Spain, officially the Kingdom of Spain (Spanish: España, Reino de España), is a country located in Southern Europe, with two small exclaves in North Africa (both bordering Morocco). The mainland of Spain is bounded on the south and east by Mediterranean Sea (containing the Balearic Islands), on the north by the Bay of Biscay and on the west by the Atlantic Ocean (containing the Canary Islands off the African coast). Spain shares land borders with Portugal, France, Andorra, Gibraltar, and Morocco. It is the largest of three sovereign states that make up the Iberian Peninsula — the others being Portugal and Andorra.

There are a number of hypotheses as to the origin of the Roman name "Hispania", the root of the Spanish name España and the English name Spain.

Spain is a democracy which is organized as a parliamentary monarchy. It is a developed country with the ninth-largest economy in the world.

History

Different cultures have settled in the area of modern Spain, such as the Celts, Iberians, Romans, Visigoths, and Moors. For just over five centuries, during the Middle Ages, large areas were under the control of Islamic rulers, a fragment of which survived as late as 1492, when the Christian kingdoms of Castile and Aragon completed the 770 years long process of driving the Moors out. That same year, Christopher Columbus reached the New World, leading to the creation of the world-wide Spanish Empire. Spain became the most powerful country in Europe, but continued wars and other problems gradually reduced Spain to a diminished status. The 20th century was dominated in the middle years by the Franco dictatorship; with the dawn of a stable democracy in 1978, and having joined what is now known as the European Union in 1986, Spain has enjoyed an economic and cultural renaissance.

Prehistory and pre-Roman peoples in the Iberian Peninsula

Modern humans in the form of Cro-Magnons began arriving in the Iberian Peninsula from north of the Pyrenees some 35,000 years ago. The best known artifacts of these prehistoric human settlements are the famous paintings in the Altamira cave of Cantabria in northern Spain, which were created about 15,000 BCE.

The historical peoples of the peninsula were the Iberians and the Celts, the former inhabiting the Mediterranean side from the northeast to the southwest, the latter inhabiting the Atlantic side, in the north and northwest part of the peninsula. In the inner part of the peninsula, where both groups were in contact, a mixed, distinctive, culture was present, known as Celtiberian.

The earliest urban culture is believed to be that of the semi-mythical southern city of Tartessos (perhaps pre-1100 BCE). Between about 500 BCE and 300 BCE, the seafaring Phoenicians, and Greeks founded trading colonies along the Mediterranean coast. The Carthaginians briefly took control of much of the Mediterranean coast in the course of the Punic Wars until they were eventually defeated and replaced by the Romans.

Roman Empire

During the Second Punic War, an expanding Roman Empire captured Carthaginian trading colonies along the Mediterranean coast (from roughly 210 BCE to 205 BCE), leading to eventual Roman control of nearly the entire Iberian Peninsula – a control which lasted over 500 years,
bound together by law, language, and the Roman road. The base Celt and Iberian population remained in various stages of romanization, and local leaders were admitted into the Roman aristocratic class.

The Romans improved existing cities, such as Lisbon (Olissipo) and Tarragona (Tarraco), and established Zaragoza (Caesaraugusta), Mérida (Augusta Emerita), and Valencia (Valentia). The peninsula's economy expanded under Roman tutelage. Hispania served as a granary for the Roman market, and its harbors exported gold, wool, olive oil, and wine. Agricultural production increased with the introduction of irrigation projects, some of which remain in use. Emperors Trajan, Hadrian, Marcus Aurelius and Theodosius I, and the philosopher Seneca were born in Hispania. Christianity was introduced into Hispania in the first century CE and it became popular in the cities in the second century CE. Most of Spain's present languages and religion, and the basis of its laws, originate from this period.

**Visigothic Hispania –Germanic invasions(5th–8th centuries)**

After the decline of the Roman Empire, Germanic tribes invaded the former empire. Several turned sedentary and created successor-kingsdoms to the Romans in various parts of Europe. Iberia was taken over by the Visigoths after 410.

In the Iberian peninsula, as elsewhere, the Empire fell not with a bang but with a whimper. Rather than there being any convenient date for the "fall of the Roman Empire" there was a progressive "de-Romanization" of the Western Roman Empire in Hispania and a weakening of central authority, throughout the 3rd, 4th and 5th centuries. At the same time, there was a process of "Romanization" of the Germanic and Hunnic tribes settled on both sides of the limes (the fortified frontier of the Empire along the Rhine and Danube rivers). The Visigoths, for example, were converted to Arian Christianity around 360, even before they were pushed into imperial territory by the expansion of the Huns. In the winter of 406, taking advantage of the frozen Rhine, the (Germanic) Vandals and Sueves, and the (Sarmatian) Alans invaded the empire in force. Three years later they crossed the Pyrenees into Iberia and divided the Western parts, roughly corresponding to modern Portugal and western Spain as far as Madrid, between them. The Visigoths meanwhile, having sacked Rome two years earlier, arrived in the region in 412 founding the Visigothic kingdom of Toulouse (in the south of modern France) and gradually expanded their influence into the Iberian peninsula at the expense of the Vandals and Alans, who moved on into North Africa without leaving much permanent mark on Hispanic culture. The Visigothic Kingdom shifted its capital to Toledo and reached a high point during the reign of Leovigild.

Importantly, Spain never saw a decline in interest in classical culture to the degree observable in Britain, Gaul, Lombardy and Germany. The Visigoths tended to maintain more of the old Roman institutions, and they had a unique respect for legal codes that resulted in continuous frameworks and historical records for most of the period between 415, when Visigothic rule in Spain began, and 711, when it is traditionally said to end. The proximity of the Visigothic kingdoms to the Mediterranean and the continuity of western Mediterranean trade, though in reduced quantity, supported Visigothic culture. Arian Visigothic nobility kept apart from the local Catholic population. The Visigothic ruling class looked to Constantinople for style and technology while the rivals of Visigothic power and culture were the Catholic bishops— and a brief incursion of Byzantine power in Cordoba.
The period of Visigothic rule saw the spread of Arianism briefly in Spain. In 587, Reccared, the Visigothic king at Toledo, having been converted to Catholicism put an end to dissension on the question of Arianism and launched a movement in Spain to unify the various religious doctrines that existed in the land. The Council of Lerida in 546 constrained the clergy and extended the power of law over them under the blessings of Rome.

The Visigoths inherited from Late Antiquity a sort of feudal system in Spain, based in the south on the Roman villa system and in the north drawing on their vassals to supply troops in exchange for protection. The bulk of the Visigothic army was composed of slaves, raised from the countryside. The loose council of nobles that advised Spain's Visigothic kings and legitimized their rule was responsible for raising the army, and only upon its consent was the king able to summon soldiers.

