



How to be a Gadget Savvy Traveller



# Spain



**Spain is all about fun and fiestas - you'll want to record your favourite moments, but how can you keep your gadgets safe, and what do you do if they're stolen?**

Fiona Flores Watson is a Seville-based travel writer and *blogger* who contributes to publications including Living Spain, Conde Nast Traveller, Spain Magazine and Olive.

@Seville\_Writer

When you're travelling around Spain, whether you're in the city, mountains, or at the beach, you'll bring some gadgets for taking photos and keeping in touch. Here we offer tips on how to look after them, and what you need to do if you're unlucky enough to be robbed.

## Before you go

If you're planning to go to Spain, read up on what's happening - you may find local ferias (fairs) are on while you're there. These are full-on, all-night eating, drinking, and dancing extravaganzas; but such crowds can be danger points for theft, so be aware. Some good sources of information are: [Spain.info](#), [Lonely Planet](#), [STA Travel](#) and [Spanish Fiestas](#).

A handy app is [Triposo Spain](#), which offers city guides featuring monuments, places to eat, maps, and useful phrases. The UK Government Foreign & Commonwealth Office offers [travel advice about Spain](#), including safety and security.

Make a detailed log of all items (including photos and serial numbers), in case of loss or theft, as well as receipts confirming their value for an insurance claim. You should also take your phone's IMEI number, a 15/16-digit number (enter `*#06#` on your phone).



## Hotspots

Bus and train stations are always popular hunting grounds for thieves, as travellers arriving or leaving are distracted by tickets, luggage and orientation; same goes for metro and bus networks. Any Starbucks or fast food outlet, frequented by foreigners, may be targeted by thieves.

Additional areas to be extra-careful in Madrid are: the Prado Museum, Retiro Park (best avoided after dark), north of Gran Vía, Puerta del Sol, and Plaza Mayor.

In Barcelona, the Rambla is notorious for pickpockets and thieves; be careful at night especially in the southern part. In Seville, Maria Luisa Park, and El Jueves market (Thursdays) in Calle Feria; at night, Alameda bars and by the river. Never leave any valuables unattended on the beach.

## What to watch



The most frequently targeted gadgets in Spain are mobile phones; never carry yours in your pocket, or put it down, even for a second.



In Spain, thieves often work in gangs: in a station, or a busy street, they will watch for travellers (give-aways: looking at a map, carrying luggage). One of them will use some excuse to distract you; then while your attention is diverted, another will grab your valuables. Dropping bird mess on you, then helping to wipe it off; offering flowers; and asking for directions, are some common distraction tactics.



Another scam is pretending to be police officers, asking to see your ID, and then running off with your wallet and/or bag. On the metro, gangs have been known to slash backpacks and steal valuables – always wear your bag on your front.

## When to watch

Obviously you need to be particularly vigilant about your gadgets at night – when you’re more relaxed after a few drinks, in a crowded bar or club. Also be careful in markets – while you’re looking at the food, handicrafts and other items on stalls, it’s easy for someone to sneak up, steal a bag, and run off into the crowd before you’ve even realised.

If you’re arriving at an unfamiliar destination, especially when tired after an overnight journey, or you’re catching a train or bus first thing, have a coffee so you’re properly awake, and less of an obvious target.

## Talk like a local

*Spanish phrases to use if you feel you’re in danger:*

**Leave me alone!**

**Dejame/dejame en paz!**

**Don’t bother me!**

**No me molestas!**

**This (these) person (people)/man/woman is (are) bothering me.**

**Esta(s) persona(s)/hombre/mujer me esta(n) molestando.**

**Excuse me, do you speak English?**

**Perdona, hablas ingles?**

**Can you help me please?**

**Me puedes ayudar, por favor?**

*To report lost/stolen goods:*

**My telephone’s been stolen.**

**Me han robado mi teléfono.**

**I’ve lost my camera.**

**He perdido mi camara de fotos.**

**Where’s the nearest police station?**

**Donde esta la comisaria mas cerca?**

**I want to report a crime.**

**Quiero hacer una denuncia.**

*Useful vocabulary:*

**Theft**

**Susstraccion**

**Loss**

**Extravío**

**Possessions**

**Efectos**

**The person making the denuncia, i.e. reporting the crime**

**Denunciante**

**Facts**

**Hechos**

**Gadget**

**Aparato**

**Theft without violence**

**Hurto**

**Thief**

**Ladron**

## What to do

Never take your eye off your bag – don't leave it on a chair, table, counter or bar, floor or anywhere where you're not physically holding it. Easy tips to keep your gadgets safe include not using camera or laptop bags, but nondescript ones; using a rucksack with lockable zippers; taking a cable lock to secure your bag to a bed or other furniture in your hostel, as well as padlocks for lockers.

**Pacsafe** makes bags with extra-strong, thief-proof straps and zips, plus slash-proof protection in the bag's most vulnerable areas. Or use a backpack with rear-access only compartment (can't be accessed while being worn on your back, only when taken off).

## Reporting a theft

You can make your denuncia (crime report) to the police by one of three methods. (Please note that the first two methods are only valid for theft without violence. In both cases, you must visit a police station and sign the denuncia within 72 hours.)

### 1) Por Telefono - By Telephone

Call 902 102 112 to report your crime to an English-speaking operator.

### 2) Por Internet - By Internet

On the Policia Nacional (National Police) website you can fill in an [online denuncia](#).

### 3) En Comisaria - In person at a Policia Nacional station

Find your closest police station [here](#). There are also **SATE** (Foreign Tourist Assistance Service) offices in Madrid; Malaga, Marbella and Estepona (Costa del Sol); Gandia and Benidorm (Costa Blanca); and Mallorca.

## Get connected



When travelling in Spain, and using your gadgets to keep in touch with those at home, or with friends or family who are also visiting or living in the country, beware. Using your mobile phone or other gadgets abroad means that you'll be "roaming", which can incur high charges. Even answering calls on your phone will cost you, giving you a nasty shock when you get your next bill back home.

However, there's a whole raft of other, cheaper options for staying in contact using your phone and gadgets while you're in Spain.

The first is to get a SIM to use in Spain, so you're on a local network, as long as your phone is "**unlocked**" (can use SIMs of networks other than your normal UK network). Pre-order a SIM online before you leave – that way you're all set up to call as soon as you step off the plane. Try these: **Simforspain**, **holidayphone** and **prepaidsimcard**.

For those who are travelling to other countries, a **Toggle SIM card** gives you nine local country numbers. If you have a UK mobile monthly plan, you can get an add-on for around £2 or £3 per day, which includes unlimited calls and text to European numbers. A great option for a short trip.

Bear in mind that WiFi is available for free in most hotels and hostels in Spain, as well as many cafes, so Skype is often a convenient way of communicating.

For super-bargain-priced calls from a Spanish landline (if you're staying with a local family, for example), pre-paid phone cards offer superb value. A 5 euro **Jazztel** card offers 3600 minutes of calls to UK landlines.

*Please note: All charges and fees are accurate as of November 2014*

Endsleigh Insurance Services Limited is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. This can be checked on the Financial Services Register by visiting their website at [www.fca.org.uk/register](http://www.fca.org.uk/register). Endsleigh Insurance Services Limited. Company No: 856706 registered in England at Shurdington Road, Cheltenham Spa, Gloucestershire GL51 4UE.