

Travel & Driving Guide

Spain

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Touring Spain By Car

Spain is one of the most popular holiday destinations for many travelers to visit. From mouth-watering seafood, crystal clear beaches, beautiful flamenco dancers, vibrant nightlife and the worlds famous 'Running with the Bulls' in Pamplona. Each city has a unique & fascinating feature to discover, whether it be the capital Madrid, Barcelona or the bustling city of Seville, wherever you are, you will sure to be surprised. During the summer season, island and beach holidays are the most popular for tourists. Golden sandy beaches with clear cool waters are what surround the islands of Spain, and what attracts many visitors here throughout the year. But on the mainland there is much more to discover with many attractions from historic landmarks, fascinating architecture, to its famous festivals all year round! One of the best ways to explore the world of Spain is to rent a car and drive - you'll have endless possibilities without tight schedules and fixed itineraries. And with the many roads and motorways that are highly maintained, you'll have the ability and freedom to discover each wonderful city at ease.

This self-drive guide is aimed at the many travelers who wish to see all that Spain has to offer in the comfort and independence of their own vehicle. In this guide we've included everything you need for a self-drive holiday in Spain, from hiring a car, rules of the road, accommodation tips, to some great touring ideas in the many unique regions of Spain.

Driving Tips

A car rental in Spain is the perfect way and easiest option to explore the many wonderful regions Spain has to offer. What else can be better than having the freedom, comfort and independence with your car rental. Below are a few tips to assist you on your adventure within Spain!

- All Emergency vehicles have right of way, so when you see the flashing lights coming from behind you, pull aside to the 'right' and let them through.
- Anytime of the day, if you're driving within a tunnel, make sure you turn on your headlights. This assists other motorists of your whereabouts.
- If there is a solid line on the road, then lane changing is not permitted.



Clerencia Church, Salamanca

Driving Laws in Spain

- Current passport and full drivers license from your country of origin must also be carried while driving.
- Driving in Spain is on the RIGHT, overtake on the left.
- All passengers must wear a seat belt at all times.
- Spain has strict drunk driving laws, only allowing 0.5mg blood alcohol level.
- Laws are strict on the use of indicator lights, make sure when overtaking and turning use your indicators or you run the risk of getting fined.
- When crossing lanes only cross when the white lines are broken. If the white line is solid do not cross.
- Speed Limits: (Unless signed otherwise.)
 - Motorways: 75 mph
 - Open Roads: 55-60 mph
 - Towns: 30 mph
- Children under 12 are not allowed to travel in the front. Passengers under 53 inches tall are required to use a child safety restraints or booster seat.
- Approved reflective jackets must be worn in case you need to step out of your vehicle on a highway.
- Warning triangles are compulsory.
- Spare lamps and bulbs are compulsory.
- Give way to traffic from your left unless otherwise signed.
- Mobile phones cannot be used while driving even when pulled to the side. You must park completely away from any traffic before using your phone.
- Having headphones in your ears is also banned except for hearing aids.
- Dipped headlights must be used in poor daylight visibility.
- It is illegal to wear sunglasses in a tunnel.



Insurance:

Spanish law requires all vehicles to have compulsory third party (CTP) injury insurance, although your car rental supplier should already have comprehensive insurance covering their cars. In the case of an accident, it must be reported to the insurance provider immediately, and a deductible may be due. To reduce the amount of the deductible you may be liable for, check with Auto Europe to arrange extra cover.

Car Rental companies in Spain will normally include:

- **Third Party insurance:** Compulsory insurance will be included in your car rental rate. This covers you for other people's injury and damage to their vehicle.
- **Collision Damage Waiver (CDW):** This limits your financial liability for damage to the rented vehicle, and is normally included in the prepaid car rental rates. Rentals are normally subject to a liability deductible, which can be reduced at the time you collect your rental car.
- **Theft Loss Cover:** This limits your financial liability for the loss or theft of the rented vehicle and is generally included in the prepaid car rental rates.
- **Fire and Liability:** This limits your financial liability for bodily injury or death, and is normally included in the prepaid car rental rates.
- **Personal Accident Insurance:** This covers the driver for personal injuries and is generally not included in your car rental rates. It is considered an optional extra that you can take upon collection of the car.

License Requirements

To drive a rental car in Spain, a driver will need to be over the age of 21 and have also held a full license for a minimum of one year. An International Drivers Permit is also required and can be obtained at any AAA office or from the National Automobile Club

Min & Max Age Requirements

Min Driving Age: The minimum age to rent a car in Spain is usually 21. Surcharges apply for drivers aged 21-24 years old.

Young Driver's Surcharge: Drivers aged 21-24 years may be charged from €15+tax per day, paid locally.

Max Driving Age: There is no maximum driving age in Spain. However, in some cases, aged drivers may be required to hold a letter from their GP stating they are healthy and fit to drive. Check with Auto Europe for further details.



Road Signs

Road Signs — Many European countries now utilize the 'Vienna Convention on Road Signs and signals' where signals and signage are standard, making it easier to understand and familiarize for tourists and locals alike.

Warning Signs



Narrow road ahead



Sharp turn ahead

Regulatory Signs



Give way to oncoming traffic



Complete stop before passing

Restrictive & Prohibitive Signs



Minimum Traveling speed



Minimum speed limit zoned ended



Parking is not permitted

Mandatory Signs



Winter equipment required within advised zone



Pedestrians and bicycles permitted 'only'



No overtaking allowed within the no passing-zone

Traveling Outside Spain

Driving your rental car out of Spain is permitted for most Western European and EU countries, however driving into Eastern European countries is generally not allowed. Driving outside of mainland Europe or the United Kingdom is strictly forbidden. If you are Traveling outside the country, make sure that you advise Auto Europe at the time of booking for any restrictions that may apply.

Many rental suppliers in Spain do allow one way rentals to other countries, however drop off fees do apply. There are also some suppliers that have rules stating their cars must be returned within the country. International one ways always need to be booked in advance.

Domestic One Ways

Most car rental suppliers will allow their vehicles to be booked on one way journeys within Spain without any extra charge. It's essential to pre-book one way journeys though, as fees can be applied if cars are returned somewhere other than the depot booked for drop off.

Road Tolls

In Spain, most motorways charge a toll fee for usage of the motorway. Prices are determined on distance traveled; collect a ticket upon entry and return it upon exiting. Car type and the day of the week will also contribute to the price of the toll. Electronic tolling is used on most motorways, check with the rental supplier for tolling options.

Parking Laws

Do not park in areas painted yellow on the pavement, curb or where a no parking sign is displayed. In major cities, parking spaces marked blue on the pavement are metered parking, spaces marked with yellow are 'no parking allowed'. Before parking your vehicle, make sure to check for signage nearby, otherwise you may be left with a parking infringement and/or your car towed. Double parking is also illegal within Spain.



Car Fuel

Gasoline Stations are located in all main cities in Spain and in most of the smaller towns. Most fuel stations are generally attended, so it's a good idea that you watch the attendant filling, as scams can be quite common. Gasoline in Spanish is known as '*gasoline*', while unleaded gasoline is '*gasoline sin plomo*' and diesel '*gasoleo*'.

Spain Car Rental FAQ's

What kind of car should I rent for my holiday in Spain?

This depends on where you're Traveling, how many people are Traveling and the kind of driving you intend to do. Cars range from small (economy, compact) to larger size cars (intermediate, full size) to 4WD's vehicles. For short trips with fewer passengers opt for the smaller cars, which will also save on fuel and for longer trips with the family then a larger car or passenger van may suit. There are plenty of car rental options to choose from – it all depends on your personal needs.

How do I figure what car is right for me?

You can use the ACRISS system to find the car that suits your needs. This is an internationally recognized code that will ensure that you get the same standard of vehicle wherever you rent.

