kinds, fill the pages of the programme of entertainment with which Spain greets its visitors year after year.

### Music and dance festivals

There are a number of musical events which rightly deserve top international ranking, namely: the symphony concert season in Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Palma, Alicante, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria and Santa Cruz de Tenerife; and the well-established Granada and Santander Festivals. Opera performances in Madrid, Barcelona, Seville, Bilbao and Oviedo figure prominently among appearances made by the world's most eminent singers and conductors.

The outstanding events on the dance calendar are the performances given by the National Ballet during the Madrid season (Autumn Festival), and the International Music and Dance Festivals of Granada and Santander.

Within its genre, the Cuenca International Religious Music Week occupies a truly special place.

As far as jazz is concerned, it should perhaps just be recalled here that international recognition has long

been accorded to the Vitoria-Gasteiz, Donostia-San Sebastián, Madrid and Barcelona Jazz Festivals.

### Film and theatre festivals

This type of event is of singular importance, not only as regards the opportunity afforded to judge the films being screened, but also as a form of granting official recognition to the professional work of actors, actresses, directors and the like. Hence the interest with which the international movie industry views the San Sebastián International Film Festival, the Valladolid International Film Week (Seminci), the Sci-Fi and Horror Film Festival (*Cine Fantástico*) in Sitges (Barcelona), Gijón's Semana Negra (Black Week), a literary-cultural event celebrating the genre of crime fiction, and the Festivals held in Huelva, Cadiz, etc.

As for theatre, apart from the normal season's programme of activities, special interest lies in the cycles of drama given in Barcelona (GREC Summer Festival), Mérida (Classical Theatre Festival), Almagro (International Classical Theatre Festival), Cadiz (Ibero-American Theatre Festival) and Madrid (Madrid Regional Autumn Festival).

## TRADE FAIRS AND CONVENTIONS

Spain is one of the most popular international trade-fair and convention venues.

**Madrid** and **Barcelona** are the leading cities in this field and have purpose-built Exhibition Grounds and Conference Centres equipped with excellent facilities and operating capabilities. Madrid has three leading sites: the Madrid Conference Centre; the Casa de Campo Exhibition Grounds; and, above all, the facilities at the Parque Juan Carlos I, with its Exhibition Grounds and Municipal Conference Centre, where, among



*Valencia. Concert Hall*

others, the International Tourist Industry Trade Fair (FITUR) is held every January, the second most important trade fair of its kind in the world: Exhibition Grounds - *Parque Ferial*. ☎ 902 221 515.

In the case of Barcelona, the Montjuïc Exhibition Grounds and Barcelona Conference Centre are the city's chief venues for this type of activity. ☎ 902 233 200.

Other cities actively involved in this sector are: **Torremolinos (Malaga)**, with its Costa del Sol Conference Centre and Exhibition Grounds; **Cordoba, Murcia, Palma, Seville** and **Zaragoza** where the respective Conference Centres and Exhibition Grounds are permanently in operation; **Granada**, where the Manuel de Falla Conference Centre incorporates a notable cultural element.

All these cities have grouped together under the "Spain Convention Bureau" logo, in order to better co-ordinate their activities and jointly market their services abroad. [www.scb.es](http://www.scb.es)

Further cities with local infrastructures suitable for the holding of such events are Alicante, Benidorm, Bilbao, A Coruña (Corunna), Salamanca, Santander, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Tenerife and Vigo.

*Madrid. Convention and Conference Centre. Mural by Miró*







# HANDICRAFTS AND FASHION

**T**radition and creativity come together to give Spanish products a seal of quality acknowledged and respected the world over.

**Handicrafts.** Thanks to the prestige acquired over centuries and the variety in their design, handicrafts have become a feature of almost all Spain's different regions. Pottery and ceramicware from, among other places, Talavera de la Reina, Puente del Arzobispo (Province of Toledo) and Sargadelos (Galicia) enjoy international repute, as do the items produced by the Manises school (Valencia), famed for its exclusive creations. Ceramic tiles from Castellón de la Plana, Toledo, Seville, Granada and Valencia have earned well-deserved fame ever since the Middle Ages.

**Leather and leatherware** is another line enjoying international prestige. Tooled leather or cordovan, sometimes gilded to enhance its beauty, has been worked in Cordoba for hundreds of years. Leather apparel, footwear, bags, cases and accessories are marketed in the very latest designs. Andalusia and the Levant are the main regions specialising in this trade.

