

## SPAIN

**S**PAIN (España) occupies the larger part of the Iberian Peninsula in southwestern Europe, which she shares with Portugal. Since a chain of massive mountains forms her northern border and virtually isolates her from the rest of Europe, the boundaries of this land have been scarcely disturbed by the events of history. Spain is separated from North Africa by the Straits of Gibraltar.

The country's total land area of 195,000 square miles (a little more than twice the size of the state of Oregon) includes two island groups—the Balearics off her eastern coast and the Canaries, sixty-five miles from the northwest coast of Africa.

To the visitor, this land offers a great deal. Her great natural beauty, historical cities, interesting customs, gay fiestas and some of the most beautiful buildings in the world (the Alhambra in Granada and the Palace of Alcazar in Seville) attract thousands of tourists each year.

Madrid, one of the great capitals of the world, dominates the high central plateau (Meseta) of Spain. It is the hub of a vast network of roads and railways. The city of 1,619,000 inhabitants, situated 2,000 feet above sea level, is the highest capital city in Europe. Barcelona, an impressive city of 1,500,000 located on the Mediterranean coast, is the second large city, the main industrial center and chief seaport of Spain. In Barcelona, as well as in all Spanish cities, there is a mingling of the ancient with the modern. Narrow cobblestone streets and quaint buildings mark the older section of the city; the modern part is a model of town planning and broad thoroughfares.

The strongly fortified Rock of Gibraltar, which guards the entrance to the Mediterranean from the Atlantic, is a well-known landmark near the southern tip of the country. Gibraltar has been a British Colony for nearly 250 years.

### CLIMATE AND TOPOGRAPHY

Few countries combine such extremes of both climate and topography. From the snow-capped Pyrenees of the north to the mellow sun-

Morning shopping is done from a perambulating grocery store. (Monkmeyer photo)



Hercules Tower in La Coruña

drenched hills of the south, from the bleak Atlantic fjords to the warm shores of the Mediterranean, from the Andalusian hills to the austere Castilian plateau (oppressed by the heat in summer, bitterly cold and windswept in winter), from the well-irrigated farms in Valencia to the rugged mountains of the west, and from the luxuriant farms of Motril to the sparsely settled deserts of Extremadura—this is Spain!

### PEOPLE

Apart from the Basques, the Spanish have developed from the mingling of Iberian, Phoenician, Roman, Gothic and Moorish blood. Spain's long and colorful history has contributed to the character, physical appearance, language and customs of its 30,000,000 inhabitants. The shrewd Galician, the obstinate Aragonese, the proud Castilian, the easy-going Andalusian and the vigorous Catalan, differ even more than a Frenchman differs from an Italian or an Englishman from a German. Nevertheless, they have in common fundamental characteristics which constitute a strong national spirit.

Spain is a land of peaceful and unhurried living. Although very poor, the peasant is, as a rule, a cheerful and happy person. For the most part, the people dress like other Europeans, although there is traditional apparel varying according to regions, which the people

The Magic Fountain in Barcelona



*Dave Brinkley  
reported  
from there  
this spring*