

History

The ancestors of today's Spaniards included Stone Age hunters from Africa; Greeks, Romans, Visigoths and other European peoples; Berber tribes from Morocco; and Phoenicians, Jews and Arabs from the Middle East. The ancestors of a good half of the people living in the Americas today – and others dotted across the rest of the globe – were Spaniards. The key to this great ebb and flow of peoples, cultures and empires is Spain's location: on both the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean; in Europe yet just a stone's throw from Africa. This pivotal position has entangled Spain in the affairs of half the world – and the affairs of half the world in Spain's.

IN THE BEGINNING

Caves throughout the country tell us plenty about Spain's earliest inhabitants. The most impressive, with sophisticated paintings of bison, stag, boar and horses, are at Altamira (p509) near Santander, and date from around 12,000 BC. Altamira was part of the Magdalenian hunting culture of southern France and northern Spain, a Palaeolithic (Old Stone Age) culture that lasted from around 20,000 BC to the end of the last Ice Age in about 8000 BC.

The story goes back even further. The oldest pieces of human bone in Europe have been found in Spain. Human bone fragments 780,000 years old were found in the Sierra de Atapuerca near Burgos in 1994 and probably come from ancestors of the later Neanderthals. Another piece of bone found in 1976 near Orce, in Granada province, is reckoned to be from the skull of an infant ancestor of *Homo sapiens* eaten by a giant hyena over a million years ago.

These finds suggest that the earliest humans in Europe arrived in Spain from Africa.

From the later Neanderthal era, about 30,000 BC, comes 'Gibraltar woman', a skull that was found in 1848. Current thinking is that the Neanderthals were displaced during the last Ice Age by waves of migrants of African origin.

The Cueva de Nerja (p760) in Andalucía is one of many sites of these Cro-Magnons, the first modern humans, who hunted mammoth, bison and reindeer. After the Ice Age new peoples, probably from North Africa, arrived, and their rock-shelter paintings of hunting and dancing survive in eastern Spain.

The Neolithic (New Stone Age) reached eastern Spain from Mesopotamia and Egypt around 6000 BC, bringing many innovations, such as the plough, crops, livestock, pottery, textiles and permanent villages.

Between 3000 and 2000 BC the first metalworking culture began at Los Millares, near Almería (p799), where people began to smelt and shape local copper deposits. The same era saw the building of megalithic tombs (dolmens), constructed of large rocks, around the perimeter of the Iberian Peninsula. The best examples are to be found at Antequera (p758) in Andalucía.

The Bronze Age in Spain began around 1900 BC when people at El Argar in Almería province learned how to alloy copper with tin.

For a colourful survey of the whole saga of Spanish history, read *The Story of Spain* by Mark Williams.

TIMELINE c 12,000 BC

Stone Age hunters at Altamira paint some of Europe's most sophisticated cave art

c 800–600 BC

The fabled Tartessos culture, influenced by Phoenician and Greek traders, flourishes in western Andalucía

PHOENICIANS & GREEKS

By about 1000 BC a flourishing culture had arisen in western Andalucía. The development of this and other societies in the south and east was influenced by Phoenician and, later, Greek traders, who exchanged oils, textiles, jewels and ivory for local metals. The Phoenicians, a Semitic people from present-day Lebanon, set up trading colonies including Cádiz (which they called Gadir), Huelva (Onuba), Málaga (Malaca) and Almuñécar (Ex or Sex). Greek settlements, which began around 600 BC, tended to be further north on the Mediterranean coast. The biggest was Emporion (Empúries; p354) in Catalonia.

These incomers brought the potter's wheel, writing, coinage, the olive tree, the grapevine, the donkey and the hen. Around 700 BC iron replaced bronze as the most important metal in the lower Guadalquivir valley of western Andalucía.

This Phoenician-influenced culture was very likely the fabled Tartessos, which Greek, Roman and biblical writers mythologised as a place of unimaginable wealth. No-one knows whether Tartessos was a city or a state. Some argue it was a trading settlement on the site of modern Huelva; some believe it may lie beneath the marshes near the mouth of the Río Guadalquivir.

IBERIANS & CELTS

Iberians is the general name given to the inhabitants of most of the Iberian Peninsula during the millennium or so before the Romans arrived in 218 BC. From around 1000 to 500 BC, they were joined by Celts (originally from Central Europe) and other tribes who crossed the Pyrenees and settled in northern Spain.

In contrast to the dark-featured Iberians, the Celts were fair, drank beer and ate lard. Celts and Iberians who merged on the *meseta* (the high tableland of central Spain) became the Celtiberians. Celts and Celtiberians typically lived in sizable hill-fort towns called *castros*. The Celts introduced iron technology to the north about the same time as the Phoenicians brought it to the south.

CARTHAGINIANS

From about the 6th century BC the Phoenicians and Greeks were pushed out of the western Mediterranean by Carthage, a former Phoenician colony in modern Tunisia. There was a flourishing Carthaginian colony on Ibiza.

The Carthaginians inevitably came into conflict with the next rising Mediterranean power – Rome. After losing to Rome in the First Punic War (264–241 BC), Carthage responded by invading the Iberian Peninsula under generals Hamilcar Barca, Hasdrubal and Hannibal. The first landing was in 237 BC. The Second Punic War (218–201 BC) saw Hannibal march his elephants over the Alps towards Rome but also brought Roman legions to Spain. Hannibal was eventually forced to retreat, finally being routed in North Africa in 202 BC.

ROMANS

Though the Romans eventually held sway on the Iberian Peninsula for 600 years, it took them 200 years to subdue the fiercest of local tribes.

The Basques in the north, though defeated, were never Romanised in the same way as the rest of Hispania (as the Romans called the peninsula).

Legendary stands against the Romans included the eight-year revolt led by the shepherd-turned-guerrilla Virathius in the west and the centre from around 150 BC, and the siege of Numancia near Soria in 133 BC. Rome had to bring in its most illustrious generals to deal with these insubordinations.

By AD 50 most of the peninsula, particularly the south, had adopted the Roman way of life. This was the Pax Romana, a long and prosperous period of stability. Hispania became urbanised and highly organised. In the 1st century BC the Romans organised the peninsula into three provinces: Baetica (most of Andalucía plus southern Extremadura and southwestern Castilla-La Mancha), with its capital at Corduba (Córdoba); Lusitania (Portugal and northern Extremadura), with its capital at Augusta Emerita (Mérida), the greatest Roman city on the peninsula; and Tarraconensis (the rest), with its capital at Tarraco (Tarragona).

Rome gave the peninsula a road system, aqueducts, temples, theatres, amphitheatres, circuses, baths and the basis of its legal system and languages. The Roman era also brought many Jews, who spread throughout the Mediterranean part of the Roman Empire, and Christianity, which probably came with soldiers from North Africa and merchants in the 3rd century AD. Hispania gave Rome gold, silver, grain, wine, soldiers, emperors (Trajan, Hadrian, Theodosius) and the literature of Seneca, Martial, Quintilian and Lucan. Another notable export was *garum*, a spicy sauce derived from fish and used as a seasoning. The finest of Spain's Roman ruins are at Empúries (p354), Itálica (p708), Mérida (p829), Tarragona (p387) and Segovia (p194).

The Pax Romana started to crack when two Germanic tribes, the Franks and the Alemanni, swept across the Pyrenees towards the end of the 3rd century AD, causing devastation. When the Huns arrived in Eastern Europe from Asia a century later, further Germanic peoples moved westwards. Among these were the Suevi and Vandals, who overran the Iberian Peninsula around 410.

VISIGOTHS

The Visigoths, another Germanic people, sacked Rome itself in 410. Within a few years, however, they had become Roman allies, being granted lands in southern Gaul (France) and fighting on the emperor's behalf against barbarian invaders on the Iberian Peninsula. When the Visigoths were pushed out of Gaul in the 6th century by yet another Germanic people, the Franks, they settled on the Iberian Peninsula, making Toledo their capital.

The rule of the roughly 200,000 long-haired Visigoths, who had a penchant for gaudy jewellery, over the several million more-sophisticated Hispano-Romans was precarious and undermined by strife among their own nobility. The Hispano-Roman nobles still ran the fiscal system and their bishops were the senior figures in urban centres.

The ties between the Visigoth monarchy and the Hispano-Romans were strengthened in 587 when King Reccared converted to Roman Christianity from the Visigoths' Arian version, which denied that Christ was identical to God. Culturally, the Visigoths tended to ape Roman ways. Today a few Visigothic churches can be seen in northern Spain. One, at Baños de Cerrato (p211) near Palencia, dates from 661 and is probably the oldest surviving church in the country.

'Rome gave the peninsula a road system, aqueducts, temples, theatres, amphitheatres, circuses, baths and the basis of its legal system and languages'

Spanish History Index (vlib.iue.it/hist-spain/index.html) provides countless internet leads for those who want to dig deeper.

218–201 BC

Rome defeats Carthage in the Second Punic War and begins a 600-year occupation of the Iberian Peninsula

AD 410

Suevi and Vandals, Germanic peoples from the north, overrun the Iberian Peninsula

466

Visigothic conquest of the Iberian Peninsula begins

711

Muslims invade the peninsula from North Africa, overrunning it within a few years

THE MUSLIM CONQUEST

By 700, with famine and disease in Toledo, strife among the aristocracy and chaos throughout the peninsula, the Visigothic kingdom was falling apart. This paved the way for the Muslim invasion of 711, which set Spain's destiny quite apart from that of the rest of Europe.

Following the death of the prophet Mohammed in 632, Arabs had spread through the Middle East and North Africa, carrying Islam with them. If you believe the myth, they were ushered onto the Iberian Peninsula by the sexual exploits of the last Visigoth king, Roderic. Later chronicles relate how Roderic seduced young Florinda, the daughter of Julian, the Visigothic governor of Ceuta in North Africa, and how Julian sought revenge by approaching the Muslims with a plan to invade Spain.

In 711 Tariq ibn Ziyad, the Muslim governor of Tangier, landed at Gibraltar with around 10,000 men, mostly Berbers (indigenous North Africans). Roderic's army was decimated, probably near the Río Guadalete or Río Barbate in Cádiz province, Andalucía, and he is thought to have drowned while fleeing the scene. Visigothic survivors fled north.

Within a few years the Muslims had conquered the whole Iberian Peninsula, except small areas in the Asturian mountains in the north. The Muslims pushed on over the Pyrenees, but were driven back by the Franks.

MUSLIM SPAIN

The Muslims (sometimes referred to as Moors) were the dominant force on the peninsula for nearly four centuries, a potent force for 170 years after that, and a lesser one for a further 250 years. Between wars and rebellions, Al-Andalus, the name given to Muslim territory on the peninsula, developed the most highly cultured society of medieval Europe.

Al-Andalus' frontiers were constantly shifting as the Christians strove to regain territory in the stuttering 800-year Reconquista (Reconquest). Up to the mid-11th century the frontier lay across the north of the peninsula, roughly from just south of Barcelona to northern Portugal, with a protrusion up to the central Pyrenees. Al-Andalus also suffered internal conflicts and Muslims and Christians even struck up alliances with each other in the course of quarrels with their own co-religionists.

Muslim political power and cultural developments centred initially on Córdoba (756–1031), then Seville (c 1040–1248) and lastly Granada (1248–1492). These cities boasted beautiful palaces, mosques and gardens, universities, public baths and bustling *zocos* (markets). The Muslims developed the Hispano-Roman agricultural base by improving irrigation and introducing new fruits and crops (oranges, lemons, peaches, sugar cane, rice and more).

Though military campaigns against the northern Christians could be very bloodthirsty affairs, Al-Andalus' rulers allowed freedom of worship to Jews and Christians (*mozárabes* or Mozarabs) under their rule. Jews mostly flourished, but Christians had to pay a special tax, so most either converted to Islam (coming to be known as *muladies* or Muwallads) or left for the Christian north.

It was through Al-Andalus that much of the learning of ancient Greece – picked up by the Arabs in the eastern Mediterranean – was transmitted to Christian Europe.

The Muslim settlers themselves were not a homogeneous group. Beneath the Arab ruling class was a larger group of Berbers, and tension between these two groups broke out in Berber rebellion numerous times.

Before long, Muslim and local blood merged. There was even frequent aristocratic intermarriage with the northern Christians.

The Cordoban Emirate & Caliphate

Initially Al-Andalus was part of the Caliphate of Damascus, which ruled the Muslim world. In 750 the Omayyad caliphal dynasty in Damascus was overthrown by a rival clan, the Abbasids, who shifted the caliphate to Baghdad. However an Omayyad survivor, Abd ar-Rahman I, managed to establish himself in Córdoba in 756 as the independent emir of Al-Andalus. He began constructing Córdoba's Mezquita (mosque), one of the world's greatest Muslim monuments. Most of Al-Andalus was more or less unified under Cordoban rule for long periods. In 929 Abd ar-Rahman III bestowed on himself the title caliph, launching the Caliphate of Córdoba (929–1031), during which Al-Andalus reached its peak of power and lustre. Córdoba in this period was the biggest and most dazzling city in Western Europe. Astronomy, medicine, mathematics and botany flourished and one of the great Muslim libraries was established in the city. Abd ar-Rahman III's court was frequented by Jewish, Arab and Christian scholars.

Later in the 10th century the fearsome Cordoban general Al-Mansour (or Almanzor) terrorised the Christian north with 50-odd forays in 20 years. He destroyed the cathedral at Santiago de Compostela in northwestern Spain in 997 and forced Christian slaves to carry its doors and bells to Córdoba, where they were incorporated into the great mosque. But after Al-Mansour's death the caliphate collapsed into a devastating civil war, finally breaking up in 1031 into dozens of *taifas* (small kingdoms), with Seville, Granada, Toledo and Zaragoza among the most powerful.

Almoravids & Almohads

Political unity was restored to Al-Andalus by the Almoravid invasion of 1091. The Almoravids, a strict Muslim sect of Saharan nomads who had conquered North Africa, were initially invited to the Iberian Peninsula to help the Seville *taifa* against the growing Christian threat from the north. Seventy years later a second Berber sect, the Almohads, invaded the peninsula after overthrowing the Almoravids in Morocco. Both sects soundly defeated the Christian armies they encountered.

Under the Almoravids and the Almohads, religious intolerance sent Christian refugees fleeing north. But in time both mellowed in their adopted territory and Almohad rule saw a cultural revival in Seville. The Cordoban philosopher Averroës (1126–98) greatly influenced medieval Christian thought with his commentaries on Aristotle, trying to reconcile science with religion.

The Nasrid Emirate of Granada

Almohad power eventually disintegrated in the face of internal disputes and Christian advances. After Seville fell to the Christians in 1248, Muslim territory on the Iberian Peninsula was reduced to the Emirate of Granada, comprising about half of modern Andalucía and ruled from the lavish

Córdoba's renowned 10th-century caliph Abd ar-Rahman III had red hair and blue eyes; one of his grandmothers was a Basque princess.

Richard Fletcher's *Moorish Spain* is an excellent short history of Al-Andalus (the Muslim-ruled areas of the peninsula).

756–1031

Córdoba dominates Al-Andalus (the Islamic areas of the peninsula) and becomes the finest city in Western Europe

1085

Castilla, a northern Christian kingdom, captures Toledo

1091

The Almoravids invade, helping to unify Muslim Spain

1147

The Almohads defeat the Almoravids in Morocco and invade Muslim Spain

Alhambra palace by the Nasrid dynasty. Granada saw Muslim Spain's final cultural flowering, especially in the 14th century under Yusuf I and Mohammed V, both of whom contributed to the splendours of the Alhambra (p771).

THE RECONQUISTA

The Christian Reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula began in about 722 at Covadonga, Asturias, and ended with the fall of Granada in 1492. It was a stuttering affair, conducted by a tangled sequence of emerging, merging and demerging Christian states that were as often at war with each other as with the Muslims. However the Muslims were gradually pushed south, as the northern kingdoms of Asturias, León, Navarra, Castilla and Aragón developed.

An essential ingredient in the Reconquista was the cult of Santiago (St James), one of the 12 apostles. In 813, the saint's supposed tomb was discovered in Galicia. The town of Santiago de Compostela (p540) grew here, to become the third-most popular medieval Christian pilgrimage goal after Rome and Jerusalem. Christian generals experienced visions of Santiago before forays against the Muslims, and Santiago became the inspiration and special protector of soldiers in the Reconquista, earning the sobriquet *Matamoros* (Moor-slayer). Today he is the patron saint of Spain.

The Rise of Castilla

Covadonga lies in the Picos de Europa mountains, where Visigothic nobles took refuge after the Muslim conquest. Christian versions of the battle tell of a small band of fighters under their leader, Pelayo, defeating an enormous force of Muslims; Muslim accounts make it a rather less important skirmish. Whatever the facts of Covadonga, by 757 Christians occupied nearly a quarter of the Iberian Peninsula.

The Asturian kingdom eventually moved its capital to León, which spearheaded the Reconquista until the Christians were set on the defensive by Al-Mansour in the 10th century. Castilla, originally a small principality in the east of the kingdom of León, developed into the dominant Reconquista force as hardy adventurers set up towns in the no-man's-land of the Duero basin, spurred on by land grants and other *fueros* (rights and privileges). It was the capture of Toledo in 1085, by Alfonso VI of Castilla, that led the Seville Muslims to call in the Almoravids.

Alfonso I of Aragón, on the southern flank of the Pyrenees, led the counterattack against the Almoravids, taking Zaragoza in 1118. After his death Aragón was united through royal marriage with Catalonia, creating a formidable new Christian power block known as the Kingdom of Aragón. Portugal emerged as an independent Christian kingdom in the 12th century.

Castilla suffered a terrible defeat by the Almohads at Alarcos, south of Toledo, in 1195, but in 1212 the combined Christian armies of Castilla, Aragón and Navarra routed a large Almohad force at Las Navas de Tolosa in Andalucía. This was the beginning of the end for Al-Andalus: León took the key towns of Extremadura in 1229 and 1230; Aragón took Valencia in the 1230s; Fernando III El Santo (Ferdinand the Saint) of Castilla took Córdoba in 1236 and Seville in 1248; and Portugal expelled the Muslims in 1249. The sole surviving Muslim state on the peninsula was now the Emirate of Granada.

Following his 1959 success in *Ben-Hur*, Charlton Heston turned to the Spanish Reconquista for his follow-up Hollywood epic, *El Cid* (1961).

The Lull

Fernando III's son, Alfonso X El Sabio (the Learned; r 1252–84), proclaimed Castilian the official language of his realm. At Toledo he gathered around him scholars regardless of their religion, particularly Jews who knew Arabic and Latin. Alfonso was, however, plagued by uprisings and plots, even from within his own family.

The Castilian nobility repeatedly challenged the crown until the 15th century. This was also an era of growing intolerance towards the Jews and Genoese, who came to dominate Castilian commerce and finance, while the Castilians themselves were preoccupied with their low-effort, high-profit wool production. In the 1390s anti-Jewish feeling culminated in pogroms around the peninsula.

Castilla and Aragón laboured under ineffectual monarchs from the late 14th century until the time of Isabel and Fernando (Isabella and Ferdinand), whose marriage in 1469 would merge the two kingdoms. Isabel succeeded to the Castilian throne in 1474 and Fernando to that of Aragón in 1479. The joint rule of the Catholic Monarchs (Reyes Católicos), as they are known, dates from 1479. The pious Isabel and the Machiavellian Fernando became an unbeatable team.

The Fall of Granada

After Emir Abu al-Hasan of Granada refused, in 1476, to pay any more tribute to Castilla, Isabel and Fernando launched the final crusade of the Reconquista in 1482, with an army largely funded by Jewish loans and the Catholic Church.

By now the rulers of Granada were riven by internal feuds. Matters degenerated into a confused civil war, and the Christians took full advantage of the situation. Isabel and Fernando entered Granada, after a long siege, on 2 January 1492, to kick off what turned out to be the most momentous year in Spanish history.

The surrender terms were fairly generous to Boabdil, the last emir, who got the Alpujarras valleys south of Granada and 30,000 gold coins. The remaining Muslims were promised respect for their religion, culture and property, but this didn't last long.

THE CATHOLIC MONARCHS The Inquisition

The Catholic Monarchs founded the Spanish Inquisition to root out those who didn't practise Christianity as the Catholic Church wished them to. The Inquisition was responsible for perhaps 12,000 deaths over 300 years, 2000 of them in the 1480s. It focused initially on *conversos* (Jews who had converted to Christianity), accusing many of continuing to practise Judaism in secret.

In April 1492, under the influence of Grand Inquisitor Tomás de Torquemada, Isabel and Fernando ordered the expulsion from their territories of all Jews who refused Christian baptism. Up to 100,000 Jews converted, but some 200,000 – the first Sephardic Jews – left for other Mediterranean destinations.

The bankrupt monarchy seized all unsold Jewish property. A talented middle class was decimated.

'The Catholic Monarchs founded the Spanish Inquisition to root out those who didn't practise Christianity as the Catholic Church wished them to'

1248

Seville falls to Fernando III of Castilla; the Nasrid Emirate of Granada becomes the last surviving Muslim state on the peninsula

1469

Isabel, heir to Castilla, marries Fernando, heir to Aragón, uniting the peninsula's two most powerful Christian states

1478

Isabel and Fernando, the Catholic Monarchs (Reyes Católicos), establish the Spanish Inquisition

1492 (January)

Isabel and Fernando capture Granada

Persecution of the Muslims

Cardinal Cisneros, Isabel's confessor and overseer of the Inquisition, tried to eradicate Muslim culture too. In the former Granada emirate he carried out forced mass baptisms, burnt Islamic books and banned the Arabic language. This, combined with seizures of Muslim land, sparked a revolt in Andalusia in 1500. Afterwards, Muslims were ordered to convert to Christianity or leave. Most (around 300,000) underwent baptism and stayed. They came to be known as *moriscos* (converted Muslims), but their conversion was barely skin-deep and they never assimilated. The *moriscos* were finally expelled between 1609 and 1614.

Columbus

In April 1492 the Catholic Monarchs granted Christopher Columbus (Cristóbal Colón to Spaniards) funds for his long-desired voyage across the Atlantic in search of a new trade route to the Orient.

On 3 August 1492 Columbus set off from the port of Palos de la Frontera (p710) in southwestern Andalusia with three small ships and 120 men. They stopped at the Canary Islands, then sailed west for 31 days, sighting no land; the rebellious crew gave Columbus two more days. However, he landed on the island of Guanahani (Bahamas), which he named San Salvador, went on to find Cuba and Hispaniola, and returned to a hero's reception from the Catholic Monarchs in Barcelona, eight months after his departure.

Columbus made three more voyages, founding Santo Domingo on Hispaniola, finding Jamaica, Trinidad and other Caribbean islands, and reaching the mouth of the Orinoco and the coast of Central America. But he died impoverished in Valladolid in 1506, still believing he had reached Asia.

After Isabel

Fernando and Isabel entangled Spain in European affairs by marrying their four children into the royal families of Portugal, Burgundy and England. (The liaison with England went wrong when the youngest child, Catalina, or Catherine of Aragón, was cast aside by Henry VIII.) The early deaths of two children left the third, Princess Juana, heir to the Castilian throne when Isabel died in 1504. Juana's husband, Felipe El Hermoso (Philip the Handsome), was heir to the Low Countries and to the lands of the powerful Habsburg family in Central Europe. However, Juana, dubbed Juana la Loca (the Mad), proved unfit to rule and, when Felipe died soon after Isabel, Fernando took over as regent of Castilla until his death in 1516. His annexation of Navarra in 1512 brought all of Spain under one rule for the first time since Visigothic days.

THE HABSBURGS

Carlos I

In 1517, 17-year-old Carlos I (Charles I), son of Juana la Loca and Felipe El Hermoso, came from Flanders to take up his Spanish inheritance. In 1519 Carlos also succeeded to the Habsburg lands in Austria and was elected Holy Roman Emperor (in which capacity he was Charles V). Carlos now ruled all of Spain, the Low Countries, Austria, several Italian states and parts of France and Germany – more of Europe than anyone since the 9th century – plus the Spanish colonies in the Caribbean and Panama. To these he would add more of Central Europe and further big slices of the Americas.

Carlos spent only 16 years of his 40-year reign in Spain. At first the Spaniards did not care for a king who spoke no Castilian, nor for his appropriating their wealth. Castilian cities revolted in 1520–21 (the Guerra de las Comunidades, or War of the Communities), but were crushed. Eventually the Spanish came round to him, at least for his strong stance against emerging Protestantism and his learning of Castilian.

Carlos I's reign saw ruthless but brilliant Spanish conquistadors seize vast tracts of the American mainland. Between 1519 and 1521 Hernán Cortés conquered the fearsome Aztec empire with a small band of adventurers. Between 1531 and 1533 Francisco Pizarro did the same to the Inca empire. With their odd mix of brutality, bravery, gold lust and piety, these men were the natural successors to the crusading knights of the Reconquista. The new colonies sent huge cargoes of silver, gold and other riches back to Spain, where the crown was entitled to one-fifth of the bullion (the quinto real, or royal fifth). Seville enjoyed a monopoly on this trade and grew into one of Europe's richest cities.

Carlos spent the bulk of the monarchy's new American wealth on an endless series of European conflicts and, war-weary, he abdicated shortly before his death in 1556, dividing his many territories between his son Felipe and his brother Fernando. Felipe got the lion's share, including Spain, the Low Countries and the American possessions.

Felipe II

Felipe II (Philip II; r 1556–98) presided over the zenith of Spanish power. His reign is a study in contradictions. He enlarged the overseas empire – by 1600 Spain controlled Florida, all the biggest Caribbean islands, nearly all of present-day Mexico and Central America, and a large strip of South America – but lost Holland to a long drawn-out rebellion. He received greater flows of silver than ever from the Americas, but went bankrupt. His navy defeated the Ottoman Turks at Lepanto in 1571 but the Spanish Armada of 1588 was routed by England. He was a fanatical Catholic, who spurred the Inquisition to new persecutions, yet readily allied Spain with Protestant England, against Catholic France, when it suited Spain.

When Felipe claimed Portugal on its king's death in 1580, he not only united the Iberian Peninsula but also Europe's two great overseas empires. However the Castilian gentry's disdain for commerce and industry allowed foreign merchants to dominate trade. Money that didn't find its way into foreign pockets, or wasn't owed for European wars, went towards building churches, palaces and monasteries. Spain, it was said, had discovered the magic formula for turning silver into stone.

Decline of the Habsburgs

Seventeenth-century Spain was like a gigantic artisans' workshop, in which architecture, sculpture, painting and metalwork consumed around 5% of the nation's income. The gentry and the Church, which was entitled to one-tenth of all production, led a quite comfortable existence, but for most Spaniards life was decidedly underprivileged. The age was immortalised on canvas by artists such as Velázquez, El Greco, Zurbarán and Murillo, and in words by Miguel de Cervantes, the mystics Santa Teresa of Ávila and San Juan de la Cruz (St John of the Cross) and the prolific playwright Lope de Vega.

The minor country town of Madrid was selected in 1561 by Felipe II as the new capital from which he would mould his kingdom.

'On 3 August 1492 Columbus set off from the port of Palos de la Frontera in southwestern Andalusia with three small ships and 120 men'

1492 (April)

Isabel and Fernando expel Jews who refuse Christian baptism

1492 (October)

Christopher Columbus, funded by Isabel and Fernando, lands in the Bahamas

1517–56

Reign of Carlos I, Spain's first Habsburg monarch

1556–98

Reign of Felipe II, the zenith of Spanish power

Under a trio of ineffectual kings, Spain saw its chickens come home to roost during this period. Felipe III (Philip III; r 1598–1621) left government to the self-seeking Duke of Lerma. Felipe IV (Philip IV; r 1621–65) concentrated on a long line of mistresses and handed over affairs of state to Count-Duke Olivares, who tried bravely but retired a broken man in 1643. Spain lost Portugal and faced revolts in Sicily, Naples and Catalonia. Silver shipments from the Americas shrank disastrously. Carlos II (Charles II; r 1665–1700) failed to produce children, a situation that led to the War of the Spanish Succession.

