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ACCOMMODATION

There's generally no need to book ahead for a room in the low or shoulder seasons, but when things get busier it's advisable (and in high periods it can be essential) to make a reservation if you want to avoid a wearisome search for a room. At most places a phone call earlier the same day is all that's needed: they'll probably ask your approximate time of arrival and will tell you that they'll hold the room for you until a specific hour. Some may ask for a credit card number. Many hotels take reservations by email.

Prices throughout this guidebook are high-season maximums. In many cases this means you may be pleasantly surprised if you travel in the low-season. What constitutes low or high season depends on where and when.

BOOK ACCOMMODATION ONLINE

For more accommodation reviews and recommendations by Lonely Planet authors, check out the online booking service at www.lonelyplanet.com. You'll find the true, insider lowdown on the best places to stay. Reviews are thorough and independent. Best of all, you can book online.

Most of the year is high season in Barcelona, especially during trade fairs. August can be dead in the cities. Winter is high season in the Pyrenees and low season in the Balearic Islands (indeed, the islands seem to shut down between November and Easter). July and August in the Balearics offer sun and fun, but finding a place to stay without booking ahead can be a pain. Weekends are high season for boutique hotels and *casas rurales* (country homes; see opposite), but bad for multistar business hotels in Madrid and Barcelona (which often offer generous specials then).

We divide accommodation categories into budget, midrange and top end. As prices vary greatly from one part of the country to another, the dividing line can be at times a little arbitrary. In places such as Barcelona and Madrid, and other popular tourist locations, a budget place can mean anything up to €40/60 for an *individual/doble* (single/double). At the higher end of this range you can generally expect to find good, comfortable rooms with private bathrooms. Shave a few euros off and you may find the place only has shared bathrooms in the corridor. In less-travelled regions, such as Extremadura, Murcia and Castilla-La Mancha, it can be relatively easy to find perfectly acceptable single/double rooms (usually with shared bathroom) for around €30/45. If you want to go for rock bottom, youth hostels, where a bed can cost anything up to €23 but more often around €16 and €19, are probably the best bet.

Midrange places in the big cities can range up to about €200 for a fine double, and there are plenty of good and on occasion outright charming options for less. Anything above

that price takes you into luxury level. Again, though, much depends on the location and period. Cities like Madrid and Barcelona, with busy trade fair calendars, can become more expensive still during such fairs, while some business-oriented hotels almost give away rooms during slow periods. In many other parts of Spain you'd be hard-pressed to pay more than €150 for the best double in town. Within each area we have divided up the offerings on the basis of local conditions. A double in a *parador* (see p841) in Castilla-La Mancha at around €100 might be rated top end; the same price will get you a nice but smallish midrange room in Madrid.

A *habitación doble* (double room) is frequently just that: a room with two beds (which you can often shove together). If you want to be sure of a double bed (*cama matrimonial*), ask for it!

Two websites with online hotel booking facilities are **Hotelkey** (☎ in Spain 902 303555; www.hotelkey.com) and **Madeinspain** (www.madeinspain.net). The national tourist office website (www.spain.info) is another option.

Apartments, Villas & Casas Rurales

Throughout Spain you can rent self-catering apartments and houses from one night upwards.

Villas and houses are widely available on the main holiday coasts and in popular country areas. Rural tourism continues to boom, with accommodation available in many new and often charming *casas rurales*. These are usually comfortably renovated village houses or farmhouses with a handful of rooms. Some just provide rooms, while others offer meals or self-catering accommodation. Lower-end prices typically hover around €25/45 (single/double) per night, but a growing number of boutique establishments can easily charge up to €80 for a double. Many are rented out by the week. Also known as '*agroturismo*', this kind of place is being turned into a fine art in ever greater swathes of the country.

A simple one-bedroom apartment in a coastal resort for two or three people might cost as little as €30 per night, although more often you'll be looking at nearly twice that much, and prices can jump even further in high season. More luxurious options with a swimming pool might come in at anything between €200 and €400 for four people. These options are most worth considering if you plan to stay several days or more, in which case there will usually be discounts from the daily rate.

Tourist offices can supply lists of places for rent, and in Britain the travel sections of the broadsheet press carry private ads for such places. Agencies include:

PRACTICALITIES

- If your Spanish is up to it, try the following newspapers: *El País* (or the free, constantly updated, downloadable version, *24 Horas*, on www.elpais.es), the country's leading daily and left-of-centre oriented; *ABC*, for a rightwing view of life; Barcelona-based *La Vanguardia*, which on Friday has a great listings magazine for that city; and *Marca*, an all-sports (especially football) paper.
- Tune into: Radio Nacional de España (RNE)'s Radio 1, with general interest and current affairs programmes; Radio 5, with sport and entertainment; and Radio 3 ('Radio d'Espol'), with admirably varied pop and rock music. The most popular commercial pop and rock stations are 40 Principales, Cadena 100 and Onda Cero.
- Switch on the box to watch Spain's state-run Televisión Española (TVE1 and La 2) or the independent commercial stations (Antena 3, Tele 5, Cuatro, La Sexta and Canal Plus). Regional governments run local stations, such as Madrid's Telemadrid, Catalonia's TV-3 and Canal 33 (both in Catalan), Galicia's TVG, the Basque Country's ETB-1 and ETB-2, Valencia's Canal 9 and Andalucía's Canal Sur. Cable and satellite TV is becoming more widespread.
- Buy or watch videos on the PAL system.
- Bring an international adapter because plugs have two round pins; the electric current is 220V, 50Hz.
- Use the metric system for weights and measures.

Apartments-Spain (www.apartments-spain.com)

Casas Cantabricas (96 in UK 01223 328 721; www.casas.co.uk)

Holiday Serviced Apartments (96 in UK 0845 060 4477; www.holidayapartments.co.uk)

Individual Travellers Company (96 08700 780 194; www.indiv-travellers.com)

Owners Direct (www.ownersdirect.co.uk)

Simply Travel (96 08701 664 979; www.simplytravel.co.uk)

Top Rural (96 91 523 58 00; www.toprural.com)

Travellers' Way (96 in UK 0845 612 9001; www.travellersway.co.uk)

Vintage (96 in UK 0845 344 0457; www.vintageattravel.co.uk)

Camping & Caravan Parks

Spain has around 1000 officially graded *campings* (camping grounds). Some are well located in woodland or near beaches or rivers, but others are on the outskirts of towns or along highways. Few are near city centres, and camping isn't particularly convenient if you're relying on public transport.

Camping grounds are officially rated as first class (1^AC), second class (2^AC) or third class (3^AC). There are also a few that are not officially graded, usually equivalent to third class. Facilities generally range from reasonable to very good, although any camping ground can be crowded and noisy at busy times (especially July and August). Even a third-class camping ground is likely to have hot showers, electrical hook-ups and a café. The best ones have heated swimming pools, supermarkets, restaurants, laundry service, children's playgrounds and tennis courts. Sizes range from a capacity of under 100 people to over 5000.

Camping grounds usually charge per person, per tent and per vehicle – typically €4 to €7 for each. Children usually pay a bit less than adults. Many camping grounds close from around October to Easter.

The annual *Guía Oficial de Campings*, available in bookshops around the country, lists most of Spain's camping grounds and their facilities and prices. Tourist offices can always direct you to the nearest camping ground.

You sometimes come across a *zona de acampada* or *área de acampada*, a country camping ground with minimal facilities (maybe just tap water or a couple of barbecues), little or no supervision and little or no charge. If it's in an environmentally protected area, you may need

to obtain permission from the local environmental authority to camp there.

With certain exceptions – such as many beaches and environmentally protected areas and a few municipalities that ban it – it is legal to camp outside camping grounds (but not within 1km of official ones!). Signs usually indicate where wild camping is not allowed. If in doubt you can always check with tourist offices. You'll need permission to camp on private land.

Various websites list camping grounds around the country, including www.campin.guia.com and www.campingonline.com/espana. The former contains comments (mostly in Spanish) and links, while you can book on the latter.

Hostels

Spain's 200 or so youth hostels – *albergues juveniles*, not be confused with *hostales* (budget hotels) – are often the cheapest places for lone travellers, but two people can usually get a double room elsewhere for a similar price. Some hostels are only moderate value, lacking in privacy, often heavily booked by school groups, and with night-time curfews and no cooking facilities (although if there is nowhere to cook there is usually a cafeteria). Others, however, are conveniently located, open 24 hours and composed mainly of double rooms or small dorms, often with a private bathroom. An increasing number have rooms adapted for people with disabilities. Some even occupy fine historic buildings.

Most Spanish youth hostels are members of the **Red Española de Albergues Juveniles** (REAJ, Spanish Youth Hostel Network; www.reaj.com), the Spanish representative of **Hostelling International** (HI; www.hihostels.com).

Most Spanish hostels are also members of the youth hostel association of their region (Andalucía, Catalonia, Valencia etc). Each region usually sets its own price structure and has a central booking service where you can make reservations for most of its hostels. You can also book directly with hostels themselves. Central booking services include:

Andalucía (96 902 51 00 00; www.inturjuven.com)

Catalonia (96 93 483 83 41; www.tujuca.com)

Valencia (96 902 22 55 52; www.ivaj.es in Spanish)

Just a few youth hostels are independent of regional associations – although they may still be REAJ and HI members! A good website for

seeking out hostels, affiliated or otherwise, is www.hostelworld.com.

Prices at youth hostels often depend on the season, and vary between about €10 and €18 for under-26s (the lower rate is usually applied to people with ISIC cards too) and between €14 and €23 for those 26 and over. In some hostels the price includes breakfast. A few hostels require you to rent sheets (around €2 to €4 for your stay) if you don't have your own or a sleeping bag.

Most hostels require you to have an HI card or a membership card from your home country's youth hostel association; others don't require a card (even though they may be HI hostels), but may charge more if you don't have one. You can obtain an HI card in Spain at most hostels.

You will sometimes find independent *albergues* offering dormitory accommodation for around €9 to €15, usually in villages in areas that attract plenty of Spanish walkers and climbers. These are not specifically youth hostels – although the clientele tends to be under 35. They're a kind of halfway house between a youth hostel and a *refugio* (mountain shelter; see p842). Some will rent you sheets for a couple of euros if you need them.

Hotels, Hostales, Pensiones & Hospedajes

Officially, places to stay are classified into *hoteles* (hotels; one to five stars), *hostales* (one to three stars) and *pensiones* (basically small private hotels, often family businesses in rambling apartments; one or two stars). These are the categories used by the annual *Guía Oficial de Hoteles*, sold in bookshops, which lists almost every such establishment in Spain, except for one-star *pensiones*, with approximate prices.

In practice, places listing accommodation use all sorts of overlapping names to describe themselves, especially at the budget end of the market. In broad terms, the cheapest are usually places just advertising *camas* (beds), *fondas* (traditionally a basic eatery and inn combined, though one of these functions is now often missing) and *casas de huéspedes* or *hospedajes* (guesthouses). Most such places will be bare and basic. Bathrooms are likely to be shared. Your room may be small, possibly lacking a window, and it may have alarming electrical fittings and erratic hot water – but in most cases it will be kept pretty clean. The

beds may make you feel as though you're lying diagonally across a bumpy hillside – or they may be firm, flat and comfortable. In winter don't hesitate to ask for extra blankets. Singles/doubles in these places generally cost from around €15/25 to €20/30.

A *pensión* is usually a small step up from the above types in standards and price. Some cheap establishments forget to provide soap, toilet paper or towels. Don't hesitate to ask for these necessities. *Hostales* are in much the same category. In both cases the better ones can be bright and spotless, with rooms boasting full en suite bathroom. Prices can range up to €40/60 for singles/doubles in more popular/expensive locations.

The remainder of establishments call themselves *hoteles* and run the gamut of quality, from straightforward roadside places, bland but clean, through charming boutique jobbies and on to super luxury hotels. Even in the cheapest hotels, rooms are likely to have an attached bathroom and there'll probably be a restaurant. Among the most tempting hotels for those with a little fiscal room to manoeuvre are the **Paradores** (96 in Spain 902 547 979; www.parador.es), a state-run chain of hotels in stunning locations, among them towering castles and former medieval convents. Similarly, you can find stunning hotels in restored country homes and old city mansions, and these are not always particularly expensive. A raft of bijoux and/or luxury hotels set in rural areas or mansions add to the spread of choice. Cutting edge, hip design hotels with androgynous staff and a feel à la New York can be found in the big cities and major resort areas.

Many places to stay of all types have a range of rooms at different prices. At the budget end, prices will vary according to whether the room has only a *lavabo* (washbasin), *ducha* (shower) or *baño completo* (full bathroom), that is bath/shower, basin and loo. At the top end you may pay more for a room on the *exterior* (outside) of the building or with a *balcón* (balcony) and will often have the option of a suite. Seaside views frequently attract higher rates. Many places have rooms for three, four or more people where the per-person cost is lower than in a single or double, which is good news for families.

Checkout time is generally between 11am and noon.

Monasteries

An offbeat possibility is staying in a monastery. In spite of the expropriations of the 19th century and a sometimes rough run in the 20th, plenty of monastic orders have survived (albeit in diminishing numbers) across the country. Some offer rooms to outsiders – often fairly austere monks' or nuns' cells.

Monastery accommodation is generally a single-sex arrangement, and the idea in quite a few is to seek refuge from the outside world and indulge in quiet contemplation and meditation.

Refugios

Mountain shelters (*refugios*) for walkers and climbers are liberally scattered around most of the popular mountain areas (mainly the Pyrenees), except in Andalucía, which has only a handful. They're mostly run by mountaineering and walking organisations. Accommodation – usually bunks squeezed into a dorm – is often on a first-come, first-served basis, although for some *refugios* you can book ahead. In busy seasons (July and August in most areas) they can fill up quickly and you should try to book in advance or arrive by midafternoon to be sure of a place. Prices per person range from nothing to €12.50 a night. Many *refugios* have a bar and offer meals (dinner typically costs around €8 to €10), as well as a cooking area (but not cooking equipment). Blankets are usually provided, but you'll have to bring any other bedding yourself. Bring a torch too.

BUSINESS HOURS

Generally, Spaniards work Monday to Friday from about 9am to 2pm and then again from 4.30pm or 5pm for another three hours. Shops and travel agencies are usually open similar hours on Saturday as well, although many skip the evening session. The further south you go, the longer the afternoon break tends to be, with shops and the like staying closed until 6pm or so.

Big supermarkets and department stores, such as the nationwide El Corte Inglés chain, open from about 10am to 10pm Monday to Saturday. Shops in tourist resorts sometimes open on Sunday too.

Many government offices don't bother opening in the afternoon, any day of the year. In summer, offices tend to go on to *horario intensivo*, which means they can start as early as 7am and finish up for the day by 2pm.

Museums all have their own opening hours: major ones tend to open for something like normal Spanish business hours (with or without the afternoon break), but often have their weekly closing day on Monday.

Pharmacies have a wide variety of opening hours. The standard hours follow those of other shops. In the bigger centres you will find several that open 24 hours a day. Some have extended hours, say 8am to 10pm, usually on a rota basis. To find out where late-opening pharmacies are in the cities and bigger towns, pick up the local paper.

For bank and post office opening hours, respectively, see p851 and p852.

As a general rule restaurants open their kitchens for lunch from 1pm to 4pm and for dinner from 8pm to midnight. The further south you go, the later locals tend to go out to eat. While restaurants in Barcelona may already be busy by 9.30pm, their Madrid counterparts are still half empty at this time. At lunch and dinner you can generally linger quite a while after the kitchen closes. Some, but by no means all, places close one or two days a week. Some also shut for a few weeks' annual holiday – the most common period for this is during August.

Bars have a wider range of hours. Those that serve as cafés and snack bars can open from about 8am to the early evening. Those that are more nightlife bars may open in the early evening and generally close around 2am to 3am. Some places combine the two roles. As the bars close the clubs open (generally from around midnight or 1am to around 5am or 6am).

Reviews in this guidebook won't list business hours unless they differ from these standards.

CHILDREN Practicalities

As a rule Spaniards are very friendly to children. Any child whose hair is less than jet black will be dubbed *rubio/rubia* (blond/e). Accompanied children are welcome at all kinds of accommodation, as well as in many cafés, bars and restaurants, where outside tables often allow kids a bit of space and freedom while the grown-ups sit and eat or drink. Spanish children stay up late and at fiestas it's common to see even tiny ones toddling the streets at 2am or 3am. Visiting kids like this idea too – but can't always cope with it quite so readily.

Always make a point of asking staff at tourist offices if they know of family activities and for suggestions on hotels that cater for kids. Discounts are available for children (usually under 12) on public transport and for admission to sights. Those under four generally go free.

You can hire car seats for infants and children from most car-rental firms, but you should always book them in advance. You cannot rely on restaurants having high chairs and few have nappy-changing facilities. In better hotels you can generally arrange for childcare and in some places child-minding agencies cater to temporary visitors.

You can buy baby formula in powder or liquid form, as well as sterilising solutions such as Milton, at *farmacias* (pharmacies). Disposable nappies (diapers) are widely available at supermarkets and *farmacias*. Fresh cow's milk is sold in cartons and plastic bottles in supermarkets in big cities, but can be hard to find in small towns, where UHT is often the only option.

Sights & Activities

As well as the obvious attractions of beaches (and all the seaside activities), swimming pools and playgrounds, there are plenty of other good options for kids. Aquaparks, zoos and aquariums are generally winners. Barcelona's L'Aquàrium (p291), with its extraordinary walk-through shark-infested tunnel, is one of the best in all Europe.

Most kids and not a few adults succumb to the siren call of extravagant theme parks like Catalonia's Port Aventura (p392) or Terra Mítica in Benidorm (p615). On a slightly different note are Mini Hollywood (p803) and other Western movie sets in the Almería desert.

Keep an eye out for sights that might be of special interest to children. Castles, of which Spain is full (they are especially numerous across the two Castillas), are often the easiest sights to sell to young ones.

Certain museums will also interest children. The Museu Maritim (p285) and CosmoCaixa (p296) interactive science museum in Barcelona, for instance, have imaginative and engaging displays. Equally, Valencia's Ciudad de las Artes y las Ciencias (p581) is a magnificent attraction.

Football-addicted youngsters (and many of their parents) will probably want to visit either FC Barcelona's Camp Nou (p298) or Real Ma-

drid's Santiago Bernabéu (p162) football stadiums or, better still, go to a match.

Most younger children are fascinated by the ubiquitous street-corner *kioscos* selling sweets or *gusanitos* (corn puffs) for a few *céntimos*. The magnetism of these places often overcomes a child's inhibitions enough for them to carry out their own first Spanish transactions. Town fairs and festivals are also great fun for kids.

For further information, see Lonely Planet's *Travel with Children* or visit the websites www.travelwithyourkids.com and www.familytravelnetwork.com.

CLIMATE CHARTS

The *meseta* (high tableland of central Spain) and Ebro basin have a continental climate: scorching in summer, cold in winter, and dry. Madrid regularly freezes in December, January and February, and temperatures climb above 30°C in July and August. Valladolid on the northern *meseta* and Zaragoza in the Ebro basin are even drier, with only around 300mm of rain a year (little more than Alice Springs in Australia). The Guadalquivir basin in Andalucía is only a little wetter and positively broils in high summer, with temperatures of 35°C-plus in Seville that kill people every year.

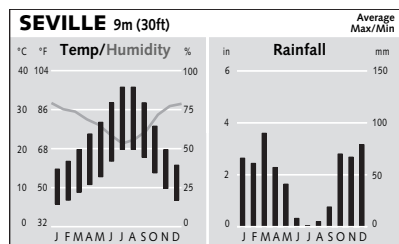
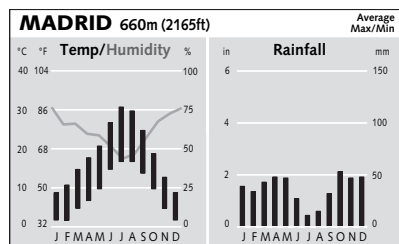
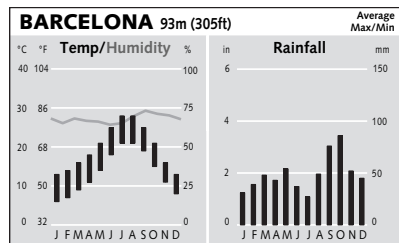
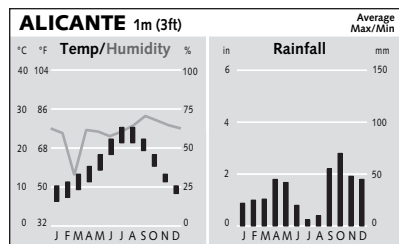
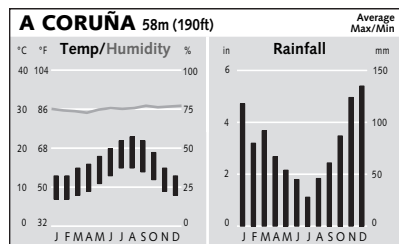
The Pyrenees and the Cordillera Cantábrica, backing the Bay of Biscay, bear the brunt of cold northern and northwestern airstreams, which bring moderate temperatures and heavy rainfall (three or four times as much as Madrid's) to the north coast. Even in high summer you never know when you might get a shower.

