

Mag *aux* ine

Get to know our regions in Spain!

No. 4, August 2025

conversaSpain
Auxiliares de conversación



Four regions, four dishes
Ready to try them all?
(Page 8-9)



**Did you know Spain has
had many capitals?**
(Page 13)



**Find which region
suits you best.**
(Page 18)





Land of Many Spains

What's one of the most surprising things about moving to Spain? Realizing how many Spains there actually are.

Spain isn't just one place: it's made up of many different regions, each with its own way of life. Whether you're walking through the busy streets of Madrid, exploring the quiet towns of Castilla y León, learning about the traditions in Castilla-La Mancha, or enjoying the sunshine in Murcia, you're seeing a different part of what makes the country special.

And that's the beauty of this experience. You're not just visiting Spain, you're getting to live it, region by region. The landscapes, the accents, the food, the *fiestas*... they're all part of the adventure.

So, this month, we shine a light on our four regions. Because the more you know about where you are, the deeper your connection becomes.

Here's to discovering the Spain beyond the postcard and falling in love with all its versions.

¡A explorar!

Tomás

CEO, Multilingual Education Development & Support

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Tomas'.

Index

04

Events

by Remy

06

Teach & Learn

by Kit

08

Recipes

by Nüpelda

10

Interview

by Ainhua

13

Curiosities

by Rafa

14

Mindfulness

by Sara

16

Games

by Val

18

Quiz

by Ainhua

19

Partners



Events *by Remy*

02



Sport. Clásica cycling race, San Sebastián

06



Festivities. Fiesta del Pan y Queso, Quel

06-10



Music. Sonorama Ribera, Burgos

07-11



Music. Medusa Festival, Valencia

09



Festivities. Descenso del Sella, Asturias

14-17



Music. Aquasella, Asturias

August						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24/31	25	26	27	28	29	30

16-24



Festivities. Semana Grande, Bilbao

17



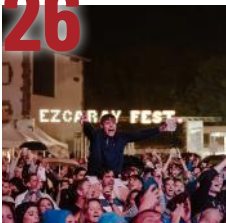
Sport. Start of La Liga

23



Sport. La Vuelta a España cycling race

26



Music. Ezcaray Fest, La Rioja

27



Festivities. La Tomatina, Buñol

31



Sport. Pyrenees Stage Run (PSR), Cataluña

Chasing sunsets

This isn't a festival. It's not a specific day you have to mark in your calendar. This is just... a plan. An excellent summer plan.

Let's talk about sunsets.

Yeah, I know—sunsets happen every day. But in Spain, in summer, it's a must. Long days, warm air, maybe you're fresh out of the sea, salty hair... That's the vibe.

Let me tell you about my sunset. I've had some great ones (Café del Mar in Ibiza—yes, it was amazing). But the one I always go back to in my head is way simpler.

"Mirador de Barrika", Basque Country. Not famous, but mine. That's the point.

I grabbed a pizza (full box, of course), drove to the viewpoint, and just sat. No music, no noise. Just the view, the sea and the sky blending into one, as well as a bunch of people quietly doing the same.

Once you arrive and pick your spot, all you have to do is wait. Then, the sky slowly turns orange, then pink, then purple... and it all happens pretty fast. After a while, you're sitting in soft light,



surrounded by strangers, with a smile on your face.

That's my memory. But honestly, you can find your own. It's the perfect time of year to chase sunsets.

If you're wondering where to start, here are some of my favorite sunset spots in each region, just in case you need a little inspiration:

- [Templo de Debod](#), in Madrid.
- [The lavender fields in Brihuega](#), in Castilla-La Mancha.
- [Las Médulas](#), in Castilla y León.
- [Mirador del Santuario de la Fuensanta](#), in Murcia.

But like I said, you get to find your own. Pick your spot: beach, hill, rooftop, wherever. Grab something to eat, go around 8:30 or 9 PM in the summer, and just be there. You don't need to make it a big thing. Go solo, with friends, with a special someone... whatever fits.

And when somebody asks, "What was the best moment you had in Spain?" I bet this will be the one you tell them about. You'll show them the photo. And you'll look at it too on a random day back home when you need a little boost.

So yeah, this is your task now.