The impact of Visigothic rule was not widely felt on society at large, and certainly not compared to the vast bureaucracy of the Roman Empire; they tended to rule as barbarians of a mild sort, uninterested in the events of the nation and economy, working for personal benefit, and little literature remains to us from the period. They did not, until the period of Muslim rule, merge with the Spanish population, preferring to remain separate, and indeed the Visigothic language left only the faintest mark on the modern languages of Iberia. The most visible effect was the depopulation of the cities as they moved to the countryside. Even while the country enjoyed a degree of prosperity when compared to the famines of France and Germany in this period, the Visigoths felt little reason to contribute to the welfare, permanency, and infrastructure of their people and state. This contributed to their downfall, as they could not count on the loyalty of their subjects when the Moors arrived in the 8th century.

**Muslim Iberia**

In the 8th century, nearly all the Iberian peninsula was quickly conquered (711–718) by mainly Berber Muslims (see Moors) from North Africa. These conquests were part of the expansion of the Islamic Umayyad Empire. Only three small areas in the mountains of northern Spain managed to cling to their independence, Asturias, Navarra and Aragon.

Under Islam, Christians and Jews were recognized as "peoples of the book", and were free to practice their religion, but faced some discriminations. Conversion to Islam proceeded at a steadily increasing pace, starting with the aristocracy, as it offered an escape from the limitations and humiliations of their dhimmi status. By the 11th century Muslims were believed to have outnumbered Christians in Al-Andalus.

The Muslim community in Spain was itself diverse and beset by social tensions. The Berber people of North Africa had provided the bulk of the armies and clashed with the Arab leadership from the Middle East. Over time, large Moorish populations became established, especially in the Guadalquivir River valley, the coastal plain of Valencia, and (towards the end of this period) in the mountainous region of Granada.

Cordoba, Muslim Spain's capital, was viewed as the richest and most sophisticated city of medieval Europe. Mediterranean trade and cultural exchange flourished. Muslims imported a rich intellectual tradition from the Middle East and North Africa. Muslim and Jewish scholars played a major part in reviving and expanding classical Greek learning in Western Europe. Spain's romanized cultures interacted with Muslim and Jewish cultures in complex ways, giving Spain a distinctive culture. Outside the cities, the land ownership system from Roman times
remained largely intact as Muslim leaders rarely dispossessed landowners, and new crops and techniques led to a remarkable expansion of agriculture.

However, by the 11th century, Muslim holdings had fractured into rival Taifa kingdoms.[11] The arrival of the North African Muslim ruling empires of the Almoravids and the Almohads restored unity upon Muslim holdings, with a stricter, less tolerant application of Islam, but ultimately, after some initial successes in invading the north, proved unable to resist the increasing military strength of the Christian states.[4]

**Fall of Muslim rule and unification**

The term *Reconquista* ("Reconquest") is used to describe the centuries-long period of expansion of Spain's Christian kingdoms; the *Reconquista* is viewed as beginning in 722 with the creation of the Christian Kingdom of Asturias, only eleven years after the Moorish invasion. As early as 739, Muslim forces were driven out of Galicia, which was to host one of medieval Christianity's holiest sites, Santiago de Compostella.[14] The breakup of Al-Andalus into the competing Taifa kingdoms helped the expanding Christian kingdoms. The capture of the central city of Toledo in 1085 largely completed the reconquest of the northern half of Spain.[15] After a Muslim resurgence in the 12th century the great Moorish strongholds in the south fell to Christian Spain in the 13th century—Córdoba in 1236 and Seville in 1248—leaving only the Muslim enclave of Granada as a tributary state in the south.[16] Also in the 13th century, the kingdom of Aragón expanded its reach across the Mediterranean to Sicily.[17]

In 1469, the crowns of the Christian kingdoms of Castile and Aragón were united by the marriage of Isabella and Ferdinand. In 1492, these united kingdoms captured Granada, ending the last remnant of a 781 year presence of Islamic rule on the Iberian Peninsula.[18] The year 1492 also marked the arrival in the New World of Christopher Columbus, during a voyage funded by Isabella. That same year, Spain's large Jewish community was expelled during the Spanish Inquisition.[19]

As Renaissance New Monarchs, Isabella and Ferdinand centralized royal power at the expense of local nobility, and the word *España* began to be used to designate the whole of the two kingdoms.[20] With their wide ranging political, legal, religious and military reforms, Spain emerged as a European great power.

**Rise as a world power: From the Renaissance to the 19th century**

*Main articles: Habsburg Spain and Enlightenment Spain*

The unification of the kingdoms of Aragón, Castile, León, and Navarre laid the basis for modern Spain and the Spanish Empire. Spain became Europe's leading power throughout the 16th century and first part of the 17th century, a position reinforced by trade and wealth from colonial possessions. Spain reached its apogee during the reigns of the first two Spanish Habsburgs (Charles I (1516-1556) and Philip II (1556-1598)). Included in this period are the last Italian Wars, the Dutch revolt, clashes with the Ottomans, the Anglo-Spanish war and war with France.[21]

The Spanish Empire expanded to include nearly all of South and Central America, Mexico, southern portions of today's United States, the Philippines in Eastern Asia, the Iberian peninsula (including the Portuguese empire (from 1580)), southern Italy, Sicily, as well as parts of modern
Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. It was the first empire about which it was said that the sun did not set. This was an age of discovery, with daring explorations by sea and by land, the opening up of new trade routes across oceans, conquests and the beginning of European colonialism. Along with the arrival of precious metals, spices, luxuries, and new agricultural plants, Spanish explorers and others brought back knowledge that transformed the European understanding of the world.\[22\]

Of note was the cultural efflorescence now known as the Spanish Golden Age and the intellectual movement known as the School of Salamanca.

Spain faced decline from the middle decades of the 17th century. A major factor behind this was the strain of continuing military efforts in Europe as the Spanish Habsburgs enmeshed the country in continent wide religious-political conflicts. These conflicts drained it of resources and undermined the European economy. Spain managed to hold on to the majority of the scattered Habsburg empire, and help Imperial forces of the Holy Roman Empire reverse much of the advance of Protestant forces, but it was finally forced to recognize the independence of Portugal (with its empire) and the Netherlands, and eventually began to surrender territories to France following the Thirty Years War.\[23\] From the 1640s Spain went into a gradual but seemingly irreversible decline for the rest of the century.

Controversy over succession to the throne consumed the first years of the 18th century. The War of Spanish Succession (1701-1714), a wide ranging international conflict combined with a civil war, cost Spain its European possessions and its position as one of the leading powers on the Continent (although it retained its overseas territories).\[24\]

During this war, a new dynasty—the French Bourbons—was installed. Long united only by the Crown, a true Spanish state was established when the first Bourbon king Philip V of Spain united Castile and Aragon into a single state, abolishing many of the regional privileges (fueros).\[25\]

The 18th century saw a gradual recovery and increasing prosperity through much of the empire. The new Bourbon monarchy drew on the French system of modernizing the administration and the economy. Towards the end of the century trade finally began growing strongly. Military assistance for the rebellious British colonies in the American War of Independence improved Spain's international standing.\[26\]

Napoleonic rule and its consequences

In 1793, Spain went to war against the new French Republic, which had overthrown and executed its Bourbon king, Louis XVI. The war polarized the country in an apparent reaction against the gallicised elites. Defeated in the field, Spain made peace with France in 1795 and effectively became a client state of that country; the following year, it declared war against Britain and Portugal. A disastrous economic situation, along with other factors, led to the abdication of the Spanish king in favour of Napoleon's brother, Joseph Bonaparte.

