

MIT Spain

From MISTI Wiki

This information is meant to supplement the [MIT Spain Living Guide](#)

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Before Coming

Getting Settled

Banking

- **Using US accounts** - If you have Bank of America in the US, you can withdraw from several banks in Europe using your Bank of America debit card at the current exchange rate with no additional charges:
 - Deutsche Bank (Germany, some other countries) Madrid has many Deutsche Banks but the Spanish branch is different than the German one, so do not expect to get ANY help in Spain if you lose your card, unlock your card, etc.
 - BNP Paribas (France)
 - Barclays (UK)
 - Any on this [list](#)

Don't withdraw from other banks unless it's an emergency; it might cost you 5 euros per transaction.

With MITFCU (checking account), you can make up to 8 surcharge-free withdraws per month from SUM Alliance, CO-OP and MoneyPass networks. (see [here](#))

- **Getting a bank account in Spain** - Not always easy. You need a (ridiculous) Document of Non-Residency, which takes at least 10 days to get. If you want to deposit US checks, that will take another 20 days to come through.
- **Other options** - Traveler's Checks are not a good idea in Spain. The only place you'll be able to change them is in the airport. There aren't many American Express friendly banks elsewhere.

Daily Life

Practicing Spanish

- If you visit [loquo](#), under "comunidad" ("community" in English version), check out the "intercambio de idiomas" (language exchange) section.
- If any of the listings interests you, just reply to the e-mail address introducing yourself and ask the person if they are interested.
- You might also want to put out your own announcement.

Food

- One thing to note about Madrid for the most part is that on Sunday everything shuts down. This includes most clothing stores and most importantly groceries. The best thing to do is to stock up on supplies during the week in preparation for the weekend.
- A great place for delicious and relatively cheap chocolate con churros (fried dough and a thick hot chocolate to dip in) is San Gines, located near Puerta del Sol.
- A kebab is delicious, quick, and cheap. Look around, you'll see a place. Doner and Durum are the two types; doner is like a pita kind of and durum is a wrap.

- Spaniards love olive oil, salt, and garlic. Don't be afraid to try new dishes, though perhaps stay away from callaos (tripe, or cow stomach).
- Vegetarians beware, although there is an abundance of fresh fruits and vegetables, simple dishes such as garbanzo soup, will often times have bits of sausage, bacon, or ham. Be sure to be clear with waiter "no cerdo, no cordero, no carne" otherwise they will simply bring out a plate with chicken.

Cell Phones and Wireless Connections

- Phone Warehouse tends to be the cheapest place to buy a new phone or a SIM card. You have to get your phone unlocked if you plan to use the European SIM though.
- Make sure to look at the different networks and decide which is best for you.
- You can recharge your SIM at Tobaccos, Phone Warehouse, certain grocery stores, and ATMs if you have a card with that bank.
- If you get stuck living in a place without wireless they aren't many wireless cafe's etc. around the city. It might be worth your while to buy a Vodafone USB modem for 60 euros which allows you to hook up to wireless anywhere there is cell phone reception.

Travel

Plane

- You should probably use this if traveling to another country.
- Europe has many discount airlines that lets you fly for cheap, sometimes for as little as 15 euros.
- Some airlines are Ryanair, easyJet, GermanWings, Vueling, etc. The website [flycheapo](#) has a cool feature that lets you to pick two cities/countries and see the list of discount airlines that fly between them. It may not be up-to-date for all routes. The website [skyscanner](#) has a ton of discount airlines and has a variety of different search options to find the cheapest flights between cities or countries on certain days or over a period of a year or a month.
- Some of these discount airlines will put you far out of the city for some airports. So, check to where you will actually land and how to get to the city you want to go.
- Also, just about all these airlines allow you to take only one carry-on luggage for free. They will charge you for any checked in luggage and additional carry-on items.
- Also, be careful when reading the fees. If a ticket cost 0.01 EUR, there will often be additional government taxes, check-in fees that will push the total to much higher prices. They might also charge you a check-in fee if you do not check in online (which you can only do if you are a resident within the EU if you are flying Ryanair. However, if you don't plan on checking bags with Ryanair, go ahead and say you are from Ireland or something and go ahead and check in online).
- [Websites](#)

