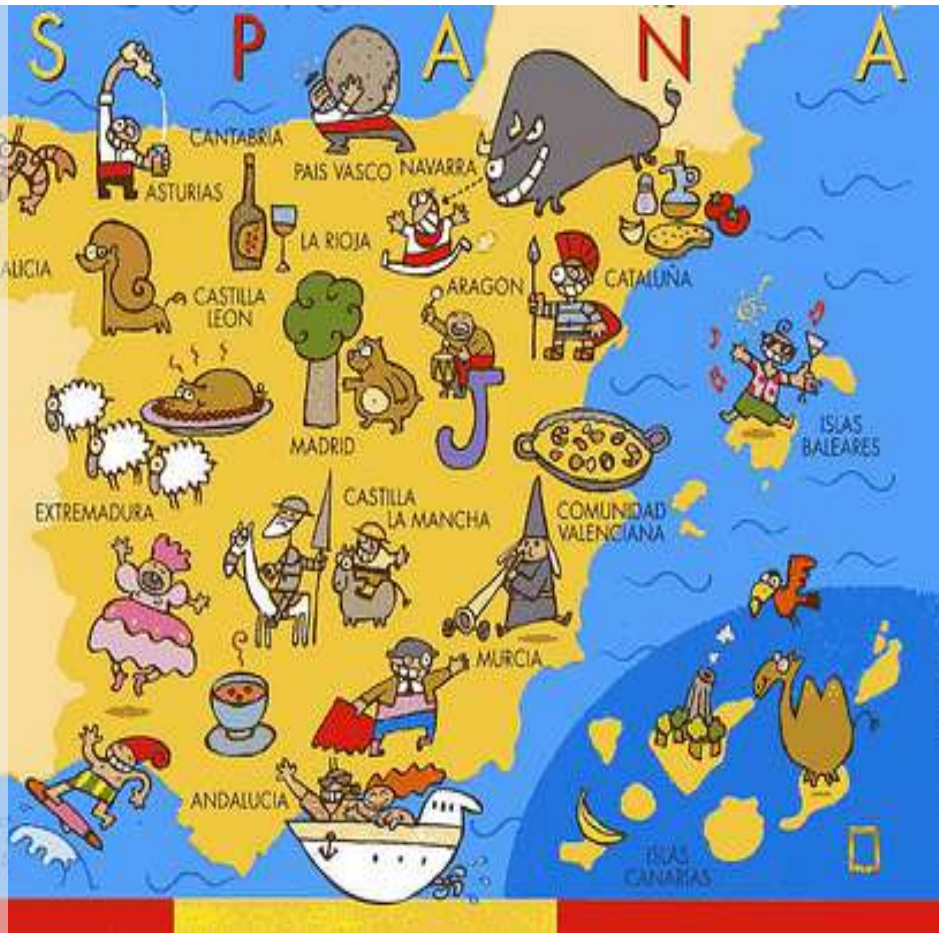


# Spanish trip to Salamanca

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Brookline High  
School  
115 Greenough  
street

Traveler's  
guide to Spain  
2014-2015

# **Traveler's handout Spain – spring 2015** **Calendar of exchange in Spain**

**Contact information of students in US and in Spain**

**Roommates and housing contact**

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## Traveler's handout Spain – February 2015

### 1. Introduction of student travelers and teachers.

| NOMBRE               |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Danielle Vishlitzky  | Natalia Suazo                          |
| Melissa Picker       | Finn Ferrier McMillan                  |
| Kaija Bariss         | Victoria David                         |
| Isabella Conway      | Stephen Giovanni Micali                |
| Anna Gargiulo        | Shamsadin Reza                         |
| Michelle Souza       | Shahar Amitay                          |
| Natasha Mundis       | Matija Jankovic                        |
| Leisa Alliyah Howard | Trevor Anthony la Salvia               |
| Felice Joanna Liang  | Hannah Timmermann                      |
| Julia Grant Cotney   | Maeve Catherine Kelly                  |
| Athalia Lopez        | José Mérida                            |
| Sarah Rose Jacobs    | Eleanor Alspaugh                       |
| Brianna Kishana Ruty | Pedro Méndez with Rafael Méndez-Sippen |
| David Krane          | Marta Fuertes with Otto Reeds-Fuertes  |
| Dalia Glazman        | Ric Calleja                            |
| Isabel Celia Daniels | Steven Dutra                           |
| Zoe Marie Yoon Brown |  |

### 2. Final Travel Details:

#### Our Departure Day:

**12:45 pm report time.** We will meet at the airport, terminal B (American Airlines)

February 14<sup>th</sup>

AA 193 Boston to JFK 2:45 pm – 4:08 pm

AA 94 JFK to Madrid Barajas 7:15 pm- 8:30 AM (15<sup>th</sup>)

#### Our return Day:

**Get on the bus from Salamanca to Madrid around 6am in the morning (Spanish time)**

February 28<sup>th</sup>

AA 95 Madrid to JFK 10:35 AM- 1:35 PM

AA 1096 JFK to Boston 4:00 PM- 5:15 PM



### 3. Accommodations:

Lodging will be with Spanish host families for the duration of our stay. Check list of the participants for contact details.