The Mediterranean coast and Balearic Islands get a little more rain than Madrid, and the south can be even hotter in summer. The Mediterranean, particularly around Alicante, also provides Spain's warmest waters (reaching 27°C or so in August). Barcelona's weather is typical of the coast – milder than in inland cities but more humid.

In general you can usually rely on pleasant or hot temperatures just about everywhere from April to early November. In Andalucía there are plenty of warm, sunny days right through winter. In July and August, temperatures can get unpleasantly hot inland.

Snowfalls in the mountains can start as early as October and some snow cover lasts all year on the highest peaks.

For more tips on the best times to travel see p21.



COURSES

A spot of study in Spain is an excellent way to meet people – Spaniards as well as other travellers – and learn something more about the country and culture. More than anything else, people are drawn to Spain from all over Europe and North America for language courses – after all, Spanish is the world's third most spoken tongue after Chinese and English!

The **Instituto Cervantes** (www.cervantes.es), with branches in over 30 cities around the world, promotes the Spanish language and culture. It's mainly involved in Spanish teaching and in library and information services. The institute's London branch has a **library** (☎ 020-7235 0353; 102 Eaton Sq, London SW1 W9AN) with a wide range of reference books, periodicals, videos and DVDs (including feature films), language-teaching material, electronic databases and music CDs. You can find more addresses on the institute's website. It can send you long lists of places offering Spanish-language courses in Spain. Some Spanish embassies and consulates can also provide information on courses.

A number of Spanish universities offer good-value language courses. Barcelona (p311), Granada (p778), Madrid (p141), Salamanca (p187) and Seville (p700) are popular locations. The **Escuela Oficial de Idiomas** (EOI; www.eoifinet.com) is a nationwide language institution where you can learn Spanish and locals other languages. Classes can be large and busy but are generally fairly cheap. There are branches in many major cities. On the website's opening page, hit EOIs en la Red to get to a list of schools.

Private language schools as well as universities cater for a wide range of levels, course lengths, times of year, intensity and special requirements. Many courses have a cultural component as well as language. University courses often last a semester, although some are as short as two weeks or as long as a year. Private colleges can be more flexible. One with a good reputation is **don Quijote** (www.donquijote.com), with branches in Barcelona, Granada, Madrid, Salamanca and Valencia.

Costs vary widely. A typical 40-hour course over two to four weeks will cost around €300 to €400 at a university. At private schools you could be looking at up to €1000 for a month of tuition at 30 hours a week. Accommodation can be arranged with families, or in student flats or residences. You might pay €450 per month in a shared student flat or €800 to €900 for full board with a family.

It's also worth finding out whether your course will lead to any formal certificate of competence. The **Diploma de Español como Lengua Extranjera (DELE)** is recognised by Spain's Ministry of Education and Science.

Of course, language is not the only learning route you can follow. You might join salsa classes in Barcelona, a flamenco school in Madrid or cooking courses in Valencia city.

CUSTOMS

Duty-free allowances for travellers entering Spain from outside the EU include 2L of wine (or 1L of wine and 1L of spirits), and 200 cigarettes or 50 cigars or 250g of tobacco.

There are no duty-free allowances for travel between EU countries but equally no restrictions on the import of duty-paid items into Spain from other EU countries for personal use. You *can* buy VAT-free articles at airport shops when travelling between EU countries.

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Spain is generally a pretty safe country. The main thing to be wary of is petty theft (which may of course not seem so petty if your passport, cash, travellers cheques, credit card and camera go missing). Most visitors to Spain never feel remotely threatened, but a sufficient number have unpleasant experiences to warrant an alert. What follows is intended as a strong warning rather than alarmism.

Scams

There must be 50 ways to lose your wallet. As a general rule, talented petty thieves work in groups and capitalise on distraction. More imaginative strikes include someone dropping a milk mixture on to the victim from a balcony. Immediately a concerned citizen comes up to help you brush off what you assume to be pigeon poo, and thus suitably occupied you don't notice the contents of your pockets slipping away.

Beware: not all thieves look like thieves. Watch out for an old classic: the ladies offering flowers for good luck. We don't know how they do it, but if you get too involved in a friendly chat with these people, your pockets always wind up empty.

On some highways, especially the AP7 from the French border to Barcelona, bands of delinquents occasionally operate. Beware of men trying to distract you in rest areas and

don't stop along the highway if people driving alongside indicate you have a problem with the car. While one inspects the rear of the car with you, his pals will empty your vehicle. They have even been reported puncturing tyres of cars stopped in rest areas, then following and 'helping' the victim when they stop to change the wheel. Hire cars and those with foreign plates are especially targeted. When you do call in at highway rest stops, try to park close to the buildings and leave nothing of value in view.

Even parking your car can be fraught. In some towns fairly dodgy self-appointed parking attendants operate in central areas where you may want to park. They will direct you frantically to a spot. If possible, ignore them and find your own. If unavoidable, you may well want to pay them some token not to scratch or otherwise damage your vehicle after you've walked away. You definitely don't want to leave anything visible in the car (or open the boot/trunk if you intend to leave luggage or anything else in it) under these circumstances.

Terrorism

International terrorism struck with a vengeance in Madrid in March 2004 when a series of bombs placed by suspected Al-Qaeda members ruptured three early-morning commuter trains and left 190 people dead.

But Spain has long had its own home-grown terrorism problem. The Basque terrorist organisation ETA frequently issues chilling warnings to tourists to stay away from Spain, but there were cautious hopes about a possible peace settlement after the organisation declared an indefinite, nationwide ceasefire in early 2006.

Repeated arrests of ETA members and a tough stance by the central government and French authorities seem to have dented the group's capacity to strike. Whether the ceasefire is a genuine first step to peace or a time-gaining tactic remains to be seen.

Overall, the chances of being in the wrong place at the wrong time is not much greater nowadays than any other Western country.

Theft & Loss

Theft is mostly a risk in tourist resorts, big cities and when you first arrive in the country or at a new city and may be off your guard. You are at your most vulnerable when dragging

around luggage to or from your hotel. Barcelona, Madrid and Seville have the worst reputations for theft and, on isolated occasions, muggings.

The main things to guard against are pick-pockets, bag snatchers and theft from cars. Theft can occur around the sights and areas frequented by tourists, on the metro (trains and stations) and at main points of arrival. Some thieves operate in groups and have no scruples about attacking in broad daylight in crowded areas. Unfortunately, police are thin on the ground and generally seem fairly blasé about such incidents (they've seen it all before and know they can do little).

Carry valuables under your clothes if possible – not in a back pocket, a day pack or anything that can easily be snatched away. Don't leave baggage unattended and avoid crushes (eg on public transport). Be cautious with people who start talking to you for no obviously good reason. This could be an attempt to distract you and make you an easier victim. Ignore demands to see your passport unless they come from a uniformed police officer; some gangs recycle stolen passports. Keep a firm grip on day packs and bags at all times.

Always remove the radio and cassette player from your car and never leave any belongings visible when you leave the car.

Anything left lying on the beach can disappear in a flash when your back is turned. Avoid dingy, empty city alleys and backstreets, or anywhere that just doesn't feel 100% safe, at night.

You can also help yourself by not leaving anything valuable lying around your room, above all in any hostel-type place. Use a safe if one is available.

Report thefts to the national police. You are unlikely to recover your goods but you need to make this formal *denuncia* for insurance purposes. To avoid endless queues at the *comisaría* (police station), you can make the report by phone (% 902 102112) in various languages or on the Web at www.policia.es (click on Denuncias). The following day you go to the station of your choice to pick up and sign the report, without queuing.

If your passport has gone, contact your embassy or consulate for help in issuing a replacement. Embassies and consulates can also give help of various kinds in other emergencies, but as a rule cannot advance you money to get home. Many countries have consulates

in a few cities around Spain (such as Alicante, Barcelona, Málaga, Palma de Mallorca, Seville and Valencia), and your embassy can tell you where the nearest one is (see opposite).

DISCOUNT CARDS

At museums, never hesitate to ask if there are discounts for students, young people, children, families or seniors.

Senior Cards

There are reduced prices for people over 60, 63 or 65 (depending on the place) at various museums and attractions (sometimes restricted to EU citizens only) and occasionally on transport. You should also seek information in your own country on travel packages and discounts for senior travellers, through senior citizens organisations and travel agents.

Student & Youth Cards

At some sights discounts (usually half the normal fee) are available to students and people under 18. You will need some kind of identification to prove age or student status. An ISIC (International Student Identity Card; www.isic.org) may come in handy (there is also a teachers' version, ITIC) for travel discounts but is not accepted at many sights.

You'll have more luck with a Euro<26 (www.euro26.org) card (known as Carnet Joven in Spain), which is useful for those under 26. For instance, Euro<26 card holders enjoy 20% or 25% off most 2nd-class train fares; 10% or 20% off many Trasmediterránea ferries and some bus fares; good discounts at some museums; and discounts of up to 20% at some youth hostels.

For nonstudent travellers under 25 there is also the International Youth Travel Card (IYTC; www.istc.org), which offers similar benefits.

Student cards are issued by hostelling organisations, student unions and some youth travel agencies worldwide.

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

Spanish Embassies & Consulates

To find the details of any Spanish embassy or consulate, check out the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Web page (www.mae.es), click on Servicios Consulares and then choose the country you want. Among those with representation are:

Andorra (% 800 030; Carrer Prat de la Creu 34, Andorra la Vella)

Australia Canberra (% 02-6273 3555; www.embaspain.au; 15 Arkana St, Yarralumla ACT 2600); Melbourne (% 03-9347 1966; 146 Elgin St, Vic 3053); Sydney (% 02-9261 2433; Level 24, St Martin's Tower, 31 Market St, NSW 2000)

Canada Ottawa (% 613-747 2252; www.embaspain.ca; 74 Stanley Ave, Ontario K1M 1P4); Montreal (% 514-935 5235; Ste 1456, 1 Westmount Sq, Québec H3Z 2P9); Toronto (% 416-977 1661; Simcoe Pl, Ste 2401, 200 Front St, Ontario M5V 3K2)

France (% 01 44 43 18 00; www.amb-espagne.fr; 22 Ave Marceau, 75008 Paris)

Germany Berlin (% 030-254 00 70; www.spanische.botschaft.de; Lichtensteinallee 1, 10787); Düsseldorf (% 0211-43 90 80; Hombergerstr 16, 40474); Frankfurt am Main (% 069-959 16 60; Nibelungenplatz 3, 60318); Munich (% 089-998 47 90; Oberföhringerstr 45, 81925)

Ireland (% 01-269 1640; 17A Meryln Park, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4)

Japan (% 03-3583 8533; embesjp@mail.mae.es; 1-3-29 Roppongi Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-0032)

Morocco Rabat (% 07-63 39 00; emb.rabat@mae.es; rue Ain Khalouiya, Route des Zaers, Km5.3, Souissi); Casablanca (% 02-22 07 52; 31 rue d'Alger); Tangier (% 09-93 70 00; 85 Ave Président Habib Bourghiba)

Netherlands (% 070-302 49 99; www.claboral.nl; Lange Voorhout 50, The Hague 2514 EG)

New Zealand See Australia

Portugal (% 01-347 2381; embespt@correo.mae.es; Rua do Salitre 1, Lisbon 1269-052)

UK London (% 020-7235 5555; spain.embassyhomepage.com; 39 Chesham Pl, SW1X 8SB); Edinburgh (% 0131-220 1843; 63 North Castle St, EH2 3LJ); London consulate (% 020-7589 8989; 20 Draycott Pl, SW3 2RZ); Manchester (% 0161-236 1262; 1a Brook House, 70 Spring Gardens, M2 2BQ)

USA Washington DC (% 202-728 2340; www.spainemb.org; 2375 Pennsylvania Ave NW, 20037); Boston (% 617-536 2506); Chicago (% 312-782 4588); Houston (% 713-783 6200); Los Angeles (% 213-938 0158); Miami (% 305-446 5511); New York (% 212-355 4080); San Francisco (% 415-922 2995)

Embassies & Consulates in Spain

The embassies are in Madrid. Some countries also maintain consulates in major cities, particularly in Barcelona. Embassies and consulates include:

Australia Madrid (Map p113; % 91 353 66 00; www.spain.embassy.gov.au; Plaza del Descubridor Diego de Ordás 3); Barcelona (Map pp272-3; % 93 490 90 13; Plaça de Gal. la Placidia 1)

Canada Madrid (Map p120; % 91 423 32 50; www.canada-es.org; Calle de Núñez de Balboa 35); Barcelona (Map pp268-9; % 93 204 27 00; Carrer d'Elisenda de Pinós 10; FGC Reina Elisenda)

France Madrid (Map p120; % 91 423 89 00; www.ambafrance-es.org; Calle de Salustiano Olózaga 9); Barcelona (Map pp274-5; % 93 270 30 00; Ronda de l'Universitat 22B)

Germany Madrid (Map p120; % 91 557 90 00; www.embajada-alemania.es; Calle de Fortuny 8); Barcelona (Map pp272-3; % 93 292 10 00; Passeig de Gràcia 111)

Ireland Madrid (Map pp114-15; % 91 436 40 93; embajada@irlanda.es; Paseo de la Castellana 46); Barcelona (Map pp268-9; % 93 491 50 21; Gran Via de Carles III 94)

Japan (Map p113; % 91 590 76 00; www.es.emb-japan.go.jp; Calle de Serrano 109)

Morocco (Map p113; % 91 563 10 90; www.mae.gov.ma/madrid; Calle de Serrano 179)

Netherlands Madrid (Map p112; % 91 353 75 00; www.embajadapaisesbajos.es; Avenida del Comandante Franco 32); Barcelona (Map pp268-9; % 93 363 54 20; www.cgholbar.org; Avinguda Diagonal 601); Palma de Mallorca (Map p633; % 971 71 64 93; Calle de San Miquel 36)

New Zealand Madrid (Map p125; % 91 523 02 26; www.nzembassy.com; Plaza de la Lealtad 2); Barcelona (Map pp272-3; % 93 209 03 99; Travessera de Gràcia 64)

Portugal (Map pp114-15; % 91 782 49 60; www.embajadaportugal-madrid.org; Calle del Pinar 1)

UK Madrid (Map p120; % 91 700 82 00; www.ukinspain.com; Calle de Fernando el Santo 16); Consulate (Map p120; % 91 524 97 00; Paseo de Recoletos 7/9); Barcelona (Map pp272-3; % 93 366 62 00; Avinguda Diagonal 477); Palma de Mallorca (Map p633; % 971 71 24 45; Plaza Mayor 3D)

USA Madrid (Map pp114-15; % 91 587 22 00; www.embusa.es; Calle de Serrano 75); Barcelona (Map pp268-9; % 93 280 02 95; Passeig de la Reina Elisenda de Montcada 23-25; FGC Reina Elisenda) Consular Agencies in A Coruña, Fuengirola, Palma de Mallorca, Sevilla and Valencia.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Spaniards like nothing more than indulging in their love of colour, noise, crowds, dressing up and partying at innumerable local fiestas (festivals) and *ferias* (fairs); even small villages will have at least one, probably several, during the year, all with unique twists and local peculiarities. Many fiestas are religion-based but are celebrated with an earthy party spirit. A few of the most outstanding include the following:

January**Festividad de San Sebastián** (p469; 20 January)

During this festival everyone in San Sebastián dresses up and goes berserk.

February–March

Carnaval This event involves several days of fancy-dress parades and merrymaking. It is at its wildest in Cádiz (p718) and Sitges (p335), but is also good in Ciudad Rodrigo (p192). It usually ends just before Lent, on the Tuesday 47 days before Easter Sunday.

March

Las Fallas (15-19 March) This festival consists of several days of all-night dancing and drinking, first-class fireworks and processions. Its principal stage is Valencia city (p587), but it is also celebrated in Gandia (p610) and Benidorm (p613). The festivities culminate in the ritual burning of (sometimes enormous) effigies in the streets.

Semana Santa (Holy Week) The week leading up to Easter Sunday entails parades of *pasos* (holy images) and huge crowds. It is most extravagantly celebrated in Seville (see p701), but is also big in Málaga (p747), Córdoba (p765), Toledo (p247), Ávila (p179), Valladolid (p200) and Zamora (p206). Holy Week can also fall in April or across the two months.

April

Moros y Cristianos (p623; 22-24 April). Colourful parades and 'battles' between Christian and Muslim 'armies' in Alcoy, near Alicante, make this one of the most spectacular of several similar events in Valencia and Alicante provinces through the year.

Feria de Abril (p700; late April) This is a week-long party in Seville held after the religious fervour of Semana Santa.

Romería de la Virgen de la Cabeza (p790; last Sunday in April) Hundreds of thousands of people make a mass pilgrimage to the Santuario de la Virgen de la Cabeza near Andújar, in Jaén province.

May

Feria del Caballo (p726; early May) A colourful equestrian fair in Andalucía's horse capital, Jerez de la Frontera. **Concurso de Patios Cordobeses** (p764; early to mid-May) Scores of beautiful private courtyards are opened to the public for two weeks in Córdoba.

Fiesta de San Isidro (p143; 15 May) Madrid's major fiesta features bullfights, parades, concerts and more. Some of the events, such as the bullfighting season, last a month.

May/June

Romería del Rocío (p712) Focused on Pentecost weekend, the seventh after Easter, this is a festive pilgrimage by up to one million people to the shrine of the Virgin at the Andalusian village of El Rocío.

Corpus Christi (Thursday of the ninth week after Easter)

Religious processions and celebrations in Toledo (p247) and other cities.

June

Hogueras de San Juan (23 June) Midsummer bonfires and fireworks, notably along the southeastern and southern coasts, on the eve of the Fiesta de San Juan (24 June). Celebrated with particular gusto in Ciutadella, Menorca (p668).

July

Fiesta de San Fermín or Sanfermines (p482; 6-14 July) For many the highlight of this week-long nonstop festival and party is the *encierro* (running of the bulls) in Pamplona, an activity also pursued in dozens of other cities and towns through the summer.

Día de la Virgen del Carmen (16 July) Around this date at most coastal towns, the image of the patron of fisher folk is carried into the sea or paraded on it amid a flotilla of small boats.

Día de Santiago (p545; Feast of St James; 25 July) This is the national saint's day and is spectacularly celebrated in Santiago de Compostela, site of his tomb.

August

Semana Grande or Aste Nagusia Dates vary from place to place for this week of general celebration, heavy drinking and bad hangovers on the north coast.

La Tomatina (p594; second-last or last Wednesday in August) This massive tomato-throwing festival in Buñol, Valencia, must be one of the messiest festivals in the country.

September

Festes de la Mercè (p312; around 24 September) Barcelona's gigantic party marks the end of summer and is held over four days with parades, concerts, theatre, fire-running and more.

FOOD

Glorious food. There's plenty of it in Spain and the regional variety is remarkable. From myriad seafood curiosities in Galicia to the venison of Castilla and the avant-garde *nueva cocina* that's cooking in Barcelona, Madrid and the Basque Country, Spain offers no shortage of surprises. For an overview of what's in store in Spain's kitchens, see p99.

In the course of this guidebook we provide a broad selection of eateries. In order to provide a guide to what you might pay for your grub, we divide listings into budget (up to €15 for a full meal), midrange (€16 to €50) and top end (€50 and up). On some

occasions, dining listings have been ordered by type (café, restaurant etc) and this division is based on the situation in the bigger cities. You may well find yourself eating like royalty in out-of-the-way towns and spending less than this split would indicate. A budget place in Madrid might well cost the same as a lower midrange joint in Murcia.

GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

Homosexuality is legal in Spain and the age of consent is 13, as for heterosexuals. In 2005, the Socialist president, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, gave the country's conservative Catholic foundations a shake with the legalisation of same sex marriages in Spain.

Lesbians and gay men generally keep a fairly low profile, but are more open in the cities. Madrid, Barcelona, Sitges, Torremolinos and Ibiza have particularly lively scenes. Sitges is a major destination on the international gay party circuit; gays take a leading role in the wild Carnaval there in February/March (p335). As well, there are gay parades, marches and events in several cities on and around the last Saturday in June, when Madrid's gay and lesbian pride march takes place (p143).

Worth looking for is *Guía Gay de España*, a countrywide guide published by Shangay, a gay publishing group, and *El País* for gay and gay-friendly bars, restaurants, hotels and shops around the country.

