

ASA

Location-Specific

GUIDE:

Spain

For parents and students

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Student Visa

All students must have a passport that does not expire for at least 3 months after their proposed return date from Spain.

FOR PROGRAMS LESS THAN 90 DAYS LONG ... No VISA is required for a U.S. passport holder who stays in Spain for 90 days or less.

FOR PROGRAMS OVER 90 DAYS LONG ... The Spanish government requires that you obtain a long-stay Student VISA from the Spanish Consulate that covers their state's jurisdiction.

The Consulate goes by the actual enrollment dates to determine whether or not a student can be granted a VISA. Students whose dates of enrollment are under 90 days can not be issued visas in any case. Therefore, if your program is, for example, 80 days long, you still have a total of 90 days to spend in Spain with no prior visa required. However, make sure that you stay in the European Union for no more than 90 days total if your program dates are such that you cannot be issued a VISA. Overstaying your 90 days could result in fines or deportation.

◆ **IF YOUR PROGRAM IS OVER 90 DAYS LONG, you will need to apply for a STUDENT VISA.**

◆ **Please read the document “Student Visa Information for Spain” for full details on how to apply for your visa.**

Applying for a VISA can be difficult and frustrating. You must apply in person at the Consulate that represents your state's jurisdiction after making an appointment with the Consulate weeks or months ahead of time. For some students, this will mean having to travel to the Consulate, even if that Consulate is far away. (For example, the Chicago jurisdiction is quite large, as is the Los Angeles jurisdiction.) The Spanish Consulate is strict with its VISA application policies, so make sure you have all the necessary documents before your appointment. **It is ultimately the student's responsibility to submit all of the required visa paperwork to the Consulate on time for processing.**

Among the documents required for the visa application are 2 enrollment letters: one from ASA and another one from the Spanish university the student will be attending. ***We cannot obtain your Spanish enrollment letter until we have the student's valid passport number, so PLEASE make sure to apply for your passport in time!*** In addition, it usually takes an average of 3 weeks to get the enrollment letter from the Spanish university, so you **MUST** let ASA know exactly when your visa appointment is, so we make sure you have this letter in time!

◆ **SEMESTER/ACADEMIC YEAR STUDENTS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO ATTEND THE ASA SPAIN PROGRAM WITHOUT A STUDENT VISA.**

Helpful Local Information

ASA students in Spain will have a Site Director to assist them during their stay:

<u>Program Location</u>	<u>Site Director Name</u>	<u>Cell Phone Number</u>	<u>Email Address</u>
Barcelona	Richard Browning	011-34-662-312-961*	richardabrowning@gmail.com
Madrid (Summer)	Paco Frisuelos	011-34-696-471-399*	pacofk@yahoo.com
Salamanca	Ana González Expósito	011-34-636-443-166*	ana@academicstudies.com
Sevilla	Elisa Guidera	011-34-658-227-992*	eguidera@qualiatravel.com

* These phone numbers include the int'l code and country code, so these are the numbers you would dial from the U.S. If you are in Spain, dial just the 9 numbers that follow "011-34." 34 is the country code for Spain, and 011 is the int'l dialing code from the U.S.

Host Institution & Housing

<u>Program Location</u>	<u>Host Institution(s)</u>
Barcelona	Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) or Universitat de Barcelona (UB)
Madrid (Summer)	Universidad Complutense de Madrid
Salamanca	Universidad de Salamanca
Sevilla	Universidad Pablo de Olavide or Universidad de Sevilla

Where will the students be living?

In Salamanca, all students live with Spanish host families. In Barcelona, Sevilla and Madrid, students can choose to live with a Spanish host family or in a shared student apartment. **No meals are included with the apartment option; 3 meals a day and laundry once a week are included with the homestay.**

Students may request to live with a friend and in most cases, this can be accommodated. Students will live as close to school as possible, in safe areas of the city (see below for details about your average commute to school). All of the host families are carefully screened by our Site Directors, and the majority has hosted ASA students for years. Living in a Spanish home is considered the best form of housing because it provides an immediate introduction to life in Spain. **Students find that speaking Spanish in their homestay is the single greatest factor in increasing their facility with the language.**

Living arrangements and the composition of host families vary. The term “host family” should not be interpreted too narrowly. Increasingly, about 50% of the hosts are childless couples or divorced women with children who enjoy having a student living with them. ASA’s hosts come from a cross-section of society; they belong to no particular professional or social milieu.

