SPAIN

HISTORY

Spain's story is one of many peoples. Romans, Muslim rulers and Christian kingdoms each built here before Spain became one country.



First Peoples and Romans

More than 14,000 years ago, people painted bison on the walls of Altamira Cave in the north. Later, Iberians and Celts lived in villages across the land. In 218 BC, Roman armies arrived. They fought the local peoples for about 200 years and won. The Romans called the land Hispania. They built roads, bridges, cities and an **aqueduct** at Segovia. Their language, Latin, grew into Spanish.



Al-Andalus

In 711, Muslim armies from North Africa crossed the Strait of Gibraltar and beat the Visigoth king who ruled Spain. They called the land al-Andalus. Córdoba (KOR-doh-bah) became one of the biggest cities in Europe, with a great mosque, libraries and schools. Muslims, Christians and Jews lived there. Farmers brought rice, oranges and new ways to water their fields.

Spain Becomes One Country

Christian kingdoms in the north, such as Castile and Aragon, fought for hundreds of years to win back land in the south. In 1469, Queen Isabella of Castile married King Ferdinand of Aragon, and in 1479 their **kingdoms** were joined. In 1492, their armies took Granada, the last Muslim kingdom. That same year, they ordered Jews to become Christian or leave Spain.

A Worldwide Empire

Also in 1492, Christopher Columbus sailed west for Isabella and Ferdinand and reached the Americas. Spain built an **empire** in the Americas and the Philippines. Ships brought silver and gold back to Spain. In the colonies, many Native people were made to work, and enslaved Africans were brought to farms and mines. Spain ended slavery in its last colonies in 1886.

Wars and Change

In 1808, a French army led by Napoleon took over Spain. Spaniards fought back with help from Britain and Portugal, and the French left in 1814. Most of Spain's colonies in the Americas won their independence by the 1820s. In 1898, Spain lost the Spanish-American War. It gave up Cuba, and Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines went to the United States. From 1936 to 1939, Spain fought a civil war. General Francisco Franco's side won, and he ruled until he died in 1975.

Modern Spain

In 1978, Spain wrote a new constitution and became a **democracy** with a king. In 1986, it joined the group of countries that became the European Union. In 1992, Barcelona hosted the Summer Olympics and Seville held a world's fair. Today, Spain has 17 regions that run many of their own affairs. Besides Spanish, many people speak Catalan, Basque or Galician.

SPAIN THROUGH TIME

218 BC	711	1238	1479	1492	1808	1898	1936	1978
Romans arrive	Muslim armies arrive	Work begins on the Alhambra	Castile and Aragon join	Granada falls, Columbus sails	France takes over Spain	Spanish-American War	Civil war begins	New constitution

PEOPLE TO KNOW

Isabella I	Queen who sent Columbus west
Juan Sebastián Elcano	Finished the first trip around the world
Miguel de Cervantes	Wrote the novel Don Quixote
Diego Velázquez	Painter for the king's court
Pablo Picasso	Painter who helped invent cubism

WORDS TO KNOW

aqueduct	a bridge or channel that carries water
kingdom	a land ruled by a king or queen
empire	many lands and peoples ruled by one government
democracy	a government where people vote for leaders