



Know  
Before  
You  
Go

## SPAIN

# A Guide to Keep You Safe Abroad

Provided by Sexual Assault Support and Help for Americans Abroad (SASHAA)

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**SASHAA**  
Sexual Assault Support &  
Help for Americans Abroad

Let's be perfectly clear, the number one way to prevent sexual assault is to **not rape**. While the responsibility of ending sexual gender-based violence is on the perpetrators, this guide will offer general safety tips, country-specific information, and resources to help prevent and prepare travelers for the possibility of sexual assault abroad.

## GENERAL SAFETY TIPS:

1. Use the **buddy system** and travel with friends!
2. Be aware of **social and cultural norms**. For example, looking at someone in the eyes when you speak to them is perfectly normal in the U.S., but in another country that could signify you're interested in the person.
3. **Recognize controlling behavior** when entering a relationship. Most rape survivors recall feeling "uncomfortable" about some of their partner's behaviors such as degrading jokes/language or refusal to accept "no" as an answer, whether in a sexual context or otherwise.<sup>2</sup>
4. **Avoid secluded places** where you could be more vulnerable. Meet new people in public spaces and let a trusted friend know where you'll be beforehand.
5. **Trust your gut**. Many victims have a "bad feeling" right before an assault takes place.



## ALCOHOL AND DRUG AWARENESS:

- Always be sure to watch your drink being poured and carry it yourself, even to the bathroom.
- Be aware of "drug-facilitated sexual assault drugs," also referred to as 'roofies' or 'club drugs,' which may turn your drink bright blue, cloudy, or slightly salty. Effects such as impaired judgment, lost sense of sight, sound, or consciousness can be felt within 15 minutes and up to 4 hours.<sup>3</sup>
- Spain's legal drinking age is 18. Wine can be seen at the dinner table with every meal and drinking is a societal norm. Approximately 1.5 million people in Spain drink over the recommended amount of alcohol. Drinking has become a problem with health and safety.<sup>4</sup>

## CULTURAL INFORMATION:

**Major Religions:** Spain is a predominantly Catholic nation with 94% of the population identifying as catholic and 6% as other.<sup>5</sup>

**Legal System:** The Spanish legal system is a civil law system. The three main codes in Spain are: Civil Code, Criminal Code and Commercial Code.<sup>6</sup>

**Social/Cultural Norms:** In Spain people tend to stand closer to one another while talking and kiss on the cheek when greeting each other. Traditionally, men in Spain have been known for their more forward, macho, and sometimes chauvinistic behavior towards women.<sup>7</sup> Spaniards tend to "dress-up" more than Americans. Although dress code varies by region, people in small towns dress much more conservatively than those in urban areas.<sup>8</sup>

**Gender Equality:** The status of women in Spain is similar to the status of women in the United States. A 2015 survey by the World Economic Forum ranked Spain 25th out of 142 countries in terms of gender equality (compared to the United States which ranked 28th).<sup>9</sup>



## Sexual Assault and the Law: Spanish Context

Article 179 of Spain's Criminal Code separately defines rape as: "When the sexual assault consists of vaginal, anal or oral penetration, or inserting body parts or objects into either of the former two orifices, the offender shall be convicted of rape with a sentence of imprisonment from six to 12 years."<sup>10</sup> Sexual assault excluding rape is defined separately by article 178. In short, **any sexual contact obtained without permission is punishable under Spanish law.**<sup>10</sup>

### If You Experience Sexual Assault...

Don't blame yourself! **Sexual assault is never the fault of the victim.** You may be unsure of how to proceed, and that's okay. First, consider taking the following actions:

1. If you are in a safe place, **call someone you trust** to be with you. If you are not safe, call someone you trust to come and get you.
2. Do **self-collection of evidence**. Put all of the clothes you were wearing, bed sheets, and so on in a paper bag. If you have any injuries, **take pictures**. If there is semen present, collect what you can in a hotel glass or cup and put it in the paper bag.
3. **Call a SASHAA advocate** internationally toll free, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They can help you through the ordeal, honoring your decisions. (See Resources)

### Medical Care and Reporting Sexual Assault in Spain

If you decide to report your assault to the police, an English interpreter will be provided upon request. Note that reporting your assault to the police does not mean you will necessarily have to prosecute your perpetrator. The police will then direct you to a hospital that offers forensic examinations by specially trained medical personnel. The medical examination will involve a pelvic exam, genital swabs, and the taking of hair fingernail scrapings, blood, and saliva samples. If you are traveling alone, you can contact the U.S. Embassy and to have an officer accompany you for the medical examination (See Resources).<sup>11</sup>

