



Ceuta

Ceuta (UK: /ˈsʃuːtə/, US: /ˈseɪuːtə/,^{[5][6]} Spanish: [ˈθewta, ˈsewta] [ⓘ]; Arabic: سَبْتَة, romanized: *Sabtah*) is an autonomous city of Spain on the North African coast. Bordered by Morocco, it lies along the boundary between the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. Ceuta is one of the special member state territories of the European Union. It was a regular municipality belonging to the province of Cádiz prior to the passing of its Statute of Autonomy in March 1995,^[7] as provided by the Spanish Constitution, henceforth becoming an autonomous city.

Ceuta, like Melilla and the Canary Islands, was classified as a free port before Spain joined the European Union.^[8] Its population is predominantly Christian and Muslim, with a small minority of Sephardic Jews and Sindhi Hindus, from Pakistan.^[9]

Spanish is the official language, while Darija Arabic is also a well-spoken language there.

Names

The name **Abyla** has been said to have been a Punic name ("Lofty Mountain"^[10] or "Mountain of God") for Jebel Musa,^[11] the southern Pillar of Hercules.^[12] The name of the mountain was in fact *Habenna* (Punic: 𐤇𐤁𐤍𐤏, *ḥn*, "Stone" or "Stele") or *ʿAbin-ḥīq* (𐤀𐤁𐤓𐤏𐤇𐤕, *ḥnḥq*, "Rock of the Bay"), about the nearby Bay of Benzú.^[13] The name was hellenized variously as *Ápini* (Ancient Greek: Ἄπινι),^[13] *Abýla* (Ἀβύλα), *Abýlē* (Ἀβύλη), *Ablýx* (Ἀβλύξ), and *Abilē Stēlē* (Ἀβίλη Στήλη, "Pillar of Abyla")^[12] and in Latin as *Abyla Mons* ("Mount Abyla") or *Abyla Columna* ("the Pillar of Abyla").

The settlement below Jebel Musa was later renamed for the seven hills around the site, collectively referred to as the "Seven Brothers"^[14] (Ancient Greek: Ἑπτάδελφοι, romanized: *Heptádelphoi*;^[15] Latin: *Septem Fratres*).^[16] In particular, the Roman stronghold at the site took the name "Fort at the Seven Brothers" (*Castellum ad Septem Fratres*).^[12] This was gradually shortened to Septem^[17] (Σέπτον *Sépton*) or, occasionally, **Septum**^[18] or **Septa**.^[19] These clipped forms continued as Berber *Sebta* and Arabic *Sabtan*^[14] or *Sabtah* (سبته), which themselves became *Ceuta* in Portuguese (pronounced [ˈseɥtɐ]) and Spanish (locally pronounced [ˈseɥta]).

History

Ancient

<div> <div></div> <div>Ceuta</div> <div>سَبْتَة</div> </div>	
Autonomous city	
<div> <div></div> <div>View of Ceuta</div> </div>	
<div> <div></div> <div>Royal Walls</div> </div>	<div> <div></div> <div>Palace of the Assembly</div> </div>
<div> <div></div> <div>Flag</div> </div>	<div> <div></div> <div>Coat of arms</div> </div>
<div> <div></div> <div>Location of Ceuta in Spain</div> <div>Coordinates: 35°53′18″N 5°18′56″W</div> </div>	
Country	 Spain
First settled	1st millennium BC
End of Muslim rule	14 August 1415
Ceded to Spain	4 August 1578
Autonomy status	14 March 1995
Founded by	Carthaginians
Government <div></div>	
 • Type	Autonomous city
 • Body	Council of Government



Phoenician archeological site, dated to the 7th century BC, next to the Cathedral of Ceuta

Controlling access between the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, the Strait of Gibraltar is an important military and commercial chokepoint. The Phoenicians realized the extremely narrow isthmus joining the Peninsula of Almina to the African mainland made Ceuta eminently defensible and

established an outpost there early in the 1st millennium BC. The Greek geographers record it by variations of *Abyla*, the ancient name of nearby Jebel Musa. Beside Calpe, the other Pillar of Hercules now known as the Rock of Gibraltar, the Phoenicians established Kart at what is now San Roque, Spain. Other good anchorages nearby became Phoenician and then Carthaginian ports at what are now Tangiers and Cádiz.

After Carthage's destruction in the Punic Wars, most of northwest Africa was left to the Roman client states of Numidia and—around Abyla—Mauretania. Punic culture continued to thrive in what the Romans knew as "Septem". After the Battle of Thapsus in 46 BC, Caesar and his heirs began annexing North Africa directly as Roman provinces but, as late as Augustus, most of Septem's Berber residents continued to speak and write in Punic.

