



Spain-Holiday.com  
Holiday rentals in Spain



# City Break Cost Index

Autumn/Winter 2019/2020



# Executive Summary

Welcome to our **City Break Cost Index** for 2019.

As Spain's leading online holiday rental website with over 20,000 holiday homes, Spain-Holiday.com has access to a wealth of data that can deliver insights into consumers' desires and demands when it comes to travel.

In our second **City Break Cost Index** we evaluate the most popular Spanish cities and the key trends and in-destination spending patterns that affect the way consumers approach their travel choices.

The key findings of the results show:

- Average spending on city trips is €160 (£145) per person per night.
- 40% of the budget is spent on accommodation.
- The second biggest expenditure (34%) is spent on tourist activities.
- Three out of the top five best value cities are located in Andalusia.
- Coastal cities with beaches are more popular in the Autumn/Winter months with visitors from Northern European countries looking to enjoy the warmer climate in Spain.

The Spanish tourism industry continues its success story with a record-breaking number of international visitors in 2018.

Although "sun and beach" holidays are still the number one holiday type with a market share of 28% there is a definite shift towards shorter breaks in city destinations.

International city trips are the fastest-growing segment of the leisure market and, over the decade 2007-2017 grew four times as much as the total holiday market according to ITB World Travel Trends 2018-2019.

**The city break market segment has increased 6% throughout Europe, including Spain, with the growth of European travellers taking city breaks doubling between 2007-2017.**

Who are city trip travellers?

- Mostly younger and middle-aged generations from a higher income bracket.
- Couples or groups of friends.
- Mainly interested in sightseeing, visiting objects of interest, enjoying the city atmosphere, shopping, and local gastronomy.
- Well informed about their destination before booking the trip thanks to online research.

This **City Break Cost Index** report reveals that Spain's "second cities" such as Cadiz, Cordoba and San Sebastian are growing in popularity as alternative city break destinations to the capital cities of Madrid and Barcelona.

With the continued weakened Pound against the Euro, in part due to the uncertainty of Brexit, the travel industry as a whole has been impacted on advanced travel bookings. However, the city break sector seems to be relatively untouched as the time period between booking and travelling is much shorter for city break type holidays.

This guide aims to provide clarity for travellers to plan and budget for a memorable weekend getaway in Spain in Autumn/Winter 2019/20

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# Key Findings

- The Andalusian city of **Malaga** offers the overall best value for a weekend break.
- The cost of visiting places of interest varies greatly across the cities. **Cadiz**, **San Sebastian** and **Malaga** offer the best value, costing less than €60 (£55) in total to visit the top 10 tourist attractions. In comparison, entrance to **Barcelona's** top ten attractions costs more than double at €135 (£122) per person.
- **Palma**, in Mallorca, is the most expensive city for a weekend break, followed by **Barcelona** and **San Sebastian**.
- A weekend in **Palma** costs approximately double the cost of a weekend break in **Malaga**, **Cordoba** or **Valencia**.
- The past 18 months has seen an exponential rise in the rental of e-bikes and e-scooters for tourists. The prices for an e-bike day rental can vary greatly from €8 (£7) in Alicante to €40 (£36) in Seville.
- Three out of the top five best value cities are in Andalusia - **Malaga**, **Cordoba** and **Cadiz**.
- **Alicante** has the most expensive airport-to-city taxi costing €65 (£59) for the 15km journey into the city centre; the same price as the 43km journey from Jerez airport to the city of **Cadiz**.
- The best value cities for airport transfer are **Malaga** and **Valencia** who both offer a variety of transport options – bus, train or metro, taxi and car sharing – to get to the city centre from the airport.
- Costing only €10 (£9) per person, the sightseeing bus tours in **Malaga** and **Alicante** are 66% cheaper than in **Barcelona**, which has the most expensive tourist bus costing €30 (£27) per person.



# Exploring Spanish Cities

The **City Break Cost Index** report offers an in-depth study into the typical spending costs of a traveller on a city break such as accommodation costs, airport transfer, food and drink and entrance fees to the main local sights and attractions.

Findings are based on a combination of Spain-Holiday.com's booking data as well as range of reliable sources and aims to provide the city break traveller with an invaluable benchmark of typical spending costs, city to city.

