

SEVILLA

GUIDE



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Introduction

With a population of 803,000 inhabitants (1.5 million including the surrounding metropolitan area of the city) [Seville](#) is the fourth largest city in Spain (after Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia) and it is also the 30th most populous municipality in Europe. Spain itself has a population of close to 47 Million. Muslims account for about 3% of the population.

Seville is located in the Southeast part of Spain, on the plain of the River Guadalquivir, about 80 kilometres (50 miles) from the Atlantic Ocean. The river crosses the city from North to South and can be navigated from Seville all the way to its outlet near Sanlúcar de Barrameda, on the Atlantic coast. The city port is the only river port in Spain and it played an important role in commerce between Spain and the Americas.

Seville is a provincial capital, seat of the government and parliament of the autonomous community of Andalusia (*Comunidad Autónoma de Andalucía*). The inhabitants of the city are known as sevillanos or hispalenses, after the Roman name of the city, Hispalis. People speak Spanish (or Castilian) the official language with a typical southern accent, nevertheless in the rest Spain, Castilian or Spanish coexists with several regional co-official languages such as Catalan, Basque, Galician and Occitan. English is widely spoken and understood.

Seville is a remarkably charming and equally seductive city, bursting with several attractive features for foreigners, long and short term expats and for tourists alike. It offers a very high quality of life. Let's review some of its attraction points. First, Seville is a beautiful and culturally rich city. Its Old Town, the third largest in Europe with an area of 4 square kilometres (2 sq mi), contains three UNESCO World Heritage sites: the **Alcázar palace**

complex, the **Cathedral** and the **General Archive of the Indies** and it is packed with other historical monuments and churches that are blessed with Moorish and Gothic influence. And even the culture of tapas and flamenco are signs of a mix of Arab, Jewish, and gypsy culture. Muslims will marvel at the buildings that were once built by the Arabs, whose legacy and influence is still quite apparent in all Andalusia. For instance the Giralda tower and the Cathedral were once a minaret and a mosque.

Second, Seville is a proudly traditional Spanish city. Although it lately became more cosmopolitan, the locals remain proud of their traditional ways. So, apart from occasional modern touches, such as the landmark Alamillo Bridge built by Santiago Calatrava for the 1992 Expo, Seville remains a quite a conservative city, bursting with its rich old culture, interesting history, and vibrant festivals and celebrations, from the somber Semana Santa (Holy Week) to the rollicking Feria de Abril (April Fair). This will offer foreign expats and tourists a real chance to experience **authentic** Spanish life: an abundance of tapas bars and lively clubs and plenty of flamenco tablaos (live shows). Out of your comfort zone now, and away from familiar surroundings, we encourage you to discover this genuine culture of Seville.

An additional benefit offered by Seville and adding to quality of life is that the whole southern Spain offer a subtropical climate and year round days of **sunshine** making it a supremely photogenic area, where even non professional photographers will be able to take stunning pictures. It has an average yearly temperature of 25 °C . While this is certainly a plus, we should mention that Seville makes what is believed to be one of the hottest summers in Europe, when the heat can hover around (100°F) 40°C degrees, which is why most Sevillianos disappear in the summer, leaving the city like a ghost town.

People are extremely friendly and open which adds yet another

layer of quality of life in Seville. Another positive aspect of living in Seville is that **cost of living** is lower than in other Spanish cities. And finally the city of Seville acts as a convenient **hub** from which foreigners can explore beautiful Southern Spain.



Seville Coat of Arms

Spain's main facts

The Kingdom of Spain, politically a parliamentary constitutional republic, has a population of about 47 million, its capital and largest city is Madrid, and it shares borders with Portugal to the east, France to the north, Morocco to the south (across the Strait of Gibraltar) and Algeria to the southeast.

Religion: the dominant religion is Catholicism but Spain is a secular state that guarantees freedom of religion.

Time: GMT +1. Summer (from the end of March to the end of October): GMT +2

Electricity: 220 or 225 volts, 50 Hertz AC. Standard Spanish plugs (enchufes) are European two-pins. For appliances with foreign plugs, adapters (adaptador) can be bought at most large supermarkets, electrical and D.I.Y. stores, which in Spain are run by Chinese or Pakistanis.

Business Hours: Government: 9AM to 2 PM, general: to 5 PM.

Driving: Cars drive on the right. Roads are usually in good condition. Drivers are required to flash their lights before overtaking another vehicle.

Internet domain: .es

International dialing code: +34. There are city and area codes used internally, such as (0)95 for Seville, (0)93 for Barcelona and (0)91 for Madrid.

Money: The Euro (EUR), which is divided into 100 cents. A Spanish tax identification number is needed to open a local bank account. ATMs are widely available and usually accept foreign cards.

Emergency numbers: 112 (the pan European emergency number), 061 (health emergencies) or 091 (police).