A couple of informative free magazines are in circulation in gay bookshops and gay and gay-friendly bars. One is the biweekly *Shangay-guide*. It is jammed with listings and contact ads and aimed principally at readers in Barcelona and Madrid. The monthly *MENSUAL* (€2) is available at newsstands. There is a Web version at www.mensual.com.

For more information, check out the following sites on the internet:

Chueca.com (www.chueca.com) You have to become a member of Chueca XL (€20 a year) if you want to access the site's Guía Nocturna for bars and clubs.

Coordinadora Gai-Lesbiana (www.cogailles.org) A good site presented by Barcelona's main gay and lesbian organisation, with nationwide links. Here you can zero in on information ranging from bar, sauna and hotel listings through to contacts pages.

Corazon Gay (www.corazongay.com in Spanish) Gay personals and internet search engine.

GayBarcelona.Net (www.gaybarcelona.net in Spanish) News and views and an extensive listings section covering bars, saunas, shops and more in Barcelona and Sitges.

Gays Abroad (www.gays-abroad.com) For gay men moving to Barcelona.

LesboNet.Org (www.lesbonet.org in Spanish) A lesbian site with contacts, forums and listings.

Nación Gay (www.naciongay.com in Spanish) News on the gay community across Spain.

Voz Gay (www.vozgay.com in Spanish) A Spanish community website with listings for the whole country.

Organisations

Casal Lambda (Map pp274-5; ☎ 93 319 55 50; www.lambdaweb.org; Carrer de Verdaguera i Callis 10). A gay and lesbian social, cultural and information centre in Barcelona.

Colectivo de Gais y Lesbianas de Madrid (Map pp122-3; ☎ 91 523 00 70; www.cogam.org; Calle de la Puebla 9) Has an information office and social centre.

Coordinadora Gai-Lesbiana (Map pp268-9; ☎ 93 298 00 29; www.cogailles.org; Carrer de Finlàndia 45). Barcelona's main coordinating body for gay and lesbian groups. It also runs an information line, the Línia Rosa (☎ 900 601601).

Fundación Triángulo (Map pp114-15; ☎ 91 593 05 40; www.fundaciontriangulo.es; Calle de Eloy Gonzalo 25) Another source of information on gay issues in Madrid.

HOLIDAYS

The two main periods when Spaniards go on holiday are Semana Santa (the week leading up to Easter Sunday) and August. At these times accommodation in resorts can be scarce and transport heavily booked, but other places are often half-empty.

There are at least 14 official holidays a year – some observed nationwide, some locally. When a holiday falls close to a weekend, Spaniards like to make a *puente* (bridge), meaning they take the intervening day off too. Occasionally when some holidays fall close, they make an *acueducto* (aqueduct)! National holidays are:

Año Nuevo (New Year's Day) 1 January

Viernes Santo (Good Friday) March/April

Fiesta del Trabajo (Labour Day) 1 May

La Asunción (Feast of the Assumption) 15 August

Fiesta Nacional de España (National Day) 12 October

La Inmaculada Concepción (Feast of the Immaculate Conception) 8 December

Navidad (Christmas) 25 December

Regional governments set five holidays and local councils two more. Common dates for widely observed holidays include:

Epifanía (Epiphany) or **Día de los Reyes Magos** (Three Kings' Day) 6 January

Día de San José (St Joseph's Day) 19 March

Jueves Santo (Good Thursday) March/April. Not observed in Catalonia and Valencia.

Corpus Christi June. This is the Thursday after the eighth Sunday after Easter Sunday.

Día de San Juan Bautista (Feast of St John the Baptist) 24 June

Día de Santiago Apóstol (Feast of St James the Apostle) 25 July

Día de la Constitución (Constitution Day) 6 December

INSURANCE

A travel-insurance policy to cover theft, loss and medical problems is a good idea. It may also cover you for cancellation or delays to your travel arrangements. Paying for your ticket with a credit card can often provide limited travel-accident insurance and you may be able to reclaim the payment if the operator doesn't deliver. Ask your credit card company what it will cover. Worldwide travel insurance is available at www.lonelyplanet.com/travel_services. You can buy, extend and claim online anytime – even if you're on the road.

For details of car and health insurance, respectively, see p870 and p874.

INTERNET ACCESS

Travelling with a laptop is a great way to stay in touch with life back home. Make sure you have a universal AC adapter, a two-pin plug adapter for Europe and a reputable 'global' modem if you plan to use dial-up. Spanish telephone sockets are the US RJ-11 type. Most laptops now come equipped with wi-fi, meaning you can log on to hotspots where they're available. These are still thin on the ground in Spain, and in many cases (such as in airports) you must pay a fee to access the internet this way.

The number of hotels equipped with internet availability (in rooms or in the foyer) is growing. Hotels in this guide with such services are indicated with an icon (i). For more details on travelling with a portable computer, see www.teleadapt.com.

If you intend to rely on cybercafés, you'll need three pieces of information: your incoming (POP or IMAP) mail-server name, your account name and your password. Most travellers make constant use of internet cafés and free Web-based email such as Yahoo (www.yahoo.com) or Hotmail (www.hotmail.com). You typically have to pay about €1.50 to €3 per hour to go online in most cybercafés.

Check out the following websites on p23 before arriving in Spain.

LEGAL MATTERS

If you're arrested you will be allotted the free services of an *abogado de oficio* (duty solicitor), who may speak only Spanish. You're also entitled to make a phone call. If you use this to contact your embassy or consulate, the staff will probably be able to do no more than refer you to a lawyer who speaks your language. If you end up in court, the authorities are obliged to provide a translator.

In theory, you are supposed to have your national ID card or passport with you at all times. If asked for it by the police, you are supposed to be able to produce it on the spot. In practice it is rarely an issue and many people choose to leave passports in hotel safes.

Drugs

The only legal drug is cannabis and only for personal use, which means very small amounts. Public consumption of any drug is illegal, although in a few bars you may find people smoking joints openly. Travellers entering Spain from Morocco should be prepared for drug searches, especially if they have a vehicle.

Police

Spain is well endowed with police forces. The *Policia Local* or *Policia Municipal* operates at a local level and deals with such issues as traffic infringements and minor crime. If your car has been towed, it's because these guys called up a tow truck.

The *Policia Nacional* is the state police force, dealing with major crime and operating primarily in the cities. The military-linked *Guardia Civil* (created in the 19th century to deal with banditry) is largely responsible for highway patrols, borders and security, and often has a presence in more remote areas where there is no *comisaria* (*Policia Nacional* station). They

LEGAL AGE

- The right to vote: 18 years old
- Age of consent: 13 years old (heterosexual and homosexual)
- Driving age: 18 years old

Travellers should note that they can be prosecuted under the laws of their home country regarding age of consent, even when abroad.

also deal with major crime and terrorism, and there is frequently an overlap (and occasional bickering) with the *Policia Nacional*.

Just to complicate matters, several regions have their own police forces, such as the *Mossos d'Esquadra* in Catalonia and the *Ertaintxa* in the Basque Country.

MAPS

Make sure you get a hold of the latest versions of country maps, as a series of highway code changes in 2004 caused some confusion for a while.

City Maps

For finding your way around cities, the free maps handed out by tourist offices are often adequate, although more detailed maps are sold widely in bookshops. The best Spanish series of maps are produced by Telstar, Alpina and Everest, while Lonely Planet produces a sturdy and helpful *Barcelona City Map*.

Small-Scale Maps

Some of the best maps for travellers are by Michelin, which produces the 1:1,000,000 *Spain Portugal* map and six 1:400,000 regional maps covering the whole country. These are all pretty accurate, even down to the state of minor country roads, are frequently updated and detailed, yet easy to read. They're widely available in Spain. Also good are the GeoCenter maps published by Germany's RV Verlag.

Probably the best physical map of Spain is *Península Ibérica, Baleares y Canarias* published by the Centro Nacional de Información Geográfica (CNIG), the publishing arm of the Instituto Geográfico Nacional (IGN). Ask for it in good bookshops.

Walking Maps

Useful for hiking and exploring some areas (particularly in the Pyrenees) are Editorial Alpina's *Guía Cartográfica* and *Guía Excursionista y Turística* series. The series combines information booklets in Spanish (and sometimes Catalan) with detailed maps at scales ranging from 1:25,000 (1cm to 250m) to 1:50,000 (1cm to 500m). They are an indispensable hiker's tool but have their inaccuracies. The Institut Cartogràfic de Catalunya puts out some decent maps for hiking in the Catalan Pyrenees that are often better than their Editorial Alpina counterparts. Remember that for

hiking only maps scaled at 1:25,000 are seriously useful. The CNIG also covers most of the country in 1:25,000 sheets.

You can often pick up Editorial Alpina publications and CNIG maps at bookshops near trekking areas, and at specialist bookshops such as *Llibreria Desnivel* (☎ 91 369 47 27; www.libreriadensnivel.com; Plaza de Matute 6) or *Altair* (☎ 93 342 71 71; www.altair.es; Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes 616) or *Quera* (☎ 93 318 07 43; Carrer de Petritxol 2) in Barcelona. Some map specialists in other countries, such as *Stanfords* (☎ 020-7836 1321; www.stanfords.co.uk; 12-14 Long Acre, London WC2E 9LP) in the UK, also have a good range of Spain maps.

MONEY

As in 12 other EU nations, the euro is Spain's currency. The euro is divided into 100 cents. Coin denominations are one, two, five, 10, 20 and 50 cents, €1 and €2. The notes are €5, €10, €20, €50, €100, €200 and €500.

Exchange rates are given on the inside front cover of this book and a guide to costs can be found on p21.

Spain's international airports have bank branches, ATMs and exchange offices. They're less frequent at road crossings now as Spain's neighbours – Andorra, Portugal and France – all use the euro. If you're coming from Morocco, get rid of any dirham before you leave.

Banks and building societies tend to offer the best exchange rates, and are plentiful: even small villages often have at least one. They mostly open from about 8.30am to 2pm Monday to Friday. Some also open Thursday evening (about 4pm to 7pm) or Saturday morning (9am to 1pm). Ask about commissions before changing (especially in exchange bureaux).

Prices in this guidebook are quoted in euros (€), unless otherwise stated.

ATMs

Many credit and debit cards (Visa and MasterCard are the most widely accepted) can be used for withdrawing money from *cajeros automáticos* (automatic telling machines). This is handy because many banks do not offer an over-the-counter-cash advance service on foreign cards (and where they do, the process can be wearisome). The exchange rate used for credit and debit card transactions is usually more in your favour than that for cash exchanges. Bear in mind, however, the costs involved. There is usually a charge (hovering

around 1.5% to 2%) on ATM cash withdrawals abroad. This charge will appear on your statements.

Cash

There is little advantage in bringing foreign cash into Spain. True, exchange commissions are often lower than for travellers cheques, but the danger of losing the lot far outweighs such gains.

Credit & Debit Cards

You can use plastic to pay for many purchases (including meals and rooms, especially from the middle price-range up). You'll often be asked to show your passport or some other form of identification when using cards. Among the most widely accepted are: Visa, MasterCard, American Express (Amex), Cirrus, Maestro, Plus, Diners Club and JCB. Many institutions add 2.5% or more to all transactions (cash advance or purchases) on cards used abroad – this charge does not generally appear on your bank statements.

If your card is lost, stolen or swallowed by an ATM, you can telephone toll free to have an immediate stop put on its use. For MasterCard the number in Spain is % 900 971231; for Visa % 900 991124; for Amex % 900 994426; and for Diners Club % 901 101011.

Moneychangers

As well as at banks, you can exchange both cash and travellers cheques at exchange offices – usually indicated by the word *cambio* (exchange). They abound in tourist resorts and other places that attract high numbers of foreigners. Generally they offer longer opening hours and quicker service than banks, but worse exchange rates. Their commissions are, on occasion, outrageous.

Taxes & Refunds

In Spain, value-added tax (VAT) is known as IVA (*ee-ba; impuesto sobre el valor añadido*). On accommodation and restaurant prices, it's 7% and is often included in quoted prices. On retail goods and car hire, IVA is 16%. To ask 'Is IVA included?', say *¿Está incluido el IVA?*

Visitors are entitled to a refund of the 16% IVA on purchases costing more than €90.16 from any shop if they are taking them out of the EU within three months. Ask the shop for a cash back (or similar) refund form showing

the price and IVA paid for each item, and identifying the vendor and purchaser. Then present the refund form to the customs booth for IVA refunds at the airport, port or border from which you leave the EU. This works best at airports, where you will need your passport and a boarding card that shows you are leaving the EU. The officer will stamp the invoice and you hand it in at a specified bank at the departure point for immediate reimbursement. Otherwise you will have to send the forms off from your home country and have the amount credited to your credit card.

Tipping

The law requires menu prices to include a service charge; tipping is a matter of choice. Most people leave some small change if they're satisfied: 5% is normally fine and 10% generous. Porters will generally be happy with €1. Taxi drivers don't have to be tipped, but a little rounding up won't go amiss.

Travellers Cheques

Travellers cheques usually bring only a slightly better exchange rate than cash, usually offset by the charges for buying them in the first place.

The advantage, of course, is that they protect your money because they can be replaced if lost or stolen. Visa, Amex and Travelex are widely accepted brands with (usually) efficient replacement policies. Amex offices will cash Amex travellers cheques commission-free – but you should always compare exchange rates with those offered in banks. Remember to take along your passport when you cash travellers cheques.

Get most of your cheques in fairly large denominations (the equivalent of €100 or more) to save on any per-cheque commission charges.

If you lose your Amex cheques, call a 24-hour freephone number (% 900 994426). For Visa cheques call % 900 948973; for MasterCard cheques call % 900 948971. It's vital to keep your initial receipt, and a record of your cheque numbers and the ones you have used, separate from the cheques themselves.

POST

The Spanish postal system, *Correos* (% 902 197197; www.correos.es), is generally reliable, if a little slow at times. Central post offices in most cities open around 8.30am to 10pm,

Monday to Saturday. Many branch post offices open 8am to 2pm, Monday to Friday, although there are variations depending on the branch.

Postal Rates & Services

A postcard or letter weighing up to 20g costs €0.57 from Spain to other European countries, and €0.78 to the rest of the world. The same would cost €2.77 and €2.98, respectively, for registered (*certificado*) mail. Sending such letters *urgente*, which means your mail may arrive two or three days sooner than usual, costs €2.89 and €2.75, respectively. You can send mail both *certificado* and *urgente* if you wish. Stamps for regular letters, including those being sent abroad, can also be bought at most tobacconists (*estancios*) – look for the 'Tabacos' sign.

Receiving Mail

Delivery times are similar to those for outbound mail. All Spanish addresses have five-digit postcodes; using postcodes will help your mail arrive more quickly.

Lista de correos (poste restante) mail can be addressed to you anywhere in Spain that has a post office. It will be delivered to the place's main post office, unless another is specified in the address. Take your passport when you pick up mail. A typical *lista de correos* address looks like this:

Jenny JONES
Lista de Correos
28080 Madrid
Spain

Sending Mail

Delivery times are erratic but ordinary mail to other Western European countries can take up to a week (although often as little as three days); to North America up to 10 days; and to Australia or New Zealand (NZ) up to two weeks.

SHOPPING

There are some excellent *mercadillos* and *rastreros* (flea markets) around the country, and craft shops can be found in many villages and towns. You may also pick up crafts at weekly or daily markets. The single most likely place you'll find any particular item in most cities is the nationwide department store El Corte Inglés.

Bargaining

Bargaining is not an option in department stores and high street shops. At markets and more souvenir-oriented stores you can try your luck (you've got nothing to lose, after all).

Clothes & Textiles

Label lovers and fashion victims can keep themselves well occupied in the big cities, such as Madrid and Barcelona, where local and international names present a broad range of options. Ibiza in summer is also a bit of a magnet for clubbing and summer-wear seekers.

Inexpensive rugs, blankets and hangings are made all over the country, notably in Andalucía and Galicia. In Andalucía head for Las Alpujarras and Níjar for colourful items. *Jarpas* (rugs) feature weft threads made of different types of cloth. Other textiles include lace tablecloths and pillowcases (especially from Galicia), and embroidery. Places particularly known for their embroidery include Segovia, La Alberca (Salamanca province), Carbajales (Zamora province), and Lagartera, Oropesa and Talavera (Toledo province).

In Andalucía, every major city centre has a cluster of flamenco shops, selling embroidered shawls, hand-painted fans, flat-top Cordoban hats and of course lots of flouncy dresses.

Leather

Prices of leather goods aren't as low as they used to be, but you can get good deals on jackets, bags, wallets, belts, shoes and boots in many places. Mallorca shoe brands like Camper and Farrutx have become international beacons – their products are stylish, moderately priced and, especially in the case of Camper, easily found all over Spain.

Pottery

Crockery, jugs, plant pots, window boxes and tiles are cheap. Islamic influence on design and colour is evident in much of the country. Original techniques include the use of metallic glazes and *cuerda seca* (dry cord), in which lines of manganese or fat are used to separate areas of different colour. Toledo, Talavera de la Reina, Seville, Granada and Úbeda are centres of production.

Other Crafts

Damascene weapons (made of steel encrusted with gold, silver or copper) are still being produced in Toledo. There is some very pleasing

woodwork available, such as Granada's marquetry boxes, tables and chess sets, some of which are inlaid with bone or mother-of-pearl. Baskets and furniture made from plant fibres are produced throughout Spain but are most common near the coasts.

SOLO TRAVELLERS

About the only real practical disadvantage of travelling solo in Spain is the cost of accommodation. As a rule, single rooms (or doubles let as single rooms) cost around two-thirds of the price of a double. Some hotels make little or no discount on double-room rates.

Females travelling alone shouldn't encounter problems either, at least in more travelled parts of Spain. In more out-of-the-way places, the sight of a lone female traveller may raise local eyebrows. You should be choosy about your accommodation too. Bottom-end fleapits with all-male staff can be insalubrious locations to bed down for the night. Lone women should also take care in city streets at night – stick with the crowds. Hitching for solo women travellers, while feasible, is risky.

TELEPHONE

The ubiquitous blue payphones are easy to use for international and domestic calls. They accept coins, phonecards (*tarjetas telefónicas*) issued by the national phone company Telefónica and, in some cases, various credit cards. Phonecards come in €6 and €12 denominations and, like postage stamps, are sold at post offices and tobacconists.

Public phones in bars and cafés, and telephones in hotel rooms, are almost always a good deal more expensive than street payphones.

TAKING YOUR MOBILE PHONE

If you plan to take your own mobile phone to Spain, check in advance with your mobile network provider that your phone is enabled for international roaming, which allows you to make and receive calls and messages abroad. Ask what you have to dial in order to use international roaming.

- Consider buying an alternative SIM card for use on a local network in Spain. If your phone is not blocked (check before leaving home), you can buy any local pay-as-you-go SIM card.
- Take an international adapter for the charger plug.
- Note your phone's number and serial number (IMEI number) and your operator's customer services number. This will help if your phone is stolen.
- For more advice on using mobile phones abroad go to www.ofcom.org.uk.

Mobile Phones

Spaniards adore *teléfonos móviles* (mobile or cell phones), and shops on every high street sell phones with prepaid cards. The most basic models of mobile phones start from around €80.

Spain uses GSM 900/1800, which is compatible with the rest of Europe and Australia but not with the North American GSM 1900 or the system used in Japan. (Some North Americans, however, have GSM 1900/900 phones that do work in Spain.)

You can rent a mobile phone by calling the Madrid-based **Cellphone Rental** (% 91 523 21 59, 656 266 844; www.onspanishtime.com/web). In Madrid, delivery and pick-up are done in person at a cost of US\$12 (US\$15 on weekends and holidays). Elsewhere in the country, it's delivered by courier (US\$25). The basic service costs US\$35 a week for the phone, plus postal costs (except in Madrid). You also pay US\$150 to discourage scarping with the phone. The whole operation is done on the Web.

Phone Codes

Dial the international access code (% 00 in most countries), followed by the code for Spain (% 34) and the full number (including the code, 91, which is an integral part of the number. For example to call the number % 91 455 67 83 in Madrid, you need to dial the international access code followed by % 34 91 455 67 83.

The access code for international calls from Spain is % 00. To make an international call, dial the access code, wait for a new dialling tone, then dial the country code, area code and number you want.

International collect calls are simple. Dial 900 followed by the code for the country you're calling:

Australia % 99 00 61

Canada % 99 00 15

France % 99 00 33

Germany % 99 00 49

Ireland % 99 03 53

Israel % 99 09 72

New Zealand % 99 00 64

UK for BT % 99 00 44

USA for AT&T % 99 00 11, for Sprint and various others

% 99 00 13

You'll get straight through to an operator in the country you're calling. The same numbers can be used with direct-dial calling cards.

If for some reason the above information doesn't work for you, in most places you can get an English-speaking Spanish international operator by dialling % 1008 (for calls within Europe) or % 1005 (rest of the world).

For international directory inquiries dial % 11825. Be warned: a call to this number costs €2!

