

From: "CA, Travel Info" <Travelinfo@STATE.GOV>
Subject: **Spain and Andorra Country Specific Information**
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Spain and Andorra

September 02, 2009

COUNTRY DESCRIPTION: Spain and Andorra are both advanced stable democracies and modern economies. Spain is a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union. Read the Department of State [Background Notes on Spain](#) and [Andorra](#) for additional information.

REGISTRATION/ EMBASSY LOCATION: U.S. citizens living or traveling in Spain or Andorra are encouraged to register with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate at the [Department of State's travel registration page](#) in order to obtain updated information on local travel and security. U.S. citizens without Internet access may register directly with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. Registration is important; it allows the State Department to assist U.S. citizens in an emergency.

Local embassy information is available below and at the [Department of State's list of embassies and consulates](#).

The U.S. Embassy is located at Serrano 75; telephone (34) (91) 587-2200, and fax (34) (91) 587-2303. U.S. citizens who [register](#) with the Consular Section at the U.S. Embassy, Consulate General, or one of the Consular Agencies listed below can obtain updated information on travel and security within Spain or Andorra. Additional information and appointments for routine services are available through the [U.S. Embassy's webpage](#). Appointments are required for routine Consular Services. To make an appointment, please visit the [U.S. Embassy's on-line appointment system](#).

The U.S. Consulate in Barcelona is located at Paseo Reina Elisenda 23-25; telephone (34) (93) 280-2227 and fax (34) (93) 205-5206. Visitors to Barcelona can access additional information from the [Consulate General's webpage](#).

There are six consular agencies in Spain, which provide limited services to American citizens, but are not authorized to issue passports. Anyone requesting service at one of the consular agencies should call ahead to verify that the service requested will be available on the day you expect to visit the agency.

Fuengirola (in Malaga Province), at Avenida Juan Gomez Juanito #8, Edificio Lucia 1C, Fuengirola 29640 Spain. Telephone (34) (952) 474-891 and fax (34) (952) 465-189. Hours 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

La Coruna, Calle Juana de Vega 8, 5º Piso, Oficina I, La Coruna 15003 Spain. Telephone (34) (981) 213-233 and fax (34) (981) 22 28 08). Hours 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Las Palmas, at Edificio Arca, Calle Los Martinez de Escobar 3, Oficina 7, Las Palmas, Gran Canaria 35007 Spain. Telephone (34)(928) 222-552 and fax (34)(928) 225-863. Hours 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Palma de Mallorca, Edificio Reina Constanza, Porto Pi, 8, 9-D, 07015 Palma de Mallorca 07015 Spain. Telephone (34) (971) 40-3707 or 40-3905 and fax (34) (971) 40-3971. Hours 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Seville, at Plaza Nueva 8-8 duplicado, 2nd Floor, Office E-2 No.4, Sevilla, 41101 Spain. Telephone: (34) (65) 422-8751 and fax (34) (91) 422-0791. Hours: 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Valencia, at Doctor Romagosa #1, 2-J, 46002, Valencia 46002 Spain. Telephone (34) (96)-351-6973 and fax (34) (96) 352-9565. Hours 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

For assistance regarding Andorra, please contact the U.S. Consulate in Barcelona.

ENTRY/EXIT REQUIREMENTS: Spain is a party to the Schengen agreement. As such, U.S. citizens may enter

Spain for up to 90 days for tourist or business purposes without a visa. The passport should be valid for at least three months beyond the period of stay. For further details about travel into and within Schengen countries, please see our [Schengen Fact Sheet](#).

The Spanish Government scrutinizes visitors who overstay their visas or their visa-free entry per the Schengen agreement. Immediate deportation after spending a number of days in jail is not uncommon. Visitors should take care to exit Spain promptly at the end of the 90-day visa-free travel period or at the end of the time stated on their visa.

In an effort to prevent international child abduction, many governments have initiated procedures at entry/exit points. These often include requiring documentary evidence of relationship and permission for the child's travel from the parent(s) or legal guardian not present. Having such documentation on hand, even if not required, may facilitate entry/departure.

The U.S. Department of State is unaware of any HIV/AIDS entry restrictions for visitors to or foreign residents of Spain and Andorra.

For further information concerning entry requirements for Spain, travelers should contact the Embassy of Spain at 2375 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20037, telephone (202) 452-0100, or the nearest Spanish Consulate in Boston, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New Orleans, New York, San Francisco, or San Juan. Additional information can be found on the [Spanish government website](#). Additional information may be obtained from the [Tourist Office of Spain](#) in New York at (212) 265-8822.

For further information on entry requirements to Andorra, travelers should contact the [Andorran Mission to the UN](#), 2 U.N. Plaza, 25th floor, New York, NY 10018, telephone (212) 750-8064.