This new foreign monarch was regarded with scorn. On May 2, 1808, the people of Madrid began a nationalist uprising against the French army, known to the Spanish as the War of Independence, and to the English as the Peninsular War. Napoleon was forced to intervene personally, defeating the Spanish army and Anglo-Portuguese forces. However, further military action by Spanish guerrillas and Wellington's Anglo-Portuguese army, combined with Napoleon's disastrous
invasion of Russia, led to the ousting of the French from Spain in 1814, and the return of King Ferdinand VII.

The French invasion proved disastrous for Spain's economy, and left a deeply divided country that was prone to political instability for more than a century. The power struggles of the early 19th century led to the loss of all of Spain's colonies in Latin America, with the exception of Cuba and Puerto Rico.

Further information: Mid-nineteenth century Spain

Spanish-American War

Main article: Spanish–American War

At the end of the 19th century, Spain lost all of its remaining old colonies in the Caribbean and Asia-Pacific regions, including Cuba, Puerto Rico, Philippines, and Guam to the United States after the Spanish-American War of 1898. In 1899, Spain sold its remaining Pacific possessions to Germany.

"The Disaster" of 1898, as the Spanish-American War became known, gave increased impetus to Spain's cultural revival (Generation of '98) in which there was much critical self examination. However, political stability in such a dispersed and variegated land, comprising strongly differentiated regional identities and deeply held divisions over governmental legitimacy, would elude the country for some decades and was ultimately imposed via dictatorship in 1939.

The 20th century

The 20th century brought little peace; Spain played a minor part in the scramble for Africa, with the colonization of Western Sahara, Spanish Morocco and Equatorial Guinea. The heavy losses suffered during the Rif war in Morocco helped to undermine the monarchy. A period of dictatorial rule under General Miguel Primo de Rivera (1923–1931) ended with the establishment of the Second Spanish Republic. The Republic offered political autonomy to the Basque Country, Catalonia and Galicia and gave voting rights to women.

The bitterly fought Spanish Civil War (1936-39) ensued. Three years later the Nationalist forces, led by General Francisco Franco, emerged victorious with the support of Germany and Italy. The Republican side was supported by the Soviet Union and Mexico, but it was not supported by the Western powers due to the British-led policy of Non-Intervention. The Spanish Civil War has been called the first battle of the Second World War; under Franco, Spain was neutral in the Second World War though sympathetic to the Axis.[27]

The only legal party under Franco's regime was the Falange española tradicionalista y de las JONS, formed in 1937; the party emphasized anti-Communism, Catholicism and nationalism.

After World War II, Spain was politically and economically isolated, and was kept out of the United Nations until 1955, when it became strategically important for the U.S. to establish a military presence on the Iberian peninsula. In the 1960s, Spain registered an unprecedented economic growth in what was called the Spanish miracle, which gradually transformed it into a modern industrial economy with a thriving tourism sector.
Upon the death of General Franco in November 1975, his personally designated heir Prince Juan Carlos assumed the position of king and head of state. With the approval of the Spanish Constitution of 1978 and the arrival of democracy, political autonomy were established. In the Basque Country, moderate Basque nationalism coexisted with a radical nationalism supportive of the terrorist group ETA.

In 1982, the Spanish Socialist Worker's Party (PSOE) came to power, which represented the return to power of a leftist party after 43 years. In 1986, Spain joined the European Community (which was to become the European Union). The PSOE was replaced by the PP after the latter won the 1996 General Elections; at that point the PSOE had served almost 14 consecutive years in office.

21st century

On January 1, 2002, Spain terminated its historic peseta currency and replaced it with the euro, which has become its national currency shared with 13 other countries from the Eurozone. This culminated a fast process of economic modernization.

On March 11, 2004, a series of bombs exploded in commuter trains in Madrid, Spain. This act of terror killed 191 people and wounded 1,460 more, besides possibly affecting national elections scheduled for March 14, three days after the attack. The Madrid train bombings had an adverse effect on the image of the then-ruled conservative party Partido Popular (PP) which polls had indicated were likely to win the elections, thus helping the election of Zapatero's Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE). There were two nights of incidents around the PP headquarters, with the PSOE and other political parties accusing the PP of hiding the truth by saying that the incidents were caused by ETA even though new evidence that pointed to an Islamic attack started appearing. These incidents are still a cause of discussion, since some factions of the PP suggest that the elections were "stolen" by means of the turmoil which followed the terrorist bombing, which was, according to this point of view, backed by the PSOE.

March 14, 2004, three days after the bombings, saw the PSOE party elected into government, with Rodríguez Zapatero becoming the new Presidente del Gobierno or prime minister of Spain thus replacing the former PP administration.

Politics

Spain is a constitutional monarchy, with a hereditary monarch and a bicameral parliament, the Cortes Generales. The executive branch consists of a Council of Ministers presided over by the President of Government (comparable to a prime minister), proposed by the monarch and elected by the National Assembly following legislative elections.

The legislative branch is made up of the Congress of Deputies (Congreso de los Diputados) with 350 members, elected by popular vote on block lists by proportional representation to serve four-year terms, and a Senate or Senado with 259 seats of which 208 are directly elected by popular vote and the other 51 appointed by the regional legislatures to also serve four-year terms.

Spain is, at present, what is called a State of Autonomies, formally unitary but, in fact, functioning as a highly decentralized Federation of Autonomous Communities; it is regarded by many as the most decentralized nation in Europe; for example, all territories manage their own health and education systems, and other territories (the Basque Country and Navarre) manage their own
public finances. In Catalonia and the Basque Country, an autonomous police corps widely replaces the State police functions (see Mossos d’Esquadra and Ertzaintza).

The Government of Spain has been involved in a long-running campaign against Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA), a terrorist organization founded in 1959 in opposition to Franco and dedicated to promoting Basque independence through violent means. They consider themselves a guerrilla organization while they are listed as a terrorist organization by both the European Union and the United States on their respective watchlists. The current nationalist-led Basque Autonomous government does not endorse ETA's nationalist violence, which has caused over 800 deaths.

**Administrative divisions**

![Map of Spain](image)

Spain is divided into 17 autonomous communities (comunidades autónomas) and 2 autonomous cities (ciudades autónomas) - Ceuta and Melilla. These autonomous communities are subdivided into 50 provinces (provincias).

Historically, some provinces are also divided into comarcas (roughly equivalent to a US "county" or an English district). The lowest administrative division of Spain is the municipality (municipio).