## An attractive holiday destination

2018 has been a record-breaking year for Spain's hospitality and leisure sector.

**Madrid** is the city furthest from the Spanish coast and is the most popular amongst tourists, with more than 9.7 million visitors in 2018. However, the capital is not the city of choice for international city trippers but is the most popular city break for the Spanish, with more than three times as many Spanish visiting Madrid than Barcelona.

**Barcelona** is the second largest city in Spain. It remains a magnet for foreign travellers. Of the more than eight million people who stayed in the Catalan capital in 2018, more than 6.5 million of them were international travellers, making Barcelona the most popular city in Spain for foreign visitors.

The Andalusian capital of **Seville** is the third most visited city in Spain with a total of 2,671,491 travellers in 2018.

The **Alhambra** in **Granada** is one of the most notable places of interest not only in Spain, but in the world, and continues to enhance visits to the Andalusian city. Last year, one million foreigners visited it, and added to the visits by Spaniards, the total figure amounted to 1,867,881.

**Valencia** is the third largest city in Spain, attracting 1,838,460 travellers in 2018 with its popularity due to the *City of Arts and Sciences* and its proximity to some of the best award-winning beaches in Spain.

In 2018, **Malaga** was awarded "**Best Tourist Destination**" by *Turespaña* for its quality in cultural and urban tourism. In total, it received 1,376,794 visitors, the majority of which were international.

There has however been a strong pull of tourists to Spain's "second cities" such as **Cadiz**, **Cordoba** and **San Sebastian** made more accessible thanks to low cost airlines offering direct flight routes to these destinations.

## Areas of spending

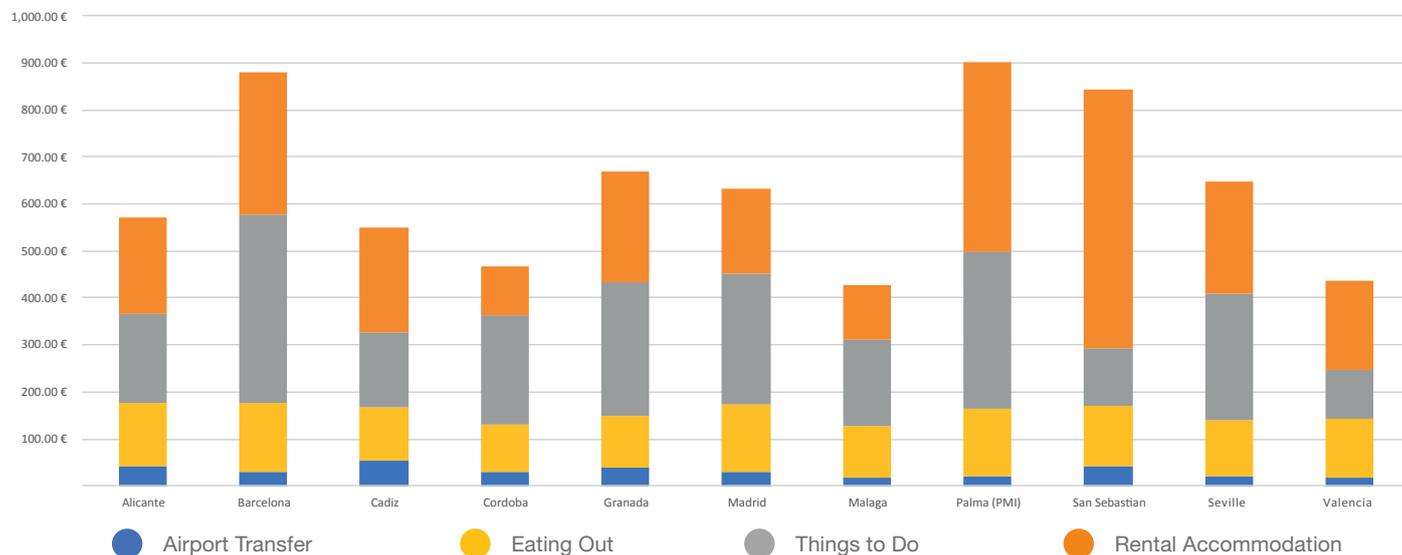
Accommodation, eating out and visiting local tourist attractions are areas that visitors are most likely to spend their budget on. The data shows that the average spending on city trips is €160 (£145) per person per night, including accommodation.