Information about [dual nationality](#) or the [prevention of international child abduction](#) can be found on our website. For further information about customs regulations, please read our [Customs Information page](#).

THREATS TO SAFETY AND SECURITY: Spain and Andorra share with the rest of the world an increased threat of international terrorist incidents. Like other countries in the Schengen area, Spain's open borders with its Western European neighbors allow the possibility of terrorist groups entering and exiting the country with anonymity. Spain's proximity to North Africa makes it vulnerable to attack from Al Qaeda terrorists in the Maghreb region. Americans are reminded to remain vigilant with regard to their personal security and to exercise caution.

In the deadliest terrorist attack in recent European history, in March 2004, Islamist extremists bombed four commuter trains entering Madrid, causing 191 deaths and over 1,400 injuries. Spanish authorities tried the suspected terrorists and their co-conspirators in February 2007 and convicted in October 2007.

The Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA) terrorist organization remains active in Spain. ETA has historically avoided targeting foreigners, directing their attacks against the police, military, local politicians, and Spanish government targets as well as towards disrupting transportation and daily life. However, foreigners have been killed or injured collaterally in ETA attacks. Two examples of this are the Barajas Airport bombing in December 2006, in which two Ecuadorian nationals were killed, and the bombing at the University of Navarre in October 2008, in which 17 students were injured including one American student. In addition, bombs have been used as part of criminal extortion of businesses, particularly in the Basque region. The risk of "being in the wrong place at the wrong time" in event of an ETA action is a concern for foreign visitors and tourists. U.S. tourists traveling to Spain should remain vigilant, exercise caution, monitor local developments, and avoid demonstrations and other potentially violent situations. The recent bombings in Burgos and Palma de Mallorca in August 2009 highlight this need.

We have received isolated reports that racial prejudice may have contributed to the arrest or detention of some African-Americans travelling in Spain. Recently, two African-American U.S. Government employees were questioned by police in Barcelona for no apparent reason. One was detained and suffered physical injuries in the process.

For the latest security information, U.S. citizens traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department of State's [Bureau of Consular Affairs' website](#), which contains current the [Travel Warnings and Travel Alerts](#) as well as the [Worldwide Caution](#).

Up-to-date information on safety and security can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll-free within the U.S. and Canada, or by calling a regular toll line, 1-202-501-4444, from other countries. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).

The Department of State urges American citizens to take responsibility for their own personal security while traveling overseas. For general information about appropriate measures travelers can take to protect themselves in an overseas environment, see the Department of State's extensive tips and advice on [traveling safely abroad](#).

CRIME: Andorra has a low rate of crime. While most of Spain has a moderate rate of crime and most of the estimated one million American tourists have trouble-free visits to Spain each year, street crimes against tourists occur in the principal tourist areas. Madrid and Barcelona, in particular, report incidents of pick-pocketing, mugging and occasional violent attacks, some of which require the victim to seek medical attention. Although crimes occur at all times of day and night and to people of all ages, older tourists and Asian Americans seem to be particularly at risk. Criminals frequent tourist areas and major attractions such as museums, monuments, restaurants, outdoor cafes, Internet cafes, hotel lobbies, beach resorts, city buses, subways, trains, train stations, airports, and ATMs.

In Madrid, incidents have been reported in all major tourist areas, including the area near the Prado Museum, near Atocha train station, in Retiro Park, in areas of old Madrid including near the Royal Palace and in Plaza Mayor. There have been a number of passport and bag thefts reported at Madrid's Barajas Airport, local hotels, as well as in El Rastro (Madrid's flea market) and in the Metro.

In Barcelona, the largest number of incidents reported also occurred in major tourist areas, on Las Ramblas, Barcelona's El Prat airport, Sants train station, Metro stations, in the Sagrada Familia Area, in the Gothic Quarter, in Parc Güell, in Plaza Real, and along Barcelona's beaches. There have been a number of thefts reported at the Port Olympic Area and nearby beaches.

Travelers should remain alert to their personal security and exercise caution. Travelers are encouraged to carry limited cash, only one credit card, and a copy of their passport; leaving extra cash, extra credit cards, passports and personal documents in a safe location. When carrying documents, credit cards or cash, you are encouraged to secure them in a hard-to-reach place and not to carry all valuables together in a purse or backpack.

In the unfortunate event a traveler loses or has their passport stolen, the Embassy or Consulate will only be able to issue a replacement during regular business hours, unless it is a life or death emergency. The Embassy and Consulate are unable to issue passports after hours and on weekend, except in true emergency situations.

