

1: Fodor's California | Fodor's Travel Guides (Bog, Paperback)

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Get in By bus All buses to other provinces leave from the TerminiBus terminal. The bus companies connect Bilbao with many cities in Spain more cheaply and frequently than the rail companies. Be prepared for long waiting lines of half an hour as there are only two ticket offices. Instead of printing, you can also use the text message they send to your mobile as proof of purchase. Moreover, you can now use four automatic machines. Easy Jet flies from London Stansted to Bilbao airport. To get to downtown Bilbao from the airport, take Bizkaibus A from the arrivals sidewalk: The timetable for the reverse journey [2]. All Renfe trains leave from Abando Station. They are very slow, and make a stop in almost every single town they pass through. This journey has three legs, but it is only possible to do 2 legs in any one day. Trains leave from Atxuri Station. It is best to book early, since the ferry is often booked out in summer. Madrid km, Barcelona km, A Coruna km, Lisbon km. Get around By car Bilbao is difficult to drive in. Hilly one-way streets, and frequent construction projects, make it a nightmare for drivers in parts of the city. Public transport If you are going to take more than a few journeys on public transit, a Barik card would be a good investment. It is convenient, and can save you a considerable amount compared to single tickets. It is valid on the Metro, bus and tram services in Bilbao, though not on the Renfe trains. It can be bought from shops in the vicinity of Metro stations. It is easy to add further credit in the machines in Metro stations. Barik cards can be used by more than one person - so you may see a family of four swiping their card four times. It is clean and efficient, and security guards are often in evidence to reassure the public. Single line within Bilbao, splitting into two lines after San Inazio station. Trains run every couple of minutes at peak hours, and the stations are mostly very close together, meaning a lot of stops if you are going on a long journey. If using the Barik card, place your card over the reader in order to enter at the automatic gates, and do this again at the end of the journey when exiting. Bilbobus City bus service. The single line runs along the river passing the Bilbao Guggenheim Museum. If using the Barik card, swipe it once per passenger before boarding: Some good views but the train is slower than buses. The Barik card cannot be used. Bizkaibus For buses which operate outside Bilbao city limits. Spectacular views of Bilbao. The Barik card can be used on this service. On foot It takes about 30 minutes to walk along the river between the Guggenheim Museum and the Casco Viejo. By taxi Taxi Bilbao: This single number is used by all taxi operators in Bilbao. Your cab should appear within five minutes. See Museums 1 Guggenheim Museum, Abandoibarra etorbidea, 2. Closed Jan 1 and Dec The idea in urban planning that a star-quality building can single-handedly change the entire image of a city. Although this effect is unproven in its pure form, the Guggenheim nevertheless changed the world wide perception of Bilbao. The graceful, sensuous curves, evocative of the ships that used to be ubiquitous along the docks of Bilbao, are covered in titanium squares, which resemble the scales of a fish and shimmer in the sunlight. In keeping with the maritime theme, appropriate for the setting, the skylights of the largest gallery formerly known as the Fish gallery are designed to look like the fins of fish. The permanent collection is not particularly impressive, but the museum always hosts at least one interesting temporary exhibit, frequently comprised of masterpieces from the other Guggenheim collections. Free of charge on Wed, and for children under Prices change for special exhibitions.. Mondays and public holidays: Established in to focus on the prehistory, archaeology, ethnography and history of Euskadi Basque homeland. Not a particularly well laid out museum. It will be of passing interest to people who study Basque culture. Children under 10 and seniors: A former convent founded in by Dominican nuns. Students, seniors, and under Call ahead for a guided visit. Churches Cathedral of St. Three naves and small Gothic cloisters. The building was designated a cathedral in Gothic style church from the first half of the 15th century Dedicated to San Anton in the 16th century, the building is a mixture of styles including a renaissance portico and baroque tower which was built in Overlooking Bilbao, this is perhaps the most symbolic religious building in the city. It is a basilica of three naves. The present ones were