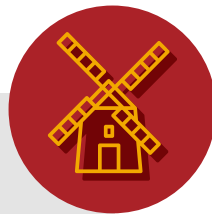
Find your sunset. Mine was Barrika. Yours are waiting.

Saying

Castilla hace y Castilla deshace

Literal meaning: Castile makes, and Castile unmakes OR Castile builds and Castile tears down.

Actual meaning: Historically, Castile is a powerful region that can decide to speed up or slow down progress in the country.



Local

The Spanish word "local" changes its meaning depending on whether it is an adjective (when it means local in English, as you might expect) or a noun (when it means a store or premises).



False friend

Tongue twister

*En Madrid madrugan Marta y Mario,
mientras muelen miel en un molino mágico.
Madrid murmura mil maravillas,
mientras Marta y Mario montan en la Gran Vía mil vigalias.
Si Marta y Mario en Madrid madrugan más,
más murmullos mágicos Madrid murmurará.*

Can you work out what it means?



Cultural Activities



Focusing on different regions in Spain, in your home country or all around the world is a great way of practicing all types of vocabulary: names of countries, continents, geographical features, food, customs and languages.



Here are a few ideas of games and projects you can run in class:

Regional Travel Brochure Project

Skills: Writing, speaking, research

- Students choose or are assigned a region (e.g., the Amazon Rainforest, the Midwest USA, the Alps, West Africa).
- They research the area (landmarks, culture, food, language, geography).
- Create a brochure or give a presentation promoting tourism.

"Mystery Region" Box

Skills: Listening, vocabulary, critical thinking

- Prepare a "mystery box" with 5 clues about a region you have already discussed (e.g., "This region is known for sushi", "It has Mount Fuji", etc.).
- Students guess the region.
- Divide into groups and set each other clues to guess other regions.
- Can be done with images or objects for younger learners.

"Compare Two Regions" Debate

Skills: Speaking, argumentation, comparative structures

- Assign two regions (e.g., Sahara vs. Arctic, Andalusia vs. The Pyrenees).
- Students prepare arguments about which region is better for tourism/living/studying.
- Practice comparative and persuasive language.





Recipe *by Nûpelda*

Four Regions, Four Dishes.

One of the best ways to get to know a place? Through its food. Each region has its own iconic dish.

This month, we're taking your taste buds on a regional tour. Try cooking them at home or keep them in mind for your next foodie adventure.

Ready to explore Spain... one bite at a time?

A DISH FOR EACH REGION

- Community of Madrid: *Bocadillo de Calamares*
- Region of Murcia: *Paparajote*
- Community of Castilla y León: *Torreznos*
- Community of Castilla-La Mancha: *Pisto Manchego*

Community of Madrid: *Bocadillo de Calamares*

A must-try in Madrid

Bocadillo de calamares is a crusty baguette filled with golden, crispy fried squid rings. It's simple but iconic. The squid is coated in flour and lightly fried until tender inside and crunchy outside. No sauce is needed, although some folks add mayo.



Region of Murcia: *Paparajote*

A sweet surprise

Paparajotes are lemon leaves coated in soft dough, fried, and dusted with sugar and cinnamon. The trick? You don't eat the leaves, just peel it off and enjoy the doughy shell. It's a dessert packed with citrusy aroma and local flavor.

Community of Castilla y León: *Torreznos*

Crunchy on the outside, juicy on the inside

Torreznos are thick pork belly strips, first marinated and then fried to porky perfection. They're a staple in bars across Castilla y León (especially Soria), and once you've tried one... you'll never look at bacon the same way again.



Community of Castilla-La Mancha *Pisto Manchego*

Spain's version of ratatouille

Pisto manchego is a comforting veggie stew made with tomatoes, zucchini, peppers, and onions, all slow-cooked in olive oil. Served warm, often topped with a fried egg or paired with bread, it's humble, hearty, and delicious.

Our Mentors Program is back... and it's bigger this year.

If you haven't heard of it yet: the Mentors Program connects new *auxiliares* with former participants who've already been through it all. School, culture, missing home, loving Spain... everything. Your mentor is someone you can text for help, questions, or just to hear “yep, that's normal.”

