



Cigna®

INSIDE  
**EXPAT**  
**HEALTH**



**WELL-BEING**

**SPAIN**



## **Welcome to Spain!**

**Everybody wants to make the most of their expat experience, but moving abroad can be challenging. That's why caring for your mental health and leading an active lifestyle are so important to stay healthy and happy in your new country.**

**This guide contains helpful tips about safeguarding your well-being in Spain.**



# 01

## MENTAL HEALTH

Mental well-being in Spain	5
Seeking mental health care	6
Private health insurance	7
Directories	8

# 02

## OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES, SPORTS AND EXERCISE

Outdoors	11
Indoors	12
Sporting events	13

# 03

## HOLISTIC THERAPY

Forms of holistic therapies	15
Mixed acceptance	16

# 04

## FAMILY & CHILDREN

Health care for mothers and children	18
Vaccinations	19
Mental health for children	20
Education	21

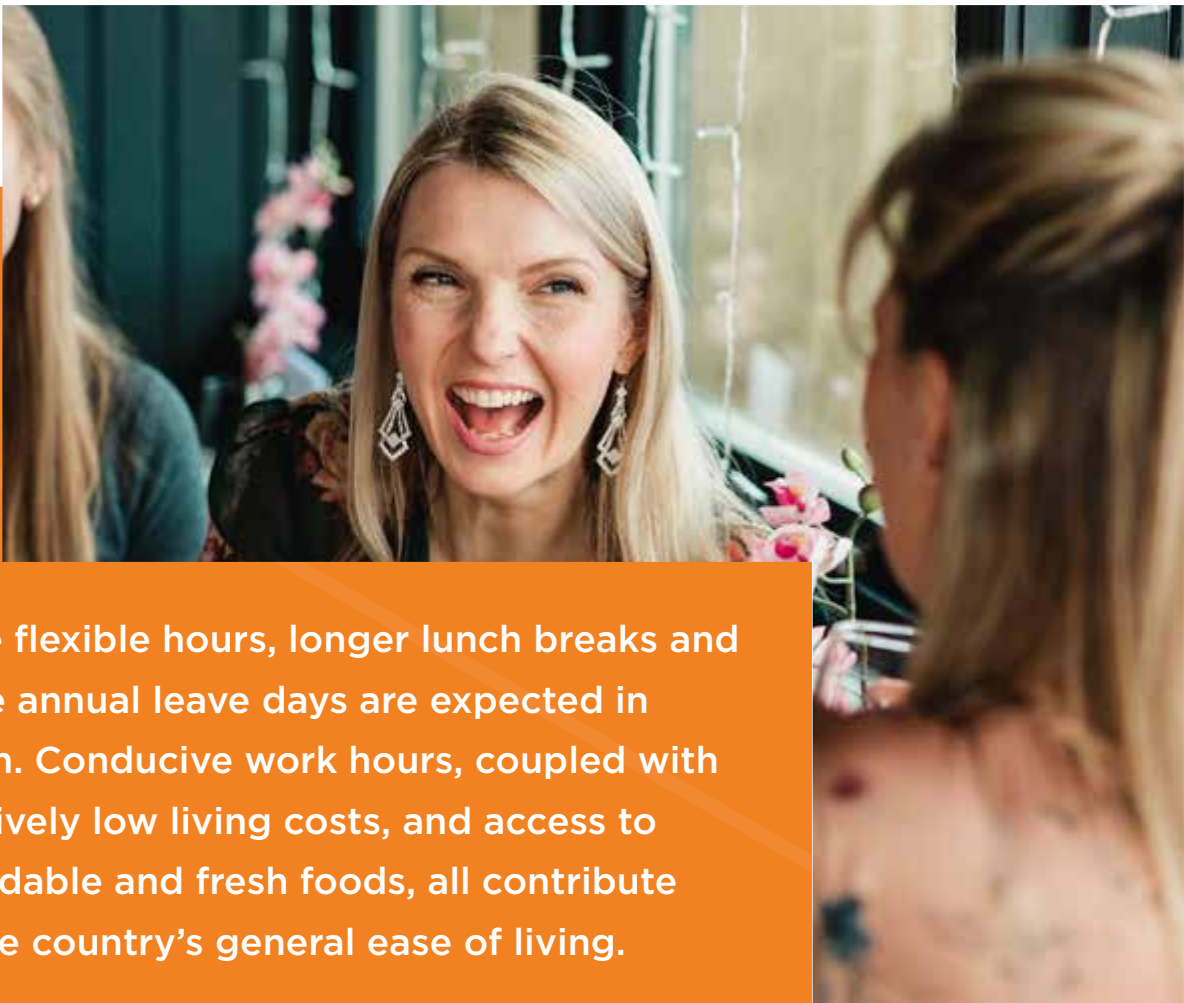


# MENTAL HEALTH





# MENTAL WELL-BEING IN SPAIN



More flexible hours, longer lunch breaks and more annual leave days are expected in Spain. Conducive work hours, coupled with relatively low living costs, and access to affordable and fresh foods, all contribute to the country's general ease of living.

Top that off with a rich local culture, well-established expat communities, and commendable improvements to the mental and physical well-being of its expats, it is no wonder Spain is one of the most popular countries to live and work in.



# SEEKING MENTAL HEALTH CARE

The country matches its exalted reputation with comprehensive offerings to support its residents' mental health. There are three steps to accessing mental health services in Spain:



- 1 Visit your GP** who will assess your condition and prescribe medication.
- 2 Get a referral** to other doctors or specialists for treatment. Most of them will be located in community health centres.
- 3 Seek further treatment** at psychiatric hospitals, daycare centres or rehabilitation centres that will offer in-patient and out-patient care.





# PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE

There are many psychologists, psychiatrists and therapists offering their services across Spain, but many do not speak English or have waiting times of up to six months for a consultation.



Here are some reasons why many expats opt to take out private health insurance for their mental health:

- **Reduce waiting time**
