

Climates of Spain

Spain has a mainly **temperate climate**. It is warmer and drier than most of Europe because it is in the south of the temperate climate zone of the Northern Hemisphere. In most of Spain, there is a considerable difference between the **seasons**. Summer is the hottest season, and winter is the coldest. Spring and autumn are the wettest seasons.

The climate of Spain is influenced by a number of factors:

- **Latitude.** The climate is hotter and drier in southern Spain, and colder and wetter in the north.
- **Atmospheric pressure.** The Azores anticyclone moves to Spain from North Africa in the summer, causing warm, dry weather. In winter, cold dry air reaches Spain from northern Europe.

- **Distance from the sea.** Precipitation is greater and temperatures are milder near the sea because of air humidity.
- **Altitude.** Temperatures are lower, and precipitation is greater, in mountainous regions.

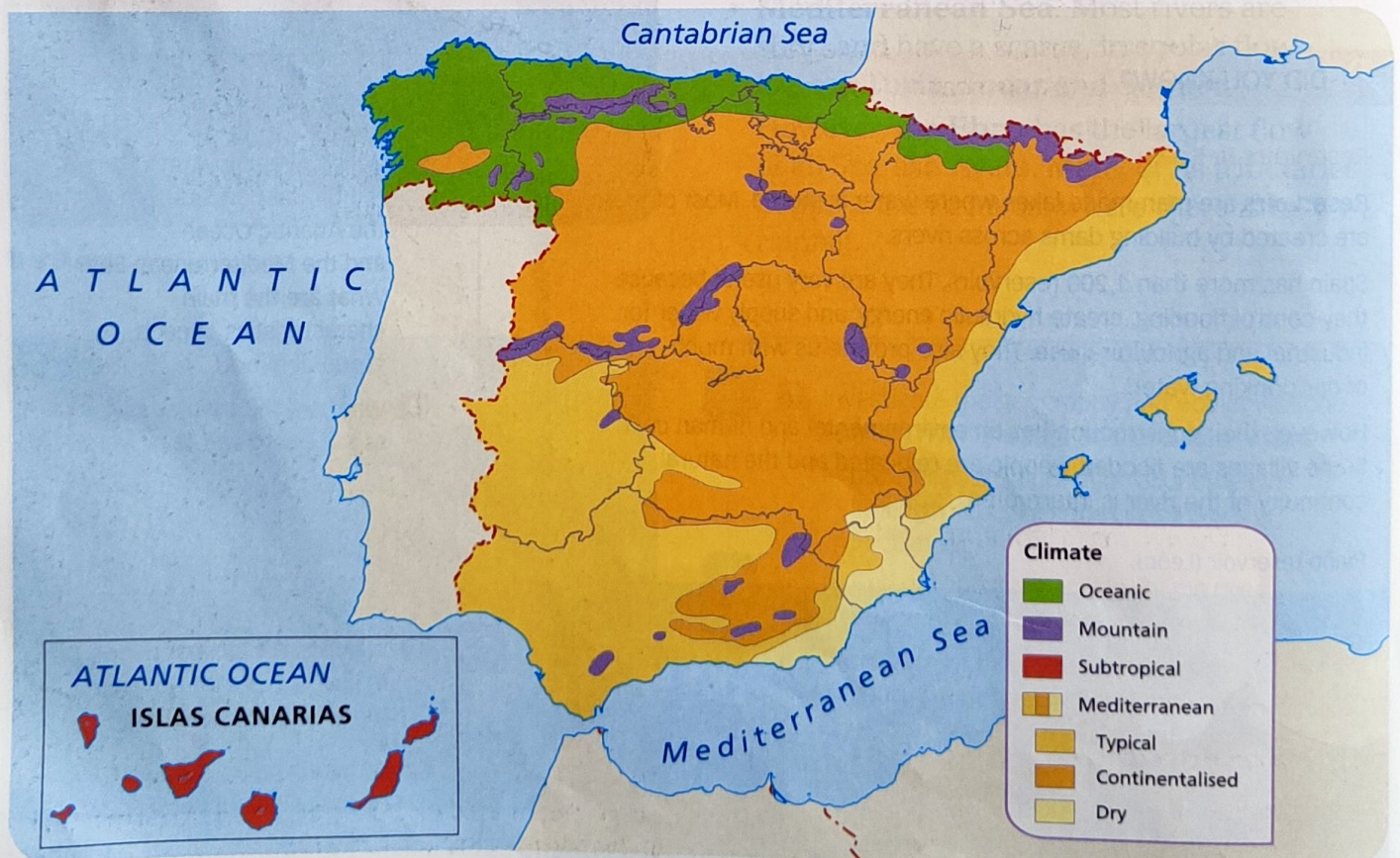
There are three main types of climate in Spain: **oceanic**, **Mediterranean** and **subtropical**.

The oceanic landscape

The north and northwest of the Península Ibérica has an oceanic (or Atlantic) climate and landscape.

- **Climate.** The **Atlantic Ocean** regulates temperatures, which are usually mild. Rainfall is heavy and regular throughout the year.
- **Vegetation.** There are **deciduous woods**, where oak, chestnut and beech trees grow. **Moorland** is found in high areas. In some regions, **meadows** have replaced the natural vegetation.

CLIMATES OF SPAIN



The Mediterranean landscape

A Mediterranean climate and landscape is found in the east, south and centre of the Península Ibérica, as well as on the Islas Baleares, Ceuta and Melilla.

- **Climate.** Precipitation is mainly scarce and irregular.
 - In **coastal regions**, temperatures are mild because of the proximity of the sea.
 - On the **Meseta Central**, the mountain ranges are a barrier against the influence of the sea. Consequently, summers are extremely hot and winters are very cold.
- **Vegetation.** In **Mediterranean forests**, evergreen trees like the holm oak, cork oak and Mediterranean pine grow.
 - In many regions, shrubs like rosemary, thyme and lavender have replaced the forests.
 - In coastal regions, fruits and vegetables are grown.



Parque Natural Collados del Asón (Cantabria).
An oceanic landscape.



Parque Nacional de Cabañeros (Ciudad Real).
An inland Mediterranean landscape.



Parque Nacional de Garajonay, in La Gomera (Santa Cruz de Tenerife). Subtropical vegetation.

The subtropical landscape

A subtropical climate is found in the Islas Canarias, which are close to the Tropic of Cancer.

- **Climate.** Temperatures are mild all the year round, and precipitation is scarce, especially in the eastern islands.
- **Vegetation** includes date palms, pine trees, drago trees, and laurisilva vegetation.



1 Bring photos of Spanish landscapes into the classroom. In groups, ask your classmates to identify them as oceanic, Mediterranean or subtropical landscapes.



2 Search the internet for information about your Autonomous Community. Complete a fact file with the following information:

My Autonomous Community	
Relief	...
Climate	...
Rivers and lakes	...
Vegetation	...