

Spain (South West Europe)

Touring tips



This information is additional to our [general advice for motoring in Europe](#).

Driving licence

- You must be at least 18 years old to drive a temporarily imported car or motorcycle over 125cc, and at least 16 years old to ride a motorcycle up to 125cc.
- All valid UK driving licences should be accepted in Spain including the older, all-green UK paper licence and the older Northern Ireland paper licence with photographic counterpart.
- The older (all green) paper licences may be more difficult to understand so you may wish to update your licence to a Photocard style licence before travelling or obtain an [International Driving Permit \(IDP\)](#)

Motor Insurance

You must have a minimum of third-party cover.

Fuel

- Unleaded petrol (95 & 98 octane) is available.
- Diesel (Gasoleo 'A' or Gas-oil) is available. Gasoleo 'B' is heating oil only.
- Leaded petrol is not available.
- You may carry spare petrol in a can.
- LPG ('Autogas') is available but only at a few outlets. See www.repsolypf.com or www.spainautogas.com
- Credit cards are accepted at most filling stations but you should check with your card issuer for usage in Spain before travel.

Speed limits

(Standard legal limits, which may be varied by signs, for private vehicles without trailers)

- Built-up areas 31 mph (50 km/h)
- 2nd category roads outside built-up areas 55 mph (90 km/h)
- 1st category roads outside built-up areas 62 mph (100 km/h)
- Motorways 74 mph (120 km/h)
- Motorways and dual carriage ways in built-up areas 49 mph (80km/h)

The minimum speed on motorways and dual carriageways is 37 mph (60 km/h).

Near schools and in some residential zones the limit is 13 mph (20kph)

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If you're driving a motorhome under 3.5tonnes, lower limits apply:

- Motorways and dual carriageways 62mph (100km/h)
- 1st and 2nd category roads 55mph (90) and 49mph (80 km/h respectively).

Seat belts

Front and rear seat occupants must wear a seat belt if fitted.

Passengers/children in cars

- Children under 12 years of age and under 1.35m tall must use an appropriate child restraint unless travelling in a taxi in an urban area.
- Children under 12 must not travel in the front seat unless the rear seats are already occupied by children, or the vehicle doesn't have rear seats, e.g. a van.
- Children taller than 1.35m may use an adult seatbelt.

Lights

- You must not use full-beam headlights in built-up areas.
- You must use dipped headlights in tunnels.

Motorcycles

- It's compulsory to use your dipped headlight during the day.
- Riders of motorcycles, as well as trikes and quadbikes without seat belts, must wear a crash helmet.
- A child between 7 and 11 years old may only ride as a passenger if the bike is being driven by a parent or authorised person. They must wear a suitable helmet.
- You must not carry a child under 7 years old.
- Moped riders under 18 years old must not carry passengers.

Drinking and driving

- The legal limit, which also applies to cyclists, is 49 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood.
- A lower limit of 29 milligrams applies to drivers with less than 2 years' experience.
- Severe penalties include fines, withdrawal of your driving licence and/or prison.
- You can be tested for narcotics as well as for alcohol.

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Fines

- On-the-spot fines can be imposed and you should be given an official receipt.
- If you pay a fine within 20 days it is reduced by 50%.
- If you refuse to pay on-the-spot your vehicle could be confiscated.
- If you park illegally your vehicle could be clamped or towed away.

It's compulsory to carry the following in Spain

- **Spare wheel** (not for two-wheeled vehicles) – and the tools to change a wheel, or a tyre repair kit.
- **Warning triangle** – (not required for two wheeled vehicles) one is compulsory but it's recommended to carry two as officials could fine you for only using one in an accident or breakdown situation.
- **Reflective jacket** – Anyone getting out of your vehicle in a breakdown situation on a motorway, main road or any other busy road must wear a reflective jacket, so they should be kept in the passenger compartment. You could be fined for not wearing one but not for not carrying them. Hire car companies often don't supply them, check this when hiring.

Other rules/requirements in Spain

If you wear glasses to drive, you should carry a spare pair.

Anything with a screen (television, video, DVD etc.) which could distract you when driving should be positioned where you can't see it. This doesn't apply to a sat nav but you must not touch or program your sat nav unless parked in a safe place.

It's forbidden to carry or use a radar detector and penalties are severe.

You must not use your horn in an urban area except in an emergency, but may flash your lights.

It is recommended that you use snow chains (maximum speed 50km/h) in appropriate conditions – the police can stop you for not doing so. Winter is usually from November to March.

You must not use spiked tyres.

If you are driving a campervan or are towing and the overall length is more than 12m, you must have one (130cm x 25cm) or two (50cm x 25cm) yellow reflectors at the rear.

You can carry a load extending by up to 10% of the length of the vehicle to the rear. The load must be indicated by a panel with diagonal red and white stripes.

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*For the
road ahead*

If you are carrying one or more bicycles on the rear of your vehicle you must fit a 50cm x 50cm reflectorised panel, which you can buy from most caravan or motorhome accessory shops or from www.fiamma.com.

You could be fined if your child (under 16 years of age) rides a bicycle without wearing a cycle helmet.

In one-way streets in some cities you must park on the side of the road with even house numbers on even days of the month, and on the uneven side on uneven days.

If you use a phone while driving it must be fully hands-free. You must not use earpieces or headphones while driving and could be fined €200 if caught doing so.

Be wary of contrived incidents as there have been reports of foreign-registered vehicles, especially those towing a caravan, and hire cars being targeted in service areas or tricked into stopping on the hard shoulder by the occupant of a passing vehicle, gesturing that something is wrong with the vehicle. Lock all doors and keep bags out of sight. If safe to do so, continue to the nearest safe populated area e.g. service station.

Thefts by bogus policemen in Madrid and Catalonia have been reported and are increasing.

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