



Spain is one of the most well known countries in the whole world. It is deemed as one of the most powerful countries in Europe and is the home to everything exciting and unique, like the flamenco dancing, bullfighting and of course, your favourite paella. It is even where you can see a lot of the most interesting arts and architectures of the French, Dutch, Germans, and the Spanish. And, apart from that, Spain can give you some of the best natural wonders on earth. It boasts green lush mountains, wide and long stretch of pristine beaches, beautiful sunsets, benign climate, and the most extrovert people on the planet.

With lots of wonders to offer, it's no surprise that more than two million of people from near and far away places visit Spain for several purposes. Some of these purposes are personal to some degree, but all are triggered knowing that Spain is worth visiting. It is also for such reasons that majority of those who have come to visit the country are planning to return for a more ultimate Spanish experiences.

However, travelling to Spain can be one of the most important decisions you can ever make in life. If you are living in a non-European country, it could be the priciest venture you can ever make. There are even some important factors to consider like your family, your work, your budget, and everything that can be affected. It is for this reason that proper and careful planning is very much needed.

Planning is not an easy task, however. It's but a long process and each step is worth pondering. If you have left from home before, I bet you know this fact, but for those who are first timers, it would be best if you'll pay attention to every step if possible. And, speaking of steps, there's no better move to take when planning for a successful Spanish travel than to know everything about Spain.

Below are some of the worth knowing facts about Spain. Consider the following for knowing all of these things will help you make your vacation to the Spanish region truly remembering.

How to Enter Spain

Just like the rest of the world, Spain had set its own entry requirements to meet by those who want to enter the country and do their own business there. Of the entry requirements, passports and visas are the most needed.

So, when planning to visit Spain, try to get all the paperwork done. If you haven't left from home before, then it's time for you to obtain a passport. This requirement, however, varies largely depending in what country you are coming from. For instance, if you are a US citizen, you can obtain your passport from the Spanish Embassy and the passport will be valid for the period of your intended stay. Aside from that, you may also need a return ticket or the so-called "proof of onward travel". In terms of visa, the Americans coming to Spain are not generally required to obtain visa provided that their stay will only be for a period of three months.

Also note that Spain is under the rule of Schengen Agreement, thus they have the so-called Schengen visa that is issued by the countries covered by the Agreement, including The Netherlands, Portugal, Finland, Denmark, Austria, Italy, Iceland, Greece, Luxemburg, Belgium, France, Germany, Sweden, Norway, and Spain. The visa is required for the visitor to be able to transfer from those borders to another without much hassle. The Schengen visa is issued for visits like tourists, private and business, and typically costs around US\$41.

Now, with certain variations available, it is always good to contact your Consulate or your Spanish Embassy regarding the passport, visa and other entry requirements. Also know everything about the application processes. Once you've gathered all the information, then do your best to meet all the requirements.

When to Visit Spain

Generally, there's no right or wrong time to visit Spain as the country is enjoying a fine weather all year round. However, if you want to see throngs of people at some of the most attractive spots in Spain, the ideal time for you to go then is during the months of May, June and September. If you are visiting the southern part of the country to enjoy the Flamenco dancing or anything that may interests you, you can visit Spain during the month of April and October.

Note, however, that during those mentioned months, Spain is blessed with a sunny weather. But if you want to get sunburns, it is always smart to avoid exposure to a tremendous heat.

It is further worth knowing that the winter in Spain is pretty mild. This is true along the southern and south-eastern part of the Mediterranean coasts. Parts of Madrid and those that are located in the high

central area of the country can get very cold especially during wintertime. But if you are visiting in summer months, these areas in the Mediterranean can be experiencing extreme heat.

Now, if you want to see the best of festivals in Spain, it would be best if you'll travel during the later days of March through April. It is during this time when the Semana Santa (Holy Week) is celebrated, giving you the greater chance of seeing the best of Spanish festivals and events. Well, there are also some Spanish festivals happening in the months of September and October, so you can also set those months as your travel target.

Transportation

So you're wondering about transportation. Well, Spain provides all the access to major and minor transportations. The country can easily be reached with lots of transportation modes available out there, including planes, taxis, buses, rental cars, trains, and a lot more.

Spain is in the first place the home to some of the largest international airports. It has all the possible connections to the rest of Europe, and it can be travelled either by planes or ferries, especially if you are coming from the other European areas like the United Kingdom or Morocco. While in Spain, you can even consider the cheapest of the transportation modes – the public buses.

Speaking of planes, Spain boasts a number of airlines and airports to welcome every visitor. The airports can be found at the cities of Barcelona, Madrid, Bilbao, Sevilla, Granada, Santiago de Compostela, Almeria, Valencia, Malaga, Mao, Ibiza, Alicante and Palme de Mallorca. Note, however, that when flying out of the country, you need to pay a certain amount for the departure tax, which is often included in your airfare. So check your ticket to know if you have paid the tax or not.