The biggest expenditure tends to be accommodation with visitors spending an average of 40% of the budget, approximately €250 (£227) for a 2-night stay in self-catering accommodation for 2 guests. Entrance fees to local places of interest is the second biggest expense accounting for one third (34%) of the holiday budget €116 (£106) per person.

## Capitalising on culture

Spain's unique landscape, history and world-renowned landmarks continue to appeal to overseas travellers, with 51% of international visitors saying the main reason they would visit Spain for a city break is for the culture. As many as 44% of visitors want to learn more about Spain's history and culture by visiting the numerous museums and cultural attractions, while 41% are particularly interested in the natural landscape.

## Breakdown of Spending Costs on a 2-Day City Break



\* Eating out for two people calculated on the average price of 2x three-course evening meal for two, 4x menu del dia, 4x beer and 4x coffee.

# Exploring City Costs: Airport Transfer

**TOP TIP:**  
Book a flight that arrives on a weekday daytime when taxi fares are standard rate and bus/trains should be running regularly.

Price is not always the deciding factor when choosing where to go on a city break. Time is an important factor on a short trip, so often getting from the airport to the accommodation as quickly as possible is one of the principal deciding factors when choosing transport method.

Taxi or car sharing may seem the obvious choice for the speediest way to get to your accommodation and officially get your holiday started but it is not necessarily the fastest or cheapest way.

The diagrams below show the most affordable and fastest means to get from the airport to the city including standard taxi fares and other means of transport such as *Uber* or *Cabify*, bus and train, where available.

Although recent laws in Spain have been relaxed on car sharing

licences, the cities of **Cordoba** and **Palma** do not allow car sharing such as *Uber* or *Cabify*.

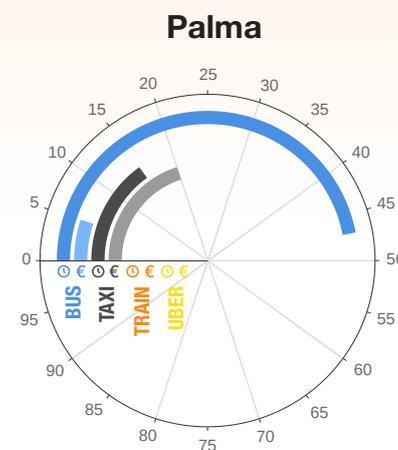
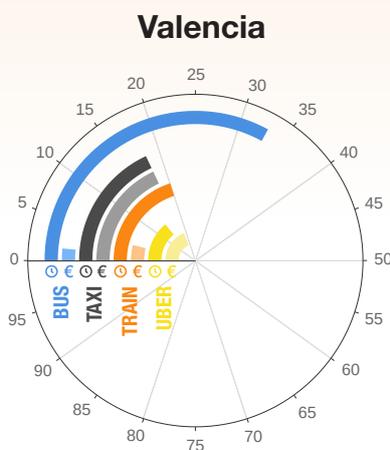
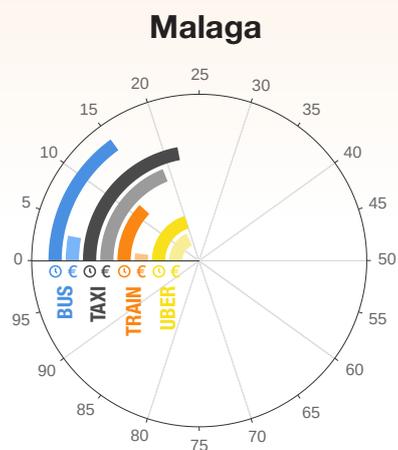
In **Madrid**, **Granada** and **Valencia**, it is cheaper to take a taxi than it is to take *Uber* or *Cabify*. And in **Malaga**, you would save just €1 (£0.90) with car sharing.

**Alicante** has the most expensive taxi fare from the airport to the city centre at €65 (£59) compared to the car sharing price of €29 (£26) for the 15km journey.