designed Jose Maria Bastera and constructed between and One of the best examples of Baroque architecture in Vizcaya. Gothic church built in the 16th century. Other places of interest 8 Vizcaya Bridge. An amazing building which has recently modernized according to designs by Philippe Starck and Thibaut Mathieu. It is an amazing complex containing a library, several bars and restaurants, a cinema and even a roof swimming pool with a glass floor! Spanish author born on 29 September Unamuno died on 31 December in Salamanca. Inaugurated on 31 May , on the site of several former theaters, the first Teatro Arriaga burnt down on 22 December The second Teatro Arriaga opened on 5 June There is a tourist information office in the theater building: Even if you are not going to take a train, visit the platforms, there is an impressive stained glass atrium depicting some traditional Basque jobs. Mercado de la Ribera. One of the biggest covered markets in Europe. It was built in on the site of the original Rivera Street market. Produce fish and meat are sold in the market every morning, except Sundays. Construction began on the plaza on December 31, and finished exactly 20 years later on December 31, There is a market of used books, stamps, coins, and other small items in the plaza every Sunday morning. The Plaza Nueva is surrounded by buildings and only has entrances on some sides. The interior is just as lavish as the exterior, with beautiful stained glass windows. A convention center and concert hall housed in a modern building at the far end of paseo Uribitarte. This is a must-walk street. The site of a former steel factory, this park was created in the s as the first step of reorienting Bilbao from the industrial sector to the service sector. Wonderful views of the Casco Viejo and the Teatro Arriaga. The park hosts a fun fair in August. Also known as la Casa Consistorial or Udaletxea. The city hall opened in Designed by architect Jaquin Rucoba in neo-baroque style. The graceful white pedestrian bridge designed by Santiago Calatrava, actually zubi zuri means white bridge in Basque. Be careful, the bridge is slippery when wet! Tiger statue on top of a building in Deusto. Seen from Euskalduna Performance Center. Strangely missing an arrival hall. Commissioned by El Sitio society at the end of the 19th century, this building was built by architect Severino de Achucarro as a social hall. Built in the early 20th century. Note the arched entranceway. An interesting mix of several architectural styles.

2: Fodor's California | Fodor's Travel Guides (Bog, Paperback)

Fodor's provides expert travel content worth exploring so you can dream up your next trip. The world is a weird and wonderful place—we want to show you around.

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however the complex offers a variety of amenities and services ideal for the whole family making it one of the most popular resorts of the Riviera Maya. Here you will find first class hotels, exceptional homes and condominiums, tennis courts, shopping, a dolphin pool, museum, shops, spas, cafes, restaurants and bars. In addition, you can enjoy a number of activities like swimming with dolphins and other marine animals, diving, snorkeling, fishing, sailing or simply relaxing on the beautiful beaches of this place. Another player in this development is the beautiful and challenging golf course of 36 holes, designed in , surrounded by greenery and integrated seamlessly with the residential area. Puerto Aventuras is a paradise for lovers of navigation, as well as those looking to relax and enjoy the Mexican Caribbean, or even to make this their place of residence. Sale or rental of apartments with a view of the harbor, the sea, or the golf course, are available, as well as single-family homes, hotels, or condominiums overlooking the harbor and sea. Tiene una profundidad controlada de 4 metros y su canal es de 1 milla de diferencia. It has a controlled depth of 4 meters and the channel is 1 mile apart. Also included are important features such as a dry dock, an ton travel lift, dispensers of high speed Diesel and Magna fuel, electricity of , and v. Cuenta con nueve hoyos en la parte del mar y otros nueve en la parte de la laguna. The only difference is that you can enjoy them in the privacy and luxury of your own yacht. La Amada Marina is the central point of the Playa Mujeres complex, which is equipped with every amenity and luxury. You will have no problem finding gourmet restaurants, spa, gym, elegant shopping areas, hotels, beach club, yacht club, heliport, limousine service, concierge, tennis court and more than three kilometers of beach on an untouched peninsula. One of the most outstanding features is a beautiful golf course with 18 holes designed by the renowned golfer and designer Greg Norman, with breathtaking views and challenging winds. It has nine holes along the sea and another nine along the lagoon. La Amada Residencias combina elegantes y modernas viviendas con Instalaciones innovadoras, un amplio abanico de comodidades y un incomparable entorno. It all comes together to make your days pass in tranquility. Here you can enjoy a game of golf, sailing at sunset, an afternoon of spa treatments or a glass of wine when night falls. La Amada Residences offers stylish, modern homes with innovative facilities, a wide range of amenities and an incomparable setting. Your estate consists of condominiums offering 1, 2, 3 and 4 bedrooms per property whether you choose: Cuenta con muelles flotantes de concreto con gran estabilidad permiten un atraque seguro a las embarcaciones. Las escolleras protegen los muelles de los vientos del norte, este y sureste, ofreciendo comodidad y seguridad a los yates. Breakwater protects the moorage from north, east and southeast winds, providing comfort and safety for the yachts. In conjunction with this incredible marina, El Cid has the All Inclusive Hotel Marina El Cid Spa and Beach Resort, where you will be able to enjoy luxurious accommodations, world-class services and exceptional amenities including restaurants serving from casual Mexican to fusion gourmet dining, bars, an all-new convention center, a magnificent pool, Kids Club, Fitness center, Dive shop and tennis court. El Cocay Spa has an amazing assortment of massage services and traditional Mayan spa treatments. El Cid, situated near the charming, bohemian fishing village of Puerto Morelos, allows you to experience a diverse range of water activities, including scuba diving and snorkeling at Puerto Morelos National Reef Park, sport fishing and sailing, to name a few. Featuring a tranquil setting and a reputation for warm hospitality, Marina El Cid is a considered one of the best spots by experienced boaters. Yacht lovers from all over the world will have the opportunity to enjoy the true spirit of Mexico celebrated at this unique place. Set sail for relaxation and tranquility at Marina El Cid. Esta marina de servicio completo cuenta con 64 amarres para yates de hasta 80 pies de largo y 10 para mega yates de hasta pies de largo y 10 pies calado. At this marina you can find Villa Vera Puerto Isla Mujeres, a luxury boutique hotel that offers 20 suites and 4 villas, in an atmosphere of quietness and relaxation. In addition to specialty restaurants, swimming pools, bar, spa services and beach club. Enjoy a first class concierge type service, which will help you to find a solution to all your needs. At Isla Mujeres you will find a simple but pleasant life style, in which you will be able to sail in the Caribbean with your yacht, tour around the island on a golf cart, swim with dolphins, practice snorkel or scuba diving, or sunbathe in its beautiful beaches. A three-masted trimaran of 33 meters in length, it was constructed in Alvarado, Veracruz, from 14 varieties of tropical woodâ€”each selected to give the different parts of the boat resilience and functionality. It also bears seven sails and a distinctive white banner of a circle with three circles inside, locked in an equilateral triangle. This is the flag of peace, as