#### **4. Safety Issues:**

##### **Important numbers**

In case of any emergency, problem, robbery, incident, etc.

**Police: 911**

**Emergencies Services: 112**

**Ms. Fuertes in Spain: (01134) 618 200 265**

**Mr. Méndez in Spain: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Mr. Calleja in Spain: (01134) 618 808 155**

**Letra Hispánica phone number: (01134) 923 262 018**

**Your Host family: \_\_\_\_\_**

Important!!!!!! ALWAYS carry with you: **Your address and phone numbers of your host family, BHS teachers and Language School and your passport number.**

**For calling from the US add 011 34 and 9 digits number + number**

**Calling in Spain (with an Spanish number) just 9 digits number**

**Calling in Spain (with a US phone) is like making an international from the US \*see above\***

Also:

##### **Embajada de los Estados Unidos de América**

Serrano 75

28006 Madrid, España

Teléfono: +34 91 587-2200

Fax: +34 91 587-2303

(If you are calling from the US you need to add 011 34 + number)

#### **5 Security:**

- Do not bring valuable items on the trip.
- Do not leave jewelry, cameras, money, wallets, purchases, or electronic devices in open view when we will be travelling, in public or busy places, or in restaurants.
- Keep your room picked up and your possessions together. "Take care of your own stuff"
- Be careful in the metro and in large crowds. In crowded places, caution with people who do not inspire much confidence, panhandlers or people who ask for a cigarettes, the time, buy a flower, etc.
- Be cautious and alert!!!!!! Particularly when going to touristic places or Madrid, which is a big city.

##### **Money/Personal Items:**

"Take care of your own stuff". Before leaving any public place (be it on a plane, bus, train, metro or waiting area) **DOUBLE CHECK** that you have all of your personal belongings with you. Then check again. Did you leave anything behind?

### General Rules of Safety:

- ★ Watch out for pickpockets, particularly in crowded areas like in Madrid. Careful with people that approach you with tricks like asking you for the time, directions, etc. ¡Ojo! It's a trick to distract you and take your money! They are really fast and you won't even know you have been robbed!
- ★ Please do not keep your wallet in your back pants pockets.
- ★ NEVER give your phone number, address to anyone outside of the group.
- ★ Exercise sensible judgment when dealing with strangers. If you need for directions be selective to whom you ask. It is OK to talk to people in shops, bartenders, cafes, etc.
- ★ Be careful when talking about politics, particularly in public.
- ★ Avoid being alone in public.
- ★ Stay with the group during the activities. In addition to safety issues, it is inconsiderate if we have to wait for you and we are scheduled to do something else.
- ★ When not with the whole group, you should be with at least 2 other people at all times.
- ★ Curfews: Please respect the curfews given to you and go to bed at a reasonable hour. Your teachers want you to be rested so you can take advantage of your day. We will be checking in with the host families to make sure you're getting enough sleep. Once curfew is in effect, no one is to leave his/her home until breakfast the next morning.



**Good idea:** When you carry large sums of money, credit cards, etc. It's a better idea to carry them in an easy to conceal travel pouch under your clothes. DO NOT carry passports, wallets, credit cards, etc. in outer pockets or in a backpack. You increase the chances of losing it or having it stolen.

### 6. Essential Documents:

- Passport and a copy stored in another part of your luggage/wallet
- Health Insurance card

You cannot board a plane without your passport, so if you don't have it, it will be a "big problem". **Once in Spain, leave your passport where you are staying. Do not take it with you anywhere but make sure you have a passport photocopy with you at all times.**



Note: In Spain, you must present a valid official ID to pay with a credit/debit card. No exceptions. So, in your case will be a copy of your passport.

### 7. Code of Conduct:

You have signed a document where you agree to follow the rules of BHS handbook. **There will be a "zero" tolerance" policy regarding any form of substance abuse both**

here in the U.S. and abroad. Any infraction of the behavior contract can result in a student(s) an accompanying adult being sent home at the offending student(s) parent's expense. Remember, your actions reflect you, your parents and your school!!

**Decorum:**

We are ambassadors to our country while abroad. Be mindful of the time and be prompt for meals, meetings, departure times, etc. We would like everyone to be polite and punctual. A late start may prevent us from doing what we have planned.

Dress appropriately in order to blend better with the locals. (Don't be upset if we ask you not to wear a certain item of clothing such as a baseball cap). When we enter religious places, please be respectful of the rules related to dress and behaviour. At home, be considerate (and avoid rough housing) especially at night or early in the morning.

When sightseeing and traveling by motor coach with a guide, be respectful and attentive. Wearing headphones the tour guides or teachers are talking to the group is disrespectful. Let's remember to be courteous to tour guides, bus drivers, waiters, etc. Also let's not be litter bugs and dispose any wrappings, cans or other trash we generate when we leave the bus.

**Curfews:**

When travelling, our days will be long, and our schedule will be very full. When we say "good night," we mean it. Please be cooperative. Our curfew will vary depending on the activity of the day and also respecting your homestay rules. We will be requesting that the host families to be vigilant and strict with you in this regard.

