

Spain country profile

FACTS



- **Full name:** Kingdom of Spain
- **Population:** 45 million (UN 2009)
- **Capital:** Madrid
- **Area:** 505,988 sq km (195,363 sq miles)
- **Major languages:** Spanish (Castilian), Catalan and its variant Valencian, Gallego (Galician), Euskera (Basque)
- **Major religion:** Christianity

Life expectancy: 78 years (men), 84 years (women) (UN)

Monetary unit: 1 euro = 100 cents

Main exports: Transport equipment, agricultural products

GNI per capita: US \$31,960 (World Bank, 2008)

Internet domain: .es (.cat for Catalonia)

International dialling code: +34



Located at the crossroads of the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, Europe and Africa, Spain's history and culture are made up of a rich mix of diverse elements.

Through exploration and conquest, Spain became a world power in the 16th century, and it maintained a vast overseas empire until the early 19th century. Spain's modern history is marked by the bitterly fought Spanish Civil War of 1936-39, and the ensuing 36-year dictatorship of General Francisco Franco. After Franco's death in 1975, Spain made the transition to a democratic state and built a successful economy, with King Juan Carlos as head of state.



The constitution of 1978 enshrines respect for linguistic and cultural diversity within a united Spain. The country is divided into 17 regions which all have their own directly elected authorities. The level of autonomy afforded to each region is far from uniform. For example, Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia have special status with their own language and other rights.

Andalusia, Navarre, Valencia and the Canaries in turn have more extensive powers than some other regions. Asturias and Aragon have taken steps to consolidate language rights.

The Giralda, Seville: Remnant of a mosque that once stood on the site

In 2006 a Catalan referendum backed by the central government gave the region greater autonomy.

The Catalans won nation status within Spain and the region's parliament gained extra powers in taxation and judicial matters. The country's regional picture is a complex and evolving one.

One of Spain's most serious domestic issues has been tension in the northern Basque region. A violent campaign by the Basque separatist group ETA has led to nearly 850 deaths over the past four decades. Eta declared a ceasefire in March 2006 saying it wished to see the start of a democratic process for the Basque region. The move divided opinion in Spain.

Tentative moves to negotiate a lasting peace were dealt a blow when Eta carried out a deadly bomb attack at Madrid's international airport at the end of the year. In June 2007, Eta called off its ceasefire.

Until 2008, the Spanish economy was regarded as one of the most dynamic within the EU. However, the mainstays of the economy were tourism and a booming housing market and construction industry, and so the global economic crisis of 2008-9 hit the country hard.

Spain was tipped into a severe recession and unemployment had reached nearly 20% - more than double the EU average - by the end of 2009.

Spain shares the Iberian peninsula with Portugal and its territory includes the Balearic Islands, the Canary Islands and two North African enclaves.

From Velazquez in the seventeenth century, through Goya straddling the eighteenth and nineteenth, to Picasso in the twentieth, Spain has the proudest of traditions in art.

Flamenco music and dance are widely admired around the world while Cervantes' novel Don Quixote is one of the most popular ever written.

Cinema is much loved and the films of directors such as Pedro Almodovar attract huge audiences.

LEADERS

Head of state: King Juan Carlos I

Spaniards honour King Juan Carlos for ensuring the country's transition to democracy after the death of the former dictator, General Franco, and for saving Spain from a coup attempt in 1981.

Prime minister: Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero

Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, who has been in office since 2004, led his governing Socialist Workers' Party to another victory in elections in March 2008.

The party won by an increased margin, but fell just short of an absolute majority.

The Socialist Workers' Party won a surprise election victory over Jose Maria Aznar's conservative Popular Party in March 2004. Polling was overshadowed by a series of explosions on Madrid commuter trains in which 191 people died just days beforehand.

Mr Zapatero is considered to have won the elections because of voter anger over the conservative government's insistence that armed separatist group Eta was behind the blasts, despite the evidence pointing to Islamist extremists.

Following his election victory, Mr Zapatero described both the war and the occupation of Iraq as a "huge disaster" and pulled Spain's 1,300 troops out of the country.

He showed confidence that the Basque separatist group Eta was serious about the ceasefire it declared in March 2006 when he indicated a few months later that he would start talks with the organisation.

But in early 2007, after an Eta bomb attack at Madrid airport, he apologised to the nation for having pinned hopes on peace talks with the group. Eta withdrew its ceasefire in June.

