

Hot Tips to Getting Married in Spain

Destination Spain!

Looking for a destination wedding location? Look no further than Spain, the largely undiscovered newest trend for sunshine elopements, vow renewals and wedding ceremonies.

Where else can you find palm tree lined beaches, romantic Moorish castles, olive groves stretching beyond the horizon, world class nightlife and free tapas all in one country?! Read my hot tips for getting married in Spain.



Photo credit: Sam Milling

Dig out your documents

The truth is that even if you have Spanish residency, it is very difficult to get married in Spain. Whether you contract a Civil Marriage or a Religious Marriage, the necessary documents are similar, all must be originals and all must be officially translated into Spanish.

So either, you can start digging out your birth certificate, passport, residency papers, registration with the town hall, certificate of marital status, certificate of no impediment a healthy dose of patience and a DNA sample (just kidding about the sample)..... or you can do things the easy way!

Take out a contract!

Let's be clear on the difference between a marriage and a wedding.

A marriage is the actual legal CONTRACT.

A wedding is the celebration or CEREMONY where the memories are made.

By far and away the easiest option is to contract your marriage in the country that you live in, then come on over to Spain for your symbolic wedding ceremony on the beach, in the olive groves, a Moorish castle or other dream location.

For example, if you are a British citizen, pop off to your local register office and for about forty pounds

GBP you can be legally married then hop on a plane to your ceremony in the sunshine and let the celebrations commence!

Consider Gibraltar

British citizens can also contract their marriage at the register office in Gibraltar.

A peninsular just off the Spanish mainland, Gibraltar remains under British law, so the bonus is that you can walk across the border from Spain and it is all in English. Contact the [Civil Status and Registration Office](#) for full information.

Choose your region

Spain is a very big country with 17 regions, all of which have different personalities according to their historical customs and the climate.

Without giving you a geography lesson, just know that the **North of Spain** can be cold and wet. The Basque Country is fiercely proud of its cultural difference in that it was never ruled by the Romans or the Moors. To be more certain of the weather, choose a wedding date in September or October.

Likewise, Catalonia in the **North East of Spain** holds onto its own language. For fairytale weddings in Gaudi inspired castles, head to the capital Barcelona.

In **Central Spain** you will find the contrast of the windmills and wide open plains as described in Don Quixote with the international urban opulence of Madrid's palaces and five star hotels.

The **West of Spain** borders Portugal. The pilgrim's route of Santiago de Compostella has given rise to many paradors – mostly historic buildings that are now beautiful, state-run luxury hotels, perfect for a wedding in a dramatic location.

The **East of Spain** contrasts the wild coast (Costa Brava) down to the white coast (Costa Blanca) with the high rise skyline of Benidorm somewhere in between. Win! Win! Bring your hens and stags to celebrate your last few nights of singledom then head off to a rustic Spanish farmhouse or "finca" wedding.

Andalusia in the **South of Spain**, is heavily influenced by its Moorish heritage. Even the name is Arabic, Al-Andalus. This a region of olive trees (one hundred million, but who's counting?) and a plethora of world-heritage palaces. But it is the average of 320 days of sunshine a year and the beautiful coastline that draws many couples to celebrate their wedding along the palm tree fringed beaches of the Costa del Sol and the lesser known Costa Tropical.

Island Wedding

Each of the Canary Islands and the Balearic Islands is different. Tenerife has volcanic black sand beaches whereas Ibiza is known as the white island and Mallorcan mountains contrast with the island's clubbing hotspot in Magaluf. Basically, the Spanish islands have something for everybody.



Photo: Debbie Skyrme aka Celebrant Spain with her dear friend Paqui at the wedding of her son Carlos

Spanish Wedding Traditions

So, you've contracted your marriage, you've chosen your Spanish Wedding Ceremony location, now all that remains is to select your **celebrant** to officiate your ceremony and make your vision of your perfect wedding in Spain a reality.

You might like to include some of the local Spanish Wedding traditions such as the **Arras coin ritual**. It is said that the 13 coins represent a commitment to financially provide and a responding promise to manage the housekeeping. In this day and age however, a Spanish couple often exchange one coin at a time, with a word of personal commitment pledging patience, honesty, support and so on. The twelfth coin is jointly pledged to their love.



Photo: ©Greg Korvin, Sol Wedding Marbella

Celebrating Ritual Differences

To symbolise family unity, one half of a Spanish bridal couple usually enters the ceremony with their **mother**, whilst their partner-to-be is escorted by their father. The parents stand by their son or daughter until the ceremony is complete and the families bonded by love.

In case you were wondering, Spanish wear their wedding ring on the third finger of their **right** hand.

And note that if a guest is single they wear their corsage **upside down** at a Spanish wedding... useful info for other singletons!

And finally, most guests to a Spanish wedding give the couple a **gift of cash** instead of a wrapped present. If you want to follow this tradition it will save you having to pay for extra suitcases to carry all your presents home, but on the other hand you may have to explain to the customs official why your bags are stuffed with used euro notes!



Biography: Debbie Skyrme is a wedding celebrant (former UK Deputy Superintendent Registrar) who crafts English speaking symbolic wedding ceremonies in southern Spain. Your perfect Destination Wedding Ceremony location is closer than you think!

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