Spain

Business Travel Guide

Compiled by:

Swiss Business Hub Spain

Madrid, August 2025

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Swiss, EFTA and the European Union citizens need a valid national identity card or passport to enter Spain. Citizens from the rest of the world require a valid passport and a temporary entrance or residence visa issued by the appropriate Spanish Embassy or Consulate from their country of residence, unless they come from countries with which a visa exemption agreement has been signed. Where such an agreement has been reached, these persons are exempt from an entrance visa for visits not exceeding 90 days and they must not intend to undertake any work in Spain.

-Swiss citizens may reside in Spain for more than three months provided they register in the Central Register of Foreign Nationals within 90 days of entry.

Moreover, Spanish firms will be able to hire Swiss citizens without any need for an administrative authorisation process. They will thus have the right to access any professional activity in identical conditions to those applicable to Spanish nationals.

Transfer from the airport to the city center:

- The price for a **taxi** ride from the Madrid-Barajas airport to the center of Madrid (inside the M-30 ring road) is a flat rate €33 one way and takes approximately 20-30 minutes depending on the traffic conditions.
- There is a **metro** line from Madrid city to the airport terminal 4: Metro Line 8 Nuevos Ministerios - Aeropuerto T4. The line has two metro stations in the airport. The price of a single ticket to/from the airport is €5 and the service operates from 6.05 a.m. to 1.30 a.m.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

Mandatory and recommended vaccinations: No particular vaccinations are required in Spain. .

The healthcare system in Spain is generally of a high standard and combines both private and public healthcare, with residents in possession of a Spanish social security number and the necessary documentation being entitled to receive free or low-cost healthcare.

The state system is funded by social security contributions, with each region of Spain taking individual responsibility for a health budget allocated by the central government.

As the healthcare system is decentralized, you will need to check the conditions in your own area for using healthcare services. There is a directory of the regional health authorities within the different regions of Spain on the Spanish Health Ministry's website (mainly in Spanish). Click on your region on the map for contact details of your local health authority and links to specific information about the health services it provides.

Medical insurance: Some residents choose to use private healthcare services in Spain in order to have access to more options for treatment and physicians, and to avoid the queues of the public health system, especially in the case of non-emergency procedures. There are hundreds of private clinics and hospitals across the country, giving the private healthcare system a great degree of accessibility. Single consultations within the private healthcare system may be affordable, but the care required in the case of a medical complication or in an emergency can quickly become expensive. If planning to regularly use private healthcare services, it is recommended to take out health insurance.

PUBLIC SECURITY / RECOMMENDED PRECAUTIONS

Public security in Spain follows the high average of the western EU countries. The main recommended precautions are in the area of pickpocketing in major cities, mostly in public transportation and in crowded spaces. In the following link you will find the FDFA Travel Advice page of Spain (in German).

TIME ZONE

Time difference between Switzerland and

Madrid	Central European Time 0 hours (UTC +2/+1)
Barcelona	CET 0 hours (UTC +2/+1)
Canary Islands	CET -1 hours (UTC +1/+0)

Daylight Saving Time: clocks are turned forward by one hour on the last Sunday in March and turned back on the last Sunday of October.

BUSINESS HOURS

	Weekdays	Saturdays	Sundays and Nationals Holidays
Government Offices	9 a.m. to 2 p.m.	Closed	Closed
Banks	8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Thursday afternoon open	Closed	Closed
Shops	10 a.m. to 9 p.m	10 a.m. to 9 p.m	Closed or 10 a.m. to 2 p.m

Shops in towns and areas declared as touristic are allowed to open every Sunday. The list is quite extensive as it includes downtown Madrid as well as many municipalities in the Madrid metropolitan area, most of Valencia municipality, downtown Zaragoza, downtown Palma de Mallorca, most of the Catalan coastal area, most of the Murcia coastal area, the Andalusia coastal area and the Valencia coastal area. Shopping malls and hypermarkets in these areas usually stay open every Sunday.

In some smaller cities aside from Madrid and Barcelona, some businesses might still remain closed during lunchtime, approximately between 2 p.m. and 5 p.m.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

National Day	12/10
New Year's Day	01/01
Epiphany	06/01
Constitution Day	06/12

In Spain, there is a total of 14 public holidays: 9 of which are national, 3 of which are chosen by the Autonomous Communities and 2 of which by municipalities. The calendar of bank holidays in Spain can be visited in the following link (in Spanish).

Business trips should be avoided in the month of August, Christmas or Easter Holidays.

NATIONAL TRADE FAIR CALENDAR

The dates of the main trade fairs can be obtained from: Trade Fair Dates

COMMUNICATION: TELEPHONE AND INTERNET

Spain's country code is: +34

Local SIM card can be easily purchased with local service providers presenting proper identification, such as valid passport.

Important phone numbers:

Police	091
Fire department	112
Medical emergency	112

There are a large number of cell phone companies in Spain, each with different service packages on offer. Swiss cell phones can be used in Spain but may incur roaming charges, depending on the service provider in Switzerland

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Electricity plug and socket: Types C and F

The voltage in Spain is 230 V with a frequency of 50 Hz.

