

Getting here and advice about your stay

Entry requirements

EU residents only need a valid passport, or other acceptable travel document in order to visit Spain.

Visas

If your passport describes you as a British Citizen or a British Subject with Right of Abode in the United Kingdom, you do not need a visa to enter Spain. If you have another type of British nationality, you should check entry requirements with your nearest Spanish Embassy or Consulate.

Passport validity

Your passport should be valid for the proposed duration of your stay; you do not need any additional period of validity on your passport beyond this. This applies to the whole of Spain, including the Canary Islands and the Balearic Islands (Majorca, Menorca, Ibiza and Formentera).

The Spanish authorities have confirmed they will accept British passports extended by 12 months by British Embassies and Consulates under additional measures put in place in mid-2014.

Staying for longer than three months

If you are planning to stay in Spain for longer than three months you must register in person at the nearest Office for Foreigners (Oficina de Extranjeros) which is normally part of the Town Hall (Ayuntamiento), or at designated Police stations.

If you plan to live in Spain, visit the British Embassy website: www.gov.uk/government/world/spain for advice and information.

UK Emergency Travel Documents

UK Emergency Travel Documents are accepted for entry, airside transit and exit from Spain.

Hotels have a legal duty to register the passport details of tourists on check-in. Wait until the hotel staff have registered your passport details or taken a photocopy of your passport. Do not leave it in reception to collect later.

Money

The currency in Spain is the Euro (€).

When changing money, you should always use official money exchange offices or banks, as possession and use of counterfeit money is considered a very serious crime in Spain and may lead to prosecution.

When buying goods in Spain with credit or debit cards, you may need to show ID. You may be able to use a driving licence or a photocopy of your passport, but you may be required to show your passport.

Travel

Road travel

Driving is on the right. Driving rules and customs are different from those in the UK and the accident rate is higher, especially on motorways. In 2013 there were 1,680 road deaths in Spain. See: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/359311/rrcgb-2013.pdf. This equates to 3.6 road deaths per 100,000 of population and compares to the UK average of 2.8 road deaths per 100,000 of population in 2013.

[Source: Department for Transport (2013)]

You must carry two red warning triangles which should be placed, in the event of an accident or breakdown, in front of and behind the vehicle. You must have a spare wheel and the tools to change it. If at any time you have to leave your vehicle due to an accident or breakdown or while waiting for the arrival of the emergency services, you must wear a reflective vest or you may face a heavy fine. UK provisional licences are not valid for driving in Spain.

Carry a certificate of insurance in case you are stopped. If you are using UK insurance, always carry your certificate with you. Remember that this certificate is generally only valid for a stay of less than three months – contact your insurer if you are staying longer.

Spain has strict drink driving laws. Penalties include heavy fines, loss of licence and imprisonment.

Seat belts are required for all passengers in the front and back seats. No children under the age of 12 should be in the front seat and small children must be in an approved child safety seat in the back seat. Your car hire agency will be able to provide a seat so let them know you need one when you reserve the car.

Talking on a mobile phone when driving is forbidden, even if you have pulled over to the side of the road. You must be completely away from the road. Using an earpiece is also prohibited but you are allowed to use a mobile phone with a completely hands-free unit.

See the European Commission, AA and RAC guides on driving in Spain:

- www.ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/going_abroad/index_en.htm
- www.theaa.com/motoring_advice/overseas/general_advice.html
- www.rac.co.uk/travel/driving-abroad/countries/spain/

Unlicensed taxi drivers

Passengers caught using unlicensed taxi services are liable for fines of up to €600. Make sure you book your taxi or airport transfer through a licensed firm.

Crossing between Spain and Gibraltar

Spanish border checks can cause delays when crossing between Spain and Gibraltar, see: www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/gibraltar. There is no charge to enter or leave Gibraltar. Do not hand over money if you are approached by anyone claiming that there is a charge.

Crime

Most visits to Spain are trouble-free, but you should be alert to the existence of street crime, especially thieves using distraction techniques. Thieves often work in teams of two or more people and tend to target money and passports. Do not carry all your valuables in one place, and remember to keep a photocopy or scanned copy of your passport somewhere safe.

Many people have their passports stolen while passing through airports, either on arrival in or departure from Spain. Take extra care to guard passports, money and personal belongings when collecting or checking in luggage at the airport, and while arranging car hire. There has been an increase in the number of thefts from hire cars. Remove all valuables from the vehicle when you park or store items out of sight.

In some city centres and resorts, thieves posing as police officers may approach tourists and ask to see their wallets for identification purposes. If this happens to you, establish that the officers are genuine and if necessary show some other form of ID. Genuine police officers do not ask to see wallets or purses.

