

Regional Spanish

Jerome Handek samples the delights of learning Spanish in two of its most dynamic

Barcelona

Located on the Mediterranean coast, Barcelona is only a two-hour drive from the French border. It is also on the doorstep of the Balearic Islands, the Costa Brava, and the Costa Dorada.

The metropolitan area has a population of three million people, making it the second largest city in Spain. The city's prime location on the Mediterranean means the weather is pleasant for most of the year.

Barcelona offers the visitor an unforgettable experience and the opportunity to learn Spanish in one of the most beautiful cities in the world. This is a modern, thriving city, which is rich in cultural and historical heritage — the architecture of Gaudí, the Gothic Quarter, the Roman ruins, the famous *Rambles*, as well as the Picasso and Dalí museums and all the beautiful buildings of the modernist period, which fill the center of this outstandingly beautiful and atmospheric city. All this makes Barcelona simply an ideal location for a Spanish immersion program.

Barcelona, open, tolerant, and cosmopolitan, owes much of its character to its history.

The Romans first officially founded Barcelona as a city in the first century BC. During the Roman occupation, Barcelona was surrounded by walls that stood for centuries and as the city expanded more were built. This and the geographic situation, between the mountains and the sea, are aspects that

have decisively influenced the city's growth. In 1854, demolition of the walls, that were impeding urban development, was authorized. And, in 1859, the planned *Eixample* (Barcelona's characteristic urban grid) was given the go ahead.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, Barcelona was witness to the emergence of Modernism and Gaudí, whose contribution to the architectural wealth of Barcelona was enormous.

As Barcelona is located in Catalonia, the official languages spoken are Castilian and Catalan. Catalan is considerably different from Castilian (the official Spanish language). However, all schools teach Castilian, and all locals can speak both languages.

Barcelona is a city with style, allure and an unbelievable number of things to do, from art to gastronomy to pop music. The city has a clear metropolitan character. For some students that can take a bit of getting used to, because Barcelona is an experience in its own right.

Spanish Here And Now

This school is located in the picturesque hills, just 12 miles outside of Barcelona.

Their teaching philosophy is based on the fact that adult learners from different countries, of different ages and with different mother tongues will never be able to make a homogeneous classroom, no matter how much grading and pre-program screening is performed. For this reason, they only teach in

one-on-one classes, allowing them to focus all their teaching efforts on the specific level, needs and objectives of each participant.

Worldlink Education

WorldLink Education (WLE) offers unique and affordable programs to persons worldwide wishing to study Spanish in Barcelona. Classes are taught in the leading Academy of Spanish Studies, in a spacious three-story building surrounded by beautiful terraces. It has excellent facilities with modern classrooms, an Internet café, a student common room, and a video library. The Academy is in the heart of this city, just a 5-10 minute walk from Plaza de Cataluña and Plaza de España, and nearby Gran Vía and Las Ramblas.

WLE programs provide a comprehensive and balanced curriculum combining in-class instruction with cultural excursions and activities. The objective is to deepen knowledge of the Spanish language, culture, and way of life. For the individual needs of students, programs ranging in intensities are available. All levels are offered from Total Beginner to Advanced. Along with a range of flexible adult programs starting throughout the year, WLE also offers Spanish Language Summer Camp programs for children and teens.

International program advisors and staff provide on-going assistance and information, pre-arrival and throughout the program. WLE Spain also offers programs in Madrid, Valencia, Salamanca and Marbella.



regions: Cataluña and Andalucía

Cádiz

Andalucía

Andalucía has the largest population

of all Spain's autonomous regions, and is second in size. Its varied landscapes, its comfortable climate, and friendly character of the people have turned it into a very popular area for tourists and immigrants.

Although the Moorish influence is most obvious today — Andalucía was occupied by the Moors for about 800 years — it had been a cultural center long before that. The fertility of its soil and its climate with mild winters and about 3000 hours of sun per year attracted the Phoenicians and Carthaginians. Later came the Romans, and two of their emperors, Trajan and Hadrian, were born there.

Inland are the majestic cities of Seville and Granada, which combine European and Arabic architecture and culture unlike anywhere else in the world. On the Atlantic coast are the cities of Huelva and Cádiz. The glamorous resorts of Puerto Banus, Marbella and Málaga are on the Mediterranean Sea.

The choice for visitors is extremely varied,

from golden beaches to beautiful mountain ranges, and the famous “white villages” full of folklore and artisans. There are great sporting opportunities as well, from skiing in the Sierra Nevada to some of Europe's best surfing off the coast of Cádiz.

Andalucía is the home of nearly all the clichés of Spain, such as Flamenco dancing and bullfighting, as well as the setting for tales like Don Juan and Carmen.

Although some parts of the region have become very touristy, the main cities have retained their charm, and you only have to travel a few miles from the coast to find villages and towns where nobody speaks a word of English, and even good speakers of Spanish may struggle as locals traditionally shorten words.

It is a land of great tradition which has understood how to adapt to progress.

Bonanova, Escuela Intl. de Idiomas

Bonanova is an international school specializing in language teaching with more than 15 years experience on the Costa del Sol in the very center of Fuengirola (within walking

distance of the beaches, train and bus terminals), in a cosy and quiet, typical Andalusian side street, just off the main square and the shopping area.

At Bonanova, they strive to make their students feel at home and welcome. The personal attention to every student, the teaching methods, their dedicated staff, the teaching materials, and the small classes of maximum ten students contribute to rapid and efficient learning of the Spanish language. All teachers are native and have been very carefully selected. They all are university graduates and have several years of experience in teaching Spanish to foreigners.

Bonanova offers courses at various levels including specific aspects of the Spanish language: Pronunciation, conversation, grammar, vocabulary, idiomatic expressions (in accordance with the common European Framework of Reference for languages) as well as different aspects of Spanish and Hispano-American life and culture. They also offer preparation courses for students who wish to register for the official DELE exams.