**8. Prescription medication:**

Keep all medicine in its original container. Do not mix pills, or Customs may confiscate them. Prescription drugs must have the prescription attached to them. If you wear contacts, bring an extra pair or your glasses. If you are on a prescription medication, let us know, and give us an extra supply in case you lose yours. Pack an emergency kit (Tylenol, Nyquil caplets, cold/cough medicine, Kleenex, Band-Aids, etc.), but don't overdo it! Keep these things in your carry-on bag.

**Air and Motion Sickness:**

If you suffer from motion sickness consult your doctor for advice, or if an over-the-counter remedy has worked for you in the past bring it. First-time flyers don't worry; the flight is usually very smooth. Bring chewing gum for the air pressure. It helps deal with the earache caused by air pressure (especially when taking off or landing) If you have a cold, take an antihistamine or decongestant; otherwise, you may get an earache. If you get motion sickness, you may want to bring Dramamine.

**9. The euro**



There are seven different denominations in the current euro banknote series, ranging from the 5€ to the 500€ note. There are eight different denominations in the current euro coin series, ranging from the 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50 cent coin to the 1€ and 2€ coin.

1€ = \$1.12 as of 1/25/2015

Understand the currency rates before you leave Brookline. To convert euros to dollars, multiply by 1.12 (to make it easier, round it in 1.20). Remember, you are dealing in foreign currency, not dollars. It's a good idea to do the conversion BEFORE you order that large the *papas bravas*.

### Spending Money:

Before you leave the States, **change about \$100 dollars to euros**, so you will arrive with money. Check your bank for exchange availability and any delays. Once you are in Spain, it is easy to take out what you need with an ATM card. If you do not have an ATM card, take enough cash in euros or traveler's checks.

**Credit cards.** Before departing, notify your bank/credit card company that you are going to be travelling. Otherwise, the bank may freeze your card if unusual foreign transactions appear. The majority of national and local banks accept all types of foreign bank credit cards. The national banks such as BBVA, Banco Santander, Banesto are reliable for this matter. More local banks such as Caja Madrid are reliable too. Ask your host families for assistance with taking out money from a Spanish bank. You need to be aware of the fees banks charge when you get money from a foreign card in an ATM.

**Good idea:** Take out a large sum when you go to an ATM as it will avoid multiple transaction fees. Have small amounts on you for daily use and leave the rest at home.

### 10. Telephone Tips on Tour:

Notify your parents when you arrive at your host family's house. If you can use the home's wi-fi on your phone (ask first) and use a texting app like viber or whatsapp to talk to your families. Be prepared, and take in consideration the following:

Students who wish to call home during the trip should avoid calling from the family home telephone, unless is a collect-call – **calls can be very expensive.**

- Bring with you a card from an American phone company with which you can use from a fixed phone in Spain. Ex. AT&T has these.
- If you use Skype on your host's computer, please be sensitive to the time you take on their internet connection.
- Spanish Cell phones. This is a relatively inexpensive way to have your parents get in touch with you. You can buy a phone in Spain for about 20 to 30 euros and they usually include some usage time with initial purchase. Outgoing calls



outside of Spain, are extremely expensive but your parents can call you and you won't pay for usage. In Spain, you don't pay for incoming calls.

- Check with your cell phone provider to see if you have coverage in Europe and what the charge would be. (**Roaming fares can be very high**). Also now with Wi-Fi in most of the places, and homes. Check with your host family first, if they allow you to use their wi-fi, you can use your American phone and communicate using an app that allows you to text or call home for free. Just to give some examples: Skype (Depending how you use it you might have to buy credit), viber, whatsapp, imessage...

Spain is six hours head of Boston. So, if you want to call your mother at 9 in the morning, you will be waking her up at 3 am. Dial "001: and then your US number to phone home.

### 11. Luggage and Packing Tips:

Travel light! You are allowed two bags total: 1 medium-sized suitcase (50 lbs) and 1 carry-on. Anything extra, YOU PAY. Carry on size is determined by the airlines. A medium-sized suitcase is defined as 22' x 28" or smaller. After packing, walk around the block with your all your luggage. You may want to rethink the fifth pair of pants or video game you just have to take. It is highly recommended to have bags with wheels. Your arms, shoulders and back will thank you.



All luggage must be labeled. Bring a pen with you when we check in at American Airlines.

#### Carry-On:

Include:

- Valuables (leave good jewelry at home),
- Music player, tablet, computer, books. In other words entertainment for the flight or airport waits.
- Healthy Snacks. Indulge at Whole Foods or Trader Joe's. No fresh foods, though.
- Survival toiletries, (dental care items, especially)
- Change of clothing in the unlikely event of a temporary luggage loss.

Avoid:

- Liquids if you can help it. Yes, you are allowed some -small containers-, but it's easier without them.



- Packing your carry-on to the gills. Leave space to find things easily and to bring souvenirs when you return from Europe!

**Good idea:** If you have to bring liquids on carry-on, put them in a clear 1 quart plastic bag and place on top of your packed stuff, just to be efficient going through security.

### **Packing:**

This is a trip of two weeks, not three months! Salamanca is pretty cold during the winter months, so plan accordingly. Take clothing that can be mixed and matched and plan to wear each outfit at least twice. Be prepared for rain or little snow. Take comfortable walking shoes or sneakers as we will be doing a lot of walking. You represent the United States; dress accordingly. You don't have to dress to kill, but we don't want to look frumpy, either!

