

📍 Park Güell, Barcelona

Trip Notes: Spain

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

A valid US passport with at least **three months beyond your planned date of departure from the Schengen Area** is required. (We recommend six months for flexibility.) A visa is **not required** for US citizens visiting Spain or other Schengen countries for stays **up to 90 days within a 180-day period**.

Entry/Exit System (EES):

EES will start operations on **12 October 2025**, with gradual introduction at EU external borders. Full implementation expected by **10 April 2026**. Until then, passports will continue to be manually stamped.

ETIAS (European Travel Information and Authorization System):

Expected to launch in **late 2026** for visa-free travelers (ages 18–70). Required for entry into **30 European countries**, including France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Greece. Cost: about **€20**, valid for 3 years or until your passport expires. Application completed online prior to travel.

Schengen Area countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland.

UK (England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland): Requires a separate ETA for visits up to 6 months. Cost: £16 [Apply here](#).

CURRENCY & CREDIT CARDS

The official currency is the **Euro (€)**.

- Cards widely accepted; cash preferred in small towns & markets.
- ATMs are common; notify your bank before travel.
- Credit card needed for hotels & rentals.



📍 The Alhambra, Granada



📍 Royal Palace of Madrid & Almudena Cathedral



📍 La Sagrada Família, Barcelona

INTERNATIONAL LUGGAGE ALLOWANCE

Varies by airline, especially on intra-Europe flights. Always confirm baggage rules.

Reference: FAA Pack Safe.

NATIONAL EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Dial **112** for police, ambulance, or fire.

PHONES & INTERNET

- To dial Spain from the US: 011 + 34 + local number.
- To dial the US from Spain: 00 + 1 + area code + number.
- SIM/eSIMs: Movistar, Orange, Vodafone, Yoigo.
- Wi-Fi widely available in cities, cafés, hotels.

HOTELS

- Standard check-in: **3-4PM**
- Check-out: **11AM-12PM**
- Early check-in/late check-out may be available on request.

TIPPING

Tipping is not obligatory in Spain.

- **Restaurants:** Round up or 5-10% for excellent service.
- **Taxis:** Round up to nearest euro.
- **Hotels:** €1-2 per bag, small gratuity for housekeeping.

FOOD & WINE

Spain is celebrated for its vibrant culinary traditions and diverse regional wines, reflecting centuries of history and local customs.

- Meals are late: lunch 2-4 PM, dinner 9-11 PM.
- Famous for tapas, paella (Valencia), jamón ibérico, gazpacho, pintxos (Basque).
- Wine: Rioja, Ribera del Duero, cava (Catalonia), sherry (Andalusia).
- Legal drinking age: 18.

SHOPPING & VAT

- Typical hours: 10 AM - 2 PM, 5PM - 8 PM. Many shops close Sundays.
- VAT: **21%** (refund available on purchases over €154.94 from a single retailer).



La Giralda, Seville



Madrid



Ronda

Popular Souvenirs

- **Hand-painted ceramics** (Andalusia, Talavera)
- **Flamenco accessories** (Seville)
- **Spanish leather goods** (Toledo, Ubrique)
- **Olive oil, saffron, Manchego cheese, wines**
- **Espadrilles** (Barcelona, Madrid)

ETIQUETTE

- **Greetings:** Handshake or kiss on both cheeks.
- **Dining:** Share tapas, don't expect to rush meals.
- **Dress:** Stylish but modest in churches.
- **Punctuality:** Flexible socially, but tours/appointments expect timeliness.

TIME

Spain is on **Central European Time (CET):** GMT +1 (GMT +2 in daylight saving).

Note: **Canary Islands are GMT** (one hour behind mainland Spain).

CLIMATE

- **North** (Bilbao, San Sebastián): Mild, rainy.
- **Central** (Madrid, Toledo): Hot summers, cold winters.
- **South** (Seville, Granada): Hot, dry summers, mild winters.
- **Islands:** Canary Islands (spring-like year-round), Balearics (hot summers).

LANGUAGE

Official language: **Spanish** (Castilian). Regional languages: Catalan, Basque, Galician. English is common in tourist areas.

Common Phrases

- Hello - *Hola*
- Goodbye - *Adiós*
- Thank you - *Gracias*
- Please - *Por favor*
- Excuse me - *Perdón / Disculpe*
- Do you speak English? - *¿Habla inglés?*

POWER

Electricity is **230V, 50Hz**; Spain uses **plugs C & F**. Bring a universal adapter.



📍 Monserrat



📍 Plaza de España, Seville



📍 The Alhambra

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

- 1 January – **New Year’s Day**
- 6 January – **Epiphany**
- Good Friday & Easter Monday (dates vary)**
- 1 May – **Labor Day**
- 15 August – **Assumption Day**
- 12 October – **National Day**
- 1 November – **All Saints’ Day**
- 6 December – **Constitution Day**
- 8 December – **Immaculate Conception**
- 25 December – **Christmas**

DRIVING

- Drive on the **right-hand side**.
- **Speed limits:** 50 km/h (cities), 90 km/h (roads), 120 km/h (autopistas).
- Seat belts mandatory.
- US license + **International Driving Permit (IDP)** required.
- Strict drink-driving laws: 0.05% BAC limit.

OTHER USEFUL LINKS

US State Department Travel Advisories

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html>

US Embassy Madrid:

<https://www.usembassy.gov/spain>

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)

<https://step.state.gov/>

US Passports

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports.html>

International Travel Guidance

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel.html>