THE FIRST BOURBONS

Felipe V

Carlos II bequeathed his throne to his young relative Felipe V (Philip V; r 1701–46), who also happened to be second in line to the French throne. The Austrian emperor Leopold, however, wanted to see his son Charles, a nephew of Carlos II, on the Spanish throne. The resulting War of the Spanish Succession (1702–13) was a contest for the balance of power in Europe. Spain lost its last possessions in the Low Countries to Austria, and Gibraltar and Menorca to Britain, while Felipe V renounced his right to the French throne but held on to Spain. He was the first of the Bourbon dynasty, still in place today.

This was Europe's age of Enlightenment, but Spain's powerful Church and Inquisition were at odds with the rationalism that trickled in from France. Two-thirds of the land was in the hands of the nobility and Church and was unproductive, and large numbers of males, from nobles to vagrants, were unwilling to work.

Fernando VI & Carlos III

Under Fernando VI (Ferdinand VI; r 1746–59) the economy took an upturn largely as the result of a revitalised Catalonia and the Basque shipbuilding industry. Agricultural Castilla and Andalucía were left behind, however, as they were unable to increase yields due to a lack of land reforms.

Enlightened despot Carlos III (Charles III; r 1759–88) expelled the backward-looking Jesuits, transformed Madrid, established a new road system out to the provinces and tried to improve agriculture. But food shortages fuelled unrest among the masses.

THE PENINSULAR WAR

Carlos IV (Charles IV; r 1788–1808) was dominated by his Italian wife, Maria Luisa of Parma; she hooked up with a handsome royal guard called Manuel Godoy, who became chief minister. This unholy trinity was ill-suited to coping with the crisis presented by the French Revolution of 1789.

When Louis XVI of France (Carlos IV's cousin) was guillotined in 1793, Spain declared war on France. Two years later, with France's Reign of Terror spent, Godoy made peace, pledging military support for France against Britain. In 1805 a combined Spanish-French navy was beaten by the British fleet, under Nelson, off the Cabo de Trafalgar (south of Cádiz). This put an end to Spanish sea power.

In 1807 Napoleon Bonaparte and Godoy agreed to divide Britain's ally Portugal between them. French forces poured into Spain, supposedly on

the way to Portugal. By 1808 this had become a French occupation of Spain. Carlos was forced to abdicate in favour of Napoleon's brother Joseph Bonaparte (José I).

In Madrid crowds revolted, and across the country Spaniards took up arms guerrilla-style, reinforced by British and Portuguese forces led by the Duke of Wellington. The French, hopelessly stretched by Napoleon's Russian campaign, were finally expelled after their defeat at Vitoria in 1813.

THE 19TH CENTURY

During the Peninsular War, a national Cortes (parliament), meeting at Cádiz in 1812, had drawn up a new liberal constitution, which incorporated many of the principles of the American and French prototypes. This set off a contest lasting most of the 19th century between the Church, monarchy and other conservatives who liked the earlier status quo, and liberals who wanted vaguely democratic reforms.

Fernando VII (Ferdinand VII; r 1814–33) revoked the Cádiz constitution, persecuted liberal opponents and re-established the Inquisition. Corrupt government drastically cut his popularity before his death. Meanwhile the American colonies took advantage of Spain's problems to strike out on their own. By 1824 only Cuba, Guam, the Philippines and Puerto Rico remained Spanish.

First Carlist War

Fernando's dithering over his successor resulted in the First Carlist War (1833–39), between supporters of his brother Don Carlos and those loyal to his infant daughter Isabel. Don Carlos was supported by the Church, other conservatives and regional rebels in the Basque Country, Navarra, Catalonia and Aragón – together known as the Carlists. The Isabel faction had the support of liberals and the army.

During the war violent anticlericalism emerged. Religious orders were closed and, in the Disentailment of 1836, church property and lands were seized and auctioned off by the government. As usual, only the wealthy benefited. The army emerged victorious.

Isabel II

In 1843 Isabel, now all of 13, declared herself Queen Isabel II (Isabella II; r 1843–68). One achievement of sorts during her inept reign was the creation of a rural police force, the Guardia Civil (Civil Guard), which mainly protected the wealthy in the bandit-ridden countryside. There was an upturn in the economy, with progress in business, banking, mining and railways, plus some reforms in education, but the benefits accrued to few. Eventually radical liberals, and discontented soldiers led by General Juan Prim, overthrew Isabel in the Septembrina Revolution of 1868.

First Republic

Spain still wanted a monarch and in 1870 a liberal-minded Italian prince, Amadeo of Savoy, accepted the job. The aristocracy, which opposed Amadeo, split into two camps: one favoured Isabel II's teenage son Alfonso, the other backed Don Carlos' grandson Carlos. Thus began the three-way Second Carlist War (1872–76).

Santa Teresa of Ávila was brought to the silver screen by the rising star of Spanish cinema, Paz Vega, in the 2006 release *Teresa, Vida y Muerte* (Teresa, Life and Death), directed by Ray Loriga.

Felipe IV and his family (sans mistresses) have been preserved for posterity in Velázquez's world-famous family portrait, *Las Meninas*, which can be seen in Madrid's Museo de Prado (p131).

Spain lost the last of its once vast overseas possessions – Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines and Guam – in the humiliating Spanish-American War of 1898.

1609–14

The *moriscos* (converted Muslims) are finally expelled from Spain

1701

Felipe V, first of the Bourbon dynasty, takes the throne

1702–13

War of the Spanish Succession – Spain loses Gibraltar and its last possessions in the Low Countries

1793

Spain declares war on France after Louis XVI is beheaded

Amadeo quickly abandoned Spain and the liberal-dominated Cortes proclaimed Spain a federal republic of 17 states. However, this First Republic, unable to control the regions, lasted only 11 months. In the end the army, no longer liberal, put Alfonso on the throne as Alfonso XII (r 1874–85), in a coalition with the Church and landowners. The 1876 constitution, recognising both monarchy and parliament, produced a sequence of orderly *turnos* (changes of government) between supposed conservatives and liberals. Little actually separated them in policy, and electoral rigging was the norm.

EARLY 20TH CENTURY

Alfonso XIII (r 1902–30) had his friends among the military, wealthy landowners and the rich, powerful Church, and was in the habit of meddling in politics. There were 33 different governments during his reign.

At the other end of the social scale, a powder keg was forming. Industry had brought both prosperity and squalid slums to Barcelona, Madrid and some Basque cities, by attracting much large-scale migration from the country. In the countryside, the old problems of underproduction and oligarchic land ownership persisted. Many Spaniards emigrated to Latin America. The working class gravitated towards Marxism and anarchism.

Social Unrest

The anarchist ideas of the Russian Mikhail Bakunin had reached Spain in the 1860s and rapidly gained support. Bakunin advocated a free society in which people would voluntarily cooperate with each other – a state of affairs to be prepared for by strikes, sabotage and revolts. Anarchism appealed to the peasants of Andalucía, Aragón, Catalonia and the northwest, and to workers living in slums in Barcelona and other cities. In the 1890s and the 1900s anarchists bombed Barcelona's Liceu opera house, assassinated two prime ministers and killed 24 people with a bomb at Alfonso XIII's wedding in 1906. In 1910, the anarchist unions were organised into the powerful Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT; National Confederation of Work).

Socialism grew more slowly than anarchism because of its strategy of steady change through parliamentary processes. The Unión General de Trabajadores (UGT; General Union of Workers), established in 1888, was moderate and disciplined. Its appeal was greatest in Madrid and Bilbao, where people were fearful of Catalan separatism. Spanish socialists rejected Soviet-style communism.

Parallel with the rise of the left was the growth of Basque and Catalan separatism. In Catalonia, this was led by big business interests. Basque nationalism emerged in the 1890s among Basques who considered the many Castilians who had flocked to work in Basque industries as a threat to Basque identity.

In 1909 a contingent of Spanish troops was wiped out by Berbers in Spanish Morocco. The government then called up Catalan reserves to go to Morocco. This sparked off the so-called *Semana Trágica* (Tragic Week) in Barcelona, which began with a general strike and turned into a frenzy of violence. The government responded by executing many workers.

Spain stayed neutral during WWI and enjoyed an economic boom. But anarchist and socialist numbers grew, inspired by the Russian Revolution, and political violence and general mayhem continued, especially in lawless Barcelona.

During the First Republic some Spanish cities declared themselves independent states, and some, such as Seville and nearby Utrera, even declared war on each other.

PRIMO DE RIVERA

In 1921, 10,000 Spanish soldiers were killed by a small force of Berbers at Anual in Morocco. The finger of blame pointed directly at King Alfonso, who had intervened to select the Spanish commander for the Moroccan campaign. Just as a report on the event was to be submitted to parliament in 1923, however, General Miguel Primo de Rivera, an eccentric Andalusian aristocrat, led an army rising in support of the king and then launched his own mild, six-year dictatorship.

Primo was a centralist who censored the press and upset intellectuals but gained the cooperation of the socialist UGT. Anarchists went underground. Primo founded industries, improved roads, made the trains run on time and built dams and power plants. But eventually, with an economic downturn following the Wall St crash and discontent in the army, Alfonso XIII took the chance to return and dismiss him.

SECOND REPUBLIC

Alfonso had brought the monarchy into too much disrepute to last long himself. When a new republican movement scored sweeping victories in municipal elections in 1931, the king went into exile in Italy. The tumultuous Second Republic that followed – called *La Niña Bonita* (Pretty Child) by its supporters – polarised Spain and ended in civil war.

The Left in Charge

Elections in 1931 brought in a government composed of socialists, republicans and so-called radicals (who were actually centrists). The Cortes contained few workers and no-one from the anarchist CNT, which continued with strikes and violence to bring on the revolution.

A new constitution in December 1931 gave women the vote, ended the status of Catholicism as the official religion, disbanded the Jesuits, stopped government payment of priests' salaries, legalised divorce, banned priests from teaching and gave autonomy-minded Catalonia its own parliament. It also promised land redistribution, which pleased the Andalusian landless, but failed to deliver much.

The Right in Charge

Anarchist disruption, an economic slump, the alienation of big business, the votes of women and disunity on the left all helped the right to win the 1933 election. A new Catholic party, Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas (CEDA; Spanish Confederation of Autonomous Rights), won the most seats. Other new forces on the right included the fascist Falange, led by José Antonio Primo de Rivera, son of the 1920s dictator. The Falange practised blatant street violence.

By 1934 violence was spiralling out of control. The socialist UGT called for a general strike, Catalonia's president declared his region independent (within a putative federal Spanish republic) and workers' committees took over the northern mining region of Asturias (eg see Oviedo, p512), after attacking police and army posts. A violent campaign against the Asturian workers by the Spanish Foreign Legion (set up to fight Moroccan tribes in the 1920s), led by generals Francisco Franco and José Millán Astray, firmly split the country into left and right.

Ernest Hemingway's tersely magnificent novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is full of the emotions unleashed in the Spanish Civil War.

1805

Spanish-French fleet defeated by Britain at Trafalgar, ending Spanish sea power

1808–13

French occupation forces driven out in Peninsular War (Spanish War of Independence)

1813–24

Most of Spain's American colonies win independence

1860s

Anarchist ideas reach Spain and soon gain a wide following

Army Uprising

In the February 1936 elections the Popular Front, a left-wing coalition with communists at the fore, narrowly defeated the right-wing National Front. Violence continued on both sides. Extremist groups grew and peasants were on the verge of revolution. But when the revolt came, on 17 July 1936, it was from the other end of the political spectrum. On that day the Spanish army garrison in Melilla, North Africa, rose up against the left-wing government, followed the next day by some garrisons on the mainland. The leaders of the plot were five generals, among them Franco, who on 19 July flew from the Canary Islands to Morocco to take charge of his legionnaires. The civil war had begun.

SPANISH CIVIL WAR

The Spanish Civil War split communities, families and friends. Both sides committed atrocious massacres and reprisals, and employed death squads to eliminate members of opposing organisations. The rebels, who called themselves Nationalists because they thought they were fighting for Spain, shot or hanged tens of thousands of supporters of the republic. Republicans did likewise to Franco sympathisers, including some 7000 priests, monks and nuns. Political affiliation often provided a convenient cover for settling old scores. In the whole war an estimated 350,000 Spaniards died. (Some writers put the numbers as high as 500,000.)

Many of the military and Guardia Civil went over to the Nationalists, whose campaign quickly took on overtones of a crusade against the enemies of God. In Republican areas, anarchists, communists or socialists ended up running many towns and cities. Social revolution followed.

Nationalist Advance

The basic battle lines were drawn within a week of the rebellion in Morocco. Most cities with military garrisons fell immediately into Nationalist hands – this meant everywhere north of Madrid except Catalonia, eastern Aragón, the Basque coast, Cantabria and Asturias, plus western Andalucía and Granada. Franco's force of legionnaires and Moroccan mercenaries was airlifted from Morocco to Seville by German warplanes in August. Essential to the success of the revolt, they moved northwards through Extremadura towards Madrid, wiping out fierce resistance in some cities. At Salamanca in October, Franco pulled all the Nationalists into line behind him.

Madrid, reinforced by the first battalions of the International Brigades (armed foreign idealists and adventurers organised by the communists), repulsed Franco's first assault in November and endured, under communist inspiration, over two years' siege.

Foreign Intervention

The International Brigades never numbered more than 20,000 and couldn't turn the tide against the better armed and organised Nationalist forces.

Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy supported the Nationalists with planes, weapons and men (75,000 from Italy, 17,000 from Germany), turning the war into a rehearsal for WWII. The Republicans had some Soviet support, in the form of planes, tanks, artillery and advisers, but the rest of the international community refused to become involved (although some 25,000 French fought on the Republican side).

Republican Quarrels

With Madrid besieged, the Republican government moved to Valencia in late 1936 to continue trying to preside over the diversity of political persuasions on its side, which encompassed anarchists, communists, moderate democrats and regional secessionists.

Barcelona was run for nearly a year by anarchists and a Trotskyite militia called the Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista (POUM; Workers' Marxist Unification Party).

In April 1937 German planes bombed the Basque town of Guernica (called Gernika in Basque), causing terrible casualties; this became the subject of Picasso's famous pacifist painting. All the north coast fell in the summer, giving the Nationalists control of Basque industry. Republican counterattacks near Madrid and in Aragón failed.

Meanwhile divisions among the Republicans erupted into fierce street fighting in Barcelona in May 1937, with the Soviet-influenced communists completely crushing the anarchists and Trotskyites. The Republican government moved to Barcelona in autumn 1937.

Nationalist Victory

In early 1938 Franco repulsed a Republican offensive at Teruel in Aragón, then swept eastwards with 100,000 troops, 1000 planes and 150 tanks, isolating Barcelona from Valencia. In July the Republicans launched a last offensive as the Nationalists moved through the Ebro valley. The bloody encounter, won by the Nationalists, resulted in 20,000 dead.

The USSR withdrew from the war in September 1938 and in January 1939 the Nationalists took Barcelona unopposed. The Republican government and hundreds of thousands of supporters fled to France.

The Republicans still held Valencia and Madrid, and had 500,000 people under arms, but in the end the Republican army simply evaporated. The Nationalists entered Madrid on 28 March 1939 and Franco declared the war over on 1 April.

FRANCO'S SPAIN

The Nationalist victors were merciless. Instead of reconciliation, more blood-letting ensued. An estimated 100,000 people were killed or died in prison after the war. The hundreds of thousands imprisoned included many intellectuals and teachers; others fled abroad, depriving Spain of a generation of scientists, artists, writers, educators and more.

Franco ruled absolutely. The Cortes was merely a rubber stamp for such decrees as he chose to submit to it. Regional autonomy aspirations were not tolerated.

Franco kept hold of power by never allowing any single powerful group – the Church, the Movimiento Nacional (the only legal political party), the army, monarchists or bankers – to dominate. The army provided many ministers and enjoyed a most generous budget. Catholic orthodoxy was fully restored, with secondary schools entrusted to the Jesuits, divorce made illegal and church weddings compulsory. Despite endemic corruption among the country's administrators, Franco won some working-class support with carrots such as job security and paid holidays, but there was no right to strike.

Hugh Thomas' *The Spanish Civil War* is the classic account of the war in any language: long and dense, yet readable and humane. Helen Graham's *The Spanish Civil War: A Very Short Introduction* does its different job well, too.

David Trueba's 2003 movie *Soldados de Salamina* (Soldiers of Salamis) and Javier Cercas' identically named 2001 novel tell how a Republican soldier helps a Falangist leader escape execution in the last days of the civil war. Both were big successes.

Homage to Catalonia recounts George Orwell's personal involvement in the civil war, moving from euphoria to despair.

British director Ken Loach's *Tierra y Libertad* (Land and Freedom), made in 1995, is one of the most convincing treatments of the civil war on film.

1873

First Republic, a federal union of 17 states, collapses in chaos; monarchy is restored

1909

La Semana Trágica (Tragic Week) in Barcelona: a general strike turns into a frenzy of violence

1923–30

Mild dictatorship of General Miguel Primo de Rivera

1931–36

Second Republic: King Alfonso XIII goes into exile, Spanish society polarises, political violence spirals

WWII

A few months after the civil war ended, WWII began. Franco promised Hitler an alliance but never committed himself to a date. In 1944 Spanish leftists launched a failed attack on Franco's Spain from France; small leftist guerrilla units continued a hopeless struggle in the north, Extremadura and Andalucía until the 1950s.

After WWII Spain was excluded from the UN and NATO, and suffered a UN-sponsored trade boycott that helped turn the late 1940s into Spain's *años de hambre* (years of hunger). But with the onset of the Cold War, the US sought to establish four bases in Spain. Franco agreed, in return for large sums of aid, and in 1955 Spain was admitted to the UN.

Economic Miracle

The Stabilisation Plan of 1959, with its devaluation of the peseta and other deflationary measures, brought an economic upswing. The plan was engineered by a new breed of technocrats linked to the Catholic group Opus Dei. Spanish industry boomed. Thousands of young Spaniards went abroad to study and returned with a new attitude of teamwork. Modern machinery, techniques and marketing were introduced; transport was modernised; new dams provided irrigation and hydropower.

The recovery was funded in part by US aid, and remittances from more than a million Spaniards working abroad, but above all by tourism, which was developed initially along Andalucía's Costa del Sol and Catalonia's Costa Brava. By 1965, the number of tourists arriving in Spain was 14 million a year.

A huge population shift from impoverished rural regions to the cities and tourist resorts took place. Many Andalucians went to Barcelona. In the cities, elegant suburbs developed, as did shantytowns and, later, high-rise housing for the workers.

The Final Decade

The year 1964 saw Franco celebrating 25 years of peace, order and material progress. However the jails were still full of political prisoners and large garrisons were maintained outside every major city. Over the next decade, labour strife grew and discontent began to rumble in the universities and even the army and Church.

Regional problems resurfaced too. The Basque-nationalist terrorist group Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA; Basques and Freedom), founded in 1959, gave cause for the declaration of six states of emergency between 1962 and 1975; heavy-handed police tactics won ETA support from Basque moderates.

Franco chose as his successor Prince Juan Carlos, the Spanish-educated grandson of Alfonso XIII. In 1969 Juan Carlos swore loyalty to Franco and the Movimiento Nacional.

Cautious reforms by Franco's last prime minister, Carlos Arias Navarro, provoked violent opposition from right-wing extremists. Spain seemed to be sinking into chaos when Franco died on 20 November 1975.

TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY

Juan Carlos I, aged 37, took the throne two days later. The new king's links with Franco inspired little confidence in a Spain now clamouring for democracy. However, Juan Carlos earned much of the credit for the successful

transition to democracy that followed. He sacked Navarro in July 1976, replacing him as prime minister with Adolfo Suárez, a 43-year-old former Franco apparatchik with film-star looks. To general surprise, Suárez got the Francoist-filled Cortes to approve a new, two-chamber parliamentary system. Then in early 1977 political parties, trade unions and strikes were all legalised and the Movimiento Nacional was abolished.

New Constitution

Suárez's centrist Unión de Centro Democrático (UCD; Democratic Centre Union) party won nearly half the seats in the new Cortes in 1977. The left-of-centre Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE; Spanish Socialist Worker Party), led by a charismatic young lawyer from Seville, Felipe González, came second. One of the new government's first acts was to grant a general amnesty for acts committed in the civil war and under the Franco dictatorship. There were no truth commissions or trials of the perpetrators of atrocities. An unwritten pact of silence was how Spaniards have generally dealt ever since with their past differences – the civil war and the repression that followed it – in the interests of harmoniously moving forward. Not until the 21st century did people start unearthing the bones of relatives who had been shot for being on the wrong side in the wrong place during the war.

In 1978 the Cortes passed a new constitution that made Spain a parliamentary monarchy with no official religion. The constitution provided for a large measure of devolution from the central government to Spain's regions, in response to the local-autonomy fever that gripped Spain after the stifflingly centralist Franco era. By 1983 the country had been divided into 17 'autonomous communities' with their own regional governments controlling a range of policy areas.

Social Liberation

Personal and social life enjoyed a rapid liberation after Franco. Contraceptives, adultery, homosexuality and divorce were legalised and the Madrid social, party and arts scene known as the *movida* was the epicentre of a newly unleashed hedonism that still looms large in Spanish life today. However, Suárez faced mounting resistance from within his own party to further reforms, and in 1981 he resigned.

PSOE RULE

In 1982 Spain made a final break with the past by voting the PSOE into power with a sizable majority. Felipe González was to be prime minister for 14 years.

The party's young, educated leadership came from the generation that had opened the cracks in the Franco regime in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The PSOE persuaded the unions to accept wage restraint and job losses in order to streamline industry. Unemployment rose from 16% to 22% by 1986. But that same year Spain joined the European Community (now the EU), bringing on an economic boom that lasted until 1991. The middle class grew ever bigger and Spain's women streamed into higher education and jobs.

The PSOE put a national health system in place by the early 1990s and made improvements in state education, raising the university population to well over a million.

25 Años sin Franco (25 Years Without Franco; www.el-mundo.es/nacional/XXV_aniversario) is a special 2000 supplement of *El Mundo* newspaper published online – in Spanish, but the photos and graphics tell their own story.

Franco styled himself Generalísimo (Supreme General) and, later, *caudillo*, which is roughly equivalent to the German *Führer*.

Paul Preston's *Franco* is the big biography of one of history's little dictators – and it has very little to say in the man's favour. Preston has also written *Juan Carlos: Steering Spain from Dictatorship to Democracy*, about the present king.

1936–39

Spanish Civil War: Nationalist rebels led by General Francisco Franco defeat Republican forces; about 350,000 Spaniards are killed

1939–75

Franco dictatorship

1975

Franco dies and is succeeded by King Juan Carlos I

1976–81

Prime Minister Adolfo Suárez engineers a return to democracy

Slump & Scandal

Around halfway through the late 1980s boom, the good life began to turn a little sour. People observed that many of the glamorous new rich were making their money by property or share speculation, or plain corruption. In 1992 – exactly five centuries after the pivotal year of its history – Spain celebrated its return to the modern world in style, staging the Barcelona Olympics and the Expo 92 world fair in Seville. However, the economy was now in a slump (unemployment reached 22.5% the following year) and the PSOE was increasingly mired in scandals.

The slump bottomed out in 1993, but the scandals multiplied. The González-appointed head of the Guardia Civil from 1986 to 1993, Luis Roldán, suddenly vanished in 1994 after being charged with embezzlement and bribery. He was arrested the following year in Bangkok and in 1998 was jailed in Spain for 28 years.

Most damaging was the affair of the Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberación (GAL), death squads that had murdered 28 suspected ETA terrorists (several of whom were innocent) in France in the mid-1980s. A constant stream of GAL allegations contributed to the PSOE's electoral defeat in 1996. In 1998 a dozen senior police and PSOE men were jailed in connection with the affair.

PARTIDO POPULAR RULE

The 1996 general election was won by the centre-right Partido Popular (PP; People's Party), led by José María Aznar, a former tax inspector from Castilla y León. The party had been founded by a former Franco minister, Manuel Fraga, something its opponents never let it forget. Aznar promised to make politics dull, and he did, but he presided over eight years of solid economic progress, winning the 2000 election as well with the first-ever absolute parliamentary majority for a centre-right party in democratic Spain.

The PP cut public investment, sold off state enterprises and liberalised various sectors, such as telecommunications. In 1997 employers and unions signed a deal reforming Spain's employment system: severance pay was reduced but it became easier for companies to hire the young, middle-aged and long-term unemployed. During the Aznar years Spain's economy grew by an average of 3.4% a year, far outstripping the EU average, and unemployment fell from 23% in 1996 to 11% in 2004. The figure was still the highest in the EU, but the statistics concealed the fact that many officially jobless people benefited from a big black economy.

On noneconomic fronts Aznar's rule was less of an unqualified success. The government's slow response to the *Prestige* disaster of 2002, when oil from a broken tanker smothered 600km of northwestern Spanish coast in black sludge, earned it a lot of opprobrium. Aznar took a hard line against ETA, banning its political wing, Batasuna, in 2002, and refusing to talk to ETA unless it renounced violence. Aznar also lined up firmly behind US and British international policy after the 11 September 2001 attacks on the USA. However, his strong support for the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 was unpopular at home, as was his plan to send 1300 Spanish troops to Iraq.

The major social change of the Aznar years was a tripling of the number of foreigners, especially from South America, Morocco, sub-Saharan Africa and Eastern Europe, in the population: see p58 for more on this profoundly important development.

The Spanish government can be found on the Web at www.la-moncloa.es, while Juan Carlos I has his site at www.lacasareal.es.

Spain uses more cement than any other country in Europe.

The PSOE, after its resounding defeat in 2000, chose an amiable, sincere young lawyer from Valladolid, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, as its new leader. Zapatero immediately swept most previous PSOE high-ups, including Felipe González, out of the party hierarchy. But as the March 2004 general election approached, Zapatero seemed powerless to prevent a third successive victory for the PP, now led by Mariano Rajoy, successor to Aznar, who had decided to retire after two terms.

THE MADRID BOMBINGS

Early on the morning of Thursday 11 March 2004, three days before the general election, bombs exploded on four crowded commuter trains in and near Madrid, killing 191 people and injuring 1755. An estimated quarter of Spain's population, 11 million people, poured onto the streets in demonstrations of peace and solidarity the following day. Accompanying the overwhelming feelings of national shock and grief was the question, 'Who did it?' The PP government pointed a very firm finger at ETA, which had been foiled in at least two attempts to carry out devastating bombings in the preceding months.

The evidence this time, however, pointed at least equally strongly to Islamic extremists. Police investigating the bombings were certain by the following day that ETA was not the culprit. The government, however, continued to maintain that ETA was the prime suspect until Saturday 13 March, when police in Madrid arrested three Moroccans and two Indians, with suspected links to Al-Qaeda, in connection with an unexploded bomb found on one of the trains.

The following day the PSOE, which had lagged a distant second in the opinion polls before 11 March, won the election. This shock result was widely attributed to the PP's unpopular policy on Iraq, which most Spaniards believed was the reason terrorists had attacked Madrid, and to the PP's apparent attempts to mislead the public by blaming the bombings on ETA.

By March 2005, 75 people, mostly Moroccan, had been arrested for suspected involvement in the bombings. Some were released but in April 2006 29 were ordered to stand trial for involvement in the bombings. A two-year investigation headed by Judge Juan del Olmo had found that Islamic extremists inspired by, but not directed by, Osama bin Laden, were responsible for the attacks. The trial of the 29 was likely to start in 2007 and to last at least a year.

FROM A (AZNAR) TO Z (ZAPATERO): SPAIN UNDER THE NEW PSOE

Within two weeks of taking office in April 2004, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero's new PSOE government honoured its campaign pledge to pull Spanish troops out of Iraq. Since then the Zapatero government has forged ahead with reforms that have largely pleased its supporters, including the many young voters who chose the PSOE in the wake of the Madrid bombings, and predictably angered the right. Zapatero – nicknamed Bambi by his detractors for a certain resemblance to the Disney cartoon animal; his amiable, almost innocent air; and supposed political light-weightedness – has shown a dogged determination to negotiate solutions to Spain's most intractable problems, in stark contrast to the more autocratic approach of his PP predecessors.

Ghosts of Spain (2006) by Giles Tremlett of the *Guardian* gets right under the skin of contemporary Spain, and its roots in the recent past. If you read only one book on Spain, make it this one.