Within Spain, you must always dial the full area code with the number. All numbers have nine digits and begin with 9. Dial % 1009 to speak to a domestic operator, including for a domestic reverse-charge (collect) call (*llamada por cobro revertido*). For national directory inquiries dial % 11818.

Mobile phone numbers start with 6. Numbers starting with 900 are national toll-free numbers, while those starting 901 to 905 come with varying conditions. A common one is 902, which is a national standard rate number. In a similar category are numbers starting with 803, 806 and 807.

Phonecards

Cut-rate prepaid phonecards can be good value for international calls. They can be bought from *estancos* (tobacconists) and newsstands in the main cities and tourist resorts. If possible, try to compare rates because some are better than others. *Locutorios* (private call centres) that specialise in cut-rate overseas calls have popped up all over the place in the centre of bigger cities. Again, compare rates – as a rule the phonecards are better value and generally more convenient.

TIME

Mainland Spain and the Balearic Islands have the same time as most of the rest of Western Europe: GMT/UTC plus one hour during winter and GMT/UTC plus two hours during the daylight-saving period, which runs from the last Sunday in March to the last Sunday in October.

The UK, Ireland, Portugal and the Canary Islands, a part of Spain in the Atlantic Ocean off the northwestern coast of Africa, are one hour behind mainland Spain. Morocco is on GMT/UTC year-round. From the last Sunday in March to the last Sunday in October, subtract two hours from Spanish time to get Moroccan time; the rest of the year, subtract one hour.

Spanish time is USA Eastern Time plus six hours, and USA Pacific Time plus nine hours.

During the Australian winter (Spanish summer), subtract eight hours from Australian Eastern Standard Time to get Spanish time; in the Australian summer subtract 10 hours. For information about other time zones and their relation to Spain, see the World Time Zones map on pp914–15.

Although the 24-hour clock is used in most official situations, you'll find people generally use the 12-hour clock in everyday conversation.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Local Tourist Offices

All cities and many smaller towns have an *oficina de turismo* or *oficina de información turística*. In the country's provincial capitals you'll sometimes find more than one tourist office – one specialising in information on the city alone, the other carrying mostly provincial or regional information. National and natural parks also often have visitor centres offering useful information. Their opening hours and quality of information vary widely.

Turespaña (www.spain.info, www.tourspain.es), the country's national tourism body, presents a variety of general information and links on the entire country in its Web pages. There is also a nationwide tourist information line in several languages, which might come in handy if you are calling from elsewhere in Spain. For basic information in Spanish, English, French and German call % 901 300600 from 9am to 10pm daily.

Tourist Offices Abroad

Information on Spain is available from the following branches of Turespaña abroad:

Canada (☎ 416-961 3131; www.tourspain.toronto.on.ca; 2 Bloor St W, Ste. 3042, Toronto M4W 3E2)

France (☎ 01 45 03 82 50; www.espagne.infotourisme.com; 43 rue Decamps, 75784 Paris)

Germany (☎ 030-882 6543; berlin@tourspain.es; Kurfürstendamm 63, 10707 Berlin) Branches in Düsseldorf, Frankfurt am Main and Munich.

Netherlands (☎ 070-346 59 00; www.spaansverkeersbureau.nl; Laan van Meerdervoor 8a, 2517 The Hague)

Portugal (☎ 21-354 1992; lisboa@tour.spain.es; Avenida Sidónio Pais 28 3° Dto, 1050-215 Lisbon)

UK (☎ 020-7486 8077; www.tourspain.co.uk; 2nd fl, 79 New Cavendish St, London W1W 6XB)

USA (☎ 212-265 8822; www.okspain.org; 666 Fifth Ave, 35th fl, New York, NY 10103) Branches in Chicago, Los Angeles and Miami.

TRAVELLERS WITH DISABILITIES

Spain is not overly disabled-friendly but some things are slowly changing. Disabled access to some museums, official buildings and hotels represents something of a sea change in local thinking, although it remains a minority phenomenon. In major cities more is slowly being done to facilitate disabled access to public transport and taxis. Where hotels and sights are said to be wheelchair accessible, we have marked them with an icon (♿). You need to be a little circumspect about hotels advertising themselves as disabled-friendly, as this can mean as little as wide doors to rooms and bathrooms, or other token efforts.

Organisations

Accessible Travel & Leisure (☎ 01452-729739; www.accessibletravel.co.uk; Avionics House, Naas Lane, Gloucester GL2 2SN) Claims to be the biggest UK travel agent dealing with travel for the disabled and encourages the disabled to travel independently.

Disability Now (☎ 020 7619 7323; www.disabilitynow.org.uk) Has a limited list of disabled-friendly accommodation in Spain.

ONCE (☎ 91 436 53 00; www.once.es; Calle de José Ortega y Gasset 18, Madrid) The Spanish association for the blind. You may be able to get hold of guides in Braille to a handful of cities, including Madrid and Barcelona, although they are not published every year.

Royal Association for Disability & Rehabilitation (RADAR); (☎ 020-7250 3222; www.radar.org.uk; Unit 12, City Forum, 250 City Rd, London EC1V 8AF) RADAR may be able to point you to useful organisations dealing with travel abroad for the disabled.

VISAS

Spain is one of 15 member countries of the Schengen Convention, an agreement whereby all the then EU member countries (except the UK and Ireland) plus Iceland and Norway abolished checks at internal borders in 2000. As of 1 January 2007, the EU is made up of 27 countries. For detailed information on the EU, including which countries are member states, visit <http://europa.eu.int>.

EU, Norwegian, Swiss and Icelandic nationals need no visa, regardless of the length or purpose of their visit to Spain. If they stay beyond 90 days, they are required to register with the police (although many do not). Legal residents of one Schengen country (regardless of their nationality) do not require a visa for another Schengen country.

Nationals of many other countries, including Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, NZ, Switzerland and the USA, do not need a visa for tourist visits of up to 90 days in Spain, although some of these nationalities may be subject to restrictions in other Schengen countries and should check with consulates of all Schengen countries they plan to visit. If you wish to work or study in Spain, you may need a specific visa, so contact a Spanish consulate before travel. If you are a citizen of a country not mentioned in this section, check with a Spanish consulate whether you need a visa.

The standard tourist visa issued by Spanish consulates is the Schengen visa, valid for up to 90 days. A Schengen visa issued by one Schengen country is generally valid for travel in all other Schengen countries.

Those needing a visa must apply *in person* at the consulate in the country where they are resident. You may be required to provide proof of sufficient funds, an itinerary or hotel bookings, return tickets and a letter of recommendation from a host in Spain. Issue of the visa does *not*, however, guarantee entry.

Coming from Morocco, you are unlikely to get into Spain's North African enclaves of Ceuta or Melilla without a Spanish visa (if you are supposed to have one), and passports are generally checked again when you head on to the peninsula. You may well be able to board a boat from Tangier (Morocco) to Algeciras and certainly to Gibraltar but, again, passports are generally closely checked by the Spaniards at Algeciras and you could be sent back to Morocco.

Extensions & Residence

Schengen visas cannot be extended. You can apply for no more than two visas in any 12-month period and they are not renewable once in Spain. Various transit visas also exist. Nationals of EU countries, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland can enter and leave Spain at will and don't need to apply for a *tarjeta de residencia* (residence card), although having one can make things like opening bank accounts easier.

People of other nationalities who want to stay in Spain longer than 90 days are supposed to get a residence card, and for them it can be a drawn-out process, starting with an appropriate visa issued by a Spanish consulate in their country of residence. Start the process well in advance.

Non-EU spouses of EU citizens resident in Spain can apply for residency too. The process is lengthy and those needing to travel in and out of the country in the meantime who would normally require a visa should ask for an *exención de visado* – a visa exemption. In most cases, the spouse is obliged to make the formal application in their country of residence.

Photocopies

All important documents (passport data page and visa page, credit cards, travel insurance policy, driving licence etc) should be photocopied before you leave home. Leave one copy with someone at home and keep another with you, separate from the originals.

VOLUNTEERING

Several possibilities for volunteering to participate in projects present themselves in Spain. **Sunseed Desert Technology** (www.sunseed.co.uk) is a UK-run project, developing sustainable ways for living in semiarid environments, based in the hamlet of Los Molinos del Río Agua in Almería. At **Pueblo Inglés** (www.puebloingles.com) volunteers spend their days conversing with Spaniards in English at various locations in Spain. A good website with further volunteering options, ranging from excavations in Mallorca to work on restoring the wetlands of Manga del Mar Menor, is **Transitions Abroad** (www.transitionsabroad.com).

WOMEN TRAVELLERS

Travelling in Spain is as easy as travelling anywhere in the Western world. Spanish women now travel widely around their own country without men, and Spaniards are

quite accustomed to foreign women travelling in Spain without men. Spanish men under about 40, who have grown up in the liberated post-Franco era, conform less to old-fashioned sexual stereotypes, although you might notice that sexual stereotyping becomes more pronounced as you move from north to south in Spain, and from city to country. And in terms of equality of the sexes, Spain still has a long way to go. The Socialist Zapatero government has introduced measures to promote equality in employment for women, but the battle has barely begun, with few women reaching top positions and women's wages lower than those of men for the same kind of work.

Women travellers should be ready to ignore stares, catcalls and unnecessary comments. Learn the word for help (*socorro*) in case you need to draw other people's attention.

By and large, Spanish women have a highly developed sense of style and put considerable effort into looking their best. While topless bathing and skimpy clothes are in fashion in many coastal resorts, people tend to dress more modestly elsewhere.

There are women's bookshops in Madrid, Barcelona and a few other cities that are also useful sources of information on women's organisations and activities. The websites of many women's organisations can be reached through the feminist website www.nodo50.org/mujeresred.

WORK

Nationals of EU countries, Switzerland, Norway and Iceland may freely work in Spain. If you are offered a contract, your employer will normally steer you through any bureaucracy.

Virtually everyone else is supposed to obtain, from a Spanish consulate in their country of residence, a work permit and, if they plan to stay more than 90 days, a residence visa. These procedures are well nigh impossible unless you have a job contract lined up before you begin them.

You could look for casual work in fruit picking, harvests or construction, but this is generally done with imported labour from Morocco and Eastern Europe, with pay and conditions that can best be described as dire.

Translating and interpreting could be an option if you are fluent in Spanish and a language in demand.

Another option might be au pair work, organised before you come to Spain. A useful guide is *The Au Pair and Nanny's Guide to Working Abroad*, by Susan Griffith and Sharon Legg. Susan Griffith's *Work Your Way Around the World* is also worth looking at.

University students or recent graduates might be able to set up an internship with companies in Spain. The **Association of International Students for Economics and Commerce** (www.aiesec.org), with branches throughout the world, helps member students find internships in related fields.

You can start a job search on the Web, for instance at **Think Spain** (www.thinkspain.com).

Language Teaching

This type of work is an obvious option for which language-teaching qualifications are a big help. Language schools abound and are listed under 'Academias de Idiomas' in the Yellow Pages. Getting a job is harder if you're not an EU citizen. Some schools do employ non-EU citizens without work papers, but usually at lower than normal rates. Giving private lessons is another avenue, but is unlikely to bring you a living wage straight away.

Sources of information on possible teaching work – in a school or as a private tutor –

include foreign cultural centres, such as the British Council, Alliance Française etc, foreign-language bookshops, universities and language schools. Many have notice boards where you may find work opportunities or can advertise your own services.

Tourist Resorts

Summer work on the Mediterranean coasts is a possibility, especially if you arrive early in the season and are prepared to stay a while. Many bars (especially of the UK and Irish persuasion), restaurants and other businesses are run by foreigners. Check any local press in foreign languages, such as the Costa del Sol's *Sur In English*, which lists ads for waiters, nannies, chefs, baby-sitters, cleaners and the like.

Yacht Crewing

It is possible to stumble upon work as crew on yachts and cruisers. The best ports to look include (in descending order) Palma de Mallorca, Gibraltar and Puerto Banús.

In summer the voyages tend to be restricted to the Mediterranean, but from about November to January a few boats head for the Caribbean. Such work is usually unpaid and about the only way to find it is to ask around on the docks.

Transport

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THINGS CHANGE...

The information in this chapter is particularly vulnerable to change. Check directly with the airline or a travel agent to make sure you understand how a fare (and ticket you may buy) works and be aware of the security requirements for international travel. Shop carefully. The details given in this chapter should be regarded as pointers and are not a substitute for your own careful, up-to-date research.

By law you are supposed to have your passport or ID card with you at all times in Spain. It doesn't happen often, but it could be embarrassing if you are asked by the police to produce a document and you don't have it with you. You will need one of these documents for police registration when you book a hotel room.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Spain is one of Europe's top holiday destinations and is well linked to other European countries by air, rail and road. Regular car ferries and hydrofoils run to and from Morocco and there are ferry links to the UK, Italy, the Canary Islands and Algeria.

As competition in the air grows, flying is increasingly the cheapest and fastest option from other European countries.

Some good direct flights are available from North America. Those coming from Australasia have fewer choices and will usually have to make at least one change of flight.

ENTERING THE COUNTRY Passport

Citizens of the 25 European Union (EU) member states and Switzerland can travel to Spain with their national identity card alone. If such countries do not issue ID cards – as in the UK – travellers must carry a full valid passport (UK visitor passports are not acceptable). All other nationalities must have a full valid passport.

If applying for a visa (see p856), check that your passport's expiry date is at least six months away. If you are not an EU citizen you may be required to fill out a landing card (at airports only), scattered about in the area just prior to passport control.

AIR

High season in Spain generally means Christmas/New Year, Easter and roughly June to September. This varies somewhat, however, depending on the specific destination. You may find reasonably priced flights available to places such as Madrid in August because it is stinking hot and everyone else has fled to the mountains and the sea. As a general rule, November to March is when air fares to Spain are likely to be at their lowest, and the intervening months can be considered shoulder periods.

Airports & Airlines

The main gateway to Spain is Madrid's **Barajas airport** (Aeropuerto de Barajas; % national flight information 902 40 47 04; www.aena.es), although many European direct flights serve other centres, particularly Barcelona's Aeroport del Prat, Málaga, Palma de Mallorca and Valencia. Charter flights and low-cost airlines (mostly from the UK) are flying direct into a growing number of regional airports, including A Coruña, Alicante, Almería, Asturias, Bilbao, Girona (for the Costa Brava and Barcelona), Ibiza, Jerez de la Frontera, Murcia, Reus and Seville.

CLIMATE CHANGE & TRAVEL

Climate change is a serious threat to the ecosystems that humans rely upon, and air travel is the fastest-growing contributor to the problem. Lonely Planet regards travel, overall, as a global benefit, but believes we all have a responsibility to limit our personal impact on global warming.

Flying and climate change

Pretty much every form of motorised travel generates CO₂ (the main cause of human-induced climate change) but planes are far and away the worst offenders, not just because of the sheer distances they allow us to travel, but because they release greenhouse gases high into the atmosphere. The statistics are frightening: two people taking a return flight between Europe and the US will contribute as much to climate change as an average household's gas and electricity consumption over a whole year.

Carbon offset schemes

Climatecare.org and other websites use 'carbon calculators' that allow travellers to offset the level of greenhouse gases they are responsible for with financial contributions to sustainable travel schemes that reduce global warming – including projects in India, Honduras, Kazakhstan and Uganda.

Lonely Planet, together with Rough Guides and other concerned partners in the travel industry, support the carbon offset scheme run by climatecare.org. Lonely Planet offsets all of its staff and author travel.

For more information check out our website: www.lonelyplanet.com.

Iberia, Spain's main national carrier, flies to most Spanish cities (many via Madrid) from around the world but is generally the expensive way to go.

Among the airlines that fly to and from Spain are the following:

Aer Lingus (EI; % 0818 365000 in Ireland; www.aerlingus.com) Flies to Alicante, Almeria, Barcelona, Bilbao, Madrid, Málaga, Palma de Mallorca, Seville and Valencia, as well as to Alicante, Barcelona and Málaga from Cork.

Air Berlin (AB; % 01805 737800 in Germany, 902 320737 in Spain; www.airberlin.com) German budget airline with direct flights from cities all over Germany, as well as Amsterdam, Helsinki, London and Zürich, to Madrid, Barcelona and other destinations. Many flights run via Palma de Mallorca.

Air Europa (UX; % 902 40 15 01 in Spain; www.air.europa.com) Flies to Madrid from London, Paris, Rome, Milan and New York, and from destinations all over Spain.

Air Madrid (DRI; % 902 51 52 51 in Spain; www.airmadrid.com) An intercontinental budget airline linking Madrid with various South American destinations, including Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico and Peru. There are connections to Barcelona and other Spanish and European destinations.

Air Scotland (GRE; % 0141 222 2363 in UK; www.air-scotland.com) Flies from Birmingham, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Manchester and Newcastle to Alicante, Barcelona, Girona, Málaga and Palma de Mallorca.

Alpi Eagles (E8; % 899 500 058 in Italy; www.alpieagles.com) Flights from Venice and Naples to Barcelona.

BMI (BD; % 0870 607 0555 in UK; www.flybmi.com) Flights from Heathrow airport (London) and other UK airports to Alicante and Palma de Mallorca.

British Airways (BA; % 0870 850 9850 in UK, 902 11 13 33 in Spain; www.britishairways.com) London direct to Madrid, Barcelona and Málaga. Some flights also from Manchester and Birmingham.

Brussels Airlines (SN; % 902 90 14 92 in Spain, 070 351111 in Belgium; www.flysn.com) Operates flights from Brussels to Barcelona, Bilbao, Madrid, Málaga, Murcia, Palma de Mallorca, Seville and Valencia.

Continental (CO; % 900 961266 in Spain, 1-800-523 3273 in USA; www.continental.com) Direct flights to Barcelona and Madrid from New York (Newark).

Delta (DL; % 800 241 4141 in USA, 901 116 946 in Spain; www.delta.com) Flies from New York JFK to Madrid and Barcelona.

EasyJet (U2; % 0905 821 0905 in UK, 902 29 99 92 in Spain; www.easyjet.com) Flies to Alicante, Almeria, Asturias, Barcelona, Bilbao, Ibiza, Madrid, Málaga, Maó, Palma de Mallorca and Valencia from various London and other UK airports. Some of these destinations are also served from Berlin (Schönefeld), Dortmund, Geneva and Paris (Orly).

Excel Airways (XL; % 0870 169 0169 in UK) Flights from UK destinations to Alicante, Maó, Málaga and Palma de Mallorca.

FlyGlobeSpan (GSM; % 0870 556 1522 in UK; www.flyglobespan.com) Flights from Edinburgh and Glasgow to Barcelona.

Germanwings (4U; % 0900-1919100 in Germany, 91 625 97 04 in Spain; www15.germanwings.com) Flies from Cologne, Stuttgart and other cities to Alicante, Barcelona, Ibiza, Jerez de la Frontera, Málaga, Madrid and Palma de Mallorca.

Iberia (IB; % 902 40 05 00 in Spain; www.iberia.es) Destinations all over Spain from major cities worldwide.

Jet2 (LS; % 0871 226 1737 in UK; www.jet2.com) A budget airline that flies from Leeds and Belfast to Alicante, Barcelona, Málaga, Murcia and Palma de Mallorca.

LTU (LT; % 0211 941 8456 in Germany; www.ltu.com) Flights from all over Germany to Alicante, Almeria, Ibiza, Madrid, Maó, Málaga, Palma de Mallorca, Seville and Valencia. It also offers all-in packages.

Meridiana (IG; % 199 111 333 in Italy; www.meridiana.it) Flights from Florence, Pisa and Catania to Barcelona and connections throughout Italy.

MyAir (8I; % 899 500060 in Italy; www.myair.com)

A budget airline with flights to Barcelona, Ibiza, Madrid, Palma de Mallorca from Venice and/or Milan (Orio).

Monarch (ZB; % 0870 040 5040 in UK, 800 099260 in Spain; www.flymonarch.com) Has scheduled and charter flights from London Gatwick and Luton and other UK cities to Alicante and Málaga: London Luton to Alicante, Almeria, Barcelona, Málaga, Menorca and Palma de Mallorca.

Royal Air Maroc (AT; % 09000 0800 in Morocco; www.royalairmaroc.com) Also known as RAM, it covers much of the air traffic between Spain and Morocco.

Ryanair (FR; % 0906 270 5656 in UK, 0530 787787 in Ireland, 807 220032 in Spain; www.ryanair.com) Flies to Girona (Ryanair's hub for Barcelona), Granada, Jerez de la Frontera, Málaga, Murcia, Reus, Santander, Santiago de Compostela, Seville, Valencia, Valladolid, Vitoria and Zaragoza. Flights run from London Stansted to all these destinations (except Málaga, which is connected to Dublin, Shannon and Brussels). A plethora of connections from all over Western Europe also fly to some or all of these destinations.