Caligula assassinated the Mauretanian king Ptolemy in AD 40 and seized his kingdom, which Claudius organized in AD 42, placing Septem in the province of Tingitana and raising it to the level of a colony. It subsequently was Romanized and thrived into the late 3rd century, trading heavily with Roman Spain and becoming well known for its salted fish. Roads connected it overland with Tingis (Tangiers) and Volubilis. Under Theodosius I in the late 4th century, Septem still had 10,000 inhabitants, nearly all Christian citizens speaking African Romance, a local dialect of Latin.^[20]

Medieval

Vandals, probably invited by Count Boniface as protection against the empress dowager, crossed the strait near Tingis around 425 and swiftly overran Roman North Africa. Their king, Gaiseric, focused his attention on the rich lands around Carthage; although the Romans eventually accepted his conquests and he continued to raid them anyway, he soon lost control of Tingis and Septem in a series of Berber revolts. When Justinian decided to reconquer the Vandal lands, his victorious general Belisarius continued along the coast, making Septem a westernmost outpost of the Byzantine Empire around 533. Unlike the former ancient Roman administration, however, Eastern Rome did not push far into the hinterland and made the more defensible Septem their regional capital in place of Tingis.

Epidemics, less capable successors and overstretched supply lines forced a retrenchment and left Septem isolated. It is likely that its count (comes) was obliged to pay homage to the Visigoth Kingdom in Spain in the early 7th century. There are no reliable contemporary accounts of the end of the Islamic conquest of the Maghreb around 710. Instead, the rapid Muslim conquest of Spain produced romances concerning Count Julian of Septem and his betrayal of Christendom in revenge for the dishonor that befell his daughter at King Roderick's court. Allegedly with Julian's encouragement and

• Mayor-President	<u>Juan Jesús Vivas</u> (PP)
Area	
• Total	18.5 km ² (7.1 sq mi)
• Land	18.5 km ² (7.1 sq mi)
• Rank	18th
Elevation	10 m (30 ft)
Highest elevation	349 m (1,145 ft)
Population (2018) ^[1]	
• Total	85,144
• Rank	19th
• Density	4,600/km ² (12,000/sq mi)
• Rank	2nd
Demonyms	Ceutan <i>ceutí</i> (es) <i>caballa</i> ("Atlantic mackerel", colloquial) ^{[2][3]}
GDP ^[4]	
• Total	€1.907 billion (2022)
• Per capita	€23,073 (2022)
Time zone	UTC+01:00 (CET)
• Summer (DST)	UTC+02:00 (CEST)
ISO 3166 code	ES-CE
Postal code	51001–51005
Official language	<u>Spanish</u>
Parliament	<u>Assembly of Ceuta</u>
Congress	1 deputy (out of 350)
Senate	2 senators (out of 264)
Currency	<u>Euro</u> (€) (EUR)
Website	<u>www.Ceuta.es</u> (<u>https://www.w.ceuta.es/ceuta/</u>)



The Arab Baths of Ceuta, built between the 11th and 13th centuries

instructions, the Berber convert and freedman Tariq ibn Ziyad took his garrison from Tangiers across the strait and overran the Spanish so swiftly that both he and his master Musa bin Nusayr fell afoul of a jealous caliph, who stripped them of their wealth and titles.

After the death of Julian, sometimes also described as a king of the Ghomara Berbers, Berber converts to Islam took direct control of what they called Sebta. It was then destroyed during their great revolt against the Umayyad Caliphate around 740. Sebta subsequently remained a small village of Muslims and Christians surrounded by ruins until its resettlement in the 9th century by Mâjakas, chief of the Majkasa Berber tribe, who started the short-lived Banu Isam dynasty.^[21] His great-grandson briefly allied his tribe with the Idrisids, but Banu Isam rule ended in 931^[22] when he abdicated in favor of Abd ar-Rahman III, the Umayyad ruler of Córdoba, Spain.



The Marinid Walls, built by Abu Sa'id Uthman II in 1328

Chaos ensued with the fall of the Caliphate of Córdoba in 1031. Following this, Ceuta and Muslim Iberia were controlled by successive North African dynasties. Starting in 1084, the Almoravid Berbers ruled the region until 1147, when the Almohads conquered the land. Apart from Ibn Hud's rebellion in 1232, they ruled until the Tunisian Hafsids established control. The Hafsids' influence in the west rapidly waned, and Ceuta's inhabitants eventually expelled them in 1249. After this, a period of political instability persisted, under competing interests from the Marinids and Granada as well as autonomous rule under the native Banu al-Azafi. The Fez finally conquered the region in 1387, with assistance from Aragon.