1982–96

Spain is governed by the centre-left Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) led by Felipe González

1986

Spain joins the European Community (now the EU)

1996–2004

The centre-right Partido Popular (PP), led by José María Aznar, presides over eight years of steady economic progress

2004 (11 March)

One hundred and ninety-one killed in Madrid train bombings by Islamic terrorists

'An amnesty for illegal immigrants in 2005 allowed some 500,000 non-EU citizens to obtain legal residence and work permits in Spain'

In response to persistent agitation from (principally) Catalonia and the Basque Country for more regional autonomy, Zapatero declared his government willing to renegotiate the statutes that define the powers of Spain's 17 autonomous communities. In May 2005 his government passed a motion supporting dialogue with ETA if it abandoned violence. Already weakened by the arrest of many of its top leaders, ETA had not murdered anyone in two years and had started to make vaguely conciliatory noises. In March 2006 it declared a permanent ceasefire, saying it wanted to 'promote a democratic process in the Basque Country'. Zapatero said he would seek peace talks (see p31), but it remains to be seen whether a durable and peaceful political solution for the Basque Country can be achieved. ETA, which has long sought an independent state covering the Spanish and French Basque Country and Navarra, has murdered more than 800 people in its 45 years of existence.

An amnesty for illegal immigrants in 2005 allowed some 500,000 non-EU citizens to obtain legal residence and work permits in Spain, while the government pledged a crackdown on subsequent illegal immigration and black-market labour. This has not, however, stemmed the tide of Africans and South Americans seeking a way into Spain (seen as an easy entry point into Europe) – nor the humanitarian tragedy of the many hundreds who die making dangerous sea crossings from Africa to the Canary Islands or Andalucía.

2004 (14 March)

PSOE, led by José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, wins surprise election victory

2006 (22 March)

ETA declares permanent ceasefire

The Culture

THE NATIONAL PSYCHE

More than five centuries of national unity have done little to erode the regional ticks that distinguish one group of Spaniards from another. Even so, they cannot escape the occasional national generalisation. A visitor to Franco's Spain in the 1960s might have found them uniformly dour and frumpy. Not any more.

Spaniards, from San Sebastián to Seville, share a zest for the fest. The country's calendar creaks beneath the weight of an unending parade of feast days and celebrations that, whether of religious or pagan origin, share the common aim of providing an excuse for much drinking, eating and merrymaking. Not that many Spaniards need an excuse. Urban Spain in particular attaches great importance to what the Irish would call *craic*. From the international rave clubs of Ibiza to the rivers of revellers in the narrow Siete Calles of Bilbao, a live-for-the-moment attitude prevails.

Perhaps simply a precariousness about daily life down the centuries in this long-troubled country has engendered the need for momentary escape. A trip around the country reveals a broad spectrum of regional traits. While the people of deep Spain, the two Castillas, tend to be taciturn and dry, their neighbours to the south in Andalucía are the height of instant affability. Your average Andalusian loves a chat over a sherry in an extrovert and often fickle fashion. In the northeast, the Catalans are famed for their unerring sense of business and a rather Protestant style of work ethic. Further west, the proud Basques can at first seem unapproachable but quickly prove effusively hospitable once the ice is broken.

Madrid comes closest to providing a picture of the amalgam. For centuries a magnet for Spaniards from all corners of the country, its people have that air of the capital, burning candles at both ends by working and partying hard, and keeping a curious eye open for newcomers.

LIFESTYLE

Since Spain passed its new constitution in 1978, the life of its people has changed in leaps and bounds. At the time, 40% of Spanish homes had neither bath nor shower and a quarter of the population above 16 was illiterate. Only a fifth of families could afford to go away on holidays. Now most families have all the standard white goods, a car and take annual holidays at home and abroad. True, household debt has never been so high.

The rapid rise in living standards has been accompanied by deep social change. Spanish women are having fewer children than they were a couple of generations ago (see Population, p55), divorce is on the rise, as is the

According to a study by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Spain is the second-noisiest country in the world after Japan.

MY BEAUTIFUL LITTLE LAUNDRETTE

Spain is for some just one big washing machine – for laundering vast amounts of money. According to Spanish police, at least €2 billion are laundered in Spain annually. The Costa del Sol was long the favoured location, but filthy cash from local, South American, Russian and Ukrainian mafia organisations now gets the cleaning treatment up and down the Mediterranean coast. Luxury cars, boats, houses, even whole suburbs are bought up to make grubby drug and people-traffickers' money squeaky clean. Spain is a special target because of its close financial ties with South America and its position next to North Africa, a gateway for the drug trade. It is estimated that a quarter of all the €500 notes in circulation in Europe are in Spain. Hardly a coincidence!

number of single parent families. De facto couples are gradually acquiring much the same rights as their married counterparts and the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE; Spanish Socialist Worker Party) government shook the conservative elements of society to the core when it legalised same-sex marriage in 2005. The Catholic Church and right-wing opposition Partido Popular (PP; People's Party) vociferously condemned the law but in April 2006, PP's mayor of Ourense (Galicia) surprised all by officiating at the gay marriage of a party colleague. All this was utterly unthinkable in the grey days of Franco, when the Church ruled supreme over Spanish mores.

Children still tend to stay in the parental home for longer than their counterparts in northern Europe. It is not uncommon for them to still be living with their parents into their thirties. The reasons given range from unemployment (almost 20% of university graduates take four years or more to find work) to low salaries combined with the high cost of rent.

10 REASONS WHY SPAIN IS CONTROLLED CHAOS *Skerekes*

- **Semana Santa** (Seville; see the boxed text, p701) Hundreds of men hooded like the Ku Klux Klan processing with candles through narrow alleyways followed by two-tonne virgins carried on the shoulders of 40 barefoot men. Who said Lenten fasting had to be dull?
- **Las Fallas** (Valencia; see the boxed text, p586) Grab your sparklers kids and hit the streets. It's time to burn five-storey tall papier-mâché and wooden sculptures while throwing around incendiary devices with reckless abandon.
- **La Tomatina** (Valencia; see the boxed text, p594) Instructions: drink all night, stumble into the main square at dawn, then get whipped by wet towels and hosed down as you throw truckloads of tomatoes at your fellow *borrachos* (drunkards). But watch out: that tomato juice can leave a nasty eye infection.
- **Carnaval** (Andalucía; see p718) The party doesn't stop for two weeks during this Andalusian fiesta, where full-grown men in Pink Panther costumes can be found passed out luxuriously on park benches at 9am while troops of Smurfs scamper through the streets until dawn.
- **Bullfighting** Rail-thin men in tight-fitting outfits running around provoking a 320kg bull with barbed sticks while another dances around the animal with a piece of red cloth – now that's entertainment.
- **The running of the bulls** (Pamplona; see the boxed text, p482) Grab your running shoes and hit the pavement everyone. It's the latest work-out craze. Beat the herd of charging bulls into the ring or be trampled into the cobblestones. Talk about putting blood, sweat and tears into your workout!
- **'Higher' education** Roll a joint and grab your Amstel light; it's siesta time higher-education style. Don't worry, your professor's not going to bust you for drinking on school grounds. If you're lucky, the next round might be on him.
- **Botellón** Grab your friends and a few litres of Cruzcampo and head towards the plaza. No need to worry about swilling your *cerveza* (beer) in public. If your friend gets a little too drunk and rowdy out in the streets, it's your responsibility, not the police's.
- **Small-town oddities** Head out to the little town of Alberca and go hog wild – with their designated mascot, that is. Yep, that's right, every year this little pueblo (village) designates a pig which it will spare, let loose in the streets, and allow to be the town pet.
- **Los niños de la noche** While American children are snugged securely in their beds at dusk, Spanish youth are left to run wild producing mayhem in the streets until midnight. Clearly, Spanish parents have never heard of Wee Willy Winkie and his 8pm curfew.

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ECONOMY

Statistics are a funny thing. Figures show the gap in per capita earnings between Spain and the EU closing (to about 80% of the EU average). And yet wages trail well behind those of most Western European countries. The average gross salary does not exceed €18,000 a year. A senior project manager might earn €40,000 before tax. The minimum wage is €490 a month.

Some years ago, former president José María Aznar proclaimed *España va bien* (Spain is doing well) and, by most appearances, one would have to agree. Annual growth, at 3.5%, remains among the most robust of the EU (whose combined average is predicted to be 2.7% for 2006). For the first time ever, Spain ended the 2005 financial year with a budget surplus (and is set to continue running a surplus until at least 2009). Unemployment, while still high, is down to 9.1% (the figures in excess of 20% of the early 1990s seem a distant memory).

At 3.9%, Spanish inflation is almost twice the EU average of 2.1%; public debt remains high; and the trade deficit is widening. Equally, EU funding is set to drop drastically from 2007. There are worries over the higher cost of oil, overdependence on the construction industry, a plateauing of the property boom and the enlargement of the EU in 2004 (which made Spain into a net contributor to EU funds after being a large-scale recipient for many years).

Large Spanish companies, after expanding heavily into Latin America in the 1990s, have started buying up European enterprises as they seek to expand further. In 2004 Spain's Banco Santander (continental Europe's biggest bank) bought the UK bank Abbey for UK£8 billion, and in 2005 Telefónica, the world's third-biggest telecommunications company, bought the British mobile-phone firm O2 for €26 billion. Spain also now has five of Europe's seven biggest construction groups – hardly surprising given the decade-long building boom that has seen Spain become the Florida of Europe in terms of holiday homes. Construction accounts for 16% of the economy. As well as jobs, the building boom has produced some very unsightly and ecologically dubious overdevelopment, not to mention widespread municipal corruption, especially along the coasts.

POPULATION

With 44.1 million people, Spain is one of the least densely populated of Western European countries – about 87 people per square kilometre. According to one survey, Spaniards are among the shortest and slimmest people in Europe too.

In recent years the population would have fallen had it not been for the massive arrival of immigrants. Indeed, the total population grew by nearly one million in 2004 alone. By the end of 2005 it was estimated that 8.4%, or 3.7 million, were foreigners.

Spaniards like to live together in cities, towns or pueblos (villages), a habit that probably goes back to past needs for defence. Only in the Basque Country (and to some extent Galicia) do you see countryside dotted with single farmsteads and small fields. As a result, cities like those of Madrid and Barcelona have among the highest population concentration in the world, while the countryside is bereft of people. Regional differences persist today. The peoples with the strongest identities – the Catalans, Basques and, to a lesser extent, the Galicians – are on the fringes of the Spanish heartland of Castilla and have their own languages and minority independence movements.

Some consider Spain's Roma people to be its only true long-standing ethnic minority. They are thought to have originated in India and reached Spain in the 15th century. As elsewhere, they have suffered discrimination. There are about 600,000 Roma in Spain, more than half of them in Andalucía.

John Hooper's *The New Spaniards* gives a crisp and diverse insight into many aspects of modern Spanish society. It is a breezy, well-documented account of everything from sex bars to the economy.

Mites de Barça is a trilingual coffee-table book covering one of Spain's most glorious sides, FC Barcelona.

SPORT Football

Fútbol (soccer) seems to be many a Spaniard's prime preoccupation. Hundreds of thousands of fans attend the games in the Primera División (First Division) of the Liga (league) every weekend from September to May, with millions more following the games on TV.

Almost any game in the Primera División is worth attending for the Spanish crowd experience. Those involving eternal rivals Real Madrid and Barcelona stir still greater passions. These two have large followings and something approaching a monopoly on the silverware: between them they have carried off the league title 47 times. Since 2004 Barcelona has been having a dream run, taking the league in 2004–05 and again the following year, as well as winning the 2006 European Champion's Cup for only the second time in the club's history.

Real Madrid, which has been having a rocky time of it in the past few years, is at home in the **Estadio Santiago Bernabéu** (☎ 91 398 43 00, 902 324324; www.realmadrid.com; Avenida de Concha Espina 1), near metro Santiago Bernabéu, and FC Barcelona's home is at **Camp Nou** (☎ tickets 902 189900; www.fcbarcelona.com; Avinguda Aristides Maillol s/n), near metro Collblanc.

Other leading clubs include Valencia, Athletic Bilbao, Deportivo La Coruña, Real Betis (of Seville), Málaga and Real Sociedad of San Sebastián.

League games are mostly played on Saturday and Sunday, and you can pay at the gate (from about €15 for lesser games, at least €30 for the cheapest seats at less important Real Madrid or FC Barcelona matches) for all but the biggest matches.

Bullfighting

It is difficult to classify this very Spanish activity. Bullfighting occurs in Portugal, southern France and parts of Latin America, but Spain is its true home. The most important fight season takes place in Madrid for a month from mid-May as part of the city's celebrations of its patron saint, San Isidro.

To aficionados the fight is an art form and to its protagonists a way of life. To its detractors it is little more than ghoulish torture and slaughter. If we call it here a spectator sport, it is more for lack of another obvious 'category'.

La lidia, as the art of bullfighting is known, took off in Spain in the mid-18th century (King Carlos III stopped it late in the century, but his successors dropped the ban). By the mid-19th century breeders were creating the first reliable breeds of *toro bravo* (fighting bull), and a bullfighting school had been launched in Seville.

The bullfighting season begins in the first week of February with the fiestas of Valdemorillo and Ajalvir, near Madrid, to mark the feast day of San Blas. All over the country, but especially in the two Castillas and Andalucía, *corridos* (bullfights) and *encierros* (the running of the bulls through town), as in Pamplona, are part of town festivals. As a rule, *corridos* take place on weekends from about 6pm. On the card are six bulls, and hence fights, faced by three *cuadrillas* (teams) of *toreros* (bullfighters).

The matador is the star of the team. It is above all his fancy footwork, skill and bravery before the bull that has the crowd in raptures or in rage, depending on his (or very occasionally her) performance. A complex series of events takes place in each clash, which can last about 20 to 30 minutes. *Peones* dart about with grand capes in front of the bull, horseback picadors drive lances into the bull's withers and *banderilleros* charge headlong at the bull in an attempt to stab *banderillas* into his neck. Finally, the matador kills the bull, unless the bull has managed to put him out of action, as sometimes happens.

For the latest information on the next bullfight near you, biographies of *toreros* and more, check out www.portaltaurino.com (in Spanish).

A Spanish animal-rights and antibullfighting organisation is the Asociación para la Defensa de los Derechos del Animal (ADDA), at www.addaong.org (in Spanish).

Other antibullfighting organisations are the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA; www.wspa-international.org) and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA; www.peta.org).

La lidia is about many things – death, bravery, performance. No doubt the fight is bloody and cruel, but aficionados say the bull is better off dying at the hands of a matador than in the *matadero* (abattoir). To witness it is not necessarily to approve of it, but might give an insight into the tradition and thinking behind *la lidia*.

Basketball

Baloncesto (basketball) is an increasingly popular sport, and Spain's first ever world championship victory (over Greece) in September 2006 in Japan doubtless won it more aficionados. From late September to late June, 18 clubs contest the Liga Asociación de Clubes de Baloncesto (ACB) national league. Leading teams include Barcelona and Real Madrid (attached to the football clubs), Tau Vitoria, Unicaja of Málaga, Pamesa of Valencia, Caja San Fernando of Seville and Estudiantes of Madrid. For details on upcoming matches around the country, check out the Spanish-language league website www.acb.com.

Motor Racing

Every year around April or May the dashing Formula One knights in shining motorised armour come to Montmeló, about a 30-minute drive north of Barcelona, to burn rubber. For more information, see p328.

Spain is motorcycle mad and even more so now that it has a world-class rider in Dani Pedrosa. It stages a Grand Prix tournament in the world 500cc championship (as well as in the 250cc and 125cc categories) in May each year at the Jerez de la Frontera track **Circuito Permanente de Velocidad** (☎ 956 15 11 00; www.circuitodejerez.com; Carretera de Arcos, Km10) in Andalucía. A second Grand Prix round is usually held at the Montmeló circuit a month later.

Cycling

Spain's version of the Tour de France cycling race is the three-week *Vuelta a España* (www.lavuelta.com), which is usually held in September. The course changes each year.

Tennis

Spanish tennis is attracting a growing following of fans, most of whom concentrate their attention on the young left-handed champion, Rafael Nadal, the wonder boy from Manacor (Mallorca) and champion of the clay court who looks well on the way to one day dethroning Switzerland's Roger Federer as world number one. Other Spanish players worth following include Carlos Moyá, Juan Carlos Ferrero and Arantxa Sánchez Vicario.

Spain's strength in men's tennis won it the Davis Cup for the first time in 2000, with the final played in Barcelona. The team pulled off the same feat in December 2004 when Moyá defeated the USA's Andy Roddick at Seville's Estadio Olímpico. At the time of writing, Spain was number two in the Davis Cup rankings.

A SUCCESSOR FOR SCHUMI?

Asturias-born Fernando Alonso became the youngest ever Formula One driver to take two successive championships (at the age of 26) in a nail-biting competition in 2006. After racing away to an early lead in the season, Alonso hit a bad patch, with arch-rival and seven-times Ferrari champ Michael Schumacher winning seven races in a row and coming within an ace of knocking Alonso aside. The latter finally came out on top in the last Grand Prix race of the season in Brazil in October. Now that Schumacher has bowed out of Formula One racing, the way is open for Alonso to become his successor.

For Ernest Hemingway's exhaustive study of a subject he loved dearly, the bullfight, reach for *Death in the Afternoon*.

Golf

Golf is another sport where Spaniards are increasingly prominent and it's ever more popular in Spain. Miguel-Ángel Jiménez and Sergio García are the stars of the moment, although no-one can forget the triumphs of Severiano (Seve for short) Ballesteros, who dominated Spanish and indeed much of continental Europe's golf scene in 1990s.

MULTICULTURALISM

Long an exporter of its people (the 'Moroccans of the 1950s' in the words of writer Rosa Montero, one of the country's best-known journalists and novelists), Spaniards have, since the mid-1990s, been confronted by a new reality: multiculturalism.

The massive influx of immigrants, who now make up 8.4% of the population (see p55), is rapidly changing the once seemingly homogeneous make-up of the country.

Some 700,000 Muslims (more than 500,000 from Morocco) live in this once ultra-Catholic country. More than one million nationals from Spain's former South American colonies have come to claim their birthright in the *madre patria* (mother country). More than half a million of the foreigners come from EU countries and a similar number from Eastern European countries, especially Romania.

The streets of Spain's big cities have taken on new hues. While the Madrid of the 1980s still had a largely uniform feel, the city today hums to the sounds of many languages, whose speakers have brought new tastes to the dining table. *Shwarma* (kebab) stands and Peruvian restaurants abound. Argentines staff call centres and Filipinos wait in some restaurants. Hordes of retired and wealthy EU citizens are catered for by co-nationals on the holiday *costas* (coasts). Around 15% of the population of the Balearic Islands and just over 12% in Madrid are foreigners.

The image of illegal immigrants crossing the Straits of Gibraltar and the Atlantic (to the Canary Islands) from Morocco in barely seaworthy boats has been a daily reminder of a litany of suffering. As Morocco tightens controls on this route, sub-Saharan Africans are increasingly opting for the more dangerous sea route from Mauritania and even Senegal to the Canary Islands.

While the daily arrivals are a problem for the islands, the alarmed cries over this 'deluge', however, ring hollow. Far more illegal migrants arrive by more mundane means: over the French border and by air. No-one really knows how many come each year, but the figures could be in the hundreds of thousands.

Border controls are minimal and many South Americans do not need a visa to travel to Spain. Pretending to be a tourist is all a prospective *clandestino* (illegal immigrants without papers) from Argentina or Venezuela, for instance, needs to do to get past passport control.

Many businesses connive in this too, as illegal labour comes cheap and with no strings attached. In 2005, an amnesty led to the legalisation of around 700,000 *clandestinos*, a measure that was good for the social security coffers and workers' rights, but which did nothing to staunch the flow of new arrivals.

Spain's multicultural experiment has just begun and urbanite Spaniards, fascinated by the melting pots of New York, London and Paris, rub their hands in glee at this 'coming of age'. Others, fearful of being engulfed, recoil in horror. One study predicts that migrants will make up more than a quarter of the population by 2015. Already 8.4% of all students in Spain were of foreign origin in 2006, up from 7.4% in the previous year.

The word 'internet' was finally accepted as a Spanish word by the Real Academia Española in late 2003.

MEDIA

Media observers in Spain lament the poor quality of much TV news reporting and its frequent partiality. The state-run channels, notably TVE1, tend to toe the line of whichever party is in power.

In print, things are healthier. Much as in the UK, the main newspapers each have their pronounced political leaning. If *El País*, the country's most prestigious newspaper, is centre-left and closely associated with the PSOE, *ABC* is unashamedly right-wing. Some regional titles have their own axes to grind. A good example is a Catalan-language daily published in Barcelona, *Avui*, which pushes an openly Catalan-nationalist line.

Probably the sharpest political punditry comes from the biting satirical puppet show, *Las Noticias del Guñol*, on Canal+ nightly from Monday to Saturday. Not everyone can be bothered with politics, however. The country's most read newspaper (2.5 million readers) is *Marca*, dedicated entirely to sport.

RELIGION

Second to Rome, Spain has long been thought of as the world's greatest bastion of Catholicism. But the Church in Spain, still a powerful institution in spite of the constitutional separation of Church and State since 1978, is anxious. On paper, 80% of the population claims to be Catholic, but only 20% regularly attend Mass. As much as 6% of the population claims to be atheist.

The arrival in power of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero and his PSOE government was unwelcome news for the men in purple. The legalisation of gay marriages, the easing of divorce laws and the decision to drop the previous government's secondary-school reforms (which included compulsory religious education) all met with vigorous criticism from the country's bishops.

Indeed the church, whose headquarters is in the small conservative town of Toledo, the 'Rome of Spain', is becoming increasingly tetchy. In a paper published in April 2006, the Episcopal Conference not only reiterated its opposition to abortion and euthanasia, but declared that 'the Church considers masturbation, fornication, pornographic activities and homosexual practices to be serious sins against chastity'. The condom, of course, is considered 'immoral'.

Spain's most significant religious communities after the Catholics are Protestants (around 800,000) and Muslims (around 700,000). Although religious freedom is guaranteed under the constitution of 1978, leaders of the minority faiths frequently claim that they are victims of discrimination. This is particularly evident in the area of finances: the Catholic Church receives state funds and enjoys fiscal benefits denied other faiths.

WOMEN IN SPAIN

Since the demise of Franco in 1975, Spanish society has evolved in leaps and bounds and women have quickly conquered terrain in what was (and in many respects remains) a profoundly male-dominated society. The glass is half empty or half full, depending on your point of view. In the Franco years, the woman's place was in the home. Nowadays, 54% of university students are women.

In the workplace, however, women continue to fight against the odds. On average, men are paid up to 40% than women for equivalent work. Some 80% of those in part-time work are women. Few women make it to the top levels of business.

'On paper, 80% of the population claims to be Catholic, but only 20% regularly attend Mass'

In 2006, the PSOE government approved a draft law aimed at promoting equality of the sexes. Due to come into effect in 2007, it provides for a minimum of 40% of women candidates at all elections.

The law, which met with some employer and PP opposition, would also oblige larger companies to favour the employment and promotion of women.

ARTS Literature

It is difficult to talk of a 'Spanish' literature much earlier than the 13th century, if one means literature in Castilian. Before this, troubadours working in Vulgar Latin, Arabic and other tongues were doing the rounds of southern Europe, and the great writers and thinkers in a Spain largely dominated by Muslims produced their treatises more often than not in Arabic or Hebrew.

Of all the works produced in Spanish in the Middle Ages, the *Poema de Mio Cid*, which has survived in a version penned in 1307 (although first written in 1140), is surely the best known. The epic tale of El Cid Campeador, or Rodrigo Díaz, whose exploits culminated in mastery over Valencia, doesn't let the facts get in way of a good story of derring-do.

Perhaps the greatest of all the Spanish poets was Luis de Góngora (1561–1627). He manipulated words with a majesty that has largely defied attempts at critical 'explanation'; his verses are above all intended as a source of sensuous pleasure. This was the greatest period of Spanish letters – El Siglo de Oro (Golden Century), which stretched roughly from the middle of the 16th century to the middle of the 17th century.

The advent of the *comedia* (comedy) in the early 17th century in Madrid produced some of the country's greatest playwrights. Lope de Vega (1562–1635) was perhaps the most prolific: more than 300 of the 800 plays and poems attributed to him remain. He explored the falseness of court life and roamed political subjects with his imaginary historical plays. Less playful is the work of Tirso de Molina (1581–1648), in whose *El Burlador de Sevilla* we meet the immortal character of Don Juan, a likable seducer who meets an unhappy end.

With a life that was something of a jumbled obstacle course of trials, tribulations and peregrinations, Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (1547–1616) had little success with his forays into theatre and verse. But today he is commonly thought of as the father of the novel. *El Ingenioso Hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha* started life as a short story, designed to make a quick peseta, but Cervantes found he had turned it into an epic tale by the time it appeared in 1605. The ruined *ancien régime* knight and his equally impoverished companion, Sancho Panza, embark on a trail through the foibles of his era – a journey whose timelessness and universality marked out the work for greatness.

It was some centuries before Cervantes had a worthy successor. Benito Pérez Galdós (1843–1920) is Spain's Balzac. His novels and short stories range from social critique to the simple depiction of society through the lives of its many players. His more mature works, such as *Fortunata y Jacinta*, display a bent towards naturalism.

Miguel de Unamuno (1864–1936) was one of the leading figures of the Generation of '98, a group of writers and artists working around and after 1898 (a bad year for Spain with the loss of its last colonies and an economic crisis at home). Unamuno's work is difficult, but among his most enjoyable prose is the *Tres Novelas Ejemplares*, which is imbued, like most of his novels and theatre, with a disquieting existentialism.

For a gripping account from the losing side of Nelson's famous victory over the Franco-Spanish fleet, it is hard to beat the prose of Benito Pérez Galdós in *Trafalgar*.

Federico García Lorca's dramatic play, *Bodas de Sangre* (Blood Wedding), was brought to the screen in a modern flamenco remake by Carlos Saura with dancers of the calibre of the late Antonio Gades in 1981.

A little later came the brief flourishing of Andalucía's Federico García Lorca (1898–1936), whose verse and theatre leaned towards surrealism, leavened by a unique musicality and visual sensibility. His many offerings include the powerful play *Bodas de Sangre* (Blood Wedding). His career was cut short by Nationalist executioners in the early stages of the civil war.

One of the few writers of quality who managed to work through the years of the Franco dictatorship was the Nobel Prize-winning Galician novelist Camilo José Cela (1916–2002). His most important novel, *La Familia de Pascual Duarte*, appeared in 1942 and marked a rebirth of the Spanish realist novel. It is said to be the most widely read and translated Spanish novel after Don Quijote.

CONTEMPORARY WRITING

The death of Franco in 1975 signalled the end of the constraints placed on Spanish writers. Many of those who became able to work in complete freedom had already been active in exile during the Franco years. Juan Goytisolo (b 1931) started off in the neorealist camp but his more mature works, such as *Señas de Identidad* (Signs of Identity), are decidedly more experimental. Much of his work revolves around sexuality, as he equates sexual freedom (he is bisexual) with political freedom. In *Juan sin Tierra* he sets homosexuality and heterosexuality in conflict with one another. Goytisolo's pal, Jaime Gil de Biedma (1929–90), was one of the 20th century's most influential poets in Catalonia and indeed across Spain.

Manuel Vázquez Montalbán (1939–2003), one of Barcelona's most prolific writers, is best known for his Pepe Carvalho detective novel series and a range of other thrillers.

Andalucian Antonio Muñoz Molina (b 1956) is an author of note. Madrid features regularly as the stage for his stories, such as *Los Misterios de Madrid* (Mysteries of Madrid) and *El Dueño del Secreto* (The Master of the Secret). He shifts the geographical focus in his latest work, *Ventanas de Manhattan* (Windows of Manhattan).

Eduardo Mendoza's (b 1943) *La Ciudad de los Prodigios* (The City of Marvels) is an absorbing and at times bizarre novel set in Barcelona in the period between the Universal Exhibition of 1888 and the World Exhibition in 1929. He was back in 2006 with *Mauricio o Las Elecciones Primarias* (Maurice or the Primaries), delving into pre-1992 Barcelona.