Class	Fuel Capacity	Type	Transmission	Fuel/Air Cond.
M = Mini	0.8 - 1.0	B = 2 Door	M = Manual	R = Yes
E = Economy	1.0 - 1.4	D = 4 Door	A = Automatic	N = No
C = Compact	1.2 - 1.6	C = 2/4 door	N = Manual 4WD	D = Diesel Air
F = Full size	2.0 - 3.2	L = Limousine	C = Manual AWD	Q = Diesel No Air
P = Premium	2.0 - 4.2	S = Sports Car	B = Auto 4WD	H = Hybrid Air
L = Luxury	2.0 - 4.2	T = Convertible	D = Auto AWD	I = Hybrid No Air
X = Special	1.2 - 3.0	J = All Terrain		E = Electric Air
		R = Recreational		C = Electric No Air



F = 4 Wheel Drive
X = Special
K = Commercial Van/Truck
P = Ute
X = Special
E = Executive

Examples:
ECMN: E = Economy
C = 2 or 4 door
M = Manual

FDAR: F = Full Size
D = 4 Door
A = Automatic

Will I be able to collect my rental car directly from the airport once I arrive, or will I have to take a shuttle bus to the depot?

The majority of car rental companies have desks at both international and domestic airport terminals, and many will have a shuttle bus that will take you directly to your rental vehicle. Check with Auto Europe when you book to find out exactly where you will collect the car.

Are there additional fees to collect my rental car from Spanish Airports?

Auto Europe's car rental rates usually do include the airport or 'premium location' fees for car rental collections in Spain. Check your prepaid voucher to make sure that this included.

What about fees for collecting my rental car from downtown depots in Spain?

Downtown, airport and railway locations are all considered premium locations, and as above these fees are included in Auto Europe's 'inclusive' car rental rates.

Do I need a credit card to collect my car rental?

Yes. Car rental suppliers will usually freeze the deductible of the vehicle (from €250 to €1,000) which will be refunded to your credit card when the rental car is returned at the end of the rental.

Can I collect my rental car in one Spanish city and drop it off in another city in Spain?

Yes, this is certainly possible, but in some cases there may be a one-way fee payable when you collect your rental. Check with Auto Europe when you book to find out any additional costs.

More Spain Car Rental FAQ's

Can I visit any surrounding European countries and then return my car rental to Spain?

Travel is certainly possible to surrounding mainland European countries, as well as the United Kingdom. There will be restrictions on travel to Northern European countries in winter so advise Auto Europe when you make your car rental booking if you're considering travel to these countries. Most suppliers will not permit travel to Eastern European countries.

Should I take out additional insurance on my car rental?

Rental rates will include basic insurance: Collision Damage Waiver (CDW), Third Party Liability and Theft Protection. In the event that your rental vehicle is accidentally damaged, regardless of who is at fault, or stolen, the Insurance deductible is the maximum amount you are liable for. In Spain, the base amount of deductible begins at €500.

Should I rent a GPS for driving in Spain?

100%! GPS rentals are available from Auto Europe. Rates begin at \$7 per day plus shipping. The GPS is delivered direct to your home or travel agent before you go. The units also include full mapping for Western and most of Eastern Europe.

What do I do if I want to extend my car rental once I have already collected it?

Simply call Auto Europe at 0-800-223-5555-5 open 24 hours a day, and we will gladly extend your rental for you at the same price per day that you were originally booked at.

Spain Regions

North-western Spain:

**Galicia
Asturias
Cantabria**

Northern Spain:

**Basque country
Navarra
La Rioja**

North-eastern Spain:

**Catalonia
Aragon
Extremadura**



Central Spain:

**Madrid
Castile-La Mancha
Castile-Leon**

Eastern Spain:

**Murcia
Valencia**

Andalucía

**The Islands:
Balearic Islands
Canary Islands**



North-Western Spain

The most historic Region of Spain is situated north of Portugal and bordered north of the Atlantic Ocean. This Region boasts an astounding Spanish history divided into three autonomous communities; Galicia, Asturias and Cantabria. The Galicia province is located just north of Portugal, filled with gushing valleys, scenic mountains and rivers flowing towards the Atlantic Ocean. Asturias is another stunning province that lies between Cantabria and Galicia; perfect for those self-drive tours through its lush forests blanketed with stunning scenery and unspoiled coastlines. There are also over seventy beaches along its coastline with beautiful vistas making it a perfect summer getaway for tourists and locals alike.

Galicia – Santiago De Compostela / Asturias - Oviedo / Cantabria - Santander

What's On

January:

- **Día de los Reyes (Three Kings Day) – January 2, festival of the Epiphany Parades .**

March:

- **Día de San José (St. Joseph's Day) – 19 March, religious holiday.**

June:

- **Corpus Christi – June 1, Major Spanish Holiday, this event is marked by big processions, especially in Toledo, Málaga, Seville, and Granada.**

July:

- **Rapa das Bestas (shearing of the beasts) - First weekend in July, the most famous in Galicia and was declared a Festival of National Touristic Interest in 1963.**

September:

- **Feira Franca - First weekend in September, the fair marks the height of Pontevedra's Prosperigin in the 15th and 16th centuries, through historical recreation, theater, animation, and demonstration of artisanal activities.**

October:

- **Fiesta de San Froilán - 4–12 October, celebration of the patron saint of the city of Lugo.**

November:

- **All Saints Day – 1 November, in Memory of relatives and friends.**

Best Things to See & Do

Tower of Hercules – A lighthouse built back in the 98-117AD, which is still a functioning lighthouse today and also one of the world's oldest.
Santiago de Compostela Cathedral – A medieval cathedral discovered back in 819 AD which was built over the tomb of Saint James, one of the apostles of Jesus Christ.

Santa Maria del Naranco and San Miguel de Lillo monuments – Two Roman Catholic churches erected in the 9th Century, which are now declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Picos de Europa, National Park – A huge national park with a range of mountains, wildlife and villages stretched along three regions; Leon, Cantabria and Asturias.

Parque de la Naturaleza de Cabarceno – A wildlife park located 15km from Santander; renowned for the semi-freedom of their animals, and scenic botanical routes.

Palacio Real de La Magdalena – The Royal Palace of the Magdalena located in Santander was built back in the early 1900's, today a historical architectural site.



Cathedral Santiago De Compostela, Galicia

Self Drive Tours in North-Western Spain

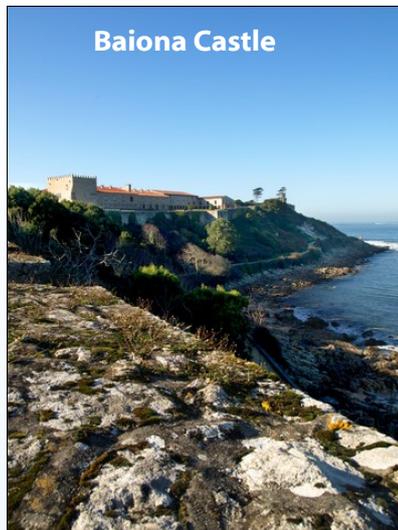
The Pilgrims Drive

Santiago de Compostela - Betanzos - Vilalba - Oviedo - Santander

This trip takes a day to complete, but with your car rental you have the choice to stretch your trip longer to get the most out of your self-drive tour. Collect your car rental from Santiago Compostela and head north east on the AP-9 until you reach the town of Betanzos; a medieval town known for its grand churches, town gates and festivals. From here hop on to the A-6 and then merge onto the A-8 until you arrive into Vilalba. In Vilalba, you'll find the remains of a 14th Century castle and many Palaeolithic sites. While you're in town, why not also pay a visit to the church of San Roque and the Museum of Prehistory and Archaeology, once known as a municipal prison.

The E-70 from Vilalba will lead you towards the A-8. As you drive along the A-8 you'll pass several north coastal towns, feel free to go off route to admire the wonderful scenery. When you're back on route, take the A-8, turn off onto the A-66 and follow the signs into Oviedo; the capital of Asturias. Have a rest

and enjoy a cool drink at a cigar bar, or for the adventurous climb the tower of Oviedo's Cathedral, or re-visit the sites where the pilgrims passed on their journey to the Holy City of Santiago de Compostela. When you're back on the roads again, hop onto the A-64, then continue east along the A-8, and follow the signs to the A-76 that leads you into Santander; the final stop of your journey. Santander is the capital of the Cantabria region and is located in a beautiful setting along the north coast.