Check off each item as you put it in the suitcase so that you do not forget anything. Leave the list at home for insurance purposes.

### **Suggestion for clothing to pack:**

- 1 pair of jeans,
- 2 pairs of warm pants
- 5-8 Long sleeve T-shirts/sweaters
- 1 heavy coat
- 2 (suggested) warm sweaters or sweatshirt - layering-
- pairs of socks
- pairs of underwear
- very comfortable walking shoes



In addition to the clothing that you will be taking,

#### **You *should* have the following:**

- Comfortable footwear
- A bag/backpack/tote
- A wrist watch
- A journal/pens
- Prescription medicines clearly labeled in original containers (please bring motion sickness medicine if you are prone to getting sick in a car or bus)
- Glasses/contacts
- Lipbalm
- Heavy coat
- One nice outfit
- Camera
- Charger for your electronics

#### **You *must* have the following:**

- Passport (in a carrier) and copies
- Travelers' checks and/or bank card
- Proof of medical insurance
- Family names, phone numbers, addresses.

#### **You *may* want the following:**

- Language Phrase books
- Small calculator for conversions
- Sunglasses
- Travel alarm
- Book, magazines, playing cards.
- Electricity adapter (220 volts)

- Face cloth in ziplock bag and “wet ones”
- Soap in a plastic container
- WARM CLOTHES

### **Packing Tips:**

You do not need bring all the beauty supplies on this trip, just the toiletries you needs. Use travel sized bottles for shampoo, cleaning products, etc. Keep clippers, small scissors, army knives, in your checked in bag. Not sure? Don’t need it for flight? Check it in.

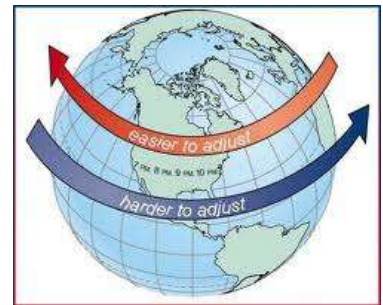
Pack some snacks for the flight. We suggest packages of granola bars, peanut butter crackers, etc. Bottled water is readily available abroad, but you may wish to take a bottle of water for the trip to Logan and the airport, although not through security.

### **For the flight:**

Have readily accessible your toothbrush for after meals, socks or slippers for comfort, headache remedy, gum, Kleenex, a book or magazine, your journal. Since we have to sleep on the plane the first night.

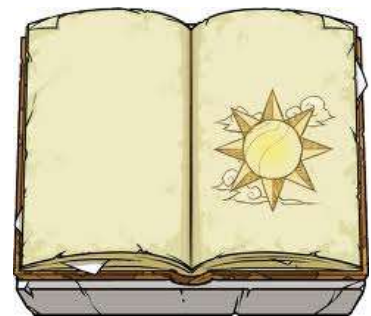
### **Jet Lag:**

As our departure date approaches, you will become excited. Pace yourself! It’s like this: we leave Boston at 2:45 pm on Saturday then arrive to destination at 8:30 aprox Madrid time or 2:30 Boston time, then we need to get a 2 hour bus to Salamanca. You will have been up all night, and then have to stay awake for the rest of the day. Once you meet your host families, they are going to want to get to know you and you’re going to want to make a good impression (while you might be a bit jet lagged and all you’re thinking about is it taking a nap for a while) You will also want to integrate yourself in the host family and they will understand you would like to rest. Please, take our advice and get some sleep on the plane. You will get to Salamanca in a better shape. Bring your Sponge Bob pillow if you need to. Drink plenty of fluids, but no caffeine! If you do these things, you will be adjusted quicker.



### **Journal:**

As part of this travel/study trip we would like you to keep a journal of your experience. Preferably in Spanish, but if you feel the need to express some deeper thoughts you may switch to English. Fifty years from now, your observations, thoughts and feelings of the February 2015 will mean a great deal not only to you, but to your grandchildren. You want to be able to come back with as many anecdotes and memories possible. It is interesting to take notes of the cultural differences you experience and reflect upon them later.



**Good idea:** Post cards. It’s a good idea that you take the time to send a few postcards to your people in the U.S.A. They would love to see where you are living, visiting or

your experiences. Bring a list of addresses with you, written down in your journal for example.

## **12. Additional Information:**

### **Customs:**

We will be going through Customs upon landing in Boston. Fill out forms carefully on the airplane prior to landing. Keeping an itemized list of purchases throughout the trip will help you in the process.

### **VAT Taxes**

Value-added tax (or sales tax) is charged on services and many categories of consumer products. In Spain it is **16% as average**.

## **13. Information on Spain and Salamanca**

Whether floodlit by night or bathed in the sunset, there's something magical about Salamanca. This is a city of rare beauty, awash with golden sandstone overlaid with ochre-tinted Latin inscriptions; an extraordinary virtuosity of plateresque and Renaissance styles. The monumental highlights are many, with the exceptional Plaza Mayor (illuminated to stunning effect at night). It is a sight you won't forget. But Salamanca is also Castilla's liveliest city. It is home to a large Spanish and international student population that provides the city with much youth and vitality.