METHODS OF PAYMENT

National currency in Spain is the euro (EUR).

Exchange rate as of August 19, 2025: CHF 1 = EUR 0.94

When entering or leaving the country with EUR 10,000 or more in cash or other monetary instruments, the money must be declared in writing to the custom office.

Acceptance of methods of payment:

	everywhere	almost everywhere	limited	not accepted
Cash (national currency)	☒	☐	☐	☐
Cash (USD)	☐	☐	☒	☐
MasterCard	☒	☐	☐	☐
Visa	☒	☐	☐	☐
American Express	☐	☐	☒	☐
Diner	☐	☐	☐	☒
Apple Pay	☐	☐	☒	☐
Google/Samsung Pay	☐	☐	☒	☐

DOMESTIC TRAVEL, LOCAL TRANSPORT

The most commonly used kind of public transport are bus and metro. The quality of the services is excellent. We usually recommend either using public transport in big cities or hiring a local taxi. The

price of a taxi in Spain may vary depending on the city and the specific fare regulations of each locality. The cost per kilometer usually ranges from approximately €1.18 (CHF 1.11) to €1.75 (CHF 1.65).

Main ride hailing apps: Free Now, Uber, Cabify, Bolt

Main method of payment for taxi and subways: Credit card / cash

Car rental with/without a driver can be arranged at numerous companies:

- Hertz: https://www.hertz.es/p/alquiler-de-coches/espana w/o driver
- Europcar: https://www.europcar.es/es-es w/o driver
- Sixt: https://www.sixt.es/ w/o driver

Regarding air, sea and rail transportation in Spain:

AIR:

The 46 airports (+2 heliports) in Spain reached historic levels with 369 million passengers in 2024. The main airports in terms of passengers' traffic are Madrid, Barcelona, Palma de Mallorca, Malaga.

The following airports have direct connections to Switzerland: Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Alicante, Málaga, Sevilla, Bilbao, Santiago de Compostela, Mallorca, Menorca, Ibiza, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Tenerife, Lanzarote and Fuerteventura.

SEA:

Spain's geographical position and the peninsular nature of its mainland with 8,000 km of coastline have led to the development of 46 ports providing maritime links to all destinations. The Bahía de Algericas AP led the total traffic ranking with 103.65 million tonnes. Similarly, the same ports that ranked in the top five in 2023 also ranked in the top five in 2024, namely Valencia with 81.13 million tonnes, Barcelona with 69.69 million tonnes, Cartagena with 35.92 million tonnes and Bilbao with 34.59 million tonnes. In total, Goods traffic through ports of general interest closes 2024 with more than 557.7 million tonnes

RAIL:

The Spanish rail network is predominantly operated by the state-owned company "Red Nacional de los Ferrocarriles Españoles" (RENFE), However, in December 2020, the Spanish railway market opened to new competitors. SNCF (French state railway company) entered the market with its brand Ouigo, and so did the Italian brand Iryo. The country benefits from a wide railway network, **used by millions of travelers each year,** especially in terms of high-speed train lines. The high-speed rail network connects all major cities to **Madrid as well as the main tourist destinations in Spain. Since 2013, the Spanish high-speed network is connected to France via the Barcelona-Figueres line.**

ACCOMMODATION, TEMPORARY OFFICE SPACE

Information regarding tourism is available at the official Spanish tourism website: https://www.spain.info

Office space can be rented for short period in Spain via coworking

LANGUAGES USED FOR BUSINESS

Spanish is the official national language for the entire country.

The six autonomous communities of Catalonia, the Basque Country, Galicia, Valencia, Navarre and the Balearic Islands have also declared regional languages as official languages along with Spanish. These languages are Catalan (in Catalonia and the Balearic Islands), Basque (in the Basque Country and areas of Navarre), Galician and Valencian.

Although many large companies do conduct business in English and Spanish, you cannot expect English (neither French, nor German) to be widely spoken. Check in advance to determine if an interpreter is needed.

BUSINESS PRACTICES

Scheduling Meetings:

You should always make appointments in advance and confirm them by phone or email just before your arrival. When you arrive at an appointment, the most appropriate way to announce yourself is to present your business card to the receptionist, who in turn will let your Spanish contact know that you have arrived.

There is no substitute for face-to-face meetings with Spanish business representatives to break into this market. **Spaniards expect a personal relationship with suppliers.** Initial communication by phone or email is far less effective than a personal meeting.

Decision-making can be slow and tedious: various levels of hierarchy will be consulted and all aspects of your proposal will be analysed in painstaking detail; only the highest individual in authority makes the final decision. Spaniards generally expect the people with whom they negotiate to have the authority to make the final decision.

Although you should always be punctual yourself, you should not be surprised or alarmed if a visitor arrives 15-20 minutes late.

