



A Dances played an important part in the ceremonial life of the Plains Indians. In this photo a Sioux man wears his ceremonial dance costume. His hair is adorned with feathers and a roach.

Latin, Black and Lovin' It Like That

Dr. Marta Moreno Vega

Showcasing African Cultural Heritage in the Americas

"Sometimes destiny takes you where you need to be."

By Dana Marniche

About a decade ago, the Latin television celebrity Cristina was made the promising new host of a television talk show on one of the major English speaking networks. She appeared before millions of American viewers, fair-skinned, blond, middle-aged and vivacious. Except for her accent she could have fit the stereotype of the all-American star. For those interested in diversity in American media it was exciting if unexpected, to see the unusual combination of a Latina hosting a national talk show meant for America's mainstream audience.

A few months or perhaps less, into the programming, however, Cristina made a horrendous faux pas. Someone must not have coached her very well about taboo topics, because she made the mistake of talking with one of her guests about how her grandmother used to talk about "the little black angels" around them.

One could almost hear the thousands of channels switching around the nation.

Didn't she know how most people were going to react hearing someone use the words "black" and "angel" in the same sentence? Wasn't she aware most white people were unable to conceive of a "black angel", let alone want to hear about one. Didn't she know she had just cursed at them. I remember thinking to myself, oh well, they won't be able to relate to her after this, a few more weeks and she'll be off the air. She was. Of course it could be said she was gone for other reasons. I'm not so sure though.

But, the ironic and precarious position of Latin ethnic and cultural identity in America has been on display in various ways since that time. Lately, there has been a Latin boom with some of the Latin world's top pop stars taking the stage and filling T.V. screens of American homes. Ricky Martin made his Latin and American fans swoon dancing the Rumba related to African deities and his most popular song is about a woman with skin "the color of mocha", although one would never be able to tell that from his video. Mocha, after all, would have been a judge too harsh, especially, though not exclusively, on the eyes of white America.

One who has been at the forefront of trying to amend stereotypes and misconceptions about Latin culture and bridge the man-made gap between acceptance and myth of the biological origin of Spanish-speakers in the Americas.

Dr. Marta Moreno Vega has been involved with the founding and leadership of cultural organizations related to Latino culture and the African Diaspora for 25 years. Just recently, she was asked to speak about African American issues of leadership for NASA. She spoke in terms of black leadership which has been used to organize communities of Africans in the Diaspora. Her organizations have



contributed considerably to the cultural enrichment and enlightenment of populations of New York City and the surrounding area. She is President of the Caribbean Cultural Center/African Diaspora Institute one of the cultural organizations she is responsible for founding. As a commentary in "Newsweek" aptly put it, "the center's soul is black pride - a lesson Vega learned at her mother's knee".

Interestingly, Marta's mother and father came from Puerto Rico to El Barrio in Upper Manhattan, where Marta was born, with "racial consciousness" already well-developed. As Marta tells it, her mother was always conscious of the complexities of the racial situation, having been born and raised in Puerto Rico, the fair-skinned daughter of a black man and a very fair woman who'd been thrown out of her own family for marrying a black Puerto Rican. The daughter of that union, Marta's mother, also married a black Puerto Rican. After marriage, her parents came to America and tried to get an apartment in an East Harlem neighborhood that was at the time largely Italian. Marta's mother often told the story of how when she went to sign the lease the landlord gladly gave it to her. "You

Showcasing African Cultural Heritage
cont'd

know she was big and fair-skinned, and they thought she was German or something". When her father showed up, the landlord tried to take the lease from them. The couple ended in having to pay several months rent in advance to keep the apartment.

Marta was thus taught from a very young age, the importance of her own black heritage and to be the very best at what she did. It was a young Marta who in her twenties founded Friends of El Museo Del Barrio which evolved into the "thriving museum of Puerto Rican life and culture" that it is today in Harlem. After getting her education in NYU as an art teacher, she taught in the public schools for a while. When she took off from work, to have her first son and thought she had had enough of teaching, she went looking in the New York Times classifieds. There she happened to see an ad seeking a director for the state-funded educational project, El Museo Del Barrio.

