

Spain

Planning a trip to Spain? Then you should talk to us... We offer impartial expert advice and the ability to deliver top quality itineraries with the best tour operators that are exceptional value for money. Arranging your travel through The Specialist Travel Consultancy also reduces the time you have to spend researching and planning your trip. And our service is completely free!

Contact us to discuss your travel requirements on **0845 838 7667** or for more information on the service we offer please visit our website: www.thestc.co.uk

We arrange tailor made trips:

- Cultural tours
- Adventure travel
- Geography Tours
- Walking & Trekking
- Multi-activity weeks

Facts & Highlights

Full Country Name: The Kingdom of Spain.

Area: 510,000 sq km.

Population: 44 million.

Capital: Madrid.

Language(s): Castilian Spanish (official) - 74%, Catalan - 17%, Galician - 7%, Basque - 2%.

Religion(s): Roman Catholic - 97%; Protestant/other - 3%.

Currency: Euro.

Government: Parliamentary Monarchy elected every four years.

Electricity: 220 or 225 volts AC, 50Hz.

Time: GMT + 1 hours.



Get with the Rhythm: Feel the feverish fire of the Flamenco.

Follow the Trail to St. James: Walk sections of the world famous Compostella Trail.

National Parks: Experience the scenery, wildlife and stunning flora of some of Europe's finest national parks.

The Alhambra: Marvel at the Moorish detail and elaborate decoration of this awe-inspiring palace.

Gaudi: Be challenged by Gaudi's striking and thought provoking architecture in the great city of Barcelona.

Majorca: See what the majority of people visiting this beautiful island miss - rugged mountains and a traditional way of life amongst remote villages.

The Quiet Canaries: Turn your back on the tourists and head for the quieter, yet scenically stunning, islands of La Gomera and El Hierro.

Spain is much more than bullfights, flamenco dancers and crowded beaches. Its tremendous history is reflected in its prehistoric cave paintings, Moorish palaces, crumbling castles, Roman ruins, Gothic and Renaissance cathedrals as well as some very distinctive modern architecture. Its diverse geography ranges from rolling green hills to vertiginous rock faces, whilst the south of the country gives a taste of Moroccan landscapes and architecture. The uniqueness of Spain lies in its once separate kingdoms. Despite now being unified, these regions remain diverse in their language, culture, cuisine and art, and this shines through in the numerous festivals and fiestas that happen with apparent spontaneity right across the country.

In terms of activities and adventure, Spain has much going for it. Its climate lends itself well to the outdoors and there is much diversity in the terrain on offer.

In the north of the mainland lies the compact region of Asturias and the wonderful mountains of the Picos de Europa. This impressive limestone range, characterised by deep gorges and impressive rock pinnacles, is one of Spain's best kept secrets. Although small when compared to many of the other mountain ranges in Europe, it retains an air of remoteness. Indeed, walks into its interior are serious undertakings and should not be embarked on lightly. The region is a naturalists' paradise, home to a wonderful array of flora and fauna, with large numbers of eagles and other bird life, over 70 mammals (including wolves and bears) 147 species of butterfly and nearly 50 varieties of orchid.

To the east, the Pyrenees stretch for some 270 miles to the Mediterranean, and offer a wealth of walking, trekking and ski-mountaineering possibilities, some gentle, some more extreme.

In the south of the country the Sierra Nevada forms a formidable barrier between the central plateau and the Mediterranean Sea. Its high mountains and picture postcard Andalucian villages are a walker's dream with plenty of interest and variety amongst the valleys and hills.

Away from mainland Spain, its islands offer some of the country's best and most surprising walking. Although more renowned for its nightlife, Majorca is home to the Tramuntana mountains, which rise to some 1445m and are interspersed with traditional towns, villages, monasteries and ancient footpaths.

Similarly, the Canary Islands also offer exceptional walking, with a wide variety of options amongst the peaks and volcanoes of Gran Canaria and Tenerife, as well as the quieter side of the volcanic landscapes of La Gomera and El Hierro.

Contact us to discuss your requirements and we will be pleased to put together a tailor-made programme to suit your needs.



Suggested Itineraries

8 Days: Easy walks in the Sierra Nevada

- Day 1** Fly to Malaga; drive to Orgiva.
- Walk through the Sopotujar forest with views over the Guadalfeo river.
- A fine walk ending in the village of Canar; from here it is often possible to see Morocco.
- Visit the magnificent city of Granada.
- A high mountain day at altitude on Cerro Redondo (2700m).
- Walk through the traditional villages on the slopes of Sierra Nevada, ending in Trevezlez (the highest village in Spain) at 1500m.
- A day in either of the famous river gorges of the area - Trevezlez or Poqueira.
- To Malaga; fly London.