Thanks to the high profile of Spanish designers, **fashion** has been the sector to register the sharpest upswing and



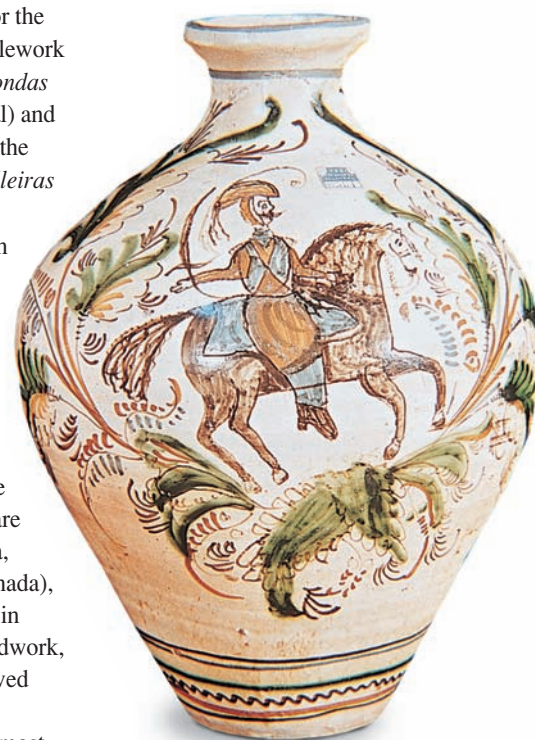
Wood carver

score the most resounding international success. Fashion shows such as the Gaudí in Barcelona and Cibeles –*pasarela* Cibeles, literally catwalk or parade– in Madrid, are a showcase for the season's collections created by Spain's top fashion-designers. Styles, such as the Ibiza or Mediterranean look, have also proved very popular across the whole prêt-à-porter sector. In contrast, the art of ornate embroidery, a legacy left by the Moriscos (Moorish converts, sometimes known as Spanish Moors), is the precursor of and reason for the enormous value put on the needlework from Lagartera (Toledo), the *blondas* lace from Almagro (Ciudad Real) and the *puntillas* lacework made by the incredibly nimble-fingered *palilleiras* (lace-workers) of Camariñas (Galicia), as well as other artisan arts and crafts.

Other noble materials, such as **glass** and **wood**, also occupy a privileged position. The glassworks in La Granja (Segovia) continues to manufacture superb items of the finest crystal, while the glassware from Cadalso (Madrid), Cuenca, Orense, Castril and María (Granada), and Mataró (Barcelona) is held in high esteem by collectors. Woodwork, whether in the form of handcarved religious images or pieces of furniture, ranks among Spain's most

outstanding products, with major production centres located on the Levant coast, in Castile and in the north. Other handicrafts include **damascene** (metal inlaid with gold thread) from Toledo, a painstaking labour carried out using age-old engraving techniques, and the steel industry (Albacete, Toledo) which produces weaponry, swords and knives, of international renown.

Talavera de la Reina (Toledo).  
Ceramicware



Leather handicrafts





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Puerta de Bisagra  
☎ 925 220 843 ☎ 925 252 648

**CATALONIA**  
Tourist information 934 849 900  
[www.gencat.net/turisme](http://www.gencat.net/turisme)

**08008 - BARCELONA**  
Palau Robert. Paseo de Gracia, 107  
☎ 932 388 091 ☎ 932 384 010

**08020 - BARCELONA**  
El Prat Airport  
Terminal A: ☎ 934 784 704  
Terminal B: ☎ 934 780 565  
☎ 934 784 736

**17004 - GIRONA**  
Rambla de la Libertad, 1  
☎ 972 226 575 ☎ 972 226 612

**25007 - LLEIDA**  
Mayor, 31 Bis  
☎ 973 700 319 ☎ 973 248 120

**43001 - TARRAGONA**  
Fortuny, 4  
☎ 977 233 415 ☎ 977 244 702

**28001 - MADRID - Oficina de Turismo de la Generalitat**  
(Catalonian Regional Tourist Board)  
Serrano, 1. Librería Blanquema  
☎ 915 241 000 ☎ 915 763 723