She applied and got the job. After a time, funding was withdrawn, but Marta and the other staff decided they were going to stay. "At the time there was that kind of pride in the 70's which said, we're black, we're Latino we want our institutions ... we didn't get paid for a year - but we were going to make sure there was El Museo for the children of East Harlem."

After a while she says funding started coming through. "It was startling because it hit a nerve, we had children coming from all over the city to El Museo. ...it had nothing to do with training, you know sometimes destiny takes you where you need to be".

Marta practices the African-based San Teriya religion, and is, in fact, a San Teriya priestess. She considers her practice integral and core to her identity. Although she wasn't brought

up in the religion, she remembers growing up with her father's mother having a sacred room and being surrounded by images of African deities. At that time she really didn't know what they were. As she developed through her cultural work with El Museo she began making the connections. "When you understand that you are a temple for the sacred, you understand that anything you do that is positive reinforces and enhances the spirituality within".

Speaking of the connection of the Spanish-speaking population to their African roots, Marta comments, "We all come out of a colonial experience. When Puerto Ricans first got here there wasn't a close identification with the African or African roots.... Its over time that it develops. The Dominican population is like the first generation Puerto Ricans were... In Santo Domingo, the government itself refuses to acknowledge blackness-like on the passports, but neither does Puerto Rico because Puerto Rico is a colony of the U.S., so, I mean, that's why I don't want to be simplistic. Now we have the second and third wave of young people (Puerto Rican) especially the hip-hop generation here, but I mean, that cross-over is tight. But that has taken two or three generations to develop...."

Racism she adds, is "very tight" in Puerto Rico. "If you go into many of the offices in Puerto Rico you won't see dark-skin Puerto Ricans. If a second or third generation goes to Puerto Rico they're discriminated against. They're American for one, and second they tend to be dark. You have a large population of dark-skinned Puerto Ricans in America. When you deal with administration in Puerto Rico you're generally dealing with very light-skin, blond-haired, blued-eyed people."

As for her cultural centers, the struggle for funding is on-going. "Its

been a struggle between elitist and generally European-centered art versus community, African, Native, Asian, Latino- centered art. It's a problem because the art is really elitist in this city and this nation. Its generally supported by the rich and those institutions because of their power are generally supported by government without a question mark. Community institutions are constantly at risk."

Marta Vega is a specialist in Yoruba belief systems in the Diaspora. She has a doctorate in Yoruba Philosophy from the African Studies Department founded by Dr. Asante at Temple University in Philadelphia. She's taught African religions at Rutgers in New Jersey and presently is a professor in the Black and Hispanic Studies Department of Baruch College. She's also a member of the New York State Task Force on High School Drop-Outs, the Schomburg Center for the Preservation of Black Culture and Friends of the African Street Festival in Brooklyn.

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GRACEFUL
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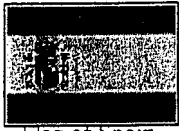
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3. Young Lords holding a press conference
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The Young Lords

The *Young Lords* party, a Puerto Rican revolutionary political organization, was formed in New York during the stininet of 1961) by a group of Puerto Rican college students who felt that they wanted to connect with the people they hail left behind in the gliet: to. "Their thirteen-point program said that they were "lighting for the liberation of all oppressed pcopl," Self-dcterminntion for ill] Latinos, ecptalily for women, community control of institutions, and opposition to the war in Vietnam were some of their issues. The Young Lords engaged in s(reet actions and organized school breakfast *programs*.



Flag of Spain



Si. Spain



Spain

Soain. Nationa Athem of -
'Royal March'

Spanish dance

SPAIN

The country of Spain has had a greater influence on the rest of the world than that of most countries. In the United States, for example, Hispanic, Americans--those whose culture, language, and ethnic identity are rooted in Spain--will

form the largest ethnic minority. Most Hispanic Americans trace their roots back to countries that were once Spain's New World colonies, such as the many countries of Central and South America, rather than directly to Spain itself. The lion's share of the Western Hemisphere is known as Latin America. Most of its people speak Spanish or Portuguese as a mother tongue and follow the precepts of the Roman Catholic church. This is not surprising when it is recalled that Spain and Portugal led the Europeans into the Age of Discovery and founded the first globe-circling empires.