12 Days: The Compostella Trail (sections of)

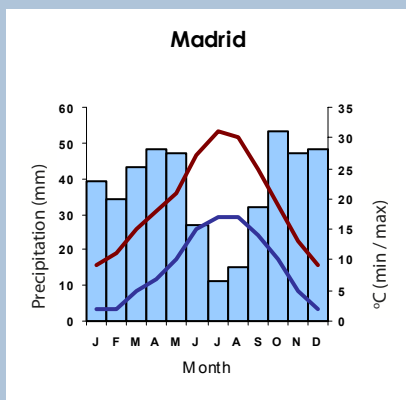
Follow in the steps of pilgrims from all over Europe who have been making their way

Geography & Climate

Spain has a very diverse geography, ranging from high plateaus, mountain ranges and volcanoes to large alluvial plains and semi-desert. Much of the interior is on the Meseta Central, a vast plateau ranging in height from 600m to 760m above sea level. The north east border with France is dominated by the mountains and cirques of the Pyrenees. In the south, the mountains of the Sierra Nevada rise to the highest point on the mainland at 3,479m, whilst the Pico de Teide volcano on the island of Tenerife rises to 3,718m and is the highest point in the Kingdom.

The contrast between the coastal and interior regions as well as the wide range of altitudes across the mainland give Spain a very varied climate. While most of the country is sunny and hot during the summer, the winter climate varies between cold and snowy in the mountainous or plateau regions and mild in the coastal areas and islands.

Spain can be visited all year round, but for trekking in the high regions of the Pyrenees, Picos or Sierra Nevada spring through to autumn is the time to visit. Winter trekking is possible on the Canary Islands.



to the tomb of Saint James who, according to legend, is resting in Santiago de Compostela. The main pilgrims' route crossing the north of Spain has gained fame as both a wonderful walking trail and for its fascinating culture and historical monuments. The most scenic sections lie between Burgos and Santiago, and pass through rich pasture land in the high plains of the Castilian Meseta and into the hills and mountains of Galicia. Historical cities such as Burgos, Leon and Astorga house some of Northern Europe's finest examples of medieval architecture. The walks are of easy grade and generally within the capabilities of anyone who leads a normally active life.

8 days: Multi-activity week in the Picos

- Day 1** Fly to Bilbao; transfer to Arenas.
- Day of canyoning in the Rubo Gorge.
- Morning caving, afternoon free.
- Walk the famous Cares Gorge (about 16 miles).
- Rock climbing on local rock faces.
- Canoeing on the Sella River.
- Mountain biking in the Sierra de Cuera.
- Transfer to Bilbao; fly to London.

National Holidays

- Jan 1:** New Year's Day.
Jan 6: Epiphany
Mar / April: Good Friday (date varies).
May 1: Labour Day.
Aug 15: Assumption.
Oct 12: National Day.
Dec 6: Constitution Day.
Dec 25: Christmas Day.

There are also numerous other regional public holidays. Regional governments are allowed to set their own holiday dates according to traditions peculiar to individual towns or districts, as long as the total number of days (including national holidays) does not exceed 14 in any one year.

Festivals

Spain is justifiably famous for its festivals, and each region or town will often have its



own unique customs, handed down through the generations.

"La Tomatina", Buñol (near Valencia): On the last Wednesday in August each year, tens of thousands of participants come from all over the world to this small town, where more than one hundred tons of over-ripe tomatoes are thrown in one giant food fight!

International Festival of Music and Dance:

This is an exquisite Spanish festival held in Granada every June. Around the Alhambra Palace and all over the city the streets are filled with the sound of Spanish guitars, the click of castanets, the whirl of flamenco dancing and much, much more.

Price Guide

With so many options, prices vary enormously depending on the length and style of trip required, as well as the group size. Week long cultural tours or adventure trips start at around £650 per person including flights, depending on type of activity and itinerary.

Regulations & Red Tape

A full passport or valid photo ID is required for travel to Spain. British passport holders do not require a visa.

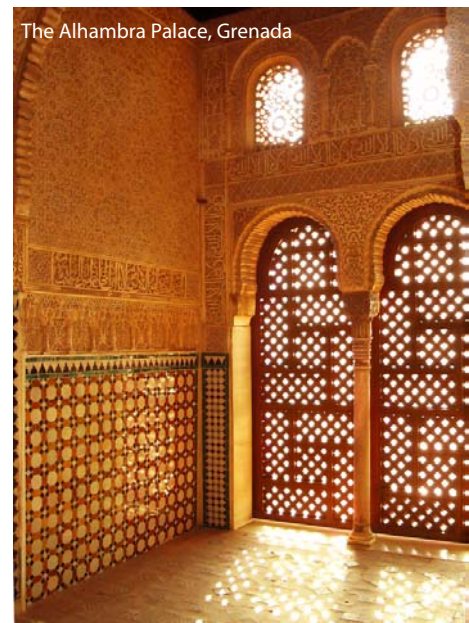
Useful Addresses

Spanish National Tourist Office
PO Box 4009, London W1A 6NB
Tel: (020) 7486 8077
Web: www.spain.info
Opening hours: Mon-Fri 0915-1615.

More Information

To discuss the travel possibilities Spain offers in greater detail, and receive free, independent advice on suitable tour operators, please contact:

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