The prime minister supported the process by which Catalonia won greater autonomy at a referendum in June 2006.

Mr Zapatero was born in 1960. His grandfather, a Republican army officer, was shot dead during the Civil War. He studied law but his career has been largely devoted to politics.

He joined the Socialist Party while still in his teens and first entered parliament at 26. He became party leader in 2000.

He is married and has two daughters.



Prime Minister Zapatero made counter-terrorism a priority



Neo-classical facade of the Congress of Deputies, the lower house

FLAMENCO DANCING

Flamenco is a song, music and dance style which is strongly influenced by the Gitanos (Spanish Gypsies), but which has its deeper roots in Moorish musical traditions. Flamenco culture originated in Andalusia (Spain), but has since become one of the icons of Spanish music and even Spanish culture in general.

Originally, flamenco consisted of unaccompanied singing (cante). Later the songs were accompanied by flamenco guitar (toque), rhythmic hand clapping (palmas), rhythmic feet stamping and dance (baile). The toque and baile are also often found without the cante, although the song remains at the heart of the flamenco tradition. More recently other instruments like the cajón (a wooden box used as a percussion instrument) and castanets (castañuelas) have been introduced.



Flamenco history

Many of the details of the development of flamenco are lost in Spanish history. There are several reasons for this lack of historical evidence:

- The turbulent times of the people involved in flamenco culture. The Moors, the Gitanos and the Jews were all persecuted and expelled by the Spanish Inquisition at various points in time as part of the Reconquista
 - The Gitanos mainly had an oral culture. Their folk songs were passed on to new generations by repeated performances in their social community.
 - Flamenco was for a long time not really considered an art form worth writing about according to Spaniards. Flamenco music has also slipped in and out of fashion several times during its existence.
- Granada, the last Muslim stronghold, fell in 1492 when the armies of the catholic king Ferdinand II of Aragon and queen Isabella of Castile reconquered this city after about 800 years of mainly Moorish rule. The Treaty of Granada was created to have a formal base for upholding religious tolerance, and this paved the way for the Moors to surrender peacefully. For a few years there was a tense calm in and around Granada, however the inquisition did not like the religious tolerance towards Muslims and Jews. Therefore the inquisition used religious arguments to convince Ferdinand and Isabella to break the treaty and force the Moors and Jews to become Christians or leave Spain for good.

In 1499, about 50,000 Moors were coerced into taking part in a mass baptism. During the uprising that followed, people who refused the choices of baptism or deportation to Africa, were systematically eliminated. What followed was a mass exodus of Moors, Jews and Gitanos from Granada city and the villages to the mountain regions (and their hills) and the rural country.

It was in this socially and economically difficult situation that the musical cultures of the Moors, Jews and Gitanos started to form the basics of flamenco music: a Moorish singing style expressing their hard life in Andalusia, the different compas (rhythm styles), rhythmic hand clapping and basic dance movements. Many of the songs in flamenco still reflect the spirit of desperation, struggle, hope, pride, and late-night partying of the people during this time. Much later other local traditional Spanish musical traditions would also influence, and be influenced by, the traditional flamenco styles.

The first time flamenco is mentioned in literature is in 1774 in the book *Cartas Marruecas* by José Cadalso. The origin of the name flamenco however, is a much-debated topic. Some people believe it is a word of Spanish origin and originally meant Flemish (Flamende). However, there are several other theories. One theory suggests an Arabic origin taken from the words *felag mengu* (meaning: 'peasant in flight' or 'fugitive peasant').

During the so-called golden age of flamenco, 1869-1910, flamenco music developed rapidly in music cafés called *café cantantes*. Flamenco dancers also became one of the major attractions for the public of those cafés. Similarly, guitar players supporting the dancers increasingly gained a reputation, and so flamenco guitar as an art form by itself was born. Julián Arcas was one of the first composers to write flamenco music especially for the guitar.

The flamenco guitar (and the very similar classical guitar) is a descendent from the lute. The first guitars are thought to have originated in Spain in the 15th century. The traditional flamenco guitar is made of Spanish cypress and spruce, and is lighter in weight and a bit smaller than a classical guitar, to give the output a 'sharper' sound.

Style of Dance

Flamenco dance can be compared to the dances from the Orient. The elegant gestures of the female dancers resemble those of Oriental dancers, only they are more forceful. The dancer's use of castanets, castañuelas, can be compared to the oriental finger cymbals. However, castanets are not traditional to flamenco as they have only been adopted in the last 100 years.