In the 1490s Christopher Columbus colonized the Caribbean islands and set the stage for Hernando Cortez' conquest of Mexico in 1519-21. Francisco Pizarro's invasion of Peru followed in 1531-33. The opening in the 16th century of the route from Mexico across the Pacific to the Philippines placed the Spanish on the edge of Asia and in close competition with the Portuguese, who had come by way of their sea route around southern Africa's Cape of Good Hope, India. and through the Strait of Malacca. Andres de Urdaneta took advantage of the Pacific's westerly wind belt at about 42° N. latitude. This allowed Spain's galleons to return to Mexico directly from the Philippines rather than face typhoons and the perils of attempting to circumnavigate most of the globe. Earlier navigators had returned to Spain by way of the Indian and South Atlantic oceans. A lucrative trade, based on Mexican silver and Chinese silks and other luxuries, began to flourish, and Manila was founded in 1571. The Philippines remained a Spanish colony until 1898, when it passed to the United States as a result of the Spanish-American War.

During the early 1540s the area now known as the United States was explored by Hernando de Soto and Francisco Coronado. In 1565 St. Augustine, Fla., was founded to protect Spain's vital sea-lane, which ran via the northward flowing Florida Current and the Gulf Stream that parallel the coastline front southern Florida to North Carolina. In the latitude of North Carolina and Virginia, the treasure-laden galleons caught prevailing westerly winds, which carried them home to Cadiz on Spain's southern Atlantic coast. In 1598, almost a decade before the first English settlement at Jamestown, Va., Spanish pioneers established towns on the Rio Grande headwaters in the present state of New Mexico. Most of the original settlers in the area around Santa Fe were recruited in central Spain, especially in Andalusia and Castile.

While Spain's explorers and conquistadors raised their king's banner around the world, its priests labored among the native peoples to spread Christianity. The cross of Roman Catholicism was raised at countless missions throughout the far-flung Spanish

empire, and Spanish attitudes, values, and ideals were spread along with religion in a potent mix that still remains strong five centuries later.

The Spanish kings also became embroiled in European affairs in the effort to extend their country's political control and religious beliefs. Perhaps because Spain's power was spread so wide, its hold on the empire began to slip, and Spanish influence over the military and political affairs of Europe went into a decline that lasted into the mid-20th century.

LAND

Cadiz, Gulf of

Galicia

Guadalquivir

Spain - Regional Divisions
of

Spain is shaped like a gigantic bull's hide stretching in the sun between Europe and Africa. Spain's large area of 194,898 square miles (504,784 square kilometers) covers about five sixths of the Iberian Peninsula. In Western Europe, only France is larger. At its widest Spain stretches some 635 miles (1,022 kilometers) from east to west. From north to south the country is about 550 miles (885 kilometers) long.

Spain's longest coastline stretches for 1,700 miles (2,740 kilometers) along the Mediterranean Sea from the eastern end of the Pyrenees mountain chain to the Strait of Gibraltar. On the Atlantic Portugal shares the peninsula's coast with Spain. Between the Strait of Gibraltar and the border with southern Portugal at the Guadiana River, Spain faces an embayment of the Atlantic Ocean known as the Gulf of Cadiz. The ports of Huelva, Rota, and Cadiz are on this coast, and up the navigable Guadalquivir River is the ancient transportation center Seville. From the province of Galicia, located to the north of Portugal, Spain's coastline extends almost due eastward along the often stormy Bay of Biscay to terminate at the western end of the Pyrenees, which form the frontier with France.

Of all Europe's mountain ranges, the jagged and often snowcapped Pyrenees, 270 miles (435 kilometers) long, have functioned most effectively as a barrier to human movement. Unlike the Alps, the Pyrenees have no low foothills or hospitable valleys to ease access into and through their heights. Rather, the Pyrenees rise abruptly from the flanking plains of France and Spain with only steep gorges and steep-walled natural amphitheaters that lead to almost impassable lofty summits. The French peasant's adage, "Africa begins with the Pyrenees," is not without a large measure of truth in emphasizing the historic significance of the Pyrenees as a barrier in the development of Spain. In the words of the American historian Will Durant, Spain's mountains, particularly the Pyrenees, "were her protection and tragedy: they gave her comparative security from external attack, but hindered her economic advance, her political unity, and her participation in European thought." The continued political independence of the tiny principality of Andorra is largely a result of its remote location amid the Pyrenees between France and Spain.