Murcia's Arturo Pérez-Reverte (b 1951), longtime war correspondent and general man's man, has become one of the most internationally read Spanish novelists. His latest novel, *El Pintor de Batallas*, about a war photographer who secludes himself to paint what his photos could never capture, draws on his own experience as a war correspondent.

Madrid's Almudena Grandes (b 1960) has emerged as a writer of some stature. In *Castillos de Cartón* (Cardboard Castles), she follows the life of an art valuer who re-encounters a former lover.

A runaway success story has been *La Sombra del Viento* (The Shadow of the Wind), by Barcelona-born, US-based Carlos Ruiz Zafón (b 1964). This engaging, multilayered mystery story plays out over several periods in Barcelona's 20th-century history.

Cinema & Television

Mention cinema and Spain in the same breath nowadays and just about everyone will say: Pedro Almodóvar (b 1949). The Castilian director with the wild shock of hair, and whose personal, camp cinema was born in the heady days of the Madrid *movida* (the late-night bar and club scene) in the years after Franco's death, is inimitable.

Arturo Pérez-Reverte has built up a following for his series of rollicking tales from 17th-century Spain, featuring Captain Alaric.

Spanish cinema has since evolved in leaps and bounds, but Spanish films still only attract around 15% of audience share in Spain (60% goes to US films). State aid is limited and the average Spanish flick is made on a budget of approximately €3 million, peanuts compared with the average Hollywood production.

Almodóvar's latest, *Volver* (Return; 2006), is a trip back in time and space for the director, who explores aspects of life in his homeland of southern Castilla-La Mancha. In a typically unhinged tale partly set (as usual) in Madrid, Almodóvar lines up a series of his favourite actresses (including Carmen Maura and Penélope Cruz) to rattle the skeletons in a village family's closet. Almodóvar's script took the prize for best script at Cannes and his tribe of female stars were awarded a combined best actress prize at the same film fest – a first.

In terms of strangeness, a line could perhaps be drawn between Almodóvar and one of the earliest great names in Spanish film, Luis Buñuel (1900–83). This disrespectful icon started off with the disturbing surrealist short *Un Chien Andalou* (1929), made with Salvador Dalí ('nuff said). Much of his later film-making was done in exile in Mexico.

A classic to slip through the net of Franco's censorship was Luis García Berlanga's (b 1921) *¡Bienvenido, Mr Marshall!* (1952), a satire of the folkloric genre beloved of the regime, and at the same time a critique of the deal done with the USA to provide Marshall Plan aid to Spain in return for military bases. About the only tangible result for the villagers in the film is a rain of dust as Marshall's VIP cavalcade charges through.

Carlos Saura (b 1932) has been incredibly prolific, with more than 35 films to his name, ranging from the dance spectacular *Flamenco* (1995) to the civil war tragicomedy *¡Ay, Carmela!* (1990).

In 2000, Almodóvar became one of the few Spaniards to take an Oscar, in this case for possibly his best movie, *Todo Sobre Mi Madre* (All About My Mother; 1999). Another quirky director who had foreign audiences a-giggle was José Juan Bigas Luna (b 1946) with the hilarious *Jamón, Jamón* (Ham, Ham), a story of crossed love and murder, in 1992.

Vicente Aranda (b 1926) found acclaim with *Amantes* (Lovers; 1991), set in 1950s Madrid and based on the real story of a doomed love triangle. He was back in 2006 with the epic *Tirant lo Blanc*, a tale of knights, chivalry and damsels loosely based on the eponymous medieval Catalan tale by Joanot Martorell.

Alejandro Amenábar (b 1972) had a landmark hit in 2004 with *Mar Adentro* (Out to Sea), a touching if difficult film based on the true story of a man's 30-year struggle to win the right to end his own paralysed life. The lead, Javier Bardem, took the best actor award at the Venice film festival that same year.

Barcelona's Isabel Coixet (b 1960) went down the English-language route with movies such as *La Vida Secreta de las Palabras* (The Secret Life of Words; 2005), in which a nurse cares for a burns patient (played by Tim Robbins) on a North Sea oil rig. The story has some dramatic and utterly unexpected twists.

Tapas (2005), directed by first-timers Juan Cruz and José Corbacho, is a touching and funny flick of everyday Spanish suburban life set in L'Hospitalet, a district of Barcelona, from where the two actors-turned-directors hail.

Two other key films hit Spanish screens in 2006. The blockbuster *Alatriste* is based on the adventure novels of Arturo Pérez-Reverte. Costing €24 million, exceptional for Spanish cinema, it's a rollicking good adventure film with the Spanish version of D'Artagnan. Perhaps more striking is Manuel Hueriga's *Salvador*, about Salvador Puig Antich, a young protestor who was the last person to be executed under Franco in 1974.

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly, a great spaghetti western by Italian director Sergio Leone, was largely shot in the Tabernas desert in southeastern Andalucía.

The WWII blockbuster movies *The Battle of the Bulge* and *Patton* were both shot on location in Spain in the 1960s with Spanish army material, including 75 tanks and 500 infantrymen.

Spanish TV is dominated by chat shows that often border on gossipy shouting matches, but several series have carved out a big chunk of audience share during the past few years. *Cuéntame Cómo Pasó* (Tell Me How It Happened) is set in a *barrio* (district) of Madrid and recounts tales of the city from 1940 to the 1980s. Starring Imanol Arias, it is one of the most watched shows on the *caja tonta* (silly box).

Another popular sitcom is *Aquí No Hay Quien Viva* (It's Impossible Living Here!), an endless soap following the lives and loves of the folks of an apartment block.

Also popular is *El Comisario*, a cop show starring Tito Valverde as *comisario* (police chief) Gerardo Castilla in charge of a young police team investigating anything from baby kidnappings to street crime.

The late-night American-style chat show, *Buenafuente* (hosted by Andreu Buenafuente) is a mix of interviews with personalities and slightly silly humour.

Music

Spain pulsates with music, and not just flamenco. Music is everywhere and the country's intense musicality will be one of your abiding memories. The rock, pop and electronic scene, while not always wildly original or hugely successful beyond Spanish shores, is nonetheless very busy and energetic – a good deal more so than in many other European countries – and has a big following.

Meanwhile flamenco (see p67), the music most readily associated with Spain, is enjoying a golden age and its influence is felt through almost all Spanish musical genres.

POPULAR MUSIC

Each summer throws up one ultra-danceable catchy hit that takes the country by storm. Some of these spread beyond Iberian shores. Remember *Aserejé* by Las Ketchup (2002)?

Among more lasting artists, the undoubted King Midas of Spanish pop, writer of countless hit ballads for himself and others, is Alejandro Sanz, born in Madrid in 1968. Sanz's songs have a wistful lyricality that touches every heart. Recently he's developed a slightly harder-edged 'urban' image.

Another of the most talented and entertaining songwriter-performers is Kiko Veneno, from Andalucía, who has been around since the 1970s mixing rock, blues, African and flamenco rhythms with witty, simpatico lyrics focusing on snatches of everyday life, and turning out several hit albums. The iconoclastic Joaquín Sabina is another Andalusian evergreen, a prolific producer of rock-folk with a consistent protest theme for more than two decades. 'I'll always be against those in power,' he has proclaimed.

Enrique Bunbury, from Zaragoza, made his name as the vocalist of 1990s rock band Héroes del Silencio, and has since broadened his brush as a talented and versatile solo artist mixing '80s-style glam with Latin American influences. (Yes, he *does* take his name from *The Importance of Being Earnest*.)

A hugely popular young band serving up more mainstream pop-rock is El Canto del Loco. It provides great, high-energy live performances and its album *Zapatillas* (Trainers) was the big success of 2005–06. The indie scene is headed by bands such as psychedelic rockers Sidonie, from Barcelona, which fuses classic pop and rock influences with melodic sitars and a touch of electronica – well worth hearing – and Madrid foursome Dover, powerful live performers ranging over grunge, punk and power pop. Both bands sing predominantly in English.

Indy Rock (www.indyrock.es in Spanish) is a good source for upcoming gigs and festivals, while Clubbing Spain (www.clubbingSpain.com in Spanish) has the knowledge on house and techno events.

In electronic realms, José de Padilla, with his *Café del Mar* compilations and more recent albums such as *Man Ray, vol 4* (2005), is one of the few Spanish DJs to have exploited Ibiza's status as a world dance-music capital. Also listen out for the techno-pop duo OBK, which has been around since the 1980s but won the best electronic track award at Spain's 2006 national music awards with *Yo no soy cool* (I'm not cool).

In the field of *canCIÓN española* (Spanish song), a melodic, romantic genre most popular with an older generation, the undoubted rising star is Pasión Vega, whose beguiling voice may draw you in even if you don't normally go for this kind of thing. Vega incorporates a wide range of influences including flamenco (in which she started out), pop, blues, *fado* (Portuguese folk song), jazz and bossa nova.

Jazz has a good following too. Right now the most loved jazz musician in the country is the twinkle-fingered octogenarian Cuban pianist Bebo Valdés, who has been almost adopted by Spain since his triumphant collaboration with flamenco singer Diego El Cigala on the album *Lágrimas Negras* (Black Tears; 2003).

FOLK

Although the odd group playing traditional folk music can be found in several regions, Spain's real folk hotbed is Galicia. The region's rich heritage is closely related to that of its Celtic cousins in Brittany and Ireland and has nothing in common with other Spanish music such as flamenco. Emblematic of the music is the *gaita*, Galicia's version of the bagpipes. Top bagpipers are popular heroes in Galicia, and some of the younger generation have broadened the music's appeal by blending it with other genres. One highly versatile performer – not just of the *gaita* but of other wind instruments too – is Carlos Núñez. He presents a slick show involving violins, percussion, guitar and lute, and often invites a wide range of guest artists – as on his successful and award-winning 2004 album, *Carlos Núñez y Amigos*. Other exciting Galician pipers are Susana Seivane, Mercedes Peón (who mixes the pipes with many other instruments and her own voice in a spectrum of ethnic styles) and Xosé Manuel Budiño.

Galicia's most successful Celtic group is the highly polished Milladoiro. Other groups to seek out are Berrogüetto, Luar Na Lubre and Fía Na Roca. Uxía is a gutsy female solo vocalist.

CLASSICAL

All Spanish cities have active classical music scenes, and the larger ones are bursting with activity. Most of the music you'll hear in the concert halls, however, won't be written by Spanish composers. Outsiders have made at least as much serious music as Spaniards themselves from the country's vibrant rhythms. Who hasn't heard of *Carmen*, an opera whose leading lady epitomises all the fire and flashing beauty conjured up by the typical image of Andalusian women? Its composer, Frenchman Georges Bizet (1838–75), had been mesmerised by the melodies of southern Spain in much the same way as Claude Debussy (1862–1918), whose penchant for the peninsula found expression in *Iberia*. Another Frenchman, Maurice Ravel (1875–1937), whipped up his *Bolero* almost as an aside in 1927. Russians, too, have been swept away by the Hispanic. Mikhail Glinka (1804–57) arrived in Granada in 1845, fell under the spell of *gitano* song and guitar, and returned home to inspire a new movement in Russian folk music.

Spain itself was more or less bereft of composers until the likes of Cádiz-born Manuel de Falla (1876–1946) and Enrique Granados (1867–1916) in the early 20th century. Granados and Isaac Albéniz (1860–1909) became

great pianists and interpreters of their own compositions, such as the latter's *Iberia* cycle. The blind Joaquín Rodrigo (1901–99) was one of Spain's leading 20th-century composers. His celebrated *Concierto de Aranjuez* for guitar yielded what for some is the greatest jazz rendering of any classical music work – Miles Davis' 1959 version on his *Sketches of Spain* album.

Andrés Segovia (1893–1987), from Linares in Andalucía and steeped in flamenco, probably did more than any other musician to establish the guitar as a serious classical instrument, taking this formerly humble instrument to dizzying heights of virtuosity.

In opera, Spain has given the world both Plácido Domingo (b 1934) and José Carreras (b 1946). With Italian tenor Luciano Pavarotti (b 1935), they form the big three of modern male opera singers. Catalonia's Montserrat Caballé (b 1933) is one of the world's outstanding sopranos.

Painting & Sculpture

Humans have been creating images in Spain for as long as 14,000 years, as the cave paintings in Altamira (p509) attest. Later, the Celtiberian tribes were producing some fine ceramics and statuary, perhaps influenced by the presence of Greeks, Carthaginians and ultimately Romans.

Mostly anonymous, the painters and decorators of Romanesque churches across the north of the country left behind extraordinary testaments to the religious faith of the early Middle Ages. Some remain *in situ* but the single best concentration of 12th-century Romanesque frescoes, possibly in all Europe, can be seen in Barcelona's Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (p299).

Artists began to drop their modesty in the 14th century, and names such as Catalans Ferrer Bassá (c 1290–1348); Bernat Martorell (c 1400–52), a master of chiaroscuro; Jaume Huguet (1415–92); and Córdoba's Bartolomé Bermejo (c 1405–95) are thus known to us, and their works identifiable. At this time Gothic painting, more lifelike and complex than the seemingly naive, didactic Romanesque, took hold.

One of the most remarkable artists at work in the latter half of the 16th century was an 'adopted' Spaniard. Domenikos Theotokopoulos (1541–1614), known as El Greco (the Greek), was schooled in his native Crete and Italy, but spent his productive working life in Toledo (see the boxed text, p244). His slender, exalted figures can be seen in various locations in that city, as well as in Madrid's Museo del Prado (p131).

THE GOLDEN CENTURY

As the 16th century gave way to the 17th century, a remarkably fecund era opened. A plethora of masters, in the service of the Church and State, seemed to appear out of nowhere.

In Italy, José (Jusepe) de Ribera (1591–1652) came under the influence of Caravaggio. Many of his works found their way back to Spain and are now scattered about numerous art galleries, including the solid selection in the Museo del Prado.

The star of the period was the genius court painter from Seville, Diego Rodríguez de Silva Velázquez (1599–1660), who stands in a class of his own. With him any trace of the idealised stiffness that characterised a by-now spiritless mannerism fell by the wayside. Realism became the key, and the majesty of his royal subjects springs from his capacity to capture the essence of the person, king or *infanta* (princess), and the detail of their finery. His masterpieces include *Las Meninas* (The Maids of Honour) and *La Rendición de Breda* (The Surrender of Breda), both in the Museo del Prado.

A less-exalted contemporary, and close friend of Velázquez, Francisco de Zurbarán (1598–1664) moved to Seville as an official painter. Probably

Many home-grown bands in Catalonia sing in Catalan rather than Spanish, and since 1998 the annual Senglar Rock festival has celebrated Catalan Rock. Catalonia's Bob Dylan, Lluís Llach (b 1948) made a name as a protest singer in the Franco years and gave his last concerts in 2006.

Velázquez so much wanted to be made a Knight of Santiago that in *Las Meninas* he cheekily portrayed himself with the cross of Santiago on his vest, long before his wish was finally fulfilled.

of Basque origin but born in Extremadura, he is best remembered for the startling clarity and light in his portraits of monks. He travelled a great deal and, in Guadalupe, a series of eight portraits can still be seen hanging where Zurbarán left them, in the Hieronymite monastery (p828). Zurbarán fell on hard times in the 1640s and was compelled by the plague to flee Seville. He died in poverty in Madrid.

Zurbarán has come to be seen as one of the masters of the Spanish canvas, but in his lifetime it was a younger and less-inspired colleague who won all the prizes. Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1618–82) took the safe road and turned out stock religious pieces and images of beggar boys and the like, with technical polish but little verve. Again, you can see many of his works in the Museo del Prado.

GOYA & THE 19TH CENTURY

Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes (1746–1828), a provincial hick from Fuendetodos (p423) in Aragón, went to Madrid to work as a cartoonist in the Real Fábrica de Tapices (p130). Here began the long and varied career of Spain's only truly great artist of the 18th (and for that matter the 19th) century. By 1799 he was Carlos IV's court painter.

Several distinct series and individual paintings mark the progress of his life and work. At the end of the 18th century he painted such enigmatic masterpieces as *La Maja Vestida* and *La Maja Desnuda*, identical portraits but for the lack of clothes in the latter. At about the same time he did *Los Caprichos*, a series of 80 etchings lambasting the follies of court life and ignorant clergy.

The arrival of the French and war in 1808 profoundly affected his work. Unforgiving portrayals of the brutality of war are *El Dos de Mayo* and, more dramatically, *El Tres de Mayo*. The latter depicts the execution of Madrid rebels by French troops and both hang in the Museo del Prado.

An obvious precursor to many subsequent strands of modern art, Goya was an island of grandeur in a sea of artistic mediocrity in Spain. He marked a transition from art in the service of the State or Church to art as a pure expression of its creator's feeling and whim.

Long after Goya's death, the Valencian Joaquín Sorolla (1863–1923) set off on his own path, ignoring the fashionable French impressionists and preferring the blinding light of the Valencian coast to the muted tones favoured in Paris. He is known for his cheerful, large-format images of beach life and much of his work can be admired in Madrid's Museo Sorolla (p137).

THE SHOCK OF THE NEW

Like a thunderclap came the genius of the mischievous *malagueño*, Pablo Ruiz Picasso (1881–1973). A child when he moved with his family to Barcelona, Picasso was formed in an atmosphere laden with the avant-garde freedom of Modernism (see p75).

Picasso must have been one of the most restless artists of all time. His work underwent repeated revolutions as he passed from one creative phase to another. From his gloomy Blue Period, through the brighter Pink Period and on to cubism – in which he was accompanied by Madrid's Juan Gris (1887–1927) – Picasso was nothing if not a surprise package.

By the mid-1920s he was dabbling with surrealism. His best-known work is *Guernica*, a complex canvas portraying the horror of war and inspired by the German aerial bombing of the Basque town, Guernica, in 1937. Picasso cranked out paintings, sculptures, ceramics and etchings until the day he died. A good selection of his early work can be seen in Barcelona's Museo Picasso (p289). Other works are scattered about different galleries, notably Madrid's Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (p131).

Separated from Picasso by barely a generation, two other artists reinforced the Catalan contingent in the vanguard of 20th-century art: Dalí and Miró. Although he started off dabbling in cubism, Salvador Dalí (1904–89) became more readily identified with the surrealists. This complex character's 'handpainted dream photographs', as he called them, are virtuoso executions brimming with fine detail and nightmare images dragged up from a feverish and Freud-fed imagination. Preoccupied with Picasso's fame, Dalí built himself a reputation as an outrageous showman and shameless self-promoter. The single best display of his work can be seen at the Teatre-Museu Dalí (p359) in Figueres.

Slower to find his feet, Barcelona-born Joan Miró (1893–1983) developed a joyous and almost childlike style that earned him the epithet 'the most surrealist of us all' from the French writer André Breton. His later period is his best known, characterised by the simple use of bright colours and forms in combinations of symbols that represented women, birds (the link between earth and the heavens), stars (the unattainable heavenly world, source of imagination) and a sort of net, which entraps all these levels of the cosmos. Galleries of his work adorn Barcelona (p300) and Palma de Mallorca (p635).

THE CONTEMPORARY SCENE

The two main artistic movements of the 1950s, El Paso and the Catalan Dau el Set, launched names such as Antonio Saura (1930–98), Manuel Millares (1926–72) and Barcelona's tireless Antoni Tàpies (b 1923). The art of Madrid's Eduardo Arroyo (b 1937) is steeped in the radical spirit that kept him in exile from Spain for 15 years from 1962. His paintings, brimming with ironic socio-political comment, tend, in part, to pop art.

The death of Franco acted as a catalyst for the Spanish art movement. New talent sprang up, and galleries enthusiastically took on anything revolutionary, contrary or cheeky. The 1970s and 1980s were a time of almost childish self-indulgence. Things have since calmed down but there is still much activity.

The Basques Eduardo Chillida (1924–2002) and Jorge Oteiza (1908–2003) were two of Spain's leading modern sculptors.

Joan Hernández Pijuan (1931–2005) was one of the most important abstract painters to come out of Barcelona in the latter decades of the 20th century. His work is often referred to as informalist and it concentrates on natural shapes and figures, often with neutral colours on different surfaces.

Seville's Luis Gordillo (b 1934) started his artistic career with surrealism, from where he branched out into pop art and photography. His later work in particular features the serialisation of different versions of the same image.

Mallorcan Miquel Barceló (b 1957) is one of the country's big success stories. His work is heavily expressionist, although it touches on classic themes, from self-portraiture to architectural images.

Barcelona's Susana Solano (b 1946) is a painter and above all sculptor, considered to be one of the most important at work in Spain today, while Jaume Plensa (b 1955) is possibly Spain's best contemporary sculptor. His work ranges from sketches, through sculpture to video and other installations that have been shown around the world.

Flamenco

The passionate and uniquely Spanish constellation of singing, dancing and instrumental arts known as flamenco first took recognisable form in the late 18th and early 19th centuries among Roma people in the lower Guadalquivir valley of Andalucía (still flamenco's heartland). The first flamenco was *cante*

'The death of Franco acted as a catalyst for the Spanish art movement'

Reach into the tortured mind of one of Spain's greatest artists with the help of Robert Hughes' riveting work on Goya.

jondo (deep song), an anguished instrument of expression for a group on the margins of society. *Jondura* (depth) is still the essence of pure flamenco. It's not something that's universally appreciated: to the unsympathetic ear, flamenco song can sound like someone suffering from excruciating toothache. But love it or hate it, a flamenco performer who successfully communicates their passion will have you unwittingly on the edge of your seat, oblivious to all else. The gift of sparking this kind of response is known as *duende* (spirit).

A flamenco singer is known as a *cantaor* (male) or *cantaora* (female); a dancer is a *bailaor/a*. Most of the songs and dances are performed to a blood-rush of guitar from the *tocaor/a*. Percussion is provided by tapping feet, clapping hands and sometimes castanets. Flamenco *coplas* (songs) come in many different types, from the anguished *soleá* or the intensely despairing *siguiriyá* to the livelier *alegría* or the upbeat *bulería*. The traditional flamenco costume – shawl, fan and long, frilly *bata de cola* dress, and for men flat Cordoban hats and tight black trousers – dates from Andalusian fashions of the 19th century.

FLAMENCO TODAY

Rarely can flamenco have been as popular as it is today, and never so innovative. While long-established singers such as Enrique Morente, Carmen Linares, Chano Lobato and José Menese remain at the top of the profession, new generations continue to broaden flamenco's audience.

Perhaps most popular and universally acclaimed at present is José Mercé, from Jerez. Estrella Morente from Granada (Enrique's daughter) and La Tana from Seville are young singers steadily carving out niches in the first rank of performers.

Dance, always the readiest of flamenco arts to cross boundaries, has reached its most adventurous horizons in the person of Joaquín Cortés, born in Córdoba in 1969. Cortés fuses flamenco with contemporary dance, ballet and jazz in spectacular shows with music at rock-concert amplification. The most exciting younger dance talent is Farruquito, born into a famous flamenco family in Seville in 1983 (he made his Broadway debut at the age of five). Other top stars to look out for – you may find them dancing solo or with their own companies – include Sara Baras, Antonio Canales, Manuela Carrasco, Cristina Hoyos and Eva La Hiera. Buena.

Among guitarists, listen out for Manolo Sanlúcar from Cádiz; Tomatito from Almería; and Vicente Amigo from Córdoba and Moraíto Chico from Jerez, who both accompany today's top singers.

FLAMENCO FUSION

Given a cue, perhaps, by Paco de Lucía (see opposite), musicians began mixing flamenco with jazz, rock, blues, rap and other genres in the 1970s and they're still doing it today. This 'flamenco fusion' presents perhaps the easiest way into flamenco for newcomers and can be great music in its own right.

The seminal recording was a 1977 flamenco-folk-rock album, *Veneno* (Poison), by the group of the same name centred on Kiko Veneno (see p63) and Raimundo Amador, both from Seville. Amador then formed the group Pata Negra, which produced four fine flamenco-jazz-blues albums, before he went solo.

The group Ketama, originally from Granada, has successfully mixed flamenco with African, Cuban, Brazilian and other rhythms for two decades now. Cádiz's Niña Pastori arrived in the late 1990s with an edgy, urgent voice singing jazz- and Latin-influenced flamenco. Eleven-strong Barcelona-based band Ojos de Brujo mixes flamenco with reggae, Asian and even club dance

10 GREAT FLAMENCO & FUSION ALBUMS

- *Paco de Lucía Antología* – Paco de Lucía (1995)
- *Una Leyenda Flamenca* – El Camarón de la Isla (1993)
- *Cañalla* – Niña Pastori (2000)
- *Del Amanecer* – José Mercé (1999)
- *Buika* – Concha Buika (2005)
- *Noche de Flamenco y Blues* – Raimundo Amador, BB King et al (1998)
- *Blues de la Frontera* – Pata Negra (1986)
- *Cositas Buenas* – Paco de Lucía (2004)
- *Lágrimas Negras* – Bebo Valdés and Diego El Cigala (2003)
- *Sueña La Alhambra* – Enrique Morente (2005)

rhythms. They're great live performers and have gained wide popularity outside as well as inside Spain. Málaga's Chambao successfully combines flamenco with electronic beats on its albums such as *Flamenco Chill* (2002) and *Pokito a Poko* (Little by Little; 2005). But the latest revelation is Concha Buika, a Mallorcan of Equatorial Guinean origin who not only possesses a beautiful, sensual voice but also writes many of her own songs. Her albums *Buika* (2005) and *Mi Niña Lola* (2006) are a captivating melange of African rhythms, soul, jazz, hip-hop, flamenco and more!

FLAMENCO LEGENDS

The great singers of the 19th and early 20th centuries were Silverio Franconetti and La Niña de los Peines, from Seville, and Antonio Chacón and Manuel Torre, from Jerez de la Frontera. Torre's singing, legend has it, could drive people to rip their shirts open and upturn tables.

La Macarrona and Pastora Imperio, the first great *bailaoras*, took flamenco to Paris and South America. Their successors, La Argentina and La Argentinita, formed dance troupes and turned flamenco dance into a theatrical show.

The dynamic dancing and wild lifestyle of Carmen Amaya (1913–63), from Barcelona, made her the *gitana* dance legend of all time. Her longtime partner Sabicas was the father of the modern solo flamenco guitar, inventing a host of now-indispensable techniques.

After a trough in the mid-20th century, when it seemed that the *tablaos* (touristy shows emphasising the sexy and the jolly) were in danger of taking over, *flamenco puro* got a new lease of life in the 1970s through singers such as Terremoto, La Paquera, Enrique Morente and, above all, El Camarón de la Isla from San Fernando near Cádiz. Camarón's incredible vocal and emotional range and his wayward lifestyle made him a legend well before his tragically early death in 1992. As his great guitar accompanist Paco de Lucía observed, 'Camarón's cracked voice could evoke, on its own, the desperation of a people'.

Paco de Lucía himself, born in Algeciras in 1947, is the flamenco artist known most widely outside Spain, and with very good reason. So gifted that by the time he was 14 his teachers had nothing left to teach him, de Lucía has transformed the flamenco guitar into an instrument of solo expression with new techniques, scales, melodies and harmonies that have gone far beyond traditional limits. He can sound like two or three people playing together. He vowed that his 2004 world tour would be his last, but he still performs.

Flamenco World (www.flamenco-world.com), Flama (www.guiaflama.com in Spanish), Centro Andaluz de Flamenco (caf.cica.es in Spanish), esflamenco.com (www.esflamenco.com) and Deflamenco (www.deflamenco.com) are all great resources on flamenco, and include calendars of upcoming events.

In his first book, *Duende*, Jason Webster immersed his body and soul for two years in Spain's passionate and dangerous flamenco world in search of the true flamenco spirit.

SEEING FLAMENCO

Flamenco is easiest to catch in Andalucía, Madrid and Barcelona. In the south, many towns' summer *ferias* (fairs) and fiestas include flamenco performances, and some places stage special night-long flamenco festivals. Bigger events include the two-week Festival de Jerez in Jerez de la Frontera (p726) in late February/early March every year; the Festival de Cante de las Minas, in La Unión, Murcia, over several days in mid-August; and the month-long Bienal de Flamenco (p706), held in Seville in September of even-numbered years. Otherwise, look out for big-name performances in theatres, check seasons of concerts, and visit regular flamenco nights at bars and clubs in some cities – often just for the price of your drinks. Flamenco fans also band together in clubs called *peñas*, which stage live performance nights; most will admit interested visitors and the atmosphere here will be authentic and at times very intimate.