## **MONUMENTS & MUST-SEES**

### **Plaza Mayor**

The Plaza Mayor is located in the center of Salamanca. It was originally used for bullfights, but is now the central gathering spot for locals and tourists alike. Shops, restaurants, and cafés line the square and offer students an opportunity to purchase souvenirs or sample the local fair with friends. The Plaza Mayor is considered one of the finest in all of Europe.

### **Catedral Vieja**

Founded in the 12th century is a beautiful example of Romanesque architecture.

### **Catedral Nueva**

The construction of this cathedral began in the early 1500s but not completed until 1700s. It serves as a combination of both Gothic and Renaissance style architecture.

### **Casa de las Conchas**

This historical building was constructed in early 16th Century and is currently home to a public library. The most unique aspect of this building is that its exterior is decorated with over 300 shells. These shells are a symbol of the Order of Santiago de Compostela, patron saint of Spain, of which the building's architect was a knight.

### **Universidad de Salamanca**

The original and main buildings of the Universidad de Salamanca are of extreme historical importance as the university is the oldest and one of the most prestigious in all of Spain. It is also the fourth oldest university in continuous operation throughout all of Europe. While there, students will learn of some amusing side stories about the university, including that of *la rana*.

**In addition to the aforementioned, there are numerous other fine buildings, monuments and other places to see and explore in Salamanca.**

### **Cuisine**

Salamanca is well known for its jamón (ham) and provides ample opportunity to sample the jamón serrano or jamón ibérico. Stop off at many of the restaurants and cafés to discover many local dishes that have been perfected over thousands of years in the heart of Old Castilla.

### **Shopping:**

Almost all shops close at midday for at least three hours, except the bigger chain stores in the center of Salamanca, or the big department store chain *El Corte Inglés*. Generally store hours are from 10 am to 1:30 pm and 5 to 8 pm. Shops are closed all day Sunday and some on Saturday afternoon, except for *El Corte Inglés*.

Read more: <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/spain/castilla-y-leon/salamanca#ixzz3NxRhXPn>

## **SPAIN CULTURE**

### **Cuisine**

Spain offers a wide array of dishes each of which is influenced by the country's numerous cultural influences: Roman, Christian, Jewish, and Moorish. There are numerous foods that can be found throughout the country including: tortilla española (potato omelette), paella (a rice dish), jamón serrano (a type of cured ham), various cheeses, chorizo and morcilla (sausages), churros, flan, and magdalenas (madeleines or muffins). However, the country's cuisine also varies by its 19 regions and is indicative of the geography and culture of each. Students will have the culinary opportunity to experience typical Spanish cuisine as well as those that are indicative of the particular region in which they are studying and/or traveling.

### **Personal Greetings**

The concept of personal space is different from what you may be used to. Hugs and kisses are common; including when meeting people for the first time. When passing locals in the street, don't be surprised if they make eye contact with you but exchange no smiles or greetings.

### **Rhythm of Life**

Spaniards typically live a much slower paced life, when compared to other countries such as the U.S. Normally, breakfast is light and consists of a cup of coffee with milk, hot chocolate, and a pastry or toast. Around mid-morning, Spaniards typically take a "coffee break" to sip on a freshly squeezed glass of orange juice or a cup of coffee. Lunch is the most important, and heaviest, meal of the day and is typically eaten between 1:30 PM and 3:30 PM. During the hours of 2PM-5PM many small businesses will close for workers to go home and eat lunch with their family, this break is known as the 'siesta'. Dinner is eaten between 9PM-11PM and is typically much lighter and is not as important in Spain as it is in other countries, such as the U.S. Commuting between housing and school will be a part of your daily routine, so be prepared to walk everywhere or use public transportation!

### **Living and Working Space**

Spaniards generally live in smaller apartments, or *pisos*, instead of houses as Americans do. These apartments are compact but comfortable. You may expect to find smaller appliances (i.e. washers, dishwashers and refrigerators) and smaller living accommodations, closet space, beds, showers and tubs than in the U.S. Space heaters and fans are widely used as central air is not as common in Spain. Clothes lines and drying racks are widely used in Spain, and you will find clothes dryers to be less common -So have this in mind when packing or washing your clothes-. Also, some families shop for meals daily vs. weekly.

### **Festivals**

The Spaniards are well known for their 'fiestas' In every town and village in Spain at some point during the year there is a unique festival which brings all the residents together. Although most festivals have religious origins, Spaniards take the art of celebration very seriously with festivities, which include costumes, traditional dance, sharing of large meals, and celebrating until late hours of the morning. Each major city in Spain has a number of different regional festivals depending on the time of year. We will be there during Carnival!