Poets and writers from the time of the Romans to the present have likened Spain to a fortress or citadel. In part these metaphors highlight the remoteness from European influences that have marked Spanish history. They are most accurate when employed to describe Spain's vast central region, the Meseta, as in the following quotation from an official publication:

*By the very makeup of its land area
Spain is a castle, a fortress. Its
average altitude is only surpassed,
in Europe, by Switzerland. The land
is furrowed by high mountains which
leave between themselves and the sea
only narrow strips of lowlands.*

To gain an understanding of such a large and diverse country, it is necessary to examine Spain in terms of its major geographic regions. The first and largest of Spain's regions forms the heart of the Iberian Peninsula. Known as el Centro, or the Center, this region is dominated by the high, rugged plateau known as the Meseta. A thinly populated region, it occupies about half of Spain's total area and is home to only slightly more than a quarter of its population. Spain's remaining three regions occupy coastal belts that lie between the Centro-Meseta heartland and the seas washing the peninsula's three sides.

The region known as el Norte, or the North, stretches across northern Spain from the Atlantic's breakers on the west to the saw-toothed Pyrenees on the east. The Galician and Basque peoples of el Norte occupy slightly more than a tenth of the total area and number a fifth of Spain's total population.

Spain's long Mediterranean coast forms the Catalan-dominated region known as el Este, or the East. While it accounts for just under 15 percent of Spain's total area, el Este is home to nearly 30 percent of the population. Barcelona, Spain's second largest urban-industrial center, is located here.

The fourth and final regional division is el Sur, or the South. It is a land with coastal "windows" opening on both the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. Almost the whole of el Sur's territory is in the autonomous region of Andalusia. In area el Sur accounts for about 17 percent of Spain. The tiny Spanish possessions of Melilla and Ceuta, located opposite Andalusia on Morocco's Mediterranean coast, add only an insignificant 12 square miles (31 square kilometers) to the area of el Sur. Because el Sur lacks a great metropolitan urban complex, its population is slightly less than 18 percent of Spain's total.

Centro-Meseta

EM
Sierra de Guadarrama

Aragon

ma
Douro

Ebro River

New Castile

EM
Old Castile

The heart of Spain is the vast, high, central plateau region known as the Meseta. Framed by the Cantabrian Mountains on the north and the Sierra Morena ranges on the south, the Meseta occupies about half of Spain's land area. It is punctuated by several smaller mountain ranges that accentuate the Meseta's overall elevation and stark, windswept spaciousness. One of these ranges, the Sierra de Guadarrama, bisects the Meseta just to the north of Spain's centrally located capital, Madrid. (*See also* Madrid.)

Historically the northern portion of the Meseta-- north of the Sierra de Guadarrama and drained by the Douro River system--was known as Castilla la Vieja, or Old Castile. Today this is the modern Spanish province Castilla-Leon. The southern and slightly lower Meseta, once called Castilla la Nueva, or New Castile, is now known as Castilla-la Mancha. Aragon, another of the ancient regions that form modern Spain, embraces the northeastern flank of the Meseta and is drained by the Ebro River system.

The Meseta is one of the bleakest, least hospitable regions in Europe. To a large extent this is the result of the climate. Thanks to its large size, elevation, and surrounding mountain barriers, it tends to be continental in character. In winter, high atmospheric pressure develops over the cold elevated land. The resulting outflowing winds are dry and cold. In summer, wind directions change, but the inblowing winds bring little if any moisture, so drought conditions continue through the yearly cycle. An old Spanish proverb captures the essence of the Meseta's climate by describing Madrid as having "six months of winter and six months of hell" to round out the year.