Thieves often work in teams of two or more people. In many cases, one person distracts a victim while the accomplices perform the robbery. For example, someone might wave a map in your face and ask for directions, "inadvertently" spill something on you, or help you clean-up bird droppings thrown on you by a third unseen accomplice. While your attention is diverted, an accomplice makes off with the valuables. Thieves may drop coins or keys at your feet to distract you and try to take your belongings while you are trying to help. Attacks are sometimes initiated from behind, with the victim being grabbed around the neck and choked by one assailant while others rifle through or grab the belongings. A group of assailants may surround the victim in a crowded popular tourist area or on public transportation, and only after the group has departed does the person discover he/she has been robbed. Purse-snatchers may grab purses or wallets and run away, or immediately pass the stolen item to an accomplice. A passenger on a passing motorcycle sometimes robs pedestrians. There have been reports of thieves posing as plainclothes police officers, beckoning to pedestrians from cars and sometimes confronting them on the street asking for documents, or to inspect their cash for counterfeit bills, which they ultimately "confiscate" as evidence. The U.S. Embassy in Madrid has received reports of cars on limited access motorways being pulled over by supposed unmarked police cars. The Spanish police do not operate in this fashion. American citizens are encouraged to ask for a uniformed law enforcement officer if approached.

Theft from vehicles is also common. "Good Samaritan" scams are unfortunately common, where a passing car or helpful stranger will attempt to divert the driver's attention by indicating there is a flat tire or mechanical problem. When the driver stops to check the vehicle, the "good Samaritan" will appear to help the driver and passengers while the accomplice steals from the unlocked car. Drivers should be cautious about accepting help from anyone other than a uniformed Spanish police officer or Civil Guard. Items high in value like luggage, cameras, laptop computers, or briefcases are often stolen from cars. Travelers are advised not to leave valuables in parked cars,

and to keep doors locked, windows rolled up, and valuables out of sight when driving.

While the incidence of sexual assault is statistically very low, attacks do occur. We recommend American citizens remain aware of their surroundings at all times, and travel with a companion if possible, especially at night. Spanish authorities warn of the availability of so-called "date-rape" drugs and other drugs, including "GBH" and liquid ecstasy. Americans should not lower their personal security awareness because they are on vacation.

A number of American citizens have been victims of lottery or advance fee scams in which a person is lured to Spain to finalize a financial transaction. Often the victims are initially contacted via Internet or fax and informed they have won the Spanish Lottery (El Gordo), inherited money from a distant relative, or are needed to assist in a major financial transaction from one country to another. For more information, please see the Bureau of Consular Affairs' webpage on [International Financial Scams](#).

In many countries around the world, counterfeit and pirated goods are widely available. Transactions involving such products may be illegal under local law. In addition, bringing them back to the United States may result in forfeitures and/or fines. The [Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Division in the U.S. Department of Justice](#) has more information on this serious problem.

The Embassy's U.S. Commercial Service receives reports of a type of scam targeting U.S. businesses, utilizing the name of a legitimate Spanish concern and legitimate-appearing Spanish bank references. The scam usually involves a temptingly large order or business proposal. The [U.S. Commercial Service in Spain](#) stands ready to counsel any U.S. firm which would like to verify the legitimacy of an unsolicited business proposal purporting to come from a Spanish firm.

VICTIMS OF CRIME: If you are the victim of a crime abroad, you should contact the local police and the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate (see end of this sheet or see the [Department of State's list of embassies and consulates](#)). This includes the loss or theft of a U.S. passport. The embassy/consulate staff can, for example, help you find appropriate medical care, contact family members or friends and explain how funds may be transferred. Although the investigation and prosecution of the crime are solely the responsibility of local authorities, consular officers can help you to understand the local criminal justice process and to find an attorney if needed.

The local equivalent to the "911" emergency line in Spain is 112.

Please see our [information on victims of crime](#), including possible victim compensation programs in the United States.

CRIMINAL PENALTIES: While in a foreign country, a U.S. citizen is subject to that country's laws and regulations, which sometimes differ significantly from those in the United States and may not afford the protections available to the individual under U.S. law. Penalties for breaking the law can be more severe than in the United States for similar offenses. Engaging in sexual conduct with children or using or disseminating child pornography in a foreign country is a crime, [prosecutable in the United States](#).

Persons violating the laws of Spain or Andorra, even unknowingly, may be expelled, arrested or imprisoned. Penalties for possessing, using, or trafficking in illegal drugs in Spain and Andorra are severe, and convicted offenders can expect long jail sentences and heavy fines.

The cities of Madrid and Barcelona and the Balearic Islands regional government have banned the consumption of alcohol in the street, other than in registered street cafes and bars. Visitors to Madrid, Barcelona, Mallorca, Ibiza, and Menorca should be aware that failure to respect this law might result in the imposition of fines.