The host will provide students with **three meals a day**, one load of laundry per week, a reasonably comfortable bed, clean surroundings, good light and desk for studying, and most importantly, endless opportunities to learn and practice Spanish. Living arrangements and the composition of families vary. Keep in mind homes in Spain are not as large as most homes here, so space, especially storage space, can be limited. **The vast majority of students love living with a host family and report that it was one of the best aspects of their study abroad experience.**

Some hosts take only one student at a time, and others more; some homes have double bedrooms and some have single bedrooms (or both). So, students may share a room with another ASA student, *or* they may have their own room. You may be the only student with your host, or more than likely you will have a roommate or housemate. If you have a preference either way, please note this on your Housing Questionnaire and we will do our very best to accommodate you. *However, please keep in mind that we cannot guarantee any particular housing preference.*

Shared student apartments may house anywhere between 2-8 students and will be shared by university students who could be male *or* female, and from any country. (The vast majority of students living in the apartments come from Europe and the U.S.) *Please note: students living in a shared student apartment must pay a **damage deposit of \$500** to ASA prior to departure. A damage deposit is not required for students who choose a homestay.*

How are the host families selected?

Our Site Directors in Spain is responsible for interviewing, selecting, and matching host families with students. All the hosts must complete a detailed questionnaire and interview in their home. Each host is asked a variety of questions about their background, occupations, family composition, previous experience with students, habits, living arrangements, pets, and more.

All ASA students will complete a Housing Questionnaire after being accepted, which collects information that help us match the student with a compatible host family. *Students must be sure to indicate any allergies, dietary restrictions, or other special needs on the Housing Questionnaire.*

Students will receive their housing assignment by email, about 2 weeks prior to departure. If you have any concerns about your living arrangements after you arrive, please don't hesitate to bring it to our attention. Many times a concern can be a cultural misunderstanding or a communication problem that is easily resolved. If, for any reason, we are unable to settle an issue between a host family and a student, we will move the student to a new family as soon as possible. The welfare of our students is always our highest priority.

I have pet allergies/special dietary needs/other special needs. Can this be accommodated?

In most cases, yes. We will make every effort to accommodate each student's needs! It is extremely important that students indicate any allergies, dietary restrictions, or other special needs on their Housing Questionnaire.

How will I get to class from my residence?

Most students live within a 10-25 minute commute from campus by foot, bus, and/or subway. Many students are able to walk to/from class, and others take the bus or subway. Public transportation in Spain is excellent and reasonably-priced. Although Spain is a safe country, we recommend that students take taxis after 10 pm.

Do I need to bring sheets, pillows, blankets, towels, etc.?

All students will need to bring their own towels or buy them upon arrival. Pillows, sheets, and blankets are provided by the host families. All bedding *except* sheets is provided with a shared student apartment, so students who chose apartment housing must bring or buy twin sheets.

Medical Care

What happens if I get sick while I'm in Spain?

Our students' health and safety is always our number-one priority. The first and most important step to take is for the student to notify their Site Director immediately if they are ill. They will help the student in any way possible – by locating medical care, translating, accompanying him/her to the doctor, etc. Modern medical facilities and medications are widely available in Spain.

Cell Phones

What is the time difference between Spain and where I live?

The following times are the number of hours BEHIND Spain each region is:

Pacific	Mountain	Central	Eastern
9 hours	8 hours	7 hours	6 hours

So, if it is 6pm in Spain, then it is 12 noon Eastern, 11am Central, and 9am Pacific.

Dialing Instructions for Spain

011-INTERNATIONAL CODE 34-COUNTRY CODE FOR SPAIN + PHONE NUMBER

For example, if the number you want to call is (+34) 123 456 789, you would dial 011-34-123-456-789 when calling from the U.S. To call this example number inside Spain, you would dial 123-456-789.

For more information on calling abroad, go to <http://www.howtocallabroad.com/>

How do the cell phones work?

Each student receives a pay-as-you-go cell phone when they arrive in Spain. ASA provides the phone, while students are responsible for the cost of all calls. A pay-as-you-go system means that students have to purchase talk time before they are able to make and receive calls. This system makes it easy for students to keep track of how much they are spending on phone calls. The rates for calls and text messages are described in the phone's instruction booklet, which they will receive upon arrival in Spain. Students can purchase talk time using a debit or credit card, and their Site Director will show the students how and where to purchase talk time. The phones are usually up and running within 24 hours of arrival, after students have had the chance to purchase talk time and charge the battery.

◆ There is no charge to the student for incoming calls!

What is the best way to call to/from Spain?

Many students use **SKYPE** which gives you **free international calls** over the Internet. For details, go to www.skype.com.

You can also contact your long distance provider about their international calling plan. Or, use an international pre-paid calling card. To use an international pre-paid calling card, you dial the access number, enter your PIN number/calling card number, then enter the number you want to call.

Try www.nobel.com or www.tel3advantage.com for international pre-paid calling cards for calling U.S. – abroad. Try www.enjoyprepaid.com for international pre-paid calling cards that parents or students can use to call each other, anywhere in the world.