History of Seville

Seville saw its golden age in the era of Columbus and his discoveries; all the riches that poured in during the 16th and 17th centuries paid for the churches, palaces, and squares that you can enjoy today. Seville was founded as a Roman settlement called “Hispalis”, next to which in 207 B.C. the Romans built Itálica. Both became the centre of the Roman Western Mediterranean dominions until the Roman Empire was defeated by Vandals and Visigoths at the end of the 5th century.

After the Muslim occupied the Iberian Peninsula in 711 and conquered the city in 712, Seville was known as Ishbiliya (Arabic: إشبيلية). The Moors occupied Seville from 712 AD to 1248 AD,

leaving indelible traces in Seville, as in all of Al-Andalus (Andalucía). The most well-known of the remaining Islamic monuments is La Giralda, the tower of a once important mosque. During the Muslim rule in Spain, Seville came under the jurisdiction of the Caliphate of Córdoba before becoming the independent Taifa of Seville; later it was ruled by the Muslim Almoravids and the Almohads.

In 1248 Seville was incorporated into the Christian Kingdom of Castile under Ferdinand III.

After the 1492 Christopher Columbus expedition to the New World (from Palos de la Frontera's port), the results from his claiming territory and trade for the Crown of Castile (incipient Spain) in the West Indies began to profit immensely the city of Seville because the Crown awarded the royal monopoly for trade with the growing Spanish colonies in the Americas to the port of Seville. This means that the port monopolised the whole trans-oceanic trade: only sailing ships leaving from and returning to the inland port of Seville could engage in trade with the Spanish Americas, so merchants from Europe and other trade centres needed to go to Seville to acquire New World trade goods. And all goods imported from the New World had to pass through the Casa de Contratación before being distributed throughout the rest of Spain.

When Seville became one of the economic centres of the Spanish Empire, this opened a Golden Age of arts and literature. The 17th century, coinciding with the Baroque period of European history, was hence the period of most brilliant flowering of the city's culture and artistic splendour in Seville: painters such as Diego Velázquez, Murillo and Valdés Leal; and sculptors like Martínez Montañés, were all born in Seville and left behind important works. The city also assumed an important role in the world literature as well as in opera music.

Then began a gradual economic and demographic decline as silting in the Guadalquivir forced the trade monopoly to relocate to the nearby port of Cádiz.

The 20th century in Seville saw the horrors of the Spanish Civil War. Two decisive cultural and architectural milestones for the city were the Ibero-American Exposition of 1929 which left important urban improvements in the city; and more recently the Expo'92, which reinforced the image of Seville as a modern and dynamic city.



La Corrida de Toros

SEVILLE CUSTOMS, CULTURE, TYPICAL FOODS

Sevillans, you will find the vast majority of them to be very friendly, open and approachable, some things to look out for when waking in the streets of Seville. The people are very sociable and do not spend a lot of time at home. The bars and cafes are full of people talking and having fun. There are many different types of bars and restaurants in Seville, theme bars, traditional Spanish bars and all kinds of restaurants.

Don't be surprised if people greet you with two kisses one in each cheek, this is the normal and of course, a very nice way to greet people, a typically Spanish greeting, offered not just in Seville, but all over Spain.

Family life in Spain is considered very important by families. If you go to a restaurant, café or bar, you will most likely see many families with young children, many of them staying until late at night.

You will also find that your own "personal space" will virtually disappear when you take to the streets, the people will not think twice about almost bumping into you from any or all directions, be assured though, it's very normal for them to do this and they have no problem with it, so do not be offended, there is no mal-intent, it's just their way of doing things, and it can even be quite fun, you just never know who you are going to bump into.

Sevilla food is really delicious, with "Tortilla de Patata"(Spanish Potato omelet), "Patatas Bravas" (spiced potatoes with garlic), "Calamares" (Squid), "Jamon Serrano"(Cured ham), "Gambas"(Prawns) and all kinds of seafood, meat and vegetables on offer.

A typical “Menu del Dia” (day menu) will typically cost anything from 9 to 14€ and will consist of a starter dish for example a soup, followed by a main dish, followed by a sweet, including bread and first drink. Lunch usually starts around 2pm – 3pm in Seville, so be prepared to wait a little normal than using for your lunch.

Sevillian habits

One of the most famous activities in Seville is to witness a **bull fight** in its Plaza de Toros de la Real Maestranza (<http://www.realmaestranza.com/>). Considered art by the aficionados and animal cruelty by adversaries, this spectacle is part of the Southern Spanish character and widely revered. There's also a museum attached to the rink. The most famous toreros appear during the Feria de Abril, when the cream of the crop show off their skills.

Flamenco plays a big role in Andalusia's culture. This extraordinarily powerful art form can be experienced as a spectator or as an active participant in one of the many dance academies. For shows and schools, see further section.



Flamenco dancer