**Geography**

At 194,884 mi² (504,782 km²), Spain is the world's 51st-largest country. It is comparable in size to Turkmenistan, and is somewhat larger than the U.S. state of California.

On the west, Spain borders Portugal, on the south, it borders Gibraltar (a British overseas territory) and Morocco, through its cities in North Africa (Ceuta and Melilla). On the northeast, along the Pyrenees mountain range, it borders France and the tiny principality of Andorra. Spain also includes the Balearic Islands in the Mediterranean Sea, the Canary Islands in the Atlantic Ocean and a number of uninhabited islands on the Mediterranean side of the strait of Gibraltar, known as Plazas de soberanía, such as the Chafarine islands, the isle of Alborán, the "rocks" (peñones) of Vélez and Alhucemas, and the tiny Isla Perejil. In the northeast along the Pyrenees, a small exclave town called Llívia in Catalonia is surrounded by French territory.
Mainland Spain is dominated by high plateaus and mountain ranges, such as the Sierra Nevada. Running from these heights are several major rivers such as the Tajo, the Ebro, the Duero, the Guadiana and the Guadalquivir. Alluvial plains are found along the coast, the largest of which is that of the Guadalquivir in Andalusia.

Due to Spain's geographical situation and orographic conditions, the climate is extremely diverse; it can be roughly divided in three areas:

- A temperate version of the Continental climate takes place in the inland areas of the Peninsula (largest city, Madrid).
- The Mediterranean climate region, which roughly extends from the Andalusian plain along the southern and eastern coasts up to the Pyrenees, on the seaward side of the mountain ranges that run near the coast (largest city, Barcelona).
- An Oceanic climate takes place in Galicia and the coastal strip by the Bay of Biscay (largest city, Bilbao). This area is often called Green Spain.

Territorial disputes

Territories claimed by Spain

Spain has called for the return of Gibraltar, a small but strategic British overseas territory near the Strait of Gibraltar. In referenda held in this regard to date, the overwhelming majority of Gibraltarians have rejected any union with Spain. UN resolutions call on the United Kingdom and Spain to reach an agreement over the status of Gibraltar.

Spanish territories claimed by other countries

Morocco claims the Spanish cities of Ceuta and Melilla and the lesser plazas de soberanía off the northern coast of Africa. Portugal does not recognize Spain's sovereignty over the territory of Olivenza.

Economy

According to the World Bank, Spain's economy is the eighth largest worldwide and the fifth largest in Europe. As of 2005, the absolute GDP was valued at $1.12 trillion, just behind Italy and ahead of Canada (see List of countries by GDP (nominal)). It is listed 22nd in GDP per capita, just behind the United Arab Emirates and ahead of Singapore.

Spain's mixed economy supports a GDP that on a per capita basis is 90% of that of the four leading West European economies and slightly below the European Union average. The centre-right government of former prime minister Aznar worked successfully to gain admission to the first group of countries launching the euro in 1999. Unemployment stood at 7.6% in October 2006, a rate that compares favorably to many other European countries, and which is a marked improvement over rates that exceeded 20% in the early 1990s. Perennial weak points of Spain's economy include high inflation, a large underground economy, low productivity and one of the lowest rates of investment in research and development among developed countries, also an education system slated in OECD reports as one of the worst in Western Europe. Due to the loss of competitiveness, manufacturing jobs are being lost to cheaper workforce countries in Eastern Europe and Asia.
On the brighter side, the Spanish economy is credited for having avoided the virtual zero growth rate of some of its largest partners in the EU.\[24\] In fact, the country's economy has created more than half of all the new jobs in the European Union over the five years ending 2005.\[29\] The Spanish economy has thus been regarded lately as one of the most dynamic within the EU, attracting significant amounts of foreign investment.\[30\] During the last four decades the Spanish tourism industry has grown to become the second biggest in the world\[31\] worth approximately 40,000 million Euros in 2006\[32\] More recently, the Spanish economy has benefited greatly from the global real estate boom, with construction representing 16% of GDP and 12% of employment.\[33\] According to calculations by the German newspaper Die Welt, Spain is on pace to overtake countries like Germany in per capita income by 2011.\[34\] However, the downside of this has been a corresponding rise in the levels of personal debt; as prospective homeowners struggle to meet asking prices, so the average level of household debt has tripled in less than a decade. Among lower income groups, the median ratio of indebtedness to income was 125% in 2005.\[34\]

Demography

Main article: Demography of Spain


Geographical distribution of the Spanish population in 2005

Spain's population density, at 87.8/km² (220/sq. mile), is lower than that of most Western European countries and its distribution along the country is very unequal. With the exception of the region surrounding the capital, Madrid, the most populated areas lie around the coast.

The population of Spain doubled during the twentieth century, due to the spectacular demographic boom by the 60's and early 70's. The pattern of growth was extremely uneven due to large-scale internal migration from the rural interior to the industrial cities during the 60's and 70's. No fewer than eleven of Spain's fifty provinces saw an absolute decline in population over the century. Then, after the birth rate plunged in the 80's and Spain's population became stalled, a new population increase started based initially in the return of many Spanish who emigrated to other European countries during the 70's and, more recently, it has been boosted by the large figures of foreign immigrants, mostly from Latin America (38.75%), Eastern Europe (16.33%), North Africa (14.99%) and Sub-Saharan Africa (4.08%).\[35\] In 2005, Spain instituted a 3-month amnesty program through which certain hitherto undocumented aliens were granted legal
residency. Also some important pockets of population coming from other countries in the European Union are found (20.77% of the foreign residents), specially along the Mediterranean costas and Balearic islands, where many choose to live their retirement or even telework. These are mostly English, French, German, and Dutch from fellow EU countries and, from outside the EU, Norwegian.

**Immigration in Spain**

*Main article: Immigration to Spain*

According to the Spanish government there were 3.7 million foreign residents in Spain in 2005; independent estimates put the figure at 4.8 million people, or 11% of the total population (Red Cross, World Disasters Report 2006). According to residence permit data for 2005, about 500,000 were Moroccan, another 500,000 were Ecuadorian, more than 200,000 were Romanian, and 260,000 were Colombian. Other important foreign communities are British (8.09%), French (8.03%), Argentine (6.10%), German (5.58%) and Bolivian (2.63%). In 2005, a regularization programme increased the legal immigrant population by 700,000 people. Since 2000, Spain has experienced high population growth as a result of immigration flows, despite a birth rate that is only half the replacement level. This sudden and ongoing inflow of immigrants, particularly those arriving clandestinely by sea, has caused noticeable social tension.

Spain currently has the second highest immigration rates within the EU, just after Cyprus, and the second highest absolute net migration in the world (after the United States). In 2006, from the total number of immigrants arrived in the European Union, 44.7% chose Spain as their final destination.