Lugo to Vigo

Lugo - A Coruña - Santiago de Compostela - Vigo

Just half a day trip, you'll pass through four major towns. A car rental is the only way to have the freedom to explore the way you wish, at your own pace and with no strict itineraries. Your journey starts from the gothic town of Lugo. Here you will witness the architectural heritage and sites surround by Roman Walls. Commence your drive towards the west by jumping on the A-6, take the A Coruña exit, and continue the drive along the AP-9

till you arrive into A Coruña. This beautiful region is popular with many international and local tourists for its clean beaches, sunshine, water sports and its rich Celtic and Roman heritage which is still very much alive today. Moving on, take the A-6 and continue onto the AP-9. As you drive along this route you have the option to take a detour and visit the famous medieval town of Santiago de Compostela - visited by hundreds and thousands a year for its historic and religious reference. Hop back onto the AP-9 and follow the signs to Vigo. A well established tourist destination, visitors flock to Vigo for its wonderful summer weather, attractive beaches and its varieties of modern and architectural sites.

Northern Spain

Northern Spain consists of three autonomous communities; La Rioja, Navarre and the Basque Country. These three communities are all located in the north of Spain - Navarre neighbouring France, Basque Country in the west and La Rioja settled in the south of the two provinces. All three communities have a strong historic appearance set upon vast landscapes. La Rioja is the smallest autonomous community in Spain, yet still popular by outside tourists for its world-class wine. The Navarre province is most famous for its festivals, such as the famous 'Running of the Bulls in Pamplona'. The Basque Country is made up of three smaller provinces - Alava, Guipuzcoa and Vizcaya. Bilbao is the main tourist hotspot in the Basque Country and boasts a vibrant mix of modern and historic architecture, although once known as the ugliest city in Spain.

Basque Country – Vitoria-Gazteiz / Navarra - Pamplona / La Rioja - Logroño

What's On

January:

- Cider Season Begins – 13th January, the last day of apple harvest and marks the official start of the cider season when cider houses serve their latest ciders.
- San Sebastian Feast Day - late January, the Patron Saint's Day, features various parades, parties, races, and celebrations long into the night.

February:

- Caldereros (Tinker Day) - early February, street parades and parties commemorate the historic arrival of Hungarian Gypsies in San Sebastian.
- Carnaval - early February, a popular Spanish carnival celebration, started in the 1970's.

May:

- Sagardo Eguna (Cider Day) - early May, a historic local festival which was first held in 1985.

June:

- Beer Fest - mid-June, situated around the Paseo de Justo Elizaran in the Intxaurrondo area, hosts a vast marquee and a range of beers to be tasted.
- Vispera de San Juan - late June, a religious Summer Solstice Pagan celebration based around the city's Plaza de la Constitución.

July:

- Run with the bulls in Pamplona – 7-14 July, locals and international visitors come to visit Pamplona to join in the adrenalin of bull running.

August:

- Semana Grande – Mid-August, A week long event of celebrations.

September:

- The San Sebastian International Film Festival - mid-September, one of Spain's most famous film festivals set over nine days.

November:

- Marathon - mid-November, an important international sporting event held through central San Sebastian.

Best Things to See & Do

Run with the bulls in Pamplona – Held from the 7 – 14 July, Bulls are released onto the narrow streets of Pamplona, in front of hundreds of daring people.

The petit train de la Rhune – Built in the 1924, this small cog train will take you along the scenic railway up into the mystical summit of the Basque country.

Pamplona Cathedral – The Cathedral of Royal Saint Mary is Pamplona's most symbolic monument. Built around the 15th Century, this gothic houses some of the greatest historic artefacts.

Guggenheim Museum Bilbao – A museum of both modern and contemporary art located in Bilbao.

Mercado Rural de Santo Tomas – A lively street market set up with hundreds of stalls selling fine

Bilbao Plaza

Self Drive Tours in Northern Spain

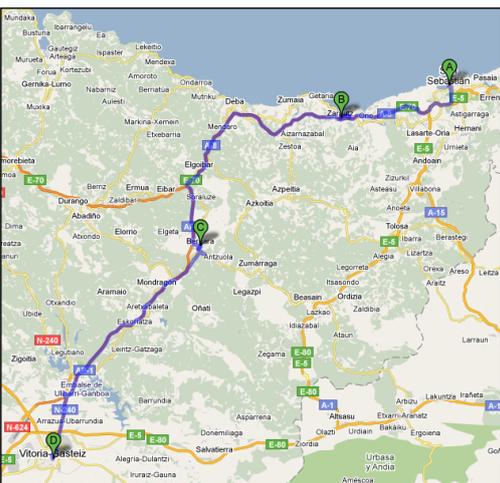
The Grand 'S'

Logrono – Pamplona – Bilbao – San Sebastian

The Northern Spain region is a considerably small area, so getting between cities and towns is quick and easy. This trip is relatively short, where you will pass through four exciting cities along the way. From the capital city of Logrono (La Rioja), hop on to the A-12 and head towards the east. Halfway towards Pamplona as you pass by scenic landscapes, take a quick peek at the medieval town of Estella where you'll find the buildings of historic Roman and Gothic architecture. Continuing on the A12, follow the signs that lead you into Pamplona. Throughout the year many celebrations are held here, so make sure you arrive in time for one. Take the AP-15 out of the city; follow on through the A-10, then onto the Autovia del Norte. Make a quick

stop for a meal in Vitoria-Gasteiz before continuing on along the Autovia de Altube. Passing by spectacular scenery in the Basque Country region of the AP-68, follow the signs and take the exit that will lead you into Bilbao. A modern city of its own, Bilbao has it all to fit any traveler's needs. One monument that can't be missed is the Bilbao Museum; its magnificent architecture is truly outstanding. For the last leg of your trip drive along the A-8 for one last glimpse of Spain's beautiful countryside, before finishing off in the coastal city: San Sebastian.

You can't go wrong with San Sebastian; beautiful resorts, massive festivals, brilliant waters, magnificent scenery and friendly people are some of the many exciting features this vibrant city offers.



San Sebastian - Vitoria Gasteiz

San Sebastian - Zarautz - Bergara - Vitoria Gasteiz

From the unspoilt city of San Sebastian, drive along the A-8, while making a quick stop at the beaches of Zarautz, before heading south-inland. As you drive, you'll pass through acres of vast scenery and mountains; this is a great opportunity for a short stop for a few snaps. Once you pass through Elgoibar, keep a lookout for the turn off onto the AP-1. Not long down the road you'll find a small town called Bergara. Make a quick turn off to visit this friendly small town village before getting back on the roads again. Take the exit that will allow you to continue south along the N-240, and within twenty minutes you will arrive into your destination Vitoria-Gasteiz.

Built upon an agricultural culture and medieval designs, Vitoria-Gasteiz is a charming little city where you can relax, wonder through the numerous museums and historic buildings, join in a festival or taste fine Basque wine.

North-Eastern Spain

In North-Eastern Spain there are two autonomous communities; Catalonia and Aragon. Catalonia is nestled along the coastline of the Balearic Sea, while Aragon sits in between Navarra and Catalonia, with France neighbouring in the North. Barcelona is the capital city of the Catalonia Community, and is the second largest city in Spain, just after Madrid. Along with its appealing features including modern and gothic architecture, bars, restaurants and clubs, Barcelona also hosts an exciting variety of festivals throughout the year. Towards the inland is the sacred city of Zaragoza, embraced by the Ebro River and one of the greatest monumental towns in Spain. Over the centuries mysterious apparitions have appeared across the city, baffling many religious communities.

