

QUICK INFO

• Landscape dominated by highland plateaus and the Pyrenees and Sierra Nevada mountain ranges, with alluvial plains along the coasts shaped by water courses, including the Guadalquivir, the Tago, and the Duero

• Climate varies by region from Mediterranean in the south to arid/semi-arid in the southeast, hot summers and cold winters in the high central plateau, with weather year-round in Andalusia, warm winters temperatures along coastline

• Current population is approximately 46.5 million

• Country consists of numerous administrative regions called *Comunidades Autónomas* (autonomous communities) centralized

• National identity is diverse and complex; traditional regional cultures include Basque, Catalan, Galician, and Castilian, also many distinct local dialects

• Other ethnic groups include Gitanos (Romani) and immigrants from Africa, South America, the Caribbean, and various parts of Asia and the Middle East as well as Eastern Europe

• Culture reflects intersection of myriad cultures, peoples, and empires throughout the ages

• With Greeks came olive trees and grape vines; Muslims developed irrigation and introduced citrus, sugar cane, rice, and grains from the New World; Spanish explorers brought tomatoes, potatoes, cilies, beans, squash, chocolate, and vanilla

• Distinct regional cuisines reflect diverse cultural identities and local traditions; "national" foods include ham and other pork products, paella, a wide range of seafood dishes, and various tapas

1. GEOGRAPHY AND

2. CLIMATE AND

Culture and identity reflect the peninsula and later by waves including the Goths and Phoenicians, Basques and Celts, Carthaginians, Romans, Visigoths, Arabs, and Muslims

3. POPULATION AND

Muslim conquest, establishment of Andalusia, the medieval Muslim state of Al-Andalus, and modern for hundreds of years

4. HISTORY AND

The fall of Granada marks the Christian reconquest of the north

5. CULTURE AND

The Spanish empire became its apex, at times encompassing much of Europe in addition to vast overseas colonies