

¿Sabías que...

...Spain is in Europe?

Spain is the only country in Europe that is officially a Spanish-speaking country.

...Spain and Portugal together make up the Iberian Peninsula?

...Spain is divided in 17 parts called autonomous communities (each has its own Executive, Legislative and Judicial Powers)?

Andalucía, Aragón, Asturias, Cantabria, Castilla-La Mancha, Castilla y León, Cataluña, Comunidad de Madrid, Extremadura, Islas Baleares, Galicia, Islas Canarias, La Rioja, Navarra, País Vasco, Región de Murcia, Valencia. They are similar, but not the same, to states in the USA. Each community is made of provinces, in total there are 50.

...Spain also has two cities on the north coast of África: Ceuta y Melilla?

...the Spanish language is the official language in every autonomous community but six has other official languages?

Cataluña, catalán; Valencia, valenciano; Islas Baleares, catalán; Galicia, gallego; País Vasco, vasco; and Navarra, vasco (only in the north).

Castilian (Spanish) is spoken by 74% of the population, Catalan by 17%, Galician by 7%, and Basque by 2%

...Madrid is the capital of Spain and it is the biggest city?

...the restaurant Casa Botín (1725) in Madrid is the oldest restaurant in the world?

...Las Islas Baleares in the Mediterranean Sea and Las Islas Canarias in the coast of África belong to Spain?

...Barcelona is the second biggest city in Spain?

... Spain has over 45 million visitors each year, making it the third most popular tourist destination in the world?

...the Spanish football league is called *La Liga* and is followed with passion by fans all over the world?

...soccer is the most important sport?

It is so popular that it's almost like a religion.

...Real Madrid is the most popular soccer club in the world with over 228 million supporters?

...Spain won the Soccer World Cup in 2010?

...shops in Spain close between 2 pm and 5 pm every day for the *siesta*, but department stores and supermarkets stay open until 9 pm or 10 pm without a break?

...there are more restaurants, cafés, and places to eat in Spain than in any other country in the world?

...Spain's currency or money is the euro?

...la tortilla española is a traditional dish of Spain made of potatoes?

...paella is a traditional and very famous dish from Spain?

Paella is typically a dish made of rice, fish, meat, and vegetables that are all cooked together in a huge frying pan.

...moros y cristianos (Moors and Christians) is a traditional dish in the region of Valencia that is made of rice and black beans?

...horchata is a popular drink in Spain made out of rice?

...the Spaniards invented the mop?

...bullfighting is the national sport of Spain?

Over one million people, including tourists and Spaniards, go to see bullfights in Spain each year. Good matadors are famous all over the country.

...the Spanish spoken in America comes from Andalucía?

Andalucía is the most populated and southernmost region in Spain.

...at one time, Córdoba in Andalucía was the largest and richest city in Western Europe?

...Andalucía is known for their music and dance, el flamenco?

...you can see África from Andalucía?

...Toledo in the region of Castilla-La Mancha is known for its medieval castles?

Castilla comes from the word castillo which means castle.

...the novel Don Quijote de la Mancha was set in Castilla-La Mancha?

...Castilla-La Mancha is known for its windmills?

In the book Don Quijote, the most famous scene is when Don Quijote mistakes the windmills for giants and charges them.

...Salamanca in the region of Castilla y León is one of the oldest cities in Europe and is home to the oldest university in Spain and Europe?

...Burgos in the region of Castilla y León is known as the land of castles?

...the city of Burgos is surrounded by castle walls?

...the city of Ávila in the region of Castilla y León is in its entirety enclosed by castles and medieval walls?

...the region of Extremadura is known as the land of conquistadors?

Hernán Cortés conquered the Aztec Empire in México and killed Montezuma, the last Aztec emperor.

Francisco Pizarro conquered the Incan Empire in Perú and killed Atahualpa, the last leader of the Incas.

Francisco de Orellana helped Pizarro conquer Perú and explore Ecuador. He named the Amazons after being attacked by women warriors.

Vasco Núñez de Balboa founded the first colony in the Americas in Panamá. He was the first European to lead a successful expedition to the Pacific Ocean from the New World.

Pedro de Alvarado conquered Guatemala and the Mayan Empire. He killed Tecún Umán, the last Mayan leader.

Pedro de Valdivia conquered and was the first governor of Chile.

Hernando de Soto was the leader of the first European expedition in the United States. He lived in Alabama.

De Soto discovered the Mississippi River. De Soto

State Park, De Soto Falls, and De Soto Caverns are named after him.

...famous architect Santiago Calatrava was born in Valencia?

Calatrava is well known all around the world. He has structures designed by him in five continents, including the transit hub at One World Trade in New York.

...La tomatina is a Valencian festival celebrated the last Wednesday in August in the city of Buñol?

This festival consists on a street tomato fight.

...Alicante is a city in the region of Valencia where Las hogueras (the Bonfires of Saint John) de San Juan is the most important festival?

It is celebrated on June 24. The festival lasts for five days. The inauguration of the fiestas comes at midnight, on the evening of June 20, as the summer solstice takes place. The tradition used to be to jump over the bonfire; but today, due the size of the fires, it has become dangerous and not achievable. Even though its pagan roots, it has been linked to the feast of Saint John (June 24). This is the day when the

hogueras come to an end. The most famous part of the fiesta is not the bonfires but the burning of pieces of junk and old furniture and the fireworks.

...La corrida de toros (the running of the bulls) is a very popular festival in the city of Pamplona, in the region of Navarra?

This event happens during the fiestas of San Fermín from the 6th to the 14th of July. They have become internationally known because of the running of the bulls. This practice involves running in front of a small group of bulls (6 to 12) that have been let loose on a course on the town's streets.

...Salvador Dalí, famous surrealist artist, is from Figueras a city in the region of Cataluña?

Dalí is best known for his striking and bizarre images in his surrealist work. The Salvador Dalí Museum is at St. Petersburg in Florida. It houses the largest collection of Dalí's work outside of Europe.

...famous architect Antonio Gaudí is from Cataluña?

Gaudí is best known for La Sagrada Familia Cathedral in Barcelona, a region of Cataluña. La Sagrada Familia began construction in 1882 and is expected to be

completed in 2041. Gaudí dedicated more than 40 years of life to its construction. UNESCO has declared La Sagrada Familia as a World Heritage site. He is also known by El Parque Güell and Casa Milá.

...Joan Miró is another famous surrealist artist from Barcelona, Cataluña?

...instead of the tooth fairy, a mouse brings money to children when they lose a tooth?

...the name Spain comes from the word ISPANIA which means the land of rabbits?

...Spain was not part of the First or Second World War?

...Spain is the only country in Europe that produces bananas?

...Spain is a monarchy?

The King of Spain is Juan Carlos I, who inherited the throne from General Franco, the dictator who ruled Spain from 1939 to 1975. Francisco Franco was responsible for the Spanish Civil War.