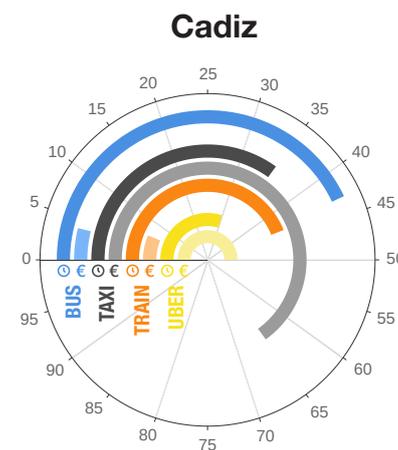
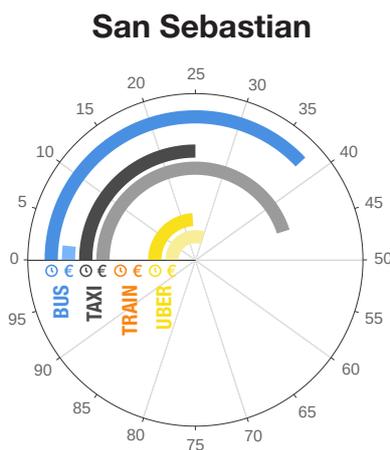
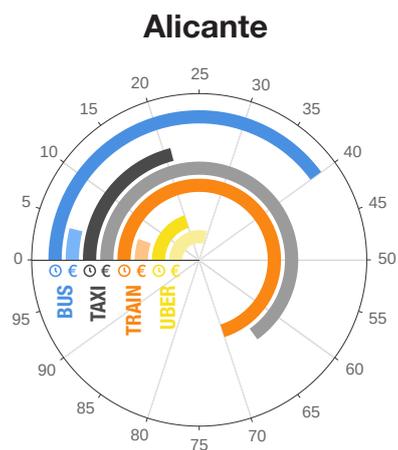
A taxi from **Valencia**, **Malaga** or **Palma** all cost less than €20 (£18) and take less than half an hour for the journey into the city.

Visitors to **Malaga** will spend less time in airport transit either by bus, taxi, train or car sharing, with all options arriving in the city in under 30 minutes.

## Top Three Cities for Cheapest Airport Transfer



## Top Three Cities for Most Expensive Airport Transfer



# Exploring City Costs: Accommodation

Spain-Holiday.com has analysed the price of centrally-located 1 or 2-bedroom quality rental apartments for a 2-night stay for two people.