defined in the Roerich Pact of 1933, which protects monuments and institutions of cultural, educational, artistic, social and research significance. From the beginning of the voyage, some children were chosen along the trip to accompany the crew, representing the children worldwide who wish for peace. The sight of the ship of peace approaching inspired curiosity and respect from people of different cultures. The ports chosen were in areas of historical value to Hispanic, Roman, Greek or Muslim cultures, to which the crew made tributes to during their stay, including praying at the Church of St. This innovative voyage was originally conceived by Captain Vital Alsar, a veteran sailor and shipbuilder for 46 years, who devoted himself to building the Trimaran Zamna along with the nautical entrepreneur Jose Manuel Diaz Rubio, who made the project possible. It is the wish of the proponents of the voyage that the flag of peace wave all over the world, especially in areas of conflict. Es el deseo de los que proponen el viaje que la bandera de la paz ondee alrededor del mundo especialmente en zonas de conflicto. The decision to bring a child aboard the Zamna came from a desire to spread a message of peace from the children to the world. The Island of Cozumel was chosen by the captain as the starting point because it has the special, tolerant and peaceful aura he was looking for. Cozumel has no record of historical warfare; even the Spanish Conquistadors, upon arrival, were amazed by the cordiality with which they were received. Cousteau Anchor Museum, which will also include a unique light and sound show projected on a screen of flowing water, and a permanent dock for the Zamna. And in 1948, the First International Peace Conference, focused on ratifying the Roerich Pact of 1933, will also take place on this island that knows peace so well. The ocean-crossing journey of the Zamna, catching the attention of press whether it sailed into New York, Santander, or Alexandria, celebrated the historical unification of many cultures through the sea. There are many ways to spread peace, but the voyage of the Zamna stands alone in its scope, spirit, and vision for a peaceful future for all. Los Spas de la Riviera Maya han sido acreditados con reconocimientos muy importantes como: Richness is abundant here in the air, water, earth and energy in general. The Riviera Maya is the perfect destination to relax from daily stress and the bigger city tensions. With a selection of the best spas that offer different ways to pamper your body and to experience total renovation and relaxation. These amazing places have the most modern and sophisticated equipment, with amazing architecture and with the best therapists that will take care of every detail to provide you a complete well being experience.