Portuguese

On the morning of 21 August 1415, King John I of Portugal led his sons and their assembled forces in a surprise assault that would come to be known as the Conquest of Ceuta. The battle was almost anticlimactic, because the 45,000 men who traveled on 200 Portuguese ships caught the defenders of Ceuta off guard and suffered only eight casualties. By nightfall the town was captured. On the morning of 22 August, Ceuta was in Portuguese hands. Álvaro Vaz de Almada, 1st Count of Avranches was asked to hoist what was to become the flag of Ceuta, which is identical to the flag of Lisbon, but in which the coat of arms derived from that of the Kingdom of Portugal was added to the center; the original Portuguese flag and coat of arms of Ceuta remained unchanged, and the modern-day Ceuta flag features the configuration of the Portuguese shield.



Representation of Prince Henry the Navigator during the Conquest of Ceuta in azulejos at the São Bento railway station

John's son Henry the Navigator distinguished himself in the battle, being wounded during the conquest. The looting of the city proved to be less profitable than expected for John I, so he decided to keep the city to pursue further enterprises in the area.^[23]

From 1415 to 1437, Pedro de Meneses became the first governor of Ceuta.

The Marinid Sultanate started the 1419 siege but was defeated by the first governor of Ceuta before reinforcements arrived in the form of John, Constable of Portugal and his brother Henry the Navigator, who were sent with troops to defend Ceuta.



1572 depiction of Ceuta

Under King John I's son, Duarte, the colony at Ceuta rapidly became a drain on the Portuguese treasury. Trans-Saharan trade journeyed instead to Tangier. It was soon realized that without the city of Tangier, possession of Ceuta was worthless. In 1437, Duarte's brothers Henry the

Navigator and Fernando, the Saint Prince persuaded him to launch an attack on the Marinid sultanate. The resulting Battle of Tangier (1437), led by Henry, was a debacle. In the resulting treaty, Henry promised to deliver Ceuta back to the Marinids in return for allowing the Portuguese army to depart unmolested, which he reneged on.

Possession of Ceuta indirectly led to further Portuguese expansion. The main area of Portuguese expansion, at this time, was the coast of the Maghreb, where there was grain, cattle, sugar, and textiles, as well as fish, hides, wax, and honey.^[24]

Ceuta had to endure alone for 43 years, until the position of the city was consolidated with the taking of Ksar es-Seghir (1458), Arzila and Tangier (1471) by the Portuguese.

The city was recognized as a Portuguese possession by the Treaty of Alcáçovas (1479) and by the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494).

In the 1540s the Portuguese began building the Royal Walls of Ceuta as they are today including bastions, a navigable moat and a drawbridge. Some of these bastions are still standing, like the bastions of Coraza Alta, Bandera and Mallorquines.^[25]

Luís de Camões lived in Ceuta between 1549 and 1551, losing his right eye in battle, which influenced his work of poetry *Os Lusíadas*.

Union between Portugal and Spain

In 1578 King Sebastian of Portugal died at the Battle of Alcácer Quibir (known as the Battle of Three Kings) in what is today northern Morocco, without descendants, triggering the 1580 Portuguese succession crisis. His grand-uncle, the elderly Cardinal Henry, succeeded him as King, but also had no descendants, having taken holy orders. When the cardinal-king died after two years later, three grandchildren of King Manuel I of Portugal claimed the throne:

- Infanta Catarina, Duchess of Braganza
- António, Prior of Crato
- Philip II of Spain, uncle of former King Sebastian of Portugal

Philip prevailed and was crowned King Philip I of Portugal in 1581, uniting the two crowns and overseas empires.^[26]

During the Union with Spain, 1580 to 1640, Ceuta attracted many settlers of Spanish origin^[27] and became the only city of the Portuguese Empire that sided with Spain when Portugal regained its independence in the Portuguese Restoration War of 1640.

Spanish

On 1 January 1668, King Afonso VI of Portugal recognised the formal allegiance of Ceuta to Spain and ceded Ceuta to King Carlos II of Spain by the Treaty of Lisbon.^[28]

The city was attacked by Moroccan forces under Moulay Ismail during the Siege of Ceuta (1694–1727). During the longest siege in history, the city underwent changes leading to the loss of its Portuguese character. While most of the military operations took place around the Royal Walls of Ceuta, there were also small-scale penetrations by Spanish forces at various points on the Moroccan coast, and seizure of shipping in the Strait of Gibraltar.