Under the artistic direction of Nacho Duato since 1990, the Compañía Nacional de Danza has performed to critical acclaim around the world and won many awards.

Theatre & Dance

Thanks mainly to a big development programme by the PSOE governments of the 1980s and 1990s, most Spanish cities now boast at least one theatre worthy of the name, and drama is now a vibrant field. Larger cities such as Madrid, Barcelona and Seville have plenty of smaller locales staging avant-garde and experimental productions as well as larger venues for straighter productions. Unadulterated drama, though, is unlikely to appeal if your understanding of Spanish – or, in Barcelona, Catalan – is less than fluent.

Dance too thrives and not just in the context of flamenco (p67). Barcelona is Spain's capital of modern dance, with several shows to choose from almost any week. The Madrid-based Compañía Nacional de Danza, under the direction of Nacho Duato, is one of Europe's most exciting contemporary ensembles and has performed to great acclaim around the world. The Ballet Nacional de España, founded in 1978, mixes classical ballet with Spanish dance. Spain's most gifted classical dancer for aeons, *madrileña* Tamara Rojo, rarely performs in her homeland as she has been a principal dancer with London's Royal Ballet since 2000, garnering ever more superlative reviews as the years pass.

Here and there you'll find the occasional regional folk dance, such as Catalonia's *sardana* round-dance, or the Málaga area's *verdiales*, which are flag dances done to exhilarating fiddle-and-percussion music.

Architecture

As you look up in awe at the arches of the great Roman aqueduct in Segovia you can almost see centurions marching beneath it. Soothed by the gentle bubbling of its cool fountains, the mesmerising beauty of the Alhambra induces a dream sense of a mythical Arab world long past. Wandering along the echoing corridors of the Romanesque cloisters of the Monasterio de Santo Domingo de Silos on a grey winter's day, the Middle Ages seem to have returned with all their mystical fervour. Towering, at times half-ruined, castles dot the countryside from Catalonia to Castilla. To gaze up, eyes turned to God, at the great Gothic cathedrals of Burgos, Palma de Mallorca and Toledo, you can only feel the awe inspired when they were first raised. And who cannot be carried away by the whimsy of Gaudí's Modernista fantasy in Barcelona's La Sagrada Família and Casa Batlló? Spain's architecture presents one of the broadest and richest testimonies in Europe to thousands of years of building ingenuity.

ANCIENT SPAIN

The tribes that first inhabited the Iberian Peninsula, collectively known as Celtiberians, left behind a wealth of evidence of their existence. The most common living arrangement, called the *castro*, was a hamlet surrounded by stone walls and made up of circular stone houses. Several have been partly preserved in locations mostly across northern Spain. Among the better known ones are those at A Guarda (La Guardia; p570), on Galicia's southern coast, and near Coaña (p525) in Asturias.

The Greeks and Carthaginians rarely made it far into the Spanish interior. Greek remains at Empúries (p354) in Catalonia are the most impressive reminder of their Iberian presence.

The Romans left behind more clues. Among the more spectacular sites are the aqueduct in Segovia (p194), the bridge at Alcántara (p823) and the stout walls of Lugo (p575).

Vestiges of some Roman towns can also be seen. Among the more important are the ancient town of Augusta Emerita in Mérida (p829); ancient Tarraco, now known as Tarragona (p387); the amphitheatre and other ruins at Itálica (p708) near Seville; and Sagunto (p593) in Valencia. Modest remains have been imaginatively converted into underground museums in Barcelona (Museu d'Història de la Ciutat; p287) and Zaragoza (Museo del Foro de Caesaraugusta; p418).

EARLY CHRISTIANITY

Filling the vacuum left by the departing Romans, the Visigoths employed a more humble but remarkably attractive style, which survives in a handful of small churches. The 7th-century Ermita de Santa María de Lara, at Quintanilla de las Viñas (p227) in Burgos province, is one of the best. Fragments of this unique style can be seen in several cities across Spain, including Toledo.

Reputedly the oldest church in Spain is the 7th-century Basílica de San Juan in Baños de Cerrato (p211), while the cathedral in nearby Palencia (p209) has Visigothic origins in the crypt. The horseshoe arch, later perfected by the Arabs, is characteristic of the Visigoths' aesthetic.

When Spain was swamped by the Muslim invasion of 711 AD, only the unruly northern strip of the country in what is today Asturias (and probably parts of Cantabria and the Basque Country) held out. During the 9th century a unique building style emerged in this green corner of Spain cut off from

Ciudades Patrimonio de la Humanidad España is a beautiful volume (in Spanish) covering those cities that are or contain World Heritage sites.

the rest of Christian Europe. Of the 30-odd examples of pre-Romanesque architecture scattered about the Asturian countryside, the Palacio de Santa María del Naranco and Iglesia de San Miguel de Lillo, in Oviedo, are the finest (for both, see the boxed text, p513). These buildings offer a foretaste of the Romanesque style.

THE MARK OF ISLAM

Córdoba was the centre of Islamic political power and culture for its first 300 years in Spain, but Muslims remained for almost another 800 years in their longest-lasting enclave, Granada.

The Syrian Omayyad dynasty that set up shop in Spain brought with it architects imbued with ideas and experience won in Damascus. This was soon put to use in the construction of the Mezquita (mosque; p763) in Córdoba, the style of which was echoed across Islamic Spain. Horseshoe-shaped and lobed arches, the use of exquisite tiles in decoration (mostly calligraphy and floral motifs), complex stucco, peaceful inner courtyards and stalactite ceiling adornments are all features reminiscent of Damascus.

Remnants of this Islamic legacy abound across Spain, although many grand examples have been lost. The most striking piece of Islamic architecture in northern Spain is the palace of the Aljafería (p419) in Zaragoza.

In the 12th century the armies of Morocco's Almoravid dynasty stormed across the by now hopelessly divided lands of Islamic Spain. To them we owe some of the marvels of Seville, in particular the square-based minaret known as the Giralda (p690), even more beautiful than the minaret of the Koutoubia mosque in Marrakesh.

Islamic art reached new heights of elegance with the construction of the Alhambra (p771) in Granada. Built from the 13th to the 15th centuries, it is symptomatic of the direction taken by Islamic art at the time. Eschewing innovation, the Alhambra expresses a desire to refine already well-tried forms (geometric patterns, use of calligraphy in decoration, stalactite décor). It is one of the Islamic world's most beautiful creations.

MOZARABIC & MUDÉJAR

Already in the 10th century, Mozarabs – Christians practising in Muslim territory – began to adopt elements of classic Islamic construction and export them to Christian-held territory. Although Mozarabic artisans contributed to many buildings, there are few 'purely' Mozarabic structures. Among the outstanding examples are the Iglesia de San Miguel de Escalada (p218), east of León; the Ermita de San Baudelio (p232), beyond Berlanga de Duero in Soria province; and the Iglesia de Santa María de Lebeña (p535) on the east side of the Picos de Europa mountains.

More important was the influence of the Mudéjars, Muslims who remained behind in the lands of the Reconquista. Their skills were found to be priceless (but cheap) and their influence is evident throughout Spain.

One unmistakable Mudéjar feature is the preponderance of brick: castles, churches and mansions all over the country were built of this material. Another telltale feature is in the ceilings. Extravagantly decorated timber creations, often ornately carved, are a mark of the Mudéjar hand. Several different types get constant mention. The term *armadura* refers to any of these wooden ceilings, especially when they have the appearance of being an inverted boat. *Artesonado* ceilings are characterised by interlaced beams leaving regular spaces (triangular, square or polygonal) for the insertion of decorative *artesas*. The term *techumbre* (which can simply mean 'roof') applies more specifically to the most common of *armaduras*, where the skeleton of the ceiling (looked at from the end) looks like a series of As.

The Alhambra, one of the world's most remarkable Islamic monuments, was used as a barracks by Napoleon's troops during the Peninsular War.

The Alhambra comes alive in the entertaining and learned study, *Alhambra* by Michael Jacobs; it's beautifully illustrated with photographs of one of Andalusia's most emblematic buildings.

A replica of Seville's Giralda minaret once stood in Madison Square in New York, along with another in Kansas City. Neither exists any more.

FROM ROMANESQUE TO GOTHIC

As the Muslim tide was turned back and the Reconquista gathered momentum, the first great medieval European movement in design began to take hold in Spain, spreading from Italy and France. From about the 11th century churches, monasteries, bridges, pilgrims' hospices and other buildings in the Romanesque style mushroomed in the north.

The first wave came in Catalonia, where Lombard artisans influenced by Byzantine building techniques soon covered the countryside with simple churches – the church of Sant Climent de Taüll (p376) and others scattered around nearby are emblematic.

Romanesque is identified by a few basic characteristics. The exteriors of most edifices bear little decoration and tend to be simple, angular structures. In the case of churches in particular, the concession to curves comes with the semicylindrical apse – or, in many cases, triple apse. The single most striking decorative element is the semicircular arch or arches that grace doorways, windows, cloisters and naves. The humble church of the **Monasterio de Sigüenza** (96 974 57 81 58; Villanueva de Sigüenza; 11.30am–1.30pm & 3.30–4.30pm Fri & Sat, 1–2pm & 4.30–5.30pm Sun), 93km east of Zaragoza, has a doorway boasting 14 such arches, one encased in the other.

The Camino de Santiago (Way of St James) is studded with Romanesque beauties. These include (travelling from east to west) the Monasterio de Santo Domingo de Silos (p228), the smaller cloister (Las Claustrillas) in the Monasterio de las Huelgas (p224) in Burgos and the restored Iglesia de San Martín (p211) in Frómista.

During the 12th century modifications in the Romanesque recipe became apparent. The pointed arch and ribbed vault of various kinds are clear precursors of the Gothic revolution to come.

The Monasterio de la Oliva (p488) in Navarra was among the first to incorporate such features, and other buildings followed. Cathedrals in Ávila (p177), Sigüenza (p264), Tarragona (p389) and Tudela (p488) all display at least some transitional elements.

A peculiar side development affected southwest Castilla. The cathedrals in Salamanca (p185 and p185), Zamora (p207) and Toro (p206) all boast Byzantine lines, particularly in the cupola.

Everyone in northern Europe marvelled at the towering new cathedrals built from the 12th century, made possible by the use of flying buttresses and other technical innovations. The idea caught on later in Spain, but three of the most important Gothic cathedrals in the country, in Burgos (p223), León (p214) and Toledo (p241), were built in the 13th century.

The first two owe much to French models, but the Spaniards soon introduced other elements. The huge decorative altarpieces towering over the high altar were one such innovation. And, although not an exclusively Spanish touch, the placing of the choir stalls in the centre of the nave became the rule rather than the exception in Spanish Gothic style.

The main structural novelty in Spanish Gothic was star-vaulting, a method of weight distribution in the roof in which ribbed vaults project outwards from a series of centre points.

In Catalonia, another variant of the style, Catalan Gothic, was largely bereft of the pinnacles and other decorative touches more common in French and northern European styles. Catalan architects favoured breadth over height and stretched the limits of the possible by creating incredibly broad, unsupported vaults. Their use of supports like flying buttresses was minimal.

Monuments often belong to several styles. Many great buildings begun at the height of Romanesque glory were only completed long after Gothic had gained the upper hand. And although, for instance, the cathedral in Burgos

An exhaustive website covering monasteries old and new in Spain, www.catolicos.com/monasteriosespana.htm (in Spanish) has links that will lead you to many sites of great architectural interest around the country.

was one of the first to go up, its spires were a result of German-inspired late-Gothic imagination. In many cases, these Gothic or Romanesque-Gothic buildings later received a Plateresque or baroque overlay.

Mudéjar influences still made themselves felt, particularly in the use of brick rather than stone. Toledo and the region of Aragón, particularly Zaragoza, Teruel, Tarazona and Calatayud, boast many gloriously original and unique buildings of a Gothic-Mudéjar combination.

The so-called Isabelline style was a late ingredient. Taking some cues from the more curvaceous traits of Islamic design, it was in some ways an indirect precursor to Plateresque. Its ultimate expression would be Toledo's San Juan de los Reyes (p245), originally destined to be the final resting place of the Reyes Católicos (Catholic Monarchs). Designed by French-born Juan Güas (1453–96), it is a medley of earlier Gothic and Mudéjar elements, with a final decorative Isabelline flourish.

The 16th century saw a revival of pure Gothic, perhaps best exemplified in the new cathedral in Salamanca (p185), although the Segovia cathedral (p196) was about the last, and possibly most pure, Gothic house of worship raised in Spain.

Not only religious buildings flourished. Most of the innumerable castles scattered across the country went up in Gothic times. Many never saw action and were not intended to – an extraordinary example of Mudéjar castle-building from this era is the sumptuous castle at Coca (p200). In Barcelona some marvellous civil Gothic architecture can be admired, including the Saló del Tinell (p287) in the one-time royal palace in the Barri Gòtic and the Reials Drassanes (Museu Marítim; p285), the once-mighty shipyards.

THE RENAISSANCE

The Renaissance in Spain can be roughly divided into three distinct styles. First was the Italian-influenced special flavour of Plateresque. To visit Salamanca is to receive a concentrated dose of the most splendid work in the genre. The university façade (p185), especially, is a virtuoso piece, featuring busts, medallions and swathes of complex floral design. Not far behind in intensity comes the façade of the Convento de San Esteban (p186). Little of the work can be convincingly traced to any one hand, and it appears that the principal exponent of Plateresque, Alonso de Covarrubias (1488–1570), was busier in his home city of Toledo (the Alcázar, p241, and the Capilla de los Nuevos Reyes in the cathedral, p241).

Next was the more purist Renaissance style that prevailed in Andalucía, and had its maximum expression in the Palacio de Carlos V (p775) in Granada's Alhambra. Diego de Siloé (1495–1563) and his followers are regarded as masters. Siloé made his mark with Granada's cathedral (p776); others followed him with such masterpieces as the Jaén cathedral (p790).

Juan de Herrera (1530–97) is the last and perhaps greatest figure of the Spanish Renaissance, but his work bears almost no resemblance to anything else of the period. His austere masterpiece is the palace-monastery complex of San Lorenzo de El Escorial (p166).

BAROQUE BAUBLES

The heady frills and spills of baroque can be seen all over Spain, but usually in the form of additions rather than complete buildings. Cádiz's cathedral (p718) is an exception (although some neoclassical work was added). Three loose phases can be identified, starting with a sober baroque still heavily influenced by Herrera, followed by a period of greater (some would say nauseating!) architectural exuberance and finally running into a mixture of baroque with the beginnings of neoclassicism.

Spanish Splendour: Palaces, Castles & Country Homes (Roberto Schezen, photographer) is a sumptuous photographic presentation of some of the most spectacular noble buildings in Spain.

The leading exponents of this often overblown style were the Churriguera brothers. Alberto (1676–1750) designed Salamanca's Plaza Mayor (p185), but he and brother José (1665–1735) are best known for their extraordinary *retablos* – huge, carved wooden altar backdrops. Their memorable works feature twisting gilded columns, burdened with all manner of angels and saints.

Baroque reached new heights of opulence with the Sagrario in Granada's Monasterio de La Cartuja (p776) and the Transparente in Toledo's cathedral (p241). Seville is jammed with gems. But baroque appears elsewhere, too: the façade superimposed over the Romanesque original in the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela (p541) and the cathedral in Murcia (p674) are notable.

MODERNISME MADNESS

Catalonia, at the end of the 19th century, was the powerhouse of the country. And over its capital was unleashed one of the most imaginative periods in Spanish architecture by a group of architects who came to be known as the Modernistas. Leading the way was Antoni Gaudí (1852–1926), who sprinkled Barcelona with jewels of his singular imagination. They range from his immense, and still unfinished, Sagrada Familia church (p294) to the simply weird Casa Batlló (p292) and only slightly more sober La Pedrera (p293).

Hot on Gaudí's heels were two other Catalan architects, Lluís Domènech i Montaner (1850–1923) and Josep Puig i Cadafalch (1867–1957). Domènech i Montaner's works include the Palau de la Música Catalana (p289), while Puig i Cadafalch built such townhouses as Casa Amatller (p293).

Elsewhere in Spain, Modernisme (the local version of Art Nouveau) made little impact, although Gaudí and Domènech designed a handful of playful buildings in northern Spain.

BUILDING INTO THE FUTURE

If Barcelona is the seat of Modernisme, Madrid is the capital of Spanish Art Deco. In the 1920s the newly created Gran Vía provided a perfect opportunity for new building, and a number of Art Deco caprices raised in that era still line the boulevard today. Overwhelming (and of questionable taste) is the Palacio de Comunicaciones (or post office to some; p134) on Plaza de la Cibeles.

Ambitious building and urban redevelopment programmes continue to change the main cityscapes. In Barcelona, for instance, the 1992 Olympics provided an enormous impulse for new construction and urban renewal. The Macba art museum (p288) shines white and boldly bright in the once slummy El Raval district. More recently, Jean Nouvel added the spangly gherkin-shaped Torre Agbar (p295), just off Plaça de les Glòries Catalanes; the blue triangular Edifici Fòrum (p291) was deposited on the waterfront by Swiss architects Herzog & de Meuron; and Enric Miralles made a colourful splash with the Mercat de Santa Caterina (p289).

Further south, Valencia has chimed in with its futuristic Ciudad de las Artes y las Ciencias (City of Arts and Sciences; p581) complex, by Santiago Calatrava. The single most eye-catching modern addition to the Spanish cityscape (so far) is Frank Gehry's Museo Guggenheim (p455) in Bilbao, where Calatrava has also been busy designing the city's airport. Not to be left out, Sir Norman Foster designed the city's new metro system. In a similar vein, Sir Richard Rogers provided the dreamy, wavy new Terminal 4 at Madrid's Barajas airport (p164).

For a good introduction to the Modernista genius, Antoni Gaudí, have a look at www.gaudiallgaudi.com, with links to photographic sections on a range of his works, as well as that of other Modernista architects, designers and artists.

Gaudí: The Man & His Work, by Joan Masso Bergos, is a beautifully illustrated study of the man and his architecture, based on the writings of one of his confidants.

Environment

THE LAND

The Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal), having previously wobbled around off the western end of Europe for millions of years, settled into its present position about 70 million years ago. Its collision at that time with the European and African landmasses caused the peninsula's main mountain chains to rise up. The resulting rugged topography not only separated Spain's destiny from the rest of Europe's for long periods in historical times, but also encouraged the rise of separate small states in the medieval period.

The Meseta

At the heart of Spain and occupying 40% of the country is the *meseta*, a sparsely populated tableland (apart from a few cities, such as Madrid) that's much given to grain growing. Contrary to what Professor Henry Higgins taught Eliza Dolittle, the *meseta* is not where most of Spain's rain falls. In fact it has a continental climate: scorching in summer, cold in winter, and dry. Nor is it really a plain: much of it is rolling hills and it's split in two by the Cordillera Central mountain chain. Three of Spain's five major rivers, the Duero, Tajo and Guadiana, flow west across the *meseta* into Portugal and, ultimately, into the Atlantic Ocean. Like other Spanish rivers, these three are dammed here and there to provide much of the country's water and electricity.

The Mountains

The *meseta* is bounded by mountain chains on all sides except the west (where it slopes gradually down across Portugal).

Across the north, close to the Bay of Biscay (Mar Cantábrico), is the damp Cordillera Cantábrica, which rises above 2500m in the spectacular Picos de Europa. The Sistema Ibérico runs down from La Rioja in the central north to southern Aragón, peaking at 2316m in the Sierra de Moncayo, and varying from plateaus and high moorland to deep gorges and strangely eroded rock formations, such as the Serranía de Cuenca. The southern boundary of the *meseta* is the low, wooded Sierra Morena, rolling across northern Andalucía.

But it's at or near Spain's extremities that the country's highest mountains rise up. The Pyrenees stretch 400km along the French border, with numerous 3000m peaks in Catalonia and Aragón, the highest being Pico de Aneto (3408m). Across Andalucía stretches the Cordillera Bética, a rumpled mass of ranges that includes mainland Spain's highest peak, Mulhacén (3479m), in the Sierra Nevada southeast of Granada.

The Lowlands

Around and between all the mountains are five main lower-lying areas.

The basin of Río Ebro, Spain's most voluminous river, stretches from the central north to the Mediterranean coast, yielding a variety of crops, though parts of central Aragón are near-desert.

North of the lower Ebro is fertile Catalonia, composed mainly of ranges of low hills. Further south, the coastal areas of Valencia and Murcia are dry plains transformed by irrigation into green market gardens and orchards.

The basin of Spain's fifth major river, the Guadalquivir, stretches across central Andalucía, a zone producing many crops. The summer here sees high temperatures, with a daily average high of 36°C in Seville in July and August.

In northwest Spain is the region of Galicia, which is hilly, rainy and green, with mixed farming.

The highest peak in the whole of Spain is actually Teide (3718m), 1400km southwest of the mainland on the Canary island of Tenerife.



The Coasts

Spain's coast is as varied as its interior. The Mediterranean coast alternates between rocky coves and inlets (as on Catalonia's Costa Brava, the Balearic Islands and Andalucía's Cabo de Gata), and flatter, straighter stretches with some long beaches and some heavy tourism development, as on the Costa Daurada, Costa Blanca and Costa del Sol.

Sea temperatures along the Mediterranean coasts average 19°C or 20°C in June or October, and a reasonably comfortable 22°C to 25°C between July and September – slightly more in the Balearic Islands and around Alicante.

The Atlantic coast has cooler seas and whiter, sandier beaches. The Costa de la Luz, from the Strait of Gibraltar to the Portuguese border, is blessed with many long sandy beaches backed by dunes. In the northwest, Galicia is deeply indented by long estuaries called *rias*, with plenty of sandy beaches. Along the Bay of Biscay, the Cordillera Cantábrica comes almost down to the coast, and the beaches are mostly coves and small bays, though still sandy.

WILDLIFE

Spain's animal life is among Europe's most varied thanks to its wild terrain, which has allowed the survival of several species that have died out elsewhere. It's possible to see plenty of exciting wildlife if you know where to look. But sadly, some species are now in perilously small numbers. The plant life is astonishing in its variety, as the spectacular wildflower displays on roadsides and pastures in spring and early summer testify.

Animals

There are about 170 *osos pardos* (brown bears) in the Cordillera Cantábrica, and about 20 in the Pyrenees (in France and Andorra as well as Spain). Hunting or killing Spain's bears has been banned since 1973, and expensive conservation programmes have started to pay off in the last few years, at least in the western Cordillera Cantábrica, where the population of around 140 is now considered viable for future survival. Bears are being introduced from Slovenia to boost the Pyrenean population. In 1900 Spain had about 1000 brown bears; as with many other species, hunting and poison were the main reasons for their decline.

The *lobo* (wolf) is also on the increase. From a population of about 500 in 1970, Spain now has between 2000 and 2500. Their heartland is the mountains of Galicia and northwestern Castilla y León (Zamora is the province with most wolves). Though heavily protected, wolves are still considered an enemy by many country people.

The outlook is even brighter for the *cabra montés* (ibex), a stocky mountain goat whose males have distinctive, long horns. Almost hunted to extinction by 1900, the ibex was protected by royal decree a few years later (though is still subject to controlled hunting today). There may now be 30,000 in the country, chiefly in the Sierra de Gredos and the mountains of Andalucía.

The beautiful *lince ibérico* (Iberian or pardel lynx), unique to the Iberian Peninsula, is in grave danger of becoming the first extinct feline since the sabre-toothed tiger. Its numbers have dropped to probably fewer than 200 in Spain, and possibly none at all in Portugal, mainly due to a decline in the number of rabbits, its staple food, and loss of habitat to agriculture, plantations and roads. The only significant breeding populations are in the eastern Sierra Morena and Doñana area in western Andalucía. After years of dithering, expensive save-the-lynx programmes are now underway, including an in-captivity breeding centre at Doñana.

Other less uncommon beasts – all widely distributed – include the *jabali* (wild boar); the *ciervo*, *corzo* and *gamo* (red, roe and fallow deer); the *gineta* (genet), a catlike creature with a white and black coat; and the *ardilla* (red squirrel). The chamois (*rebeco*, *sarrio*, *isard* or *gamuza*), a small antelope, lives mainly above the tree line in the Pyrenees and Cordillera Cantábrica. South-western Spain is home to the Egyptian *meloncillo* (mongoose). Gibraltar's 'apes' – actually Barbary macaques – are the only wild monkeys in Europe.

Twenty-seven marine mammal species live off Spain's shores. Dolphin and whale-spotting boat trips are a popular attraction at Gibraltar and nearby Tarifa.

BIRDS

With 390 resident species and subspecies, Spain has easily the biggest and most varied bird population in Europe. Around 25 species of birds of prey, including the *águila real* (golden eagle), *buitre leonado* (griffon vulture) and *alimoche* (Egyptian vulture), breed here. Monfragüe in Extremadura (p818) is the single most spectacular place to observe birds of prey. You'll often see them circling or hovering in mountain areas or on the *meseta*.

Wild Spain by Frederic V Grunfeld (1999) is a useful practical guide to Spain's wilderness and wildlife areas, with illustrations of both animals and plants.

Bird-watchers will need a field guide, such as the *Collins Field Guide: Birds of Britain and Europe* by Roger Tory Peterson, Guy Mountfort and PAD Hollom, or the slimmer *Collins Pocket Guide: Birds of Britain and Europe*.

BACK FROM THE BRINK?

The *quebrantahuesos* (lammergeier or bearded vulture), with its majestic 2m-plus wingspan, is still a threatened species but is recovering slowly in the Pyrenees, where about 80 pairs now breed (the largest population in Europe). It has also been sighted in the Picos de Europa mountains after a 50-year absence, and an attempt is being made to reintroduce it to Andalucía's Parque Natural de Cazorla. The name *quebrantahuesos*, meaning 'bone breaker', describes the bird's habit of dropping animal bones on to rocks from great heights, so that they smash open, allowing the bird to get at the marrow.

Another emblematic and extremely rare bird is the *águila imperial ibérica* (Spanish imperial eagle), unique to Spain. With the help of an active government protection plan, its numbers have increased from about 50 pairs in the 1960s to some 200 pairs today, in such places as Monfragüe and Andalucía's Sierra Morena.

Spain's several hundred pairs of *buitre negro* (black vulture), Europe's biggest bird of prey, probably make up the world's largest population. Its strongholds include Monfragüe, and the Sierra Pelada in western Andalucía.

Another spectacular bird that you're certain to see if you're in western Andalucía, Extremadura or either of the Castillas in spring or summer is the white stork. Actually black and white, this creature makes its large and ungainly nests on electricity pylons, trees, towers – in fact, any vertical protuberance it can find, even right in the middle of towns – and your attention will be drawn by the loud clacking of chicks' beaks from these lofty perches. Thousands of white storks migrate north from Africa across the Strait of Gibraltar in January and February – as do much smaller numbers of Europe's only other stork, the *cigüeña negra* (black stork), which is down to about 200 pairs in Spain.

Spain's extensive wetlands make it a haven for water birds. The most important of the wetlands is the Parque Nacional de Doñana and surrounding areas in the Guadalquivir delta in Andalucía. Hundreds of thousands of birds winter here, and many more call in during the spring and autumn migrations. Other important coastal wetlands include Albufera de Valencia (p593) and the Ebro delta (p394). Inland, thousands of *patos* (ducks) and *grullas* (cranes) winter at Laguna de Gallocanta in Aragón (p442), Spain's biggest natural lake. Laguna de Fuente de Piedra (p759), near Antequera in Andalucía, is one of Europe's two main breeding sites for the *flamenco* (greater flamingo), with as many as 20,000 pairs rearing chicks in spring and summer (the other main breeding ground is France's Camargue).

Plants

Mainland Spain and the Balearic Islands contain around 8000 of Europe's 9000 plant species, and 2000 of them are unique to the Iberian Peninsula (and North Africa). This abundance is largely due to the fact that the last ice age did not cover the entire peninsula, enabling plants killed off further north to survive in Spain.