**CEUTA**  
Tourist information  
[www.ceuta.es](http://www.ceuta.es)

**51001 - CEUTA**  
Edrissi Edificio Baluarte de los Mallorquines  
☎ 856 200 560 ☎ 856 200 565

**EXTREMADURA**  
Tourist information 924 008 373  
[www.turismoextremadura.com](http://www.turismoextremadura.com)

**06005 - BADAJOZ**  
Plaza de la Libertad, 3  
☎ 924 013 659 ☎ 924 013 658

**10003 - CÁCERES**  
Plaza Mayor, 3  
☎ 927 010 834 ☎ 927 010 835

**GALICIA**  
Tourist information 902 200 432  
[www.turgalicia.es](http://www.turgalicia.es)

**15001 - A CORUÑA (CORUNNA)**  
Dársena de La Marina  
☎ 981 221 822 ☎ 981 221 822

**15403 - FERROL (A Coruña)**  
Plaza Camilo José Cela  
Edificio Xunta de Galicia, 1ª Planta  
☎ 981 311 179 ☎ 981 337 013

**27001 - LUGO**  
Miño, 10-12  
☎ / ☎ 982 231 361

**32003 - OURENSE**  
Casa do Legoeiro. Ponte Romana  
☎ 988 372 020 ☎ 988 214 976

**36001 - PONTEVEDRA**  
General Gutiérrez Mellado, 1 B  
☎ 986 850 814 ☎ 986 848 123

**15705 - SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA (A Coruña)**  
Rúa del Vilar, 30-32  
☎ 981 584 081 ☎ 981 565 178

**36201 - VIGO (Pontevedra)**  
Cánovas del Castillo, 22  
☎ 986 430 577 ☎ 986 430 080

**28014 - MADRID - Oficina de Turismo de la Xunta De Galicia**  
(Galician Regional Tourist Board)  
Casado del Alisal, 8  
☎ 915 954 214 ☎ 915 954 268

**MADRID**  
Tourist information 902 100 007  
[www.turismomadrid.es](http://www.turismomadrid.es)

**28014 - MADRID**  
Duque de Medinaceli, 2  
☎ 914 294 951 ☎ 914 293 705

**28045 - MADRID**  
Estación de Atocha. Vestíbulo de Cercanías  
☎ 915 284 630 ☎ 915 307 955

**28042 - MADRID**  
Barajas Airport  
Terminal 1. International Arrivals  
☎ 913 058 656 ☎ 913 054 195

**28036 - MADRID**  
Chamartín Railway Station  
Vestíbulo Puerta 14  
☎ 913 159 976

**MELILLA**  
[www.melillaturismo.com](http://www.melillaturismo.com)

**52004 - MELILLA**  
Calle Fortuny, 21  
☎ 952 675 444 ☎ 952 269 123

**MURCIA**  
Tourist information 902 101 070  
[www.murciaturistica.es](http://www.murciaturistica.es)

**30001 - MURCIA**  
Plaza Julián Romea, 4  
☎ 968 277 675 - 968 277 742

**NAVARRRE**  
[www.turismonavarra.es](http://www.turismonavarra.es)

**31001 - PAMPLONA**  
Eslava, 1  
☎ 848 420 420 ☎ 848 424 630

**LA RIOJA**  
Tourist information 941 291 260  
[www.lariojaturismo.com](http://www.lariojaturismo.com)

**26071 - LOGROÑO**  
Paseo del Espolón  
Príncipe de Vergara, 1  
☎ 941 291 260 ☎ 941 291 640

**28001 - MADRID. Oficina de Turismo - Centro Riojano**  
Serrano, 25 - 1ª  
☎ 915 764 852 ☎ 915 781 660

**VALENCIAN REGION**  
Tourist information 902 123 212  
[www.comunitatvalenciana.com/turisme](http://www.comunitatvalenciana.com/turisme)

**03002 - ALICANTE**  
Rambla de Méndez Núñez, 23  
☎ 965 200 000 ☎ 965 200 243

**12100 - CASTELLÓN DE LA PLANA**  
Muelle Serrano Lloveras  
Grao de Castellón  
☎ 964 069 333 ☎ 964 069 335

**46003 - VALENCIA**  
Calle de la Paz, 48  
☎ 963 986 422 ☎ 963 986 421

**28010 - MADRID Generalitat Valenciana. Oficina en Madrid (Valencian Regional Authority - Madrid Office)**  
Calle España, 25  
☎ 917 022 290 ☎ 917 022 285

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INFORMATION

TURESPAÑA  
[www.spain.info](http://www.spain.info)



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