During the Napoleonic Wars (1803–1815), Spain allowed Britain to occupy Ceuta.

Occupation began in 1810, with Ceuta being returned at the conclusion of the wars.^[29] Disagreements regarding the border of Ceuta resulted in the Hispano-Moroccan War (1859–60), which ended at the Battle of Tetuán.



The Royal Walls of Ceuta, built from 962 to the 18th century, and navigable moats



Fort of the Desnarigado, built in the 19th century, houses a museum.

In July 1936, General Francisco Franco took command of the Spanish Army of Africa and rebelled against the Spanish republican government; his military uprising led to the Spanish Civil War of 1936–1939. Franco transported troops to mainland Spain in an airlift using transport aircraft supplied by Germany and Italy. Ceuta became one of the first battlegrounds of the uprising; General Franco's rebel nationalist forces seized Ceuta, while at the same time the city came under fire from the air and sea forces of the official republican government.^[30]

The Llano Amarillo monument was erected to honor Francisco Franco; it was inaugurated on 13 July 1940. The tall obelisk has since been abandoned, but the shield symbols of the Falange and Imperial Eagle remain visible.^[31]

Following the 1947 Partition of India, a substantial number of Sindhi Hindus from current-day Pakistan settled in Ceuta, adding to a small Hindu community that had existed in Ceuta since 1893, connected to Gibraltar's.^[32]

When Spain recognized the independence of Spanish Morocco in 1956, Ceuta and the other *plazas de soberanía* remained under Spanish rule. Spain considered them integral parts of the Spanish state, but Morocco has disputed this point.

Culturally, modern Ceuta is part of the Spanish region of Andalusia. It was attached to the province of Cádiz until 1995, the Spanish coast being only 20 km (12.5 miles) away. It is a cosmopolitan city, with a large ethnic Arab-Berber Muslim minority as well as Sephardic Jewish and Hindu minorities.^[33]

On 5 November 2007, King Juan Carlos I visited the city, sparking great enthusiasm from the local population and protests from the Moroccan government.^[34] It was the first time a Spanish head of state had visited Ceuta in 80 years.^[35]

Since 2010, Ceuta (and Melilla) have declared the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha, or Feast of the Sacrifice, an official public holiday. It is the first time a non-Christian religious festival has been officially celebrated in Spanish ruled territory since the Reconquista.^{[36][37]}



Eclectic House of the Dragons, built in 1905



A street in Ceuta, c. 1905–1910



Map of Ceuta in the 1940s

Geography

Ceuta is separated by 17 km (11 mi)^[38] from the province of Cádiz on the Spanish mainland by the Strait of Gibraltar and it shares a 6.4 km (4 mi) land border with M'diq-Fnideq Prefecture in the Kingdom of Morocco. It has an area of 18.5 km² (7 sq mi; 4,571 acres). It is dominated by Monte Anyera, a hill along its western frontier with Morocco, which is guarded by a Spanish military fort. Monte Hacho on the Peninsula of Almina overlooking the port is one of the possible locations of the southern pillar of the Pillars of Hercules of Greek legend (the other possibility being Jebel Musa).^[39]

Important Bird Area

The Ceuta Peninsula has been recognised as an Important Bird Area (IBA) by BirdLife International because the site is part of a migratory bottleneck, or choke point, at the western end of the Mediterranean for large numbers of raptors, storks and other birds flying between Europe and Africa. These include European honey buzzards, black kites, short-toed snake eagles, Egyptian vultures, griffon vultures, black storks, white storks and Audouin's gulls.^[40]

Climate



Map of Ceuta (the Perejil Island, part of Ceuta, is just off the coast, in the upper left of this map)



Perspective view of the Strait of Gibraltar facing eastwards; Spain and Gibraltar on the left; Morocco and Ceuta on the right. The vertical dimension is exaggerated by a factor of 3.



A highly detailed map of Ceuta

Ceuta has a maritime-influenced Mediterranean climate, similar to nearby Spanish and Moroccan cities such as Tarifa, Algeciras or Tangiers.^[41] The average diurnal temperature variation is relatively low; the average annual temperature is 18.8 °C (65.8 °F) with average yearly highs of 21.4 °C (70.5 °F) and lows of 15.7 °C (60.3 °F) though the Ceuta weather station has only been in operation since 2003.^[42] Ceuta has relatively mild winters for the latitude, while summers are warm yet milder than in the interior of Southern Spain, due to the moderating effect of the Straits of Gibraltar. Summers are very dry, but yearly precipitation is still at 849 mm (33.4 in),^[42] which could be considered a humid climate if the summers were not so arid.