- **Seek treatment from any specialists without a GP's referral**
- **Access a broader range of English-speaking mental health professionals**
- **Access treatments beyond state coverage**
- **Seek a second opinion**
- **Access private hospitals equipped with state-of-the-art technology**
- **Request a private room for in-patient care**

Be aware that private insurances often only cover an individual's therapy, have clauses that limit in-patient coverage or have a minimum age for eating disorder treatments. Family and couple therapy are usually beyond coverage. Mental health also has some of the longest consultations among other fields of health care, so coverage by your insurance may not be enough to fully pay for the costs of treatment.



## DIRECTORIES

Here are some resources to help get you started:

- **English Speaking Healthcare Association (ESHA)**  
[eshaspain.org/directory/categories/english-speaking-psychiatrist](https://eshaspain.org/directory/categories/english-speaking-psychiatrist)
- **Asociación Nacional de Psicólogos Clínicos y Residentes (ANPIR), The National Association of Clinical Psychologists and Residents**  
[anpir.org/socios/panel/profesionales\\_avanzado.php](https://anpir.org/socios/panel/profesionales_avanzado.php)
- **International Therapist Directory**  
For mental health professionals specialising in Third Culture Kids and international expats.  
[internationaltherapistdirectory.com](https://internationaltherapistdirectory.com)





# OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES, SPORTS AND EXERCISE





Spain is blessed with many athletes in different sports who serve as role models for its citizens.

Most residents enjoy working out alone or in groups, indoors and out, practising slow-paced yoga or joining heart-thumping football matches.





# OUTDOORS

From wrestling to cycling, hiking to swimming, sports playing to sports watching, you will be spoiled for choice when it comes to recreation in Spain. Seven to eight o'clock in the morning and at night are prime times for crowds in local parks.



## HERE ARE SOME POPULAR ACTIVITIES LOCALS AND EXPATS LOVE TO TAKE PART IN AROUND THE YEAR:

- **Jogging**

There are plenty of green spaces within major cities and outside smaller villages for an invigorating run.

- **Football**

With historic wins on the international stage and a prideful competitiveness among their own countrymen, football is practically a way of life in Spain.