In any emergency, call 112. To report a crime, including stolen property and lost or stolen passports, visit the nearest Policia Nacional, regional police (Ertzaintza in the Basque Country, Mossos d'Esquadra in Catalonia, and Policia Foral in Navarre) or Guardia Civil Station to make a police report (denuncia). If you have had belongings stolen, you will need to keep the report for insurance purposes. If your passport is lost or stolen, you will also need the report to apply for an emergency travel document from the nearest British Consulate and to apply for a replacement passport when you return to the UK.

Personal attacks, including sexual assaults, are rare but they do occur, and are often carried out by other British nationals. Be alert to the possible use of 'date rape' and other drugs including 'GHB' and liquid ecstasy. Buy your own drinks and keep sight of them at all times to make sure they are not spiked. Alcohol and drugs can make you less vigilant, less in control and less aware of your environment. If you drink, know your limit – remember that drinks served in bars are often stronger than those in the UK. Avoid splitting up from your friends, and don't go off with people you do not know.

There has been an increase in reports of burglaries in areas with holiday accommodation and residential areas in major cities. Make sure your accommodation has adequate security measures in place and lock all doors and windows at night or when you are not in. If you are a tourist and are concerned about the security of your accommodation, speak to your tour operator or the owner. Make sure you know the contact details of the local emergency services and the location of the nearest police station.

When driving, be wary of approaches by bogus police officers in plain clothes travelling in unmarked cars. In all traffic-related matters, police officers will be in uniform, and all police officers, including those in plain clothes, carry official ID. Unmarked police vehicles have a flashing electronic sign on the rear window which reads Policia (Police) or Guardia Civil (Civil Guard), and normally have blue flashing lights. Genuine police officers will only ask you to show them your documents and will not ask for your bag or wallet/purse.

If in any doubt, you should talk through the car window and contact the Civil Guard on 062 or Police on 112 and ask them to confirm that the registration number of the vehicle corresponds to an official police vehicle.

Be aware of 'highway pirates' who target foreign-registered and hire cars, especially those towing caravans. Some will (forcefully) try to make you stop, claiming there is something wrong with your car or that you have damaged theirs. If you decide to stop to check the condition of your/their vehicle, stop in a public area with lights like a service station, and be extremely wary of anyone offering help.

Spanish law defines anyone under 18 to be a minor. Any unaccompanied minors that come to the attention of the Spanish authorities (for whatever reason, but particularly in

connection with criminal incidents or when in hospital) are judged to be vulnerable and may be taken into a minors centre until a parent or guardian can be found.

You must provide ID (your passport) if requested by a Police Officer. The Police have the right to hold you at a police station until your identity is confirmed.

Possession of even a small quantity of drugs can lead to arrest and detention. Possession of large quantities will probably result in prosecution and a prison sentence if convicted.

Some local councils in Spain have banned the consumption of alcohol in the street and on-the-spot fines may be issued. There are strict controls on drinking and sexual activity in public places, including beaches.

In some parts of Spain it is against the law to be in the street wearing only a bikini or swimming shorts/trunks. Being bare-chested has also been banned. Some local councils will impose fines if you are caught wearing swimwear on the seafront promenade or the adjacent streets.

For security reasons, some public authorities in Spain do not allow the burka or niqab to be worn in their buildings. If you visit Town Councils wearing a burka or niqab, you may be asked to remove it while in the building.

Only use officially registered or licensed taxis.

Lottery scams

There have been reports of lottery scams in Spain. A person receives what appears to be official notification from the Spanish Inland Revenue office (Hacienda) that they have won the Spanish lottery and should deposit money in a bank account to receive their winnings. It is likely to be a scam if you have not entered a lottery, you are asked to pay anything up-front and the contact telephone number is for a mobile phone.

Timeshare and holiday clubs

Timeshare ownership is well established in Spain with many respected companies, agents and resorts operating legally and fairly. However, there are also many unscrupulous companies, some of which claim to provide various incentives, which do not always materialise. Further information and advice is available from the Timeshare Consumers Association (TCA): www.timeshare.org.uk/what-is-timeshare.php and on the British Embassy website: www.gov.uk/government/world/spain

Bribery and corruption

Bribery is illegal. It is an offence for British nationals or someone who is ordinarily resident in the UK, a body incorporated in the UK or a Scottish partnership, to bribe

anywhere in the world. In addition, a commercial organisation carrying on a business in the UK can be liable for the conduct of a person who is neither a UK national nor resident in the UK or a body incorporated or formed in the UK. In this case it does not matter whether the acts or omissions which form part of the offence take place in the UK or elsewhere.