This summer, we have twice as many mentors as last year. And here's something that makes us proud: almost every single mentor from last year signed up again. That tells you something.

Because being a mentor isn't just answering a few questions. It's about showing up, sharing the little things

that make this experience easier, and helping new *auxiliares* feel a bit more at home even before they get here.

That's why this year mentors are already getting in touch with their mentees. From the first message to their first week in Spain, they'll be there for them. Because the Mentors Program isn't just about having someone to message. It's about making sure no one feels like they have to figure things out alone.

And now, it's time to introduce them properly. Starting with two familiar faces — Sara and Jen — who are back for round two.



JEN SCHALLER

“Jen was amazing and incredibly helpful. She was someone to count on when feeling lost and confused. She truly made a difference!”



SARA TUZCI

“Sara was absolutely incredible. She was available for anything I needed and was always willing to hop on a 1 on 1 call when needed. She made everything easier!”

JEN SCHALLER

From: *USA*

Came to Spain: *in 2023*

Renewed with
ConversaSpain:

- 23-24 (*Castilla y León*)
- 24-25 (*Madrid*)



FAV PLACES IN SPAIN

- Asturias
- Granada
- Mallorca
- Gran Canaria
- Barcelona



ADVICE FOR NEW AUXIS

"Communication is important. Being able to take a Spanish class, from a school or someone you know, will make things much easier.

To understand the culture, the way people say certain things and communicate, relieves so much stress. Besides, the school and people in the community will embrace you if you make an effort. If they see you are trying, it will help you connect. Language is huge."

BEING A MENTOR

"When it's your first year, you don't know people, and it can be scary. It's nice to have someone on the ground that can connect you to different things, answer questions, paint a picture of what your experience could look like before you get there. Someone who has experienced the same as you. It makes the transition easier".



THINGS THAT SHOCKED JEN

- Everyone is very affectionate, (students call their teachers by their first name!)
- The puentes and celebrations/festivities
- Meal times (I am used to it now, but I struggled with it at first)

SARA TUZCI

From: *Illinois (US), Guadalajara (MX), Artvin (TR)*

Came to Spain: *in 2022*

Renewed with ConversaSpain: *22-23
23-24*



FAV PLACES IN SPAIN

- Andalucía
- Huesca (Parque Nacional de Ordesa)
- Cantabria
- Basque Country
- Madrid (home)



ADVICE FOR NEW AUXIS

"So many things! The main one is to come with an open mind, and be ready to embrace the new culture and meet new people."

You have to be open about the experience, and have a lot of patience. It can be a slow process, but you will work through that. Everything works out in the end."

BEING A MENTOR

"I think the main thing was knowing I could be an extra assistance to other *auxiliares* coming in. When I first came in here there were lots of anxieties and questions I had."

I think this is a great opportunity to help alleviate some of those feelings. Plus, it is a fun way to meet more *auxis* coming in!"



THINGS THAT SHOCKED SARA

- How many days-off we have, Spaniards love to celebrate!
- How slow things are sometimes, like bureaucracy...
- Things being closed on Sunday, especially in smaller places, plan ahead!



Did you know... ?

Spain had **many capitals**
before Madrid

It's hard to imagine Spain without Madrid as its capital, but the truth is it took a while to settle there.

Over the centuries, the title of capital city moved around like a traveling throne: **Toledo, Valladolid, Sevilla, and even Cádiz** all had their time in the spotlight. Each change was due to politics, geography, or simply royal preference.

Madrid finally became the permanent seat of power in the 16th century, thanks to King Felipe II. Since then, it's been the heart of the country, but its rise to the top was anything but straightforward. In fact, even after Madrid was established as the capital, there were a few exceptions/years in which it changed briefly.

History here loves a plot twist.

Retreats in Spain:

A Journey through Our Regions

Spain's wellness retreats really show the special spirit of each region, from mountain hideouts to peaceful coastal escapes.

This short guide shows some of the best retreats in these different landscapes, and how Spain's geography shapes the wellness experience.