TIPS ON CHOOSING A GOOD CALLING CARD:

- Make sure the rate you're looking at is for a mobile phone and not a landline. Usually the rate to call a mobile phone abroad is higher than the rate to call a landline.
- Check to see if the card has a connection fee or disconnection fee.
- Some cards charge a small weekly or monthly MAINTENANCE FEE that is deducted from your balance.
- Watch out for MINUTE ROUNDING. For example, if your card has 3-minute rounding and you make a 1-minute call, you will actually be charged for 3 minutes of talk time; if you make a 5-minute call, you will actually be charged for 6 minutes of talk time; if you make a 7-minute call, you will be charged for 9 minutes of talk time. So, 1-minute rounding is much more desirable than 5-minute rounding.

- Most cards will give you a toll-free OR local access number to use. Try to use their LOCAL ACCESS NUMBER, if possible, because some cards charge a per-minute or flat fee for using their toll-free access number.
- Normally, the fewer “fees” a card has, the higher the per-minute rate. Conversely, the more “fees” a card has, the lower the per-minute rate. If a card seems “too good to be true,” with no fees AND a super low rate...then it probably is! Therefore, it’s important to READ ALL OF THE FINE PRINT before purchasing any phone card, and don’t be afraid to call the company to ask questions before purchasing anything.
- Don’t forget that you may have to pay for the call you make to the access number. If you call the access number from your cell phone, that call uses your minutes.

Mail, Computers & Internet

Will students have Internet/email access while in Spain?

Yes. All students will have free Internet access at their host university, so **bring your laptop!** *Please note, students will NOT have Internet access at their homestay.* In addition, some students may have access to computer labs at their university, and reasonably priced Internet cafes abound in European cities.

What kind of adaptor do students need in order to use their laptop in Spain?

In Spain, the power supply is 220 volts/50 cycles, while in the U.S. it is 120 volts/60 cycles. Most laptops have a power supply that supports both 110 and 220 volts and 60 and 50 cycles (dual voltage). If your computer meets these requirements, you will only need to buy a plug adaptor so that the U.S. plug will fit into the Spanish wall socket. Voltage adaptors and converters can be purchased at most hardware stores or places like Target, Wal-Mart, etc.

Can students receive mail?

Yes, students can receive mail at their residence. However,

- We do NOT recommend mailing packages to Spain unless it is absolutely necessary.
- All mail/packages must arrive AFTER the student has moved in.

In general, it is problematic to receive packages in Spain— the recipient is usually charged a customs tax to receive the package. Therefore, it is not advisable to mail anything— especially not items such as clothing, gifts, etc. that are of a non-urgent nature. The customs tax can be anywhere from €5 (approx. \$8) to €200 (approx. \$350), depending on the package’s declared value and contents. It is difficult to predict what the tax will be when sending a package. If you declare a value, it is not uncommon to pay fees as high as US\$60-\$150 to pick up the package! Remember that all insured packages require a declared value.

If you do choose to send something, the following information will assist you. On the customs form, you should mark your items as “used” whenever possible (i.e. “used books” or “used clothing”), or “FOR PERSONAL USE ONLY – NO COMMERCIAL VALUE,” as packages containing new items will be taxed exorbitantly. You will also have to declare a value on the customs form. The higher the declared value, the higher the tax will be on the receiving end. Declaring a value of less than €10/\$10 may help to keep the customs tax to a minimum.

For sending packages, we recommend FedEx, UPS, or DHL because they will give you a tracking number. Although FedEx, DHL, and UPS are not the cheapest ways to mail items abroad, they are the fastest and most secure. You may contact any of these companies for a price quote and estimated transit time by giving them the weight, dimensions and destination of your package. For sending mail (letters, cards, papers, photographs, etc.), we recommend the U.S. Postal Service.

Please confirm the correct address before mailing anything. General address format:

Host Family Name
c/o (student’s name)
Address
Postal Code, City
SPAIN

► OVERNIGHT MAIL

“Overnight” from the U.S. does NOT mean overnight to Spain! If someone in the U.S. sends an overnight document to Spain, it will arrive in Spain AFTER 2 DAYS OR MORE. For urgent documents, ATM cards, etc., use a reliable service such as FedEx or UPS. While the express or overnight USPS Global Priority service is reliable, it will actually take several EXTRA days to reach its destination because when the item enters Spain it is placed directly into the Spanish postal system, which delays its delivery.

Example: If a FedEx letter classified as “overnight” leaves the U.S. on a Monday morning, the student will likely receive the item at the *earliest* on Wednesday or Thursday of the same week. Other couriers (UPS, USPS) may take longer.