Bus

- If you want to travel to another country by bus, you want to use [Eurolines](#). Note: site only works with **Internet Explorer**.
- For traveling around Spain, [Movelia](#) is a great site and lets you book/pay for your tickets ahead of time.
- Generally, different companies go between different cities. I have found it useful to just enter "autobus [city 1] [city 2]" in Google, and usually one of the first hits gets you the company that serves that trajectory.
- Also, most busses will have space, so you can buy the ticket at the terminal and save printing and online booking costs. Just be sure to check the schedules. Most companies allow you to travel there on a bus and have an open return (abierto). Open return allows you to return on any bus during a certain day, though you'll have to go to the ticket office in the city and get your spot on the bus you want. This allows more flexibility in your travel. If you want to travel internationally (like to Portugal), you'll have to go to a different ticket area than the main one.
- Overnight busses tend to be cheaper than the train or plane and save you a night in a hostel. Not always the most comfortable sleep, it will save you euros in the end.

Train

- Trains are usually way more expensive than a bus so you have to decide if getting there sooner (if not at the same time) is worth that extra 20-30 euros. If you decide to go for it however then use, [Renfe](#).
- You can apply for a Euro <26 card (carnet joven) which will give you a discount on train tickets. More information at Caja Madrid or at the [website](#).
- You also get a discount if you buy a ticket to return directly along the same route i.e. you go from Madrid Chamartín to Barcelona Sants. If you show your ticket when you buy in Barcelona, you can get a big discount (maybe 70%?) when you return to Madrid Chamartín.
- Also consider buying a Eurail pass if you plan on traveling a lot. [Website](#)

Car Rentals

- For going to the countryside...Pretty expensive and impractical unless you have a group of 4 or 5 or really want to go to the countryside. Most places worth visiting are accessible by bus, train, or plane.
- Most cars are manual, so unless you want to fork over more money, know how to drive a stick.
- You need an international driving permit, which you can obtain in the US before you leave from AAA or American Automobile Touring Alliance. See the [US Embassy site](#) for more information.
- Do they charge extra insurance fees for people under 25 yrs old?

City Specific Information

Barcelona

- There is already quite a bit of good information compiled on this wikitravel [site](#)

Side Trips

- Montserrat is a beautiful monastery built into the stone of a mountain about an hour from Barcelona. It costs about 15-20 Euro roundtrip to get there and has some great hiking trails and views. A site with more information is [here](#)

Nightlife, Food and Music

- Barcelona has a lot of good free Jazz and Blues venues that have live music almost any night of the week. Among the notable ones are Jamboree, Jazz Si Club and the Harlem Jazz Club. Other venues that will book larger groups and branch out into world and funk music are the Apolo and Sidecar. More information on music venues and shows is available at [Barcelona Rocks](#).
- a great Champaign and Tapas bar is [Can Paixano](#), located at the top of Barceloneta on a side street. It is always packed and serves great champaign and entrepans (sandwiches)
- I made this google map [listing](#), it is specific to the trip I took but lists a lot of major sites to see and music venues.

Granada

Madrid

- [Transport in Madrid](#)
- [Housing in Madrid](#)
- [Music in Madrid](#)

Pamplona

There are two main universities in Pamplona: The Public University of Navarra [\[1\]](#) and the University of Navarra (private).

A great way to improve your spanish or improve the following languages: French, Euskara, Italian is by participating in the Tandem Program offered by the Public University of Navarra. You are basically paired up with someone and communicate with the person in, i.e. Spanish, and the other person communicates to you in English . I was paired up with someone who graduated from the Public University of Navarra several years ago, and spent time such as hiking or mountain climbing in the Pyrenees mountain which is a few kilometers away from Pamplona, spend a day in San Sebastian and other activities. The Tandem Program is free and open to anyone; you don't have to be

affiliated with the Public University of Navarra to participate. For more information contact and ask about the Tandem Program: centro.idiomas@unavarra.es.

If you want to participate in the "Club de Emprendedores" you can contact Pablo Martin at the following email address: pmaguado@UNAV.ES. You can also email him to be part of an email list for events taking place in Pamplona throughout the year and it is open to anyone.

If you want to travel outside of Spain, the option I took was by bus (VIBASA). There is a discount for students. Go to the following website for more information: <http://vibasa.es/index2.htm>.

If you need to go to a clinic for any reason, the University of Navarra (private) is rated as one of the best hospitals in Spain. You can make an appointment online at the following website: <https://www.cun.es/informacion-practica/contacto/solicitud-de-consulta/>

See the RESA website [RESA](#) for housing information in Pamplona.

San Sebastián

Sevilla

Valencia