



Budget Planner for Study in Spain

To begin the process of determining your study abroad budget, you should cross-reference this guide with [Preparing to Study Abroad, Money Matters](#) and the program costs listed on our website, www.ifsa-butler.org.

The information in this guide was compiled by our IFSA-Butler Spain office based on personal experience and student feedback. Despite years of experience, however, we have yet to create a “perfect” budget. If you’re honest with yourself about your expectations and lifestyle, this guide will give you a good idea of how much money you will need while abroad.

Costs are in U.S. dollars unless otherwise stated.

Tips for Determining Your Budget

- When figuring your budget, enter the minimum amounts on which you think you could manage.
- Estimate a second set of figures that are more generous. Include items such as restaurant meals, personal expenses, entertainment and vacation travel. You might be able to afford the more generous projection.
- If your resources are limited, make adjustments based on close questioning of what you *really need*, what would be *nice to have* and what you *can do without*. Your final budget should fall somewhere in the middle.

The budget worksheet (see last page) itemizes costs you will incur in Spain. It is in three parts: **fixed expenses**, which are expenses prepaid in the United States in U.S. dollars; **variable expenses**, which are mainly incurred in Spain and include start-up and term-time costs; and **vacation expenses**, which are expenses for your university holidays in Spain and at the end of the program. We have also added a line where you should enter your personal resources, from which you will subtract your estimated expenses to determine a working budget.

Exchange Rates

The currency in Spain is the euro (€). The latest exchange rate is available at any bank, in most major newspapers and on the web at www.oanda.com.

Fixed Expenses

All students have the fixed expenses of the program fee and their transportation to and from Spain. Other expenses could include the [Tuition Payment Plan](#) enrollment fee, and travel and personal property insurance.

- **Program fee:** Use the “Services Included in the Program Fee” information in [Money Matters](#) to determine what is included in our program fee. Remember that your \$500 program deposit is credited to the fee.
- **Transportation costs:** Enter the cost of travel from your home city to Barcelona. If you choose to travel after the program, make sure you include the fare to the city from which your return flight to the United States will depart.
- **Tuition Payment Plan** (not applicable to all students): If you use the monthly payment plan through Tuition Payment Plan, enter the enrollment fee, which is \$55 for the year or \$35 for the semester.

- **Overload fee:** Some universities abroad charge a fee for taking more than the required credit, called overload fees. These universities do not always tell IFSA-Butler about the overload fee in advance. If you plan to take an overload while in Spain, investigate the possibility of additional fees. You are responsible for overload fees if they occur. The *Student Handbook* you will receive during orientation discusses a full course load so that you can avoid overloads and their related fees.
- **Cost of medical, travel and personal property insurance:** While in Spain, you will have medical coverage through an IFSA-Butler group medical plan, the cost of which is included in your IFSA-Butler program fee. See [Preparing to Study Abroad](#) for more information. You might also wish to secure personal property or travel insurance. IFSA-Butler is not responsible for your personal property.
- **Passports:** The fee for obtaining a U.S. passport is \$135 or \$110 to renew an expired one. If you already have a passport, check the expiration date to ensure that it is valid for six months past the time you will be in Spain. Information about obtaining passports is available at www.travel.state.gov.
- **Visa:** As an U.S. student, you must obtain a student visa from the Spanish government before leaving the U.S. Keep in mind that you may be required to visit a Spanish Consulate or Embassy in person in order to obtain your visa. The exact fee for obtaining a Spanish student visa varies according to the exchange rate, but the cost is around U.S.\$160.

It is important that you enter Spain with a student visa, not just a tourist visa. Not only is it illegal for you to go with a tourist visa, but once in Spain it is impossible to change your status from tourist to student. Student visas are granted only by Spanish Consulates outside of Spain. Immigration authorities in Spain will not grant student visas nor will they change your immigration status from tourist to student.

Variable Expenses

The costs and estimates in this section are in euros (€).

- **Personal items:** Estimate what you will spend on clothing, a new backpack or travel items. You will want comfortable, color-coordinated clothes and shoes suitable for walking, but you should also plan on buying some items in Barcelona. See the "packing" section in [Preparing to Study Abroad](#) for more information.
- **Orientation:** During the IFSA-Butler orientation in Barcelona, housing, meals and group activities are provided. However, budget about €100 for entertainment.
- **Course materials:** Our Spain office estimates that students will spend €200 on course materials (i.e. photocopies of required readings) for the full year or €100 for a semester.
- **Emergency reserve:** Whether it's a credit card or a cash reserve, set aside money for emergencies. You might want to consider €1,000.
- **Meals:** Students who select the host family option will receive two meals per day. Students at Residencia Travesera de Gracia can purchase and prepare their own meals, or choose from one of two meal plan options for a supplemental fee. Students housed at Residencia Gran de Gracia or in student apartments will be responsible for purchasing and preparing their own meals.
- **Local transportation:** Most students in Barcelona walk or take the Metro or bus. Single fares cost about €1; however, most students buy the T-Jove pass which allows unlimited journeys in Zone 1 (most of Barcelona) for 90 days and costs about €120. Your semester public transport costs will probably be around €150.
- **Personal expenses:** We recommend stocking up on toiletries and prescriptions before leaving the United States, if there is room in your luggage, as this will create space for souvenirs and new clothes on the return.

journey. Be sure to set aside money in case you need to visit a doctor or fill a prescription; we recommend €200.

