

Buying Renfe Tickets Online - Revised Dec. 22, 2010

Remember that the Renfe website is being changed continuously, so one should not panic if one cannot find everything that is in this procedure. Use common sense and try to continue until you succeed in buying your ticket. Persevere!

The website is a bit surreal. It is like Alice in Wonderland, where nothing seems to be what it really is. Even if you are on the English page, you will find some items in Spanish. Sometimes the website will send you to a completely Spanish page! However if you persevere you may be able to save some money by getting the web discounts.

You may want to print this procedure before you start.

1. Renfe Savings

I just wanted to point out the savings one can get by buying AVE tickets on the internet. Here are some popular destinations from Madrid (tourist class):

[Barcelona](#)

Normal price: 129.30€

Web price: 51.70€

[Seville](#)

Normal price: 77.60

Web price: 31.00

Malaga

Normal price: 81.80

Web price: 32.70

Cordoba

Normal price: 63.80

Web price: 25.50

You can save plenty of money if you plan ahead and buy your tickets 62 days in advance on the web. The discounts become less available as your travel date nears, because they are bought by other people. There are only a limited number of tickets with discounts.

2. The Renfe website recommends using Microsoft Internet Explorer, Version 6.01 or higher, with Javascript and you should allow cookies and pop-ups. You should also have Acrobat Reader, Version 6 or higher. Many people who have used other browsers have had problems because the Renfe website is designed **ONLY** for this browser. If you have problems, go to one of your friends who has this browser and use his PC. **This is very important!**

Many people have had good luck with a Mac and the Firefox or Safari browser.

3. The Renfe website seems to be optimized only for the Windows operating system. Those who use other operating systems on their computers may have problems buying Renfe tickets. If this happens to you, then try using a PC with Windows and see if that works out.

4. If you are using Windows on your computer, maximize all the screens to be able to see all the information on the Renfe website.

5. When you use the Renfe website, be sure to use a PC with a printer because you will have to print out your ticket after the transaction completes. You will get a PDF file with the ticket, which you should print out. You will also get a confirmation email with the Locator Number (Localizador) and your time schedule. Your train ticket will tell you from what station you leave. If you have a problem printing the PDF file, you can print it out at the Renfe station, where they have machines that will print it out. if you have the Locator Number.

6. The website allows you to buy tickets 62 days in advance of your trip for the AVE and AVANT trips. This is very important! Some discounts are available for dates between 62 days and 4 months in advance. Fares and schedules are posted at midnight, Madrid time.

If you cannot see the schedule 62 days in advance for travel between two cities, that means that Renfe is reworking the schedule. This happens frequently especially before summer and after summer. Try looking every day until you see the schedule 62 days in

advance.

7. The AVE is the high velocity train for long distances. The AVANT is the high velocity train for medium distances. They both use the same rails and some of their destinations may be the same. Be sure to compare the prices for each of these to choose the best alternative.

8. Not all the seats are offered at a discount. You can buy most tickets 62 days in advance of your trip. A partial list of tickets can be bought 4 months in advance. You should buy your tickets 62 days in advance. That is when the complete list of tickets is shown on the website. You are competing with thousands of other people who want the web discounts. The fewer days between your trip date and the day you buy the tickets, the fewer discounts you will find on the web because the discounted tickets have already been sold. The people who plan early are the people who will get the discounts.

9. The AVANT is the high speed line for short distances, such as between Madrid and Toledo. **There are no web discounts for AVANT. The web discounts only apply to large distances that are run on the AVE and non-AVE trains.**

10. Many web discounts disappear rapidly when they are posted because of demand. Those who want them should try to buy exactly 62 days in advance, before they disappear.

11. Tickets are not individual, they are without name, so there is no problem if you buy tickets for your friends and input only your personal data online.

12. Some Americans have had problems completing their transactions because their credit card companies blocked the purchase, thinking that there could be some fraud involved. The solution was to call their credit card companies to unblock the purchase. Others have still had problems because Renfe could not connect with the bank of the credit card company. The solution would be to use another credit card.

13. To start the buying procedure, go to <http://www.renfe.es/>.

Read this procedure first.