The Community of Castilla y León

Sierra de Gredos

Offers a quiet place for physical and mindful practices. Perfect for people who want deep calm and connection in wild nature:

- **Daily yoga** (Hatha, Vinyasa, Iyengar) following the natural day
- **Meditation sessions** with silent sitting, visualizations, and walks
- **Breathwork and pranayama** to balance energy and focus
- Evening **Yoga Nidra** and sound journeys with gongs or nature
- **Quiet mindful hikes** through forests and streams to ground yourself

The Community of Madrid

Sierra de Guadarrama

Close to the city, these retreats offer clear mindfulness and gentle yoga. Great for city people looking for a meaningful escape close to home:

- **Mindfulness meditation**, sitting and walking sessions
- Gentle **Hatha or Vinyasa yoga**, often outdoors
- Forest or mountain **walks combining movement and breath**
- **Pranayama breathing** to relax and clear the mind
- Time to enjoy **nature** and moments of quiet reflection



A person is seen from behind, sitting on a mat on the grass in a forest, with their hands clasped behind their head in a yoga pose. Sunlight filters through the trees, creating a warm, golden atmosphere.

The Community of Castilla-La Mancha

Albacete region

These retreats offer simple and heartfelt experiences focused on connection and growth. Well suited for those seeking a chance to slow down and rediscover themselves:

- **Daily yoga** from grounding Hatha to more dynamic flows
- **Meditation** including silent sits, guided mindfulness, and mantra
- **Group workshops** for emotional exploration and honest sharing
- **Breathwork** to release tension and reconnect with your inner self
- Quiet moments for **walks through olive groves** or restful silence

The Region of Murcia

Coastal Murcia

Murcia's coastal retreats mix movement and rest by the sea. Ideal for those wanting to refresh body and spirit with sea air:

- Yoga mixing **Yin and Yang styles**, plus **Yoga Nidra** for deep rest
- Holistic practices like **sound healing**, indoors or on the beach
- **Wellness facilities** like pools and spa treatments
- Free time to enjoy the **coast, sunshine, and self-care**
- **Sunrise/sunset meditation sessions** to connect with sea rhythms

Where Rest Meets Renewal

Each region gives more than just a new view. It offers a chance to change your pace, reset your focus, and be present.

Whether you like **mountains, plains, forests, or coastlines**, Spain's retreats offer not only rest but also space to reconnect deeply with your body, mind, and spirit.

02

01

Which city is known for its medieval walls?

- A) Burgos
- B) Ávila
- C) Segovia

Which sea borders the Region of Murcia?

- A) Cantabrian Sea
- B) Balearic Sea
- C) Mediterranean Sea

03

Which town is famous for its university and for Cervantes?

- A) Aranjuez
- B) Alcalá de Henares
- C) San Lorenzo de El Escorial

04

Which novel is set in Castilla-La Mancha?

- A) *Don Quijote*
- B) *La Celestina*
- C) *Cien Años de Soledad*

06

Which royal site houses a monastery, palace, and library?

- A) El Escorial
- B) Manzanares el Real
- C) Torreldones

What's the name of the ancient theater in Cartagena?

