



SPAIN - COUNTRY SPECIFIC PREPARATION FOR PARTICIPANTS BEFORE DEPARTURE

QUICK GUIDE: IMPORTANT THINGS TO TALK WITH PARTICIPANTS ABOUT SPAIN
FOR A SUCCESSFUL EXPERIENCE *BEFORE DEPARTURE*

FAMILY LIFE & COUNTRY

- ⇒ **Languages.** Very important that all students are aware that there are four official languages in Spain and in some regions the Castilian (“Spanish”) is not used in school. Books & subjects may be in a different language. Although most of the participants know beforehand they are surprised by this fact once here. The languages are “Castilian, Basque, Catalan and Galician”.
- ⇒ **Meals.** Usually families have lunch and dinner together. It is expected by the participants to stay at the table until everyone has finished. No picking between meals.
- ⇒ **Privacy.** The room doors are usually kept open. The room is not unique to the student and family members may walk in and out during the day. This is linked to the fact that families value if students share the free time together in common areas of the house rather than staying in the room. Participants should talk with the family if they feel uncomfortable in order to avoid any misunderstandings when it comes to privacy issues.
- ⇒ **Order.** The Spanish household rules can be very strict particularly when it comes to the cleanness of the rooms, but they may be other aspects too: for example leaving the coat without hanging on the coat hook, backpack on the floor, etc. Also participants should keep the wardrobe tidy. Especially clothes should be stored accordingly and the bed should be made every day before leaving the room in the morning.
- ⇒ **Expression.** Families value verbal communication but also facial expressions like smiling, nodding and other signs of paying attention, etc.
- ⇒ **Predisposition & Proactivity.** It is expected that the student has initiative, offers to do things without being asked, etc.
- ⇒ **Host siblings.** Many families expect the English-natives speakers or students with a good knowledge of this language to spend some time daily to speak with their children and / or help them with English homework.

SCHOOL

- ⇒ Student must **show interest** in class. Although they may not understand they should ask. Teachers may follow their normal teaching plan so participant may be treated like any other pupil with no special treatment.
- ⇒ The English level of Spanish students is low. The school also expects the English-speaking student to **help** their **schoolfellows**.
- ⇒ **Teaching** in general is **very theoretical**. The teacher explains and the students take notes, do homework and then take exams.
- ⇒ Neither extracurricular activities nor sports are usually in the school buildings but in external facilities that has to be paid by the participant.