Students can consult with their U.S. cell phone provider about purchasing an international SIM card in order to utilize their current cell phone while abroad. However, many students find it easier to purchase an inexpensive phone in Spain. Purchasing a cell phone ("un móvil") is very easy to do in Spain. Look for a prepaid cell phone so that you can continue to add credit to your account throughout your semester or year abroad. Additional information about cell phones will be given during the IFSA-Butler orientation.

- **Entertainment:** For some students, the cost of alcohol should be considered. A night in the clubs could cost as little as €12 or as much as €120, depending on your lifestyle. Some people find this to be a major budgeting problem!

While Barcelona boasts numerous free events, concerts or a special evening at the theatre may cost from €20-€80. Movies are about €6-€9. Staff in Barcelona will give you suggestions for entertainment that won't wreck your budget. Carry your student ID card everywhere; it provides special rates on entrance fees to museums, some archaeological sites and local transportation. You will receive additional information on this subject during orientation.

Vacation Expenses

We highly recommend that you invest in a good guidebook—*Let's Go*, *Lonely Planet* and *Rough Guide* are some of the best. A guidebook can help you find good deals on travel, lodging, dining and entertainment, as well as help you create a realistic vacation budget.

- **Travel:** Most students who travel within Spain go by air if going on long trips. Flying saves time, but it is very expensive. Buses are the best way to get around when traveling shorter distances. They are comfortable, punctual and less expensive. Check with the IFSA-Butler Spain office for advice on the cheapest and safest ways to travel and take your student ID with you. No matter where you're going be sure to check out U.S. State Department warnings; they're available at most travel agencies and on the web at www.travel.state.gov.
- **Accommodation:** Your program housing is covered during short university breaks. However, students staying over the semester break must find alternate accommodation and/or luggage storage. Our Spain office cannot store luggage.
- **Meals:** While traveling, most of your meals will be consumed in restaurants, so you might want to estimate €25 per day, not including beverages.
- **Personal expenses:** The telephone call component of your budget will be higher during vacation periods than during term time, but other expenses should be about the same. Entertainment and recreational expenses will vary. You will obviously need less if you're backpacking and hostelling instead of staying in city hotels. It's difficult to gauge how much you'll spend on clothing and gifts, but keep in mind you must carry (or ship) all those purchases home at the end of your program.

Approximate Costs of Commonly Purchased Items in Spain

Now you're ready to begin your budget planning. Check for the exchange rate by consulting the business section of any major newspaper or on the web at www.oanda.com.

Grocery Items

Liter of milk	€1-€2
Bread (baguette)	€1
Yogurt (personal size)	€0,50
Eggs (dozen)	€3
Cheese	€5-€15/kg
Soda	€1
Juice	€1,50/litre
Beef/steak	€9-25/kg
Apples	€4/kg
Oranges	€4/kg
Bananas	€3/kg
Potato chips (personal size)	€0,50
Sugar	€2/kg
Coffee	€10/kg
Potatoes	€2/kg

Personal Items

Cigarettes (pack)	€4-€5
Toothpaste	€2
Contact lens solution	€4-€6
Deodorant	€2
Shampoo/conditioner	€3
Soap (bar)	€1-€2
Tampons (box of 10)	€2
Hair dryer	€10-€15
Clothing iron	€20-€40
Box of detergent	€3-€10

Services

Haircuts	€15-€40
Rental movie	€3
Movie theatre	€5-€8
Museum or gallery	free-€20
Internet café	€1-3/hour
Fast food combo meal	€6
Beer in a bar	€2
Cup of coffee	€1
Alcohol/mixed drinks	€5-€10
Theatre (show student ID)	free-€80
Massage (one hour, at home)	€30-€100

Budget Worksheet— Spain

Fixed Expenses

	U.S.\$
Program fee (see your program fee sheet)	\$ _____
U.S. domestic and round-trip transportation	\$ _____
Passport fee	\$ _____
Visa fee	\$ _____
Tuition Payment Plan enrollment fee*	\$ _____

**may not apply to all students*

Total fixed expenses

A \$ _____

Variable Expenses

Personal items (clothing, luggage)	\$ _____
Personal expenses	\$ _____
Orientation spending money	\$ _____
Local transportation	\$ _____
Course materials (see your program fee sheet)	\$ _____
Entertainment	\$ _____
Emergency reserve fund	\$ _____

Total variable expenses (convert to U.S.\$)

B \$ _____

Vacation expenses (Check with travel professionals and/or guidebooks)

Travel costs (train, airfare, etc.)	\$ _____
	\$ _____
Accommodation	\$ _____
	\$ _____
Meals	\$ _____
Personal expenses, including entertainment	\$ _____

Total vacation expenses (convert to U.S.\$)

C \$ _____

Total estimated expenses (add lines A, B and C)

D \$ _____

List personal resources available such as savings, family contribution, financial aid, summer earnings, etc. Subtract your estimated expenses and you can anticipate your study abroad budget.

Total estimated resources \$ _____

Less total estimated expenses (line D) \$ _____

Your study abroad budget \$ _____