3: Read Microsoft Word - RB-E

Story time just got better with Prime Book Box, a subscription that delivers hand-picked children's books every 1, 2, or 3 months at 40% off List Price.

The national flag, adopted in 1795, consists of three horizontal stripes: The peseta was replaced by the euro as official currency as of 1999. The euro is divided into cents. There are coins in denominations of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, and 50 cents and 1 euro and 2 euros. There are notes of 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, and 200 euros. The metric system is the legal standard. Joseph the Artisan, 1 May; St. Comparatively, the area occupied by Spain is slightly more than twice the size of the state of Oregon. The Spanish mainland extends 1,365 km (849 mi) w and 1,994 km (1,239 mi) s. Spain also holds Ceuta, Melilla, and other "places of sovereignty" in the north of Morocco. Spain has long claimed Gibraltar, a narrow peninsula on the south coast, which was taken by a British-Dutch fleet in 1704 and became a British colony under the Treaty of Utrecht. In 1979, Gibraltar residents voted to remain a British colony and demanded greater participation in talks between the United Kingdom and Spain concerning the future of Gibraltar. The United Kingdom plans to grant Gibraltar greater autonomy, but Spain does not agree with this plan. The Duero and the Guadalquivir form broad valleys and alluvial plains and at their mouths deposit saline soils, creating deltas and salt marshes. The Canary Islands are a group of 13 volcanic islands, of which 6 are barren. They have a ruggedly mountainous terrain interspersed with some fertile valleys. The Balearic Islands are a picturesque group with sharply indented coastlines; they combine steep mountains with rolling, fertile ranges. The northern coastal regions have an average annual rainfall of 99 cm (39 in); the southern coastal belt has 41–79 cm (16–31 in); and the interior central plain averages no more than 50 cm (20 in) annually. Nevertheless, vegetation is generally sparse. In the humid areas of the north there are deciduous trees including oak, chestnut, elm, beech, and poplar, as well as varieties of pine. Pine, juniper, and other evergreens, particularly the ilex and cork oak, and drought-resistant shrubs predominate in the dry southern region. The Canaries, named for the wild dogs *Canariae insulae* once found there, support both Mediterranean and African flora. A small, yellow-tinged finch on the islands has given the name "canary" to a variety of yellow songbirds widely bred as house pets. Animal life in Spain is limited by the pressure of population and few wild species remain. As of 1999, there were at least 82 species of mammals, 150 species of birds, and over 5,000 species of plants throughout the country. Fire eliminates 1,000,000 hectares of forestland each year. Government reforestation schemes meet with difficulties where sheep and goats graze freely over large areas. During the 1990s, an average of 92,000 hectares (228,000 acres) were reforested annually. Air pollution is also a problem in Spain. In 1999, industrial carbon dioxide emissions totaled 100 million metric tons. In 2000, the total of carbon dioxide emissions was at 108 million metric tons. According to a report issued by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), threatened species included 20 types of mammals, 20 species of birds, 8 types of reptiles, 4 species of amphibians, 24 species of fish, 27 types of mollusks, 36 species of other invertebrates, and 14 species of plants. Threatened species included the Spanish lynx, Pyrenean ibex, Mediterranean monk seal, northern bald ibis, Spanish imperial eagle, Cantabrian capercaillie, dusky large blue and Nevada blue butterflies, and on the Canary Islands, the green sea turtle and Hierro giant lizard. The Canarian black oystercatcher and the Canary mouse have become extinct. There were 96 males for every females in the country. According to the UN, the annual population rate of change for 2000–10 was expected to be 0. The projected population for the year was 46 million. The population density was 86 per sq km (222 per sq mi). The capital city, Madrid, had a population of 5 million in that year. Nevertheless, more than 1 million in there were 1 million, foreign residents in Spain, 2 million. There were 1 million Moroccans, 84,000 Ecuadorians, 80,000 British, 62,000 Germans, 48,000 Colombians, 44,000 French, and 42,000 Portuguese. Internal migration was 1 million in. In the past it has been directed toward the more industrialized zones and the great urban centers, and away from the rural areas. Rural-to-urban and urban-to-rural migration is now roughly in balance. Placed into practice in 1985, Plan Greco was a scheme to regularize the immigration process; it was paralleled by a labor quota system aimed at responding to short and long-term labor shortages. However, both employers and labor unions agreed that the labor quota was a failure, falling short of the necessary workers. All the same, Spain still had an estimated 1 million. In 2000, Spain had its fifth and largest legalization program with 1 million, unauthorized foreign