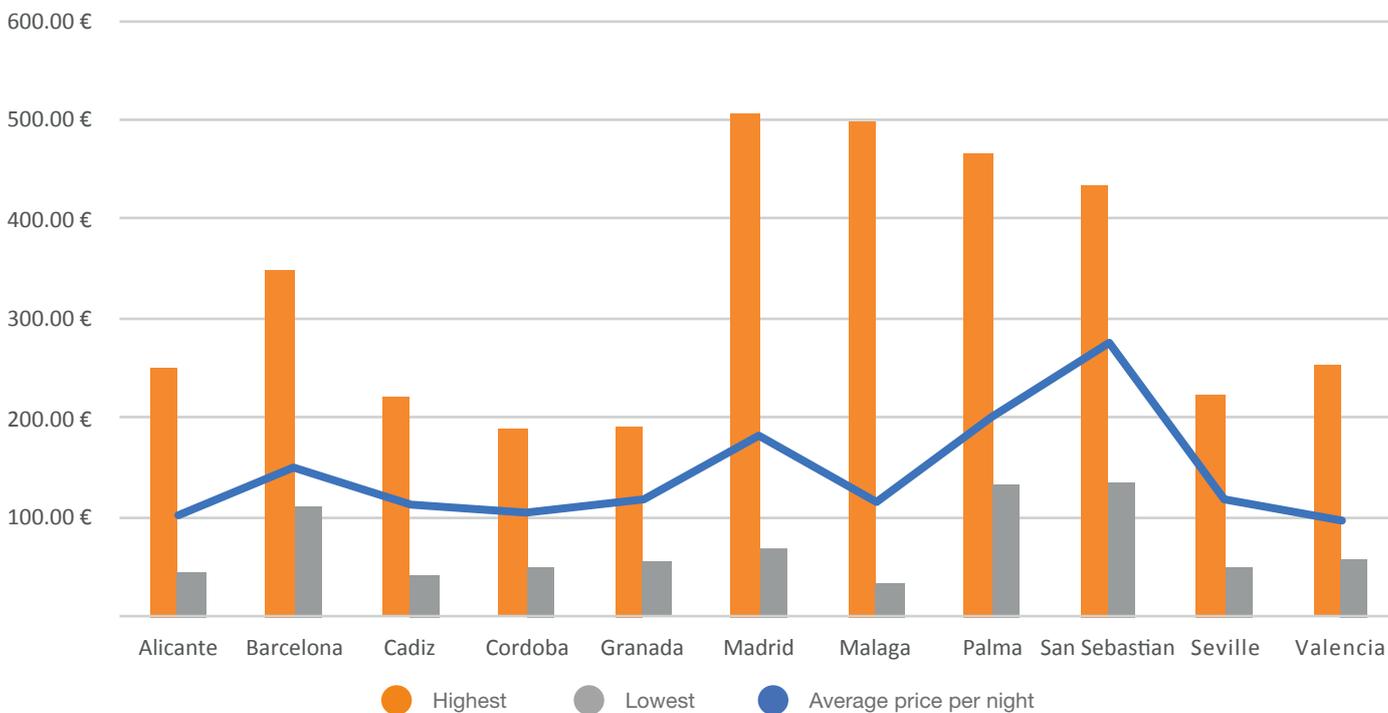
**Valencia, Alicante** and **Cordoba** offer the best value, cheapest accommodation.

**San Sebastian, Palma** and **Madrid** are the three most expensive cities in Spain for tourist accommodation.

With an average price for a 2-night stay for 2 people in **Valencia** costing €193 (£175), Valencia is 65% cheaper than similar accommodation in **San Sebastian** which costs €552 (£500).

For an average price of approximately €100 (£90) per night, a couple can find quality holiday rental accommodation in the city centres of **Alicante, Cordoba** and **Valencia**

Accommodation (price per night in Euros)



# Exploring City Costs: *Eating Out*

## TOP TIP:

Look for restaurants that offer "Menu del Dia" which is a set two- or three-course lunchtime menu including a glass of wine, beer or soft drink for approximately €10 (£9) per person.

Food is a great way to experience and explore the culture of a new destination.

43% of Brits state that gastronomy is a key deciding factor in choosing a particular place to visit.

With this in mind, the report looks at the average price of food and drink staples in the most popular Spanish cities. These

include a three course evening meal with a bottle of wine for two, a lunchtime set "menu del dia", a coffee and a pint of Spanish beer.

The three cheapest cities for eating out are the Andalusian cities of **Cordoba**, **Malaga** and **Granada**. By comparison, the three most expensive cities for food and drink are **Barcelona**, **Palma** and **Madrid**.

## Eating Out Cost Comparison

Destination	Meal for two	Menu del Dia	Coffee	Beer
Alicante	€ 35.00	€ 10.00	€ 1.94	€ 4.27
Barcelona	€ 46.80	€ 40.00	€ 1.86	€ 3.00
Cadiz	€ 30.00	€ 10.00	€ 1.48	€ 2.20
Cordoba	€ 26.50	€ 9.00	€ 1.30	€ 1.75
Granada	€ 30.00	€ 9.00	€ 1.48	€ 2.00
Madrid	€ 40.00	€ 11.00	€ 1.72	€ 3.00
Malaga	€ 30.00	€ 9.00	€ 1.48	€ 2.00
Palma	€ 40.00	€ 12.00	€ 1.92	€ 2.50
San Sebastian	€ 35.00	€ 10.00	€ 1.58	€ 3.00
Seville	€ 32.00	€ 10.00	€ 1.36	€ 2.45
Valencia	€ 35.00	€ 10.00	€ 1.51	€ 2.00

The average price for a 3-course evening meal for two including a bottle of wine in the multicultural city of **Cordoba** is only €26.50 (£24). This is approximately one third cheaper than dining out in **Barcelona**, **Palma** and **Madrid** where the average price of the evening meal for 2 is €40 (£36).