The flamenco dancer creates complex rhythmic patterns with an intricate footwork technique, characterized by toe-heel clicking steps. To do this, special dancing shoes or boots, zapatos de baile, are required. They have dozens of nails driven in to the soles and heels, and are partially reinforced to add stability. The upper part of the body expresses grace and posture, appearing undisturbed by the vigorous footwork. The ladies wear long dresses with voluminous skirts, sometimes used to emphasize arm movements. The dancer's job is to project the mood of the song. Music and dance fall into three categories: jondo, or grande ('profound', or 'grand'), intensely sad and dealing with themes of death, anguish, despair, or religion; intermedio ('intermediate'), less profound, but also moving, often with an oriental cast to the music; and chico ('light'), with subjects of love, the countryside, and gaiety. Do not try to clap the rhythm during a dance. The dancer is usually accompanied by hand clapping or percussion, as well as song and guitar. A very common rhythmic pattern is contratiempo where the dancer is accentuating exactly between beats, and to accomplish that he/she requires a very steady mark on the beat. Unfortunately, spectators tend to clap completely off beat, thereby disturbing the pattern. Applause, however, is much appreciated, but you do not have to wait until the performance has ended. Feel free to applaud at any point that you find especially exceptional.

Duende

Duende is often described as the spirit of flamenco. You will find it everywhere, though, as it appears in all forms of live performances expressing genuine feelings, separating mere talent from genius. There have been many attempts to describe duende. Duende is like a voice forcing your dark feelings to float up to the surface from the dark dungeons of your subconscious, causing an earthquake, thunderstorm and volcanic eruption inside of you. It is not unusual that people affected by the Duende act like lunatics; crying their eyes out, tearing their hair, throwing themselves at the floor. Afterwards you feel empty, relieved of those 'dark' feelings. Duende is like a catharsis for the soul...

COSTUME

Flamenco Dress

The original shape of the flamenco dress, the "guitar body", enhanced the woman's qualities and masked its defects: A low neck area round or square, according to the fashion, hair pulled back in a bun to make the neck appear thinner, the dress tightened around the waist and widening at the hips and the frills are placed to have the woman walk in a more boasting fashion. The dress has been earning a reputation as very easy-to-wear and flirty with the years thanks to the different accessories: Manila scarves, flowers placed in the hair, etc.

The Flamenco dress has varied according to fashion and the economic situation but without losing its uniqueness. In the forties with the passing of the Civil War it reached its zenith. The women stood out at the Fair with their frilled dresses and were just as long as they are now, straight and spotted, with austere fabrics, complemented with flowers, fine combs, bracelets and hidden money-pockets that have always generally been a custom according to style. In the fifties calico continued to be the main cloth, but the dress was enriched with stitched lace or belts, for comfort at the same time for dancing or horse-back riding. The dress was shortened and the footwear was visible.

The economic boom of the sixties and seventies had repercussions for the flamenco dress; it was shortened to the knee or half-way up the calf. The frills were cloaked and they began to use the "tergal", a base of cotton and an embroidered cloth as the main decorative feature. The sleeves reached the elbows or the wrist and were stitched with little frills. In the seventies they were lengthened to the ankles and were fashioned with bright colours.

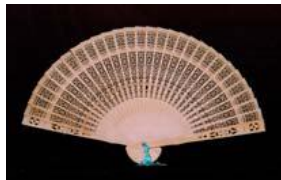
MALE DANCERS

The men dress in traditional short jackets or waistcoats, tight pants (perhaps chaps) and flat wide-brimmed hats



Manila Shawl

When a dancer's swirling dance causes the layers of her skirt to rise as if she is about to take flight, a delicate piece of silk covered with floral embroidery takes the place of her wings. The women of Seville made the Manila silk shawl their own from the very moment this Chinese complement was first imported in the 16th century via the Philippines, then a Spanish colony. And in the same way it was also adopted by the cantaora (singer) as an essential part of her costume as she stepped on stage to sing, and by the dancer, taking on a key role in her performance.



FLAMENCO MUSIC

GUITAR

The role of the guitar reached its peak during the café cantante years, as well, with the guitar developing into an essential part of the flamenco art form. From 1910 to 1955 flamenco singing was marked by the opera flamenca, with an easier kind of music such as fandangos and cantes de ida y vuelta-the latter clearly showing

South American influences. From 1915 onwards flamenco shows were organized and performed all over the world. However, not everyone was happy with that development and in 1922 a group of intellectuals, among them Manuel de Falla, organized a contest in Granada to promote "authentic" cante jondo.