workers applying. A gateway into Europe, Spain receives large numbers of non-European migrants through Ceuta and Melilla. Between 1980 and 1998, an estimated 8,000 people were granted refugee status. In 1995, 15,000 illegal migrants traveled on boats that were intercepted, and in a boat with Moroccans attempting to enter southern Spain was seized. In 1996, 6,000 people applied for asylum in Spain, up from 4,000 in 1995, however by 1997 none applied. In 1998, the net migration rate was an estimated 0. The greatest contrasts are found between those of Celtic, Iberic, and Gothic antecedents in the north and those of southern lineage. The great mobility of the population toward the urban centers, the coast, and the islands has contributed to the diffusion of ethnic characteristics. The Basques, Galicians, and Catalans consider themselves separate nations within Spain; they enjoy considerable cultural, economic, and political autonomy. Estimates of the Roma population are usually given as several hundred thousand. Regional languages are spoken by over 16 million persons in Spain. A majority of those who live in the northeastern provinces and the Balearic Islands spoke Catalan, a neo-Latin tongue. Galician, close to Portuguese, was used in Galicia, in the northwest corner of Spain. The Basques in northern Spain spoke Basque, a pre-Roman language unrelated to any other known tongue and using an ancient script. Bable, a form of Old Castilian was spoken in Asturias northwest, and Valencian, a dialect of Catalan, was used by inhabitants of the eastern province of Valencia. In the same survey, Protestants, numbering about 1,000,000, are represented by the Federation of Evangelical Religious Entities. There are about 400,000 Jews in the country. There are also about 9,000 practicing Buddhists. Roman Catholicism was once the official religion of Spain, but the constitution of 1978 established the principles of religious freedom and separation of church and state. The Roman Catholic Church does, however, continue to maintain certain privileges, as well as monetary support, from the state. In 1998, there were 19,000 passenger cars and 4,000 commercial vehicles. In 1998, the National Spanish Railway Network encompassed 14,000 km (9,000 mi) of broad, standard and narrow gauge railways, of which broad gauge was the largest portion at 11,000 km (7,000 mi), followed by narrow gauge at 1,000 km (1,000 mi), and standard gauge at 2,000 km (1,200 mi). A total of 7,000 km (4,000 mi) of railway broad, standard and narrow gauge were electrified. The port of Bilbao, on the Bay of Biscay, can accommodate tankers of up to 100,000 tons. Scheduled ferry services connect Spain with neighboring countries and North Africa. As of 1998, Spain had 1,000 km (1,000 mi) of navigable inland waterways. Spain had an estimated 100 airports and airfields in 1998. As of 1998, a total of 95 had paved runways, and there were also eight heliports. In 1998, about 1,000 A shrine near Santander, discovered in 1998, is believed to be over 14,000 years old, and the paintings discovered in the nearby caves of Altamira in 1998 are of comparable antiquity. The recorded history of Spain begins about 1000 bc, when the prehistoric Iberian culture was transformed by the invasion of Celtic tribes from the north and the coming of Phoenician and Greek colonists to the Spanish coast. From the 6th to the 2nd century bc, Carthage controlled the Iberian Peninsula up to the Ebro River; from 200 bc, with the fall of Numantia, until the barbarian invasions of the 5th century ad, Rome held Hispania, from which the name Spain is derived. During the Roman period, cities and roads were built, and Christianity and Latin, the language from which Spanish originated, were introduced. In the 5th century, the Visigoths, or western Goths, settled in Spain, dominating the country until 711, when the invading Moors defeated King Roderick. All of Spain, except for a few northern districts, knew Muslim rule for periods ranging from 100 to 800 years. Under Islam, a rich civilization arose, characterized by prosperous cities, industries, and agriculture and by brilliant writers, philosophers, and physicians, including Jews as well as Muslims. Throughout this period, however, Christian Spain waged intermittent and local war against the Moors. The most prominent figure in this battle was El Cid, who fought for both Christians and Moors in the 11th century. By the 13th century, Muslim rule was restricted to the south of Spain. In order to strengthen the unity of the new state, Moors and Jews were expelled from Spain; Catholic converts who chose to stay were subject to the terrors of the Inquisition if suspected of practicing their former religions. The year 1492 also witnessed the official European discovery of the Americas by Christopher Columbus, sailing under the Castilian flag. By the latter part of the 16th century, however, under Philip II, the toll of religious wars in Europe and the flow of people and resources to the New World had drained the strength of the Spanish nation; in 1588, the "invincible" Spanish Armada was defeated by England. On 2 May 1808, however, the Spanish people revolted and, later assisted by the British, drove the French from Spain. Much of the 19th and early 20th centuries were consumed in passionate struggles between radical republicanism and absolute monarchy. Abroad, imperial Spain lost most of its dominions in the Western

