

The **history of Spain** dates to contact between the [pre-Roman](#) peoples of the [Mediterranean](#) coast of the [Iberian Peninsula](#) with the [Greeks](#) and [Phoenicians](#). During [Classical Antiquity](#), the peninsula was the site of multiple successive colonizations of Greeks, [Carthaginians](#), and Romans. Native peoples of the peninsula, such as the [Tartessos](#), intermingled with the colonizers to create a uniquely Iberian culture. The Romans referred to the entire peninsula as [Hispania](#), from which the name "Spain" originates. As was the rest of the [Western Roman Empire](#), [Spain](#) was subject to numerous invasions of [Germanic tribes](#) during the 4th and 5th centuries AD, resulting in the end of Roman rule and the establishment of Germanic kingdoms, marking the beginning of the [Middle Ages in Spain](#).

Germanic control lasted until the [Umayyad conquest of Hispania](#) began in 711. The region became known as [Al-Andalus](#), and except for the small [Kingdom of Asturias](#), the region remained under the control of Muslim-led states for much of the [Early Middle Ages](#), a period known as the [Islamic Golden Age](#). By the time of the [High Middle Ages](#), Christians from the north gradually expanded their control over Iberia, a period known as the [Reconquista](#). As they expanded southward, a number of Christian kingdoms were formed, including the [Kingdom of Navarre](#), the [Kingdom of León](#), the [Kingdom of Castile](#), and the [Kingdom of Aragon](#). They eventually consolidated into two roughly equivalent polities, the [Crown of Castile](#) and the [Crown of Aragon](#). The [early modern period](#) is generally dated from the union of the Crowns of Castile and Aragon by royal marriage in 1469.

The joint rule of [Isabella I](#) and [Ferdinand II](#) is [historiographically](#) considered the foundation of a unified Spain. The [conquest of Granada](#), and the [first voyage of Columbus](#), both in 1492, made that year a critical inflection point in Spanish history. The voyages of the explorers and [conquistadors](#) of Spain during the subsequent decades helped establish a [Spanish colonial empire](#) which was among the largest ever. King [Charles I](#) established the [Spanish Habsburg](#) dynasty. Under his son [Philip II](#) the [Spanish Golden Age](#) flourished, the Spanish Empire reached its territorial and economic peak, and his palace at [El Escorial](#) became the center of artistic flourishing. However, Philip's rule also saw the destruction of the [Spanish Armada](#), a number of state bankruptcies and the independence of the [Northern Netherlands](#), which marked the beginning of the slow decline of Spanish influence in Europe. Spain's power was further tested by its participation in the [Eighty Years' War](#), whereby it tried and failed to recapture the newly independent Dutch Republic, and the [Thirty Years' War](#), which resulted in continued decline of Habsburg power in favor of the French [Bourbon dynasty](#). Matters came to a head with the death of the last Habsburg ruler [Charles II of Spain](#); the [War of the Spanish Succession](#) broke out between two European alliances led by the French Bourbons and the Austrian Habsburgs, for the control of the Spanish throne. The Bourbons prevailed, resulting in the ascension of [Philip V of Spain](#), who

took Spain into various wars and eventually recaptured the territories in southern Italy that had been lost in the War of the Spanish Succession. Spain's late entry into the [Seven Years' War](#) was the result of fear of the growing successes of the British at the expense of the French, but Spanish forces suffered major defeats. Motivated by this and earlier setbacks during Bourbon rule, Spanish institutions underwent a [period of reform](#), especially under [Charles III](#), that culminated in Spain's largely [successful involvement](#) in the [American War of Independence](#).

During the [Napoleonic era](#), Spain became a French [puppet state](#). Concurrent with, and following, the Napoleonic period the [Spanish American wars of independence](#) resulted in the loss of most of Spain's territory in the Americas in the 1820s. During the re-establishment of the Bourbon rule in Spain, [constitutional monarchy](#) was introduced in 1813. Spain's history during the nineteenth century was tumultuous, and featured alternating periods of republican-liberal and monarchical rule. The [Spanish–American War](#) led to losses of Spanish colonial possessions and a series of military dictatorships, during which King [Alfonso XIII](#) was deposed and a [new Republican government](#) was formed. Ultimately, the political disorder within Spain led to a coup by the military which led to the [Spanish Civil War](#). After much foreign intervention on both sides, the [Nationalists](#) emerged victorious; [Francisco Franco](#) led a fascist dictatorship for almost four decades. Franco's death ushered in a return of the monarchy under King [Juan Carlos I](#), which saw a liberalization of Spanish society and a re-engagement with the international community. A new liberal [Constitution](#) was established in 1978. Spain entered the [European Economic Community](#) in 1986 (transformed into the [European Union](#) in 1992), and the [Eurozone](#) in 1998. Juan Carlos abdicated in 2014, and was succeeded by his son [Felipe VI](#).