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Meals:

Breakfast: or *desayuno*, is the smallest meal of the day in Spain. A typical breakfast includes café con leche (strong coffee with milk), sweet rolls with jams or cheese, and fresh fruit. Sometimes small pastries called *magdalenas* are common.

Tapas: or small Spanish meals, are typically eaten after breakfast, but before lunch in Spain. Tapas usually include jumping around from restaurant to restaurant, ordering a drink and one small plate at each stop. Tapas are commonly eaten with one's hand and include some kind of meat, vegetable, or potato. [Popular Tapas](#)

Lunch: or *la comida* is the main meal of the day in Spain and is usually taken in the mid afternoon. Traditionally, a typical Spanish lunch involved multiple courses and accompanies a two to three hour break in the day (commonly between 2:00pm and 5:00pm). However, with modern metropolitans like Barcelona and Madrid, taking this amount of time of is becoming less common, and the large lunch has been replaced by a one-hour lunch break in the middle of the day. A Spanish lunch may include some form of meat or vegetable soup, a fresh fish or seafood course, a salad or vegetable medley, a dessert, and coffee.

Dinner: or *la cena*, is a much smaller meal than lunch in Spain, and is commonly eaten between the hours of 9:00pm and midnight. A typical dinner in Spain is light

and will usually consist of fresh fish or meat served with potatoes or rice. Other common dinners include omelets, salads, and light desserts.

Snacks: or *la merienda* is the common late afternoon snack in Spain. This fills the gap between the ending of lunch (3-5pm) and the start of dinner (9-11pm), and commonly includes bread with some form of spread, cheese, or meat. This meal is most common among children, who are very active after they are done at school.

After Dinner: it is common for Spaniards to stay out late into the evening after they finish *la cena*, especially during the summer months. These late nights are accompanied by an after midnight snack, which usually comes in the form of a churro (fried pastry) and a hot chocolate.

Spanish Meals

Frequently Used Foods:

- **Fruits and Vegetables:** orange, grape, apple, strawberry tomato, melon, lemon, fig, peach, cherry, zucchini, chili peppers, cucumber, olive, garlic, lettuce, broccoli, cauliflower, red and orange peppers, potato, onion
- **Protein:** pork, chicken, egg, cod, anchovy, shrimp, squid, octopus, mussel, beef
- **Spices:** paprika, wine, parsley, rosemary, thyme, oregano, salt, pepper, saffron, red pepper, cinnamon, bay leaf, coriander
- **Oils/Misc:** olive oil, cheese, rice, chocolate, almonds

Ten Regional Favorite Dishes With Links to Interesting Recipes:

- **Paella:** ([recipe](#)) ([images](#))
- **Gambas al Ajillo:** ([recipe](#)) ([images](#))
- **Tortilla Espanola:** ([recipe](#)) ([images](#))
- **Gazpacho:** ([recipe](#)) ([images](#))

- **Patatas Bravas:** ([recipe](#)) ([images](#))
- **Pisto Manchego:** ([recipe](#)) ([images](#))
- **Polvorones:** ([recipe](#)) ([images](#))
- **Flan:** ([recipe](#)) ([images](#))
- **Pimientos Rellenos:** ([recipe](#)) ([images](#))
- **Lomo Adobado:** ([recipe](#)) ([images](#))

Religion: Roman Catholicism dominates the Spanish landscape, with almost 71% of all Spanish citizens identifying as Catholics.

National Holidays and Dietary Requirements:

- **Epiphany:** or *El Dia de los Reyes*, celebrates the day the magi, or Wisemen, arrived to worship and give gifts to the newborn baby Jesus. On the eve of January 6th, children will polish and leave their shoes out for the Kings' presents. Parades are also common during this holiday.
- **Labour day/ May Day:** celebrated on May 1st every year, Spanish Labor Day recognizes all of the social and economic achievements of the country. On this day, most schools, businesses, and transports are closed, and citizens commonly spend time with their family and go to the beach.
- **Assumption:** This holiday celebrates the Assumption of Mary and is recognized annually on August 15th. This is the principal feast day of the Virgin Mother Mary. There are many processions through the streets to honor the Virgin Mary, and a multitude of outdoor festivities take place. This is an extremely vibrant and colorful holiday in Spain.
- **Fiesta Nacional de Espana:** The National day of Spain is celebrated every year on October 12th and commemorates the anniversary of Columbus's first arrival in America. There are many festivals and national events during this holiday, highlighted by a military parade in Madrid. [additional information](#)

- **All Saints' Day:** This holiday is a chance for the citizens of Spain to recognize and honor lost family and friends. Celebrated annually on November 1st, this holiday also presents a chance for family to congregate and reminisce.

Etiquette: Like most other European countries, when eating with utensils, the knife stays in one hand and the fork in the other. More informal meals, including some forms of tapas, can be eaten by hand without the aid of utensils. When not eating, both hands should remain on the top of the table and visible. It is polite and customary to pass food to the left in Spain.

Food History: Spanish cuisine is both complex and regional because of the vast climate changes found throughout the country. Also, it has been shaped greatly by the country's position on the Iberian Peninsula. Greeks introduced the use of olives to the country, Phoenicians left their wide variety of sauces, and the Moors implemented the increased use of fruits, nuts, meats, and seasoning. This has created a vast landscape of Spanish cuisine, which combines intricate use of ingredients with a truly unique eating schedule.

Additional Information and Acknowledgements:

http://www.etiquettescholar.com/dining_etiquette/table-etiquette/europe-m_table_manners/spanish.html

<http://www.enforex.com/culture/history-spanish-food.html>