Climate data for Ceuta, 2003-2010													
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Record high °C (°F)	21.7 (71.1)	25.5 (77.9)	27.9 (82.2)	28.4 (83.1)	33.7 (92.7)	35.3 (95.5)	40.2 (104.4)	38.9 (102.0)	34.8 (94.6)	33.1 (91.6)	27.2 (81.0)	25.6 (78.1)	40.2 (104.4)
Mean daily maximum °C (°F)	15.8 (60.4)	15.9 (60.6)	17.4 (63.3)	19.1 (66.4)	21.9 (71.4)	25.7 (78.3)	28.9 (84.0)	28.5 (83.3)	25.8 (78.4)	22.8 (73.0)	18.8 (65.8)	16.4 (61.5)	21.4 (70.5)
Daily mean °C (°F)	13.4 (56.1)	13.7 (56.7)	14.8 (58.6)	16.4 (61.5)	18.8 (65.8)	22.3 (72.1)	24.9 (76.8)	25.0 (77.0)	22.8 (73.0)	20.2 (68.4)	16.4 (61.5)	14.3 (57.7)	18.6 (65.4)
Mean daily minimum °C (°F)	11.0 (51.8)	11.4 (52.5)	12.2 (54.0)	13.6 (56.5)	15.7 (60.3)	18.8 (65.8)	20.9 (69.6)	21.5 (70.7)	19.8 (67.6)	17.5 (63.5)	14.0 (57.2)	12.1 (53.8)	15.7 (60.3)
Record low °C (°F)	1.3 (34.3)	4.4 (39.9)	7.2 (45.0)	9.0 (48.2)	10.5 (50.9)	7.2 (45.0)	16.3 (61.3)	18.0 (64.4)	15.3 (59.5)	12.2 (54.0)	7.4 (45.3)	6.3 (43.3)	1.3 (34.3)
Average precipitation mm (inches)	122 (4.8)	145 (5.7)	90 (3.5)	57 (2.2)	21 (0.8)	3 (0.1)	1 (0.0)	3 (0.1)	37 (1.5)	82 (3.2)	127 (5.0)	161 (6.3)	849 (33.2)
Average precipitation days (≥ 1 mm)	8	9	6	6	4	1	0	0	2	7	7	10	60
Average relative humidity (%)	72	75	68	71	66	67	61	70	72	75	73	73	70
Source: Agencia Estatal de Meteorología ^[43]													

Government and administration

Since 1995, Ceuta is, along with [Melilla](#), one of the two [autonomous cities](#) of Spain.^[44]

Ceuta is known officially in Spanish as *Ciudad Autónoma de Ceuta* (English: *Autonomous City of Ceuta*), with a rank between a standard [municipality](#) and an [autonomous community](#). Ceuta is part of the territory of the [European Union](#). The city was a [free port](#) before Spain joined the European Union in 1986. Now it has a low-tax system within the [Economic and Monetary Union of the European Union](#).

Since 1979, Ceuta has held elections to its 25-seat assembly every four years. The leader of its government was the Mayor until the Autonomy Statute provided for the new title of [Mayor-President](#). As of 2011, the [People's Party](#) (PP) won 18 seats, keeping [Juan Jesús Vivas](#) as Mayor-President, which he has been since 2001. The remaining seats are held by the regionalist [Caballas Coalition](#) (4) and the [Socialist Workers' Party](#) (PSOE, 3).^[45]

Owing to its small population, Ceuta elects only one member of the Congress of Deputies, the lower house of the *Cortes Generales* (the Spanish Parliament). As of the November 2019 election, this post is held by María Teresa López of Vox.^[46]

Ceuta is subdivided into 63 *barriadas* ("neighborhoods"), such as Barriada de Berizu, Barriada de P. Alfonso, Barriada del Sarchal, and El Hacho.^{[47][48][49]}



The Palacio de la Asamblea de Ceuta is the seat of the [Assembly of Ceuta](#).

Ceuta maintains its own police force.