### **Madrid: (<http://www.aboutmadrid.com/>)**

The capital of Spain, located in the heart of the peninsula and right in the center of the Castillian plain 646 meters above sea level, has a population of over three million. A cosmopolitan city, a business center, headquarters for the Public Administration, Government, Spanish Parliament and the home of the Spanish Royal Family, Madrid also plays a major role in both the banking and industrial sectors. Most of its industry is located in the Southern fringe of the city, where important textile, food and metal working factories are



clustered. Madrid is characterized by intense cultural and artistic activity and a very lively nightlife

The grand metropolis of Madrid can trace its origins to the times of Arab Emir Mohamed I (852-886), who ordered the construction of a fortress on the left bank of the Manzanares River. Later it became the subject of a dispute between the Christians and Arabs until it was conquered by Alonso VI during 11th century. At the end of the 17th century, a defensive wall was built for the protection of the new outlying areas, tracing the roads of Segovia, Toledo and Valencia. During the 18th century, under the reign of Carlos III, were designed the great arteries of the city, such as the Paseo del Prado and Paseo las Acacias

Madrid is the capital of Spain with a population of almost 4 million. It occupies the geographical center of the Iberian Peninsula and standing at a sea level altitude of 2,200 feet, it is the highest capital in Europe. Spain's major roads originate from and distances measured from the "Kilometer 0" mark of Puerta del Sol. We will visit this popular, energetic gathering place where many shops, clubs, and restaurants are located. Madrid is known as the city that never sleeps. You can find traffic jams on the main roads at 1:00 a.m.!

Madrid is the home of the Prado museum, considered one of the top three museums in the world.

#### **14. What are the Spanish people like?**

Spain's population density, lower than most European countries, is roughly equivalent to New England's. In the last decades, following a longstanding pattern in the rest of Europe, rural populations are moving to cities. Urban areas are also experiencing a significant increase in immigrant populations from North Africa, South America, and Eastern Europe.

Spain has no official religion. The constitution of 1978 disestablished the Roman Catholicism as the official state religion, while recognizing the role it plays in Spanish society. According to the National Institute of Statistics (April 2010), 73.2% of the population considers itself Catholic, 2.3% belong to another religion, 14.6% are agnostic, and 7.6% are atheists. Spaniards like to talk and do talk openly about religion, politics, money, and topics that people in other cultures might be more careful or sensitive about discussing with people they don't know very well.

Spaniards in general are a very friendly, warm and fun-loving people. And have been times unfairly stereotyped as carefree or even lazy, but this is not true. In general, Spanish people are hard-working but they do know how to enjoy their free time. Family life is very important in Spain and this featured in every region in the country. Towards the south of Spain, life is considerably slower and more relaxed.

Spanish people are very proud of their history and culture and are very happy when foreigners take an interest. They love to show off and this is so evident in their dance



such as flamenco, but there are many other elements they like to show to the foreigners. But overall Spaniards like to show their country to foreign visitors.

## 15.Lifestyle and Family

Spanish families are typically open and welcoming, eager to make a good impression. Most Spanish families—including the extended family—tend to be close-knit, visiting each other frequently and sharing in large weekend gatherings. As a guest in the family, you might be invited to be in these events. It will be an interesting experience.

Gender roles are evolving in Spanish society. More and more women have jobs outside the home. But traditionally, the mother is still likely to manage the household. Since homes and apartments in Spain tend to be smaller than in the States, siblings often share rooms.

Spaniards are more inclined to identify with their particular region than with the country as a whole. It is common that families still are attached to their “hometown” – little spec of a place where there are cousins, aunts, abuelos, and longtime friends and everybody knows everybody.

When you are with your family, try to be aware of the family dynamics and how they function. It is important that you observe in order to be able to understand them. Spanish families are very friendly and welcoming. You will notice that their social relationships do not take place in homes; they tend to meet in restaurants, bars, and cafeterias. In Spain life is more outdoors, rather than at home, which are also smaller than the ones in the U.S. to invite people over. This doesn't mean Spaniards do not like people at home. They are a bit more reserved about showing the outside world their home, particularly to people they don't know well, but when they do it, they are very welcoming and generous hosts. They will treat you very well.

Please, be aware of the different suggestions in order to develop a great relationship with your host family and take advantage to the fullest of your experience with them.

### Señora Fuertes' musings

- Spaniards tend to be very proud of their cuisine, from wherever region they come from. Your family might cook special dishes during your stay. Even if the food doesn't look the most appealing to you, at least try it. It is important you show appreciation for their efforts and interest for showing you the typical aspects of their way of life.
- Mothers in Spain like to feed their cubs, so prepare yourself to receive an extra spoon of food when you are at the table with the family. Good luck! It's a constant fight! You can politely say you have had enough (Gracias, estoy satisfecho/a or he tenido bastante)