The range of temperatures is also far more extreme on the Meseta than in the coastal regions. Summer days are hot, but when the sun sets, temperatures fall rapidly. In July the mean daily temperature ranges 30°F (-1°C) between high and low. The range from summer heat to winter cold is also great. Long spells of below-freezing temperatures are punctuated by lows that can dip to 15°F (-9°C). Ice-skating in Madrid's parks is not common but occurs occasionally. Highway traffic in both the plains and mountains of Old Castile is often seriously impeded by snowstorms.

The fierce summer heat and drought of the Meseta are broken only by occasional thunderstorms, so most crops require irrigation. Without irrigation the landscape is semidesert and good only for grazing. Browns and grays are the prevailing colors, and dust coats the countryside. A haze known as the *calina* often cuts visibility and adds to summer discomfort on the Meseta. It should come as no surprise that the Meseta is one of Europe's most sparsely populated regions. Only around the metropolis of Madrid is population density high. Over most of the Meseta the density is less than a third that of Spain as a whole.

El Norte

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Galicia

Vieo. Spain

El Ferrol del Caudillo.
Spain

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CantabriannMMountains

Although mountainous terrain causes problems for the people of Spain's Norte, the region as a whole is strikingly different from the Meseta. The climate is maritime, due to the proximity of the sea and prevailing air currents. Winters are mild and moist, while the warmer summers are equable and lack extremes. El Norte is a lush, green, forested land with considerable rainfall even in the summer months. Because of the prevailing westerly winds, winter months experience most of the more than 40 inches (102 centimeters) of annual life-sustaining precipitation.

In Galicia, in the northwest, the landscape is built on an ancient granite upland much broken by east-west faults. Many of the valleys formed by these faults have been flooded by the sea to form deep, steep-sided inlets that resemble fjords. Not caused by the erosion of continental glaciers, these scenic inlets are correctly called Has rather than fjords. This rfa coast has provided the Galicians excellent opportunities to supplement their diets and incomes through fishing. A large part of Spain's annual fish catch is landed at the Galician ports La Coruna and Vigo. Vigo served as a base for the Spanish Armada in the 16th century, when Spanish seapower held sway over the world.

Most Galicians were strongly pro-Francisco Franco during the dictator's regime. In part this is explained by the fact that he was born at the naval base town. El Ferrol, north of La Corufia. To honor the local hero. El Ferrol's name became El Ferrol del Caudillo (caudillo means "leader," or "chief." in Spanish).

To the east of Galicia the coastal provinces extend to the homeland of one of Europe's most distinctive linguistic groups--the Basques. The Cantabrian Mountains form the spine of this verdant region, which spreads wide as it approaches the Pvrenees. Pais Vasco, the province at the head of the Bay of Biscay, includes one of Spain's historic iron mining and industrial districts developed around Bilbao and San Sebastian.

FOOD

Malik

THOUGHT

El Este

93
Jucar River

Wares

Turia River

Valencia



The range of European
climates makes ...

The long, eastward-facing Mediterranean coast of Spain is world renowned as a resort area of attractive sunny beaches and gleaming modern tourist hotels. North of Barcelona the red crystalline rocks of the coastal mountains form the backdrop for the picturesque Costa Brava, a favorite beach resort area for sun-starved tourists from the countries of Northwestern Europe. Barcelona, Spain's major Mediterranean port and host city for the Olympic Games in 1992, is the heart of another of Spain's distinctive linguistic regions, Catalonia. (See also Barcelona.)

The climate and natural vegetation found in this part of Spain generally are characteristic of the Mediterranean Basin. The climate is known as dry-summer subtropical, or, in more popular terms, Mediterranean climate. It is a climate characterized by clear, dry, hot summers and moderately moist, mild winters. It is the type of climate found in central and southern California, central Chile, southernmost Africa, and southern Australia. The result of an unaltering wet-dry climatic rhythm is seen in almost every aspect of the landscape in this region of Spain.

The long summer drought excludes many of the plants common elsewhere in Europe. The natural vegetation here is made up of plant species that resist excessive moisture loss through evaporation. Some have thickened stems or bark, waxy coatings, or fine hairy coverings on leaves. Leaves are often small, and some are formed like thorns to discourage browsing animals. Succulent (water-storing) plants such as cacti also thrive in Mediterranean regions. Such hardy drought-resistant plants often form dense thickets called chaparral. (The leather leggings that ranch hands in the American Southwest wear for protection are called chaps from the word chaparral.)