Sky Europe (NE; % 02 4850 4850 in Slovakia, 06 1777 7000 in Hungary, 807 001204 in Spain; www.skyeurope.com) Flights to Barcelona from Bratislava, Budapest, Krakow, Prague and Salzburg.

Spanair (JK; % 902 13 14 15 in Spain; www.spanair.com) Direct flights to Barcelona and Madrid from Ancona, Copenhagen and Oslo, and a web of domestic flights. Also connections to other European and some US cities.

Sterling Airlines (NB; % 7010 74 74 in Denmark; www.sterlingticket.com) Flights from Copenhagen, Stockholm, Helsinki and other Scandinavian airports to Alicante, Barcelona, Madrid, Málaga and Palma de Mallorca.

Swiss (LX; % 0848 700700 in Switzerland, 901 11 67 12 in Spain; www.swiss.com) Now owned by Germany's

Lufthansa, Swiss sometimes has surprisingly good deals from Geneva and Zürich to various Spanish cities.

Thomson Fly (TOM; % 0870 190 0737 in UK; www.thomsonfly.com) Frequent flights from Coventry (UK) to Barcelona and a host of less regular flights from various UK locations to Alicante, Girona, Ibiza, Málaga, Menorca and Palma de Mallorca.

Transavia (HV; % 0900 0737 in Netherlands, 902 11 44 78 in Spain; www.transavia.com) Low-cost flights from Amsterdam and/or Rotterdam to Alicante, Almeria, Barcelona, Girona, Madrid, Málaga, Palma de Mallorca, Seville and Valencia.

Virgin Express (TV; % 070 353637 in Belgium, 902 88 84 59 in Spain; www.virgin-express.com) Regular flights from Brussels to Barcelona, Madrid, Málaga, Madrid, Murcia and Palma de Mallorca.

Vueling (VLG; % 902 33 39 33 in Spain; www.vueling.com) Barcelona-based budget airline with flights to Amsterdam, Brussels, Lisbon, Milan, Paris, Rome and a growing range of Spanish destinations.

Tickets

World aviation has never been so competitive and the Internet is often the easiest way of locating and booking reasonably priced seats.

Full-time students and those under 26 have access to discounted fares. You have to show a document proving your date of birth or a valid International Student Identity Card (ISIC) when buying your ticket. Other cheap deals include the discounted tickets released to travel agents and specialist discount agencies. 'No-frills' carriers, however, sell direct to travellers. Many airlines also offer excellent fares to Internet surfers, and there is no shortage of online agents:

www.cheaptickets.com
www.ebookers.com
www.expedia.com
www.openjet.com
www.opodo.com
www.planesimple.co.uk
www.skyscanner.net
www.travelocity.co.uk
www.tripadvisor.com

Africa

From South Africa a host of major airlines service Spain but usually via major European hubs such as Frankfurt, London and Paris. British Airways, Air France and Lufthansa are among the airlines offering the best deals flying out of Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg. **Flight Centre** (www.flightcentre.co.za), **STA Travel** (www.statravel.co.za) and **Rennies Travel**

(www.renniestravel.com) have offices throughout Southern Africa. Check their websites for the nearest branches to you

Morocco's national airline, Royal Air Maroc (RAM), dominates the flying trade from Morocco to major Spanish cities, with flights to Barcelona, Madrid, Málaga and Valencia. Most of the direct flights are from Casablanca. Morocco's Regional Air Lines operates some flights in codeshare with RAM to Málaga from Casablanca and Tangier. Iberia also flies to Casablanca and a few other Moroccan destinations.

The Iberia subsidiary Iberia Regional-Air Nostrum flies to/from Málaga (up to six times daily), Almería, Granada and Madrid from Melilla, the Spanish enclave on the Moroccan coast. The Moroccan crossing point into Melilla is the neighbouring town of Nador.

Asia

Bangkok, Singapore and Hong Kong are the best places to shop around for discount tickets. **STA Travel** Bangkok (☎ 02-236 0262; www.statravel.co.th); Singapore (☎ 6737 7188; www.statravel.com.sg); Hong Kong (☎ 2736 1618; www.statravel.com.hk); Japan (☎ 03 5391 2922; www.statravel.co.jp) proliferates in Asia. Another resource in Japan is **No 1 Travel** (☎ 03 3205 6073; www.no1-travel.com); in Hong Kong try **Four Seas Tours** (☎ 2200 7760; www.fourseas-travel.com).

Australia

Cheap flights from Australia to Europe generally go via Southeast Asian capitals. As a rule there are no direct flights from Australia to Spain.

STA Travel (☎ 1300 733 035; www.statravel.com.au) and **Flight Centre** (☎ 133 133; www.flightcentre.com.au) are major dealers in cheap airfares, although discounted fares can also be found at your local travel agent. Look at the travel ads in the Saturday editions of Melbourne's *Age* and the *Sydney Morning Herald*. For online bookings, try www.travel.com.au.

Canada

Scan the travel agencies' advertisements in the *Toronto Globe & Mail*, *Toronto Star* and *Vancouver Sun*. **Travel CUTS** (☎ 1-866 246 9762; www.travelcuts.com), called **Voyages Campus** in Quebec, has offices in all major cities in Canada.

Iberia has daily flights from Toronto via London to Madrid. Other major European

airlines offer competitive fares to most Spanish destinations via other European capitals.

Canary Islands

Few visitors to the Canary Islands combine their trip with another to mainland Spain (or vice versa). There is no financial incentive to do so, as flights from other parts of Europe to the Canaries are often cheaper than those between the islands and the mainland.

Iberia, Spanair, Air Europa and charters fly from Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria and, less frequently, Lanzarote and Fuerteventura to Madrid, Barcelona and other mainland destinations.

Continental Europe

Air travel between Spain and other places in continental Europe is worth considering if you are short on time. Short hops can be expensive, but for longer journeys you can often find air fares that beat overland alternatives.

In France the student travel agency **OTU Voyages** (☎ 01 55 82 32 32; www.otu.fr in French) is a safe bet for cut-price travel. Have a look at **Lastminute** (☎ 0892 705 000; www.lastminute.fr) too.

In Germany, **STA Travel** (☎ 069 7430 3292; www.statravel.de in German) is one of the best student and discount travel agencies. **Just Travel** (☎ 089 747 3330; www.justtravel.de) is also worth a look.

Amsterdam is a popular departure point and a good budget flight centre. Try the bucket shops along Rokin. Or try **Air Fair** (☎ 0900 771717; www.airfair.nl in Dutch). **Kilroy Travels** (☎ 0900 0400636; www.kilroytravels.nl in Dutch) is also worth checking out.

The best place to look for cheap fares in Italy is at **CTS** (Centro Turistico Studentesco e Giovanile; ☎ 199 501150; www.cts.it), which has branches in cities throughout the country.

In Lisbon, Portugal, **Tagus** (☎ 892 5454; www.viagenstagus.pt; Rua Camilo Castelo Branco 20) is a reputable travel agency. It has branches around the country.

New Zealand

Unfortunately, there are no direct flights between New Zealand (NZ) and Spain. The *New Zealand Herald* has a travel section in which travel agencies advertise fares. **STA Travel** (☎ 0508 782872; www.statravel.co.nz) has offices in Auckland, as well as in Hamilton, Palmerston North, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. **Flight Centre** (☎ 0800 243544;

www.flightcentre.co.nz) has branches in Auckland and throughout the country.

South America

Iberia and a series of South American national airlines connect Spain with Latin America. Most flights converge on Madrid, although some continue to Barcelona.

Asatej (www.asatej.com) is a Hispanic youth travel organisation, with offices in Argentina, Mexico, Uruguay and the USA.

The UK & Ireland

Discount air travel is big business in London. Advertisements for many travel agencies appear in the travel pages of the weekend newspapers, such as the *Independent*, the *Guardian* on Saturday and the *Sunday Times*.

STA Travel (☎ 0870 1630026; www.statravel.co.uk) and **Traifinders** (☎ 0845 0585858; www.traifinders.com), both of which have offices throughout the UK, sell discounted and student tickets.

No-frills airlines are increasingly big business for travel between the UK and Spain. EasyJet and Ryanair are the main operators, getting some competition from smaller outfits like Jet2. Prices vary wildly according to season and also depend on how far in advance you can book them.

The two national airlines linking the UK and Spain are British Airways and Iberia. They both operate regular direct flights to Madrid and Barcelona, as well as a growing range of other centres.

Most British travel agents are registered with the ABTA (Association of British Travel Agents). If you've paid for your flight with an ABTA-registered agent who goes bust, ABTA will guarantee a refund or an alternative.

Good agencies for charter flights from the UK to Spain include **Avro** (☎ 0870 4582841; www.avro.com), **JMC** (www.5.thomascook.com) and **Thomson** (☎ 0870 1650079; www.thomson.co.uk).

From Ireland, check out offers from Aer Lingus and Ryanair.

USA

Several airlines fly 'direct' (many flights involve a stop elsewhere in Europe en route) to Spain, landing in Madrid and Barcelona. These include KLM, British Airways and Iberia.

Discount travel agencies in the USA are known as consolidators. San Francisco is the ticket-consolidator capital of America,

although some good deals can be found in other big cities. The *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Chicago Tribune* and *San Francisco Examiner* all produce weekly travel sections. **STA Travel** (☎ 800 781 4040; www.statravel.com) has offices around the country. **Travel Cuts** (☎ 1-800-592 2887; www.travelcuts.com) is a similar operation.

Discount and rock-bottom options from the USA include charter, stand-by and courier flights. Stand-by fares are often sold at 60% of the normal price for one-way tickets. **Courier Travel** (www.couriertravel.org) is a search engine for courier and stand-by flights. You can also check out the **International Association of Air Travel Couriers** (www.courier.org).

LAND

You can enter Spain by train, bus and private vehicle along various points of its northern border with France (and Andorra) and the western frontier with Portugal. Bus is generally the cheapest option but the train is more comfortable, especially for long-haul trips.

Border Crossings

The main road crossing into Spain from France is the highway that links up with Spain's AP7 tollway, which runs down to Barcelona and follows the Spanish coast south (with a branch, the AP2, going to Madrid via Zaragoza). A series of links cut across the Pyrenees from France and Andorra into Spain, as does a coastal route that runs from Biarritz in France into the Spanish Basque Country.

The A5 freeway linking Madrid with Badajoz crosses the Portuguese frontier and continues on to Lisbon and there are many other road connections up and down the length of the Hispano-Portuguese frontier.

As Spain, France and Portugal are members of the EU and the Schengen area (see p856) there are usually no border controls between them. The tiny principality of Andorra is not in the EU and border controls remain in place.

Bus

Eurolines (www.eurolines.com) and its partner bus companies run an extensive network of international buses across 26 European countries and Morocco. In Spain they serve many destinations from the rest of Europe, although services often run only a few times a week.

See individual country sections for more information on bus transport.

BUS PASSES

Travellers planning broader European tours that include Spain could find one of the following passes useful.

Busabout (‰ 020-7950 1661 in UK; www.busabout.com; 258 Vauxhall Bridge Rd, London SW1V 1BS) is a UK-based hop-on, hop-off bus service aimed at younger travellers. It has passes of varying durations allowing you to use a network of 36 cities in 11 countries. The main passes are of interest only to those travelling a lot beyond Spain (where there are four stops). You can pick up a three-stop Spanish Explorer pass for UK£99, or opt for a wider loop (or loops). A Western Loop pass taking in Spain, France and Switzerland costs UK£275.

Eurolines (www.eurolines.com) offers a low-season pass valid for 15/30 days that costs UK£135/205 (UK£115/159 for under-26s and senior citizens over 60). This pass allows unlimited travel between 40 European cities. The only Spanish cities included are Barcelona and Madrid. Fares increase to UK£225/299 (UK£189/245) between June and mid-September.

Car & Motorcycle

When driving in Europe always carry proof of ownership of a private vehicle. Third-party motor insurance is required throughout Europe (see p870).

Every vehicle should display a nationality plate of its country of registration. A warning triangle (to be used in case of breakdown) is compulsory. In Spain, a reflective jacket is also compulsory. Other recommended accessories are a first-aid kit, spare-bulb kit and fire extinguisher.

Pre-booking a rental car before leaving home will enable you to find the cheapest deals (for multinational agencies see p870). No matter where you hire your car, make sure you understand what is included in the price and your liabilities.

Spain is great for motorcycle touring and motorcyclists swarm into the country in summer. With a bike you rarely have to book ahead for ferries and can enter restricted traffic areas in cities.

An interesting website packed with advice for people planning to drive in Europe is **Ideamerge** (www.ideamerge.com), with information on the Renault company's car leasing plan, motor home rental and much more.

Your vehicle could be searched on arrival from Andorra. Spanish customs look out for contraband duty-free products destined for illegal resale in Spain. The same generally goes on arrival from Morocco or the Spanish North African enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. In this case the search is for controlled substances.

See p869 for comprehensive information on road rules, petrol, insurance and other driving tips for Spain.

Train

The principal rail crossings into Spain pierce the Franco-Spanish frontier along the Mediterranean coast and via the Basque Country. Another minor rail route runs inland across the Pyrenees from Latour-de-Carol to Barcelona. From Portugal, the main line runs from Lisbon across Extremadura to Madrid.

Direct trains link Barcelona with Paris, Geneva, Zürich, Turin and Milan at least three times a week. Direct overnight trains also connect Paris with Madrid. Check details on the **Spanish national railways** (Renfe; ‰ 902 24 34 02 in Spain for international trips; www.renfe.es) website.

Andorra

Regular buses connect Andorra with Barcelona (including winter ski buses and direct services to the airport) and other destinations in Spain (including Madrid) and France. For details see p398.

France

BUS

Eurolines (www.eurolines.fr) heads to Spain from Paris and more than 20 other French cities and towns. It connects with Madrid (17½ hours), Barcelona (15¼ hours) and many other destinations. There is at least one departure per day for main destinations.

TRAIN

About the only truly direct trains to Madrid and Barcelona are the *trenhoteles*, which are expensive sleeper trains. The Barcelona service leaves from Paris Austerlitz at 8.32pm daily and arrives at 8.24am (stopping at Orléans, Limoges, Perpignan, Figueres, Girona and Barcelona Sants). The Madrid equivalent leaves from Paris at

7.43pm daily and arrives in Madrid Chamartín at 9.13am (stopping at Orléans, Blois, Poitiers, Vitoria, Burgos and Valladolid).

There are several other less luxurious possibilities. Two or three TGV trains leave from

Paris Montparnasse for Irún, where you change to a normal train for the Basque Country and on towards Madrid. Up to three TGVs also put you on the road to Barcelona (leaving from Paris Gare de Lyon), with a change of train

RAIL PASSES

The InterRail Pass and Rail Europe Senior Card are available to people who have lived in Europe for six months or more. They can be bought at most major stations and student travel outlets.

Eurail passes and Eurail Selectpass are for those who have lived in Europe for less than six months and are supposed to be bought outside Europe. They are available from leading travel agencies and online at www.eurail.com.

InterRail Pass

The **InterRail** (www.interrail.net) map of Europe is divided into zones, one of which comprises Spain, Portugal and Morocco. The pass is designed for people aged under 26, but there is a more expensive version for older folk: the InterRail 26+. There are three types of ticket: 16 days in one zone under 12yr/under 26yr/over 26yr (€143/195/286), 22 days in two zones (€198/275/396) and one month in all zones (€273/385/546). Cardholders get discounts on travel in the country where they purchase the ticket.

Rail Plus Senior Railcard

Senior citizens can get a Rail Plus Senior Railcard (available at all major stations), which is valid for a year for trips that cross at least one border and which entitles you to 30% off standard fares. In the UK the card costs UK£12 but you must already have a **Senior Railcard** (www.senior-railcard.co.uk; UK£20).

Eurail Passes

Eurail passes are good for travel in 18 European countries (not including the UK) but forget it if you intend to travel mainly in Spain. People aged over 26 pay for a 1st-class pass (Eurailpass) and those aged under 26 for a 2nd-class pass (Eurailpass Youth). Passes are valid for 15 or 21 days or for one, two or three months. These cost US\$605/785/975/1378/1703 respectively for the Eurailpass. The Eurailpass Youth comes in at US\$394/510/634/896/1108. Children aged between four and 11 pay half-price for the Adult 1st-class passes. The Europass Saver is for two people and brings a 15% reduction in the standard Adult prices. Another option is the Eurail Flexipass (with Adult, Saver and Youth versions), which gives you 10 or 15 days travel in two months). The 15-day version costs US\$940/611 for the Adult/Youth versions.

Eurail Selectpass

This provides between five and 15 days of unlimited travel within a two-month period in two to five bordering countries (from a total of 22 possible countries). As with Eurail passes, those aged over 26 pay for a 1st-class pass, while those aged under 26 can get a cheaper Europass Youth for travel in 2nd class. The basic five-day pass costs US\$473/306 for the Adult/Youth version. There is also a Europass Saver that works like the Eurailpass Saver (see above).

Regional & National Passes

Eurail also offers a Spain national pass and a regional pass for Spain and Portugal. You can choose from three to 10 days' train travel in a two-month period for either pass. The 10-day national pass costs US\$470/385 for 1st class Adult/2nd class Youth. The 10-day regional pass (1st class only) costs US\$504. A Saver version costs US\$439. As with all Eurail passes, you want to be sure you will be covering a lot of ground to make this worthwhile. Check some sample prices in euros of where you intend to travel on the **Renfe** (www.renfe.es) website to compare.

at Montpellier or Narbonne. Two daily direct Talgo services connect Montpellier with Barcelona (and on to Murcia). A slow overnight train runs from Paris to Latour-de-Carol, where you change for a local regional train to Barcelona.

For more information on French rail services check out the SNCF (www.voyages-sncf.com) website.

Morocco

Buses from several Moroccan cities converge on Tangier to make the ferry crossing to Algeciras and then fan out across to main Spanish centres. Several companies, including ALSA (www.alsa.es), run these routes.

Portugal

BUS

AutoRes (% 902 02 09 99 in Spain, 218 94 02 50 in Portugal; www.auto-res.net) runs one or two buses a day from Lisbon to Madrid via Badajoz. The trip takes about seven hours.

Other services from the Portuguese capital run to Seville via Aracena; to Málaga via Badajoz, Seville, Cádiz, Algeciras and the Costa del Sol; to Granada via Albufeira, Huelva, Seville, Málaga and Almuñécar.

Another service runs north via Porto to Tui, Santiago de Compostela and A Coruña in Galicia. Local buses cross the border from towns such as Huelva in Andalucía, Badajoz in Extremadura and Ourense in Galicia.

TRAIN

An overnight train runs daily from Lisbon to Madrid and another to Irún. See Renfe (www.renfe.es) for details.

UK

BUS

Eurolines (% 0870 5808 080; www.nationalexpress.com/eurolines) runs buses to Barcelona, Madrid and other Spanish destinations several times a week. The London terminal is at Victoria Coach Station (Buckingham Palace Rd). Journey times (including a wait in Paris of up to two hours) can range from 24 to 26 hours to Barcelona and 25 to 30 hours to Madrid.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

You can take your car across to France by ferry or via the Channel Tunnel on Eurotunnel (% 0870 5353 535; www.eurotunnel.com). The latter runs four crossings (35 minutes) an hour between Folkestone and Calais in the high season.

For breakdown assistance both the AA (% 0800 085 2840 for European breakdown cover; www.theaa.com) and the RAC (% 0870 5722 722 in UK; www.rac.co.uk) offer comprehensive cover in Europe.

TRAIN

The passenger-train service Eurostar (www.eurostar.com) travels between London and Paris, from where you can connect with trains to Spain. Alternatively, you can purchase a train ticket that includes crossing the English Channel by ferry, SeaCat or hovercraft.

For the latest fare information on journeys to Spain, including the Eurostar, contact the Rail Europe Travel Centre (% 0870 8371 371 in UK; www.raileurope.co.uk). Another source of rail information for all of Europe is Rail Choice (www.railchoice.com). Travel times depend in large measure on what connections you make in Paris.

SEA

Ferries run to mainland Spain regularly from the Canary Islands, Italy, North Africa (Algeria, Morocco) and the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla) and the UK. Most services are run by the Spanish national ferry company, Acciona Trasmediterránea (% 902 45 46 45; www.trasmediterranea.es).

Algeria

Acciona Trasmediterránea runs daily ferries from Alicante to Oran (13 hours, leaving at 7pm) and from Almería to Ghazaouet (eight hours, leaving at midnight) in Algeria.

Canary Islands

An Acciona Trasmediterránea car ferry leaves from Santa Cruz de Tenerife (5pm) and Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (2pm) every Saturday for Cádiz. It's a long and bumpy ride, taking about 48 hours from Santa Cruz.

Italy

Ferries run from Genoa to Barcelona three times a week and up to six times a week from Civitavecchia (near Rome). For more information see p330.