The UK Government takes a very serious view on bribery and corruption, and any UK company considered to be involved in corrupt practices will feel the full weight of the law bear down on them under the UK Bribery Act 2010. The UK Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS, formerly Business, Innovation and Skills, or BIS) has published a number of documents on their website. See: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-business-energy-and-industrial-strategy for assistance in this area.

Spain has also had a number of high profile corruption cases over recent years. Most of these cases have been linked to the housing boom and involved mostly regional and municipal governments in the awarding of contracts for cash payments. The Bárcenas corruption case, which broke in January 2013, is the first major corruption case to affect members of the central government and the ruling party (Partido Popular). The case centres on allegations that ex-PP treasurer used undeclared party donations from private companies to make illegal bonus payments to senior party figures. Other major corruption cases include the ERE case, involving alleged fraudulent payments of redundancy pay by the regional socialist government (PSOE) in Andalusia and the Noos case, involving the King's brother-in-law Iñaki Udangarin, involving allegations of misuse of public funds intended to finance a sports centre in Palma de Mallorca.

The OECD also reported on Spain's legal framework against bribery in 2014. The review highlighted Spain's record of zero prosecutions and expressed concerns that Spain operated different sanction regimes for bribery of EU and non-EU MS.

The second GRECO (EU Group of States Against Corruption) compliance report on Spain, dated June 2013, encouraged the Spanish authorities "to pay further attention to the international dimension of corruption", and acknowledged that lack of transparency of political funding "constitute a major source of citizen's concern". A recent opinion poll showed that 85% of Spaniards think corruption is widespread or very widespread in business and government alike.

Corruption is cited as one of the factors behind declining support for the two main political parties. Both the government and the opposition have committed to tackling corruption in order to reverse this trend. A first ever Transparency Law was passed in 2013. Following the State of the Nation debate a clear majority in the Congress voted in favour of a motion mandating the government to bring forward the following reforms:

- A new law on the Control of the Economic and Financial activities of Political Parties.

- A new regulatory law on the Exercise of Political Functions (‘statute of public office’) which will clarify requirements on public figures to publish their tax returns and declarations of assets.
- Modification of the penal code to include a crime of illegal financing and unjustified profit of elected public officials.
- Reform of the Court of Auditors to give it more tools to monitor and investigate.
- Reform of the Public Sector Contracting Law to prohibit contracts being awarded to people previously sentenced for corruption.
- New measures to modernise electoral campaigns.

In 2014 the first Spanish Government transparency website was launched. See: www.transparencia.gob.es. Also Spain is included in the World Bank’s Ease of Doing Business report at: www.doingbusiness.org/data/exploreeconomies/spain and its performance evaluated in Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index 2014 at: www.transparency.org/cpi2014/results

Safety

Balcony Falls (Balconing)

There have been a number of very serious accidents (some fatal) as a result of falls from balconies. Many of these incidents have been caused by British nationals being under the influence of drink or drugs and most should have been avoidable. Your travel insurance probably will not cover you for incidents that take place while you are under the influence of drink or drugs.

Some local councils have introduced laws banning the misuse of balconies with fines for those who are caught.

Outdoor activities

Take care when swimming in the sea. Some beaches, especially around Spanish Islands, may have strong undercurrents. Most of them have a flag system. Before swimming, make sure you understand the system and follow any warnings (a red flag means you must not enter the water). You should take extra care if there are no life-guards, flags or signs. Follow local advice if jellyfish are present.

You should avoid swimming at beaches that are close to rivers. Do not dive into unknown water as hidden rocks or shallow depths can cause serious injury or death.

Take care when walking along unmanned beaches close to the water's edge as some waves can be of an unpredictable size and come in further than expected with strong undertows.

Further tips can be found on ABTA's Swim Safe pages. See: www.abta.com/news-and-views/campaign-zone/swim-safe

Temperatures in some parts of Spain can change very quickly. Take extra care when planning a hike or walk to check local weather reports for warnings of extreme heat or cold temperatures.

If an accident occurs whilst mountaineering, canoeing, potholing or climbing, or if you become lost in the mountains or other areas requiring mountain rescue, call 112 for the emergency services or 062 for the Civil Guard.

For advice on safety and weather conditions for skiing or other outdoor activities call the Spanish National Tourist Office in London on 020 7317 2028 or see the European Avalanche Warning Services site: www.avalanches.org/eaws/en/main.php

The Catalonia region has started billing negligent climbers, skiers and other adventurers who have to be rescued.

Political situation

Avoid all demonstrations and follow the advice of police and local authorities.