Defence and Civil Guard

The defence of the enclave is the responsibility of the Spanish Armed Forces' General Command of Ceuta (COMGECEU).^[50] The Spanish Army's combat components of the command include:

- 54th Regulares Infantry Regiment based in *González Tablas* barracks;
- 2nd Tercio Duke of Alba Regiment of the Spanish Legion based in the Seraglio-Recarga cantonment;
- 3rd "Montesa" Cavalry Regiment (RC-3) located in the *Colonel Galindo* barracks and equipped with Leopard 2 main battle tanks and Pizarro infantry fighting vehicles^[51]
- 30th Mixed Artillery Regiment, one group equipped with 155/52mm towed howitzers and the other with Mistral short-range SAMs and 35/90 SKYDOR/35/90 GDF-007 anti-aircraft guns fulfilling an air defence role;^[52] and
- 7th Engineer Regiment

The command also includes its headquarters battalion as well as logistics elements.^[50]

In 2023, the Spanish Navy replaced the *Aresa*-class patrol boat *P-114* in the territory with the *Rodman*-class patrol boat *Isla de León*.^[53]

Ceuta itself is only 113 km (70 mi) distant from the main Spanish naval base at Rota on the Spanish mainland. The Spanish Air Force's Morón Air Base is also within 135 km (84 mi) proximity.

The Civil Guard is responsible for border security and protects both the territory's fortified land border as well as its maritime approaches against frequent, and sometimes significant, migrant incursions.^[54]

Economy

The official currency of Ceuta is the euro. It is part of a special low tax zone in Spain.^[55] Ceuta is one of two Spanish port cities on the northern shore of Africa, along with Melilla. They are historically military strongholds, free ports, oil ports, and also fishing ports.^[56] Today the economy of the city depends heavily on its port (now in expansion) and its industrial and retail centres.^[55] Ceuta Heliport is now used to connect the city to mainland Spain by air. Lidl, Decathlon and El Corte Inglés have branches in Ceuta. There is also a casino. Border trade between Ceuta and Morocco is active because of advantage of tax-free status. Thousands of Moroccan women are involved in the cross-border porter trade daily, as *porteadoras*. The Moroccan dirham is used in such trade, even though prices are marked in euros.^{[57][58][59]}



The Moroccan mountain of Jebel Musa, as viewed from Benzú. It is also known as the 'Dead Woman' because of its silhouette.

Transport

The city's Port of Ceuta receives high numbers of ferries each day from Algeciras in Andalusia in the south of Spain. The closest airport is Sania Ramel Airport in Morocco.

A single road border checkpoint to the south of Ceuta near Fnideq allows for cars and pedestrians to travel between Morocco and Ceuta. An additional border crossing for pedestrians exists between Benzú and Belyounech on the northern coast. The rest of the border is closed and inaccessible.

There is a bus service throughout the city, and while it does not pass into neighbouring Morocco, it services both frontier crossings.

Hospitals

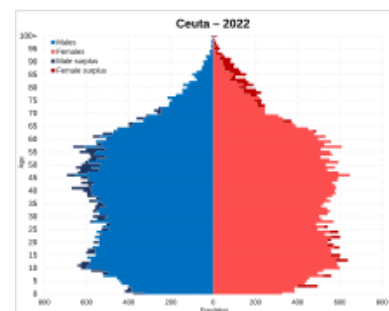
The following hospitals are located within Ceuta:^{[60][61]}

- University Hospital of Ceuta, established in 2010, 252 beds^[62]
- Primary Care Emergency Services Jose Lafont
- Ceuta Medical Centre
- Spanish Military Hospital (500 beds in 1929, 2020 listed as a clinic)^{[63][64]}

Demographics

As of 2018, its population was 85,144.^[65] Due to its location, Ceuta is home to a mixed ethnic and religious population. The two main religious groups are Christians and Muslims. As of 2006 approximately 50% of the population was Christian and approximately 48% Muslim.^[66] As of a 2018 estimate, around 67.8% of the city's population were born in Ceuta.^[67]

Spanish is the primary and official language of the enclave.^[68] Moroccan Arabic (Darija) is widely spoken.^[69] In 2021, the Council of Europe demanded that Spain formally recognize the language by 2023.^[70]



Ceuta population pyramid in 2022

Religion

Christianity has been present in Ceuta continuously from late antiquity, as evidenced by the ruins of a basilica in downtown Ceuta^[71] and accounts of the martyrdom of St. Daniel Fasanella and his Franciscans in 1227 during the Almohad Caliphate.



Remains of the Late Roman Christian Basilica and Necropolis of Ceuta, dated to the mid-4th century AD or the beginning of the 5th century AD

The town's Grand Mosque had been built over a Byzantine-era church. In 1415, the year of the city's conquest, the Portuguese converted the Grand Mosque into Ceuta Cathedral. The present form of the cathedral dates to refurbishments undertaken in the late 17th century, combining baroque and neoclassical elements. It was dedicated to St Mary of the Assumption in 1726.