Human activities are also geared to the annual alternation of wet and dry. Farmers plant and tend crops in the moist winter and harvest them in the dry heat of early summer. Sheep and cattle are moved to higher, cooler pastures in spring as the plains begin to dry up in the Mediterranean heat. In the past more than 77,000 miles (124,000 kilometers) of sheep trails crisscrossed Spain to provide routes for the moving herds. Today trucks and railways have replaced all but a few of the trails once followed by vast herds of sheep, cattle, horses, donkeys, and their drivers.

A 100-mile (160-kilometer) arc of the Spanish Mediterranean coast, roughly centered at Valencia, is famous as one of Southern Europe's garden spots. Known as La Huerta, this area supports a lucrative agriculture based on irrigation water provided by the three rivers that enter the sea here--the Mijares, the Turia, and the Jucar. In the midst of La Huerta is Spain's third largest city, Valencia. Much of its industrial activity is devoted to food processing, and its chief exports include the famous Valencia orange. (See also Valencia.)

South of Cabo de la Nao conditions become increasingly desertlike. Temperatures are high, and precipitation is so meager and erratic that even wheat fields must be irrigated to guarantee a

crop. Where irrigation water can be tapped, lush oases of crops--such as sugarcane, cotton, mulberries, citrus fruits, bananas, and dates--flourish. Water is severely limited, however, so most farmers must rely on such deep-rooted tree crops as figs, almonds, and olives and grape vines for their livelihood.

Offshore the Balearic Islands are culturally and commercially oriented to Barcelona. Tourism now dominates their economy, but market gardening and the production of wine and cheese continue to employ many island residents. (*See also Balearic Islands.*)

El Sur

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Andalusia

pffl
Ceuta

L i
Melilla

U J
Guadalquivir

O
Huelva. Spain

Minas de Riotinto. Spain

U J
Gibraltar. Strait of

El Sur is composed of the ancient region of Andalusia, plus two, tiny fragments of empire located across the Mediterranean on the shores of Africa--Ceuta and Melilla. The region has coastal access to both the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. The Mediterranean portion is a rugged, semiarid region that spreads between the Sierra Morena edge of the Meseta and the folded ranges of the Sierra Nevada. The Atlantic-facing part of the Spanish Sur, by way of contrast, is dominated by the country's most extensive area of plains--the Andalusian Lowland.

In past geologic periods this entire lowland was covered by the sea, but it is now filled with the silt and other alluvium brought by the waters of the Guadalquivir River system. At the river's mouth an extensive sandbar, known as the Arenas Gordas, caused the development of a huge lagoonlike marsh area known as Las Marismas. Large areas of swampland have been improved for rice growing here.

The whole of el Sur experiences the Mediterranean climate, and the region as a whole is one of the driest in Europe. Europe's highest temperature, 122°F (50°C), was recorded in Seville. The mountainous areas of el Sur usually intercept enough moisture on their western portions to permit wheat, olives, and grapes to flourish. To the east and inland, however, conditions quickly become desertlike, and irrigation is necessary to produce the region's great crops of oranges and other fruit. Many of the oranges grown in el Sur are of the small, bitter variety known as Seville, which is used for making marmalade. (*See also Seville.*)

The Sierra Morena is often considered to be a mountain range, but in fact it is the elevated and eroded outer edge of the Meseta. In certain of its areas rich ore deposits have been worked since at least the time of the ancient Carthaginians. The Minas de Riotinto district is the location of the historically famous Riotinto copper mines. Huelva became a major port handling the export of copper. Lead, mercury, and pyrites are also produced in the Riotinto mining district.