14. This is a trial run to get a one way ticket from Madrid to Malaga on the AVE. AVE means Alta Velocidad Española and its logo resembles a bird. Ave also means bird.

15. On the panel there is a box called "Compra de Billetes", which means "Purchase Tickets". Hit the "Entrar" button to enter and to start the ticket purchase.

16. As a trial, I selected Outward (for one way trip). The "Return" button is for a two way trip. It is better to buy two one way trips rather than one two way trip because the latter can give you complications if you do not do it properly.

17. In the Departure drop down menu, select Madrid*. There are cities with an asterisk after the city name, and this means that city has more than one station. In computer technology, an asterisk means that there is a wild card in the deck. If you choose

Madrid*, it means you want any station in Madrid. Later your ticket will tell you which station to go to. Always use the destination with the asterisk because it works better than the particular station.

18. For the Destination, select Malaga.

19. For the Outward Date, I chose August 9, 2010.

20. No. Passengers: 1

21. Press the Search button.

22. This brings you to the Availability panel.

23. I find the AVE 02162, departure at 16:35H, arrival at 19:07H, and I check Tourist class at 34.10€. There is a "W" symbol beside the fare and this indicates that it is the Web fare, the cheapest fare, which gives you a 60% discount. These seats are limited.

There are other fares marked with a star symbol and these are the Estrella fare with a 40% discount. If there is no "W" or star symbol beside the fare, that means that all the discount tickets have already been taken for that date. You may then want to look for a different date. The discount tickets can easily be found because they have the symbol of a hand with the thumb up in the column with the train number.

Most people will choose the Turista class over the Preferente class because it is cheaper. The Preferente seat is slightly wider than the Turista seat because there are only 3 seats in each row. In the Turista class there are 4 seats in the row. Many times you will be upgraded to the Preferente class for free (without a meal) because that car is available. You will not know until you choose your seat in another panel.

24. Classes of Service:

Preferente Class - Meal at your seat, newspapers, audio/video, parking discounts, access to AVE lounges.

Turista Class - Cheapest class with no meal.

Most people should choose Tourist Class. The seats are very wide and comfortable. If you need food, you can go to the cafeteria car and buy something there. It is useless to choose Preferente Class if you want to save money. Many times when you book Tourist Class early, Renfe puts you in the Preferente Class car, but does not give you the meal.

25. At the bottom of the page, check the box Continue.

26. You reach the Prices page. This page shows that the fare is the web fare.

27. At the top you will see the tickets you chose and their price. There is a box which shows what type of fare you chose. This is the meaning of the different fares:

a. Web - 60% discount.

b. Adulto - Full fare and no discount.

c. Carnet Joven - Youth Card - 25% discount. The Youth Card is for students from 14 to 26, but this is good only for Spanish students because the card is issued by the autonomous governments to their students. No foreigner can take advantage of this, unless he is a permanent resident of [Spain](#) and is a student.

d. Estrella - 40% discount.

e. Niño - Child - 40% discount. A child is one who is between 4 and 14 years of age. Foreigners buying online can claim this discount. A child less than 4 years of age rides free if the child rides on your lap. If you want the child to have his own seat, then you have to buy a child fare. Of course the web fare (if you can find one) will be cheaper than the child fare.

f. Tarjeta Dorada - Gold Card for over 60 years old - 25% to 40% discount, depending on the day. On Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, there is a 40% discount. On other days the discount is 25%. This can be bought at the ticket office for 5 euros. People who are not Spanish citizens or residents should take their passports with them to buy the Tarjeta Dorada. The card can be acquired by foreigners and non-residents. The website will ask you for your Tarjeta Dorada number if you ask for this discount. You cannot get this card on the web, and the only place you can get it is at a Renfe office at any railroad station. The card also allows you a discount on the Cercanias trains.

If you were not able to get the web fare or the Estrella fare, the drop down menu allows you to choose one of the discounts. There is a second drop down menu marked "Seleccione un descuento" (Select one discount) that allows you to choose the Familia Numerosa General (Big family general) or Familia Numerosa Especial (Big family special). For these one has to be registered in Spain as a big family, so this eliminates all foreigners.