Thirsty beer drinkers should head to **Cordoba** where a domestic pint costs €1.75 (£1.60) on average compared to a sobering €4.27 (£3.87) in **Alicante**.

# Exploring the City: Local Experiences

## TOP TIP:

Many museums and art galleries offer free entrance on Mondays. Flexible travel dates can make significant savings.

Not everyone on a city break is a “culture vulture” with plans to hit the museums, art galleries and cultural attractions. Some prefer to simply soak up the city ambiance, shop ‘til they drop or indulge in the gastronomy. However, one universally popular thing to do on a city break is go sightseeing around the city.

Each city offers day passes for their “Hop On Hop Off” buses, but in recent years there has been a significant rise in the rental of e-bikes and e-scooters.

**Malaga** and **Alicante** are the cities with the cheapest

sightseeing buses costing €10 (£9) for a 1-day adult pass, compared to **Barcelona’s** “Hop On Hop Off” tourist bus which costs three times the price at €30 (£27).

The prices for an e-bike day rental can vary greatly from €8 (£7) in Alicante to €40 (£36) in Seville.

The report also compared the entrance fees for the top ten attractions and places of interest in each city which include cultural attractions, museums, art galleries as well as natural attractions such as city parks.

## Local Experiences Cost Comparison

 Destination	 Total Top 10 Attractions	 Day Pass Tourist Bus	 24h E-bike Rental
<b>Alicante</b>	€ 84.70	€ 10.00	€ 8.00
<b>Barcelona</b>	€ 148.39	€ 30.00	€ 35.00
<b>Cadiz</b>	€ 46.75	€ 12.25	€ 25.00
<b>Cordoba</b>	€ 90.75	€ 19.99	€ 14.00
<b>Granada</b>	€ 109.84	€ 18.00	€ 25.00
<b>Madrid</b>	€ 107.58	€ 22.00	€ 20.00
<b>Malaga</b>	€ 62.26	€ 10.00	€ 25.00
<b>Palma</b>	€ 143.99	€ 12.00	€ 24.00
<b>San Sebastian</b>	€ 33.83	€ 12.00	€ 18.00
<b>Seville</b>	€ 86.90	€ 16.30	€ 40.00
<b>Valencia</b>	€ 83.82	€ 17.00	€ 10.00

**San Sebastian**, **Cadiz**, and **Malaga** are the three cheapest cities to visit their top attractions. It costs less than €60 (£51) per person to visit the top ten attractions in each city, with several of them free of charge.

**Cadiz** has the most attractions that are free to visit, including castles and museums. It is the cheapest city to explore its most popular tourist attractions with seven of the top ten attractions free of charge to enter. In comparison, all the main tourist sights in **Cordoba**, **Granada**, **Madrid** and **Palma** charge entrance fees.

The most expensive cities in terms of visiting sites of tourist interest are **Barcelona**, **Palma** and **Granada**. It costs €200 (£181), €167 (£151), and €143 (£130) respectively to visit the

top ten attractions in each city.

The *Sagrada Familia* in **Barcelona** is the most visited attraction in Spain, and ranked 6th most popular in the world, with more than 4.5 million visitors annually. An adult entrance fee costs €22 (£20).

The *Alhambra* in **Granada** is one of the most notable places of interest not only in Spain, but in the world, and continues to attract visits to the Andalusian city. Last year, one million international travellers visited it and, in addition to the visits of Spaniards, the total figure amounted to 1,867,881. An adult entrance fee to the *Alhambra* and *Generalife* costs €14.85 (£13.50).

# Conclusion

City trips are the fastest growing holiday market segment with an increase of 6% in 2018.

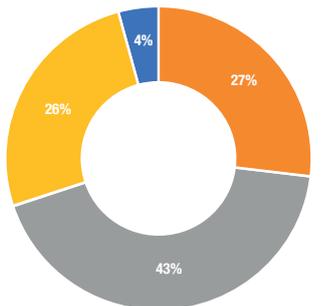
It is no coincidence that the trend for city breaks is increasing year on year.

