

# SPAIN



Important Information

# Congratulations!

Your Spain trip is quickly approaching! Please make the most of it by taking a few moments to read the enclosed information, download both apps and review information posted on both apps for your group. Please bring this booklet with you on the trip for quick reference.

## A-O Trips App

You should have received an email from A-O Trips – Spain (AOI2501) with download, activation and log-in instructions. The personalized app will provide the most up-to-date information available throughout the program. If you have not done so already, we encourage you and your guest to download the app to your personal devices prior to leaving for Spain. The A-O Trips app was designed to provide a more interactive experience for all attendees. You will be able to view general trip information regarding the destinations, hotels and transportation, daily agenda along with local activities, your personalized agenda, flight schedules and so much more!



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## About Spain

Spain is a country in southwestern Europe, home to around 48 million people. It's famous for its dramatic landscapes, luxurious beaches, fantastic food, and diverse history. Spain occupies about 85 percent of the Iberian Peninsula, which it shares with its smaller neighbor Portugal.

The country is geographically and culturally diverse. The many and varied cultures that have gone into the making of Spain—those of the Castilians, Catalonians, Lusitanians, Galicians, Basques, Romans, Arabs, Jews, and Roma (*Gypsies*), among other peoples—are renowned for their varied cuisines, customs, and prolific contributions to the world's artistic heritage. The country's Roman conquerors left their language, roads, and monuments, while many of the Roman Empire's greatest rulers were Spanish, among them Trajan, Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius.

**Madrid**, Spain's central capital, is a city of elegant boulevards and expansive, manicured parks such as the Buen Retiro. It is renowned for its rich repositories of European art, including the Prado Museum's works by Goya, Velázquez, and other Spanish masters. The heart of old Hapsburg Madrid is the portico-lined Plaza Mayor, and nearby is the baroque Royal Palace and Armory, displaying historic weaponry.

**Barcelona** is a city on the northeastern coast of Spain. It is the capital and largest city of the autonomous community of Catalonia, as well as the second-most populous municipality of Spain. With a population of 1.6 million within city limits, its urban area extends to numerous neighboring municipalities within the province of Barcelona and is home to around 5.3 million people, making it the fifth most populous urban area of the European Union after Paris, the Ruhr area, Madrid and Milan. It is one of the largest metropolises on the Mediterranean Sea, located on the coast





between the mouths of the rivers Llobregat and Besòs, bounded to the west by the Serra de Collserola mountain range.

Barcelona has a rich cultural heritage and is today an important cultural center and a major tourist destination. Particularly renowned are the architectural works of Antoni Gaudí and Lluís Domènech i Montaner, which have been designated UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The city is home to two of the most prestigious universities in Spain: The University of Barcelona and Pompeu Fabra University. The city is known for hosting the 1992 Summer Olympics. In addition, many international sport tournaments have been played here.

### **The Palace, A Luxury Collection Hotel, Madrid**

You will spend your first three nights at The Palace, a Luxury Collection Hotel, Madrid.

An authentic landmark in the heart of the city, The Palace Hotel has returned to a timeless glory after its impressive renovation. Located in the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Paisaje de la Luz (*Landscape of Light*), at the heart of the Golden Triangle, it is just a short distance from key places of interest, like Museums Nacional del Prado, Reina Sofía, Thyssen-Bornemisza, Palacio Real de Madrid and more city attractions. Showcasing 20th-century art, enchanting culture, and eclectic style, each beautifully crafted accommodation reflects the essence of Madrid's exuberant creative scene. Its spectacular stained-glass dome, favored accommodation for artists, bohemians and thinkers, starts a new chapter of its rich historical legacy.

You are within walking distance of the city center where you can immerse yourself in the culture and history of Madrid.



## Hotel Arts Barcelona

Welcome to Hotel Arts Barcelona, iconic luxury experience where you will enjoy the next four nights of your trip to Spain. Hotel Arts Barcelona is a 5-star, luxury hotel in Barcelona, Spain, with perfect credentials as a premier destination. An urban resort that stands as the tallest hotel on the coast, overlooking the beachfront offering panoramic city and beach views for A-O Trips travelers. The hotel effortlessly combines tranquility and genuine luxury with individual and personalized service provided by a well-connected and passionate team. The hotel offers a pool with views of the ocean.