Terrorism

There is a high threat from terrorism. Attacks could be indiscriminate, including in places visited by foreigners. The Spanish authorities take measures to protect visitors, but you should be vigilant and follow the instructions of the local authorities.

The Basque terrorist organisation ETA has been less active in recent years and has not mounted any attacks since 2009. In October 2011 ETA announced a "definitive cessation of armed activity". ETA's last major attack was in 2006. British Nationals have not been a target of ETA terrorism.

There is considered to be a heightened threat of terrorist attack globally against UK interests and British nationals, from groups or individuals motivated by the conflict in Iraq and Syria. You should be vigilant at this time.

In 2015, Spanish police disrupted a number of groups suspected of recruiting individuals to travel to Syria and Iraq. Some of them expressed an intention to carry out attacks in Europe. Several further police operations have taken place in 2016. Spanish authorities believe that a number of Spanish nationals have successfully travelled to Syria and Iraq.

[Source: FCO Overseas Business Risk/gov.uk (July 2015)]

Health

Visit your health professional at least four to six weeks before your trip to check whether you need any vaccinations or other preventive measures. Country-specific information and advice is published by the National Travel Health Network and Centre on the TravelHealthPro website: www.travelhealthpro.org.uk/locations/spain/ and by NHS (Scotland) on the fitfortravel website: www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/destinations/europe--russia/spain.aspx

Useful information and advice about healthcare abroad is also available on the NHS Choices website: www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcareabroad/Pages/Healthcareabroad.aspx

Health insurance

If you are visiting Spain, you should get a free European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) before leaving the UK. The EHIC is not a substitute for medical and travel insurance, but it will cover you for any necessary treatment you receive at a public healthcare centre or hospital during your trip. Any treatment provided is on the same terms as Spanish nationals.

You should produce your EHIC prior to treatment. If you do not have your EHIC with you or you have lost it, you can call the Department of Health Overseas Healthcare Team (+44 191 218 1999) to get a Provisional Replacement Certificate. You are under no obligation to provide travel insurance as payment for necessary treatment in a public healthcare facility and you can insist that your EHIC is accepted. Some hotels may call private doctors or ambulances to take patients to private hospitals; the EHIC will not be accepted there. For more information visit the Healthcare in Spain website: www.healthcareinspain.eu

The EHIC will not cover medical repatriation, or any private care. Private hospitals will not accept the EHIC and will ask you to pay for your treatment or provide evidence of adequate insurance.

Make sure you have adequate travel health insurance and accessible funds to cover the cost of any medical treatment abroad and repatriation. If you are referred to a medical facility for treatment you should contact your insurance/medical assistance company immediately. As a general rule, if you need hospital treatment in Spain you are more likely to receive appropriate care in a public healthcare facility (although in some tourist areas there may be no public healthcare facility nearby). Your insurance/medical assistance company will be able to provide further details.

If you need emergency medical assistance during your trip, dial 112 and ask for an ambulance.

If you plan to live in Spain, you should look at alternative forms of health cover and visit the British Embassy website: www.gov.uk/government/world/spain for more information.

Further information on accessing healthcare in Spain for visitors is available at the Healthcare in Spain website: www.healthcareinspain.eu

Natural disasters

Forest fires occur frequently in Spain (including Spanish islands) during the summer months. Take care when visiting or driving through woodland areas. Make sure cigarette ends are properly extinguished, do not light barbecues and do not leave empty bottles behind. You should be aware that causing a forest fire is treated as a criminal offence in Spain even if unintentional. If you see the on-set of a forest fire, call the emergency services on 112.

[Source: FCO Travel advice/gov.uk (Apr 2016)]

FCO Travel Advice

If you are travelling to Spain for business, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) website has travel advice to help you prepare for your visits overseas and to stay safe and secure while you are there.

For advice please visit the FCO Travel section pages on the gov.uk website: www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/spain

Travel insurance

Take out comprehensive travel and medical insurance before you travel. See FCO Foreign Travel Insurance: www.gov.uk/guidance/foreign-travel-insurance

[Source: FCO Travel advice/gov.uk (Apr 2016)]

Sponsored By:

Regional Investment



City Investment



Technology Services



Law / Legal Services



Financial Services



International Project Management & Construction Consultants



Accountancy / Professional Business Services



Education / School Services



Hotels / Corporate Lodging



Real Estate / Property Services



ICT / Telecommunications



Chamber of Commerce



;

Contact IMA
International Market Advisor
IMA House
41A Spring Gardens
Buxton
Derbyshire
SK17 6BJ
United Kingdom
Email: info@ima.uk.com
General enquiries switchboard: +44 (0) 1298 79562
Website: www.DoingBusinessGuide.co.uk