There will be a message that says: "We wish to inform you that you have selected an **OPEN RETURN** journey". This means that you have chosen a one way trip.

28. There is a new feature to choose your seat. Check the box that says "Select Seat" This is good only for the AVE and not for the AVANT train. After entering your payment method, a diagram of the seats available for selection will come up on screen at the end of the process.

If you have a pet with you, check the Ticket for Pets box. Hit the Continue button.

29. You are now at the Identification Page. Fill in all of the fields that have an asterisk, as they are mandatory.

Email - Fill in your email id. This is important because at the end of the process, Renfe sends you a confirmation email.

Name - Your first name.

Surname(s) - Your last name. The Spanish put in their mother's maiden last name also.

30. For Type of Document: Choose passport, and you can put your passport number there. Also enter the data for Town/City, Province (state), Telephone 1, and Country.

31. For country, if you are from the U.S., look for the box that says [United States](#). If you cannot find the name of your country, choose any country. This box is not important and may probably be used only to find out how many foreigners are buying tickets from each country.

32. For Telephone No. 1, put in any 9 digit number. Phone numbers in Spain have 9 digits.

33. Do not check the box that says, " I agree to receive publicity about Renfe offers and promotions." Mark this box if you want to receive advertising material or register for information about Renfe's offers and promotions. Most people do not need more junk mail!

Hit the Continue button.

34. You reach the Payment Page.

35. Fill in the Credit/Debit Card information. The field that says Card Holder means your name, as shown on the card. Do not use an Amex card because most people found that it does not work with Renfe.

36. CVV/CID is the security number at the back of your credit card, usually consisting of 3 numbers.

37. Check the "I have read and accept the General Terms and Conditions for Passengers, the General Terms and Conditions of Sale and the Privacy Policy available in Legal Information." box.

Press the Buy button.

38. You will go to the Seat Selection page. Choose your seat by clicking on it. You should know that the last row (where you will see a symbol for a table) faces backward, but there is a table between that row and the adjacent row. This may be a good place for a group of four who want to talk to each other. It is best to choose the middle row because you will be able to see the TV set which shows the movies.

To view the seating arrangement for each class of service, go to:

<http://www.renfe.com/EN/empresa/comun...>

Choose your route, such as Madrid-Cordoba-Malaga. Then choose the Turista or Preferente and you will see the seating arrangement.

39. Go to the next page.

40. You will then get a message that Renfe is connecting with your bank. If there is any

problem from then on, it is the fault of your bank and you should contact them. However it may be that the Renfe website has gone down. The error messages you will get are not understandable at all. Just try again from the start and see what happens.

41. You will then go to the Ticket page. This will have your purchase code no., a summary of your trip purchase and schedule, and a Print Tickets button, which you should hit.

42. **You will see the tickets in a PDF format, which you need to print.** Your ticket will give you the train station name (such as [Atocha](#) or Chamartin for Madrid departures), the date and time when the train leaves, the date and time of arrival at the destination, the train number (such as AVE 02093), the class of service, the car number (coche), and the seat number (plaza). With this you can go to the gate directly when you go to the railroad station and use the ticket to board. The ticket should have the barcode on it. Go to the station half an hour before your train leaves because you have to go through a security checkpoint, similar to the one in airports. Then you need to look for the platform you leave from. The AVE trains are very punctual.

At the bottom of the ticket, there is a box titled Datos Del Cliente (Client Data). Ignore this, because you do not have to fill the box. This box is only for the Spanish who want to use it as a receipt, probably for tax purposes, if they travel for business.

43. Sometimes when you go to the payment page (Forma de Pago), you may be switched unexpectedly to Spanish. This is the meaning of each term:

You only need to fill in any fields marked with *.