Catalonia - Barcelona / Aragon - Zaragoza

What's On

January :

- Festes dels Tres Tombs - 17th January, part of the district festival of Sant Antoni Abat.

February:

- Carnaval - early February, a major event as Easter approaches, celebrations include parades, floats, parties and dancing.

March:

- Holy Week - mid-March, Holy Week in Zaragoza, attracts over 100,000 visitors to the city.

April:

- Jueves Santo - mid-April, held yearly on Easter Monday, celebrations include various religious parades and processions, including singers and drummers through the heart of the Casco Histórico district.

May:

- Corpus Christi - carpets of flowers, processions and a 'dancing egg' is balanced on the cathedral's fountain in Barcelona.

June:

- Gay and Lesbian Festival - 28th June, the festival features a parade starting at the Placa de l'Universat, Barcelona.
- Hoguera de San Juan - mid-June, The festival of Saint John the Baptist, one of the country's most famous saints.

August:

- Assumption Festa Major - 15-21 August, celebrations and local parties reside in the streets of Gracia during

September:

- BAM - 24th September, a free musical performance to celebrate the Feste de Mercé.

October:

- Fiestas del Pilar (Pilar Festival), Zaragoza - mid-October, an annual festival celebrating the Virgen del Pilar, with a host of events and parties attracting crowds of thousands.

December:

- Swimming cup - 25th December, annual Christmas event where people dive into the cold icy waters of Barcelona Port.

Best Things to See & Do

La Sagrada Familia - A massive Roman Catholic church in Catalonia which has been under construction since 1882.

Magic Fountain - The most spectacular water fountain in Barcelona. During the summer evenings light shows are displayed, where hundreds of visitors come to watch the spectacular fifteen minute display.

Belchite, Aragon - An old time village torn down from the Spanish civil war. Left undisturbed, visitors have the chance to freely walk through the historic ruins.

Casa-Milla, Barcelona

Self Drive Tours in North-Eastern Spain

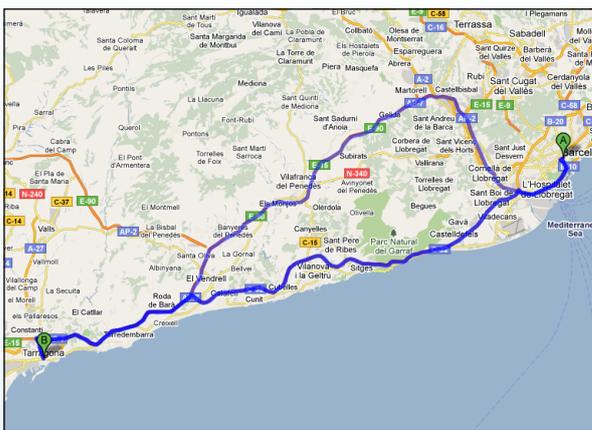
Zaragoza - Barcelona

Zaragoza - Lleida - Terrassa - Mataro - Barcelona

In just under a day's trip, you'll be able to visit at least five cities and villages, and view the many historic artefacts as you pass by stunning Spanish scenery. From the banks of the Ebro River in Zaragoza, take the E-90/A-2 and follow the road along the AP-2. After passing through vast plains, take the exit that leads you into Lleida. Your visit in Lleida will give you a glimpse of the surviving ruins and the still standing cathedrals in the centre, built from as early as the 9th Century.

Grab a meal and head out onto the LL-12, and continue along the AP-2. Drive for 56 miles then take the exit onto the AP-7 and follow the signs towards Terrassa. If you're lucky you may be able to join in on one of the town's several festivals held annually. Otherwise Terrassa is an interesting place that holds many fabulous treasures, from churches to monasteries which are still standing today from early medieval times. Take the C-58 out of town and then follow the road along the B-10 and B-20. It won't take you long until you arrive into Mataro. Its significant beaches and marinas are some of the main features found within Mataro. During the summer months, visitors flock here to enjoy the water sports, shopping and bathing along the famous marina.

When you're back onto the road, head south along the C-31 and follow the signs into Barcelona. Settled along the borders of the Balearic Sea, Barcelona is a stylish and diverse city due to its popular attractions and growing economy. There are hundreds of activities you can see and do in Barcelona, such as partying at one of the cities many enjoyable fiestas, eating bocadillos, or just relaxing at Barceloneta Beach. Barcelona offers you a truly enjoyable experience.



Barcelona - Tarragona

This trip has two parts, and you have the choice to take either the coastal route west or the inland route. For an enjoyable start why not take the coastal route. Drive along the Autopista De Pau Casals approximately 20 minutes south until you arrive into the Parc Natural Del Garraf. The Garraf is an exotic nature park made up by limestones, potholes, sinkholes and rasclers which combined makes a classic Karst Mediterranean landscape; a truly magnificent site to explore. When your back onto the Autopista de Pau Casals, take the AP-7 exit and continue along this road. A short while later Take Exit 33 and follow the signs into Tarragona. The

southernmost province in the Catalonia Region, Tarragona boasts a diverse mix of crystal clear waters, pristine beaches, preserved roman ruins. Highlights of the province's attractions include a range of wine-related activities and festivals. When you're ready to head back into Barcelona, why not experience the inland route. Hop back onto the AP-7 for 80kms, and then follow the AP-2 and B-23 towards Barcelona. From there, follow the streets signs into Barcelona.

Central Spain

Central Spain is one of the most beautiful and diverse regions in Spain with ancient ruins, fantastic scenery and impressive architecture. Within, local towns and cities boast their unique combination of Roman monuments, splendid parks and modern attractions. Located in the heart of Central Spain is Madrid, the capital of Spain, which is the most occupied by locals and visitors alike. Other provinces include Castile-La Mancha, Castile-Leon and Extremadura, all surrounding Madrid.

Madrid - Madrid / Castile-La Mancha - Toledo / Castile and Leon - Valladolid / Extremadura - Mérida

What's On

January:

- **San Antón** - 17th January, annual pet blessing in San Antón Church, witnessed by hundreds of pet owners.

February:

- **Carnaval** – Week before lent, celebrations include parties and parades ending with the 'Burial of the Sardine' custom on Ash Wednesday.

March:

- **Bullfighting** - March to October, season starts at the Plaza de Toros Monumental de Las Ventas
- **Semana Santa (Holy Week)** - March and April, religious icons parade through the streets.

May:

- **Madrid Day** - 1st May, a concert is held in memory of the 1808 rebellion against Napoleon
- **Dia de San Isidro (St. Isidore Day)** - 15th May, Celebration of the patron saint of Madrid, highlights includes bullfights and concerts.

June:

- **San Antonio de la Florida (St. Anthony of Florida)** - 9th - 13th June, the city's biggest street party.

September:

- **Festival de Otoño (Autumn Festival)** - September - November, highlights include performing arts festival, (music, dance and theatre) with acts from around the world.
- **Música en las Ventas** - September to October, performances are displayed in the bullring, from international and national modern artists.

December:

- **Dia de los Inocentes** – 28th December, a day in relation to April Fools day.

Best Things to See & Do

Royal Palace - The Royal Palace is a massive building built with a base of columns, the official residence of the kings of Spain.

Adventurous Appetites Tapas Tour – Explore Madrid, in a way locals enjoy Spain, away from popular tourist areas. Soak up the real Spanish culture, and of course taste those delicious mouth-watering tapas.

Cathedral of Toledo – One of the greatest gothic Structure in Spain.

Monasterio de San Juan de los Reyes – A historic monastery in Toledo, built around the 1400's, which still stands today.

Segovia Aqueduct – One of the most significant and preserved monuments left by Romans in Castile-Leon.

Royal Monastery of Santa Maria de Guadalupe – A much significant Roman Catholic monastery built in Guadalupe of the Extremadura Community.