There are a number of reasons to explain this, including Spain's cultural ties with Latin America, its geographical position, the porosity of its borders, the large size of its submerged economy and the strength of the agricultural and construction sectors which demand more low cost labour than can be offered by the national workforce. In fact, Spain has been Europe's largest absorber of migrants for the past six years, with its immigrant population increasing fourfold as 2.8 million people have arrived.

**Most populous metropolitan regions**

1. Madrid 5,843,041
2. Barcelona 3,135,758
3. Valencia 1,623,724
4. Sevilla 1,317,098
5. Málaga 1,074,074
6. Bilbao 946,829

**Identities**

*Main articles: Spanish people and Nationalities in Spain*

The Spanish Constitution of 1978, in its second article, recognizes historic entities ("nationalities", a carefully chosen word in order to avoid the more politically loaded "nations") and regions, inside the unity of the Spanish nation. Spain's identity is for some people more an
overlap of different regional identities than a sole Spanish identity. Indeed, some of the regional identities may be even in conflict with the Spanish one.

In particular, a large proportion of Catalans, Basques and Galicians, quite frequently identify, respectively, primarily with Catalonia, the Basque Country, and Galicia, with Spain only second or not at all. For example, according to the latest survey by the Spanish Centre of Sociological Investigations (CIS), 44% of Basques identify themselves first as Basques (only 8% first as Spaniards); 40% of Catalans do so with Catalonia (20% identify firstly with Spain), and 32% Galicians with Galicia (9% with Spain). The majority of these groups though, identify themselves both as Basques, Catalans or Galicians and Spaniards at the same time.

Almost all communities have a majority of people identifying as much with Spain as with the Autonomous Community (except Madrid, where Spain is the primary identity, and Catalonia, Basque Country, Galicia, and the Balearics, where people tend to identify more with their Autonomous Community). It is this last feature of "shared identity" between the more local level or Autonomous Community and the Spanish level which makes the identity question in Spain complex and far from univocal.

Languages

The languages of Spain (simplified)

- **Spanish**, official, spoken in all the territory
- **Catalan/Valencian**, co-official, except in La Franja and Carxe
- **Basque**, co-official, except in Navarre
- **Galician**, co-official, except in Asturias and Leon
- **Asturian**, unofficial
- **Aragonese**, unofficial
- **Aranese**, co-official (dialect of Occitan)

The Spanish Constitution, although affirming the sovereignty of the Spanish Nation, recognizes historical nationalities.

**Spanish** (called both español and castellano in the language itself) is the official language throughout Spain, but other regional languages are also spoken, and are the primary languages in some of their respective geographies. The following languages are co-official with Spanish according to the appropriate Autonomy Statutes.

- **Aranese** (aranés)
- **Basque** (euskera).
- **Catalan** (català), which is known as **Valencian** in the Autonomous Community of Valencia.
- **Galician** (galego).

Spain's legacy: a map of the **Hispanophone** world

There are also some other surviving **Romance minority languages** such as **Asturian**, **Astur-Leonese**, **Leonese**, **Extremaduran**, **Cantabrian**, **Aragonese**, and others. Unlike Aranese, Basque, Catalan and Galician, these do not have any official status because of their very small number of speakers or because of lack of political will in the regions they are spoken.[38]

In the tourist areas of the Mediterranean coast and the islands, English and German are widely spoken by tourists, foreign residents, and tourism workers.

**Minority groups**

In the 16th century, a famous minority group, the **Gitanos**, a Roma people group, began to arrive in Spain.

Spain has a number of descendants of populations from former colonies (especially **Equatorial Guinea**) and immigrants from several **Sub-Saharan** and **Caribbean** countries have been recently settling in Spain. There are also sizeable numbers of **Asian** immigrants, most of whom are of **Chinese**, **Filipino**, **Middle Eastern**, **Pakistani** and **Indian** origins; Spaniards of Latin American descent are sizeable as well and a fast growing segment. Other growing groups are Britons (761,000 in 2006), Germans and other immigrants from western and eastern Europe.[39]

After the 19th century, some Jews established themselves in Spain as a result of migration from former **Spanish Morocco**, escape from Nazi repression, and immigration from Argentina. Spanish law allows **Sefardí** Jews to claim **Spanish citizenship**.

**Religion**

*Main article: Religion in Spain*

**Roman Catholicism** is the main religion in the country. About 76% of Spaniards self-identify as Catholics, about 2% with another religious faith, and about 19% identify as non-believers or atheists. A study conducted in October 2006 by the Spanish Centre of Sociological
Investigations\textsuperscript{[40]} shows that from the 76% of Spaniards who identify as Catholics or other religious faith, 54% hardly ever or never go to church, 15% go to church some times a year, 10% some time per month and 19% every Sunday or multiple times per week. About 22% of the whole Spanish population attend religious services at least once a month.

Evidence of the secular nature of contemporary Spain can be seen in the widespread support for the legalization of same-sex marriage in Spain — over 66% of Spaniards support gay marriage according to a 2004 study by the Centre of Sociological Investigations.\textsuperscript{[41]} Indeed, in June 2005 a bill was passed by 187 votes to 147 to allow gay marriage, making Spain the third country in the European Union to allow same-sex couples to marry after Belgium and the Netherlands.

Protestant denominations are also present, all of them with less than 50,000 members, about 20,000 in the case of the Latter-day Saints (Mormons). Evangelism has been better received among Gypsies than among the general population; pastors have integrated flamenco music in their liturgy. Taken together, all self-described "Evangelicals" slightly surpass Jehovah's Witnesses (105,000) in number.

The recent waves of immigration have led to an increasing number of Muslims, who have about 1 million members. Muslims had not lived in Spain for centuries; however, colonial expansion in Northern and Western Africa gave some number of residents in the Spanish Morocco and the Sahara Occidental full citizenship. Nowadays, Islam is the second largest religion in Spain, accounting for approximately 3% of the total population.

Along with these waves of immigration, an important number of Latin American people, who are usually strong Catholic practitioners, have helped the Catholic Church to recover.

Judaism was practically non-existent until the 19th century, when Jews were again permitted to enter the country. Currently there are around 50,000 Jews in Spain, all arrivals in the past century and accounting less than 1% of the total number of inhabitants. Spain is believed to have been about 8% Jewish on the eve of the Spanish Inquisition.

**Spanish language**

The Spanish language developed from vulgar Latin, with influence from Basque in the north and Arabic in the southern part of the Iberian Peninsula (see Iberian Romance languages). Typical features of Spanish diachronic phonology include lenition (Latin \textit{vita}, Spanish \textit{vida}; Latin \textit{lupus}, Spanish \textit{lobo}), palatalization (Latin \textit{annum}, Spanish \textit{año}) and diphthongation of short E/O from vulgar Latin (Latin \textit{terra}, Spanish \textit{tierra}; Latin \textit{novus}, Spanish \textit{nuevo}; Latin \textit{tempus}, Spanish \textit{tiempo}; Latin \textit{ferrum}, Spanish \textit{fierro} and now \textit{hierro}). Similar phenomena can be found in most other Romance languages as well, especially after the fall of the Roman Empire in the 4th century AD cut out further linguistic influence of original Latin.