Correo Electronico (*) = E-mail address

Nombre (*) = First Name

Apellido 1 (*) = Last Name

Tipo de Documento (*) = Type of Document (Choose Pasaporte)

Numero Documento (*) = Number of Document (Put in your passport number)

Direccion = Address

Codigo Postal = Postcode/Zip

Poblacion (*) = Town

Provincia (*) = District/County/State

Pais (*) = Country

Telefono 1 (*) = Telephone number

Check this box: He leído y acepto las Condiciones Generales Viajeros (I have read and accept the General Terms of Passengers)

Tarjeta de Credito/Debito = Credit card/Debit card

Numero de Tarjeta (*) = Card number

Titular de la Tarjeta (*)= Name of Card Holder

Fecha de Caducidad (*)= Card expiry Date

Comprar = Buy

44. You do not need anything else to board your train if you have printed out your electronic ticket. Just go to the station and find out what platform (via) your train leaves from. You do not have to exchange your electronic ticket for another ticket. The electronic ticket is the real ticket. Renfe personnel will wand it at the gate to your train and allow you to board.

45. If your computer goes down or the Renfe web page goes down while you are doing your transaction and you are not sure if the transaction was completed, check with your bank to see if your credit card was charged for the ticket. Then you can make a decision whether to attempt the transaction again.

46. If you completed your transaction and your computer went down or you had a problem with your printer, or you forgot to print the ticket, you can go to the box "My Accounts".

a. Go to the Renfe front page. Then go to the second page and check the Changing Tickets box.

b. Fill in the data with the Localiser or ticket number you received in your email confirmation.

Press Search.

c. You should now have the option to print (impresa) your tickets. Your browser will probably block the popup at first, so look for the blocked popup icon or yellow bar and give it the go-ahead. Now you should see your PDF which you can print. Also take a moment to email the PDF to yourself (or otherwise put it online in a safe place) in the event that you need to access them in Spain (i.e. at a hotel PC or internet cafe).

d. You will get back the final page and you should try to print this. If this does not work, call Phone number: (+ 34) 902-109-420 (Hours:7:00-23:00) for help. The attendant will ask you for your Locator No. and then help you print the PDF file. You can also go to any Auto Check In machine at any Renfe station and print out your ticket using your Locator No.

47. The Tarifas page is only in Spanish. Here is the explanation in English:

A. Tarifa Web - You get a 60% discount if you buy your ticket on the web 15 days or more before the date you travel.

B. Tarifa Estrella - You get a 40% discount if you buy your ticket on the web at least 7

days before you travel.

C. Tarifa Ida y Vuelta - You get a 20% discount if you buy round trip tickets. The date of return should be 60 days or less after the date of your first trip.

If you want to go round trip, you should do two trips instead of asking for the round trip because the round trip procedure will not give you the web discount. It will give you the round trip discount, which is smaller than the web discount.

48. Advice to travelers: The web page is not user friendly and one has to do trial and error to find the discounts one is entitled to. Also if the train is more than half an hour late in arrival at the destination, one is entitled to a full refund of the fare paid. Be sure to ask for the refund because it may not be given freely.

49. When you put in your credit card information and enter the data, you may get the G001 error. This means that Renfe could not make a connection with your credit card's bank at that time. You can try again another time. If you have tried several times and have not been successful, there is bad news for you. Most of the people who have had this error are people who live outside of Spain.

Sometimes the G001 error means that the Renfe website is not working properly. Try at another time. The Renfe website is woefully underpowered because it does not have the capacity to handle the number of people who want to use it.

Most of the time it means that your bank is blocking the purchase because it thinks that fraud is being committed with your credit card, since it is a foreign purchase. Call your bank and explain what you are doing and ask them to unblock the purchase. This is very important and you should really do this before you start the procedure of purchasing the ticket online.

There is another cause for this error. It may mean that the Renfe website software is incompatible with the software of your credit card's bank. The Renfe software is designed to work with the software of banks in Spain. Banks in Spain seem to have a higher degree of security than banks in other countries, especially the USA. A Spanish bank customer must have a contract to access his account on the web. The Spanish bank customer is given a customer number, a numerical code, and a plastic card the size of a credit card. This card has a matrix from A to J on the vertical column and Nos. 1 to 10 on the horizontal column. The matrix is filled with random numbers from 1 to 99. When the software of Renfe queries the software of a Spanish bank, the Spanish bank software asks the user for his customer number, his numerical code, and asks for the random number in a certain spot of the matrix, such as G5. If the user cannot provide this number, the request is rejected by the bank. This bank software prevents fraud.