Mountain areas claim much of the variety. The Pyrenees have about 150 unique species and the much smaller Sierra Nevada in Andalucía about 60. When the snows melt, zones above the tree line bloom with small rock-clinging plants and gentians, orchids, crocuses, narcissi and sundews. The alpine meadows of the Picos de Europa are home to 40 orchid species.

A variety of pines flourishes on Spain's hills and mountains. The lovely umbrella pine, with its large spreading top and edible kernel, grows near coasts. The rare but beautiful Spanish fir is confined to the Sierra de Grazalema and a few other small areas in western Andalucía.

Practical bird-watching guides include John R Butler's *Birdwatching on Spain's Southern Coast*, Ernest Garcia and Andrew Paterson's *Where to Watch Birds in Southern & Western Spain* and Michael Rebane's *Where to Watch Birds in North and East Spain*.

The natural vegetation of many lower slopes in the east and south is Mediterranean woodland, with trees such as the wild olive, carob, holm oak and cork oak that are adapted to a warm, fairly dry climate.

NATIONAL & NATURAL PARKS

Much of Spain's most spectacular and ecologically important country – about 40,000 sq km or 8% of the entire country, if you include national hunting reserves – is under some kind of official protection. Nearly all these areas are at least partly open to visitors, but degrees of conservation and access vary. For example, *parques naturales* (natural parks), the most widespread category of protected area, may include villages with hotels and camping grounds, or may limit access to a few walking trails with the nearest accommodation 10km away. Fortunately, the most interesting parks and reserves usually have helpful visitors centres where you can obtain decent maps and information on local accommodation, walking routes and activities.

The *parques nacionales* (national parks) are areas of exceptional importance for their fauna, flora, geomorphology or landscape, and are the country's most strictly controlled protected areas. They are declared by the national parliament but managed by Spain's regional governments. Spain has 14 national parks – nine on the mainland, four on the Canary Islands and one on the Balearic Islands. The hundreds of other protected areas, declared and administered by Spain's 17 regional governments, fall into at least 16 classifications and range in size from 100-sq-metre rocks off the Balearics to Andalucía's 2140-sq-kilometre Parque Natural de Cazorla.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Human hands have been wreaking radical change in Spain's environment for more than two millennia. It was the Romans who began to cut the country's woodlands – for timber, fuel and weapons – which until then covered half the *meseta*. Deforestation since then, along with overtiling and overgrazing (especially by huge sheep herds), has brought substantial topsoil erosion; most of the fertile Doñana wetlands and the 300-sq-km delta of Río Ebro have been formed by eroded deposits. Urban and industrial growth, intensive tourism development along the coasts, and the construction of hundreds of dams for hydroelectricity and irrigation, have caused further change. And over the centuries many animal species were drastically depleted by hunting and habitat loss.

But there's still lots of wilderness. By European standards Spain is sparsely populated, and most of its people live in towns and cities, which reduces their impact on the countryside.

Conservation

Environmental awareness took a huge leap forward in the post-Franco 1980s. The Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) government spurred a range of actions by regional governments, which now have responsibility for most environmental matters. In 1981 Spain had just 35 environmentally protected areas, covering 2200 sq km. Now there are more than 400, covering some 40,000 sq km. But different regions give varied priority to conservation: Andalucía has more than 80 protected areas, while neighbouring Extremadura has just three. Nor are protected areas always well protected, often because their ecosystems extend beyond their own boundaries. And environmentalists and dedicated officials still have to struggle against illicit building, quarrying and hunting in some protected areas.

Of Spain's animal species, 28 vertebrates (including 16 birds and five mammals) and 16 invertebrates are considered in danger of extinction. In the plant

The English-language Iberianature (www.iberianature.com) is a terrific source of up-to-date information on Spanish fauna and flora.

The best guide to Spain's flowers and shrubs is *Flowers of South-West Europe* by Oleg Polunin and BE Smythies. In the south, Betty Molesworth Allen's *Wildflowers of Southern Spain* is very helpful.

For official information on national parks, visit the website of the Ministerio de Medio Ambiente, Spain's environment ministry (www.mma.es). It's in Spanish, but the diagrams, maps, lists and pictures are informative to everyone.

SPAIN'S HIGHLIGHT PARKS

Park	Features	Activities	Best time to visit	Page
Parc Nacional d'Aiguestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici	beautiful Pyrenees lake region	walking, wildlife-watching	Jun-Sep	p375
Parque Nacional de Doñana	bird & mammal haven in Guadalquivir delta	4WD tours, wildlife-watching, walking horse riding	year-round	p711
Parque Nacional de Ordesa y Monte Perdido	spectacular section of the Pyrenees, with chamois, raptors & varied vegetation	walking, rock climbing	mid-Jun–Jul, mid-Aug–Sep	p433
Parque Nacional de los Picos de Europa	beautiful mountain refuge for chamois & a few wolves & bears	walking, rock climbing, caving	May-Jul, Sep	p527
Parques Nacional & Natural Sierra Nevada	mainland Spain's highest mountain range, with many ibex, 60 endemic plants & the beautiful Alpujarras valleys on southern slopes	walking, rock climbing, mountain biking, horse riding, skiing	depends on activity	p785
Parque Natural de Cazorla	abundant wildlife, 2300 plant species & beautiful mountain scenery	walking, driving, 4WD tours, wildlife-watching, mountain biking	Apr-Oct	p796
Áreas Naturales Serra de Tramuntana	spectacular mountain range on Mallorca	walks, bird-watching	late Feb–early Oct	p638
Parque Nacional Monfragüe	spectacular birds of prey	bird-watching	Mar-Oct	p818
Parque Natural Sierra de Grazalema	lovely, green, mountainous area with rich bird life	walking, rock-climbing, bird-watching, caving, canyoning, paragliding	Sep-Jun	p729
Parc Natural del Cadi-Moixeró	steep pre-Pyrenees range	rock climbing, walking	Jun-Sep	p370
Parque Natural de la Zona Volcánica de la Garrotxa	beautiful wooded region with 30 volcanic cones	walking	Apr-Oct	p363
Parque Natural Sierra de Gredos	beautiful mountain region; home to Spain's biggest ibex population	walking, rock climbing, mountain biking	Mar-May, Sep-Nov	p181
Parque Natural de Somiedo	dramatic section of Cordillera Cantábrica	walking	Jul-Sep	p526
Parque Natural de Cabo de Gata-Níjar	sandy beaches, volcanic cliffs, flamingo colony & semidesert vegetation	swimming, bird-watching, walking, horse riding, diving, snorkelling	year-round	p803

realm, of the 8000 species on the mainland and Balearic Islands, 117 are in danger of extinction. Plants are threatened by such factors as ploughing and grazing, as well as by tourism and collection.

Water

Potentially Spain's worst environmental problem is drought. It struck in the 1950s, 1960s and 1990s, and threatens again in the late 2000s. This is despite a gigantic investment in reservoirs (which number around 1300, covering a higher proportion of Spain than of any other country in the world) and projects such as the Tajo-Segura water-diversion system, which can transfer 600 million cubic metres of water annually from the Tajo basin in central Spain to the heavily irrigated Valencia and Murcia regions on the

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

Spain's parks and other protected areas are mostly well cared for by their managers and by their users. Visitors centres and plentiful signage provide reminders to stick to established routes, to obtain the required permits for restricted areas, and not to damage vegetation, scare wildlife etc.

Giving your custom to local businesses, especially those with ecofriendly credentials, in and around parks and protected areas helps sustain rural economies without recourse to potentially noxious alternatives. But steer clear of noisy, disruptive activities such as quad biking.

Wherever you are, take extreme care to avoid starting fires, which every summer ravage large areas of Spain.

Water is at a premium in much of the country, especially in the dry centre, south and east. Don't waste it.

Mediterranean coast. Although Spain's many dams and reservoirs provide irrigation and hydroelectricity (reducing the need for nuclear or dirtier forms of power) and conserve water, they inevitably destroy habitats. The coastal building and golf-course booms increase demand for water, but inefficient irrigation methods and the very low price of water mean that too much water is simply wasted.

Intensive agriculture and the spread of towns and cities (including tourist resorts) have lowered water tables in some areas. Growing vegetables under huge areas of plastic in the southeast, especially Almeria province, with intense fertiliser and pesticide use and water pumped up from deep underground, is drying up some of the underground aquifers it depends upon.

Other Problems

Coastal development, often slackly controlled, has degraded many of the country's coastal environments and added to the pollution of the seas, although sewage-treatment facilities are being steadily improved. The coastal building boom has accelerated in the past decade, fuelled by second-home buyers from Spain and abroad, and also by the laundering of assorted black money, ranging from unpaid taxes to the proceeds of international drug trafficking and the illegal arms trade. In the southern region of Andalusia 59% of the coastline is already urbanised. The voracious construction and property industry plans ever more developments: *El País* newspaper reported in late 2005 that plans had been approved for at least 1.65 million more homes along the Mediterranean coast between Andalusia and the Valencia area in the east, with some towns and villages planning to multiply their population by 10. Spain's beaches still get creditable numbers of 'blue flags', which indicate that they meet certain minimal standards of hygiene, facilities and environmental management.

Valencia, Granada, and Madrid have the dubious distinction of being the three cities with the dirtiest air in Spain, chiefly because of vehicle emissions, according to the environmental group *Ecologistas en Acción*.

See www.blueflag.org for the latest list of Spain's cleanest, best cared-for beaches.

Spain Outdoors

Few countries in Europe can match Spain's diversity of landscapes, from the rugged coastline of Galicia to the picturesque shores of the Mediterranean, from the towering Pyrenees in the north to Andalucía's Sierra Nevada. You could enjoy these from afar with a glass of Rioja wine in hand, but diving in (sometimes literally) to explore a little further adds a whole new dimension to your Spain visit. Possibilities range from walking or mountain biking in the wilderness to more high-adrenaline pursuits such as downhill skiing and hang-gliding. A variety of water sports are also among Spain's most popular activities.

Depending on your level of experience, you have the option of striking out on your own or joining an organised tour; the latter has the advantage of hooking you up with like-minded people. As a rule, the operators along the Mediterranean coast are more plentiful and have more experience in dealing with English-speaking clients than those in the north, although high standards of professionalism are pretty uniform wherever you go.

WALKING

Spain is one of the premier walking destinations in Europe and a snapshot of the possibilities shows why: Spain's highest mainland peak, Mulhacén (3479m; p783) above Granada; following in the footsteps of Carlos V in Extremadura (p812); walking along Galicia's Costa da Morte (Death Coast; p558); or sauntering through alpine meadows in the Pyrenees (p362).

GRs, PRs & Other Paths

Spain's extensive network of short and long-distance trails are called *senderos de pequeno recorrido* (PRs) and *senderos de gran recorrido* (GRs) respectively. PRs are marked with yellow-and-white slashes, while GRs are signposted red-and-white. While these are a great concept, maintenance of the trails is sporadic. Local or regional groups also create and maintain their own trails using their own trail marking. Tourist offices may have pamphlets describing nearby walks and trailheads sometimes have informative panels.

When to Go

Spain encompasses a number of different climate zones, ensuring that, unlike in much of Europe, it's possible to hike here year-round. If your feet are starting to itch in early spring, head to Andalucía, where conditions are at their best from March to June and in September and October; they're downright unbearable in midsummer but in winter most trails remain open, except in the high mountains. If you prefer to walk in summer, do what Spaniards have traditionally done and escape to the north. The Basque Country, Asturias, Cantabria and Galicia are best from June to September. Starting in mid-June, the Pyrenees (p362) are accessible, while July and August are the ideal months for the high Sierra Nevada (p783). August is the busiest month on the trails and if you plan to head to popular national parks and stay in *refugios* (mountain refuges), book ahead.

Prime Spots

Most famous are the Pyrenees, separating Spain from France and containing two outstanding national parks: Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici (p375) and Ordesa y Monte Perdido (p433). The spectacular GR11 or Senda Pirenaica traverses the Pyrenees by connecting the Atlantic (at Hondarribia in

With an average altitude of 660m, Spain is the second-highest country in Europe after Switzerland.

Spain's long-distance walking trails (GRs) follow old Roman, royal and pilgrimage roads, cart trails and shepherds' migratory paths.

the Basque Country) with the Mediterranean (at Cap de Creus in Catalonia). Walking the whole route to appreciate its beauty is unnecessary, as there are day hikes in the national parks that coincide with the GR11.

Scenic and accessible limestone ranges with their distinctive craggy peaks (usually hot climbing destinations, too) include the Picos de Europa (p527), Spain's first national park and straddling Cantabria, Asturias and León provinces; the Basque mountains; Valencia's Els Ports area (p609); and the Sierra de Cazorla (p796) and Sierra de Grazalema (p729) in Andalucía.

To walk in mountain villages, the classic spot is Las Alpujarras (p786), near the Parque Nacional Sierra Nevada (p783) in Andalucía.

Great coastal walking abounds even along the heavily visited south on Mallorca (p630) and Cabo de Gata (p803) just east of Almería. The easy walking on Galicia's Illas Cies (p569), part of Spain's newest national park, makes it ideal for families.

Spain's most famous long walk is the Camino de Santiago (p89).

For more information on parks and protected areas, see p80.

Information

Region-specific walking (and climbing) guides are published by Cicerone Press (www.cicerone.co.uk) for Mallorca, the Cordillera Cantábrica, the Vía de la Plata pilgrim's route from Sevilla to Santiago, the Costa Blanca, the Sierra Nevada and the GR11 route across the Spanish Pyrenees. In Barcelona, Quera (Map pp278-9; ☎ 93 318 07 43; Carrer de Petritxol 2) is a map and guidebook specialist. Madrid's La Tienda Verde (www.tiendaverde.es) and Librería Desnivel (www.libreriadesnivel.com in Spanish) both sell maps (the best Spanish ones are Prames and Adrados) and guides. In Spanish, the website www.andarines.com gives route descriptions and useful links for books, sports shops and Spanish mountaineering associations.

CYCLING

Spain has a rich variety of cycling possibilities, from gentle family rides to challenging two-week expeditions. If you avoid the cities (where cycling can be somewhat nerve-wracking), Spain is also a cycle-friendly country with drivers accustomed to sharing the roads with platoons of Lycra-clad cyclists. The excellent network of secondary roads, usually with a comfortable shoulder, is ideal for road touring.

When to Go

In terms of when to go, the same information holds true for cycling as it does for walking (see p83).

What to Take

Bike hire along the popular Mediterranean coastal areas, the islands and major cities is relatively easy but is hit-and-miss just about anywhere else. Bring your own helmet (helmets are required by law but enforcement is inconsistent) and bicycle if you're planning to do serious touring. Bicycle shops are common everywhere, making it unnecessary to load yourself down with supplies.

Prime Spots

Every Spanish region has both off-road (in Spanish called BTT, from *bici todo terreno*; mountain bike) and touring trails and routes. Mountain bikers can head to just about any *sierra* (mountain range) and use the extensive *pistas forestales* (forestry tracks). A challenging off-road excursion takes you along the Altiplano across the Sierra Nevada. Classic long-haul touring

ON LITTLE WHEELS

Most coastal cities have flat, wide seaside promenades (eg Barcelona, San Sebastián and A Coruña) that are ideal for *patinaje* (rollerblading), except when Spaniards come out in droves for their evening (usually 7.30pm to 9pm) *paseo* (stroll). Skateboard-friendly cities such as Pamplona have skating tracks and skateboard parks.

routes include the Camino de Santiago; the Vía de la Plata; and the 600km Camino del Cid, which follows in the footsteps of Spain's epic hero from Burgos to Valencia. Guides in Spanish exist for all of these.

Information

An indispensable website for readers of Spanish is www.amigosdelciclismo.com, which gives useful information on restrictions, updates on laws, circulation norms, contact information for the hundreds of cycling clubs all over the country, and lists of guidebooks, as well as a lifetime's worth of route descriptions organised region by region. There are more than 200 cycling guidebooks published (the vast majority in Spanish). *España en Bici* by Paco Tortosa and María del Mar Fornés is a good overview guide. *Cycle Touring in Spain: Eight Detailed Routes* by Harry Dowdell is a helpful planning tool, as well as being practical once you're in Spain. Another good resource is *The Trailrider Guide – Spain: Single Track Mountain Biking in Spain*, by Nathan James and Linsey Stroud.

For information on bicycle purchase and transport in Spain, see p867. Bike Spain (www.bikespain.info) in Madrid is one of the better cycling tour operators. The Real Federación Española de Ciclismo (www.rfec.com) provides contact information for bicycle clubs.

SKIING & SNOWBOARDING

For winter powder, Spain's skiers (and the royal family) head to the Pyrenees of Aragón and Catalonia. Outside of the peak periods (which are the beginning of December, 20 December to 6 January, carnival and Semana Santa – Holy Week), Spain's top resorts are relatively quiet, cheap and warm in comparison with their counterparts in the Alps. Resorts now also cater to snowboarders, with shops, schools and the installation of on-slope half-pipes. The season runs from December to April, though January and February are generally the best, most reliable times for snow.

Prime Spots

In Aragón, two popular resorts are Formigal (p439) and Candanchú (p439); just above the town of Jaca, Candanchú has some 42km of runs with 51 pistes (as well as 35km of cross-country track). In Catalonia, Spain's first resort, La Molina (p369), is still going strong and is ideal for families and beginners. Considered by many to have the Pyrenees' best snow (especially in January), the 72-piste resort of Baqueira-Beret (p380) boasts 30 modern lifts with 104km of downhill runs for all levels (and 7km of cross-country track). The après-ski scene also gets high ratings. Andorra, also in the Pyrenees, has popular, well-known resorts. Pas de la Casa-Grau Roig (p407) is Andorra's biggest, with 100km of runs.

Spain's other major resort is Europe's southernmost: the Sierra Nevada (p783), outside Granada. With completely overhauled facilities for the 1996 World Cup ski championships, the 76km of runs are at their prime in March. Despite their World Cup status, the slopes are particularly suited for families and novice to intermediate skiers.

Camping outside designated camping grounds is generally not permitted in Spain. The website www.campingsonline.com helps you locate camp sites anywhere in the country.

An excellent English-language site, with articles on wildlife, outdoor sports and conservation, is www.wild-spain.com.

Of the minor ski stations with poorer snow and a shorter season, Puerto Navacerrada (p173) is just 60km from Madrid and has 16 runs that cater to beginners and intermediates. It can be overwhelmed by crowds on winter weekends. In La Rioja, Valdezcaray, in the Sierra de la Demanda just 45 minutes from Santo Domingo de la Calzada (p496), has 14 runs reaching a maximum altitude of 1530m. Manzaneda, 90km northeast of Ourense (p572) in Galicia, boasts a 230m elevation drop, extensive snow-making machines and 15 runs along treeless trails from 1500m to 1800m.

Information

If you don't want to bring your own gear, Spanish resorts have equipment hire, as well as ski schools. Lift tickets range between €31 and €39 for adults, and €24 and €26 for children; equipment hire costs around €18 a day. If you're planning ahead, Spanish travel agencies frequently advertise affordable single- or multiday packages with lodging included.

WATER SPORTS

Scuba Diving & Snorkelling

With Spain's 4000km of shoreline, abundant marine life, relatively warm Mediterranean water, and varied underwater features including wrecks, sheer walls and long cavern swim-throughs, you'll find great *buceo* (scuba diving) and snorkelling opportunities year-round. The numerous Mediterranean dive centres cater heavily to an English-speaking market and offer single- and multiday trips, equipment rental and certification courses. Their Atlantic counterparts (in San Sebastián, Santander and A Coruña) deal mostly in Spanish, but if that's not an obstacle for you, then the colder waters of the Atlantic will offer a completely different underwater experience.

A good starting point is the coral reefs along the Costa Brava, especially around the Illes Medes marine reserve (p353) off L'Estartit (near Girona). The Costa del Sol (p749) outfits of Málaga, Nerja and Mijas launch to such places as La Herradura Wall, the 1937 cargo vessel the *Motril* wreck and the Cavern of Cerro Gordo. Spain's Balearic Islands (p627) are also popular dive destinations with excellent services.

Paco Nadal's *Buceo en España* provides information province by province, with descriptions of ocean floors, dive centres and equipment rental.

Surfing

Vans of European surfers following the best waves along Spain's windswept Atlantic coast are a sure sign that summer has arrived. At its best from September to April, Spain's north shore has consistent, tubing waves (in winter) and innumerable beaches that offer ideal conditions for all levels of surfer. Cold water is the only drawback; a full wetsuit is required in winter, but a shorty is sufficient in summer. Some people complain of localism (territorial locals) at the best spots on good, and therefore crowded, days. Surf shops abound in the popular surfing areas and usually offer board and wetsuit hire.

Mundaka's legendary left (p463), once considered Europe's best and a magnet for surfers, hit the headlines for all the wrong reasons in 2005 when its waves mysteriously never showed up and a World Championship Tour event had to be cancelled; surfers eagerly await its return. Heading east throughout the Basque Country (and even in downtown San Sebastián at the city beach, Zurriola; p468), Cantabria and Asturias, there are well-charted surf beaches. If you're looking for solitude, along Galicia's Costa da Morte (p558) some isolated beaches remain empty even in summer. In September surfers head to Galicia's Pantín Classic surf competition north of Ferrol

(p555). On the Mediterranean, southwest Spain gets powerful, winter beach breaks, and weekdays off Conil de la Frontera (just northwest of Cabo de Trafalgar) can be sublimely lonely.

José Pellón's *Guía del Surf en España* provides comprehensive recommendations on surf shops, surfing schools, clubs and prime spots. Both www.globalsurfers.com and www.wannasurf.com have Spain pages with A to Z surfing information.

Windsurfing & Kitesurfing

With 10km of white, sandy beaches, easy equipment hire and windsurfing schools, not to mention the strong winds of the Straits of Gibraltar (aka the Wind Machine), Tarifa (p735) is Spain's year-round windsurfing and kitesurfing capital. If you can't make it that far south, the less well known Empuriabrava in Catalonia also has great conditions, especially from March to July, while the family resort of Oliva near Valencia is also worth considering. If you're looking for waves, try Spain's northwest coast, where the northeast trade winds keep the wind constant all year. The Spanish-language website www.windsurfesp.com/sp.asp gives very thorough descriptions of spots, conditions and schools all over Spain.

Kayaking, Canoeing & Rafting

With 1800 rivers and streams, opportunities abound in Spain to take off downstream in search of hot wave trains, curlers and reversals. As most rivers are dammed for electric power at some point along their flow, there are many reservoirs with excellent low-level kayaking and canoeing where you can hire equipment. The downside is that to follow a river's course to the sea means you'll end up carrying your boat.

Top white-water rivers include Catalonia's turbulent Noguera Pallaresa (p373), Aragón's Gállego, Cantabria's Carasa and Galicia's Miño. In general, May and June are best for kayaking, rafting, canoeing and hydrospeed (water tobogganing). For fun and competition, in the first weekend in August the crazy 22km, en-masse Descenso Internacional del Sella canoe race (p530) from Arriondas in Asturias to coastal Ribadesella is a blast.

Patrick Santal's *White Water Pyrenees* thoroughly covers 85 rivers in France and Spain for kayakers, canoers and rafters.

For more-tranquil sea kayaking around cliffs, the Costa Brava's shore by Cala Montgó, Tamariu (p347) and Cadaqués (p356) is tops. Guided excursions, classes and equipment hire from beaches are easy to locate. Exciting surf-kayak spots coincide with the surfing meccas: Mundaka (p463), with its own Surf Kayak Club (www.ur2000.com in Spanish), and Llanes (p523) in Asturias.

Sailing

Spain has some 250 harbours for sport sailing and stages many regatas, and many companies specialise in chartering sailing boats both with and without a skipper and crew. The Real Federación Española de Vela (☎ 91 519 50 08; www.rfev.es in Spanish) maintains a calendar of windsurfing and sailing regatas, as well as regulations governing sailing in Spanish waters.

Canyoning & Puenting

If walking, sliding, diving, jumping and swimming down canyons is your thing, Spain's top *barranquismo* (canyoning) centres are found in Aragón's Parque de la Sierra y Cañones de Guara (p428), which is famous for its deep throats, powerful torrents and narrow gorges, and the Río Verde north of Almuñécar (p789) in southern Spain. May to September are generally the best months.

For a list of hyperbaric chambers and diving-accident facilities in Spain, check www.scuba-doc.com/divsp.htm.

The website www.spainforvisitors.com/sections/activities.htm is a good all-purpose website that provides links to a host of activities in Spain, including ballooning, skiing, walking, sailing and windsurfing.

Valencia's choice as host for the 2007 America's Cup may have delighted Spanish sailors, but landlocked Switzerland looking for a home port was responsible rather than Spanish sailing prowess.

Another popular activity run by adventure outfits all over Spain is swing jumping or *puenting* (which is the Spanglish way of saying 'jumping from a high bridge'). Unlike bungee jumping, where there's rebound, the idea is to jump out far, snug in two harnesses and two cords, and free fall (reaching up to 170km/h) into a pendulum-like swing action.

HANG-GLIDING & PARAGLIDING

If you want to take to the skies either *ala delta* (hang-gliding) or *parapente* (paragliding), there are a number of specialised clubs and adventure tour companies. The **Real Federación Aeronáutica España** (☎ 91 508 29 50; www.rfae.org in Spanish) gives information on recognised schools and lists clubs and events. The best places for paragliding in Spain are Castejón de Sos (p430) in Aragón; Zahara de la Sierra (p730) and Parque Natural Sierra de Grazalema (p729) in Andalucía; Almuñécar (p790); and a number of places along Spain's Mediterranean coast. For hang-gliding try Montsec in Catalonia (p386) as well as the places listed above for paragliding.

For the lowdown on skydiving courses, drop zones (Seville is one of the most popular spots) and equipment hire, look no further than www.skydiveworldwide.com/europe/spain.php.

Camino de Santiago

We sophisticated citizens of the 21st century like our exercise, but a walk of 783km and a month or more of exposure to the extremes of the elements, blisters, cramp, tendonitis and exhaustion requires extra-special motivation. Yet in an unprecedented revival, unlike anything since the 13th century, ever larger numbers of people are following the medieval Camino de Santiago (Way of St James) pilgrimage route across northern Spain. Drive down any road running parallel to the Camino, and you'll see pilgrims of all sizes, ages and nationalities, heading ever westward, loaded down under weighty backpacks or cycling along trails marked with yellow arrows and scallop shells (Santiago's pre-eminent symbol). The motivation of today's pilgrims is in many ways similar to that of their predecessors hundreds of years ago. Medieval pilgrims trod the Camino for faith, penance, salvation, hope for the future, and a dab of adventure. Modern pilgrims do it for the Romanesque and Gothic art, the physical challenge, the gorgeous ever-changing landscapes, or to enjoy a cheap holiday, but also to decide what's next in life, take a spiritual or religious journey, or work out a midlife crisis. Today, too, the pilgrimage to Santiago can be a life-changing experience, and it will certainly be the experience of a lifetime.

Before people could take a plane or drive to Santiago, millions of pilgrims simply walked out of their doors in Germany, the British Isles, Scandinavia, Poland or France and made a beeline for Compostela along a huge network of trade routes, royal roads and trails that eventually came together in Spain. The Camino has even been credited with giving birth to the idea of Europe: 'Europe was born on the pilgrim road to Santiago,' said Goethe. Although in Spain there are many *caminos* (paths) to Santiago, by far the most popular is, and was, the Camino Francés (p93), which originated in France, crossed the Pyrenees at Roncesvalles and then headed west for 750km across the mountains, wheat and wine fields and forests of the regions of Navarra, La Rioja, Castilla and Galicia. Threaded across this vast space are Pamplona, Logroño, Burgos and León, as well as an endless string of villages, each with its own pilgrimage vestige. Whether you go by car or under your own power, the Camino de Santiago is a highlight of travelling in Spain.