**History**

The standard Spanish language is also called Castilian. It originated in the Cordillera Cantábrica, in northern Spain, in the 8th and 9th centuries AD, but others claim it came from Franco-Navarrese and Gothic-Castilian dialects in the 11th century AD. After the Reconquista, this northern dialect was brought to the south and almost entirely replaced the provincial dialects,
such as in Andalusia, where it shows heavy influences of Moorish Arabic, (Moro or Morocho), the Romance speech of Christians living in Moorish territory (Mozarabe) and Sefardi Jewish grammar (Ladino). These languages all but vanished in the Iberian peninsula by the late 16th century.

The language was brought to the Americas (Latin America, especially Mexico, Central America and western South America), and to the Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Marianas, Palau and the Philippines, by the Spanish colonization which began in the 16th century. The Spanish failed to exercise land claims over the Solomon Islands and Micronesia, where a map reader can find some geographic place names in Spanish, but no major Spanish cultural influence is felt in distant, often isolated islands in the three centuries of Spanish administrative rule in these areas later acquired by the Germans and Americans by 1900.

The Catholic church preached Christianity to the natives in selected local languages such as Mayan, Aztecan, Guaraní, Quechua and Aymará in the Americas, and Tagalog in the Philippines, rather than Spanish, for ease of conversion and to separate them from the direct influence of the non-missionary Spaniards, held by the church to be "evil", uncivilized and unfavorable for the natives, and to further expand assimilation of natives to the introduced Spanish culture.

In the Americas its usage was continued by the descendants of the Spaniards, whether by the large population of Spanish criollos or by what had then become the mixed Spanish-Amerindian (mestizos) majority. After the wars of independence fought by these colonies in the 19th century, the new ruling elites extended their Spanish to the whole population to strengthen national unity, and the encouragement of all natives to become fluent in Spanish has had a certain amount of success, except in very isolated parts of the former Spanish colonies.

In the Philippines, this process did not occur for several reasons. It was isolated as the only Spanish colony in Asia, far removed from all of Spain's colonies in the Americas. Rather than being a direct colony of Spain, the Philippines was in fact a colony of another Spanish colony, New Spain, and was administered from Mexico City, thereby lessening the ties and interest of Spain proper, and disabling the large scale Spanish migration experienced across the Americas. From the Spanish claim on these islands in 1535 to the late 1800s, the Philippines was the only "direct" European colony in terms of cultural influences in Southeast Asia.

In comparison to its counterparts in Spanish America, the Philippine population was, and still is, almost exclusively native, and mixed Spanish-Filipinos (Filipino mestizos) were few in number, while Spaniards (of which a great many were actually Mexican Criollos) accounted for even fewer than the Mestizos. Following the Spanish-American War the small number of Spaniards and Latin Americans present in the country eventually returned to New Spain (Mexico) and Spain, or a smaller wave of Hispano-Filipinos had settled in US-annexed Hawaii and the western US in the early 1900s (see Filipino Americans).
Ultimately, at the culmination of the Philippine-American War many of the already minuscule Mestizo population was decimated as casualties of war. English was then declared an official language. Spanish finally ceased to be an official language of the Philippines in 1973. A creole language called Chabacano developed as a lingua franca in the south when the Spaniards built forts to combat the Muslims and imported workers from all over the country. The local languages, then and now, are not mutually intelligible. However, Spanish like English (but more preferable) is still studied by educated Filipinos and professionals who might emigrate to Mexico.

Unlike the Philippines, when Puerto Rico became a possession of the United States as consequence of the same Spanish-American War, its population was by then almost entirely of Spanish and mixed Afro-Caribbean Spanish (mulatto and mestizo) descent, thereby enabling the retention of their inherited Spanish language as a mother tongue while co-existing with the American imposed English as co-official. Puerto Rico has received immigration from Europe, when Spanish colonial officials invited farmers and island fishers from Corsica, the Canary Islands, the Azores, Greece, Malta, Italy and Ireland, while millions of Puerto Ricans went to the mainland US in the 20th century. (see Puerto Rican and Puerto Ricans in the United States).

A similar situation occurred in the American Southwest including California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas, where Spaniards, then Californios (Spanish criollos in California) followed by Chicanos (Mexican Americans) and later Mexican immigrants, maintained Spanish alive before, during and after the American appropriation of those territories, since the 1500s. Spanish continues to be used by millions of citizens and immigrants from Latin America to the United States (for example, many Cuban Americans arrived in Miami, Florida beginning in the 1950s and 1960s, and followed by other Latin American groups. The local majority is now Spanish-speaking). Spanish is now treated as the country's "second language," and over 5 percent of the US population are Spanish-speaking, but most Latino/Hispanic Americans are bilingual or also regularly speak English.

In the 20th century, Spanish was introduced in Equatorial Guinea and Western Sahara after periods of Spanish colonial rule, and it is also studied and spoken in former French and Portuguese colonies in Africa and Asia, but it is not the main languages of these areas. It is also spoken in parts of the United States that had not been part of the Spanish Empire, such as Spanish Harlem in New York City, at first by immigrants from Puerto Rico, and later by other Latin American immigrants who arrived there in the late 20th century.

In the Marianas, the Spanish language was retained until the Pacific War, but native inhabitants may speak Chamorro an Austronesian language, some German and later English, Japanese and Korean introduced in the early 20th century, and some languages introduced by immigrants from the Philippines and Southeast Asia.

Language politics in Francoist Spain declared Spanish as the only official language in Spain, and to this day Castilian Spanish is the most preferred language in government, business, public education, cultural arts and the media. But in the 1960s and 1970's, the Spanish parliament agreed to allow provinces to use, speak and print official documents in three other languages: Catalan for Catalonia, Basque, a non Indo-European language for the Basque provinces, and Galician, akin to Portuguese, for Galicia. Since the early 1980s after Spain became a multi-party democracy, these regional and minority languages have rebounded in common usage as secondary languages, but Castilian Spanish remains the universal language of the Spanish people.
Main article: *Influences on the Spanish language*

[edit] Basque influence

Many Castilians who took part in the *reconquista* and later repopulation campaigns were of *Basque* lineage and this is evidenced by many *place names* throughout Spain. The change from Latin 'f-' to Spanish 'h-' (discussed at length below) is commonly ascribed to the influence of Basque speakers for a few reasons. The change from f to h was first documented in the areas around *Castile* and *La Rioja*, areas where many Basques were known to have lived. The change to h took place to a greater degree in the *Gascon language* in *Gascony* in France, an area also inhabited by Basques. The *Basque language* lacked the f sound and thus substituted it with h, the closest thing to f in that language.