Many American credit cards simply will not work because the bank that issues them may not have software that is compatible with the Renfe software. The Amex card and the Citibank card do not work. Many Americans have pulled their hair out in frustration trying to buy Renfe tickets on the web, without much luck. This writer has not had any

luck using his American Visa credit card because when he puts in his credit card information on the Renfe website, the Renfe website brings him to his credit card's bank and when he enters the information his bank asks for, nothing happens and the transaction is not completed.

If you have problems which you cannot resolve, call Renfe, who can transfer you to an English speaker.

Phone number: (+ 34) 902-109-420 (Hours:7:00-23:00).

Most credit cards are now working. The tickets are transferable, so if none of your credit cards work, you can ask a friend to try his credit card and if it works, you can print out the tickets and pay your friend.

Many Americans who have had a problem buying tickets have resorted to **Petrabax**, an agency that charges a fee for buying Renfe tickets. This is their website:

<http://petrabax.com/renfe/>

50. Cities that are now reached by the AVE or AVANT:

Be aware that many stations may not be in the town center.

Albacete - Station is at the Avenida de la Estacion (0.8 km from the Cathedral).

Antequera - Station: Santa Ana (This station is 12 km away from downtown Antequera.)

Barcelona - Station: Sants

Calatayud

Ciudad Real - Station: Central (1.6 km from downtown Ciudad Real.)

Cordoba - Station: Central (0.8 km from Mezquita.)

Cuenca - Station Fernando Zobel is located at Cerro de la Estrella (4 km from downtown). Take the No. 12 bus to downtown.

Guadalajara - Station: Yebes (A traveler from Madrid who wants to go to Guadalajara should not use the AVE because it drops you off at Yebes, which is a small town 14 km away from Guadalajara, with very scant buses or taxis available to take you to downtown. Use the Cercanias train instead, which drops you off downtown.)

Huesca (1 km to Cathedral.)

Lleida (0.6 km to Cathedral.)

Madrid - Station: Atocha for trips to Malaga, Seville, Zaragoza, Barcelona, Toledo.

Station: Chamartin for trips to Segovia, Valladolid.

Malaga - Station Maria Zambrano - also known as Vialia (1 km to downtown.)

Puente Genil - Station: Herrera (9 km from downtown Puente Genil.)

Puertollano

Segovia - Station: Guiomar (5 km from downtown Segovia and bus connection every 15 minutes to Roman Aqueduct.)

Seville - Station: Santa Justa (2 km from Cathedral.)

Tarragona - Station: Camp de Tarragona (15 km away from downtown Tarragona.)

Toledo (2 km to Cathedral.)

Valencia - Temporary Estacion de Giorgeta, located at the intersection of San Vicente and Giorgeta. They are going to work to be able to get the AVE to the Estacion Norte, but they say this will take several years. (3 km from Cathedral)

Valladolid - Station : Campo Grande (1 km to downtown.)

Zaragoza - Station: Delicias (2.5 km to Plaza de **Aragon**.)

51. There is a Changes/Refunds button on one of the panels, if one needs to use it. You will need to have a ticket number to use it. If you bought your ticket on the internet and you want to make a change to it, such as a different date or time, you can go to any Renfe office or station and ask for the change. There is no charge for this and you will have to hand over your internet ticket to get the new ticket.

52. For those people who want to travel on Renfe to **Portugal** or France, look for the button on the top of a panel which says International Trains. They have train hotels with dining rooms and sleeping cabins available.

53. Here is a good AVE map that can help travelers visualize where the high speed trains go:

<http://www.adif.es/AdifWeb/estaciones...>

The AVE lines are the ones in black.

54. Luggage has to be carried by the passenger and placed on the overhead rack above the seat. A passenger with heavy luggage may have a problem lifting the luggage to the overhead rack. Most passengers using Renfe have small pieces of luggage, for that very reason. Bringing two pieces of luggage can create a problem because the overhead storage is limited for each person. At the end of each car, there is some limited space for heavy luggage. There is no separate car for luggage.