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Ceuta was established in 1417. It incorporated the suppressed Diocese of Tanger in 1570.^[72] The Diocese of Ceuta was a suffragan of Lisbon until 1675, when it became a suffragan of Seville.^[73] In 1851, Ceuta's administration was notionally merged into the Diocese of Cádiz and Ceuta as part of a concordat between Spain and the Holy See;^[74] the union was not actually accomplished, however, until 1879.



Cathedral of St. Mary of the Assumption, completed in 1726

Small Jewish and Hindu minorities are also present in the city.^[75]

2019 census^[76]

Roman Catholicism	60.0%
Islam	36.7%
Non-religious	1.9%
Atheist	1.5%

Migration

Like [Melilla](#), Ceuta attracts African migrants who try to use it as an entry to Europe. As a result, the enclave is surrounded by double fences that are 6 m (20 ft) high, and hundreds of migrants congregate near the fences waiting for a chance to cross them. The fences are regularly stormed by migrants trying to claim asylum once they enter Ceuta.^[77]

Education

The [University of Granada](#) offers undergraduate programmes at their campus in Ceuta. Like all areas of Spain, Ceuta is also served by the [National University of Distance Education \(UNED\)](#).

While primary and secondary education are generally offered in Spanish only, a growing number of schools are entering the Bilingual Education Programme.

Notable people from Ceuta

up to 1800

- [Qadi Ayyad](#) (1083 in Ceuta – 1149) born in Ceuta, then belonging to the [Almoravids](#) was the great imam of that city
- [Muhammad al-Idrisi](#) (1100 in Ceuta – 1165 in Ceuta) was a Muslim geographer, cartographer and Egyptologist. He lived in Palermo at the court of King [Roger II of Sicily](#), known for the *[Tabula Rogeriana](#)*.^[78]
- [Abu al-Abbas as-Sabtī](#) (1129 in Ceuta – 1204 in Marrakesh) the main [Wali](#) of Marrakesh
- [Joseph ben Judah of Ceuta](#) (c. 1160 – 1226) a Jewish physician and poet, and disciple of [Moses Maimonides](#)
- [Abu al-Abbas al-Azafi](#) (1162 in Ceuta – 1236) a religious and legal scholar, member of the Banu al-Azafi who ruled Ceuta
- [Mohammed ibn Rushayd](#) (1259 in Sabta – 1321) a judge, writer and scholar of [Hadith](#)
- [Álvaro of Braganza](#) (1440–1504) a president of Council of Castile.
- [George Camocke](#) (1666–1732) a Royal Navy captain and former admiral for Spain who was exiled to Ceuta to live out the last years of his life.
- [Don Fernando de Leyba](#) (1734 in Ceuta – 1780) a Spanish officer who served as the third governor of [Upper Louisiana](#) from 1778 until his death.
- Brigadier General [Francisco Antonio García Carrasco Díaz](#) (1742 in Ceuta – 1813 in Lima, Peru) a Spanish soldier and Royal Governor of Chile
- [Sebastián Kindelán y O'Regan](#) (1757 in Ceuta – 1826 in Santiago de Cuba) a colonel in the Spanish Army who served as governor of East Florida 1812/1815, of Santo Domingo 1818/1821 and was provisional governor of Cuba 1822/1823

- Isidro de Alaix Fábregas Count of Vergara and Viscount of Villarrobledo, (1790 in Ceuta – 1853 in Madrid) a Spanish general of the First Carlist War who backed Isabella II of Spain

since 1800

- General Francisco Llano de la Encomienda (1879 in Ceuta – 1963 in Mexico City), a Spanish soldier. During the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) he remained loyal to the Second Spanish Republic
- General Antonio Escobar Huertas (1879 in Ceuta – executed 1940 in Barcelona), a Spanish military officer
- África de las Heras Gavilán (1909 in Ceuta – 1988 in Moscow), a Spanish Communist, naturalized Soviet citizen, and KGB spy who went by the code name *Patria*
- Eugenio Martín (born 1925 in Ceuta), a Spanish film director and screenwriter ^[79]
- Jacob Hassan, PhD (1936 in Ceuta – 2006 in Madrid), a Spanish philologist of Sephardic Jewish descent
- Manuel Chaves González (born 1945 in Ceuta), a Spanish politician of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party. He served as the Third Vice President of the Spanish Government from 2009 to 2011
- Ramón Castellano de Torres (born 1947 in Ceuta), a Spanish artist, thought by some to be an expressionist painter
- Ignacio Velázquez Rivera (born 1953), first Mayor-President of Melilla
- Juan Jesús Vivas Lara (born 1953 in Ceuta), became the Mayor-President of Ceuta in Spain in 2001
- Pedro Avilés Gutiérrez (born 1956 in Ceuta), a Spanish novelist from Madrid.
- Eva María Isanta Foncuberta (born 1971 in Ceuta), a Spanish actress ^[80]
- Mohamed Taieb Ahmed (born 1975 in Ceuta), a Spanish-Moroccan drug lord ^[81] responsible for trafficking hashish across the Strait of Gibraltar and into Spain.
- Rakesh Narwani (born 1981 in Ceuta), a Spanish Filmmaker