HISTORY

What originally set Europe's feet moving? Tradition tells us that Pelayo, a 9th-century religious hermit living in a remote area of northwestern Iberia, followed a mysterious shining star to a Roman mausoleum hidden under briars. Inside were the remains of the apostle James the Greater (in Spanish, Santiago). Confirmed by the local bishop Teodomiro and Asturian king Alfonso the Chaste, the earthshaking discovery spread like wildfire and put the incipient Compostela indelibly on European maps. Today it's hard to imagine the impact of this news, but in that age pilgrimage to holy sites with relics was tantamount to obtaining a ticket to eternal salvation. Relics were sacred commodities: the more important the relic, the more important the shrine that held them. And Santiago's relics were gold: nearly intact and belonging to one of Jesus' apostles, making them Europe's finest. When word got out, the devoted hightailed it to Spain. (See the boxed text, p90, to find out how James the Greater's remains got to Iberia in the first place.)

Bad for early pilgrims, but very good for monarchs, was the lack of roads, bridges, towns, churches and basic services for people trying to get to Compostela. The road had to be built and settled. Taking advantage of the dearth

The Camino is also called the Way of the Stars (*Via Láctea* in Spanish) because the heavenly Milky Way appears to parallel the Camino on the ground. Charlemagne, it is said, dreamt that Santiago told him to follow the Milky Way to his tomb, making him the legendary first pilgrim.

of able-bodied souls, monarchs offered enormous privileges to settlers, who soon populated town after town. Northern Spain was also plagued by Christian versus Muslim skirmishes that made the going hazardous. Monarchs and ecclesiasts were no fools: they quickly put the apostle's image to work and he was reborn as the legendary Santiago Matamoros (Moorslayer), heading up the Christian troops and supposedly helping slaughter Muslim forces mounted on a white charger at key Reconquista battles. Benedictine monks from Cluny in France also recognised the advantage of close ties to the Camino and founded many monasteries and attendant churches along the Camino, helping to spread Romanesque art forms and the order's power. In the 12th century a French cleric compiled the *Liber Sancti Jacobi* (aka the *Book of St James*), a masterwork on the Santiago pilgrimage that includes a guidebook dividing the route from the Pyrenees into 13 stages.

After its 11th-to-13th-century heyday (rivalling even Rome and Jerusalem), the Camino suffered through the Protestant Reformation and nearly died out until its late-20th-century revival. The route's current success has pumped new life into some lost little corners of northern Spain.

INFORMATION

The Camino is not the yellow-brick road to Santiago. While it is way-marked with cheerful yellow arrows on everything including telephone poles, rocks, trees and the ground, the 'trail' itself is a mishmash of forest path, rural lanes, field track running parallel to highways, paved secondary roads and footpaths all strung together. Scallop shells, stuck in cement markers or stylised on metal signs, also show the way.

Tourist offices in northern Spain frequently offer local- and region-specific information on the Camino. 'Friends of the Camino' associations also provide invaluable information, especially the **Confraternity of St James** (% 020 7928 9988; www.csj.org.uk; 27 Blackfriars Rd, London, SE1 8NY, UK). The Confraternity's website lists details of associations in several other countries.

Pilgrim's Credential & Compostela Certificate

Modern pilgrims carry a *Credencial del Peregrino* (Pilgrim's Credential) that they get stamped daily in churches, bars and *refugios* (refuges), to gain access to the network of *refugios* and acquire a certificate of completion, the Compostela. Pilgrims who walk (or ride a horse) the last (not simply any) 100km or cycle the last 200km and claim a religious or spiritual motive for the journey can receive the Compostela from the Santiago cathedral's *Oficina de Acogida de Peregrinos* (% 981 56 24 19; Rúa do Vilar 1; www.archicompostela.org;

PAGAN QUEENS & STONE BOATS

In the year AD 44, pagan Queen Lupa was more than a little suspicious when two Palestinian refugees landed in her territory, near Padrón in western Galicia, with the decomposing and headless body of a Christian martyr, and requested permission to bury him. The apostle James, son of Zebedee and María Salomé, is by tradition thought to have preached in Iberia. Herod Agrippa had him executed on his return to Jerusalem and Santiago's followers whisked the body to Jaffa, from where they let Providence guide their stone boat on a miraculous sea voyage through the Straits of Gibraltar back to Galicia. Promising safe passage and burial, Queen Lupa sent the loyal disciples out to a field to retrieve two oxen to pull the body on a cart. Instead they found two wild bulls eager to gore them. Not to be daunted, the disciples prayed to Santiago, who transformed the bulls' ire into cowed obedience: the two beasts bowed their heads and were peacefully yoked. Impressed by this and other exploits, Queen Lupa converted to Christianity. Santiago then remained forgotten until Pelayo saw the star in the woods.



(9am-9pm). Get the Credential (€0.25) in the *refugios* of major cities, via a Friends of the Camino association, or at the monastery in Roncesvalles (where it costs €1).

Both documents are useful for pilgrims' discounts: ask about applicability at museums along the Camino and discount one-way airfares with Iberia.

Tours

Numerous outfits, both in and outside Spain, organise walking and cycling tours of varying duration. Established companies include **Experience Plus** (www.experienceplus.com), which leads both walking and cycling tours (from O Cebreiro and León respectively); as well as **Bravo Bike** (www.bravobike.com) and **Saddle Skedaddle** (www.skedaddle.co.uk) which specialise in cycling. **On Foot in Spain** (www.onfootinspain.com) and **Iberian Adventures** (www.iberianadventures.com) offer walking trips, including self-guided options with Iberian Adventures, where you walk on your own but are provided with maps, route notes, reserved accommodation and luggage transfers. **Saranjan** (www.saranjan.com) runs upmarket bus tours with some walking involved.

PLANNING

Remember: the Camino changes – sleeping facilities open and close, trails are detoured and prices fluctuate.

Where to Start

No official Camino starting point exists. People usually decide where to start depending on the time available and what they want to see. To walk the 'whole' route (meaning from Roncesvalles) allow at least five weeks; allow two weeks to cycle and give yourself a week by car. Touring cyclists riding on the roads will inevitably go faster than mountain bikers using the mostly off-road walkers' trail. If you use a car, your experience will be more one of looking at the Camino than of doing it, but you will have the flexibility to explore many additional sites that are unfeasible by foot or bicycle.

When to Go

The Camino can be done any time of the year. From October to May there are few people on the road but in winter there will be snow, rain and bitter winds. In May and June the wildflowers are glorious and the endless fields of cereals turn from green to toasty gold, making the landscapes a huge draw. July and August bring crowds of summer vacationers, overcrowded *refugios* and scorching heat, especially in the middle section through Castilla y León. September is less crowded and the weather still stable, making it a pleasant month to travel. Santiago's feast day, 25 July, is another popular time to converge on the city. See Santiago de Compostela (p540) for more details.

The Confraternity of St James website (with great links, online bookshop, and historical and practical information) is the one not to miss:

www.csj.org.uk.

Cyclists seeking practical information and advice will want to check out groups.yahoo.com/group/santiago_bicicleta.

CAMINO BOOKS

Outstanding books include David Gittitz and Linda Davidson's *The Pilgrimage Road to Santiago: The Complete Cultural Handbook*; William Melczer's translation of the 12th-century *Pilgrim's Guide to Santiago de Compostela*; Jack Hitt's quirky, modern, personal account *Off the Road*; and Nancy Frey's contemporary analysis of the pilgrimage's popularity, *Pilgrim Stories: On and Off the Road to Santiago*. John Brierley's popular *A Pilgrim's Guide to the Camino de Santiago* attends to both the 'outer and inner pathways', with an updated (and lighter-weight) edition published in 2006.

What to Take

The lighter the load, the easier the walking and cycling. In summer, pilgrims ideally get by with about 8kg to 10kg of clothing (quick-drying trousers, shorts, T-shirts, jumper, socks and footwear), sleeping bag, guidebook and any favourite personal items (camera, sunscreen, toiletries, blister pack). Winter pilgrims will need adequate all-weather gear. For walkers, lightweight, flexible boots with good ankle support are sufficient. Even experienced hikers often get tendonitis (and blisters) from wearing heavy boots on the relatively flat terrain of the *meseta* (the high tableland of central Spain). Cyclists will need panniers and helmet as a minimum. With the yellow arrows and detailed guidebooks, buying maps is unnecessary.

Sleeping

Those carrying the Credential can stay in *refugios*. Charging €3 to €6 (in Galicia, only a donation is required in the public *refugios*), most *refugios* have dorm rooms, bathrooms, space to hang laundry and sometimes kitchen facilities. As a rule it's first come, first served. Cyclists may have to wait until 8pm before being admitted to give preference to walkers. Pilgrims with support vehicles are at the bottom of the preference totem pole. In summer the *refugios* quickly fill and people start getting up earlier and earlier to race to the next *refugio* to ensure a bed space instead of enjoying the Camino.

Numerous alternatives, albeit more expensive, exist all along the Camino: *hostales* (budget hotels), hotels and rural guesthouses. Another option is to carry a tent. Camping grounds intermittently coincide with the Camino (see www.campingsonline.com). For lodging information in this book, see the specific towns in the Basque Country, Navarra & La Rioja (p449), Castilla y León (p175) and Galicia (p538) chapters.

Eating

Restaurants all along the route offer an economical *menú del día* (daily set menu) from €7 to €12, which most often includes three courses, wine or water and bread. Bread, cheese, fruit and cold cuts for picnics are readily available at small markets in the many towns and villages en route.

Getting There & Around

Since the Camino Francés has no fixed starting point, you can join the trail at any point along the way. See city sections in the Basque Country, Navarra & La Rioja (p449), Castilla y León (p175) and Galicia (p538) chapters for transport details.

You can parallel the route by car following the blue-and-yellow high-way signs. Covering the entire route by public transport is difficult unless you're travelling from one major town to the next and skipping the smaller villages. Information boards in the *refugios* usually have updated transport information.

Some 300 *refugios* (refuges) along all of the *caminos* (paths) are listed in easy-to-follow Spanish, along with heaps more good info, at www.caminosantiago.org, the site of the Spanish Friends of the Camino Federation.

CAMINO FRANCÉS

The highlights of the Camino Francés from Roncesvalles to Santiago de Compostela are detailed here. For more specific information on the major towns in Navarra, La Rioja, Castilla y León and Galicia, please see the corresponding chapters.

Roncesvalles to Pamplona

Just north of Roncesvalles, the Camino Francés dramatically enters Spain at the same Pyrenean pass immortalised in the French epic *Song of Roland* and which Napoleon used to launch his 1802 occupation of Spain. Diminutive Roncesvalles, 45km from Pamplona, admirably sets the tone for this extraordinary route. Its 13th-century Gothic church contains the first statue of Santiago dressed as a pilgrim (with scallop shells and staff) and a finely sculpted 13th-century Virgin and child encased in silver. At the daily Mass, the church's canons bless pilgrims using a prayer dating from the 12th century.

Beautiful beech forests surround Roncesvalles and are the Camino's first and last. The trail progressively descends through rural pastures, dense mixed forests and picturesque villages, whose three-storey white houses with brightly coloured shutters and steep peaked roofs (for the winter snows) line the undulating road.

Long before people were running with the bulls down the streets of Pamplona in a frenzy of San Fermín madness, pilgrims overnighted here. In the 11th century Pamplona became an official stop along the Camino, cementing its prosperity. Don't be put off by the cathedral's bland neoclassical façade: just inside are the pure, soaring lines of the 14th-century Gothic interior. The 15th-century alabaster tombs of the Navarran king Carlos III El Noble and his wife, Leonor, are particularly fine.

Pamplona to Estella

Heading west out of Pamplona, the Sierra del Perdón, with its long line of electricity-producing windmills, rises ahead of you. From the pass over the *sierra*, you can see down the long valley that leads to Puente la Reina, where the Camino Aragonés, coming from the east, joins up with the Camino Francés. Also in the valley (a patchwork quilt of wheat, white asparagus,

Romans worshipped Venus on the Galicia coast and when Santiago arrived he took her place on the scallop shell.



grapes and the first olive trees) is one of the Camino's emblematic spots: Eunate, a remarkable 12th-century, octagonal chapel sitting in the middle of a wheat field.

Puente la Reina's (Gares) main draw is its striking 11th-century bridge. Notice its diamond-shaped piers and hollows in the arches that help reduce water resistance when the Río Arga rises during floods.

The Romanesque portals of Puente la Reina's Iglesia de Santiago, Cirauqui's Iglesia de San Román and Estella's Iglesia de San Pedro de la Rúa, all with Mudéjar-influenced lobed Romanesque arches carved with complicated knots, are the only ones of their kind along the Camino. The area's microclimate makes the flowers (especially the roses and geraniums) the envy of any gardener.

The first monumental Romanesque architecture along the route finally makes an appearance in Estella: the outstanding portal of the Iglesia de San Miguel, the cloister of the Iglesia de San Pedro de la Rúa and the Palacio de los Reyes de Navarra. On the Palacio, look for the vices of sloth (a donkey playing a harp while a dog listens), lust (snakes sucking on the breasts of a woman) and avarice (naked people with money bags around their necks) high up on the street-corner capital.

Estella to Viana

Just outside Estella, at the Bodega de Irache, the winery owners tempt virtuous pilgrims with a free wine and water fountain. If you're tempted to take the wine away, it's sold cheap in an adjacent vending machine! Evergreen oaks and wine groves fill the undulating landscapes until a very long open stretch through wheat fields leads through the sleepy towns of Los Arcos, Sansol and Torres del Río. In Torres another stunning eight-sided Romanesque church, the Iglesia del Santo Sepulcro, sits quietly in the middle of the hillside village. To see the inside, complete with a rare 13th-century Christ figure (crucified with four nails), it's necessary to locate the local key lady. Viana is Navarra's last town.

Viana to Santo Domingo de la Calzada

Wine and wheat dominate the landscapes during this stretch and for good reason: La Rioja reds, the grapes for which grow in the iron-rich soils and are fed by the great Río Ebro and its tributaries, are some of Spain's finest. Logroño's Gothic Iglesia de Santiago contains a large Renaissance altarpiece depicting scenes from the life of the saint, including his violent Santiago Matamoros incarnation.

The façade's 17th-century Matamoros image appears to be a musketeer cutting Mt Rushmore-style heads. Be sure not to miss Michelangelo's crucifixion painting behind the main altar in the Catedral de Santa María la Redonda.

Little Nájera was capital of Navarra during Navarra's era of greatest power and splendour in the 11th century. Inside the fascinating Monasterio de Santa María la Real, members of Navarra's early nobility are buried around a miraculous cave where a statue of the Virgin was discovered by the king while out hunting. The 15th-century walnut choir stalls are arguably the finest along the Camino. The monastery has been undergoing restoration work but should be at least partly open by the time you get there.

From Nájera the Camino heads to one of the road's wackiest places, Santo Domingo de la Calzada. Named for its energetic, 11th-century founder Santo Domingo (who cleared forest and built roadways, a bridge, a pilgrim's hospice and a church), the cathedral has long been the major attraction (see p496).

Years when 25 July falls on a Sunday are considered 'Holy Years' (Año Santo/Jacobeo). In these years Catholic pilgrims can earn plenary indulgences (erasing all one's sins), partly explaining the Camino's popularity. The next years not to miss are 2010 and 2021.

Holy Years tend to bring improvements to the Camino's infrastructure. Around the 1993 Jacobeo there was a marked increase in public phones along the route. The 2004 Holy Year saw an explosion of internet facilities, which today are free in a lot of *refugios*.



Santo Domingo de la Calzada to Burgos

After entering Castilla y León province, the Camino passes through the densely forested Montes de Oca, once a thieves' haven, to the isolated monastery at San Juan de Ortega, whose do-gooder founder was Santo Domingo's disciple. On the vernal and autumnal equinoxes, the Miracle of the Light draws thousands to the church to see a shaft of light hit a Romanesque capital depicting the Annunciation.

In the hills after San Juan, the Camino runs by Atapuerca, Europe's most productive palaeontological site, loaded with human fossil remains dating back 1.3 million years.

Burgos overwhelms with its art and architectural riches. Not to be missed is the 13th-century Gothic cathedral, with its three eight-pointed-star vaults magnificently illuminating the main aisle and two chapels.

Burgos to León

The *meseta* begins after Burgos and continues in endless rolls of waving wheat for the next 200km across Burgos, Palencia and (most of) León provinces. People usually either love or hate this section of open, exposed territory where the largely adobe villages are few and far between. Villages are set low in long valleys (intermittently bisected by small, poplar-lined rivers), which rise up to the high, barren plains. Despite its apparent monotony, the stretch is filled with important testaments to the Camino's historical importance.

The crumbling ruins of Castrojeriz' castle rise majestically from the valley floor and the town's four large churches attest to more prosperous times. In Frómista, you'll find one of the jewels of early Spanish Romanesque architecture, the Iglesia de San Martín, with 315 corbels and fine interior capitals. Between Carrion de los Condes and Calzadilla de la Cueva, the Camino coincides with a long stretch of Roman road. Sahagún was a powerful and wealthy Benedictine centre by the 11th century. Most traces of that are gone now, but the Mudéjar-influenced brick Romanesque churches merit a visit (look for the horseshoe arches and the clever way the bricks are placed in geometric patterns). Before reaching León, the Camino runs through a long series of villages that run together along paved, busy roads.

In León the Camino reaches its architectural apex at the Romanesque Iglesia de San Isidoro and the Gothic Catedral de Santa María La Blanca. Considered the Sistine Chapel of Romanesque painting, San Isidoro's Panteón Real contains magnificently preserved frescoes depicting the most important scenes from Christ's life. The sublime cathedral's nearly 2000 sq metres of stained-glass windows, dating from the 13th to the 19th centuries, make them the best collection in Europe after Chartres in France.

León to Villafraanca del Bierzo

Hospital de Órbigo has an impressive medieval bridge and is famed for its association with the outlandish chivalry of a 15th-century knight, Don

To visit Atapuerca check the website www.atapuerca.net.

Suero de Quiñones, who jousted with every knight who passed this way for a whole month in order to free himself of an obligation to wear an iron ring round his neck every Thursday as a token of devotion to his beloved. After Hospital de Órbigo, the Camino finally returns to the mountains. Gateway to the mountain villages (which are collectively known as the Maragatería), Astorga has good Roman ruins and Gaudí's fantastical neo-Gothic Palacio Episcopal (inside you'll find an excellent museum with items relating to the Camino).

From Astorga the Camino progressively ascends through small villages (now back to wood and stone houses) nearly abandoned before the pilgrimage's revitalisation in the early 1990s, including Rabanal del Camino (a favourite stopover that even has a tiny Benedictine monastery founded in 2001). The high point (in more ways than one) is La Cruz de Ferro (1504m); the tiny iron cross is lodged in a long wooden pole set into an ancient pile of rocks. (Pilgrims bring stones to this pile – sometimes from home and sometimes picked up a few yards away – and in the last several years some have also left behind all manner of personal items on and around the pole: photos, bandanas, a braid of hair, cigarette lighter, messages etc.)

The trail makes a long, steep descent to the large, fertile valley, surrounded by mountains, known as the El Bierzo. The Camino cuts straight across the fairly industrialised valley, through the large city of Ponferrada, most famous for its impressive castle (the Templars only occupied it for about 20 years) and then through various towns before reaching El Beirzo's western edge at Villafranca del Bierzo.

At Villafranca's Romanesque Iglesia de Santiago, pilgrims too ill to go further could receive pardon at the Puerta del Perdón (the church's north door), just as if they had reached Santiago.

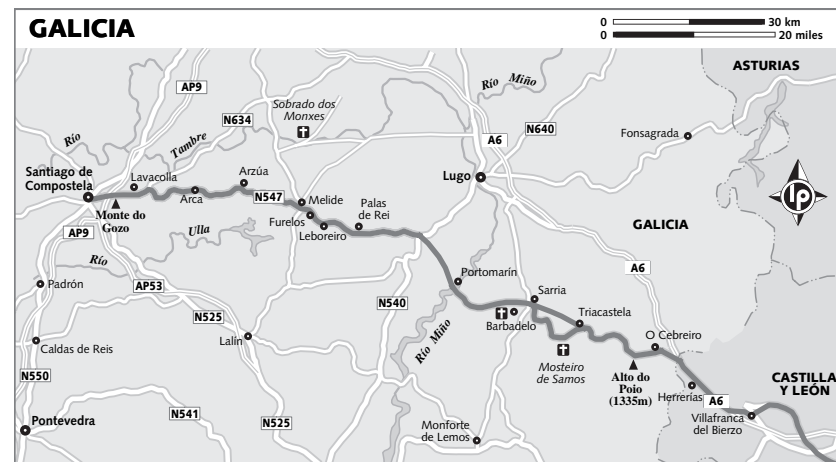
Villafranca del Bierzo to Samos

After gently ascending the long Valcarce river valley to Herrerías, the Camino abruptly rises up the imposing hillside to the pass at O Cebreiro, famous not only for attracting terrible weather, but as one of the earliest pilgrim way stations (a monastery was founded here in 836!) and the legendary locale of the Holy Grail, culminating in a 14th-century miracle in which the host and wine literally turned into the flesh and blood of Christ. Nine *pallozas* (circular, thatched-roof dwellings used since pre-Roman times) and adjacent stone houses (nearly every second one is a bar or hostel) make up this singular village.

Once you reach Galicia everything changes: it's permanently green and hilly, there are countless villages and hamlets, the grand monuments disappear and are replaced by small country churches, the houses are all stone, the roofs are slate and the rural people speak the local language, Galego. The first section through Lugo province is particularly beautiful, with old-growth oak and chestnut stands lining the way. Peeking in barn doors you'll see cobwebbed remnants of the area's strong ties to the land and its late move towards mechanisation, such as wooden ploughs and carts. Don't be surprised to see wizened old men and women (the latter dressed in black) carrying huge scythes to the field or trundling high wheelbarrow loads of hay, greens or potatoes.

In Triacastela the Camino diverges, with both paths reuniting in Sarria. Going by way of Samos allows you to see the grand Benedictine monastery, the Mosteiro de Samos, founded in the 6th century; it has two lovely cloisters (one with odd, busy mermaids and the other filled with roses), an imposing 18th-century church and four walls of murals detailing the life of St Benedict painted in the 1950s after the monastery burnt down.

Yellow arrows, the unofficial Camino blaze, were invented by the indomitable priest from O Cebreiro (Galicia), Elias Valiña Sampredo, back in the 1980s. He and his nephews went out with cans of yellow paint (because yellow is easy to see) and marked the historical ways.



Sarria to Melide

Built on a hill topped by a crumbling castle, Sarria is the usual launching point for people wanting to undertake the last 100km. The Camino winds through village after hamlet after village (such as Barbadelo, with a well-preserved Romanesque church) and steeply descends to Portomarín, set on a hill above the Río Miño. In the 1960s the old town was flooded to make way for a hydroelectric plant further downriver and the most important buildings, such as the fortresslike Romanesque Iglesia de San Juan, were moved stone by stone to the new town centre. The next town, Palas de Rei, has little to attract attention. From Palas to Melide there are lovely rural lanes, and the villages of Leboeiro and Furelos are particularly well preserved.

Melide has not only Galicia's oldest *cruceiro* (standing crucifix) along the main drag but also a good ethnographic museum in the town's small historical quarter. The museum covers the area's prehistory (pre-Roman and Roman) as well as local trades practised for centuries and lost in the last 50 years, such as shoemaking, blacksmithing and carpentry.

Melide to Santiago de Compostela

The Camino rolls through numerous hamlets bridged by eucalyptus forest to finally reach Arzúa (the cow's-milk cheese and honey are great here) and then Arca, a common last-night stopover. Lavacolla, where pilgrims used to cleanse themselves before heading into town, sits at the base of the last great hill, the climax of which is the Monte do Gozo (Mount Joy), crowned by a huge sculpture in honour of the Pope's 1989 visit to Compostela. Pilgrims once used to see the cathedral's towers from here but now the moving view is obscured by eucalyptus trees! The last 6km into town are paved and poorly marked.

From the Rúa de San Pedro it's downhill to the old medieval gateway of Porta do Camiño. Head up the pedestrian street and then down past the cathedral's northern façade and through the tunnel under the Archbishop's Palace to the magnificent cathedral square, the Praza do Obradoiro. The most important pilgrims' rituals revolve around the 12th-century Pórtico da Gloria at the cathedral's western end and the area behind the main altar, where pilgrims climb stairs to hug a Romanesque Santiago statue and then descend to the crypt below to pay respect to the relics. A fitting end to the

A short detour from Melide is the Cistercian monastery of Sobrado dos Monxes, featuring an ornate Galician baroque façade. Though it fell into disrepair in the 19th century, the monastery has since been restored.

SLEEPING ON THE HOME STRETCH

To do the last 100km walking village to village, Sarria is the most convenient starting point. This actually means you'll do 120km and it's five full days' walking to Santiago. The towns listed here go from stage to stage and in each of them at least a dozen sleeping options exist. The lodgings listed are in the middle of the budget price-range and centrally located (except the hotel in Sarria, which is by the train station), and have en-suite facilities. Taxi services, posted in *refugios* (refuges) and hotels, can ferry luggage if you'd rather not carry it yourself. Once you've reached Santiago, accommodation options are plentiful.

Hotel Roma (☎ 982 53 22 11; hotelroma1930@yahoo.es; Calvo Sotelo 2; s/d €35/46) Sarria.

Pensión Arenas (☎ 982 54 53 86; Plaza Condes Fenosa; s/d €26/36) Portomarín.

Hostal Vilariño (☎ 982 38 01 52; Avenida Compostela 16; s/d €24/36) Palas de Rei.

Hostal Teodora (☎ 981 50 00 83; www.casateodora.com; Avenida Lugo 38; s/d €24/40; a) Arzúa.

Hotel O Pino (☎ 981 51 10 35; www.hotelopino.com; Rúa de Arca 23; s/d €27/40; a i) Arca.

Santiago See Sleeping, p545.

pilgrimage is witnessing the cathedral's big finale staged before Mass ends: the swinging of the mighty Botafumeiro incense burner (see p544). It's truly a spectacle not to be missed.

OTHER CAMINOS DE SANTIAGO

The other Caminos de Santiago also have yellow arrows (more sporadic), *refugios* (fewer) and important pilgrimage monuments, but they lack the marvellous infrastructure and crowds of the Camino Francés.

In the past pilgrims coming via Toulouse in southern France would cross the Pyrenees at the Somport pass (1632m) and take the Camino Aragónés through Jaca and Sangüesa to join the main route at Puente la Reina.

Those who crossed into Iberia at Irún or sailed down to ports such as Santander, San Vicente de la Barquera and Avilés, connected up with the Caminos del Norte, following the Basque, Cantabrian and Asturian coasts, and turned inland at any number of spots to join up with the Camino Francés. The oldest known pilgrimage route to Santiago connected the Asturian city of Oviedo with Compostela.

The Vía de la Plata brought pilgrims north from southern Spain via Seville, Zafra, Mérida, Cáceres, Salamanca and Zamora along a Roman trade route. This trail either heads north to Astorga and the main route or enters Galicia via the Puebla de Sanabria towards Ourense.

The Camino Portugués also had inland and coastal versions and crossed into Galicia at Verín or Tui. Fourteenth-century British pilgrims popularised the Camino Inglés by sailing to the Galician ports of A Coruña and Ferrol then proceeding south on foot via Pontedeume and Betanzos to Sigüeiro and finally Santiago de Compostela.

From Santiago some pilgrims continued trekking to the end of the known world, Fisterra. They still do today, but most take the bus. Off the end of Fisterra's lighthouse, pilgrims burn stinking bits of clothes while watching the sun set into the endless blue horizon.

The Confraternity of St James website www.csj.org.uk publishes excellent guides to all of the alternative *caminos*.

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Food & Drink

Food and wine are among the great pleasures of Spanish life, in part because of the extraordinary variety of dishes that Spain has to offer. Indeed, if you travel from one Spanish *pueblo* (village) to the next, chances are that you'll find a different speciality in each.

Climate has always played a central role in the development of the Spanish diet and it continues to play a defining role in the eating habits of Spaniards. All along the Spanish coasts, you'll discover that no-one treats fish and seafood with such respect, from the astonishingly varied Atlantic offerings of Galicia in the northwest or the Basque Country in the north to the seafood-rich paellas and other rice dishes of the Mediterranean. Even resolutely landlocked Madrid is known as 'the best port in Spain', such is the *madrileño* (Madrid residents') devotion to fresh seafood. As the weather warms, Spaniards from all over the country head for the coast, partly in search of the beach, but just as often in search of a good meal.