Modern day flamenco frequently shows influences of other kinds of music, such as jazz, salsa, bossa nova, etc. And flamenco dance has changed, with female dancers often showcasing their temperament more than their artistry. Flamenco guitar, originally just a backdrop for the dancing and singing, is now recognized as an art form in its own right. The virtuoso Paca de Lucia is one of most influential pioneers of flamenco guitar. Although mass media has brought Flamenco to the world stage, at its heart it has always been and will always be an intimate form of music. You have not heard authentic flamenco if you have not been in a juerga, with a small group of friends, at midnight somewhere in the south of Spain, where there is nothing around but the voice, the guitar and the body of a dancer moving in the moonlight.



CASTANETS



The castanets are a percussion instrument (idiophone), much used in Moorish music, Roma music, Spanish music and Latin American music. The instrument consists of a pair of concave shells joined on one edge by string. These are held in the hand and used to produce clicks for rhythmic accents or a ripping or rattling sound consisting of a rapid series of clicks. They are traditionally made of hardwood, although fiberglass is becoming increasingly popular. In practice a player usually uses two pairs of castanets. One pair is held in each hand, with the string hooked over the thumb and the castanets resting on the palm with the fingers bent over to support the other side. Each pair will make a sound of a slightly different pitch. The higher pair, known as hembra (female), is usually held in the right hand, with the larger macho (male) pair held in the left.

Castanets are often played by singers or dancers in flamenco music.

SPANISH FLAMENCO SPELLING LIST

A

- _ afillá a type of hoarse, earthy flamenco voice
- _ alante stage front
- _ Alegrias A joyful dance, in compas of 12 beats, from Cadiz. The origin is in the jotas of Cadiz - traditional folk music of Aragon, brought to the Andalucian region by soldiers during the War of Independence in the early 19th century. The main characteristics of this style are the richness of its guitar accompaniment, the intricacy of the dancing, the demands of its difficult rhythm, and its lively sound. Descendent of the Soleares family.
- _ Andalucia region from southern Spain; birthplace of Flamenco
- _ arpegio a chord whose notes are played in succession, not simultaneously
- _ atrás stage rear

B

- _ baile the dance
- _ bailaor {a} dancer (male & female)
- _ bout body of the guitar
- _ braceo movement of the arms during the dance
- _ bulerias High-spirited song & dance from Jerez. This developed like Soleares from a simple style. However, unlike Soleares, it has a fast and lively rhythm - indeed, the fastest in all flamenco - and provides enormous scope for improvisation on the part of dancers, singers and guitarists. It is wild, frenzied and lively, but nevertheless contains the germ of sorrow that is almost always present in flamenco.

C

- _ cabales Flamenco experts
- _ café cantante coffee house with flamenco shows (originally starting with flamenco cante but eventually covering all flamenco forms)
- _ cajon percussive instrument similar to an empty wooden box
- _ calo language of the gypsies
- _ caña Caña, also very closely related to Soleares, is one of the oldest forms of flamenco, and one of the most pure and beautiful.
- _ cantaor {a} singer (male & female)
- _ cante song
- _ cante chico light song, more frivolous
- _ cante jondo deep song covering both the dark and serious aspect of Flamenco
- _ cante grande more profound song
- _ carcelera type of tonás sung by incarcerated gypsies
- _ Caracoles This is one type of cantiñ which appeared in Cadiz in the mid-19th century. It became strongly associated with Madrid, although it is essentially from Andalucia, like all flamenco music. Curro Cuchares and El Tato' who worked in the bull-rings and were also good singers took this style to Madrid where it became very popular. Later it was recreated in a masterly way by Antonio Chacon, who gave it its present brilliance and vitality.
- _ cejilla capo on a guitar
- _ colombianas flamenco style influenced by South American rhythms
- _ compás beat, rhythm, measure, the characteristic rhythm of a form
- _ copla verse
- _ cuadro group of flamenco performers, including dancers singers, and guitarists

D

- _ debla toná with religious overtones
- _ duende the soul force that inspires flamenco art