Your newly-renovated room at Hotel Arts will offer spectacular views of the Mediterranean Sea or Barcelona's historic cityscape in comfortable, spacious surroundings complete with a fresh, coastal feel. While some public areas of the hotel will be undergoing renovations during our stay, the hotel is endeavoring to keep their impact to a minimum. As a token of our gratitude for your understanding, we have secured a 10% discount on all food and beverages purchased at the hotel (*excluding Enoteca and room service*) and a 20% discount on spa services.

# Travel Information

## Air Itinerary

If Gavel International booked your air travel, your itinerary and electronic ticket confirmation have been emailed to you. If you have any questions, please contact the A-O Trips Travel Desk at Gavel International by calling **877.379.7101** or **816.334.0101**.

## Travel Instructions for Arrival Day

Refer to arrival day instructions included in this packet or on A-O Trips Website.

We will have a later start time for dinner on arrival day in order for you to become adjusted to a typical Spanish schedule. In Spain, many restaurants do not open for dinner until 8:00 p.m.

## Travel Documents

All U.S. citizens must have a valid passport to travel to Spain.

Please be sure to bring the following documents with you in your carry-on bag:

- Passport for each traveler – it must be valid for at least 90 days beyond duration of the trip
- Proof of residency for non-U.S. passport holders who reside in the United States.
- Printed copy of your Airline Itinerary & E-ticket Receipt
- Documentation supporting any prescription medication

## ETA is required for visits to the United Kingdom including layover/connections

If you plan on extending your trip into the United Kingdom (*England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland*) or if your flight has a connection via any city within the United Kingdom, including London's Heathrow Airport, you will be required to purchase an ETA (*Electronic Travel Authorization*). See the A-O Trips Website for more details.



It is your responsibility to secure all required documentation for your trip. We suggest you make two copies of each passport. Leave one copy at home and carry the other copy with you separate from your passport.

## Pregnancy

Some airlines may require a medical certificate to travel if you are in your late stages of pregnancy. If you are pregnant, please check with your airline carrier for their specific requirements.

## Luggage Tags

All checked luggage must be tagged with the pre-printed Spain A-O Trips luggage tags supplied within this packet. Please attach these luggage tags PRIOR to departing your home city. It is also recommended that you place your name and address on the inside of your checked bags.



## What to Bring

When packing, keep in mind that you will need a day/carry-on bag in addition to your checked luggage. It is recommended that you do not bring more than one piece of checked luggage per person and one carry-on bag per person.

**Day/Carry-On Bag:** Your day/carry-on bag should include your passport, travel documents, prescription medication, name badges and red or blue





wristbands, valuables, and a change of clothing. For carry-on restrictions please visit **[tsa.gov](https://www.tsa.gov)**.

Lost or delayed luggage is unavoidable and there will be delayed luggage on every group. Plan accordingly and don't let this ruin your trip. We recommend that you pack a carry-on bag with enough clothing, toiletries, and anything (*including medications*) that you may need for the first few days of your trip. A-O Trips travel staff onsite will know where you can purchase a few more items you may need once you arrive at the hotel. If you are traveling with a spouse or guest and will have two checked bags, we recommend packing items in each bag for each person. If only one bag makes it to Madrid, both guests will have some of their items.

Any liquids that you plan on packing in your carry-on bag must be in three ounce or less containers and must all fit into a quart-sized plastic bag. These will be scanned separately from your carry-on bag when you go through security at the airport.

If you use insulin or other medical prescription dispensing products, they must be clearly identified. You must have appropriate medical records with you that show your medical condition and need for the prescriptions in case security officers have questions. For carry-on restrictions, please visit **[tsa.gov](https://www.tsa.gov)**.

### **Packing for the transition day from Madrid to Barcelona via train:**

Checked Luggage: All of your large, checked luggage (*and any carry-on bags that you do not need for your travel day*) will need to be packed and set outside your guestroom door by Midnight the night before. These bags will be transferred via luggage trucks to Barcelona during the night. These bags should include the majority of your belongings,



and you should only exclude anything you will need for the morning or during your travel day to Barcelona. If you have purchased any knives or swords in Toledo, please pack those in these bags going on the luggage truck. *(You will need to go through security screening at the train station).* All bags **MUST** be tagged with NAMES *(preferably with the A-O Trips pre-printed luggage tags).*