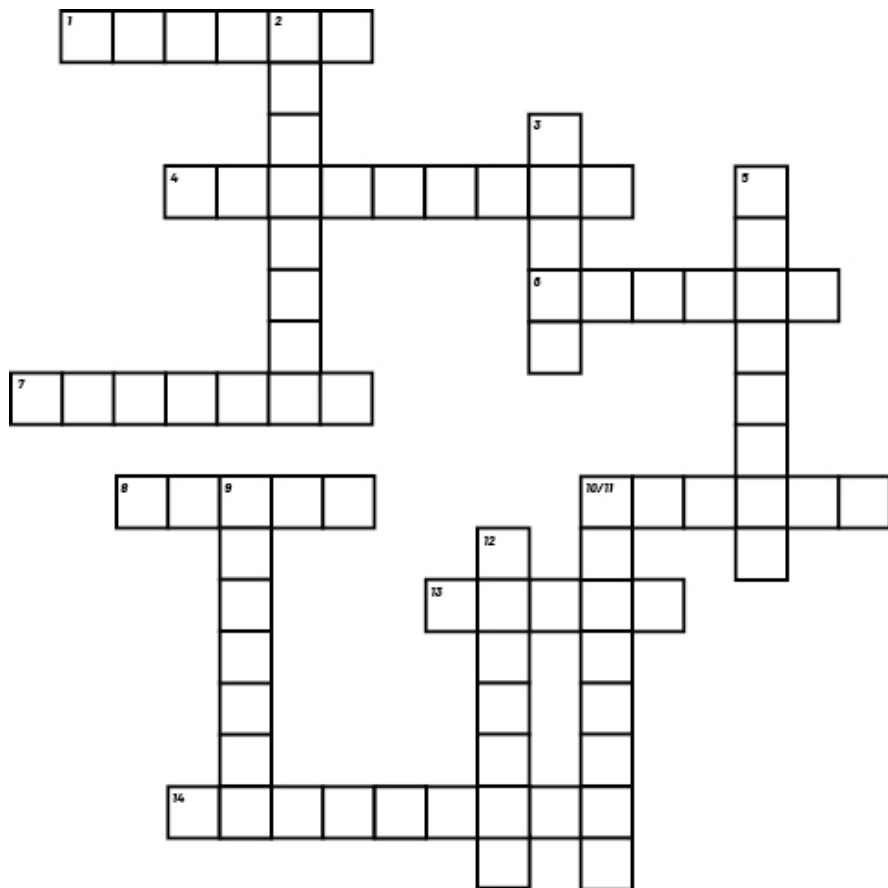
- A) Teatro Real
- B) Teatro Romano
- C) Teatro Cervantes

05

Answers

Cultural trivia
1.(B) 2.(C) 3.(B) 4.(A) 5.(B) 6.(A)
Picture search
1. Bocata, 2. Torreznó, 3. Metro, 4. Cervantes, 5. Murciano, 6. Rastro, 7. Molinos, 8. Museo, 9. Segovia, 10. Cuenca, 11. Catedral, 12. Cíbeles, 13. Pisto, 14. Cartagena

Crossword



Horizontal

1. Short for "bocadillo"
4. Don Quixote author's last name
6. Madrid's famous flea market
7. Windmills
8. Many famous ones: Prado, Reina Sofia...
10. Known for its hanging houses
13. Veggie stew
14. City with Roman ruins in the Region of Murcia

Vertical

2. Crispy pork belly snack
3. Madrid's way to get around
5. Demonym and dialect in Murcia
9. Famous aqueduct city
11. Famous monument, especially in León and Burgos
12. Iconic Madrid fountain and square

Which Spanish Region Matches Your Vibe?

Count how many As, Bs, or Cs you've picked to reveal your regional match!

01 Your ideal pace of life is...

- A) Fast, dynamic, and always buzzing
- B) Chill and full of sun-soaked breaks
- C) Peaceful, grounded, with a rhythm of its own

02 What's your favorite setting?

- A) A lively city full of cafés and culture
- B) Orange groves, palm trees, and Mediterranean air
- C) Hilltop towns, castles, and open landscapes

03 On a Sunday, you're most likely to...

- A) Hit up a museum and grab a vermouth with friends
- B) Meet family for a big lunch and talk for hours
- C) Go for a ramble in the countryside and take it slow

04 Pick your go-to food vibe:

- A) A bit of everything—global, trendy, and quick
- B) Fresh produce, hearty portions
- C) Stews, cheese, local wine... comfort on a plate

05 What's your ideal backdrop for a selfie?

- A) A rooftop with Gran Vía in the background
- B) A sun-soaked street lined with lemon trees
- C) A medieval city wall or a windmill at golden hour

06 Your favorite type of socializing is...

- A) Drinks and plans that come together at the last minute
- B) Hanging with friends on a terrace, no rush, no stress
- C) A get-together where time doesn't matter

07 What makes you feel most you when abroad?

- A) The energy of the crowd
- B) Feeling like part of a close-knit local community
- C) Losing yourself in tradition and history

08 You have a free weekend. You...

- A) Try a new exhibition, a new bar, and maybe even a new haircut
- B) Hit the coast or find a local festival
- C) Explore a lesser-known village and eat wherever the locals hang out

The answer is...



Most A's
MADRID



Most B's
MURCIA



Most C's
THE CASTILLAS
(LEÓN & LA MANCHA)

Partners

Spanish Regional Education Authorities



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Next
issue:
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