- Be cognizant of the use of space in the house. Respect the different spaces; try to keep your room or belongings organized and tidy. The lack of room in Spanish homes tend to make the families stricter with the way they arrange their household, otherwise things will turn into a chaotic. So do not leave your stuff in the middle of the common areas. Leave the bathroom tidy after using it. If you use tools in the kitchen, clean them or put them in the dishwasher after using them, etc.
- Spain is a country with serious water issues, specially the warmer areas in the summer, including Salamanca. Draughts are very common over the warmer seasons. Knowing this, please, be aware about your showers length.
- Family, especially parents, are likely to do all the household chores. They might not allow you to help them. Try to give them a hand if you see a way you can cooperate, for example setting the table before you are having dinner together, offer yourself to wash the dishes, etc. If they don't allow you to do anything, at least be present while they cook, converse with them, or ask them to show you what they are doing and how. You will learn a lot from these interactions.
- Families tend to have at least one meal a day together. Try to not be late for these. Ask the common times for their meals, or indicate them you might be late if you have a visit with the group, an excursion etc. They might wait even until you arrive.
- Be respectful with the curfews they set for you and their children. They will feel responsible for you during your stay.
- If you decide to bring a laptop with you and you wish to use it at your host home. Ask first if you can use their internet connection. Second, do not spend you whole time with the host family at the computer with your family and friends in the U.S. Be reasonable with the use of it. You are having a privilege experience with this trip so take advantage of all the things it can offer to you.
- You might encounter conversations about politics with the members of your host family. When talking about U.S. politics everybody in the world has an opinion, better or worse informed. Try to not be very defensive, listen to what they say, it might be different from your opinion, as you might have different opinions regarding their culture, traditions, politics etc. You can express your disagreement and explain how things are seen in the U.S. or the reasons why politics are in certain way. Bear in mind the information they have can be partial, and different issues make more sense when you are in the place when they happen.

## Frequently questions

### Before you travel

#### Is Spain a safe country?

In general terms, Spain is one of the safest countries in Europe for visiting tourists. As in any country, there are basic security measures to bear in mind...

Try not to walk around empty streets or poorly-lit areas, and avoid street gambling stalls. Try to carry only the money you need for any one excursion. Take care of your possessions in crowded places such as public transport or department stores. When relaxing in public places, keep valuable objects like mobile phones and cameras out of view.

**Do not forget advice from security experts:** Prevention is the best cure for this kind of problem. If you need help you can contact the Police on 091.

**Where to call in case of emergency?** Dial 112 free of charge (valid throughout Spain). Service is given in Spanish, and also in English, French and German in some tourist areas.



**Where do I buy my medication?** In Spain, medications are obtained at pharmacies. They are all marked with a green cross. You will get your prescriptions from your doctor. If you come from a country in the European Union, or your country has health agreements with Spain, you will have the same prescription drug benefits as Spanish citizens.

**How does the Spanish healthcare system work?** The Spanish **National Health Service** has an extensive network of health centers and hospitals throughout the country.

The **health centers** offer **primary health care services** (family/GP services, pediatrics and nursing, with availability of midwives, physiotherapists and social workers). They are aimed to be located within 15 minutes of any place of residence. If circumstances require, medical attention can be given at the patient's residence.



Hospitals offer **specialized attention**, with access via referral from primary healthcare services. There are also **Accident and Emergency** services available at hospitals and some health centers. Salamanca has a main university hospital that has all the services.

**What's the time in Spain?** The time zone on the Spanish mainland and the Balearic Islands is Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) + 1 hour in winter and + 2 hours in summer. On the Canary Islands, it is GMT, or GMT + 1 hour in summer, i.e. always 1 hour less than the time on the mainland and in the Balearics.

Spain changes its time between summer and winter for daylight saving. This means that the last weekend in October the clocks go back 1 hour (at 3am it is 2am) and the last weekend in March they go forward 1 hour (at 2am it is 3am).

**At what time are meals served in Spain?** Breakfast is usually had from eight to ten in the morning. Lunch, at restaurants, is served between 13.00 to 15.30 h. Dinner is served from 20.30 to 23.00 h. Many establishments are open continuously throughout the day, especially bars and cafeterias; there you can have "tapas", appetizers, and combo meals.

**Cinemas** usually have flexible hours, starting around 16.30 to 17.00 h. The last showing is around 22.00, although there are cinemas with midnight shows in all major cities.

**Theatres** usually have a single show, which normally starts around 20.00 h.

**At what time do shops and businesses open?** The most common business hours are **Monday through Saturday, from 9.30/10:00 h to 13.30/2:00 h, and from 16.30 to 20.00 h.**

Big shopping centers and department stores open from 10.00 h to 21.00 or 22.00 h uninterrupted. These big stores open sometimes on Sunday.

**Pharmacies open from 9.30 to 13.30 h, and from 16.30 to 20.00 h.** In all major cities you can find pharmacies that open **24 hours**. Pharmacies follow a rolling late-hour schedule, which is published in the newspapers, and is posted at all pharmacies.

## Languages and religion

**What religions are practiced in Spain?** Freedom of religion is guaranteed by the Spanish Constitution, although the majority of the population declares to be Catholic many do not practice it. Other religions also practiced in Spain include Islam, Judaism, Protestantism, and Hinduism, all of which have places where to conduct their rituals.



**What languages are spoken in Spain?** Spanish is the official language in the entire national territory. However, other languages coexist with Spanish in certain regions of Spain. These are: Catalan in Catalonia, Galician in Galicia, Euskera/Basque in the Basque Country, Valenciá in the Valencia Region and a particular variety of Catalan spoken on the Balearic Islands.

## Climate

**What is the weather like in Spain?** Spain, one of the warmest countries in Europe. Spain has a predominantly warm Mediterranean climate, with dry summers and winters with balanced temperatures. Here you can enjoy more than 3,000 hours of sunshine per year. It is no surprise, then, that this is one of the warmest parts of Europe. **Nevertheless, variety is the main characteristic of the climate here**, due to Spain's immense geographical diversity. So that if you travel to the north, to the Cantabrian coast, you will find a mild climate with high rainfall. Winters are mild and in summer temperatures rarely exceed 25°C (77 F). In the plateau area the temperatures in the summer are much higher and dryer, with an average of 30-35° C (86-95F). However, in the higher parts of the country, the climate is harsher and it is common to see snow from the beginning of winter to the end of spring, this is true for the mountain areas.