55. The Renfe website says that bicycles can be brought on board only on Cercanias trains.

56. Arrive at your train station half an hour before your trip. Many train stations are huge and you may spend some time looking for the place you need to go to.

57. When you arrive at the Renfe station, verify what platform (Via) your train leaves from. There may be many platforms. If you do not see any signs, ask a Renfe clerk. When your train is called or you see that the monitor says it is leaving, go to the gate/platform indicated immediately, especially if there is a crowd. The sooner you can enter your car, the better, because it will be easier to store your luggage. When you pass the checkpoint, your ticket will be wanded and you will be allowed to go to your train.

Be sure you get on the correct car. Inside the car, there is an electronic sign over each door giving the number of the car. Many passengers do not see this and go to the adjacent car. When you go up the step to the car, there is no indication whether to turn left or right. Stow your luggage and you will be ready to go.

If you go to the restroom, be aware that it is a bit difficult to lock the door when you are inside. Test the door to see that it is locked before using the restroom. Many passengers have been surprised inside the restroom when another passenger has opened it because the passenger did not lock the door.

58. The train doors close two minutes before the train is scheduled to depart.

59. You are allowed to bring your own snacks and drinks on the train. The Spanish do that all the time.

60. If you buy tickets and have an error and get only the Localizador code without the tickets, go to the top panel called Changes/Refunds. On the new page in the bottom left corner you will see the link 'My Journeys', and follow it. You will need to fill in some fields: 'Locator' (Localizador code you got by e-mail), journey date (date of first departure in case of return ticket), etc. And then you will be able to print out your ticket finally:

61. A child less than 4 years of age can ride free if the child sits on the lap of a parent. Of course if the child is big, this will not be practical or comfortable. The parent should then buy a child ticket using the niño fare.

62. If you have problems which you cannot resolve, call Renfe, who can transfer you to an English speaker.

Phone number: (+ 34) 902-109-420 (Hours:7:00-23:00).

63. The Madrid-Toledo route is heavily traveled because of tourists and also because it is a commuter run. Those who want to do a day trip to Toledo should not take a chance. Buy your round trip tickets early. This route goes south from Madrid to Toledo. The other route south from Madrid goes to Cordoba and then may go to Seville or Malaga. The two routes are not connected. In other words, one who goes north from Cordoba, Seville, or Malaga cannot go to Toledo. To go to Toledo from these southern cities of [Andalusia](#), one has to go first to Madrid and take another train to Toledo.

The only way to get to Toledo is to take the Avant from Madrid. This line goes between Madrid and Toledo only. The AVE between Madrid and Cordoba does not stop at Toledo.

64. Luggage requirements - You are allowed to bring two pieces of luggage (anything that can be hand carried) with a total weight of 20 kilos. The bigger bag should not have dimensions bigger than 70 x 50 x 25 cm. At the end of every car there is a small compartment to place big luggage or luggage one cannot put on the overhead rack because it weighs too much. Luggage rules are seldom applied. Go early if you have heavy luggage so that you can put it in the compartment for big luggage. If there is no room there, put it on the overhead rack and ask any young Spanish man to help you lift the luggage. Most Spanish will not hesitate to help you.

65. What happens if you miss your train? You are out of money because Renfe will not refund your money. Renfe was not able to sell your ticket to someone else, so if they refund your money, they will be on the losing end. So try to be on time for your train.

66. Advice to transatlantic travelers who want to take the AVE on the same day of arrival to Barcelona, Cordoba, Seville, or Malaga: Leave enough time to get to your train, otherwise you lose your money because there are no refunds. There are many flight arrival delays because of bad weather. Here are some estimates of how much time should be allotted:

Flight delay at arrival: 2 hours (this is very common).

Time to get through immigration, baggage, and customs: 1.5 hours

Taxi to Atocha Station: 0.5 hour

Time to go through security, find train platform, ticket check: 0.5 hour

Total time: 4.5 hours

If one wants to avoid all this uncertainty, stay overnight in Madrid.