A shorter city break provides the ideal opportunity to visit somewhere new without breaking the bank or using up too

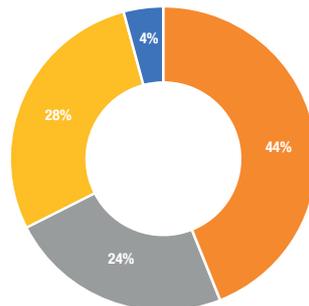
much annual work vacation. Exploring a new city with a few days full of sightseeing, cultural, gastronomic and relaxing experiences can recharge the batteries in the same way as a week or two on the beach.

## Top Three Best Value Cities

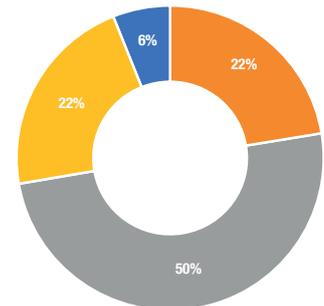
### Malaga



### Valencia



### Cordoba



Overall, the **Spain-Holiday.com City Break Cost Index - Autumn/Winter 2019/20** reveals a variety of results. Although Spain remains the number one most visited country in the world, with the majority of international visitors (28%) choosing beach holidays, city breaks holidays have increased by 6% in 2018.

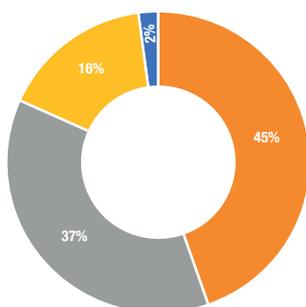
Many of these cities were once considered just the location of the airport as opposed to a holiday destination. However, with the change in travel trends and habits away from “fly and flop” beach holidays to holidays that offer a more unique experience, city breaks are increasing in popularity.

Autumn and Spring are the most popular seasons for city trips to Spain due to the Mediterranean climate.

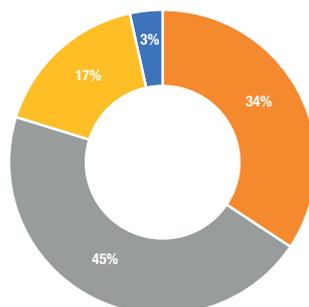
The Andalusian cities of **Malaga**, **Cordoba** and **Cadiz** have a great appeal for a short break and offer great value on accommodation, eating out and local experiences. Two more Andalusian cities, **Seville** and **Granada** also appear in the list of most popular city break destinations thanks to their rich multicultural heritage, architecture and sights of tourist interest as well as their gastronomy.

## Top Three Most Expensive Cities

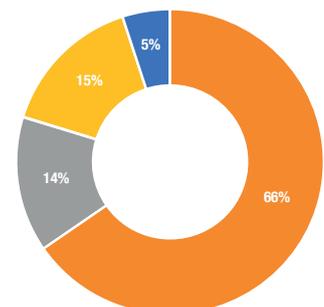
### Palma



### Barcelona



### San Sebastian



# Methodology

Exchange rate as per 28th August 2019 of €1 to £0.91.

Cities were selected based on the most searched for destinations on Spain-Holiday.com. Fieldwork was conducted in August 2019.

Airport transfer costs extracted from official transport pricing for bus, train, metro and car sharing in August 2019. Taxi fares are based on standard tariffs in September 2019.

Eating Out costs are based on the average price for two 3-course evening meal, four lunchtime “menu del dias”, beers and four coffees.

Eating out data extracted in August 2019 from sources that utilise crowdsourcing techniques to collect and aggregate price data on global prices and quality of living etc. While this method provides regular data updates from a large sample, there may be issues with data quality and consistency over time. Therefore, prices should be considered representative with considerable room for measurement and sampling error.

Accommodation data was collected from available 1 or 2-bedroom quality rental accommodation in city centre locations for September and October 2019, taking the average price of a 2-night stay for two people. The data ignored peak prices and price fluctuations based on the date and availability so actual prices may vary.

The price of local experiences, day passes for tourist buses and 1-day e-bike rentals are based on prices available at the time of publication



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## Accommodation

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## Eating Out

numbeo.com



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