



# CultureNotes: Spain

The Spanish culture is significantly more laid-back than the American way of life. Many Spaniards observe "siesta" during the day, during which stores and businesses close down for a couple hours in the afternoon. During this time, Spaniards will often eat a long, relaxing lunch, and some take the time to nap or rest.



The meal schedule in Spain is quite different from that in the U.S., and this might take some adjustment for your student. In Spain, breakfasts are often smaller than in the U.S. Lunch is generally later in the afternoon (about 2 p.m.), and dinner is often served around 8 p.m.

You may be surprised to learn that Spanish food is typically not spicy. While chili peppers are used frequently, they tend to make food more tangy than hot.

People in Spain walk a lot and take public transportation. It might take some time for your student to adjust to needing a ride whenever he/she wants to go somewhere. Be sure to discuss the need to give ample notice before a ride is needed.

There are multiple regions within Spain, each with its own regional identity, and some with their own languages. Many regions maintain their own identities, but their dialects are mutually intelligible with the "standard" Castilian Spanish.

In the south, Spain is separated from the continent of Africa by the narrow Strait of Gibraltar. Because of this, African influences have been prominent in Spain's history and culture.

- \* Capital: Madrid
- \* Population: 46,951,500
- \* Area: About 194,884 sq.mi.
- \* Nationality: Spaniard(s) (noun); Spanish (adjective)
- \* Language: Spanish
- \* Climate: Temperate
- \* Fun Fact: There is no tooth fairy in Spain. Instead, they have a tooth mouse named Ratoncito Perez.