In terms of buses, Spain considers it as the regular mode of transport. Buses are available anywhere in the country and they service to Spain from all the major areas in the continent of Europe, even including Paris, Lisbon and London.

There is also the railway systems which to and out of Spain to take passengers to their destinations. What's nice to know about this mode of transportation is that trains charge only an affordable price. But, they can be more expensive than the regular buses, unless you have the rail pass or you're under the age of 26.

Whatever transportation mode you may be considering, you'll surely reach and leave Spain with great smiles on your face knowing that you had a great day free from burdens and hassles.

Money Matters

When it comes to money matters, it is important to note that Spain has set Euro as its official currency. One euro is equivalent to 100 cents. Well, if you were traveling to Spain from a non-European country, it would be wise if you'll consider money exchange. The good news is that money exchange services are available anywhere in Spain. You can find them at the banks or in a number of exchange offices, and see that Spain has a slightly higher rate of exchange than cash do.

But if you want to travel safe and without those cash in your wallets, bringing plastics can be the best thing you can do. The plastics can be a good option knowing the fact that it can save you from much

hassles, plus the fact that plenty of the Spanish stores accept it. You can bring your cheques with you if you need some back up for your credit cards.

Also, if you are going out to take public transportation, it would be okay if you'll bring a few coins on your purse. You can use them for purposes like parking meters, tolls, laundrettes, or anything possible.

The Language

I bet you know that Spanish people speak Spanish. Well, majority of the public use that language, but due to some tourist entrances and immigrations, Spain is now full of people who speak another tongue. English, for instance, is widely understood. The truth is, the English speakers in Spain are even increasing in number with more and more people from the English speaking countries going in and out of the country.

Several other languages spoken in Spain are Galician, Catalan, and Basque. These languages, however, are spoken only in the relevant areas in the country: Catalan being the language of the northeast; Galician in the north-western parts; and Basque in the northern regions.

Health and Safety

Health is but another important factor to consider when visiting Spain. This is for the reason that health is important for people to live and to enjoy an ultimate Spanish vacation. So when visiting Spain, know something about health in Spain.

Basically, there are no certain serious risks associated with health in the Spanish region. In fact, the authority doesn't require visitors to undergo certain vaccinations for them to enter the country. Simply put, vaccination certificates are not needed, unlike the other areas on earth where visitors and tourists are required to present such document.

However, it is important to note that in July 2006, Spain was listed as one of the countries affected by bird flu, although there is said to be little risk to travellers. Given that fact, it is best if you'll avoid contacts with birds if possible. If you love to eat poultry products, make sure that it is cooked well.

Other than bird flu, no other diseases, infections or human deaths have been reported, leading people to think that Spain is absolutely a healthy country. But, if for instance, you are caught with a certain health disorder in one of your travels, contact your doctors immediately for an immediate cure. You can also visit some of the health clinics and hospitals in Spain and have yourself checked by a health specialist.

In terms of safety, Spain is not an all-safe country. It has been a victim of terrorism for long years, and now scams are lurking at the corners. Aside from that, street crimes are common in big cities like Madrid, Barcelona and Bilbao, the reasons that travellers are often warned to take certain precautions when travelling to Spain. This is but a matter of common sense though, as scams and all kinds of felonies are common anywhere on earth.

So when visiting Spain, it is always good to be careful. Stay away from troubles and arguments, and keep an eye on your belongings when travelling. Keep all your travel documents in a safe place and never wear any daring jewellery that may attract thefts and snatchers. Also, it is often recommended to be

aware of someone unknown asking for help or any kind, as in Spain this is considered as one of the most effective distractions for partners.

Other Important Factors

There are a lot more important facts to know about Spain. If you want to know more, read on.

Tipping

Tipping in Spain is so common. In fact, it is a sort of customary for waiters, hotel crews, personal services, guides, cabs, and porters. So when considering a service in Spain, consider some tipping. If you are dining a fine restaurant and you are satisfied with the service offered, then it's good to leave cash for your attendant.

Also note that for taxi rides, a 10% tip is enough. This is also true in Spanish restaurants. There are also some dining areas in Spain wherein a tip is already included in the bill. So if this is the case, don't spend much on tips.

Communications

Telephones and all sorts of communications are common in Spain, just as in the other areas in the world. However, when calling for home, it would be best if you'll use phone cards and call at the PTT offices or somewhere where a telephone call is permitted for a certain charge. This is the best option to consider rather than calling from a hotel. Yes, if you are a first timer and you want to save something for your self, then don't call from a hotel. If you'll do, expect to pay much, somewhat like ten times higher than the usual phone card call.

So that basically it. Just note all of those facts and make sure to prepare yourself before you decide to visit Spain. Prepare everything you need to, including your budget, your belongings, and yourself, physically, mentally or spiritually. That is the only key to having an ultimate vacation to Spain.