- **Basketball**

A sport that is nearly as popular as football in Spain.

- **Tennis**

This sport is popular with millions of fans and courts are easily accessible no matter where you go in Spain.

- **Golfing**

The southern region of Spain is warm throughout the year and has many resorts ideal for relaxing golfing staycations.

- **Cycling**

There are thousands of cycling routes along Spanish coasts, through mountains and across cities.

- **Cricket**

The sport is growing in popularity with clubs in major cities that you can join.

- **Snowboarding and Skiing**

The north of Spain turns into a winter wonderland at the end of the year, offering snowy getaways and winter activities like snowboarding and skiing.

- **Hiking**

Spain has some of the most scenic natural landscapes in Europe with picturesque lakes and uninterrupted stretches of beaches for any nature- and ocean-loving enthusiast. Sunbathe on a beach, swim in a lake, hike and climb through well-travelled mountain routes, and immerse yourself in some of the most gorgeous vistas in this region of the world.





## INDOORS

With a laundry list of sporting events and scenic outdoor spaces to exercise in, gyms are understandably not as prevalent in Spain as in many other countries like the US, though many fitness facilities in larger cities like Barcelona and Madrid are fully equipped with trainers to offer popular classes like spin and yoga. Membership fees range from €30-100.

There are many sports clubs across the country catering to a wide range of sports including lacrosse, handball and padel tennis.





## SPORTING EVENTS

As much as Spaniards love to move, they love watching sports just as enthusiastically. The country hosts some of the most prestigious international sporting events annually that you can spectate from home, in-person or with friends at a bar.

- **Football**

Following soccer league results, learning about the different leagues and paying attention to playing seasons are some of the best ways to integrate into the local social life. Make sure you do not miss out on at least one *el clásico* match between long-time rivals Real Madrid and Barcelona.

- **Acciona Open de España**

This is a historic open golf tournament hosted at *Club de Campo Villa de Madrid* in the capital of Spain.

- **Cycling**

*Vuelta a España*, also known as La Vuelta, is an international race that takes competitive cyclists across Spain.

- **Motor Racing**

The Spanish Formula One Grand Prix is hosted annually at the *Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya*. Other major events to watch out for include: the Euroformula Open Championship / Spanish Formula Three Championship, Rally Catalunya (also known as the *Rally de España*), Spanish MotoGP™, Valencian MotoGP™, Aragon MotoGP™ and Catalan MotoGP™.

- **Tennis**

The *Mutua Madrid Open* is part of the ATP Masters series and is held annually in the capital of Spain.



# HOLISTIC THERAPY



03





# FORMS OF HOLISTIC THERAPIES

Various forms of alternative, holistic therapy are available in some clinics in Spain. They are only allowed to be practised by doctors with medical qualifications, though most treatments are not covered by state insurance. If you plan to utilise holistic therapy to complement conventional medicine, you may need to arrange for private insurance with specific coverage for those treatments.

Holistic therapy includes:

- **Integral or complete treatments**
  - Homoeopathy
  - Naturopathic medicine
  - Traditional Chinese medicine
  - Acupuncture
  - Ayurveda
- **Biological practices**
  - Phytotherapy
  - Nutritional therapy
  - Vitamins and other nutritional supplements
- **Body-based manipulation**
  - Osteopathy
  - Chiropractic
  - Chiromassage
  - Lymphatic drainage
  - Reflexology
  - Shiatsu*
  - Sotai*
  - Aromatherapy
- **Mind and body techniques**
  - Yoga
  - Meditation
  - Kinesiology
  - Hypnotherapy
  - Sophronisation
  - Music therapy
  - Art therapy
- **Energy-based techniques**
  - Qi gong*
  - Reiki*
  - Flower therapy
  - Biomagnetic therapy





## MIXED ACCEPTANCE

There is mixed acceptance of these alternative treatments in Spain. While a significant number of residents there believe alternative treatments produce positive health effects, just as many are conservative and reluctant to try what they perceive as unorthodox treatments. Since 2018, the government has put measures in place to keep them out of state-funded facilities over concerns about its potential health risks.