If you arrive at Atocha two or three hours before your booked train leaves, check the electronic board and see if there is an earlier train going to your destination. If there is, go to the ticket office and ask for a change to the earlier train, which you can get for free.

67. Assistance to people with reduced mobility: You will see a box on the payment page with this title. There is an article in Spanish which says that if you need assistance, call 902-240-505 twelve hours before your trip. For immediate assistance at the station, go at least half an hour before your trip and go to the Help desk there to ask for assistance getting to your train. Someone will help the person with reduced mobility by placing that person on a wheelchair (if that person does not have a wheelchair) and will help the person board first before other people.

68. For changes to tickets:

a. Web fare tickets cannot be changed. That is the penalty for getting the lowest fare.

b. On the same day, you will be charged 15% of the ticket cost (for tickets without discounts).

c. For another day, you will be charged 20% of the ticket cost (for estrella fare and tickets without discounts).

69. For refunds, you will be charged 50% of the ticket cost for a web fare, and 30% of the ticket cost for the estrella fare.

70. For persons who want to take the trenhotel to other countries: When you enter the Renfe website to buy tickets, you will notice that at the bottom of the screen, there is a place that says Trenes Internacionales. I entered that and found out that it depends where you are buying your ticket from. Anyway it gives you information on how to buy your tickets, depending on what country you are buying from.

71. Do not bother with the Club AVE. This is only for Spanish citizens and permanent residents.

72. You should know that around April and May, the website is particularly troublesome, because it will not give schedules for the future. This is the time that Renfe is trying to load their summer schedules onto their web. So be patient and persistent. This also happens during fall.

73. Plane or AVE between Madrid and Barcelona: In 2008 journalists tried to go between downtown Madrid to downtown Barcelona on a plane and on the newly installed AVE to Barcelona. They found out that it took the same amount of time. The shorter plane ride was offset by the long amount of time one has to be at the airport before the flight and the hassle of airport security. Besides, on the AVE you can walk around the train, which you cannot do on the plane. There is a cafeteria car on the AVE where you can have coffee and a snack. The chairs on the AVE are very comfortable and spacious. The space one is given in planes is very small and one feels like one is cramped into a sardine can. The security check at airports is very tedious for many people. So the AVE is a better way to travel in Spain than the plane, unless one is traveling from one extreme of the country to the other extreme, such as from Malaga to Barcelona.

74. After your first trip on the AVE, you will find that the comfort of the trip more than offsets whatever problem you had in booking the train on the website. The seats are very comfortable and there is hardly any vibration. You can stand up and walk around, such as to the cafeteria car. There is a movie that is shown, like on airlines, and they have their own magazine. The AVE is Europe's most advanced high speed train. Before you know it, you are at your destination!

75. The train is a public place, so be discreet and do not be noisy. There are people who are working on their PCs and they will appreciate other passengers to be quiet, so that they can concentrate. Do not shout on your cell phones.

76. Renfe is now allowing purchase of some tickets 4 months ahead of the present date. If one looks at the normal Madrid to Malaga AVE schedule 62 days in advance, there are 12 trains available. If one looks 4 months ahead of the present date, there are only 3 trains available. According to Renfe this change is permanent, but only trains

that they are promoting will be available for sale.

In other words, if you look at the schedule from today to 62 days into the future, you get the full schedule. Between 62 days into the future to 4 months into the future, you will only see the schedule of trains that Renfe is promoting, trains that are getting fewer passengers because the hours of the trains may not be convenient. Also these trains offer only the Estrella fare, and not the web fare. My advice is not to take these trains. Wait for the normal 62 day fares where you may get a better deal with the web fare.

77. Some regional trains are only available 22 days in advance (such as Seville-Granada). If you try to book more than 22 days in advance, you will get this message as a pop-up: "TREN SIN DISPONIBILIDAD". The Madrid to Toledo trains seem to be available about 22 days in advance. The Madrid to Segovia trains are also available about 22 days in advance. So if the trip you desire is not available 62 days in advance, this is the reason. You just have to keep trying with different dates until you get what you want.