There are some difficulties with attributing this change to Basque though. There is no hard evidence that medieval Basque had an h sound, but there is also no hard evidence that it didn't. Adding to this is the fact that the f to h phenomenon is not peculiar to Spanish. It also happened in certain dialects of three other Romance languages: Romanian, Italian and Sardinian. In fact, the change from f to h is one of the most common phonological changes in all kinds of world languages and is not peculiar to Romance languages. According to the explanations which negate or downplay Basque influence, the change occurred in the affected dialects wholly independent of each other as the result of internal change (i.e. linguistic factors, not outside influence). It is also possible that the two forces worked in concert and reinforced each other.

[edit] Celtic influence

Two specific types of *lenition*, the *voicing* of *voiceless consonants* and the *elision* of *voiced consonants* (both of which are discussed at greater length below), are the phonological changes of Spanish which are most often attributed to the influence of Celtic languages. While examples of these two types of lenition are ubiquitous and well-documented in Spanish, two assumptions need to be made if these two types of lenition are to be attributed to patterns of lenition in Celtic languages. The first assumption is that a population of bilingual Celtiberian-Romance speakers existed long enough to have had an influence on the development of Castilian. The second assumption is that Continental Celtic, an extinct branch of Celtic, did indeed exhibit the types of lenition which are known to exist in modern Insular Celtic languages. (Furthermore, it should be noted that such lenitions are a very common kind of change in languages all around the world, and similar phenomena are found also in Romance languages such as Corsican and Sardinian, where no Celtic causation is plausible; the Spanish development may therefore just be an internal process, not due to outside influence.)

[edit] Germanic influence

Although Germanic languages by most accounts affected the phonological development very little, many Spanish words of Germanic origin are very common in all varieties of everyday Spanish. The words for *cardinal directions* (norte, este, sur, oeste) are all taken from Germanic words (north, east, south and west in Modern English) after the contact with Atlantic sailors.

[edit] Arabic influence

Main article: *Arabic influence on the Spanish language*
An important number of Spanish nouns start with the syllable *al*- (such as *alcohol*, *alcoba* "alcove", room", *almohada* "pillow", *algodón* "cotton", *alcalde* "judge", *alcázar* "castle", *alfalfa* "alfalfa", *almirante* "admiral" (with an added -d- by erroneous association with the Latin prefix *ad-*), *almíbar* "syrup", *alcatraz* "albatross", *álcali* "alkali", *alquimia* "alchemy", *algoritmo* "algorithm", *álgebra* "algebra", *albacora* "albacore", *Alhambra* "Red Castle", *Al-Andalus* "Andalusia" (note that Al-Andalus is how Arabs referred to the land inhabited by the Vandals, since Arabic does not have a "v" sound) have Arabic origins, as well as many that start with *at-*, *az-* and others (such as *azufre* "sulfur" and *ataúd* "coffin", *azúcar* "sugar", *azul* "blue, azure"), *azafrán* "saffron"). This is due to the interpretation of the Arabic proclitic definite article *al* as part of the following word.

Education

Literacy: 98% of the population

Levels

- From 3 to 5 years - Educación Infantil (Preparatory School)
- From 6 to 11 years - Educación Primaria (Primary School) Years, 1º, 2º, 3º, 4º, 5º and 6º
- From 12 to 16 years - Educación Secundaria Obligatoria (Compulsory Secondary School) Years, 1º, 2º, 3º, 4º
- From 17 to 18 years - Bachillerato (Post-Compulsory School), years 1º, 2º

Children from 3 to 5 years old in Spain have the option of attending the *infantil* (popularly known as *preescolar*) or Pre-school stage, which is non-compulsory and free for all students. It is regarded as an integral part of the education system with infantil classes in almost every primary school. There are some separate Colegios Infantiles or nursery schools.

Spanish students aged 6 to 16 undergo primary (Colegio) and secondary school (Instituto) education, which are compulsory and free of charge. Successful students are awarded a Secondary Education Certificate, which is necessary for entering further (optional) education as is Bachillerato for their University or Formacion Profesional (Vocational Studies). Once students have finished their Bachillerato, they can take their University Entrance Exam (Pruebas de Acceso a la Universidad, popularly called Selectividad) which differs greatly from region to region.

The secondary stage of education is normally referred to by their initials, eg. ESO or Educación Secundaria Obligatoria for secondary education.

[edit] Educación Infantil (Kindergarten)

- Structure: 2 education cycles of three academic years each one, that are called:
  - Jardín de Infancia (0-3 years)
  - Preescolar (3-6 year)

[edit] Educación primaria (primary school)

- Structure: Three cycles of two years each one:
  - First Cycle (6-7 years)
  - Second Cycle (8-9 years)
Third Cycle (10-11 years)

[edit] Educación Secundaria (Secondary School)

[edit] Educación Secundaria Obligatoria (ESO) or Compulsory Secondary Education

- Structure: two cycles of two academic years each (total 4 years):
  - 1r Cycle (12 -14 years)
  - 2n Cycle (14-16 years)

When finishing ESO the student has a number of options:

1. To do Ciclos Formativos de Grado Medio (Vocational training) (1º technical college)
3. Join the labor world (because she/he has the minimum age to get a job).

If not finished:

1. Garantía Social (learning a profession in a year)
2. Join the labor world (because you can't have left ESO before 16, the minimum age to get a job).

[edit] Bachillerato

All bachillerato students have common and thematical subjects. The commons are: Spanish Language and Literature (both years), 1st language (both years, usually English), Philosophy (1st year), Physical Education (1st year), Spanish History (2nd year), History of Philosophy (2nd year), and one optional, may it be a second language like French or German, or subjects like Audiovisuais. Then there are five different branches. Each branch implies 3 different subjects more to study:

1. Arts: History of Art, Volume (sculpture), Colours (painting)
3. Sciences & Engineering: Physics, Maths, Chemistry/Technical Drawing
4. Social Sciences: Applied Maths, Economy, Sociology/Psychology
5. Humanities: Latin, Greek, History of Art/Psychology

When finishing Bachillerato the student has a number of options:

1. To do Ciclos Formativos de Grado Superior (Vocational training) (2º technical college), very much demanded right now in working world.
2. Access to University through PAU (Pruebas de Acceso a la Universidad or Access Tests to University, also called as Selectividad).
3. Join the labor world.

This level is the shortest way to go into University. Arts has a short choice of related degrees at University, mainly History of Art only. Humanities have a wider, but short nonetheless, choice, including, Philology, Oriental Studies, Philosophy... Social studies have preference when entering degrees in Law, Economics, Business, Geography... Sciences & Engineering, as its name states,
has preference in all engineering careers, and also in Maths and Physics. Main election for Nature Sciences are Medicine, Nursing, Biology, Chemistry, Geology... Despite this, some options accept student from any branch, such as Philology, Social Work, Educational Sciences or Tourism, u are a preference to some branches over others when applying for entrance.