MEDICAL FACILITIES AND HEALTH INFORMATION: Good medical care is available in both Spain and Andorra. Regulations regarding medications may vary from those in the United States; Americans with need for specific medications are encouraged to bring a supply sufficient for their anticipated period of stay, as the medication may not be available and customs regulations may prohibit certain medications to be mailed from the United States to Spain or Andorra. The Department of State strongly urges Americans to consult with their medical insurance companies prior to traveling abroad to confirm whether their policy applies overseas and if it will cover emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation. U.S. medical insurance plans may not cover health costs incurred outside the United States unless supplemental coverage is purchased. Further, U.S. Medicare and Medicaid programs do

not provide payment for medical services outside the United States. You should contact your insurance provider before departure so appropriate arrangements can be made. Many travel agents and private companies offer insurance plans that will cover health care expenses incurred overseas, including emergency services such as medical evacuations.

Information on vaccinations and other health precautions, such as safe food and water precautions and insect bite protection, may be obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) hotline for international travelers at 1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747) or via the [CDC website](#). For information about outbreaks of infectious diseases abroad, consult the infectious diseases section of the [World Health Organization \(WHO\) website](#). The WHO website also contains additional health information for travelers, including [detailed country-specific health information](#).

MEDICAL INSURANCE: The Department of State strongly urges U.S. citizens to consult their medical insurance company prior to traveling abroad. Important questions are whether the policy applies overseas and whether it covers emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation. U.S. Medicare and Medicaid programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the United States. For more information, please see our [medical insurance overseas page](#).

When making a decision regarding health insurance, Americans should consider that many foreign doctors and hospitals require payment in cash prior to providing service and that a medical evacuation to the United States may cost well in excess of \$50,000. Uninsured travelers who require medical care overseas often face extreme difficulties, whereas travelers who have purchased overseas medical insurance have found it to be life saving when a medical emergency has occurred. When consulting with your insurer prior to your trip, please ascertain whether payment will be made to the overseas healthcare provider or if you will be reimbursed later for expenses that you incur. Some insurance policies also include coverage for psychiatric treatment and for disposition of remains in the event of death.

TRAFFIC SAFETY AND ROAD CONDITIONS: While in a foreign country, U.S. citizens may encounter road conditions that differ significantly from those in the United States.

Traffic in Madrid and Barcelona is faster-paced than in U.S. cities and can be unnerving due to unfamiliar signs or motorbikes weaving between traffic lanes. Drivers should always obey the closest traffic light, as there are separate pedestrian lights in the city. Drivers should be alert when driving at night in urban areas, due to the possibility of encountering drivers or pedestrians under the influence of alcohol. Night driving in isolated rural areas can be dangerous because of farm animals and poorly marked roads. Rural traffic is generally heavier in July and August as well as during the Christmas and Easter seasons.

Traffic regulations in effect in Spain include the prohibition on the use of a mobile phone without a hands-free device while driving a car. There is a fine of 300 euros for violation of this regulation and loss of driving privileges. In addition, all drivers and passengers are required to carry a reflective vest and put it on if they need to stop on the roadside. A reflective triangle warning sign for a vehicle stopped on the side of the road is also mandatory. Those renting vehicles are encouraged to check with the rental company about traffic regulations and safety equipment. U.S. citizens must obtain International Driving Permits prior to their arrival if they plan to drive in Spain as you are not allowed to drive on your American license. Pedestrians should use designated crossing areas when crossing streets and obey traffic lights.

One of the facets of Spanish traffic laws that Americans find perplexing is traffic stops by the Spanish National Police or the Guardia Civil. Unlike in the United States where drivers receive traffic tickets and then pay the court via mail or in person, Spanish police authorities may levy fines on the spot and issue a receipt for the payment. This is done to ensure the traffic fine is paid by foreigners who rarely come back to Spain to pay the fine.

Public transportation in large Spanish cities is generally excellent. All major cities have metered taxis, in which extra charges must be posted in the vehicle. Travelers are advised to use only clearly identified cabs and to ensure that taxi drivers always switch on the meter. A green light on the roof indicates that the taxi is available. Rail service is comfortable and reliable, but varies in quality and speed. Intercity buses are usually comfortable and inexpensive.

Please refer to our [Road Safety page](#) for more information. For specific information concerning Spanish driving

permits, vehicle inspection, road tax and mandatory insurance, please contact the [Spanish National Tourist Organization](#) offices in New York. For information about driving in Andorra, refer to [Andorra's Office of Tourism](#) .

AVIATION SAFETY OVERSIGHT: The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has assessed the government of Spain's Civil Aviation Authority as being in compliance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) aviation safety standards for oversight of Spain's air carrier operations. Further information may be found on the [FAA's safety assessment page](#) .

CHILDREN'S ISSUES: Please see our Office of Children's Issues web pages on [intercountry adoption](#) and [international parental child abduction](#).

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This replaces the Country Specific Information for Spain and Andorra dated January 13, 2009, to update sections on Entry and Exit Requirements, Threats to Safety and Security, and Traffic Safety and Road Conditions.