Hemisphere as a result of colonial rebellions in the first half of the 19th century; Cuba , Puerto Rico , and the Philippines were lost as a result of the Spanish-American War in 1898. Spain remained neutral in World War I but in the postwar period engaged in extensive military action to maintain its colonial possessions in Morocco. Early defeats in the Moroccan campaign paved the way in for the benevolent dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, who successfully ended the war in 1926 and remained in power under the monarchy until 1931. In 1931, after municipal elections indicated a large urban vote in favor of a republic, Alfonso XIII left Spain and a republic was established. The constitution of December 1931 defined Spain as a "democratic republic of workers," with "no official religion," respecting the "rules of international law" and renouncing war as an instrument of national policy and recognizing the principle of regional autonomy.

4: •â €â €â €â €â €â €MADRIDY_88 (@madridy_88) â€¢ Instagram photos and videos

Love to travel? Get FREE email communications from Fodor's Travel, covering must-see travel destinations, expert trip planning advice, and travel inspiration to fuel your passion.

Find out more about Ibiza at [theculturetrip](#). Spain is famous for its friendly inhabitants, relaxed lifestyle, its cuisine, vibrant nightlife, and world-famous folklore and festivities, and its history as the core of the vast Spanish Empire. Regions Spain is a diverse country with contrasting regions that have different languages and unique historical, political and cultural traditions. Some of the autonomous communitiesâ€”notably the ones which have other official languages alongside Spanishâ€”have been recognised as "historical nationalities" that have a unique historical identity. Cities Spain has hundreds of interesting cities. Here are nine of the most popular: A country of large geographic and cultural diversity, Spain may come as a surprise to those who only know of its reputation for great beach holidays and almost endless sunshine. There is everything from lush meadows and snowy mountains to huge marshes and deserts in the south east. However the ski resorts of Sierra Nevada do get very crowded. The Mediterranean climate that predominates in Southern and Central Spain is noted for its dry summers and somewhat wet ter winters, so visiting in the winter or spring brings the added benefit of the vegetation looking much more healthy. Asturias on the other hand gets quite a bit of rain year round and is ripe with lush green vegetation even in August. History Some of the earliest known remains of Homo of any kind in Europe have been found in Spain. Spain is also thought to have been the last refuge of the Neanderthals, and one of the few places that were inhabitable and inhabited throughout the ice ages. Early Spain and Roman Era See also: Roman Empire The earliest inhabitants of the Iberian peninsula we have any profound knowledge of were Iberians, Celts related to the Gaulish, Britannic and Central European Celts in language and culture and Basques. As most of these groups had little to no written records we only know of them due to the descriptions of the Greek, Punic and later Roman settlers and conquerors, who colonized Spain from the South starting in the 3rd century BC. Roman culture lasted on the peninsula for roughly half a millennium, when in the age of migrations the Visigoths conquered the Roman province of Hispania. Soon after their conquest, the Visigoths formed a number of rival "kingdoms" and petty noble states in almost constant conflict in ever-shifting shaky alliances with or against one another, giving rise to constant wars. Muslim conquest and "al-Andalus" In one Visigoth ruler apparently called for the Umayyad Muslims to help in his fight against some rival or other. The historical records for this era in Spain are rather bad and there are for example no contemporary Muslim sources whatsoever. This proved more successful than he could have imagined, and by the end of the 8th century most of the peninsula was in Muslim hands. While the almost years of divided rule by Christian and Muslim rulers on the Iberian peninsula was by no means peaceful, the modern narrative of a somehow concerted effort to "regain" the "lost lands" for Christendom was never the first, second or any priority for the majority of the Christian rulers. As a matter of fact, many times Christian rulers entered into alliances with Muslim rulers against other Christian rulers and vice versa. While the situation for Muslims in Christian lands and vice versa and Jews in either depended very much on the mood of the ruler and could lie anywhere on a range from benevolent ignorance to murder and expulsion, religious minorities had it a lot better in Spain than in most of the rest of Europe at that time. In fact the Sephardi Jews named after the Hebrew word for Spain were at that time not only one of the most important groups inside Spain in terms of science and education, but also dominant among the Jewish people, worldwide. However, this period ended when through conquest and marriage the kingdoms of Castile and Aragon as well as a couple of minor Christian lands were united and their rulers started a war of conquest against the Muslim rulers. In the process of re-conquering Spain, many of the great mosques and synagogues were desecrated and converted into Christian churches. There are also two synagogues still standing that were built during the era of Muslim Spain: The "new Christians" as they were called were often not sincere in their forced conversions go figure and to ensure religious "purity", the notorious Spanish inquisition was set up. Under the House of Habsburg, Spain became a personal union with the Austrian Empire, and reached its height of power in Europe during the 16th and early 17th centuries, controlling much of Benelux and Italy. By Spain lost the