El Sur is the portion of Spain most like Africa, which lies only 8 miles (13 kilometers) away across the Strait of Gibraltar. The strait is one of the most-used sea-lanes in history, as it provides the only natural connection between the Mediterranean Sea and

the oceans of the world. The famous Rock of Gibraltar lies at the tip of a peninsula overlooking the Bay of Gibraltar and the Mediterranean end of the strait. The rock is a limestone mass that rises to nearly 1,400 feet (427 meters) above the water at its base, a formidable military position that has commanded access to the strait for centuries. (*See also* [Gibraltar.](#))

PEOPLE

[Music - Spanish Flamenco](#)

[Spanish folk music example](#)

Spain's land-bridge location between Europe and Africa and its long history have resulted in a great mixing of races and cultures. Most experts agree that the population of Spain is now basically homogeneous--both in terms of race and culture. The only distinctive minority group generally recognized as outside the racial-cultural mainstream of Spanish society is made up of Gypsies, many of whom still follow a nomadic life-style along the roads and highways. Fairly large communities of settled Gypsies are found in the cities of Murcia, Granada, Barcelona, and Madrid, where their distinctive music and vocal styles add considerable color to the entertainment scene.

Some Basque extremists claim an ethnic or racial uniqueness for their group to add fuel to political arguments for a separation from Spain. More objective observers tend to see only a linguistic difference as significantly setting the Basques apart from the rest of Spain's citizens. This is not to underemphasize the significance of language. Increasing autonomy for Spain's Basques and other linguistically distinctive groups has been the rule since the adoption of the constitution of 1978. (*See also* [Basques.](#))

Language

Modern standard Spanish, also referred to as Castilian, is spoken throughout Spain and is the official language. But Castilian is often a second language, not a mother tongue. In the North two regional languages are widely spoken. One, the language of the Basque people, is called Euskara. It appears to be one of Europe's oldest languages but is quite different from the Indo-European and Uralic languages spoken across the rest of Europe. The Euskara-speaking group spreads beyond the Pyrenees into the adjoining provinces of France. These people were living in this region at the western end of the mountains long before Spain and France gained their political identities. Basques considered this rugged area their homeland even before Rome extended its control into Gaul and beyond the Pyrenees. In spite of the fact that the constitution of 1978 made Euskara an official local language and afforded increased political autonomy to the Basque provinces, violent separatist extremists still carry on a campaign of terrorism against the central government of Spain.

In the region of Galicia a language known as Gallego is widely used, and also since 1978 it, too, has been recognized as an official language to be taught in schools. Modern Portuguese

evolved from Gallego, which resembles a cross between Portuguese and Spanish. From 80 to 85 percent of Galicia's 3 million inhabitants speak Gallego. Attempts have been made to standardize the spelling and grammar, but they have not been entirely successful. A kind of common Galician language is beginning to emerge as a spoken tongue in the province's larger towns.

Catalan is another language that enjoys a special status under Spain's constitution. It is a Romance language with a highly developed literature. Most of the 7 million people who speak Catalan are located in el Este. It is the official language in three communities--Catalonia, Valencia, and the Balearics. Catalan speakers also live in the eastern fringe of Aragon, Andorra, southwestern France, and parts of Sardinia. Catalonia's Generalitat (autonomous government) promotes its official language both at home and in other countries.

Religion

Most Spaniards are baptized, married, and buried as members of the Roman Catholic church. Under the 1978 constitution the church is no longer Spain's official or established faith, though financial support is still provided by the state. Because of the liberalized and increasingly urbanized way of life since the end of the Franco regime, there has been a decline in attendance at mass. The church's influence in Spanish society has declined sharply, though officially more than 94 percent of the population is reported as being Roman Catholic. The church supported the democratic movement and so helped foster the new attitude of tolerance and personal freedom found in present-day Spain. A major controversy between old-line religious conservatism and the move toward individual liberty came to a climax in 1981, when divorce was legalized. Movements seeking legalization of abortion are gaining strength.

Many of Spain's non-Catholic citizens are members of some Protestant church. Small Eastern Orthodox congregations are found along with Muslim and Jewish groups. Among non-Christians Jews form the major community.

Population Density

Spain is overwhelmingly urban, with 76 percent of its people living in towns and cities. This concentration of Spain's people heightens the impression of emptiness that so often is commented on by travelers, especially those who cross the Meseta.