**Day/carry-on bag:** We recommend only 1 day/carry-on bag per couple to take on the train. This bag can be a small roller bag and should contain any items you may need overnight or in the morning such as sleepwear, toiletries, etc. along with clothing and shoes needed for the travel day to Barcelona. You will carry this bag with you on the train and to the restaurant for lunch. From there, this bag can be left in the bin under the coach and delivered directly to the hotel. All bags **MUST** be tagged with NAMES *(preferably with the A-O Trips pre-printed luggage tags).*

**Small backpack or string bag:** We recommend you also keep one small backpack or string bag per couple to keep with you for the entire day *(on the train, during lunch and on the 45-minute walking tour to the hotel).* We recommend you carry in this bag your passports, travel documents, prescription medication, name badges, wallets, money, and any valuables. If needed, a bottle of water and snacks for the train. *(Snacks and beverages will be available for purchase on the train).* Please wear your A-O Trips wristbands throughout the trip but it will be especially important during the transition between Madrid and Barcelona.

## Attire Details

We suggest you prepare to dress in light layers to accommodate the summer/fall weather and always wear comfortable walking shoes.

**Daytime Attire:** Summer/Fall Casual – light weight, summer/fall casual clothing and comfortable walking shoes. Daytime temperatures may range up to high-70s. Check the attire recommendations for any optional tours that you have purchased.

You should also pack a light sweater, light jacket or raincoat and small umbrella in case of inclement weather. Don't forget to pack sunglasses and your swimsuit as the Hotel Arts has a spa and outdoor pool.

**Evening Attire:** Welcome dinner in Madrid is smart casual – slacks and collared shirt or blouse with slacks, capri pants, skirt or dress. Gala dinner in Barcelona is dressy attire - elegant outfits and suits or sport coats, with ties optional.

\*One welcome dinner in Madrid and one gala dinner in Barcelona, five nights on own.

**Note:** No blue jeans or T-shirts may be worn at A-O Trips evening functions.

**Important Note:** Some local churches, basilicas or sanctuaries may require both men and women to cover shoulders and thighs down to the top of the knees while inside sacred areas. Please be respectful and wear suitable clothing or bring a scarf to cover your shoulders.

## Name Badges & Red/Blue Wristbands

Auto-Owners Insurance has provided red or blue wristbands for each attendee and guest. These should be worn so that travel staff as well as other attendees can easily identify A-O Trips guests at the airport upon arrival into Adolfo Suarez Madrid-Barajas Airport (*MAD*) and when in Spain. Agents and their guest will still be required to wear name badges to all A-O Trips group sponsored meal functions and group events.



## Special Needs and Requirements

We are happy to assist you with any reasonable special dietary requirements that you may have. If you noted these requirements or dietary needs on the A-O Trips registration website, they have been arranged. If you have questions or need any additional assistance, please contact the A-O Trips Travel Desk at Gavel International: **877.379.7101** or **816.334.0101**, or email: **AOI2501@gaveledge.com**.

Most airlines will allow medical supplies or equipment on board as additional items at no extra charge. Some medical items can be carried on the plane, as an “additional carry-on item”, as long as they meet the standard size and weight limits. If your supplies/equipment are included in a larger bag that contains other non-essential items, that bag will not be considered a free item and will be subject to normal baggage fees. Check with your airline for their policies and restrictions and if advance notice is required.

## Leave-Behind Cards

For your convenience, we have enclosed leave-behind cards that include hotel contact information. Please distribute these cards to family, friends or co-workers, so that they may contact you while you are traveling in the event of an emergency.



# General Information

## Program Inclusions

Your participation in this program includes the following:

- Roundtrip economy class air
- Group (*roundtrip*) airport transfers and luggage handling for program air participants
- A-O Trips Hospitality Desk to answer questions and assist with leisure activities
- Arrival day group breakfast/ lunch and walking tours of Madrid
- Three nights of accommodations at The Palace, a Luxury Collection Hotel, Madrid
- Breakfast daily at The Palace, a Luxury Collection Hotel, Madrid
- Welcome group dinner at The Palace, a Luxury Collection Hotel, Madrid with light entertainment
- Group walking tour of Madrid including a private visit of the Royal Palace
- Transfer to Barcelona, Spain by high-speed train
- Group lunch in Barcelona and walking tour of Barcelona
- Group city tour in Barcelona
- Four nights of accommodations at the Hotel Arts Barcelona
- Breakfast daily at the Hotel Arts Barcelona
- Gala reception and dinner at an offsite venue including transfers
- All gratuities for our sponsored events and group tours, as well as hotel gratuities

## Hotel Accommodations at The Palace, A Luxury Collection Hotel, Madrid

Room accommodations have been confirmed under your name at The Palace, a Luxury Collection Hotel, Madrid. Auto-Owners Insurance is paying for your guestroom for three nights. Your personal incidental charges, room upgrades, and any pre-program room nights will be at your own expense.

