

Espania

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This is an article about the european country of Spain. It summarizes its history, touches on the daily life of citizens, geography, exports culture and government.



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## Spain

### Geography

Spain is located in western Europe, on the Iberian Peninsula. Its borders are Portugal, France, Andorra, The Bay of Biscay and the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. Spain has acquired territories including the Canary Islands, Balearic Islands, Alboran Island, Ceuta, Melilla, Chafarinas Islands, and Alhucemas Islands and Perejil. It has an area of 195,365 square feet and is the fourth largest country in Europe. Northern Spain is generally mountainous and more wet, while the south is flat more dry. Some of its major rivers are the Guadiana, Tajo, Duero and the Ebro.

### Government

Spain is a democratic monarchy. Today, Mariano Rajoy is their president. There are two other branches of government, the congress and the senate.

### History

During its **pre-historic ages**, the Iberos ruled the center of the country while the Celtics ruled the north. Then came to Fenicians, the Greek and finally the Romans. This was the time when writing began. The Romans contributed a great deal. They contributed Latin language, religion, and legislature.

The Visigodos were the next people whom invaded in the year of 400. They brought the monarchy to Spain. These were German people, who brought the idea of the aristocratic hierarchy.

About 300 years later, the Arabs came from north Africa. They brought another religion to the peninsula, Islam. Until 1492, there were both times of peaceful and violent co-existence between the two religions.

Much contribution of architecture came from these cultures that still exists today. In the north of Spain, one will find Cathedrals and churches built by the Christians. Towards the south, you will find Mosques of the Arabs.

The next era is called **La Reconquista**. In 1492, the Christians ordered that the Arabs and Jews convert to Christianity or leave the country. When their king died without kids, the French and Spanish fought in the War of Succession for the Spanish crown. In 1701 ended in 1704 with the beginning of Bourbon (French) rule.

Following, the **first republic** was named in the 1870s. It lasted only 22 months. In **1875, Alfonso XII** was named king. During the brief Spanish American War, Spain lost its territories of Cuba, Puerto Rico and the

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Philippines to the US in 1898.

**Alfonzo XIII** ruled next. The second republic was born April 14th, 1931 and lasted five years, much longer than the first republic. Two sides emerged from this political change, eventually resulting in a civil war in July of 1936 which lasted three years. This was the same time that **Franco**, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces took over.

The following forty years were lead by Franco as a dictatorship. With the death of the dictator in 1975, came the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy in the name of **Carlos I.**

Carlos, although young, was motivated to transform Spain to western-style democracy. At his side, was **Adolfo Suarez**, prime minister of the second Monarchy Government. The first democratic parliamentary elections were held on June 15th, 1977.

In **the early eighties**, Galicia, Basque Country, Andalucia and Catalonia approved statutes for their own self-government. In January of 1981, Suarez resigned and **Leopoldo Calvo-Sotelo** took over.

This leader presented to the king dissolution of parliament and the calling of a general election to be held on October 28th. In this election, members of The Union of the Democratic Centre lost. The Spanish Socialist Worker Party won. Their leader was **Felipe Gonzalez** who consequentially took on the role of the new Prime Minister.

Victory of the next three elections of 1986, 1989 and 1993 also fell to the Socialists. In 1992, Spain became part of the European Economic Union. It was also the year of the Expo92 at Sevilla. In the same year, Spain developed its first high speed rail line. One of the country's major cities, Barcelona, held the olympics that year. Later, in 2002 Spain adapted its currency from the Peseta to the Euro. Although Spain is suffering problems of unemployment and a poor economy today, it has moved far from its democratic past into a well-respected country of Europe.

### Daily Life of Citizens

Life in Spain differs from life in other cultures. It is incredibly diverse. There are three official languages. These include Spanish, Catalan, Basque and Gallego.

People spend most of their time outside of their homes. A typical night out on the town lasts until the small hours of the morning. The most common type of recreational activity is playing soccer. They mostly socialize at restaurants and bars.

Food is very important in their culture. There are no drive-through services at restaurants. Their diet is based on olive oil, fish, fresh fruits, vegetables and even wine. This is also known as the Mediterranean diet. They eat dinner around nine.

### Exports

Spain imports machinery, motorvehicles, foodstuffs, pharmaceuticals, medicines and other consumer goods. Their customers, in order from biggest to least, are France, Germany, Portugal, Italy and the UK.

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### Culture

Spain has many different cultures rooted into its soil. The Romans contributed a great deal to today's culture. They contributed Latin language, religion, and legislation. Later the Arabs came from north Africa. They brought another religion to the peninsula, Islam. Much contribution of architecture came from these cultures that still exists today. In the north of Spain, one will find Cathedrals and churches built by the Christians. Towards the south, you will find Mosques of the Arabs.

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