Madrid Toledo Triumphal

Self Drive Tours in Central Spain

Merida - Madrid

Merida – Caceres - Toledo – Madrid

To start your trip we recommend heading out during the early morning for a chance to catch a glimpse of the rising sun light up the blue skies. From the small village of Merida marked upon a Roman Heritage, take the A-66 and travel towards Caceres. Your arrival into Caceres will have you discover the medieval ruins within. One outstanding monument is the 15th Century gothic Golfines de Abajo Palace, still standing tall within the medieval quarter.

From an exciting exploration of historic Romanesque buildings and a light breakfast, it's now time to hit the roads again. Take the A-58 towards the east, follow the road for 50kms and take the exit onto the A-5. This leg of the trip is over 200kms long, so best to carry some snacks. The scenery is splendid, but to see more make a stop at the Parque Nacional de Monfrague. Here you can join in on a walking tour or even try a suggested self-guided tour around the park. Continuing along the A-5, take Exit 76 and follow the signs to Toledo along the A-40. Toledo is a pleasant city especially when it comes to its important religious events. Combined with its strong religious presence of Arab, Christians and Jews, it's no wonder why Toledo has been named as the "City of Three Cultures".

To complete your journey, take the AP-41 for 60kms, and take the exit onto the R-5 and continue towards Madrid. As you drive into the city you will witness the magnificent scenery, this is a great opportunity to take a few snaps for great memories. Within an hour, your journey will end in the Famous Spanish City of Madrid, best known for its ever-growing economy, abundant history, impressive architecture, and lively culture.



Valladolid - Madrid

Valladolid – Salamanca - Madrid

To commence your trip, hop into your car rental from Valladolid. Declared as an International Tourist Interest, Valladolid was once a city of wealth held by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. One can't miss the Valladolid castle, a truly outstanding artefact still standing within the city. Head out and follow the signs towards the A-62 and continue along the road for 25kms. You will then need to take the A-6/A-62 Exit, follow the road for 2km, and then continue along the E-82/A-11. Just over an hour later you will arrive into Salamanca, a small province nestled in the South-West corner of Castile and Leon borders. Here you can visit one of the oldest universities in Spain and most possibly the oldest in Europe. Just before you head back out onto the roads again, why not grab a meal and spoil yourself with a bit of shopping. To finish your journey, hop onto the N-501 for 5kms, and then merge onto the A-50 for 95kms. Look for the A-51 exit in Avila, join in on the AP-6 for 40kms, and then continue along the A-6 for another 40kms. You will soon arrive into the Capital of Spain Madrid. One of the largest cities in Western Europe with a population exceeding 3 million people!



Eastern Spain

The east coast region consists of two provinces, Murcia and Valencia. Both autonomous communities are nestled along the east Mediterranean coast of Spain overlooking the beautiful Spanish Gulf. Valencia rests in the centre of Eastern Spain, with Murcia directly in the south. All year round, tourists from many various countries around the globe come to visit these two appealing communities, not only for its pristine beaches and wonderful weather, but to visit some of the greatest monuments held within the two cities.

Valencia - Valencia / Murcia - Murcia

What's On

January:

- **Cabalgata de los Reyes (Three Holy Kings / Wise Men)** – 5th January, a religious parade where three men are dressed as the Three Wise Men parading and distributing gifts and sweets to children lining the streets.

February:

- **Carnaval** – mid-February, the most popular time for parting and celebrations.

March:

- **Las Fallas** – mid-March, a famous festival well-known around Spain. Floats of many major buildings and landmarks parade through the streets, and then are finally burnt on a bonfire.

April:

- **Semana Santa Marinera (Holy Week)** – Start of April, celebrations are held around the country in the lead up to Easter.

May:

- **Fiesta del Cristo del Grau** – 4th May, an event which marks the religious statue of Christ from the Santa Maria del Mar Church, which is held along the waterfront of the Valencia Grau District.

June:

- **Fiesta de San Juan** – Last Week of June, a major event held throughout many regions of Spain, celebrating the Summer Solstice and the longest day.

July:

- **Feria de Julio** – Last week of July, a huge festival held throughout Valencia. Activities include bullfights, fireworks, concerts, food stalls and parties.

August

- **La Tomatina** - Late August, battle of the tomatoes, held 30km outside Valencia in a town called Brunol. Thousands of people compete by throwing tomatoes at each other.

October

- **Festival Internacional de Pirotecnia (International Fireworks Festival)** – Mid October, a magical display of fireworks light the skies combined with loud music.

November

- **Road Racing World Championships/Valencian Moto GP** – Mid November, a massive event of motor racing held at the Ricardo Tormo circuit.

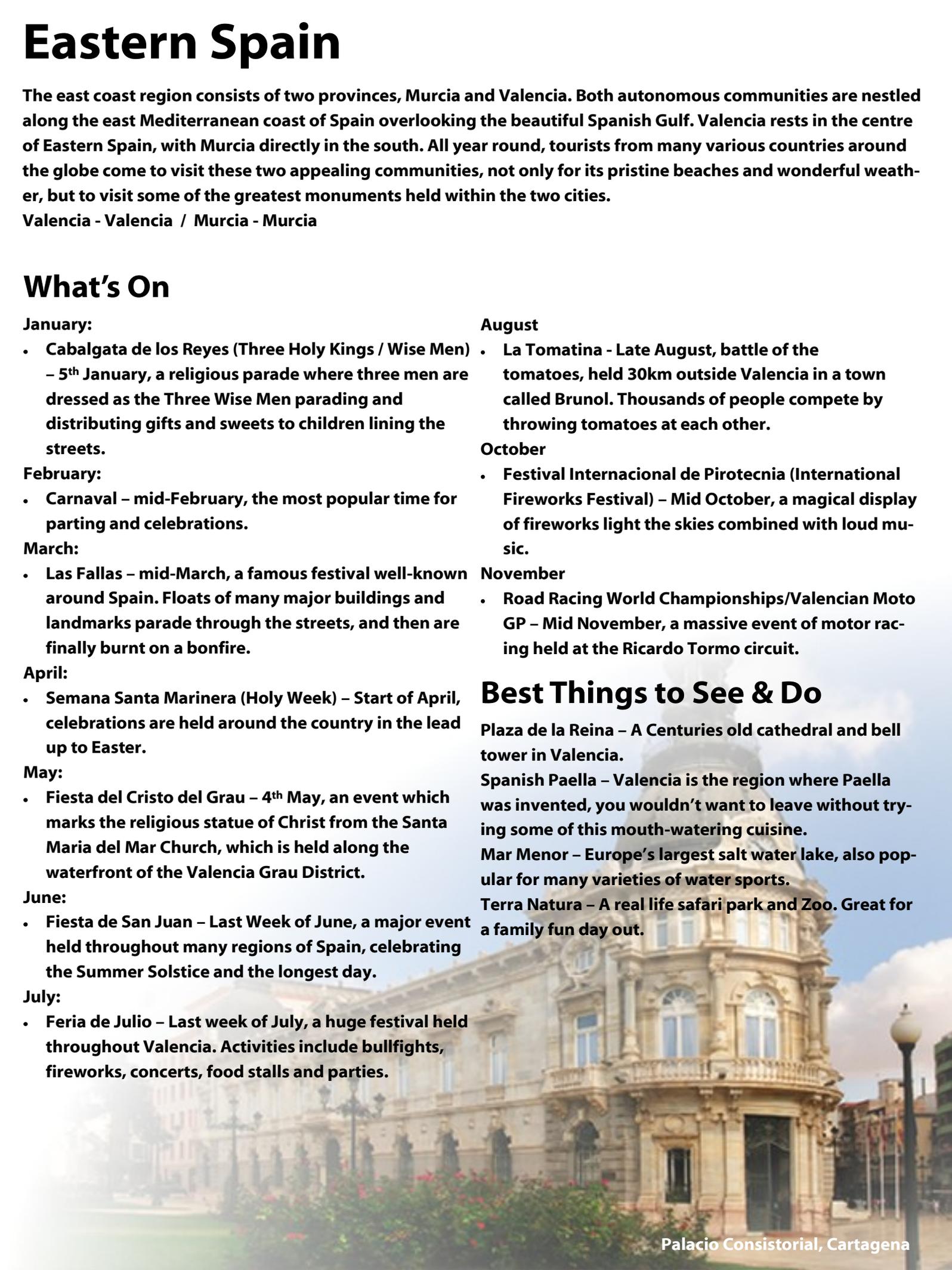
Best Things to See & Do

Plaza de la Reina – A Centuries old cathedral and bell tower in Valencia.