**Check In:** 3:00 p.m.

**Check Out:** 12:00 p.m.



## Hotel Accommodations at Hotel Arts Barcelona

Room accommodations have been confirmed under your name at the Hotel Arts Barcelona. Auto-Owners Insurance is paying for your guestroom for four nights. Your personal incidental charges, room upgrades, and any post-program room nights will be at your own expense.

**Check In:** 3:00 p.m.

**Check Out:** 12:00 p.m.

## A-O Trips Hospitality Desk

Throughout your stay, A-O Trips travel staff will be onsite to assist you with any questions that may arise. These staff members will be identifiable by their blue shirts, khaki or black pants and name badges.

The A-O Trips Hospitality Desk will be staffed daily for your convenience. At The Palace, a Luxury Collection Hotel, Madrid, the Hospitality Desk will be located in the hotel upper lobby. At the Hotel Arts Barcelona, the Hospitality Desk will be located on the lobby level, in the corridor near the guest room elevators.

Please check at the desk or refer to your A-O Trips App during your stay for your daily agenda, to note event time changes, and for any special announcements regarding the program. Suggestions for your leisure time will also be available.

## Cash Allowance

There will not be a cash allowance for this trip.



## **Incidental Accounts**

When you check-in at each hotel, you will be asked to provide a credit card to establish charging privileges for incidental expenses. Your hotel incidental accounts will need to be settled upon your check-out of each hotel. There will be a hold of 300 Euros per room for a 3-night stay at The Palace, a Luxury Collection Hotel, Madrid. There will be a hold of 600 Euros per room for a 4-night stay at the Hotel Arts Barcelona. We do not recommend you use a debit card for this. The hold on your credit card may not be removed until several business days following your departure from the hotel. You will need to present your passports upon check-in at Hotel Arts Barcelona so that the hotel can scan them.

## **Currency/Credit Cards**

Please check online prior to travel for the most current exchange rate between the Euro and the U.S. Dollar.

Exchange rates and foreign transaction fees are determined by your credit card company or bank. We recommend you check with your credit card company or bank to determine the current fees and exchange rates that they charge. In addition, it is a good idea to notify your bank and credit card companies of your travel plans so that your transactions are approved. You may want to explore obtaining a credit card that does not charge a foreign transaction fee, which is typically 3% of the charge amount.



## **Gratuities / Tipping**

All gratuities for A-O sponsored events, housekeeping, and portage at both hotels have been covered by Auto-Owners Insurance. No additional gratuities are necessary; however, they can be given at your own discretion. You will be responsible for any gratuities for services that you obtain on your own.

When dining outside of the hotel, tips are not usually expected or included in the bill and leaving a tip is a courteous gesture that shows that you appreciated their help. The maximum you would want to leave is 10% of the check and as always it would be appreciated if it was in cash.

## **Pro Tip: Currency and Tipping**

- Most businesses including taxis in Spain take credit cards so very little cash is needed while in Spain if you have credit cards.
- Some small businesses may not take American Express cards.
- Tips in cash are appreciated.
- It is the Spanish culture to treat dining as a social event or experience. Waiters/waitresses will not bring the check unless you ask for it. They are also trained not to disturb you, so you may need to flag them down if you want a refill or order additional items or drinks. So don't let this influence you on tipping!



## Pro Tip: Local Transportation

- In Madrid local rideshare apps are available using Uber or Cabify.
- You will not be able to hail a cab very easily in Barcelona. We suggest downloading the FREENOW app that works like Uber and use this to order a taxi when needed. The Cabify rideshare app is another option.

## Cell Phone/Data Service

Prior to using cell phones abroad, please contact your cell phone service provider for their availability, rates, roaming fees and charges related to international service. You can turn off the cellular data on your phone and only use the complimentary Wi-Fi at the hotels to access the A-O Trips Spain App for this trip.

