

TRAVELLING TO SPAIN

With its sunny climate, beautiful beaches and colourful festivals Spain has long been a favourite destination for Irish holiday makers. If you are planning a trip to Spain this leaflet will provide you with useful tips and information to help ensure you enjoy a hassle-free holiday.



BEFORE YOU GO

- An excellent starting point for tourists planning to visit Spain is the website www.spain.info. It contains a number of useful resources to help you plan your trip and get maximum enjoyment from your stay.
- Ensure you have all relevant travel documentation, such as your passport or national identity card, as this may be required by the relevant authorities. Be aware that hotels in Spain have a legal duty to register guests' passport details when checking-in. Wait until the receptionist has registered your details or taken a photocopy rather than leaving it at reception to collect later. ID will also be requested in shops if you are paying with a credit or debit card.
- If you are travelling to Spain by plane, be aware that Spanish law requires airlines to provide certain personal information about passengers to the authorities in advance of travel (Advance Passenger Information). These details are usually taken at the time of booking or at check-in and include the passenger's name, date of birth, nationality, and number and type of travel document (Passport or National Identity Card).

GETTING THERE

- Bear in mind that if your flight is cancelled or significantly delayed EU legislation states that you must be given a choice between re-routing to your final destination or a refund. The airline should also provide you with information, care and assistance, and compensation in certain circumstances.
- Remember if your luggage is lost or damaged by the airline while travelling to or from Spain,



you can claim compensation under the Montreal Convention. Fill out a Property Irregularity Report (PIR) at the airport and ensure to keep receipts for all necessary expenses. Make sure to complain in writing to the airline immediately as strict time limits apply to claims.

- Be aware that if you book a package holiday through a bonded and licensed travel agent, you will normally enjoy a higher level of protection should something go wrong than if you book travel services separately.



WARNINGS

- A popular scam in Spain is the sale of so-called 'Holiday clubs'. Be cautious if you are approached and are given a scratch card on which you 'win' a big prize. To claim your prize you may have to attend a presentation involving high pressure selling techniques designed to entice you to sign up to a holiday club for which the prices can be exorbitant. Be aware that at best these clubs represent bad value and at worst you may lose your money.
- Another scam involving scratch cards requires you to call a premium rate number or pay an administration fee in order to claim your 'big prize'. Alternatively you may be told you won a cash prize in a lottery but you cannot collect this prize until you pay for taxes, bank costs, delivery costs or insurance processing etc. Do not respond as you have won nothing, and will lose any money you spend.



HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

- Ensure you obtain a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) before travelling to Spain as this will allow you access the same necessary public healthcare services as any other Spanish citizen.
- You will be seen by a GP at a local health centre (*centro de salud, consultorio or ambulatorio*) or at your accommodation if you are unable to make the journey. If you need to see a specialist, the GP will give you the relevant medical certificate or referral. Accident and Emergency services (*urgencias*) are available at hospitals.
- You can check where the nearest hospitals and health centres in Spain are located at the website of the Minister of Health.
<http://www.msc.es/ciudadanos/prestaciones/centrosServiciosSNS/home.htm>
- Before you consult a doctor or hospital ensure that they accept your European Health Insurance card. Some hospitals and health centres offer both private and state-provided healthcare and it is important that you ensure that you are treated by a state healthcare provider as you will not be covered for private healthcare under the EHIC scheme.



SHOPPING ADVICE

- Remember that under EU legislation your basic legal rights as a consumer are protected when you are shopping in Spain. This means that a trader is obliged to repair or replace a faulty product and you have a two year period during which you can seek redress from the seller.
- If you encounter a problem concerning a purchase you made in a shop in Spain, and you are unable to resolve the matter amicably, the first step is to request a complaint form ("*hoja de reclamación*") from the seller/service provider. This typically has three sheets: one for the company, one for the consumer and one that may be sent to the competent consumer body. This form is also available in hotels and restaurants.
- Most businesses close in the afternoons at around lunchtime and reopen in the evenings. However in larger cities in the town centre shops may stay open as well as large chains and shopping centres.
- Tipping is not mandatory in Spain as service is always included with the price of a meal or drink. However, tipping is a common practice at bars and restaurants, hotels, and taxis, depending on the total price for the service, and on the generosity of the client. Most people leave some small change or round up if they're satisfied.



- **Remember that if things go wrong with any of the goods or services you purchase during your stay in Spain, you can contact the European Consumer Centre Ireland for free and confidential information, advice and assistance.**

OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

- If driving, remember that in Spain you must drive on the right (opposite to Ireland). If travelling with small children, they must use an approved child safety seat in the back seat of the car so if one is required ensure you inform your car rental company at the time of making your reservation.
- The current limit for drink driving in Spain is 50mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood or 30mg for new drivers with less than two years' experience. (In Ireland, the limit is 80mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood.)
- If you lose any of your possessions ask the police for the telephone number of the lost property service of the city you are in. All public transport services in larger cities have their own lost property service.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

EMERGENCY (Police, Medical, Firemen)	112
To report an assault, robbery or accident to the police	902 102 112
Road accidents or other Road related information	900 123 505
Hospital Emergencies	061
Flight and airport Information (AENA)	902 430 704
Tourist Information	913 433 500
ECC Spain	91 822 45 55

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