Morocco

You can sail from the Moroccan ports of Tangier, Al Hoceima and Nador, as well as from Ceuta or Melilla (Spanish enclaves on the Moroccan coast) to Almería, Málaga, Algeciras, Gibraltar and Tarifa. The routes are: Melilla–Almería, Al Hoceima–Almería,

Nador–Almería, Melilla–Málaga, Tangier–Gibraltar, Tangier–Algeciras, Ceuta–Algeciras and Tangier–Tarifa. All routes usually take vehicles as well as passengers.

The most frequent sailings are to/from Algeciras to Tangier (taking 1¼ to 2½ hours) and Ceuta (35 to 45 minutes). Extra services are put on during the peak summer period (mid-June to mid-September) to cater for the stream of Moroccans resident in Europe heading home for the holidays and the Tangier–Tarifa route may be restricted to people with EU passports or EU residence papers during this period. Acciona Trasmediterránea and various other companies compete for business. For more details, see the appropriate sections in the Andalucía chapter (p683). In September 2006, a weekly service between Genoa (Italy) and Tangiers began to call in at Barcelona as well. It is run by Grandi Navi Veloci (Grimaldi). The trip takes 24 hours and leaves Barcelona at 7pm.

UK

PLYMOUTH–SANTANDER

From Milbay Docks in Plymouth, Brittany Ferries (% 0870 3665 333 in UK; www.brittanyferries.co.uk) runs a car ferry twice a week to Santander from mid-March to mid-November. See also p505.

PORTSMOUTH–BILBAO

Throughout the year P&O Ferries (% 0870 5980 333 in UK; www.poferry.com) operates a service from Portsmouth to Bilbao. As a rule there are two sailings a week. Acciona Trasmediterránea (% 0871 7206 445 in UK; www.atferries.com) launched a similar service in 2006. See also p460.

VIA FRANCE

You can transport your car by Hoverspeed or ferry to France from the UK. Hoverspeed (% 0870 1642 114; www.norfolkline-ferries.com) fast boats take about two hours to cross from Dover to Dunkirk. P&O Ferries (% 0870 5980 333 in UK; www.poferry.com) has frequent car ferries from Dover to Calais (1¼ hours).

GETTING AROUND

You can reach almost any destination in Spain by train or bus, and services are generally efficient and cheap. For longer distances there are plenty of domestic air services and prices have become more competitive in recent

years. However, your own wheels give you the most freedom.

AIR

Airlines in Spain

Iberia and its subsidiary, Iberia Regional-Air Nostrum, have an extensive network covering all of Spain. Competing with Iberia are Spanair, Air Europa and Vueling. They both rival Iberia on the busy Madrid–Barcelona run and fly to a host of other Spanish destinations. In late 2006, UK and Irish low-cost airlines EasyJet and Ryanair won concessions to start operating on a handful of domestic Spanish routes. This could lead to quite a price shakedown. For airline contact details see p859.

Increasingly, customers are booking their domestic flights in Spain on the airlines' websites. It is worth shopping around, and for return flights there is nothing to stop you booking each leg with a different airline.

Typical cheaper return fares between Madrid and Barcelona hover around €80 to €120, but it can range up to €250. Cheaper tickets are generally nonrefundable, must be booked up to two weeks in advance and allow no changes. All applicable airport taxes are factored into the price of your ticket.

BICYCLE

Years of highway improvement programmes across the country have made cycling a much easier prospect than it once was. There are plenty of options, from mountain biking in the Pyrenees to distance riding along the coast.

If you get tired of pedalling it is often possible to take your bike on the train. All regional trains have space for bikes (usually marked by a bicycle logo on the carriage), where you can simply load the bike. Bikes are also permitted on most *cercanías* (local area trains around big cities such as Madrid and Barcelona). On long-distance trains there are more restrictions. As a rule you have to be travelling overnight in a sleeper or couchette to have the (dismantled) bike accepted as normal luggage. Otherwise, it can only be sent separately as a parcel. It's often possible to take your bike on a bus – usually you'll just be asked to remove the front wheel.

In the UK the Cyclists' Touring Club (CTC; % 0870 8730 060 in UK; www.ctc.org.uk; Parklands, Railton Rd, Guildford, Surrey GU2 9JX) can help you plan your own

Hire

A selection of multinational car rental agencies is listed below.

Autos Abroad (☎ 0870 0667 788 in UK; www.autosabroad.com)

Avis (☎ 902 180854 in Spain; www.avis.com)

Budget (☎ 1-800 472 33 25 in USA; www.budget.com)

Europcar (☎ 91 343 45 12 in Spain; www.europcar.com)

Hertz (☎ 91 749 90 69 in Spain; www.hertz.com)

National/Atesa (☎ 902 100101 in Spain; www.atesa.es)

Pepecar (☎ 807 414243 in Spain; www.pepecar.com)

This low-cost company specialises in cheap rentals of mostly small cars, such as Smarts, Seat Altea and Renault Modus, and some compact eight-seaters. They have outlets in Barcelona, Ibiza, Madrid, Palma de Mallorca, Seville, Valencia and a growing number of other locations. If you book far enough ahead, it can cost you around €15 per day (with 100km free), plus a credit-card handling fee and a €14 cleaning charge.

To rent a car in Spain you have to have a licence, be aged 21 or over and, for the major companies at least, have a credit or debit card. Smaller firms in areas where car hire is particularly common (such as the Balearic Islands) can sometimes live without this requirement. Although those with a non-EU licence should also have an IDP, you will find that national licences from countries like Australia, Canada, NZ and the USA are often accepted.

Insurance

Third-party motor insurance is a minimum requirement in Spain and throughout Europe. Ask your insurer for a European Accident Statement form, which can simplify matters in the event of an accident. A European breakdown assistance policy such as the AA Five Star Service or RAC Eurocover Motoring Assistance is a good investment.

Car-hire companies also provide this minimum insurance but be careful to understand what your liabilities and excess are and what waivers you are entitled to in case of accident or damage to the hire vehicle.

Road Rules

Drive on the right. In built-up areas the speed limit is 50km/h, which increases to 100km/h on major roads and up to 120km/h on *autovías* and *autopistas* (toll-free and tolled dual-lane highways, respectively). Cars towing caravans are restricted to a maximum

speed of 80km/h. The minimum driving age is 18 years old.

Motorcyclists must use headlights at all times and wear a crash helmet if riding a bike of 125cc or more. The minimum age for riding motorbikes and scooters of 80cc and over is 16, for those 50cc and under it's 14. A licence is required.

Spanish truck drivers often have the courtesy to turn on their right indicator to show that the way ahead of them is clear for overtaking (and the left one if it is not and you are attempting this manoeuvre).

Vehicles in traffic circles (roundabouts) have the right of way.

The blood-alcohol limit is 0.05%. Breath tests are becoming more common and if found to be over the limit you can be judged, condemned, fined and deprived of your licence within 24 hours. Fines range up to around €600 for serious offences. Nonresident foreigners will be required to pay up on the spot (at 30% off the full fine). Pleading linguistic ignorance will not help – your traffic cop will produce a list of infringements and fines in as many languages as you like. If you don't pay, or don't have a Spanish resident go guarantor for you, your vehicle will be impounded.

HITCHING

Hitching is never entirely safe in any country in the world and we don't recommend it. Travellers who decide to hitch should understand that they are taking a small but potentially dangerous risk. People who do choose to hitch will be safer if they travel in pairs and let someone know where they are planning to go.

Hitching is illegal on *autopistas* and *autovías*, and difficult on other major highways. Choose a spot where cars can safely stop before highway slipways, or use minor roads. The going can be slow on the latter, as the traffic is often light. Overall, Spain is not a hitchhiker's paradise. It is more difficult still in the south, where drivers tend to be more wary.

LOCAL TRANSPORT

All the major cities have good local transport. Madrid and Barcelona have extensive bus and metro systems and other major cities also benefit from generally efficient public transport.

Bicycle

Few of the big cities offer much in the way of encouragement to cycle. Barcelona is an exception, where cycling lanes have been laid out along main roads and several hire outlets make it possible for visitors to enjoy them. Driver attitudes are not always so enlightened, so beware.

Bus

Cities and provincial capitals all have reasonable bus networks. You can buy single tickets (up to €1.20, depending on the city) on the buses or at tobacconists, but, in the case of cities such as Madrid and Barcelona, you are better off buying combined 10-trip tickets (see Metro, below) that allow the use of a combination of bus and metro, and which work out cheaper per ride. These can be purchased in any metro station.

Regular buses run from about 6am to shortly before midnight. In the big cities a night bus service generally kicks in on a limited number of lines in the wee hours. In Madrid they are known as *búhos* (owls) and in Barcelona more prosaically as *nitbusos* (night buses).

Metro

Madrid has the country's most extensive metro network. Barcelona follows in second place with a reasonable system. Valencia and Bilbao also have limited metros, and Seville is building one. Tickets must be bought in metro

stations (from counters or vending machines). Single tickets cost the same as for buses (ie, up to €1.20). The best value for most visitors wanting to move around the major cities over a few days are the 10-trip tickets, known in Madrid as *Metrobús* (€6.15) and in Barcelona as *T-10* (€6.65). Monthly and season passes are also available.

Taxi

You can usually find taxi ranks at train and bus stations or you can telephone for radio taxis. In larger cities taxi ranks are also scattered about the centre and taxis will stop if you hail them in the street. Look for the green light and/or the *Libre* sign on the passenger side of the windscreens. The bigger cities are well populated with taxis, although finding one when you need to get home late on a Friday or Saturday night in places such as Madrid and Barcelona can be next to impossible. No more than four people are allowed in a taxi.

Flag fall is around €1.20 to €1.55. You then pay around €0.80 to €1 per kilometre depending on the time of day. There are airport and luggage surcharges. A cross-town ride in a major city will cost about €5 to €8, while a taxi between the city centre and airport in either Madrid or Barcelona will cost €18 to €25 with luggage.

Tram

Trams were stripped out of Spanish cities decades ago but they are making a timid comeback

MEMORABLE TRAIN JOURNEYS

The romantically inclined could opt for one of a couple of opulent and slow-moving, old-time rail adventures.

In Andalucía, climb aboard the **El Andalus Expreso** (www.alandalusexpreso.com), which does a rambling circuit from Seville to Córdoba, Granada, Jerez de la Frontera and back, with leisurely city visits. You sleep on the train, but have the option of booking into a hotel in Seville and/or Granada. The trips take place up to three times a month from April to October and cost €3800/5400 for a single/double cabin.

Up north, catch the **Transcantábrico** (www.transcantabrico.feve.es), a journey on a picturesque narrow-gauge rail route from Santiago de Compostela, travelling via O Ferrol, Oviedo, Santander and Bilbao along the coast and then a long inland stretch to finish in León. The trip (€3000/4400 per single/double, departures up to four times a month from April to October) can also be done in reverse and lasts for eight days. The package includes visits to various towns along the way, including the Museo Guggenheim in Bilbao and the Cuevas de Altamira and Santillana del Mar. The food is as pleasurable for the palate as the sights are for the other senses, with some meals on board but most in various locations.

The trains don't travel at night, making sleep easy and providing the opportunity to stay out at night.

in some. Barcelona has a couple of new sub-urban tram services in addition to its tourist Tramvia Blau run to Tibidabo. Valencia has some useful trams to the beach.

TRAIN

Renfe (☎ 902 24 02 02; www.renfe.es) is the national state train system that runs most of the services in Spain. A handful of small private railway lines are noted in the course of this book.

Spain has several types of trains. For short hops, bigger cities such as Madrid, Barcelona, Bilbao, Málaga and Valencia have a local network known as *cercanías*. Long-distance (aka *largo recorrido* or *Grandes Líneas*) trains come in all sorts of different flavours. They range from all-stops *regionales* operating within one region to the high-speed AVE trains that link Madrid with Seville and Tarragona (and, by early 2008, Barcelona). Similar trains used on conventional Spanish tracks (which differs from the standard European gauge) connect Barcelona with Valencia in the Euromed service. A whole host of modern intermediate speed services (Intercity, Talgo, Talgo 200, Alaris, Altaria and Arco) offer an

increasingly speedy and comfortable service around the country.

You'll find *consignas* (left-luggage facilities) at all main train stations. They are usually open from about 6am to midnight and charge from €3 to €4.50 per day per piece of luggage.

Classes & Costs

All long-distance trains have 2nd and 1st classes, known as *turista* and *preferente*, respectively. The latter is about 40% more expensive. Fares vary enormously depending on the service (faster trains cost more) and, in the case of some high-speed services such as the AVE, on the time and day of travel. If you get a return ticket, it is worth checking whether your return journey is by the same kind of train. If you return on a slower train than the outward-bound trip you may be entitled to a modest refund on the return leg. Alternatively, if you return by a faster train you will need to pay more to make your return ticket valid for that train.

Children aged between four and 12 years are entitled to a 40% discount; those aged

under four travel for free. Buying a return ticket gives you a 20% discount on the return trip. Students and people up to 25 years of age with a Euro<26 Card (Carnet Joven in Spain) are entitled to up to 25% off some prices.

On overnight trips within Spain it's worth paying extra for a *litera* (couchette; a sleeping berth in a six- or four-bed compartment). The cost depends on the type of train and length of journey. Only a few trains offer this service now. A more comfortable and expensive way to travel is by *trenhotel*, which offers *turista*

(sitting up or sleeping), *preferente* (sleeping single or double) and *gran clase* (luxury sleeping, single or double) classes. The lines covered are Madrid–La Coruña, Barcelona–Córdoba–Seville, Barcelona–Madrid (and on to Lisbon) and Barcelona–Málaga.

Reservations

Reservations are recommended for long-distance trips and you can make them in train stations, Renfe offices, travel agencies as well as online (this can be a little complicated though).



Health

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BEFORE YOU GO

Prevention is the key to staying healthy while abroad. Some predeparture planning will save trouble later. See your dentist before a long trip, carry a spare pair of contact lenses and glasses, and take your optical prescription with you. Bring medications in their original, clearly labelled, containers. A signed and dated letter from your physician describing your medical conditions and medications, including generic names, is also a good idea. If carrying syringes or needles, be sure to have a physician's letter documenting their medical necessity.

INSURANCE

If you're an EU citizen, a European Health Insurance Card, available from health centres or, in the UK, post offices, covers you for most medical care in public hospitals. It will not cover you for non-emergencies or emergency repatriation home. So even with the card, you will still have to pay for medicine bought from pharmacies, even if prescribed, and perhaps for a few tests and procedures. The card is no good for private medical consultations and treatment in Spain; this includes virtually all dentists, and some of the better clinics and surgeries. Citizens from other countries should find out if there is a reciprocal arrangement for free medical care between their country and Spain. If you do need health

insurance, strongly consider a policy that covers you for ambulances and the worst possible scenario, such as an accident requiring an emergency flight home.

Find out in advance if your insurance plan will make payments directly to providers or reimburse you later for overseas health expenditures; if you have to claim later make sure you keep all documentation. The former option is generally preferable, as it doesn't require you to pay out of your own pocket in a foreign country.

Worldwide travel insurance is available at www.lonelyplanet.com/travel_services. You can buy, extend and claim online anywhere – even if you're already on the road.

RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS

No jabs are necessary for Spain. However, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that all travellers should be covered for diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella and polio, regardless of their destination. Since most vaccines don't produce immunity until at least two weeks after they're given, visit a physician at least six weeks before departure.

INTERNET RESOURCES

International Travel and Health, a WHO publication, is revised annually and is available online at www.who.int/ith. Other useful websites:

Age Concern (www.ageconcern.org.uk) Advice on travel for the elderly.

Fit for Travel (www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk) General travel advice for the lay person.

Marie Stopes International (www.mariestopes.org.uk) Information on women's health and contraception.

MD Travel Health (www.mdtravelhealth.com) Travel health recommendations for every country; updated daily.

IN TRANSIT

DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS (DVT)

Blood clots may form in the legs during plane flights, chiefly because of prolonged immobility. The chief symptom of DVT is swelling or pain of the foot, ankle or calf, usually but not always on just one side. When a blood clot

travels to the lungs, it may cause chest pain and breathing difficulties. Travellers with any of these symptoms should immediately seek medical attention.

To prevent the development of DVT on long flights you should walk about the cabin, contract your leg muscles while sitting, drink plenty of fluids, and avoid alcohol and tobacco.

IN SPAIN AVAILABILITY & COST OF HEALTH CARE

If you need an ambulance, call % 061. For emergency treatment go straight to the *urgencias* (casualty) section of the nearest hospital.

Good health care is readily available, and *farmacias* (pharmacies) offer valuable advice and sell over-the-counter medication. In Spain, a system of *farmacias de guardia* (duty pharmacies) operates so that each district has one open all the time. When a pharmacy is closed, it posts the name of the nearest open one on the door.

Medical costs are lower in Spain than many other European countries, but can still mount quickly if you are uninsured.

TRAVELLER'S DIARRHOEA

If you develop diarrhoea, be sure to drink plenty of fluids, preferably an oral rehydration solution, such as Dioralyte. If diarrhoea is bloody, persists for more than 72 hours or is accompanied by a fever, shaking, chills or severe abdominal pain, you should seek medical attention.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

Altitude Sickness

Lack of oxygen at high altitudes (over 2500m) affects most people to some extent. Symptoms of Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) usually develop during the first 24 hours at altitude but may be delayed up to three weeks. Mild symptoms include headache, lethargy, dizziness, difficulty sleeping and loss of appetite. AMS may become more severe without warning and can be fatal. Severe symptoms include breathlessness, a dry, irritative cough (which may progress to the production of pink, frothy sputum), severe headache, lack of coordination and balance, confusion,

irrational behaviour, vomiting, drowsiness and unconsciousness. There is no hard-and-fast rule as to what is too high: AMS has been fatal at 3000m, although 3500m to 4500m is the usual range.

Treat mild symptoms by resting at the same altitude until recovery, usually for a day or two. Paracetamol or aspirin can be taken for headaches. If symptoms persist or become worse *immediate descent is necessary*; even 500m can help. Drug treatments should never be used to avoid descent or to enable further ascent.

Diamox (acetazolamide) reduces the headache caused by AMS and helps the body acclimatise to the lack of oxygen. It is only available on prescription and those who are allergic to the sulphonamide antibiotics may also be allergic to Diamox.

In the UK, fact sheets are available from the **British Mountaineering Council** (% 0870 010 4878; www.thebmc.co.uk; 177-179 Burton Rd, Manchester, M20 2BB).

Heat Exhaustion & Heatstroke

Heat exhaustion occurs following excessive fluid loss with inadequate replacement of fluids and salt. Symptoms include headache, dizziness and tiredness. Dehydration is happening by the time you feel thirsty – aim to drink sufficient water to produce pale, diluted urine. Replace lost fluids by drinking water and/or fruit juice, and cool the body with cold water and fans. Treat salt loss with salty fluids, such as soup, or add a little more table salt to foods than usual.

Heatstroke is much more serious, resulting in irrational and hyperactive behaviour, and eventually loss of consciousness and death. Rapid cooling by spraying the body with water and fanning is ideal. Emergency fluid and electrolyte replacement by intravenous drip is recommended.

Bites & Stings

Bees and wasps only cause real problems to those with a severe allergy (anaphylaxis). If you have a severe allergy to bee or wasp stings, carry an 'epipen' or similar adrenaline injection.

In forested areas watch out for the hairy reddish-brown caterpillars of the pine processionary moth. They live in silvery nests up in the pine trees and, come spring, they leave the nest to march in long lines (hence the name). Touching the caterpillars' hairs sets off a severely irritating allergic skin reaction.

Some Spanish centipedes have a very nasty but nonfatal sting. The ones to watch out for are those with clearly defined segments, which may be patterned with, for instance, black and yellow stripes.

Jellyfish, with their stinging tentacles, generally occur in large numbers or hardly at all, so it's fairly easy to know when not to go in the sea.

Mosquitoes are found in most parts of Europe. They may not carry malaria, but can cause irritation and infected bites. Use a DEET-based insect repellent.

Sandflies are found around the Mediterranean beaches. They usually cause only a nasty itchy bite but can carry a rare skin disorder called cutaneous leishmaniasis.

Scorpions are found in Spain and their sting can be distressingly painful, but not considered fatal.

The only venomous snake that is even relatively common in Spain is Lataste's viper. It has a triangular-shaped head, is up to 75cm long, and grey with a zigzag pattern. It lives in dry, rocky areas, away from humans. Its bite can be fatal and needs to be treated with a serum, which state clinics in major towns keep in stock. Also to be avoided is the Montpellier snake, which is blue with a white underside and prominent ridges over the eyes. It lives mainly in scrub and sandy areas, but keeps a low profile and is unlikely to be a threat unless trodden on.

Check for ticks if you have been walking where sheep and goats graze: they can cause skin infections and other more serious diseases.

Hypothermia

The weather in Spain's mountains can be extremely changeable at any time of year. Proper

preparation will reduce the risks of getting hypothermia. Even on a hot day the weather can change rapidly; carry waterproof garments and warm layers, and inform others of your route.

