

Country Information

SPAIN

[About the country](#)

Name of the country: Spain

Area: 505,984 sq km

Population: 46 million

Capital: Madrid (5.3 million inhabitants)

Government: Parliamentary monarchy since 1978.

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

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

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

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

Money

Currency: Euro (EUR; symbol €) = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of €500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins are in denominations of €2 and 1, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 cents.

[Exchange Rates:](#)

Currency Exchange Rates*			
€1.00 =	US\$ 1.34293	£ 0.870827	CHF 1.43282

* Date's rate: 21 April 2010

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

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

International travel

International airports

Spain boasts over 30 international airports (www.aena.es)

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

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

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

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

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

Passport/Visas

Spain is a signatory to the 1995 Schengen Agreement. The Schengen visa is requested for non EEA members and valid within the 25 following European countries: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. A Schengen visa issued by an Embassy or Consulate of the above countries allows the holder to travel freely in all of these countries.

To view Visa requirements for a different country visit the following website: www.visahq.com

Health & Safety

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

Climate

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

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

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

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

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

Communications

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

Useful links

- [Visa and Passport Information](#)
- [Spanish Tourist Office](#)
- [World Travel Guide](#)

For information regarding the venue and the accommodation, please refer to the [IB Professional Development Calendar](#)