

Do's and Don'ts when motoring

Newer arrivals in Spain tell me that they are very confused after reading blogs which give contradictory information about motoring. They are then more confused by the bar-room lawyers who know everything and nothing. Professional advice from seasoned practitioners in any area is always best, so here are some tips regarding motoring in Spain

What paperwork should we carry

Driving licence (Carnet de Conducir)
Registration document (Permiso de Circulacion)
ITV card (Tarjeta Inspeccion Technica de Vehiculos)
Insurance papers (Seguros) including accident report form

Some people are nervous about carrying these documents in their car in case either the documents or the car itself are stolen. Notarised copies are acceptable but it is prudent to have plain copies available in case of loss

What physical items should be in the car?

Two warning triangles. In the case of breakdown or accident these should be placed at sufficient distance in front of and behind the car on 2-way roads and behind the car only on a one-way street or motorway to alert following traffic. The actual siting will vary depending upon where the car is stopped in relation to bends etc.

At least two reflective jackets. These should be readily available to the driver and passenger *before they exit the car*. Anyone leaving the car when it has broken down or been involved in an accident must wear a high- viz vest, so it makes sense to have enough for the amount of passengers that you may carry.

Has anyone else noticed that whilst very few Spanish drivers seem to obviously carry hi-viz vests, foreign plated cars have them hanging over their back seats which is very sensible but many also have stickers showing bulls, "I love Spain" and "Barcaloony English radio" on the rear. How I wonder do they explain to the police that they are only holiday makers and do not need to re-register their vehicle?

There was previously a need for a spare set of bulbs for all of the lights in the car. The law on this changed so that it is no longer compulsory because with many cars it is a workshop job to actually change them

If you wear glasses, then you must carry a spare pair in the car. I am also advised that if you have had correctional surgery (such as laser treatment) on your eyes, this must be noted on your driving licence!

Whilst not obligatory, it is recommended that you have both a fire extinguisher and first aid kit in the car. A personal recommendation is a bottle of water also in case you break down in the searing heat as I once did

Whilst a first aid kit is not compulsory, it is against the law in Spain not to render assistance to someone who has had a personal injury

What are the general restrictions?

Pets must be kept in a caged area at the back of the car or totally strapped in. This is also recommended for boisterous children!

You cannot eat or drink whilst driving and I don't just mean alcohol. Yeah I know, you may spill it, but not even water can be taken whilst driving. Conversely, you may smoke whilst driving, though throwing lighted butts out of the window is definitely forbidden as many roadside fires are started this way

You can adjust your radio, but not your GPS (Sat-nav). You cannot use a phone, except via a speaker and microphone

The only screens that can be displayed are sat-nav, monitors for seeing what your back seat passengers are up to, especially kids, and a screen that shows the back of the car, normally used when reversing

What to wear whilst driving

Your feet must be in strapped footwear so sandals are OK, but flip-flops are not. You cannot drive bare-footed, nor indeed bare chested!

Hey ho, all common sense stuff I guess, but if you are unsure please get in touch

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