Sport

- Francisco Lesmes (1924–2005) and Rafael Lesmes (1926–2012), brothers and Spanish footballers.
- José Martínez Sánchez (born 1945 in Ceuta), nicknamed *Pirri*, a retired Spanish footballer, mainly played for Real Madrid, appearing in 561 competitive games and scoring 172 goals
- José Ramón López (born 1950), a sprint canoer, silver medallist at the 1976 Summer Olympics
- Miguel Bernardo Bianquetti (born 1951 in Ceuta), known as *Migueli*, a Spanish retired footballer, 391 caps for FC Barcelona and 32 for Spain
- Nayim (born 1966 in Ceuta), a retired Spanish footballer; he scored a last-minute goal for Real Zaragoza in the 1995 UEFA Cup Winners' Cup Final.
- Lorena Miranda (born 1991 in Ceuta), a Spanish female water polo player, silver medallist at the 2012 Summer Olympics.
- Anuar Tuhami (born 1995 in Ceuta), a Spanish-Moroccan footballer, played one game for Morocco

Twin towns and sister cities

Ceuta is twinned with:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ▪ <u>Aci Catena</u> , Italy ^[82] | ▪ <u>Cádiz</u> , Spain (since 2007) ^[84] |
| ▪ <u>Algeciras</u> , Spain (since 1997) ^[83] | ▪ <u>Melilla</u> , Spain ^[85] |
| ▪ <u>Buenos Aires</u> , Argentina | ▪ <u>Santarém</u> , Portugal ^[86] |

Dispute with Morocco

The Moroccan government has repeatedly called for Spain to transfer the sovereignty of Ceuta, Melilla and the *plazas de soberanía* to Morocco, with Spain's refusal to do so serving as a major source of tension in Morocco–Spain relations. In Morocco, Ceuta is frequently referred to as the "occupied Sebtah", and the Moroccan government has argued that the city, along with other Spanish territories in the region, are colonies.^{[87][88]} One of the major arguments used by Morocco in their attempts to acquire sovereignty over Ceuta refers to the geographical position of the city, as Ceuta is an exclave surrounded by Moroccan territory and the Mediterranean Sea and has no territorial continuity with the rest of Spain.^[89]

This argument was originally developed by one of the founders of the Moroccan Istiqlal Party, Alal-El Faasi, who openly advocated for Morocco to invade and occupy Ceuta and other North African territories under Spanish rule.^[90] Spain, in line with the majority of nations in the rest of the world, has never recognized Morocco's claim over Ceuta. The official position of the Spanish government is that Ceuta is an integral part of Spain, and has been since the 16th century, centuries prior to Morocco's independence from Spain and France in 1956.^[91] The majority of Ceuta's population support continued Spanish sovereignty and are opposed to Moroccan control over the territory.^[92]

In 1986, Spain joined NATO. However, Ceuta is not under NATO protection since Article 6 of the North Atlantic Treaty limits such coverage to Europe and North America and islands north of the Tropic of Cancer. However, French Algeria was explicitly included in the treaty upon France's entry. Legal experts have claimed that other articles of the treaty could cover Spanish territories in North Africa but this interpretation has not been tested in practice.^[93] During the 2022 Madrid summit, the issue of the protection of Ceuta was raised by Spain, with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg stating: "On which territories NATO protects and Ceuta and Melilla, NATO is there to protect all Allies against any threats. At the end of the day, it will always be a political decision to invoke Article 5, but rest assured NATO is there to protect and defend all Allies".^[94] On 21 December 2020, following statements made by Moroccan Prime Minister Saadeddine Othmani that Ceuta is "Moroccan as the Sahara", the Spanish government summoned the Moroccan ambassador, Karima Benyaich, to convey that Spain expects all its partners to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its territory in Africa and asked for an explanation for Othmani's words.^[95]

See also

- AD Ceuta FC, football club
- Hotel Tryp Ceuta
- Porteadoras – mule ladies, bale workers
- Spanish Morocco
- European enclaves in North Africa before 1830



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Notes

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