majority of its remaining territories during the Spanish-American War: For much of this time, Spain was not really one realm so much as several realms which shared a monarch. While the monarch had broad powers, there was no such thing as "absolute" monarchy in Spain and the various regions - notably the Basque country - had numerous special privileges and autonomies granted either to "the people", a local lord or "free men". This proved complicated to resolve when Spain became a Republic and it is still an issue with which Spain is grappling in the 21st century. The 20th century Spain experienced a devastating civil war between and that killed half a million Spaniards and ushered in more than 30 years of dictatorship under Generalissimo Francisco Franco. The fascist side was led by a group of generals; however, some of them soon died in plane crashes or were pushed to the side by Franco. The Republican side called for volunteers in the so-called "international brigades", and around 20, Brits, Americans, Frenchmen and even Germans joined the fight on their side. However, the Republican side was plagued by lack of weapons and ammunition some of their rifles were produced in the 19th century, by infighting between communists and anarchists, and by and Stalinist purges ordered by the super-paranoid supporters of Republican Spain in Moscow. As many people of that generation fought in the Spanish Civil War or covered it as - often blatantly biased - war correspondents including George Orwell, Ernest Hemingway and later German chancellor Willy Brandt there is a lot of well-written literature and some films that while not always historically accurate manage to perfectly capture the spirit of vain idealism that made many of the interbrigadistas go to Spain in the first place. The war was won for Franco through superior fire-power and with military aid from the Nazis including the war-crime of bombing Guernica. Franco managed to unify the not at all homogeneous nationalist forces behind his less-than-charismatic leadership and hold onto power through the Second World War in which he stayed neutral until his death. He was succeeded by King Juan Carlos. To this day, conservatives and Catholics the Republicans were pretty anti-clerical are sometimes apologetic about Franco and the "necessity" of the war. The nature of the transition meant that there was little justice for those who had suffered under the Franco dictatorship and divisions still remain. Shortly after King Juan Carlos - to the surprise of many - insisted on the country becoming a parliamentary democracy with a figurehead king as nominal head of state, right-wing generals tried to overthrow the nascent democracy on 23 February in what is now known as 23F. One of the most striking images of the coup was the general Tejero storming into the Congress of Deputies at the head of Guardia Civil members and interrupting the vote to replace center-right Adolfo Suarez with center-right Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo for Prime Minister. The coup failed mostly due to lack of popular support and because the king - in his capacity of commander-in-chief - appeared on television in full uniform to order the soldiers back into their barracks, thus throwing his lot in with democracy. This resulted in a lot of support for the king personally even among otherwise republican-inclined Spaniards for most of his reign. However, the monarchy is rather unpopular among the autonomist or independist movements of Catalonia or the Basque country. The ruling center-right party UCD under Leopoldo Calvo-Sotelo badly misjudged the Andalusian desire for regional self-government and thus lost the election, in one of the biggest popular vote landslides in any modern democracy, to the leftist PSOE. This led to the formation of Partido Popular PP from the rubble left behind by the temporary collapse of the center-right. The group declared a ceasefire in and the armed struggle appears over for the time being. Uncertain times in the third millennium In the s there was more economic expansion and a housing price boom that subsequently collapsed, leaving Spain with high unemployment and economic difficulties. As a member of U. His government, however, broke down in late as an early result of the economic crisis that hit Spain particularly hard. The economically important Catalan region is also increasing in its demands for independence from Spain. In the government of Mariano Rajoy broke down over the Catalan crisis and corruption allegations with a shaky coalition led by PSOE leader Pedro Sanchez taking over after a no-confidence vote. In King Juan Carlos abdicated, marking the first change of monarch since the death of Franco. The current king is his son, Felipe VI. Migration Spain holds a historical attachment to its neighbors within the Iberian Peninsula, Andorra and Portugal, to its former colonies, to former citizens and their descendants, and to a special category of former citizens, namely Sephardic Jews. The population of Spain is growing in large part due to migration by people from relatively poor or politically unstable areas of Latin America, such as Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador or Peru; other parts of Europe, especially