78. Before you start the purchase of your ticket, be sure to call your bank to unblock the purchase of the ticket with your credit card. Do not start the procedure of buying your ticket until you are sure that your bank will not block the purchase. You will avoid much unnecessary grief!

79. Bookings cannot be made between 2300 and 0700 local time (CEST). The website merely says that the operation (booking) could not be completed if one tries to reserve tickets between the times specified.

80. Sometime in May, June, and October, there may be a problem in viewing the schedule 62 days in advance. This may be the time that Renfe is loading the summer schedules or the fall schedules. There will be no message on the Renfe website about what is going on. One just has to try looking at the schedule everyday until one finds the new schedules.

81. Do not bring in your luggage anything that looks like a weapon, such as a long kitchen knife. When you go to the security point at the Renfe station and your luggage goes through the Xray machine, it will be detected and the security officers will ask you to throw it away before you can enter the secure area.

82. Be alert when you get to the train station. Train stations are favorite hangouts for pickpockets.

83. There are movies when the trip is longer than 2 hours. The movies are in their English original version, and have Spanish subtitles. Get the earplugs that the Renfe attendants give for free at the start of the trip and tune in to Channel 4. Channel 4 is used for the original language of the movie. If the movie is American or British, choose this channel. The movies are in Spanish if you tune in to Channel 5. The movies are new and many of them are very entertaining. Some movies are not in Spanish or English, but have been made in other European countries.

84. Most of the time the AVE train will be traveling at 300 km/hr. This is fast, but not at the speed of light! You will still be able to see the countryside. Focus on the middle and far distances and you will be able to see details.

85. People traveling south of Madrid on the AVE to Cordoba, Seville, and Malaga, will see a very high hill surrounded by a plain, located about 10 km from the Atocha station (10 to 15 minutes from Madrid). This is the Cerro de los Angeles (Hill of the Angels), located in [Getafe](#). What calls attention is that on top of the hill is a very high monument, which is the Monument to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, depicting Jesus on top of a column shaped like the top of a pyramid. This was built in 1919 and inaugurated by King Alfonso XIII. Getafe is the geographical center of Spain.

86. The most frustrating thing is when the Renfe website does not finish your transaction after you have put in all the information needed. You just have to persist. Sometimes it takes days to get that web discount that makes it worth the effort. Try it in the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening.

87. Attention to passengers going to Segovia from Madrid: When you use the pull down menu to get the city destination, you will find that there are two for Segovia. One says just Segovia. The second says Segovia AV (AV probably stands for AVE). The second one is the one to choose and will have the whole train schedule. The first one will not give you any schedule at all! The schedule for this trip appears only 22 days into the future because it is a short trip.

88. Web fares are usually given only on long runs, such as from Madrid to Malaga. The Estrella fares are usually found only on shorter runs, such as Cordoba to Malaga.

89. People who want to travel between Madrid and Seville or between Madrid and Malaga may want to spend the day in Cordoba. The only way to do this is to buy one ticket between Madrid and Cordoba and another ticket between Cordoba and Seville or Malaga. The Cordoba bus station is directly opposite the Renfe train station and there are lockers for luggage in the bus station, where you can store your luggage for a few hours. There is a No. 3 bus that you can get from the train and bus stations to downtown, where the Mezquita is.

90. Madrid's Barajas Airport has one Renfe office in T1 and another one in T4. Check this website to locate the map for each terminal:

<http://www.renfebarajas.com/>

91. When you book two tickets for the Trenhotel, the computer will assign you the same car and the plazas (place numbers) may not be consecutive. You do not have to worry that you will be sleeping with a stranger!

92. Car Rental Agencies at Different Stations:

a. Madrid Atocha Station: Atesa, Europcar, Hertz.

b. Malaga Maria Zambrano Station: Hertz, Europcar, Avis, Atesa (National and Alamo).

- c. Barcelona Sants Station: Avis, Europcar.
- d. Seville Santa Justa Station: Hertz, Avis, Europcar.

92. Have a happy trip!

93. We have discussions about Renfe tickets in the Madrid forum. If you have a problem, please look for this procedure in the Madrid forum and make your comments there. It is too difficult to answer everyone because there are so many different forums in Spain.

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