

THE IMAGE OF SPAIN ABROAD IMPROVING



According to the Elcano Royal Institute's barometer, the Spanish sunshine, gastronomy and athletes are more highly valued than the country's economy, investment opportunities, or companies. The image of Spain, the "Spain brand", is moving in the right direction, but has not yet made sufficient progress.

In the barometer, Spain obtained a 7.1 average, finishing behind other large European countries. While Spain is no longer associated with the economic crisis, it is still seen mainly as a tourist destination. **The Spanish sunshine, bull fights, and gastronomy are seen as the country's most reliable assets - far surpassing the economic capacity or the ability for technological innovation.**

This is the assessment established by the Elcano Royal Institute during the seventh iteration of its Barometer of the Image of Spain based on the interviews of 4 468 citizens from 11 European, Asian, African and American countries.

The study showed, above all, that Spain's most highly valued commodities are its possibilities as a vacation destination, its high-quality gastronomy as well as its elite athletes. Spain's economy, investment opportunities and industries appear much lower on the list of its valued assets.

The Germans, British and French associate Spain primarily with sunshine; the Italians, Chileans, Chinese, Japanese and Turks associate the country with bull fighting. Spanish cities, flamenco and football also form part of the collective image.

The Elcano Institute picked up on the fact that Spain continues to distance itself from the image of being "poor", which in 2015 many Europeans considered Spain to be due to the crisis. Despite this fact, 63% of Germans and French citizens still define Spain in this way, while the British and Italians are divided 50/50 in their perception.

The perception of Spain as being a "leisure" country instead of a "hard working" one has decreased by 40% since 2014 - reaching 26% in Germany. Along the same lines, German citizens have more confidence in all of Spain's various facets. In the USA and France, the description of Spain as being a rich, modern and urban country is also increasing.

In the United Kingdom however, the changes have been much smaller despite there being a noticeable increase in the confidence displayed towards Spain and a decrease in the number of people who consider Spain to be a poor country.

Zara, the country's bestselling brand, continues to be the best-known brand at an international level as well as being the most highly valued - receiving a grade of 7.5 on the report. Next in line are Iberia airlines (7.2), the bank: BBVA (7.0), the car manufacturer: Seat (7.0) and Telefónica/Movistar (7.0).

Spanish oils, wines and textiles - ambassadors of the "made in Spain" label - are at the same level of those produced by the Italians, French and British in terms of purchase intent. All in all, Spain received an average grade of 7.1 out of 10 as a country, finishing behind Japan (7.6), Germany (7.6), the United Kingdom (7.5), France, Italy and the United States, but ahead of China, Chile, Ecuador,

Morocco and Turkey.

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