Spanish Paella – Valencia is the region where Paella was invented, you wouldn't want to leave without trying some of this mouth-watering cuisine.

Mar Menor – Europe's largest salt water lake, also popular for many varieties of water sports.

Terra Natura – A real life safari park and Zoo. Great for a family fun day out.

A photograph of the Palacio Consistorial in Cartagena, Spain, a grand neoclassical building with a prominent dome and ornate facade. The building is surrounded by a well-maintained garden with red flowers in the foreground. The sky is blue with some clouds.

Palacio Consistorial, Cartagena

Self Drive Tours in Eastern Spain

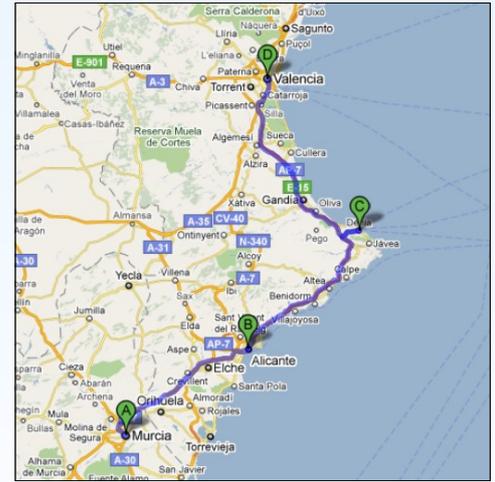
Eastern Coastal Drive

Murcia - Alicante - Denia - Valencia

Collect your rental car from Murcia and prepare yourself for an exciting and memorable trip throughout Eastern Spain. Head towards the A-30, follow the road for 7kms, then continue along the E-15/A-7 for 70kms and then take the exit into Alicante. Renowned for its long stretch of sandy beaches and pristine waters, Alicante is one of the most well-known towns on the Costa Blanca. Park your car and spoil yourself as you splurge through countless shops, dine-in at one of many local bars/cafes, or maybe relax at the beach. There is so much to love in Alicante, but there is plenty more to discover on your journey to Valencia.

When your back on the roads, look for the A-70, drive for 8kms and then continue along the AP-7 for 70kms. Take Exit 62 into Denia, a beautiful city set upon the east coast of the Valencia region. Dedicated to the Roman Goddess Diana, Denia never stops to impress. There are countless activities to do here, you can jump on a ferry and tour the calm seas of Denia, swim at one of many beaches along the harbour, explore and discover some of the cities greatest monuments and buildings from past times, or maybe enjoy a relaxing massage.

After all that, it is now time to head to Valencia. Hop onto the CV-725 and onto the AP-7. Continue north for 80kms and then 14kms along the V-31 towards Valencia. Valencia is a magnificent city overlooking the Mediterranean Sea famous for its annual spring festival the Las Fallas, as well as impressive landmarks, unspoiled beaches, exciting fiestas, splendid cuisines and breath-taking scenery.



Castellon de la Plana – Cartagena

Castellon de la Plana – Cartagena

This trip is a fair long drive; however driving along the east coast of Spain is truly memorable, from its rugged terrain to watery views and fantastic scenery, you'll quickly find yourself in the moment. From the attractive town of Castellon de la Plana venture out onto the open roads of the A-7 heading south into Valencia. Make a quick stop in the magnificent city of Valencia, for a fine meal and a little sight seeing before jumping on the coastal stretch of the AP-7.

You can choose to visit one of many interesting sites as you please on your journey south. Stop at all or either Denia, Javea or Benidorm for a relaxing beach getaway, or for a great dining experience along the boardwalks. On the AP-7, take Exit 67 and journey along the A-70 for 30kms, and then 80kms along the AP-7 into Cartagena.

Cartagena is a beautiful city where within holds one of Spain's most important commercial and navel ports. The city's architecture is superb and pleasantly mixed with both old and new buildings. As you explore the city's great artifacts, don't forget to visit the important Naval Museum and Naval Head Quarters.



Andalucía

Andalucía is one of the largest single regions in Spain, offering over three-thousand hours of sunshine a year, and with some of the best beaches and coastlines. Located in the southern area of Spain, this appealing region is divided into eight provinces; Almería, Cádiz, Córdoba, Granada, Huelva, Jaén, Málaga & Sevilla. The Andalusian shoreline stretches 900 kms across the Costa del Sol (Málaga) coastline which features some of the finest resorts in Spain. Being one of the warmest regions in Spain, Andalucía offers many wonderful activities to see and do, from trekking through its beautiful mountain ranges, to bull fighting, street parties, as well as soaking in some of its glorious weather.

Andalucía – Almería, Cádiz, Córdoba, Granada, Huelva, Jaén, Málaga, Sevilla

What's On

January

- **Dia de la Toma** – 2nd January, a fiesta is held in Granada, where King Fernando's sword and Queen Isabel's crown are marched through the streets.

February

- **Carnaval** – Start of February, a national wide celebration, numerous activities and parades are held within the Andalusia region.

March

- **Cristo de la Expiracion** – Held nine days before Palm Sunday. Fiestas and fireworks are held throughout Andalusia.
- **Holy Week** – Mid March, religious celebrations are held in the lead up to Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

April

- **Fiesta de San Marcos** - 25th April, marks the event of San Marcos, eight bulls are released onto the streets.

June

- **Feria de Corpus Christi** – Early June, a well-known festival held in the city of Granada. The festival runs over a week with plenty of local entertainment.
- **Dia del Pescaito (Fried Fish Day)** – early-June, a Sea-food festival held roughly 20kms outside Malaga in a town called Torremolinos.

August

- **Feria de Malaga** – Mid-August, a massive annual event held in Malaga, where the whole city parties!

November

- **Festival Internacional de Jazz** – early November, a well-known jazz festival held in Seville and Granada.

Best Things to See & Do

Alhambra – A Moorish palace built and constructed during the mid 14th Century for the last Muslim Emirs in Spain.

Guggenheim Museum Bilbao – A modern, unique and contemporary building designed by American architect Frank Gehry.

Eat Tapas – When you visit Spain, you can't miss out on tasting some of Spain's delicious tapas!

Alcazaba – An Arabic Moorish Fortification in the Malaga Region that dates back to the 700s.



Plaza De Espana, Sevilla

Self Drive Tours in Andalucía

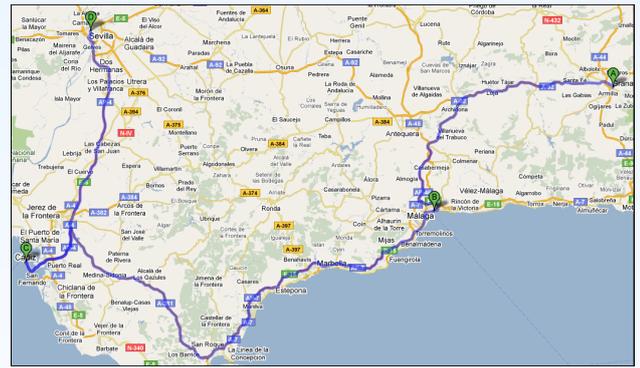
The Best of the South

Granada – Malaga – Cadiz – Sevilla

From the magnificent sights of Granada, you can experience the great wonders of Southern Spain with your car rental. Jump onto the A-92 and travel for 55kms. Take Exit 177 and then rejoin on the A-92M. Another 25kms south, merge onto the AP-46, continue for 25kms, and then 12kms along the A-7 into Malaga. On your arrival taste some of Malaga's finest wines as you bask along the lovely Malaga Harbour, or climb the steps of the Gibralfaro castle to view spectacular views of the city.