## Money and currency

**Is tipping mandatory?** No; in every single establishment in Spain, service is included with the price of the meal or drink. However, tipping is a common practice at bars and restaurants,



hotels, and taxis, depending on the total price for the service, and on the generosity of the client. It is usually around five to ten percent of the total price.

**Where can I exchange foreign currency?** This service is available at all bank offices, open to the public Monday through Saturday, from 8.30 to 14.00 h (except in the months of June through September, when they remain closed on Saturday). It is also available at currency exchange shops at all major cities, as well as selected hotels and travel agencies.

### How else can I pay?

**With credit cards:** Payment using recognized international credit cards is also commonly available in Spanish shops. They usually have signs indicating this option at the entrance to the establishment. When you make a payment you should show your passport or ID card.

**With traveler's cheques:** Traveler's cheques, accompanied by a passport, are also accepted in most hotels, restaurants and shops.

**What is the currency in Spain?** The currency in Spain is the **euro**, as in other European Union countries.

The euro is divided into 100 cents.

- There are eight different coins: 1, 2, 5, 10, 20 and 50 cent, and 1 and 2 Euro.
- There are seven different bank notes, for the following amounts: 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500 Euro.



**How much money do I need for my stay?** The average price for products and services varies depending on the province you are visiting, and the season. As a reference, we provide a list of approximate prices for services and products:

- A single metro (underground) or bus ticket costs between €1 and 1.50.
- A refreshment costs between €1.5- 2 and € 6, the latter at a fashionable place.
- A ticket to the cinema costs between € 5 and € 9.
- A ticket to the theatre costs between € 12 and € 30.
- A ticket to the opera or a concert could cost between €50 and €100.
- A breakfast special, including a cup of coffee, a bun or pastry, and a glass of juice costs between € 2 and € 4, depending on where you go.
- A daily special at an inexpensive restaurant costs between € 7 and € 10. If you are choosing from the regular menu, the price starts at € 12-15, while at a medium-priced restaurant, it would start at € 25 per person. At a "three-fork" restaurant, the total price per person can come to € 90.

### Communications

**How to send a letter or a packet?** You can send letters from anywhere in Spain. To do so you should buy stamps, available at the licensed tobacco shops known as "**Estancos**". To send the letter or postcard you need to put it in a post box, to be found in the streets, at railway stations and at





airports. If you want to send a package, then you should go to a branch of the post office ("Correos").

**How can you go online and check your e-mails?** If you want to go online, you can head for any of a number of establishments, which offer this service: cafes, restaurants, etc. At home you might have internet connection.

**How to call to and from Spain.**

**If you wish to make a call to Spain from overseas,** you should dial +34 (the code for Spain) followed by the telephone number (9 digits).

**If you want to call another country from Spain,** then dial 00 followed by the country code (US is 1) and the telephone number. You can make calls from phone boxes. These work with coins.

**If you wish to make national calls within Spain** you should dial the number with no prefix. This number should comprise 9 digits, regardless of whether it is a landline or mobile.

**To use your mobile in Spain** you should be aware that coverage here uses GSM technology, meaning that it is incompatible with some countries such as the USA or Japan. In this case you need a tri-band mobile in order to call. If you have a compatible handset, you should get in touch with your mobile company to make sure that you can use your mobile in Spain (they will activate the international *roaming* service on your account). Once you have taken these steps at home, you will be able to use your mobile in Spain as if it were a Spanish handset: i.e. you should dial 00 + the country code to make international calls. It is very expensive, so we recommend you have your phone on airplane mode and use the wifi whenever you can to communicate with people. Leave calls just for emergencies.

### Miscellaneous

**Can you drink the tap water?** Drinking water supply is guaranteed throughout Spain. We have stringent control systems that guarantee water quality. Nevertheless, in some Mediterranean coastal areas consumption of bottled water is widespread.



**Which system of weights and measures is used in Spain?** Spain uses the Metric (Decimal) System, with seven basic units of measurement, known as the International System of Units (SI), which is valid throughout the European Union. The system governs all units of weight, measurement and distance (metre, kilogram, second, litre, ton...).

1 metro = 3 feet

1 milla = 1,6 kilometros; 1 kilometro = 1,000 metros

1 kilogramo = 2.2 lbs

1 litro = 2.2 lbs

1 litro = about .25 gallons

1 galon = 8 lbs

**How do electrical appliances work in Spain?** Electricity supply in Spain is AC 220 Volts, 50 Hertz. Sockets meet European regulations and use the round pin system. Make sure that the electrical appliances you are going to use (computers, mobile phone chargers, shavers...) work at this voltage, usually they do but it's better to check this out before any surprise. Nevertheless, just in case, get one plug adapter for your time there. Careful





with hairdryers or other small appliances like this due to the different voltage fuses can burn and ruin the device.

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