#### LGBTQ VICTIM CONCERNS



Spain has a strongly supported LGBTQ community and in a 2013 Pew Research Center Poll, Spain had the highest positive response (88% yes) to the question "should society accept homosexuality?" Both same-sex marriage and homosexuality is legal in the country. Furthermore, discrimination against LGBTQ individuals is illegal. It is extremely safe for LGBTQ victims to report their sexual assault in Spain.<sup>12</sup>

#### POST EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS, EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION, AND ABORTION

##### Q. Are post exposure prophylaxis and emergency contraception available?

**A:** Yes, post exposure prophylaxis is available at any hospital emergency department.<sup>13, 14</sup> Emergency contraception can be obtained without a prescription at a pharmacy for about 19 euros.<sup>15, 16</sup>

##### Q: Is abortion legal in Spain?

**A:** Yes, as of 2010 abortion is legal regardless of circumstances up to 14 weeks of pregnancy.<sup>17</sup>

## Resources

### SASHAA

#### SASHAA International Crisis Line:

To call our confidential, toll-free, International Crisis Line first dial the country specific AT&T access code for **Spain: 900-99-0011**. Then, at the prompt, enter our phone number: **866-USWOMEN (866-879-6636)**.

#### Crisis Email:

To reach a SASHAA advocate, you can email us at [crisis@866uswomen.org](mailto:crisis@866uswomen.org). All crisis emails will be responded to within 24 hours. However, if you need to get in touch with us immediately, please call the international toll-free crisis line.

#### Live Chat:

SASHAA online chat services are available 24/7 at our website <https://sashaa.org>.

### U.S. EMBASSIES/CONSULATES

#### U.S. Embassy Madrid

Calle Serrano 75 , 28006 Madrid

Tel: 91-587-2240

24-Hour Emergency Line: 91-587-2200

Email: [askacs@state.gov](mailto:askacs@state.gov)

#### U.S. Consulate General Barcelona

Paseo Reina Elisenda de Montcada 23-25

08034 Barcelona

Tel: +(34) (93) 280-2227

Email: [BarcelonaACS@state.gov](mailto:BarcelonaACS@state.gov)

### HOSPITALS

#### Barcelona:

##### Hospital Universitari de Bellvitge

Carrer de la Feixa Llarga, s/n, 08907

L'Hospitalet de Llobregat, Barcelona, Spain

Tel: +34 93 260 76 00

##### Hospital Plato

Carrer Plató 21 Barcelona 08006, CIF G-60.213.717

Tel: 933 069 900

#### Cordoba:

Hospital Universitario Reina Sofía.

Menéndez Pidal, s/n 14004 Córdoba

Tel: +34 957 010 001

#### Madrid:

##### Hospital Universitario La Paz

Pº de la Castellana, 261, 28046

Tel: +34 017 277 000

##### Hospital Universitario San Carlos

Calle del Prof Martín Lagos, s/n, 28040 Madrid

Tel: +34 91 330 30 00

##### Fundación Hospital Alcorcón

Calle Budapest 1, Alorcon

Tel: +34 91-621-24-00

### VICTIM ASSISTANCE

#### Associació Assistència dones Agredides Sexualment (AADAS)

Tel: 93-487-57-60

Email: [informacion@aadas.e.telefonica.net](mailto:informacion@aadas.e.telefonica.net)

Website: [www.aadas.org.es](http://www.aadas.org.es)

#### Centro de Asistencia a Víctimas de Agresiones Sexuales:

Madrid: Calle de Alcalá, 124, 1º A, 28009

Tel: +34 915 74 01 10

València: Carrer del Convent de Santa Clara, 12

Tel: +34 963 94 30 69

#### Instituto de la Mujer de Extremadura

Calle Adriano, 4, 06800 - Mérida

Helpline for victims of gender violence: 016

#### Andalusian Institute for Women

Calle Dona Maria Coronel, 6 41003 Sevilla

24 hour helpline: 900-200-999

Email: [consulta.iam@juntadeandalucia.es](mailto:consulta.iam@juntadeandalucia.es)

### POLICE

General emergency number: **112**

Ambulancia (ambulance): **061**

*\*To file a police report call **902.102.112** and you will be directed to the nearest police station by an English operator.*

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