Most of the Spanish portion of the Iberian Peninsula is very thinly populated. In the Centro-Meseta region only the areas around Madrid and Saragossa have pockets of dense settlement. The administrative district of Madrid is home for nearly 5 million, reporting 1,550 persons per square mile (600 per square

kilometer), while the density for Spain as a whole is 199 (77 per square kilometer).

Belts of dense settlement stretch along the Mediterranean from Barcelona, Valencia, Murcia, and Cartagena. Population density is relatively high over most of el Sur, where Seville and Malaga stand out as the largest centers. Across el Norte another ribbon of dense population stretches from the Galician ports, through the industrial centers of Santander and Bilbao, to San Sebastian in the Basque country.

From 1950 to the mid-1970s Spain was a major exporter of workers. The demand for low-cost labor in the booming economies of Western Europe beyond the Pyrenees was like an irresistible magnet for hundreds of thousands of Spaniards. Most of these migrants were from the Meseta. Only the Madrid region of the Meseta showed a healthy gain in population during the period. Here the growth of government services and other economic activities provided sought-after jobs. The recession that began to affect Western Europe in 1974 soon ended the flood of Spanish emigration. Some Western European governments, eager to shorten their unemployment lines, offered economic inducements to migrants to return home. As a result the flow of people from Spain to the rest of Europe is now minimal.

Culture

Dress. In the past, rural Spanish people wore distinctive regional costumes. Today most Spaniards dress in modern clothes and would be hard to pick out of a group on the basis of their clothing. The beret is still widely worn, especially in the Basque country, and Galician men still favor cloth caps. Jeans, T-shirts, and tennis shoes are now as popular on the Iberian Peninsula as everywhere else in Europe.

Cuisine. The Spanish, like other Mediterranean people, are particularly fond of sidewalk cafes, where a cup of coffee, glass of wine, or meal can be enjoyed with friends as the "world" passes by. Seafood is particularly favored on most Spanish menus. Olive oil is used abundantly in cooking, as are garlic, saffron, and peppers. Rice is popular, especially in el Sur and along the Mediterranean coast. Rice and pulses--dried beans, lentils, and chick peas--cooked with fish, chicken, or pork are basics in Spanish cuisine.



For Spaniards, bullfighting is a test ...

Bullfighting. One thing that sets the Spanish apart from most Europeans living beyond the Pyrenees is their national spectacle of bullfighting. Every city and most towns of any size boast a bullring, where the crowds cheer their favorite but jeer the inept matador, or bullfighter, as he faces his large-horned adversary. Many Northern Europeans are critical of bullfighting and condemn it as a cruel blood sport. Most Spaniards, however, do not see it this way. To them bullfighting is an exciting test of bravery, skill, and grace. In terms of audience size, soccer fans now rival bullfight audiences. (*See also Bullfighting.*)

Gambling. In the mid-1980s government-run lotteries triggered a craze for gambling that caused a journalist in 1988 to write that "Spaniards have gone gambling-mad." In 1987 a record-breaking 2.75 trillion pesetas (about 24.5 billion dollars) was staked, a figure almost twice that of 1982. Government-run lotteries, casino gambling, football pools, horse racing, bingo, and slot machines are proliferating in the liberal post-Franco atmosphere of today's Spain.

In an effort to help the handicapped, Spanish lottery tickets are sold only by registered blind persons. They are a familiar sight on main street corners of every Spanish town. Spanish television advertising features flashy campaigns to boost sales. Because as much as 30 percent of lottery revenues go into the national treasury, the Spanish government backs the gambling craze.



One of Spain's prominent painters of ...

Ashk
9-1
Picasso

Visual arts. Beauty literally crowds Spain's great museums, cathedrals, and monasteries. Spanish kings collected masterpieces of art from all over Europe, but none surpassed the great works of Spain's own painters--Bartolome Murillo, Diego Velasquez, and Francisco de Goya. El Greco, who was born in Greece, is also considered a Spanish painter because he did his greatest work in Toledo. Prominent Spanish-born painters of the 20th century include Pablo Picasso, Joan Miro, and Salvador Dali. The Museum of the Prado in Madrid is one of the great art museums of the world. (*See also Painting: Dali; Goya; Greco; Miro; Murillo; Picasso; Velasquez.*)