**Higher Education**

**Ciclo Formativo de Grado Superior (2º technical college)**

- **Access:** with the [Bachillerato](#) degree or through a "Ciclo Formativo de Grado Medio" being 18 before [31st of December](#) and passing an entrance exam.
- **Structure:** it covers a set of formation cycles that are organized in professional modules.
- **When finishing:**
  - Access to University's studies related to the Ciclo Formativo's studies. For example, if you get the Computer Science's Grado Superior degree, you can do the computer science engineering. It has no access exam but the marks are considered for the university admission.
  - Join the labor work like the "Ciclos Formativos de Grado Medio"

**University**

University courses are structured in cycles, and have the *credit* as a measure for the lessons.

- **Structure and access:**
  - First cycle courses: Access with pre-enrollment.

These are 3-year terminal studies, and when finished, a student can obtain a certificate, teacher, foreman or engineering diploma. It also allows access to studies of the second cycle.

- **Studies of 1st and 2nd cycle (4 or 5 years):** Access with the university preinscription. Passing it gives the right to obtaining an academic degree (*Licenciatura*), architect or engineer title.

Passing the first cycle, for anyone in these studies, does not qualify for obtaining an official title, but it can be of worth for incorporating into other studies of the second cycle.

- **Studies of second cycle:** Access through the first university cycle, or with the possession of a graduate, architect, engineer (diploma level) or [teacher](#), whenever these studies conform to the norm of access for each second cycles. Passing it gives the student the right to obtain a university degree, architect degree or engineer degree.
  - **Studies of 3rd cycle:** they are the called Ph.D. programs (doctorate). The access is regulated by the university itself, through the Doctorate Commission. It is necessary to have the degree course, architect degree or engineer.

- **Own degrees:** are studies nonregulated with which you obtain an unofficial degree, recognized only by the university that grants them.
These courses have the same structure as the regulated studies: therefore, there are first cycle degrees, first and second cycle degrees, and second cycle degrees.

The universities regulate the access to their own degrees and they fix the academic prices. They can also offer unofficial post-degrees.

[edit] Costs

All non-university state education is free in Spain, but parents have to buy all of their children's books and materials. There also are private schools for all the range of compulsory education, and also Bachillerato. At them, parents must pay a monthly/termly/yearly fee. Most of these schools are run by religious orders, some are even single sex schools.

Schools supply a list of what is required at the start of each school year which will include art and craft materials as well as text and exercise books. Expect to spend a minimum of around ninety pounds (GBP) per child, but in some regions, the autonomous government is giving tokens to exchange them in book shops for free, this is being adapted in 2006 in regions like Andalusia, where kids from 3 to 10 will get the books for free, on the following years it is expected for all compulsory years. School uniform is not normally worn in state schools but is usually worn in private schools.

[edit] Qualifications

The Certificate of Secondary Education is awarded at the end of compulsory secondary education after passing every subject but 2, and a student who achieves appropriate grades graduates from Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO) and can apply for one of the different types of (Spanish) Bachillerato.

The modalities of Bachillerato depend on each region, but are commonly, Letters (Bachillerato de Humanidades), Nature and Health Sciences (Bachillerato de Ciencias de la Naturaleza y la Salud), Technology (Bachillerato Tecnológico), Society Sciences (Bachillerato de Ciencias Sociales) and Arts (Bachillerato de Arte), having 3 different tematic subjects each, and several common subjects such as Spanish, Foreign Language, Philosophy, History, etc.

Middle or Superior Vocational training is also a common possibility after ESO or after Bachillerato, they are called Ciclos Formativos de Grado Medio for middle or Ciclos Formativos de grado Superior for Superior getting a Technician Degree, or it can be taken after Bachillerato, getting a Superior Technician diploma and direct entrance to several related University degrees, there are more than 200 different specialities.

Students with appropriate qualifications and wishing to enrol University in Spain, must usually take an entrance exam called Selectividad, that consists in 6 tests, 3 for each tematic subject and a test for each History or Philosophy, Foreign Language (commonly English) and Spanish grammar and literature subject, after passing their Bachillerato. The School Leaving Certificate is not inferior to a number of GCSEs. The Bachillerato is not inferior to A levels. Therefore, Spanish students obtaining the appropriate grades required for entrance into universities in Europe, including England, are not precluded.

[edit] School hours
Primary school hours at present are 9:00 to 12:30 and 3:30 to 5:00, or full time classes from 9.00 to 14.00, depending on the school politics, except during June and September when they work mornings only, 9:00 to 1:00. There is a move towards a single session day in primary schools which would bring them in line with secondary schools. To achieve this each school has to submit a programme of extra curricular activities to be offered in the afternoons to the education authority, and if this is approved the proposal to move to a single session day is put to a vote by the parents for their approval.

Some schools have a dining room and provide lunches, but many do not. There is also an early morning regime for the children of working mothers in many schools, who can take their children before classes as early as 7:00 where they have breakfast and do sport or leisure activities.

Secondary schools (\textit{Instituto de Enseñanza Secundaria} or commonly \textit{Instituto}, often abbreviated to "I.E.S") work from 8:15 to 2:30 throughout the school year.

In both schools, there is a break that normally takes half an hour, starting at about 11:30. In some Secondary schools there are 2 breaks of 15 minutes...

[edit] School terms

Broadly similar to the English three term system, but with slightly shorter holidays at Christmas (December 23-January 7) and Easter (one week), and longer in the summer. In 2005, the summer holiday ran from June 22 until September 1/September 15, depending on the regions. The English half-term holiday does not exist, but there are frequent odd days and long weekends relating mainly to religious holidays and regional and national holidays.

[edit] Religious education

A non-evaluable religion class is taken in all schools in accordance with the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, and Islam or Evangelist in the schools where there are important minorities. Parents are asked when they enroll their children whether or not they wish them to take religious education, taking Civism lessons or Religious Culture, where the history of the religions is studied.

[edit] Availability of schools

All but the very smallest villages have their own primary school, and there is widespread coverage of school transport. Small village schools are grouped together under the auspices of their local teacher's centre for the provision of specialist teachers for subjects such as music, English, etc. Most larger villages and towns have a secondary school.

[edit] Arrangements for foreign pupils

Many schools have a specialist teacher to help immigrant children of all nationalities learn Spanish. Normally, the younger the child, the more quickly they learn the language and integrate.

It is quite common for secondary pupils to be placed in the class a year below their actual age in order for them to learn the language and cope with normal school work. A pupil who does badly
in end-of-year exams, especially if the staff feel that they have made insufficient effort, can be required to repeat the year, but this can only happen once.

**Bilingualism**

In bilingual communities students can choose if they want study in Spanish, bilingual, or in the other language.

[edit] **New Projects**

At this very moment the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (*Partido Socialista Obrero Español "PSOE")* is debating in the parliament a new project for Education.

Currently, the Spanish education system is undergoing substantial change resulting from the introduction of the Organic Law on the quality of Education (*Ley Orgánica de Calidad de la Educación*) or L.O.C.E.