Eastern Europe; and Africa and Asia, particularly areas that have a historical or linguistic attachment to Spain. Internally there have always been migrations from poorer rural areas such as Andalusia to the cities and to jobs in construction and tourism. Get in Entry requirements Spain is a member of the Schengen Agreement. There are normally no border controls between countries that have signed and implemented the treaty. This includes most of the European Union and a few other countries. There are usually identity checks before boarding international flights or boats. Sometimes there are temporary border controls at land borders. Likewise, a visa granted for any Schengen member is valid in all other countries that have signed and implemented the treaty. Please see Travelling around the Schengen Area for more information on how the scheme works, which countries are members and what the requirements are for your nationality. EU, EEA and Swiss nationals who enter Spain on a national identity card, who are under 18 years old and travelling without their parents are required to have written parental consent. For more information, visit this webpage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain. However, this ability to work visa-free does not necessarily extend to other Schengen countries. A stay of longer than 90 days for non-EEA or Swiss citizens almost invariably requires an advance visa. If one stays for longer than 6 months, a residence permit Titulo de Residencia must be obtained within the first 30 days of entering Spain. There are a number of ways to get into Spain. From neighboring European countries, a drive with the car or a train ride is feasible; from a number of Mediterranean countries more or less regular ferry connections are available; visitors from further away will probably be using air travel. There are many airlines connecting from most European countries, Africa, the Americas and Asia. Virtually all European low cost carriers provide frequent services to Spain including: For the islands, you will most likely directly arrive at an airport on the island, without connecting through another Spanish airport. Always check whether the bus or the train is more convenient. The Spanish high speed rail system is, however, more reliable than that of - say - Germany , because the gauge of traditional and high speed trains is different and thus high speed lines are only used by high speed passenger trains meaning fewer delays due to congested lines or technical problems. All lines that cross the border into France have either a break of gauge thus making changing train or a lengthy gauge change necessary or are high speed, thus making the high speed trains the vastly preferable option to cross the border. Spanish operators with international connections include Alsa and Linebus. Generally speaking the buses will be reasonably save and may even have WiFi or electric outlets at your seat, but if your main concern is anything but cost, opt for a train or plane instead as the former is both vastly more comfortable and faster and the latter is still a lot faster and can even be cheaper, if you manages to travel on carry-on only. Spain is also well connected by ferry to Northern Africa particularly Tunisia and Morocco and the Canary Islands which are part of Spain. Get around By train Renfe is the Spanish national rail carrier. To be safe, always take the train before the one you need. Buying tickets online with a foreign credit card may be difficult, however, those with a PayPal account may find it easier to pay using the website. On these places where both Renfe and FGC operate, usually FGC provides more trains per hour, has better punctuality records and stations are closer to the city centers; on the other side, trains are slower and single fares are more expensive. By bus The least expensive way to get around most parts of Spain is by bus. Most major routes are point to point, and very high frequency. There are many companies serving within certain autonomous communities or provinces of the country on multiple routes or on a single route going from a major city to several surrounding villages and towns. The following operators serve more than a single region: At the bus station, each operator has its own ticket counter or window and usually a single operator from here to a particular destination. Therefore, the easiest is to ask the staff who will be happy to tell you who operates which route and point you to a specific desk or window. You can also see what is all available on Movelia. It is usually not necessary or more advantageous to book tickets in advance as one can show up and get on the next available bus. Most bus companies can be booked in advance online. By boat Wherever you are in Spain, from your private yacht you can enjoy gorgeous scenery and distance yourself from the inevitable crowds of tourists that flock to these destinations.

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