## Internet

High-speed wireless internet access is complimentary throughout both hotels.

## Time Zones

Spain is on Central European Summer Time (*CEST*) during the A-O Trips program, which is six hours ahead of the U.S. Eastern Daylight Savings Time.

## Climate

### For Madrid:

September Averages:  
82° High / 59° Low;

October Averages:  
70° High / 51° Low;

### For Barcelona:

September Averages:  
79° High / 64° Low;

October Averages:  
72° High / 58° Low;

## Language

There are four official languages spoken in Spain. While most people are familiar with Castilian Spanish, it may surprise you to learn that there are three other official languages spoken throughout the country – Catalan, Basque (*Euskera*) and Galician. English is widely spoken in the larger cities like Madrid, Barcelona, etc.

## Electrical Appliances

Most computers and phone chargers (*that can handle the 230 Volt electrical current*) can use Spain plugs with a Type F, or C (2 round pins) adapter. Other US appliances such as hairdryers and curling irons will need a converter to convert the 230 Volt electrical current to 110 V plus an adapter to fit in the Spain electrical outlet.

## Emergency Assistance

In the event there is an emergency at any time during your stay at the hotel, dial “0” for assistance. Also, whenever possible, please notify the A-O Trips travel staff if you have an emergency or medical issue that arises during your trip.

## Prescription Medication

It is recommended that all prescription medications be transported in the original bottles and carried on the plane with you and not packed in your checked luggage. Please bring enough of a supply to last for the duration of your trip, as a refill may not be available. It is strongly recommended that you bring a copy of your doctor’s prescription for all medications should security personnel have any questions, or to satisfy foreign authorities.

## Duty Free Exemption

You may bring back gifts or articles up to a value of \$800 USD per person into the USA without incurring customs duty. Items should be readily available for customs inspection if requested. You may include up to two liters of alcohol within this \$800 USD exemption.

It is recommended that you keep all receipts together and with you in your carryon bag for any items purchased while in Spain. This will make completing the customs forms easier. For more information on U.S. customs regulations, please refer to the following [cbp.gov](https://www.cbp.gov) websites:

**[cbp.gov/travel/us-citizens/know-before-you-go/shopping-abroad-duty-freegifts-household-items](https://www.cbp.gov/travel/us-citizens/know-before-you-go/shopping-abroad-duty-freegifts-household-items)**

**[cbp.gov/travel/international-visitors/kbyg/types-exemptions](https://www.cbp.gov/travel/international-visitors/kbyg/types-exemptions)**

## Departure From Spain

Detailed information regarding your departure from Spain will be available onsite and updated on the A-O Trips App. Please be sure to settle your hotel account for incidental charges prior to your departure.

Please refer to the A-O Trips App for information regarding luggage and transportation to the airport.

## Contact Information

### **Auto-Owners Insurance Incentive Travel**

6101 Anacapri Boulevard, Lansing, MI 48917

Telephone: **800.346.0346** ext. **51793, 58708, or 50387**

Email: **[incentive.travel@aoins.com](mailto:incentive.travel@aoins.com)**

Trip Website: **[aotrips.com](http://aotrips.com)**

### **A-O Trips Travel Desk at Gavel International**

935 Lakeview Parkway, Suite 190

Vernon Hills, IL 60061

Telephone: **877.379.7101** or **816.334.0101**

Email: **[AOI2501@gaveledge.com](mailto:AOI2501@gaveledge.com)**

### **The Palace, A Luxury Collection Hotel, Madrid**

Plaza de las Cortes, 7, Madrid, Spain, 28014

Phone **+34 913-608000**

Website: **[marriott.com/en-us/hotels/madcl-the-palace-a-luxury-collection-hotel-madrid/overview/](http://marriott.com/en-us/hotels/madcl-the-palace-a-luxury-collection-hotel-madrid/overview/)**

### **Hotel Arts Barcelona**

Carrer de la Marina 19-21, 08005 Barcelona, Spain

Phone: **+34 93 221 1000**

Website: **[ritzcarlton.com/en/hotels/bcnrz-hotel-arts-barcelona/overview/](http://ritzcarlton.com/en/hotels/bcnrz-hotel-arts-barcelona/overview/)**



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