Business attire:

Spaniards are extremely dress-conscious and will perceive your appearance as an indication of your professional achievement and relative social standing. It is therefore important to dress *con elegancia*, which means top-quality, conservative clothing. Men should wear dark woollen or linen suits and silk ties with shirts and women should wear well-cut suits (including trouser suits) or business dresses made of high-quality fabrics. Shoes are also an important element of dress. Shabby looking shoes and colourful socks can ruin any nice outfit.

Obviously the weather can be an important factor in determining what to wear. As the temperature approaches 40ºC in the shade at the height of summer, it becomes increasingly acceptable to wear lightweight suits and, outside an air-conditioned office, to loosen one's tie and throw one's jacket over one's shoulder. Of course, it makes a difference for the dress code if you are working for a law firm or if you are a representative of an IT start-up.

As always, it is best to follow the example of your Spanish counterpart and to remember that it is 'cool' to look smart, but also that it is smart to look literally cool.

Introducing yourself:

Shake hands with everyone present -men, women- at a business or social meeting. Shake hands again when leaving.

Men may embrace each other when meeting (friends and family only). Women may kiss each other on the cheek and embrace.

You should be aware of the importance hierarchy and position play in Spanish business culture. For example, it would be frowned upon if you spent a great deal of time and attention on someone who is of lesser rank than you. It will be in your best interest to focus chiefly on those who would be considered your "equals".

Building trust and personal relationships:

It is important that you stay involved with your Spanish counterparts, helping to implement what has been agreed to. This must be done with sensitivity toward the pride that Spaniards feel in being able to handle things independently. So, never be intrusive, but always be available; express an interest in learning about their ways, while providing them with the resources and information they need to reach their objectives.

Sensitive topics:

It is difficult to cause real offence without being directly insulting, and you should not confuse a Spaniard's innate animation with anger or any other deep-seated emotion. But you must avoid making disrespectful remarks about Spanish traditions or practices (i.e. bullfighting) that you may find alien. You must certainly not allude to national or regional stereotypes.

BUSINESS RISKS

Spain's position in the Global Corruption Index 2023 powered by risk-indexes.com is 26. Currency volatility risk is very low, due to the consolidated international position of the euro.

Spain's Country Risk Classification is not assessed by the OECD as a result of being part of the OECD itself and Eurozone.

Swiss Export Risk Insurance SERV insures political and *del credere* risks involved in exporting goods and services.

Products for exporters

Product for service providers

Products for financial institutions

The full range of services and products offered by SERV can be obtained at www.serv-ch.com.

For questions about their services and insurance products, please contact:

- Christian Hendriks (English, French: E-mail, Phone +41 58 551 5525) or
- Bohumil Matousek (German, Italian: E-mail, Phone +41 58 551 5537).

IMPORT OF SAMPLES AND CATALOGUES

Customs clearance of the samples must be done through any of the following customs posts: Barcelona, Bilbao, La Farga de Moles, Madrid, Málaga, Palma de Mallorca, Sevilla, Tenerife, Valencia or Vitoria. All samples must meet the transport, packaging, labelling and documentation stipulated by national and international standards

The applicant shall submit to the relevant Foreign Health Service an application stating the type of sample to be taken, attaching the following information:

1. Health certification
2. Registration in the Register of Importers and Exporters of Biological Samples
3. Written declaration in which the recipient of the product accepts responsibility for its proper use and destruction
4. Proof of the importer's activity
5. Completed Dispatch Form

When authorized, the consignment must be sent directly to the laboratory or diagnostic or research center for which the authorization is granted.

Information about ATA carnet in Spain can be found in the following link

USEFUL LOCAL WEBSITES, ADDRESSES, EMAIL AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Business news	El Economista, Expansión		
Customs hotline	Aduanas España	Aduana Jonquera: 0034 972 554 000	
Invest in Spain	www.investinspain.org	0034 91 503 58 00	investinspain@icex.es
Spanish Patent and Trademark Office	www.oepm.es	0034 902 15 75 30	informacion@oepm.es
Tax Office	www.agenciatributaria.gob.es	0034 915 548 770	

ADDRESSES BILATERAL, NATIONAL AND LOCAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Swiss Spanish Economic Association

Asociación Económica Hispano Suiza

Embajada de Suiza

C/ Núñez de Balboa, 35 – 7°

E - 28001 Madrid

Tel.: +34 91 436 39 60

aehs@aehs.info

www.aehs.info

ADDRESSES OF THE EMBASSY AND CONSULATES OF SPAIN IN SWITZERLAND

Embassy of Spain

Calle Nuñez de Balboa 35A, 7° Piso

E - 28001 Madrid

Tel. +34 91 436 39 60

Fax +34 91 436 39 80

E-mail: madrid@eda.admin.ch

Opening times:

9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Afternoons on request

Consulate General in Barcelona

Edificio Trade

Gran Vía de Carlos III, 94,7°

E - 08028 Barcelona

Tel. +34 93 409 06 50

Fax +34 93 490 65 98

E-mail: madrid.cc@eda.admin.ch

Opening times:

9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Afternoons on request

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