Hypothermia starts with shivering, loss of judgment and clumsiness. Unless rewarming occurs, the sufferer deteriorates into apathy, confusion and coma. Prevent further heat loss by seeking shelter, warm dry clothing, hot sweet drinks and shared body warmth.

Water

Tap water is generally safe to drink in Spain. If you are in any doubt, ask *¿Es potable el agua (de grifo)?* (Is the (tap) water drinkable?). Do not drink water from rivers or lakes as it may contain bacteria or viruses that can cause diarrhoea or vomiting.

TRAVELLING WITH CHILDREN

Make sure your children are up to date with routine vaccinations, and discuss possible travel vaccines well before departure as some vaccines are not suitable for children under one year of age.

WOMEN'S HEALTH

Travelling during pregnancy is usually possible but always seek a medical check-up before planning your trip. The most risky times for travel are during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy and after 30 weeks.

SEXUAL HEALTH

Condoms are widely available, but emergency contraception may not be, so take the necessary precautions. When buying condoms, look for a European CE mark, which means they have been rigorously tested. Remember to also keep them in a cool, dry place so that they don't crack and perish.

Language

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Spanish (*español*), or Castilian (*castellano*) as it is more precisely called, is spoken throughout Spain, but there are also three important regional languages: Catalan (*català*), another Romance language with close ties to French, spoken in Catalonia, the Balearic Islands and Valencia; Galician (*galego*), similar enough to Portuguese to be regarded by some as a dialect, spoken in Galicia; and Basque (*euskara*), of obscure, non-Latin origin, spoken in the Basque Country and Navarra.

English isn't as widely spoken as many travellers expect, though you're more likely to find people who speak some English in the main cities and tourist areas. Generally, however, you'll be better received if you try to communicate in Spanish.

For a more comprehensive guide to the Spanish language than we're able to offer here, get a copy of Lonely Planet's *Spanish Phrasebook*. For information on language courses available in Spain, see p844.

PRONUNCIATION

Spanish pronunciation isn't difficult – many Spanish sounds are similar to their English counterparts, and there's a clear and consistent relationship between pronunciation and spelling. If you stick to the following rules you should have very few problems making yourself understood.

Vowels

Unlike English, each of the vowels in Spanish has a uniform pronunciation that doesn't vary. For example, the Spanish *a* has only one pronunciation, similar to the 'u' in 'nut'. Many Spanish words are written with an acute accent (eg *días*) – this normally indicates a stressed syllable and doesn't change the sound of the vowel. Vowels are pronounced clearly even if they are unstressed.

Spanish Pronunciation Guide

| | | |
|-----------|-----|---|
| a | a | as the 'u' in 'nut' |
| ai | ai | as in 'aisle' |
| au | ow | as in 'cow' |
| e | e | as in 'met' |
| ei | ey | as in 'they' |
| i | ee | as in 'keep' |
| ia | ya | as in 'yard' |
| ie | ye | as in 'yes' |
| o | o | as in 'hot' |
| oy | oy | as in 'boy' |
| u | oo | as in 'hoof' |
| | – | silent after <i>q</i> and in <i>gue/gui</i> |
| ue | we | as in 'wet' |
| uy | ooy | as the 'oy' in 'boy' |
| ü | w | as in 'wet' |

Semiconsonant

Spanish also has the semiconsonant *y*. When occurring at the end of a word or standing alone (meaning 'and') it's pronounced like the Spanish *i*. As a consonant, it's somewhere between the 'y' in 'yonder' and the 'g' in 'beige', depending on the region you're in.

Consonants

Some Spanish consonants are the same as their English counterparts. The pronunciation of others varies according to which vowel follows and which part of Spain you happen to be in. The Spanish alphabet also contains three consonants that are not found within the English alphabet: *ch*, *ll* and *ñ*. In newer dictionaries the letters *ch* and *ll* are listed under *c* and *l* respectively, but *ñ* is still treated as a separate letter and comes after *n*.

Spanish Pronunciation Guide

| | | |
|-----------|----|---|
| b | b | as in 'book' when at the start of a word or preceded by m or n; elsewhere as the 'v' in 'van' |
| c | k | as in 'cat' when followed by a, o, u or a consonant |
| | th | as in 'thin' before e and i |
| ch | ch | as in 'church' |
| cu | kw | as the 'qu' in 'quite' |
| d | d | as in 'dog' when word-initial or when preceded by l or n |
| | th | as in 'then' |
| | – | not pronounced in some words ending in -ado, eg <i>complicado</i> (complicated) is often pronounced kom-plee-ka-o |
| f | f | as in 'frame' |
| g | g | as in 'get' when initial and before a, o and u |
| | kh | as the 'ch' in the Scottish <i>loch</i> before e or i |
| h | – | always silent |
| j | kh | as the 'ch' in the Scottish <i>loch</i> |
| l | l | as in 'let' |
| ll | ly | as the 'lli' in 'million'; some people pronounce it like the 'y' in 'yellow' |
| m | m | as in 'many' |
| n | n | as in 'nana' |
| ñ | ny | as the 'ni' in 'onion' |
| p | p | as in 'pop' |
| q | k | as in 'kick' |
| r | r | a rolled 'r' sound; longer when initial or doubled |
| s | s | as in 'see' |
| t | t | as in 'top' |
| v | b | as in 'bus' |
| vu | vw | as the 'voi' in the French <i>voir</i> |
| x | ks | as in 'taxi' when between two vowels |
| | s | as in 'see' when preceding a consonant |
| z | th | as in 'thin' |

WORD STRESS

Stress is indicated by italics in the pronunciation guides included with all the words and phrases in this language guide. In general, words ending in vowels or the letters n or s have stress on the next-to-last syllable, while those with other endings have stress on the last syllable. Thus *vaca* (cow) and *caballos* (horses) both carry stress on

the next-to-last syllable, while *ciudad* (city) and *infeliz* (unhappy) are both stressed on the last syllable.

Written accents indicate a stressed syllable, and will almost always appear in words that don't follow these rules, eg *sótano* (basement) and *porción* (portion).

GENDER & PLURALS

Spanish nouns are marked for gender (masculine or feminine) and adjectives will vary according to the gender of the noun they modify. There are rules to help determine gender – with exceptions, of course! Feminine nouns generally end with -a or with the groups -ción, -sión or -dad. Other endings typically signify a masculine noun. Endings for adjectives also change to agree with the gender of the noun they modify (masculine/feminine -o/-a).

Where necessary, both forms are given for the words and phrases below, separated by a slash and with the masculine form first, eg *perdido/a* (lost).

If a noun or adjective ends in a vowel, the plural is formed by adding s to the end. If it ends in a consonant, the plural is formed by adding es to the end.

ACCOMMODATION

| | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| I'm looking for ... | <i>Estoy buscando ...</i> | e-stoy-boos-kar-do ... |
| Where is ...? | <i>¿Dónde hay ...?</i> | dón-de ai ... |
| a hotel | <i>un hotel</i> | oon o-tel |
| a boarding house | <i>una pensión/ un hospedaje</i> | oo-na pen-syon/ oon os-pe-da-khe |
| a youth hostel | <i>un albergue juvenil</i> | oon al-berge khoo-ve-neeel |
| I'd like a ... room. | <i>Quisiera una habitación ...</i> | kee-sye-ra oo-na a-bee-ta-thyon ... |
| double | <i>doble</i> | dó-ble |
| single | <i>individual</i> | een-dee-vee-dwal |
| twin | <i>con dos camas</i> | kon dos ka-mas |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| How much is it per ...? | <i>¿Cuánto cuesta por ...?</i> | kwan-to kwes-ta por ... |
| night | <i>noche</i> | no-che |
| person | <i>persona</i> | per-so-na |
| week | <i>semana</i> | se-ma-na |

May I see the room?

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>¿Puedo ver la habitación?</i> | pwe-do ver la a-bee-ta-thyon |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|

Does it include breakfast?

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>¿Incluye el desayuno?</i> | een-kloo-ye el de-sa-yoo-no |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|

I don't like it.

| | |
|---------------------|---------------|
| <i>No me gusta.</i> | no me goos-ta |
|---------------------|---------------|

It's fine. I'll take it.

| | |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| <i>Vale. La cojo.</i> | vale la ko-kho |
|-----------------------|----------------|

I'm leaving now.

| | |
|----------------------|-------------|
| <i>Me voy ahora.</i> | me voya-ora |
|----------------------|-------------|

| | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| full board | <i>pensión completa</i> | pen-syon kom-ple-ta |
| private/shared bathroom | <i>baño privado/ compartido</i> | ba-nyo pree-va-dol kom-par-tee-do |
| too expensive | <i>demasiado caro</i> | de-ma-sya-do ka-ro |
| cheaper | <i>más económico</i> | mas e-ko-no-mee-ko |
| discount | <i>descuento</i> | des-kwento |

MAKING A RESERVATION

(for phone or written requests)

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| To ... | <i>A ...</i> |
| From ... | <i>De ...</i> |
| Date | <i>Fecha</i> |
| I'd like to book ... | <i>Quisiera reservar ... (see Accommodation on p878 for bed/room options)</i> |
| in the name of ... | <i>en nombre de ...</i> |
| for the nights of ... | <i>para las noches del ...</i> |
| credit card ... | <i>tarjeta de crédito ...</i> |
| number | <i>número</i> |
| expiry date | <i>fecha de caducidad</i> |
| Please confirm ... | <i>Puede confirmar ...</i> |
| availability | <i>la disponibilidad</i> |
| price | <i>el precio</i> |

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

When talking to people familiar to you or younger than you, use the informal form of 'you', *tú*, rather than the polite form *Usted*. Wait for your Spanish friends to suggest you use the *tú* form. The polite form is used in all cases in this guide; where options are given, the form is indicated by the abbreviations 'pol' and 'inf'.

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Hello. | <i>Hola.</i> | o-la |
| Good morning. | <i>Buenos días.</i> | bwe-nos dee-as |
| Good afternoon. | <i>Buenas tardes.</i> | bwe-nas tar-des |
| Good evening/ night. | <i>Buenas noches.</i> | bwe-nas no-ches |
| Goodbye. | <i>Adiós.</i> | a-dyos |
| Bye/See you soon. | <i>Hasta luego.</i> | as-ta lwe-go |
| Yes. | <i>Sí.</i> | see |
| No. | <i>No.</i> | no |

| | | |
|------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Please. | <i>Por favor.</i> | por fa-vor |
| Thank you. | <i>Gracias.</i> | gra-thyas |
| Many thanks. | <i>Muchas gracias.</i> | moo-chas gra-thyas |
| You're welcome. | <i>De nada.</i> | de na-da |
| Pardon me. | <i>Perdon/ (getting attention)</i> | per-don/ dees-kool-pe-me |
| Sorry. | <i>Discúlpeme. (when apologising)</i> | lo see-en-to |
| Excuse me. | <i>Permiso. (when asking to get past someone)</i> | per-mee-so |

How are things?

| | |
|------------------|--------|
| <i>¿Qué tal?</i> | ke tal |
|------------------|--------|

What's your name?

| | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>¿Cómo se llama Usted?</i> | ko-mo se lya-ma oo-ste (pol) |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|

| | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>¿Cómo te llamas?</i> | ko-mo te lya-mas (inf) |
|-------------------------|------------------------|

My name is ...

| | |
|---------------------|---------------|
| <i>Me llamo ...</i> | me lya-mo ... |
|---------------------|---------------|

It's a pleasure to meet you.

| | |
|---------------------|----------------|
| <i>Encantado/a.</i> | en-kan-ta-do/a |
|---------------------|----------------|

Where are you from?

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>¿De dónde es/eres?</i> | de don-de es/ e-res (pol/inf) |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|

I'm from ...

| | |
|-------------------|------------|
| <i>Soy de ...</i> | soy de ... |
|-------------------|------------|

Where are you staying?

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>¿Dónde está alojado/a?</i> | don-de es-ta a-lo-kha-do/da (pol) |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <i>¿Dónde estás alojado/a?</i> | don-de es-tas a-lo-kha-do/da (inf) |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|

May I take a photo?

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>¿Puedo hacer una foto?</i> | pwe-do a-ther oo-na fo-to |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|

DIRECTIONS

How do I get to ...?

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>¿Cómo puedo llegar a ...?</i> | ko-mo pwe-do lye-ga-ra ... |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|

Is it far?

| | |
|---------------------|---------------|
| <i>¿Está lejos?</i> | es-ta le-khos |
|---------------------|---------------|

Go straight ahead.

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>Siga/Vaya derecho.</i> | see-gal/va-ya de-re-cho |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|

Turn left.

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Gire a la izquierda.</i> | kheere-a la eeth-kyer-da |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|

Turn right.

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Gire a la derecha.</i> | kheere-a la de-re-cha |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|

SIGNS

| | |
|------------------------|----------------|
| Abierto | Open |
| Cerrado | Closed |
| Comisaría | Police Station |
| Entrada | Entrance |
| Prohibido | Prohibited |
| Prohibido Fumar | No Smoking |
| Salida | Exit |
| Servicios/Aseos | Toilets |
| Hombres | Men |
| Mujeres | Women |

Can you show me (on the map)?

¿Me lo podría indicar (en el mapa)? me lo po-dree a een-dee-kar (en el mapa)

| | | |
|----------------|--------------------|---------------|
| here | <i>aquí</i> | a-kee |
| there | <i>allí</i> | a-lyee |
| avenue | <i>avenida</i> | a-ve-nee-da |
| street | <i>calle/paseo</i> | ka-lye/pa-seo |
| traffic lights | <i>semáforos</i> | se-ma-fó-ras |
| north | <i>norte</i> | nor-te |
| south | <i>sur</i> | soor |
| east | <i>este</i> | es-te |
| west | <i>oeste</i> | o-este |

EMERGENCIAS

Help! *¡Socorro!* so-ko-ro
Fire! *¡Incendio!* een-thee-dyo
Go away! *¡Vete! ¡Fuera!* ve-tel/fwe-ra

Call ...!
¡Llame a ...! lya-me a

an ambulance
una ambulancia oo-na am-boo-lan-thya
a doctor
un médico oon-me-dee-ko
the police
la policía la po-lee-thee-a

It's an emergency.
Es una emergencia.
 es oo-na e-mer-khen-thya

Could you help me, please?
¿Me puede ayudar, por favor?
 me pwe-de a-yoo-dar por fa-voor

I'm lost.
Estoy perdido/a.
 es-toy per-dee-do/da
Where are the toilets?
¿Dónde están los baños?
 don-de es-tan los ba-nyos

HEALTH

I'm sick.
Estoy enfermo/a. es-toy en-fer-mo/ma
I need a doctor.
Necesito un médico (que habla inglés). ne-the-see-to oon-me-dee-ko (ke a-bla een-gles)

Where's the hospital?
¿Dónde está el hospital? don-de es-ta el os-pee-tal

I'm pregnant.
Estoy embarazada. es-toy em-ba-ra-tha-da

I've been vaccinated.

Estoy vacunado/a. es-toy va-koo-na-do/da

I'm allergic to ...

Soy alérgico/a a ... soy a-ler-khee-ko/ka a ...
antibiotics
los antibióticos los an-tee-byo-tee-kos
penicillin
la penicilina la pe-nee-thee-lee-na
nuts
las nueces las nwe-thes
peanuts
los cacahuetes los ka-ka-we-tes

I'm ...

Soy ... soy ...
asthmatic
asmático/a as-ma-tee-ko/ka
diabetic
diabético/a dya-be-tee-ko/ka
epileptic
epiléptico/a e-pee-lep-tee-ko/ka

I have ...

Tengo ... tengo ...
a cough
tos tos
diarrhea
diarrea dee-a-re-a
a headache
un dolor de cabeza oon do-lor de ka-be-tha
nausea
náusea now-se-a

LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES

Do you speak (English)?
¿Habla/Hablas (inglés)? a-bla/a-blas (een-gles) (pol/inf)

Does anyone here speak English?

¿Hay alguien que hable inglés? ai al-gyen-ke a-ble een-gles

I (don't) understand.

Yo (no) entiendo. yo (no) en-tyen-do

How do you say ...?

¿Cómo se dice ...? ko-mo se dee-the ...

What does ...mean?

¿Qué quiere decir ...? ke kye-re de-theer ...

Could you please ...?

¿Puede ... por favor? pwe-de ... por fa-voor

repeat that

repetirlo re-pe-tee-ro

speak more slowly

hablar más despacio a-blar mas des-pa-thyo

write it down

escribirlo es-kree-beer-lo

NUMBERS

| | | |
|------|----------------------|-----------------|
| 0 | <i>zero</i> | the-ro |
| 1 | <i>uno</i> | oo-no |
| 2 | <i>dos</i> | dos |
| 3 | <i>tres</i> | tres |
| 4 | <i>cuatro</i> | kwa-tro |
| 5 | <i>cinco</i> | theen-ko |
| 6 | <i>seis</i> | seys |
| 7 | <i>siete</i> | sye-te |
| 8 | <i>ocho</i> | o-cho |
| 9 | <i>nueve</i> | nwe-be |
| 10 | <i>diez</i> | dyeth |
| 11 | <i>once</i> | on-the |
| 12 | <i>doce</i> | do-the |
| 13 | <i>trece</i> | tre-the |
| 14 | <i>catorce</i> | ka-tor-the |
| 15 | <i>quince</i> | keen-the |
| 16 | <i>dieciséis</i> | dye-thee-seys |
| 17 | <i>diecisiete</i> | dye-thee-sye-te |
| 18 | <i>dieciocho</i> | dye-thee-o-cho |
| 19 | <i>diecinueve</i> | dye-thee-nwe-be |
| 20 | <i>veinte</i> | veyn-te |
| 21 | <i>veintiuno</i> | veyn-tyoo-no |
| 30 | <i>treinta</i> | treyn-ta |
| 31 | <i>treinta y uno</i> | treyn-tai oo-no |
| 40 | <i>cuarenta</i> | kwa-ren-ta |
| 50 | <i> cincuenta</i> | theen-kwen-ta |
| 60 | <i> sesenta</i> | se-sen-ta |
| 70 | <i> setenta</i> | se-ten-ta |
| 80 | <i> ochenta</i> | o-chen-ta |
| 90 | <i> noventa</i> | no-ven-ta |
| 100 | <i> cien</i> | thyen |
| 101 | <i> ciento uno</i> | thyen-to oo-no |
| 200 | <i> doscientos</i> | dos-tyen-tos |
| 500 | <i> quinientos</i> | keen-yen-tos |
| 1000 | <i> mil</i> | meel |
| 5000 | <i> cinco mil</i> | theen-ko meel |

SHOPPING & SERVICES

I'd like to buy ...
Quisiera comprar ... kee-sye-ra kom-prar ...

I'm just looking.
Solo estoy mirando. so-lo es-toymee-ran-do

May I look at it?
¿Puedo mirar (lo/la)? pwe-do mee-rar (lo/la)

How much is it?
¿Cuánto cuesta? kwan-to kwesta

That's too expensive for me.
Es demasiado caro para mí. es de-ma-sya-do ka-ro pa-ra mee

Could you lower the price?
¿Podría bajar un poco el precio? po-dree-a ba-khar-oon po-ko el pre-thyo

I don't like it.

No me gusta. no me goos-ta

I'll take it.
Lo llevo. lo lye-vo

Do you accept ...?

¿Aceptan ...? a-thep-tan ...
credit cards
tarjetas de crédito tar-khe-tas de kre-dee-to
travellers cheques
cheques de viajero che-kes de vya-khe-ro

less *menos* me-nos
more *más* mas
large *grande* gran-de
small *pequeño/a* pe-ke-nyo/nya

I'm looking for the ...

Estoy buscando ... es-toy boos-kan-do ...
ATM
el cajero automático el ka-khe-ro ow-to-ma-tee-ko
bank
el banco el ban-ko
bookstore
la librería la lee-bre-ree-a
chemist/pharmacy
la farmacia la far-ma-thya
embassy
la embajada la em-ba-kha-da
laundry
la lavandería la la-van-de-ree-a
market
el mercado el mer-ka-do
post office
correos ko-re-os
supermarket
el supermercado el soo-per-mer-ka-do
tourist office
la oficina de turismo la o-fee-thee-na de too-raes-mo

What time does it open/close?

¿A qué hora abre/cierra?
 a-ke ora a-bre/tye-ra

I want to change some money/travellers cheques.

Quiero cambiar dinero/cheques de viajero.
 kye-ro kam-byar-dee-ne-ro/che-kes de vya-khe-ro

What is the exchange rate?

¿Cuál es el tipo de cambio?
 kwal es el tee-po de kam-byo

I want to call ...