E

- _ entrada entrance of the dancer
- _ estribillo a flamenco phrase

F

- _ falda skirt
- _ falseta a melodic variation played by guitarist
- _ falsete high pitched voice
- _ Fandango a dance from Huelva; cante chico
- _ farruca A spectacular male dance, one of the more recent forms of flamenco. Its origin is perhaps in some chants from the North of Spain. It is never sung when played in the pure flamenco idiom. As a dance or as a guitar solo, it is a very dramatic piece.
- _ Flamenco music/dance from Andalucia in Southern Spain. Roots in Indian, Arabic, Spanish cultures.
- _ floreo movement of the hands

TEACHER RESOURCE NOTES – SPAIN & FLAMENCO

G

- _ gitano gypsy
- _ guajiras a style influenced by Cuban rhythms

H

- _ hondo deep, profound

J

- _ juerga flamenco party or jam session
- _ jaleo utterances of approval, encouragement. Recognition of the duende
- _ jondo variation of hondo most often associated with flamenco dance

L

- _ letra verse of a song
- _ llamada "call" or "break", dance movement signalling a change of section

M

- _ malagueñas a free form flamenco style (no specific compas, interpretive, and not danced) from Malaga. Descendent of the Fandango family.
- _ manton embroidered silk shawl with long fringes
- _ marcando movements of the dancer during the letra
- _ martinete toná sung by the gypsies in a forge; refers to hammer

P

- _ palillos castanets, not used in pure flamenco
- _ palmas rhythmic hand clapping used to accompany flamenco song and dance
- _ palmeros men that clap while the musicians play
- _ picados flamenco scales on the guitar
- _ pitos finger snapping used to accompany flamenco song and dance
- _ planta sole of the foot
- _ punta toe of the foot
- _ punteado plucking technique

Q

- _ quejío lament

R

- _ rasgueado guitar strumming technique
- _ redonda flamenco voice

S

- _ salida exit of the dancer

T

- _ tablao club with stage for flamenco shows
- _ tacaor/tocaor flamenco guitarist
- _ tacon heel of the foot
- _ taconeo footwork
- _ tango baile chico, flamenco song & dance
- _ tanguillo flamenco song and dance dervied from the tango
- _ tarantas another free-form style
- _ tientos cante jondo, derived from tango
- _ tonás basic flamenco song.
- _ toque guitar playing
- _ toque compás guitar playing with fixed patterns of rhythmic beats
- _ toque libre guitar playing with free form rhythm
- _ tremolo a rapid fluttering of a guitar tone or alternating tones

Z

- _ Zapateados needs very fancy footwork; the compas speeds up, slows down, and speeds up again and is a showcase for dancers (zapato means shoes). Derived from the tango.

GENERAL FLAMENCO WEBSITES

- Flamenco background <http://www.red2000.com/spain/flamenco>
- The Flamenco Guitar Home Page <http://www.guitarist.com/fg/fg.htm>
- Flamenco Guitar Web Site <http://www.rgbartevisual.com/>
- Flamenco FAQ for Classical Guitarists <http://www.guitarist.com/fg/flamfaq.htm>
- Academy of Flamenco Guitar <http://users.aol.com/BuleriaChk/private/flamenco.html>
- Flamenco: Singers and Songs http://www.roughguides.com/RG_WWW/contexts/andaluz/andsongs.html
- Classical and Flamenco Guitar MIDI Files <http://www.guitarist.com/midis/midis.htm>
- Flamenco Articles <http://www.guitarist.com/fg/flamarts.htm>
- Affedis (Alain Faucher) <http://www.fishnet.co.uk/Affedis>
- National Conservatory of Flamenco Arts <http://www.feelflamenco.com/>
- Lilian's Flamenco Website <http://www.lillebors-flamencoladen.de/>

BOOKS

Flamenco History & Forms

- The Art of Flamenco, D.E. Pohren. Contains information on Flamenco History, musical forms, cultural background, and terminology.
- El Arte Flamenco de la Guitarra, by Juan Martin.
- Juan Serrano and Jose Elgorriaga, Flamenco, Body and Soul. The Press at California State University, Fresno. Fresno, California 93740.
- A Guide to Andalusia, by Penguin Books. Includes coverage of Flamenco with travel information. ISBN 0-670-82139-X.
- Rough Guide to Andalucia. ISBN 1-85828-094-X.
- Flamenco, by Barbara Thiel-Cramir. Introduction to the people that have contributed to Flamenco around the world.



¡Flamenco!

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