If you head inland, a different world awaits where highlights include the hearty stews and exquisitely roasted meats of Castilla, *jamón* (cured ham) and other *embutidos* (cured meats) of the Spanish interior or the olives of Andalucía. Those same Spaniards who travelled to the seashore in summer make the reverse journey in winter when the cold climate calls for the fortification of a warming meal.

Everywhere they go, at any time of the year, Spaniards will most likely accompany their meal with a Spanish wine, especially a red from La Rioja.

For all the variety of Spanish cooking, it's the rare combination of simplicity and innovation that sets Spain's cuisine apart.

The laws of traditional Spanish cooking are deceptively simple: take the freshest ingredients and interfere with them as little as possible. While the rest of the world was developing sophisticated sauces, Spanish chefs were experimenting with subtlety, creating a combination of tastes in which the flavour of the food itself was paramount. Nowhere is this more evident than in the art of humble tapas – bite-sized morsels whose premise is so simple as to have all the hallmarks of genius – where carefully selected meats, seafood or vegetables were given centre stage and allowed to speak for themselves. Such are the foundations on which Spanish cooking is built.

In recent years, however, Spanish chefs have taken the world by storm with their version of *nouvelle cuisine* which could just be Europe's most exciting culinary innovation. Chefs like Ferran Adria and Mari Arzak have developed their own culinary laboratories, experimenting with all that is new while holding fast to the traditions of simplicity that define traditional Spanish cuisine.

This blend of strong tradition and cutting-edge cuisine is illustrated by a simple fact: Spain is home to both the world's oldest restaurant, *Restaurante Sobrino de Botín* (p150) in Madrid, and *El Bulli* (p356) in Catalonia, a temple of gastronomic experimentation that was recently voted the world's best restaurant by *Restaurant* magazine.

Whether eating at home with the family or going out to a restaurant for a meal, eating is a social event that is always taken seriously enough to allocate hours for the purpose. Often, the conviviality of the surroundings and the company are as important as the food itself.

The rest of the world is finally waking up to what Spaniards have known for centuries – that there's so much more to the Spanish table than paella – which is why Spaniards spend more on food per capita than anyone else in Europe. It is, after all, one of the grand passions of Spanish life.

The Food of Spain & Portugal – A Regional Celebration, by Elisabeth Luard (2005), demystifies the food and wine of the various Spanish regions with recipes and the context from which they arise.

Spain is the world's largest producer of olive oil and much of the Italian olive oil sold around the world is made from Spanish olives.

THE ORIGIN OF TAPAS

Medieval Spain was a land of isolated settlements and people on the move – traders, pilgrims, emigrants and journeymen – who had to cross the lonely high plateau of Spain en route elsewhere. All along the route, travellers holed up in isolated inns where innkeepers, concerned about drunken men on horseback setting out from their village, developed a tradition of putting a 'lid' (tapa) atop a glass of wine or beer. Their purpose was partly to keep the bugs out, but primarily to encourage people not to drink on an empty stomach.

In this sense, little has changed and the tapa continues to serve the dual purposes of providing enjoyment and a lid to enable you to develop new levels of stamina during long Spanish nights.

STAPLES & SPECIALITIES

The basics in Spanish cooking are simple enough: bread, olive oil, wine and lots of garlic, a culinary legacy that dates back to Roman times. The eight centuries of Muslim rule in Spain is reflected in the use of spices such as saffron (an essential element of paella) and, in desserts, the predominance of honeyed sweets. Spain was also the centre of an empire and from its South American colonies came potatoes and tomatoes (not to mention coffee and chocolate).

The typical *carta* (menu) begins with starters such as *ensaladas* (salads), *sopas* (soups) and *entremeses* (hors d'oeuvres). The latter can range from a mound of potato salad with olives, asparagus, anchovies and a selection of cold meats – a meal in itself – to simpler cold meats, slices of cheese and olives.

Another essential presence on the Spanish table, and one that is usually eaten as a first course (or as tapas), is cured ham from the high plateau, known as *jamón serrano*. Every *tasca* (tapas bar) has it. *Jamón ibérico* is the best ham in Spain; its made from the hindquarters of wild pigs that have fed exclusively on acorns and the *jamón* from Extremadura or Salamanca is considered to be the finest. Highly seasoned *chorizo* (pork sausage) is also made from acorn-fed pigs. The Spanish will cure almost any kind of meat, including cows and horses; it's then called *cecina*. Spanish cured meats are a bit like Italian prosciutto, but are deep red rather than blushing pink, offer more to the teeth, have a richer aroma and last longer in the mouth.

The basic ingredients of later courses can be summarised under the general headings of *pollo* (chicken), *carne* (meat), *mariscos* (seafood), *pescado* (fish) and *arroz* (rice). Meat may be subdivided into *cerdo* (pork), *ternera* (beef) and *cerdo* (lamb). If you want a *guarnición* (side order), such as *verduras* (vegetables) you may have to order separately.

When it comes to fish, the Spanish favourites are *bonito* (tuna), *sardinas* (sardines) and *anchoas* (anchovies). Shellfish is another favourite. But the fish with which Spaniards have the closest relationship, historically, indeed almost spiritually, is *bacalao* (dried and salted cod). For many centuries roving Spanish fishermen have harvested the codfish from the grand banks of Newfoundland and Norway, salting it and bringing it home looking more like a rock than food. After soaking it several times in water it is rehydrated and relieved of its salt content, enriching the flavour and improving the texture. Originally it was considered food for the poor and some called it 'vigil day beef' for its use during fasts. The best place to enjoy it is in the Basque Country, where they revere it. Try sweet red peppers stuffed with *bacalao* and you'll be inclined to agree.

Inland, you're far more likely to encounter *legumbres* (legumes) such as *garbanzos* (chickpeas), *judias* (beans) and *lentejas* (lentils). Of the hearty stews, the king is *fabada* (pork and bean stew) from Asturias, although *cocido*,

a hotpot or stew with a noodle broth, carrots, cabbage, chickpeas, chicken, *morcilla* (blood sausage) beef and lard is a special favourite in Madrid and León. Other popular staples in Spain's interior include *cerdo asado* (roast lamb), *cochinillo* (roast suckling pig) and *patatas con huevos fritos* (baked potatoes with eggs).

If you opt for tapas, your choice is endless because anything can be a tapa: a handful of olives, a slice of ham and cheese on bread, a bit of *torrillo de patatas* (potato and onion omelette). Other common orders include: *boquerones* (white anchovies in vinegar which are delicious and tangy); *albóndigas* (good old meat balls); *pimientos de Padrón* (little green peppers from Galicia – some are hot and some not); *gambas* (prawns, either done *al ajillo*, with garlic, or *a la plancha*, grilled); *chipirones* (baby squid, served in various ways); *calamares a la Romana* (deep-fried calamari rings)...the list goes on.

DRINKS

Wine

Wine accompanies almost every meal in Spain, where people drink often but rarely to excess. Sometimes Spaniards mix wine with water, especially when giving it to drinkers of a youngish age. Eighteen is the legal age, but generally Spaniards are ready to drink wine when they start to ask for it. They grow up with responsible attitudes towards drink, and generally keep that attitude for life. So don't look for a piss-up or a Bacchanalian revel. Here wine is a food and something to be savoured, not a drug.

Probably the most common premium red table wine you'll encounter will be from La Rioja, in the north. The principal grape of Rioja is the Tempranillo, widely believed to be a mutant form of the Pinot Noir. Its wine is smooth and fruity, seldom as dry as its supposed French counterpart. Look for the 'DO Rioja' classification on the label and you'll find a good wine. Not far behind are the wine-producing regions of Ribera del Duero (p230) and Navarra (p479) while the Valdepeñas area (p254) of southern Castilla-La Mancha has less variety but is generally well-priced and remains popular.

For white wines, the Ribeiro wines of Galicia are well regarded, while one of Spain's most charming white wines is Albariño, also from Galicia. This crisp, dry and refreshing drop is a rare Spanish wine as it's designated by grape rather than region. The Penedès area in Catalonia produces whites and sparkling wine such as *cava*, the traditional champagnelike toasting drink of choice for Spaniards at Christmas.

Sherry, the unique wine of Andalucía (especially around Jerez; see the boxed text, p723), is Spain's national dram and is found in every bar, *tasca* and restaurant in the land. Dry sherry, called *fino*, begins as a fairly ordinary white wine of the Palomino grape, but it's 'fortified' with grape brandy. This stops fermentation and gives the wine taste and smell constituents that enable

To the Heart of Spain, by Ann & Larry Walker (1997), is a cookbook, wine book and travelogue of their food-inspired travels through Spain.

The discovery of *cava* (sparkling wine) is credited, at least in France, to Dom Pérignon – upon tasting it for the first time he called out to his brethren, 'Come quickly! I am drinking stars!'

A MARK OF QUALITY

Spanish wine is subject to a complicated system of wine classification with a range of designations marked on the bottle. These range from the straightforward *vino de mesa* (table wine) to *vino de la tierra*, which is a wine from an officially recognised wine-making area. If they meet certain strict standards for a given period, they receive *Denominación de Origen* (DO; Denomination of Origin) status. An outstanding wine region gets the *Denominación de Origen Calificada* (DOC), while *reserva* and *gran reserva* are other indications of quality. The only DOC wines come from the La Rioja region (p494) in northern Spain, which was demarcated in 1926, and the small Priorat area (see the boxed text, p383) in Catalonia.

The recipe for cured meats such as *jamón* (ham) comes from a noble Roman, Cato the Elder, who changed the course of Spanish culinary history with his tome *De Re Rustica*.

it to age into something sublime. It's taken as an *aperitivo* (apéritif) or as a table wine with seafood. Amontillado and Oloroso are sweeter sherries, good for after dinner. Manzanilla is grown only in Sanlúcar de Barrameda (p722) near the coast in southwestern Andalucía and develops a slightly salty taste that is very appetising. When ordering it be sure to say 'vino de Manzanilla', since *manzanilla* alone means chamomile tea.

Then there is that famous Spanish wine drink, sangria. Don't expect too much from it and remember that it was developed as a way to make use of bad wine. It's usually a red wine mixed with citrus juice and zest, a bit of cinnamon, sometimes some rum and always diabetes-inducing amounts of sugar.

Other Drinks

Spaniards' love of *cerveza* (beer) makes perfect sense given that the weather is often fiercely hot and the food salty. In bars and *tascas* almost all the beer is on tap, so sidle up to the bar and order *una caña*, for a small beer, or *una jarra* for a greater thirst. Common brands are Cruzcampo, Mahou and San Miguel; the latter is the strongest at 5.4%.

Similar to beer, *sidra* (cider) is the speciality of Galicia, Asturias and the Basque Country; you can enjoy it fresh in a *sidrería* (cider bar), often poured straight from the barrel.

Aguardiente is the term for strong spirits, the most famous being Ponche Caballero. If you've ordered a whisky with coke (*whisky con coca cola*), you'll be expected to watch while the bartender pours your whisky...and continues pouring until you tell them to stop. You pay no extra regardless of the amount and the same applies to other spirits!

Horchata is a sweet, milky drink made from tiger nuts and sugar. Tea and coffee are unremarkable in Spain, but the hot chocolate is thick, rich and delicious.

CELEBRATIONS

In addition to the feasts of the calendar, there are many other reasons and excuses for Spaniards to have a fiesta, most of which are attached to the important rites of passage in a Spaniard's life – birthdays, anniversaries, first communions, graduations and weddings. Spanish fiestas will almost always be accompanied by groaning tables of food and by music, whether a live group or an impromptu performance by groups of women spontaneously breaking into song and clapping out Gypsy rhythms.

A BAR OR RESTAURANT BY ANY OTHER NAME

Plenty of places that serve food and drink go by the name of *bar* or *restaurante*, but there are plenty of variations on the theme.

- Bar de Copas – gets going around midnight and primarily hard drinks are served.
- Cervecería – the focus is on *cerveza* (beer) and there's plenty of the foamy stuff on tap.
- Horno de Asador – a restaurant with a wood-burning roasting oven.
- Marisquería – a bar or restaurant specialising in seafood.
- Tasca – a tapas bar.
- Terraza – an open-air bar, for warm-weather timpling only.
- Taberna – usually a rustic place serving tapas and *raciones* (large tapas): expect to see barrels used as tables and tile décor.
- Vinoteca – a bit more upmarket; wine bars where you can order by the glass.

Despite Spain's reputation as a country of wine-lovers, beer sales surpassed wine sales in Spain in the early 1990s.

The most important week of the year culminates in Easter, and there are special dishes associated with Holy Week. In some communities there is a Good Friday procession in which heavy floats are borne by penitents. In order to keep up their strength, they breakfast on *bacalao a la vizcaina* (dried and salted cod with chillies and capsicum).

As this is the biggest and most important holiday on the Spanish calendar, it's an important time for families and friends to come together to eat. Dishes that are often served during this period include *monas de pascua* (figures made of chocolate), *torta pascualina* (spinach and egg pie) and *torrija* (French toast). A popular Easter dish in Mallorca is *flan de pascuas* (Easter cheese flan), and *cordero pascual* (spring lamb) is common fare everywhere.

At Christmas, *turrón* is a country-wide favourite. It's a uniquely Spanish kind of nougat, whose recipe goes back to the 14th century and incorporates honey, almonds and sugar.

VEGETARIANS & VEGANS

Such is their love for meat, fish and seafood, many Spaniards, especially the older generation, don't really understand vegetarianism. As a result, dedicated vegetarian restaurants are pretty thin on the ground, particularly outside the major cities. Be aware, too, that cooked vegetable dishes often contain ham.

That said, while vegetarians – especially vegans – can have a hard time in Spain, the eating habits of Spaniards are changing and an ever-growing selection of vegetarian restaurants seems to be springing up around the country. Barcelona and, to a lesser extent Madrid, have plenty of vegetarian restaurants. Vegetarian restaurants are easy to find throughout this book – they're marked with a ✓ symbol.

Otherwise, salads are a Spanish staple and, in many restaurants, are a meal in themselves. You'll also come across the odd vegetarian paella, as well as dishes such as *verduras a la plancha* (grilled vegetables); *garbanzos con espinacas* (chickpeas and spinach); and numerous potato dishes, such as *patatas bravas* (potato chunks bathed in a slightly spicy tomato sauce) and *tortilla de patatas*. The prevalence of legumes ensures that *lentejas* and *judías* (beans) are also easy to track down, while *pan* (bread), *quesos* (cheeses), *alcachofas* (artichokes) and *aceitunas* (olives) are always easy to find. *Tascas* usually offer more vegetarian choices than sit-down restaurants.

If vegetarianism is rare among Spaniards, vegans will feel as if they've come from another planet. To make sure that you're not misunderstood, ask if dishes contain *huevos* (eggs) or *productos lácteos* (dairy). You might also want to check out *The New Spain – Vegetarian & Vegan Restaurants*, by Jean Claude Juston, a guide to being a vegetarian in Spain and available from L'Atelier (www.ivu.org/atelier).

EATING WITH KIDS

Food and children are two of the great loves for Spaniards, which means that children are always welcome, whether in a sit-down restaurant or in a chaotically busy bar. If highchairs or risers aren't available staff will improvise and you won't be made to feel uncomfortable as your children run amok. As for the food, children's menus may be rare, but Spanish fare is rarely spicy and kids tend to like it. Toddlers are usually fed straight from their parents' plate. When kids get hungry between meals it's easy to zip into the nearest *tasca* and get them a snack and there are also sweet shops every few blocks. See p842 for further information on travelling with children.

For an authoritative and comprehensive periodical on Spanish gastronomy, check www.spaingourmetour.com, which overflows with recipes and ideas for culinary explorations of Spain.

If you're British, and can't live without Spanish food after you've left Spain, www.delicioso.co.uk is an online Spanish delicatessen that can deliver Spain to your table.

HABITS & CUSTOMS

Spanish waiters are a breed apart. In smarter places, they're often young, attentive and switched on to the needs of patrons. In more traditional places, however, waiting is a career, often a poorly paid one, which is the preserve of old men (sometimes one old man) in white jackets and bow ties and for whom service with a smile is not part of the job description. In such places, they shuffle amid the tables, the weight of the world upon their shoulders, struggling with what seems a Sisyphean task. Getting their attention can be a challenge.

Somewhere in between are Spanish barmen who can be as informal as they are informed and who love to shout their orders to the kitchen and generally create a breezy atmosphere.

In simpler restaurants you may keep the same knife and fork throughout the meal. As each course is finished you set the cutlery aside and they whisk away the plates.

Most visitors complain not about the quality of Spanish food but its timing. *Comida/Almuerzo* (lunch) is the main, leisurely meal of the day and rarely begins before 2pm (kitchens usually stay open until 4pm). For *cena* (dinner), few Spaniards would dream of turning up before 9.30pm.

In the meantime, many bars serve tapas and *raciones* (large tapas) throughout the day. *Bocadillos* (filled rolls) are another option.

Desayuno (breakfast) is generally a no-nonsense affair taken at a bar on the way to work. A *café con leche* (coffee with milk) with a *bollo* (pastry) is the typical breakfast. Some people prefer a savoury start – you could go for a *sandwich mixto* (a toasted ham and cheese).

A Spanish *tostada* is simply buttered toast. Others go for an all-Spanish favourite, *chocolate con churros*, a lightly deep-fried stick of plain pastry immersed in thick hot chocolate.

If you're just eating tapas – which Spaniards generally eat between meals, as an accompaniment to a drink or as a prelude to the main event – you can either take a small plate and help yourself or simply point to the morsel you want. If you do this, keep track of what you eat by holding on to the toothpicks. If you particularly like something you can have a *media ración* (half ration) or even a full *ración*.

In some bars you'll also get a small (free) tapa when you buy a drink. Tapas are always taken with a drink, and almost always while standing at the bar. If you don't go out on a *tapeo* (tapas-bar crawl), then you haven't experienced Spain.

For extensive links to articles (in both Spanish and English) and recent books about Spanish food, look no further than www.carnegiejlibrary.org/subject/food/spain.html.

WOULD YOU LIKE SMOKE WITH THAT, SIR?

Those of you who remember with nostalgia the days of smoke-filled Spanish restaurants or the days when you could be served by a smoking Spanish bank-teller are in for a rude shock.

On 1 January 2006, the unthinkable happened: all Spanish bars, restaurants, offices and other enclosed public places became subject to strict antismoking legislation. Smoking is now banned in all workplaces, schools (like they had to ban this?), public transport and sports and cultural centres. The law also extends to bars and restaurants although these have an opt-out clause. Those establishments over 100 sq metres must have designated smoking areas, while smaller bars must make a choice – ban smoking or make the bar off-limits to children.

Little seems to have changed, however, when it comes to bars or smaller restaurants, or at least not so that you'd notice. According to Spain's Hospitality Federation, 85% of restaurants smaller than 100 sq metres have opted to remain smoker-friendly. We've also found only a handful of bars that have elected to become smoke-free and, of the rest, no-one seems to comply with the 'no-children' rule.

The traveller's friend is the *menú del día*, a set-price meal which comprises three courses, with bread and a drink thrown in; they're generally only available at lunchtime Monday to Friday and cost around €7 to €11. You'll be given a menu with five or six starters, the same number of mains and a handful of desserts – choose one from each category and don't even think of mixing and matching. If you can't face a full menu, a simpler option is the *plato combinado*, basically a meat-and-three-veg dish.

When it comes to tipping, most Spaniards leave small change or around €1 per person.

One final thing: don't jump out of your seats if people passing your table address you with a hearty *¡buen provecho!* They're just saying 'Enjoy your meal!'

COOKING COURSES

There are many terrific cooking courses throughout Spain:

Alambique (Map pp122-3; ☎ 91 559 78 58; www.alambique.com; Plaza de la Encarnación 2, Madrid) If your interest in cooking is more in passing than something you'd like to spend weeks doing, stop by this friendly store where English-language cooking classes start from €65.

Catacurian (☎ USA 1 800 945 8606, Spain 93 511 07 38; www.catacurian.com; Carrer del Progres 2, El Masroig, Tarragona, Catalonia) Head down to the rural wine region of Priorat for three- to 10-day wine and cooking classes. Catalan chef Alicia Juanpere and her American partner Jonathan Perret lead tours and teach the classes (in English). Three-day courses start from €1350.

Cooking Club (Map p113; ☎ 91 323 29 58; www.club-cooking.com in Spanish; Calle de Veza 33, Madrid) Regular and respected programme of classes encompassing a range of cooking styles from local Spanish to international dishes and from short to longer courses.

L'Atelier (☎ 958 85 75 01; www.ivu.org/atelier; Calle Alberca 21, Mecina, Granada) Award-winning vegetarian chef Jean-Claude Juston (formerly of Neal's Yard Bakery and other celebrated veggie eateries in London) runs vegetarian cookery courses the first week of every month at his welcoming little guesthouse in the magical Alpujarras valleys of Andalucía. One day costs €45.

EAT YOUR WORDS

Want to know *pil pil* from *pimiento*? *Salsa* from *sandía*? Get behind the cuisine scene by getting to know the language. For pronunciation guidelines see p877 and for a complete rundown on useful phrases check out Lonely Planet's *Spanish Phrasebook*.

Useful Phrases

Table for ..., please.

Una mesa para ..., por favor.

oo-na me-sa pa-ra ..., por fa-vor

Can I see the menu, please?

¿Puedo ver el menú, por favor?

pwe-do ver el me-noo, por fa-vor

Can I see the wine list, please?

¿La lista de vinos, por favor?

la lee-sta de vee-nos por fa-vor

Can you recommend a good local wine?

¿Me recomienda un buen vino del país?

me re-ko-myen-da oon bwen vee-no del pa-ees

Can I have (a beer), please?

¿(Una cerveza), por favor?

(oo-na ser-ve-sa) por fa-vor

Good health/Cheers!

¡Salud!

sa-loo

Do you have children's meals?

¿Tienen comidas para niños?

tye-nen ko-mee-das pa-ra nee-nyos

The bill, please.

La cuenta, por favor.

la kwen-ta por fa-vor

I'm vegetarian.

Soy vegetariano/a. (m/f)

soy ve-khe-ta-rya-no/a

The New Spanish Table, by Anya Von Bremzen (2006) is dedicated to the fusion of tradition and *nouvelle cuisine* that is taking the world by storm, not to mention 275 recipes.

Food Glossary

<i>a la parrilla</i>	<i>a la pa-ree-lya</i>	grilled
<i>aceitunas</i>	<i>a-thay-too-nas</i>	olives
<i>adobo</i>	<i>a-do-bo</i>	marinade
<i>aguacate</i>	<i>a-gwa-ka-te</i>	avocado
<i>ajo</i>	<i>a-kho</i>	garlic
<i>albóndiga</i>	<i>al-bon-dee-ga</i>	meatballs
<i>arroz</i>	<i>a-roth</i>	rice
<i>asado</i>	<i>a-sa-do</i>	roasted
<i>bacalao</i>	<i>ba-ka-low</i>	dried and salted cod
<i>berenjena</i>	<i>be-ren-khe-na</i>	aubergine, eggplant
<i>bistec</i>	<i>bees-tek</i>	steak
<i>bocadillo</i>	<i>bo-ka-dee-lyo</i>	bread roll with filling (usually without butter)
<i>boquerones</i>	<i>bo-ke-ro-nes</i>	anchovies marinated in wine vinegar
<i>butifarra</i>	<i>boo-tee-fa-ra</i>	sausage
<i>cabrito</i>	<i>ka-bree-to</i>	kid, baby goat
<i>calamares</i>	<i>ka-la-ma-res</i>	squid rings
<i>caldo</i>	<i>kal-do</i>	broth, stock
<i>callos</i>	<i>ka-lyos</i>	tripe
<i>camarón</i>	<i>ka-ma-ron</i>	small prawn, shrimp
<i>caracol</i>	<i>ka-ra-kol</i>	snail
<i>cebolla</i>	<i>the-bo-lya</i>	onion
<i>cerdo</i>	<i>ther-do</i>	pork
<i>chorizo</i>	<i>cho-ree-tho</i>	cooked spicy red sausage
<i>chuleta</i>	<i>choo-le-ta</i>	chop, cutlet
<i>churro</i>	<i>choo-ro</i>	long, deep-fried doughnut
<i>cochinillo</i>	<i>ko-chee-nee-lyo</i>	suckling pig
<i>codorniz</i>	<i>ko-dor-neeth</i>	quail
<i>coliflor</i>	<i>ko-lee-flor</i>	cauliflower
<i>conejo</i>	<i>ko-ne-kho</i>	rabbit
<i>confitura</i>	<i>kon-fee-too-ra</i>	jam
<i>cordero</i>	<i>kor-de-ro</i>	lamb
<i>empanadillas</i>	<i>em-pa-na-dee-lyas</i>	small pie, either savoury or sweet
<i>ensalada</i>	<i>en-sa-la-da</i>	salad
<i>escabeche</i>	<i>es-ka-be-che</i>	pickled, marinade
<i>estofado</i>	<i>es-to-fa-do</i>	stew
<i>frito</i>	<i>free-to</i>	fried
<i>galleta</i>	<i>ga-lye-ta</i>	biscuit
<i>granada</i>	<i>gra-na-da</i>	pomegranate
<i>helado</i>	<i>e-la-do</i>	ice cream
<i>langosta</i>	<i>lan-gos-ta</i>	lobster
<i>langostino</i>	<i>lan-gos-tee-no</i>	king prawn
<i>leche</i>	<i>le-che</i>	milk
<i>lechuga</i>	<i>le-choo-ga</i>	lettuce
<i>lomo</i>	<i>lo-mo</i>	loin (pork unless specified otherwise)
<i>maíz</i>	<i>ma-eeth</i>	corn
<i>mantequilla</i>	<i>man-te-kee-lya</i>	butter
<i>manzana</i>	<i>man-tha-na</i>	apple
<i>mejillones</i>	<i>me-khee-lyo-nes</i>	mussels
<i>menú del día</i>	<i>me-noo del dee-a</i>	daily set menu
<i>merluza</i>	<i>mer-loo-tha</i>	hake
<i>miel</i>	<i>myel</i>	honey
<i>morcilla</i>	<i>mor-thee-lya</i>	black pudding
<i>naranja</i>	<i>na-ran-kha</i>	orange
<i>ostra</i>	<i>os-tra</i>	oyster

<i>paella</i>	<i>pa-e-lya</i>	rice dish which has many regional variations
<i>pan</i>	<i>pan</i>	bread
<i>pastel</i>	<i>pas-tel</i>	cake
<i>pato</i>	<i>pa-to</i>	duck
<i>pescadito frito</i>	<i>pes-ka-ee-to free-to</i>	fried fish
<i>pil pil</i>	<i>peel peel</i>	garlic sauce spiked with chilli
<i>pimentón</i>	<i>pee-men-ton</i>	paprika
<i>pimiento</i>	<i>pee-myen-to</i>	pepper, capsicum
<i>plátano</i>	<i>pla-ta-no</i>	banana
<i>platija</i>	<i>pla-tee-kha</i>	flounder, plaice
<i>plato combinado</i>	<i>pla-to kom-bee-na-do</i>	combination plate
<i>queso</i>	<i>ke-so</i>	cheese
<i>raciones</i>	<i>ra-syo-nes</i>	large tapas serving
<i>relleno</i>	<i>re-lye-no</i>	stuffing
<i>riñón</i>	<i>ree-nyon</i>	kidney
<i>salsa</i>	<i>saf-sa</i>	sauce
<i>sandia</i>	<i>san-dee-a</i>	watermelon
<i>sesos</i>	<i>se-sos</i>	brains
<i>seta</i>	<i>se-ta</i>	wild mushroom
<i>solomillo</i>	<i>so-lo-mee-lyo</i>	sirloin (usually of pork)
<i>sopa</i>	<i>so-pa</i>	soup
<i>tarta</i>	<i>tar-ta</i>	cake
<i>ternasco</i>	<i>ter-nas-ko</i>	lamb ribs
<i>ternera</i>	<i>ter-ne-ra</i>	veal
<i>tortilla de patatas</i>	<i>tor-tee-lya de pa-ta-tas</i>	potato and onion omelette
<i>trucha</i>	<i>troo-cha</i>	trout

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