# FAMILY & CHILDREN





# HEALTH CARE FOR MOTHERS AND CHILDREN

Most Spanish hospitals have a paediatric department that offers specialist care through family doctors' referrals. Some paediatricians work in private practices.

If you are entitled to public health care, you may register your child with a paediatrician to enjoy these services for free:

- **Pre- and post-natal care (for new parents)**
- **Paediatric care up to the age of 15**
  - Post-birth exams
  - Preventative screenings
  - Vaccinations up until the age of 14
  - Monitoring development
  - Referral to specialist services, if necessary
- **Dental care up to the age of 15**
- **Access to 23 different branches of paediatric specialties**
- **Free emergency services, including emergency dental care**
- **Education about nutrition, dental and physical health**
- **Extended health care coverage for children with physical or mental disabilities, or mental illness**



Patients using these free health care services do experience the drawbacks of regular health care in Spain, so many expat families make arrangements for insurance that covers the needs of the whole family. Some reasons to do so include:

- **Shorter waiting time for appointments and treatments**
- **Access specialists without referrals**
- **Extended dental packages**
- **Ease of access to multilingual doctors**

# VACCINATIONS

You may be required to take vaccinations before you travel to Spain depending on your place of origin. Country-specific details on specific diseases to vaccinate against are available for reference on the European Commission's [official website](#).

The *Agencia Española de Medicamentos y Productos Sanitarios*, the Spanish Agency for Medicines and Health Products, publishes a recommended vaccination schedule annually, though each of Spain's 19 autonomous communities and cities have their own arrangements. Do check with your host region's health authorities for more information.



Immunisations for children are not legally required, but highly recommended. The Spanish healthcare system offers the following vaccines to children aged 14 and below for free:

- **Hepatitis B**
- **Diphtheria**
- **Tetanus**
- **Pertussis**
- **Polio**
- **Measles**
- **Mumps**
- **Rubella**
- **Haemophilus influenzae type B**
- **Meningococcus C**
- **Human papillomavirus (HPV)**
- **Chickenpox (for risk groups only)**
- **Pneumococcus (for risk groups only)**
- **Influenza (for risk groups only)**

# MENTAL HEALTH FOR CHILDREN



Paediatricians generally keep an eye on the psychological development of children and will make referrals to specialists on an as-needed basis. In-patient and out-patient care are offered in paediatric departments of most hospitals and may treat the following:

- **Eating disorders**
- **Attention deficit disorder (ADD)**
- **Hyperactivity**
- **Addictive behaviour**





# EDUCATION



Spanish schools are directly funded and overseen by individual autonomous communities, which are then governed by the *Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional*, the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training.

There are four major stages to schooling in Spain:

- From 0–6 years old, children attend *escuela infantil*, infant schools.
- From 6–12 years old, children attend *educación primaria*, primary education.
- From 12–16 years old, teenagers attend *educación secundaria obligatoria*, obligatory secondary education.
- From 15–18 years old, teenagers attend *bachillerato* or *formación profesional*, university preparations or vocational training.

# EDUCATION

It is compulsory for children to attend schools from ages 6 to 16 with the option to continue higher education at universities or vocational schools. The government has recently been improving the quality of vocational schools in response to high unemployment rates in the country.

There are three major types of schools:

- **Colegios públicos** are state-funded schools that children can attend for free, bar the cost of textbooks and other materials used in classes. Enrolment in public schools is dependent on the proximity of the campus to your residence or workplace, family income, disabilities, and if the child has siblings already attending the school.
- **Colegios concertados** are semi-private, state-subsidised schools that are subject to the education standards laid down by the government.
- **Colegios privados** are privately-funded schools that may charge as little as €300 a year, to €10,000–30,000. They offer alternative education paths such as the International Baccalaureate (IB). These include:
  - **International schools** that are popular among expats and available in 27 cities.
  - **Religious international schools**
  - **Schools with alternative teaching methods** such as Montessori, Waldorf-Steiner and Reggio Emilia.





Cigna®

INSIDE  
**EXPAT**  
**HEALTH**