Quiero llamar a ...
 kye-ro lya-ma-a ...

airmail *correo aéreo* ko-re-o a-e-re-o
letter *carta* karta

| | | |
|------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| registered | <i>correo</i> | ko-re-o |
| mail | <i>certificado</i> | ther-tee-fee-ka-do |
| stamps | <i>sellos</i> | se-lyos |

TIME & DATES

What time is it?

¿Qué hora es? ke ora es

It's one o'clock.

Es la una. es la oo-na

It's seven o'clock.

Son las siete. son las sye-te

midnight

medianoche me-dya-no-che

noon

mediodía me-dyo-dee-a

half past two

dos y media dos ee me-dya

today

hoy oy

tonight

esta noche esta no-che

tomorrow

mañana ma-nyaa-na

yesterday

ayer a-yer

Monday

lunes loo-nes

Tuesday

martes mar-tes

Wednesday

miércoles myer-ko-les

Thursday

jueves khwe-bes

Friday

viernes vyer-nes

Saturday

sábado sa-ba-do

Sunday

domingo do-meer-go

TRANSPORT

Public Transport

What time does ... leave/arrive?

¿A qué hora sale/llega ...? a ke ora sa-le/ye-ga ...?

the bus

el autobús el ow-to-boos

the plane

el avión el a-vyon

the ship

el barco el barko

the train

el tren el tren

airport

el aeropuerto el a-e-ro-pwer-to

bus station

la estación de autobuses la es-ta-tyon de ow-to-boos-es

bus stop

la parada de autobuses la pa-ra-da de ow-to-boos-es

luggage check room

consigna kon-seeg-na

taxi rank

la parada de taxi la pa-ra-da de tak-see

ticket office

la taquilla la ta-keelya

train station

la estación de trenes la es-ta-tyon de tre-nes

The ... is delayed.

El/La ... está retrasado/a. el/la ... es-ta re-tra-sa-do/da

I'd like a ticket to ...

Quiero un billete a ... kyero oon bee-lye-te a ...

Is this taxi free?

¿Está libre este taxi? e-sta lee-bre este tak-see

What's the fare to ...?

¿Cuánto cuesta hasta ...? kwan-to kwes-ta a-sta ...

Please put the meter on.

Por favor, ponga el taxímetro. por fa-vor pon-ga el tak-see-me-tro

a ... ticket *un billete de ...* oon bee-lye-te de ...

one-way *ida* ee-da

return *ida y vuelta* ee-da ee vwe-ta

1st-class *primera clase* pree-me-ra kla-se

2nd-class *segunda clase* se-goon-da kla-se

student *estudiante* es-too-dyan-te

Private Transport

I'd like to hire a/an ...

Quisiera alquilar ... kee-sye-ra al-kee-lar ...

4WD

un todoterreno oon to-do-te-re-no

car

un coche oon ko-che

motorbike

una moto oo-na mo-to

bicycle

una bicicleta oo-na bee-thee kle-ta

Is this the road to ...?

¿Se va a ... por esta carretera?
se va a ... por es-ta ka-re-tera

Where's a petrol station?

¿Dónde hay una gasolinera?
don-de ai oo-na ga-so-lee-nera

Please fill it up.

Lleno, por favor.
lye-no por fa-vor

ROAD SIGNS

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Acceso | Entrance |
| Aparcamiento | Parking |
| Ceda el Paso | Give Way |
| Despacio | Slow |
| Desvío | Detour |
| Dirección Única | One Way |
| Modere Su Velocidad | Slow Down |
| No Adelantar | No Overtaking |
| Peaje | Toll |
| Peligro | Danger |
| Prohibido Aparcar | No Parking |
| Prohibido el Paso | No Entry |
| Salida | Exit (Freeway/Motorway) |

I'd like (20) litres.

Quiero (veinte) litros.
kyero (veyn-te) lee-tros

diesel

gasóleo ga-so-lyo

petrol

gasolina ga-so-lee-na

(How long) Can I park here?

¿(Por cuánto tiempo) Puedo aparcar aquí?
(por kwan-to tyem-po) pwe-do a-par-ka-a-kee

Where do I pay?

¿Dónde se paga?
don-de se pa-ga

I need a mechanic.

Necesito un mecánico.
ne-the-see-to oon me-ka-nee-ko

The car has broken down at ...

El coche se ha averiado en ...
el ko-che se a-a-ve-rya-do en ...



Also available from Lonely Planet:
Spanish Phrasebook

The motorbike won't start.

No arranca la moto.
no a-ran-ka la mo-to

I have a flat tyre.

Tengo un pinchazo.
ten-go oon peen-cha-to

I've run out of petrol.

Me he quedado sin gasolina.
me e-ke-da-do seen ga-so-lee-na

I've had an accident.

He tenido un accidente.
e-te-nee-do oon ak-thee-der-te

TRAVEL WITH CHILDREN

I need ...

Necesito ... ne-the-see-to ...

Do you have ...?

¿Hay ...? ai ...

a car baby seat

un asiento de seguridad para bebés
oon a-tyen-to de se-goo-ree-da para be-bés

a child-minding service

un servicio de cuidado de niños
oon ser-vee-tyo de kwee-da-do de nee-nyos

a children's menu

un menú infantil
oon me-noo-een-fan-teel

a crèche

una guardería
oo-na gwar-de-ree-a

(disposable) nappies/diapers

pañales (de usar y tirar)
pa-nyales (de oo-sar-ee-tee-ra)

an (English-speaking) babysitter

un canguro (de habla inglesa)
oon kan-go-ro (de a-bla-een-gle-sa)

formula (milk)

leche en polvo
le-che en pol-vo

a highchair

una trona
oo-na tro-na

a potty

un orinal de niños
oon o-ree-nal de nee-nyos

a stroller

un cochecito
oon ko-che-thee-to

Do you mind if I breast-feed here?

¿Le molesta que dé de pecho aquí?
le mo-les-ta ke de de pe-cho a-kee

Are children allowed?

¿Se admiten niños?
se ad-mee-ten nee-nyos

Glossary

Unless otherwise indicated, these terms are in Castilian Spanish.

abierto – open
abogado de oficio – duty solicitor
absenta – absinthe
acequia – Islamic-era canals
aficionado – enthusiast
agroturismo – rural tourism, see also *turismo rural*
ajuntament – Catalan for *ayuntamiento*
alameda – tree-lined avenue
albergue – refuge
albergue juvenil – youth hostel
alcalde – mayor
alcázar – Muslim-era fortress
alfiz – rectangular frame about the top of an arch in Islamic architecture
aljibe – cistern
altar mayor – high altar
alud – avalanche
años de hambre – literally ‘years of hunger’; a period in the late 1940s when Spain was hit by a UN-sponsored trade boycott
apartado de correos – post-office box
área de acampada – see *zona de acampada*
armadura – wooden *Mudejar* ceiling
arroyo – stream
artesonado – wooden *Mudejar* ceiling with interlaced beams leaving a pattern of spaces for decoration
auriga – chariot racer
auto-da-fé – elaborate execution ceremony staged by the Inquisition
autonomía – autonomous community or region: Spain’s 50 provincias are grouped into 17 of these
autopista – tollway
autovía – toll-free highway
AVE – Tren de Alta Velocidad Española; high-speed train
ayuntamiento – city or town hall
azulejo – glazed tile

bailaor – male flamenco dancer
bailaora – female flamenco dancer
baile – dance in a flamenco context
bakalao – ear-splitting Spanish techno music
balcón – balcony
balneario – spa
baño completo – full bathroom with toilet, shower and/or bath and washbasin
barranco – dry riverbed
barrio – district/quarter (of a town or city)

bata de cola – frilly flamenco dress
bateas – platforms where mussels, oysters and scallops are cultivated
batipueras – wooden half-doors
biblioteca – library
bici todo terreno (BTT) – mountain bike
bodega – cellar (especially wine cellar); also a winery or a traditional wine bar likely to serve wine from the barrel
bomberos – fire brigade
bota – sherry cask or animal-skin wine vessel
botijo – jug, usually earthenware
buceo – snorkelling; also used to mean diving; see *submarinismo*
búhos – night-bus routes
butaca – seat
buzón – letter box

cabrito – kid
cajero automático – automated teller machine (ATM)
cala – cove
calle – street
callejón – lane
cama – bed
cambio – change; also currency exchange
campings – officially graded camping grounds
caña – small glass of beer
canguro – babysitter
cante jondo – literally ‘deep song’; song of the *gitanos*
capea – amateur bullfight
capilla – chapel
capilla mayor – chapel containing the high altar of a church
carmen – walled villa with gardens, in Granada
carnaval – traditional festive period that precedes the start of Lent; carnival
carretera – highway
carta – menu
casa de huéspedes – guesthouse; see also *hospedaje*
casa de labranza – *casa rural* in Cantabria
casa de pagès – *casa rural* in Catalonia
casa rural – village or country house or farmstead with rooms to let
casco – literally ‘helmet’; often used to refer to the old part of a city; more correctly, *casco antiguo/histórico/viejo*
castellano – Castilian; used in preference to *español* to describe the national language
castellers – Catalan human-castle builders
Castile – Castilla (the province)
castillo – castle

castizo – literally ‘pure’; refers to people and things distinctly from Madrid
castro – Celtic fortified village
català – Catalan language; a native of Catalonia
catedral – cathedral
caudillo – Franco’s title; roughly equivalent to the German Führer
caza – hunting
centro de salud – health centre
cercanías – local train network
cerrado – closed
certificado – certified mail
cervecería – beer bar
chato – small glass
churrigueresque – ornate style of baroque architecture named after the brothers Alberto and José Churriguera
cigarrales – country estates
ciudad – city
claustró – cloister
CNIG – Centro Nacional de Información Geográfica; producers of good-quality maps
cofradía – see *hermandad*
colegiata – collegiate church
coll – Catalan for *collado*
collado – mountain pass
comarca – district; grouping of *municipios*
comedor – dining room
comisaría – national police station
completo – full
comunidad – fixed charge for maintenance of rental accommodation (sometimes included in rent); community
comunidad autónoma – see *autonomía*
condones – condoms
conquistador – conqueror
consigna – left-luggage office or lockers
converso – Jew who converted to Christianity in medieval Spain
copas – drinks; literally ‘glasses’
cordillera – mountain range
coro – choir; part of a church, usually in the middle
correos – post office
corrida de toros – bullfight
cortado – short black coffee with a little milk
Cortes – national parliament
costa – coast
coto – woodland and scrub
cruceiro – standing crucifix found at many crossroads in Galicia
cuenta – bill, cheque
cuesta – lane, usually on a hill
custodia – monstrosity

dehesa – pastureland
DELE – Diploma de Español como Lengua Extranjera; language qualification recognised by the Spanish government

día del espectador – cut-price ticket day at cinemas; literally ‘viewer’s day’
diapositiva – slide film
dolmen – prehistoric megalithic tomb
ducha – shower
duende – spirit

embalse – reservoir
embarcadero – pier or landing stage
encierro – running of bulls Pamplona-style; also happens in many other places around Spain
entrada – entrance
ermita – hermitage or chapel
iglesia – Catalan for *iglesia*
estació – Catalan for *estación*
estación – station
estación de autobuses – bus station
estación de esquí – ski station or resort
estación de ferrocarril – train station
estación marítima – ferry terminal
estanco – tobacconist shop
estanque – pond
estany – lake
Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) – the name stands for Basque Homeland and Freedom
extremeño – Extremaduran; a native of Extremadura

fallas – huge sculptures of papier-mâché (or nowadays more often polystyrene) on wood used in Las Fallas festival of Valencia
farmacia – pharmacy
faro – lighthouse
feria – fair; can refer to trade fairs as well as to city, town or village fairs that are basically several days of merrymaking; can also mean a bullfight or festival stretching over days or weeks
ferrocarril – railway
FEVE – Ferrocarriles de Via Estrecha; a national train company
fiesta – festival, public holiday or party
fin de semana – weekend
flamenco – flamingo or Flemish; also means flamenco music and dance
frontón – walled court where *pelota vasca* is played
funicular aéreo – cable car; also called *teleférico*
fútbol – football (soccer)

gaditano – person from Cádiz
gaita – Galician version of the bagpipes
gallego – Galician; a native of Galicia
galería – Galician glassed-in balcony
garum – a spicy, vitamin-rich sauce made from fish entrails throughout the Roman Empire, used as a seasoning or tonic
gasolina – petrol
gatos – literally ‘cats’; also a colloquial name for *madriñeños*

gitanos – the Roma people (formerly known as Gypsies)
glorieta – big roundabout/traffic circle
Gran Vía – main thoroughfare
GRs – (senderos de) Gran Recorrido; long-distance hiking paths
guardia civil – military police
gusanitos – corn puffs sold at *kioscos*

habitaciones libres – literally 'rooms available'
hermandad – brotherhood (including men and women), in particular one that takes part in religious processions
hórreo – Galician or Asturian grain store
hospedaje – guesthouse
hostal – cheap hotel
hostal-residencia – *hostal* without any kind of restaurant
huerta – market garden; orchard
humedal – wetland

iglesia – church
infanta/infante – princess/prince
interiores – room without a street view
IVA – *impuesto sobre el valor añadido*, or value-added tax

jai-alai – Basque name for *pelota vasca*
jardines – gardens
jondura – depth
jondo – short for *cante jondo*; early form of flamenco
judería – Jewish *barrio* in medieval Spain

kiosco – kiosk; newspaper stand

la gente guapa – literally 'the beautiful people'
lavabo – washbasin
lavandería – laundrette
levante – easterly
librería – bookshop
lidia – the art of bullfighting
lista de correos – poste restante
litera – couchette or sleeping carriage
llegada – arrival
locutorio – private telephone centre
lugares colombinos – Columbus sites
luz – light; also a common name for household electricity

macarras – Madrid's rough but (usually) likable lads
madrileño/a – a person from Madrid
madrugada – the 'early hours', from around 3am to dawn
manchego – La Mancha; a person from La Mancha
marcha – action, life, 'the scene'
marismas – wetlands
marisquería – seafood eatery
martinete – early form of flamenco song
más tasas – plus tax
medina – Arabic word for town or city

mercadillo – flea market
mercado – market
mercat – Catalan for *mercado*
meseta – the high tableland of central Spain
mihrab – prayer niche in a mosque indicating the direction of Mecca
mirador – lookout point
Modernisme – literally 'modernism'; the architectural and artistic style, influenced by Art Nouveau and sometimes known as Catalan modernism, whose leading practitioner was Antoni Gaudí
Modernista – an exponent of *modernisme*
pinsapar – popular Cuban-based rum concoction
monasterio – monastery
morería – former Islamic quarter in a town
morisco – a Muslim who converted (often only superficially) to Christianity in medieval Spain
moro – 'Moor' or Muslim (usually in a medieval context)
movida – similar to *marcha*; a *zona de movida* is an area of a town where lively bars and discos are clustered
Mozarab – Christian living under Muslim rule in early medieval Spain
mozarabic – style of architecture developed by Mozarabs, adopting elements of classic Islamic construction to Christian architecture
Mudéjar – Muslims who remained behind in territory reconquered by Christians; also refers to a decorative style of architecture using elements of Islamic building style applied to buildings constructed in Christian Spain
muelle – wharf or pier
municipio – municipality, Spain's basic local administrative unit
muralla – city wall
murgas – costumed groups
museo – museum
museu – Catalan for *museo*
muwallad – descendant of Christians who converted to Islam in medieval Spain

nitbusos – Catalan for *búhos*
novilleras – novice bullfights
número uno – best, literally number one

objetos perdidos – lost-and-found office
oficina de turismo – tourist office; also *oficina de información turística*

Páginas Amarillas – phone directory; the Yellow Pages
palloza – traditional circular, thatch-roofed house
Pantocrator – Christ the All-Ruler or Christ in Majesty, a central emblem of Romanesque art
parador – luxurious state-owned hotels, many of them in historic buildings
parque nacional – national park; strictly controlled protected area

parque natural – natural park; a protected environmental area
paseo – promenade or boulevard; to stroll
paso – mountain pass
pasos – figures carried in *Semana Santa* parades
pelota vasca – Basque form of handball, also known simply as *pelota*, or *jai-alai* in Basque
peña – a club, usually of flamenco aficionados or Real Madrid or Barcelona football fans; sometimes a dining club
pensión – small private hotel
pinchadiscos – DJs
pinchos – snacks
pinsapar – woodland of the rare and beautiful Spanish fir
pintxos – Basque for tapas
piscina – swimming pool
plaza – Catalan for *plaza*
Plateresque – early phase of Renaissance architecture noted for its intricately decorated façades
platja – Catalan for *playa*
playa – beach
plaza – square
plaza de toros – bullring
poniente – westerly
porrón – jug with a long, thin spout through which you (try to) pour wine into your mouth
port – Catalan for *puerto*
PP – Partido Popular (People's Party)
PRs – (*senderos de*) *Pequeño Recorrido*; short distance hiking paths
presa – dam
preservativos – condoms
prohibido – prohibited
pronunciamiento – pronouncement of military rebellion
provincia – province; Spain is divided into 50 of them
PSOE – Partido Socialista Obrero Español (Spanish Socialist Workers Party)
pueblo – village
punte – bridge; also means the extra day or two off that many people take when a holiday falls close to a weekend
puerta – gate or door
puerto – port or mountain pass; see also *port*
punta – point or promontory

RACE – Real Automóvil Club de España
rambla – avenue or riverbed
rastró – flea market; car-boot sale
REAJ – Red Española de Albergues Juveniles, which is the Spanish HI youth hostel network
real – royal
Reconquista – the Christian reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula from the Muslims (8th to 15th centuries)
refugi – Catalan for *refugio*
refugio – mountain shelter, hut or refuge
refugios vivac – stone shelters with boards to sleep on

reja – grille, especially a wrought-iron one dividing a chapel from the rest of a church
Renfe – Red Nacional de los Ferrocarriles Españoles; the national rail network
reredos – decoration behind an altar
reservas nacional de caza – national hunting reserves, where hunting is permitted but controlled
retablo – altarpiece
Reyes Católicos – Catholic monarchs; Isabel and Fernando
ría – estuary
río – river
riu – Catalan for *rio*
rodalies – Catalan for *cercanías*
romería – festive pilgrimage or procession
ronda – ring road

sacristía – sacristy; the part of a church in which vestments, sacred objects and other valuables are kept
sagrario – sanctuary
sala capitular – chapter house
salida – exit or departure
salinas – salt-extraction lagoons
santuario – shrine or sanctuary
según mercado – meaning 'according to market price'
Semana Santa – Holy Week, the week leading up to Easter Sunday
Sephardic Jews – Jews of Spanish origin
servicios – toilets
seu – cathedral (Catalan)
sevillana – Andalusian folk dance
SGE – Servicio Geográfico del Ejército (Army Geographic Service); producers of good-quality maps
sida – AIDS
sidra – cider
sidrería – cider bar
sierra – mountain range
s/m – on menus, an abbreviation for *según mercado*
s/n – sin número (without number), sometimes seen in addresses
submarinismo – scuba diving
supermercado – supermarket

tablaó – tourist-oriented flamenco performances
taifa – small Muslim kingdom in medieval Spain
tajines – earthenware dishes with pointed lids
tapeo – tapas-bar crawl
taquilla – ticket window
taracea – marquetry
tarjeta de crédito – credit card
tarjeta de residencia – residence card
tarjeta telefónica – phonenumber
tasca – tapas bar
techumbre – roof; specifically a common type of *armadura*
teleférico – cable car; also called *funicular aereo*
temporada alta/media/baja – high/mid/low season

terrazza – terrace; pavement café

terrazas de verano – open-air late-night bars

tertulia – informal discussion group or other regular social gathering

tetería – teahouse, usually in Middle Eastern style, with low seats around low tables

tienda – shop or tent

tocaor – male flamenco guitarist

tocaora – female flamenco guitarist

topoguías – detailed Spanish walking guides

toque – guitar-playing

toreros – bullfighters

torno – revolving counter in a convent by which nuns can sell cakes, sweets and other products to the public without being seen

torre – tower

transept – the two wings of a cruciform church at right angles to the nave

trascoro – screen behind the *coro*

trenet – Catalan for little train

trono – literally ‘throne’; also the platform on which an image is carried during a religious procession

tunas – groups of university students dressed up in medieval garb and busking towards the end of the academic year

turismo – means both tourism and saloon car; el turismo can also mean ‘tourist office’

turismo rural – rural tourism; usually refers to accommodation in a *casa rural* and associated activities, such as walking and horse riding

tympanum – semicircular or triangular space above the lintel of the main entrance to a church or other public building

urbanització – Catalan for *urbanización*

urbanización – suburban housing development

urgencia – emergency

vall – Catalan for *valle*

valle – valley

venta de localidades – ticket office

villa – small town

VO – abbreviation of *versión original*; a foreign-language film subtitled in Spanish

zarzuela – Spanish mix of theatre, music and dance

zona de acampada – country camp site with no facilities, no supervision and no charge; also called *área de acampada*

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