When your back on roads, hop onto the E-15/A-7, and travel along the coast for approximately 50kms. Be aware that there are tolls! Along the way you will pass a small town called Marbella. Make a short stop to visit some of the impressive attractions, facilities and of course its beautiful beaches that Marbella offers. On the A-7 towards Algeciras, take exit 110B, continue along the A-381 for 90kms, 20kms on the AP-4 and then 9kms on the N-443. As you cross the bridge you will find yourself on a small island called Cadiz. Cadiz offers the best beaches in the region as well as international tourist attractions such as the unique horse racing events on the beach of Sanlucar de Barrameda and the prestigious Carnival of Cadiz.

Your last stop will now be Sevilla. Drive out of the city along the N-443 and then hop on to the AP-4 for 80kms. Another 17kms along the E-5/A-4, you will soon arrive into Sevilla. As the provincial capital of the autonomous community of Andalucía, Sevilla is the main gateway for tourists to come and explore the many wonders within Southern Spain. Visit some of Sevilla's best attractions, such as touring the Gothic Cathedral of Sevilla, indulge at one of Sevilla's finest restaurants, or awake yourself at one of the many exciting festivals held throughout the year. There is plenty to discover and endless possibilities when you visit Sevilla.



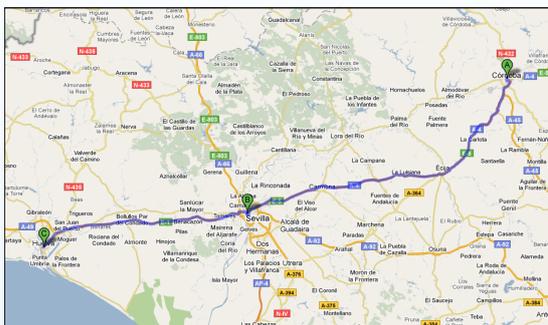
Plaza de España, Sevilla

Cordoba - Huelva

Cordoba – Sevilla – Huelva

This drive is relatively easy and allows you to visit the best sites that the Andalucía region offers. From the modernized city of Cordoba, take the E-5/A-4 and head south-west for 140kms towards Sevilla. Sevilla is ranked the fourth largest city in Spain, and is also the heart of the Andalucía region where bullfighting, tapas, Flamenco and festivals are paramount. To experience the most out of Sevilla, why not stay a few days, so you have the chance to enjoy the countless attractions and activities that you can see and do.

When you're ready to head out again, hop onto the A-49, travel west for 80kms, then take the exit onto the H-31 and follow the signs into Huelva. A city that's dedicated to its bustling port, Huelva is a pleasant city with many great monuments, attractive plazas, and without a doubt splendid seafood! There is also a considerable amount of history marked upon this city, from the Plaza de las Monjas, to its very own sprawling industrial port.



Getting into Spain

A passport with at least 6 months validity is required to enter Spain. Visas are not required for American citizens for stays up to 90 days and for the purpose of tourism only. Within Western Europe you can drive into Spain from neighboring countries such as France or Portugal. There are a couple of airlines that operate between Australia and Spain regularly, and also a number of ferry services that operate from bordering countries such as Italy or England. Spain has many international airports and ferry ports which are located conveniently close to main cities.

Airport Information

Alicante Airport (ALC)

<http://www.aena.es>

ph: +34-96 691 9000

12km from city centre.

Barcelona Airport (BCN)

<http://www.barcelona-airport.com/>

ph: +34-913 212 950

3km from city centre.

Madrid (MAD)

<http://www.aena.es>

ph: +34-913-2110 00

12km from city centre.

Malaga Airport (AGP)

<http://www.aena.es>

ph: +34-902 404 704

10km from the city centre

Sevilla Airport (SVQ)

<http://www.sevilla-airport.com/en/>

Ph: +34 954 449 000

9km from the city centre

Valencia Airport (VLC)

<http://www.aena.es>

Ph: +34 902 404 704

8km from the city centre

Ferry Port Information

Algeciras Port

1km from the city centre

Avda, de la Hispanidad 2

Ph: +34 956 58 54 63

<http://www.apba.es/>

Bilbao Port

22kms from the city centre

Campo Colantín, 37

48007 Bilbao, Bizkaia

Ph: +34 94 487 12 00

<http://www.bilbaoport.es/>

Barcelona Port

20kms from the city centre

Moll de Sant Bertan

08039 Barcelona

<http://www.portdebarcelona.es>

Santander Port

2kms from the city centre

Calle de Antonio Lopez

39009 Santander

<http://www.puertasantander.es>

Valencia Port

7kms from the city centre

Paseo Caro

46024 Valencia

<http://www.valenciaport.com>



Castle of Bellver Mallorca

Accommodation Ideas

Motorhomes

The most convenient way to explore the wonders of Spain with accommodation and transportation all in one! Rent a motorhome from Auto Europe -The Spain campervan specialists.

For more information visit: www.autoeurope.com



Hotels & Motels

Spain has many competitive options of accommodation ranging in different styles and luxury to cater any travelers need. Finding a hotel of your choice is easy with many hotels around Spain that offer a wide range of facilities such as restaurants to beauty parlours, gyms, spas, room service and more. Some hotels will offer either half-board or full board rates and larger hotels may offer discounted weekend rates. It is recommended to book accommodation well in advance to avoid disappointment, especially during festivals and at popular resorts along the coasts.



Bed & Breakfasts

Away from all the hustle and bustle of the city a Bed and Breakfast is a great way to experience Spain. Bed and Breakfasts are usually situated outside the main cities in quieter areas and are usually owned by warming families. They may not offer as many facilities and features as hotels but are certainly a cheaper and convenient way to stay in Spain.



Self Catering

Self-catered accommodation is a relaxing way to visit Spain, where you'll feel just like being at home. There are many different styles of self-catered accommodation which include apartments, houses, cottages and caravans.



Camping & Caravanning

There are many campsites and caravan sites throughout the country, covering a wide range of quality and price. Many of these areas can fill quite fast during the summer, so get in early to experience the most of the great outdoors that Spain has to offer.

Youth & Backpacker Hostels

Within the main cities of Spain such as Madrid, Barcelona and Seville, there are a wide range of backpacker hotels, starting from basic accommodation to modern hostels. Many of the hostels are used by school/university groups but are also offered to the young traveler.



Climate & Weather

Spain's climate can vary in temperature from region to region. Generally in the north it can be quite wet, while in the south it can be hot and dry. April through to October is usually the best time to visit as it's generally warm and sunny, although July and August can get quite hot with temperatures reading over 85 F. Chilling cold weather will be experienced towards the end of the year from December until February. The central part of Spain is usually the coldest with temperatures below minus zero.

Language

Spanish is the official language of Spain, however English is also used as a second language within the country. Here are a few common translations that may come in handy

¡Hola! - Hello!
¡Buenos días! - Good Morning!
¡Buen día! - Good Day!
¡Buenas noches! - Good Evening!
¿Cómo estás? - How are you?
Bien - Fine
Muy bien - Very well
Cual es tu nombre? - What's your name?
Mi nombre es - My name is.....
Mucho gusto. - It's nice to meet you
¿Habla usted inglés? - Do you speak English?
Sí. - Yes
No. - No
Gracias. - Thank you
De nada. - You're welcome
Por favor. - Please
Disculpe. - excuse me

¿Qué hora es? - What time is it?
¿Cuánto cuesta? - How much does it cost?
¿Dónde está?... - Where is
...el baño? - The restroom?
...el sitio de taxis? - The taxi stand?
...el estacion de gasolina mas cercana? - The nearest gasoline station?
...el aeropuerto? - The Airport?
¡Auxilio! - Help!
¡Fuego! - Fire!
¡Llaman a una ambulancia! - Call an ambulance!
¿Qué sucedió? - What happened?
No puedo respirar - I can't breathe
Me robaron - I've been robbed

Public Holidays

2011	
1 Jan	New Years Day
6Jan	*Epiphany
19 Mar	*San Jose
21 Apr	*Maundy Thursday
22 Apr	Good Friday
1-2 May	Labour Day
15 Aug	Assumption
12 Oct	National Day
1 Nov	All Saints Day
6 Dec	Constitution Day
8 Dec	Immaculate Conception
25 Dec	Christmas Day



Public Holidays

2012	
1 Jan	New Years Day
6Jan	*Epiphany
19 Mar	*San Jose
5 Apr	*Maundy Thursday
6 Apr	Good Friday
1-2 May	Labour Day
15 Aug	Assumption
12 Oct	National Day
1 Nov	All Saints Day
6 Dec	Constitution Day
8 Dec	Immaculate Conception
25 Dec	Christmas Day

These public holidays may be substituted with another date by independent communities.

Stay Safe

Crime

Spain is quite a safe country to visit. The main thing to watch out for, like many other countries in Europe, is petty theft. Scamming is one method used by thieves in Spain so make sure that you keep vigilant throughout, however don't let this ruin your trip.

Beaches

Spain has many beautiful beaches for visitors to relax on. To keep yourself safe while at one of the beaches, it is highly recommended to be aware of the following precautions:

- Many beaches in Spain have beach-safety flags. A green flag means it's safe to swim, yellow is to be careful and stay close to the shore, and red means dangerous 'do no swim!'.
- Animals are not allowed on beaches. If caught you could be left with an on-the-spot fine.
- First-aid can be found with a Red Cross posted along the beach.
- Rock beaches can have hidden sea creatures that can bite or sting you, so it's recommended to bring along rubber shoes.
- Keep a close eye of your belongings. Use lockers or a cloak room if available.
- Make sure to always use sunscreen!

Where to Get Help

Madrid

American Embassy

Consular Section

C/ Serrano, 75

Madrid 28006

Ph: +34 91 587 2244

Fax: +34 91 587 2266

Email askacs@state.gov

<http://www.embusa.es/>



Important Phone Numbers

In Case of Emergency:

Police, Ambulance and Fire: 112 or 061

Emergency Breakdown Service.-

902 300 505

Stay Healthy

Spain's water quality is quite good and drinkable in some major cities, however we do recommend that you keep to the bottled water. As a precaution it would be quite handy to carry some Imodium (anti-diarrhea drug) or charcoal tablets in case you do end up getting sick.

During the summer months it can get quite hot with high UV's, so it is highly recommended to use sunscreen. Also make sure to carry a bottle of water with you.

Spain has some lovely spicy cuisine which is very enjoyable to cook and eat. However, when eating out try and avoid undercooked meat or fish as some fish may contain toxins or bacteria. Also stay away from unpasteurized milk as this can contain micro-organisms that can cause disease or infection.

Hospitals are well maintained and are easily accessed in major cities, but before heading out on your trip make sure that you have taken out travel insurance. This will help cover any medical bills if you were to end up in hospital.

Majorca, Spain

Key Facts on Spain

Location: Western Europe
Area: 194,844 sq ml
Capital and Largest city: Madrid

Population: 46.5 million
Population Density: 238 per sq ml



Geography:

Spain is located in the Iberian Peninsula, south of France and east of Portugal. Just off the Iberian Peninsula are the Balearic Islands (Mallorca, Menorca, Eivissa & Formentera) which are situated in the Mediterranean sea south east of Barcelona. The Canary Islands lies off the North West coast of Africa just next to Morocco. The Meseta Central is a vast plateau situated in the heart of peninsula Spain, rimmed by mountains which have an average height of 12,000 feet. Gradually it slopes off to the west into rivers that borders off with Portugal. The country has over 1000 rivers & streams, with the Tagus River being one of the longest river in Spain. Situated in the centre of Spain & Portugal, it stretches to about 600 miles, starting from the east 142 miles away from Madrid then flowing west into Portugal until it empties into the Atlantic Ocean near Lisbon.

Electricity

The standard for wall sockets and power in Spain is 220 or 225 volts AC, and 50 Hz. The socket type features two round pins and screw-type lamp fittings.

Shopping hours

Mon-Sat 1000-1400 and 1700-2000. Supermarkets & department stores tend to be open from 0930-2100/2200, and may open on Sunday in larger cities.

Smoking

Smoking is banned in offices, shops, schools, hospitals, cultural centre and on public transport. Bars and restaurants must clearly show whether they permit or prohibit smoking. By law large restaurants are required to have a non-smoking section.

Time Zone

Mainland Spain/Balearics: GMT + 1 (GMT + 2 from last Sunday in March to last

Sunday in October).

The Canary Islands: GMT (GMT + 1 from last Sunday in March to last Sunday in October).

Measurements

The scale for measurements in Spain is the metric system:

1 millimetre (mm) = 0.03937 inches	1 milligram (mg) = 0.0154 grain
1 centimetre (cm) = 0.3937 inches	1 gram (gm) = 0.0353 oz
1 metre (m) = 1.0936 yd	1 kilogram (kg) = 2.2046lb
1 kilometre (km) = 0.6214 mile	1 tonne (t) = 0.9842 ton

Communications:

Telephone

The phone system in Spain is very good and well maintained, with mobile coverage provided throughout the country. Most international mobile companies have roaming agreements within Spain.

- Emergency: 112
- Country Code: 34
- Area codes are included within a nine digit number dialled from wherever you are.
- Mobile numbers in Spain begin with 6

Internet

Internet cafés are generally available in most urban areas. Wireless access can be accessed at a majority of hotels and cafes/restaurants.

Post

Postal services within Spain are quite efficient with safe delivery to all countries. Airmail within Europe will generally take around 5 days. Most post offices in the main cities are generally open from Mon-Fri 0800-2000 and Sat 0800-1400.

Spain Money Matters

Currency

The local currency in Spain is the Euro.

ONE EURO (€)

Notes are in denominations of €500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5.

Coins are in denominations of €2 and €1, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 cents.

The “€” symbol is either in front or after the price. As with other European countries, a comma is used to indicate a decimal. For example, €1,50 is one euro and fifty cents

Currency Exchange

Money can be changed at any bank and at most travel agencies, major hotels and airports.

Banking Hours:

Generally banks are open Mon-Fri 0830-1400. During the months of October - April, some banks will open on a Saturday as well.

Credit & Debit Cards:

Most credit and debit cards are accepted throughout Spain, including Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Diners Club. Contact your credit card company immediately if your credit card is lost or stolen.

Major credit card companies:

American Express: www.americanexpress.es

Diners Club: www.dinersclub.es

Discover: www.discovercard.com

MasterCard: www.mastercard.es

Visa: www.visa.es

ATMs

ATMs (automatic teller machines) are located in almost all towns and cities, especially in most banks, and accept major credit and debit cards.

Traveler's Cheques

Traveler's cheques are quickly disappearing from use, but can still be changed at main bank branches or exchange bureaux and some major hotels. These days it's more convenient to travel with debit/credit cards.

Tipping

Tipping is not normally expected, except for tourist areas where a service charge may be added to the bill. Locals tend to leave small change, generally around 5% when dining at restaurants.

Tax

In Spain, a value-added tax (VAT) also known as IVA (impuesto sobre el valor añadido) of 16% is applied on goods and services. Visitors who make purchases over 90,16 Euro are entitled to a refund of the 16% VAT from any shop if they are taking them out of Europe within three months. To apply for the refund ask the shop for a cash back refund form (or similar) showing the price with the VAT/IVA and the vendor and purchaser. This will then be presented by you to the customs booth at the airport, port or border for a VAT refund.



Auto Europe hopes that you find the information in this guide helpful for your self-drive holiday in Spain. The touring information has been created to be used as a guide only. Auto Europe is not liable for any misinformation, typographical errors, etc. related to the information contained in this guide.

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