

CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF SPAIN AND ITALY

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Introduction

If you look around, you will see different people. Somebody you know very well all your life or significant amount of time; or you can know only the name of this person, but even knowing nothing about this person, you can tell something about him or her from his/her clothes, speech, appearance, etc. Mentality is a way of thinking, and different ways of self-expression. So, mentality is a very significant thing, which could give a lot of information about different sides of human life and activities.

We don't think about mentality, while we deal with people of our nationality and religion, because we are very much alike. Let's imagine situation, when you find yourself in another country, with unknown people around you, who speak a foreign language and differ greatly in appearance with you. This is very complicated emotionally; everybody will feel uncomfortable in such a case. To avoid this, it's necessary to find out a lot of information about different sides of these men life.

We'll try to compare two South European countries, Spain and Italy. Their languages, location and religion are very similar, but there are many differences as well.

Location

Italy is located in Mediterranean Sea basin and occupies Apennine Peninsula, Paden plain, South Alps slope, islands of Sicily and Sardinia and a number of small islands.

Spain is the country on the European south-west, it covers approximately 85 per cent of Iberian Peninsula in Mediterranean Sea and Canary Islands in Atlantic Ocean.

About economics and business

Italy is a highly developed industrial and agrarian country. This country sets a fashion in design, manufacture and production of clothes and domestic appliances all over the world. Fiat (auto industry), Montedison (manufacture of plastics), Olivetti (communications) and Benetton (production of clothing) are the most famous leading firms. Tourism is also developed in Italy. There are many health resorts with fine hotels.

Spain is highly developed too. But it is more agrarian than industrial. The most important branch is harvesting and export of cork crust. Besides Spain has the most stable banking system in the world. It is one of the major international tourism centres as well.

Food

Italy

It is worth to visit Italy for Italian cooking and wines. Italy is proud of its cooking. For a starter, at the beginning of the meal antipasta (pieces of toasted bread with tomato), olives and smoked foods are served up. Connoisseurs can taste a Carpaccio, thinly sliced fresh raw veal, seasoned several hours in vinegar, soused by olive oil and lemon juice and sprinkled with cheese parmigiano.

The first course is the paste. This is spaghetti spiced with different dressing, which recipe has come down from father to son. To the first course the rice meals and soup are related too.

The second Italian course of the meal is underdone beef steak or beef steak with crispy crust, delicate swordfish, and baked pheasant with artichokes. That is all provoking appetite and compelling the desire to eat much more than usual. In this case Italians have a fine bal-

sam, which is called “amaro”, what is translated like “bitter”. This balsam is drawn on herbals and it helps to digestion.

Don’t forget about a cup of coffee. Usual coffee portion in Italy is a half of a coffee cup, but in this little portion a great energy is charged.

There are many snack bars, where you can buy sandwiches. You also can find pizzeria, where you may see, how pizza is being cooked in real stove on firewood. The interior is usually very simple but pizza is really good.

The North of Italy is famous for its white wines; Tuscany is famous for Chianti (a dry red wine). Out of strong drinks grappa and different liqueurs are worth tasting.

Spain

The modern Spanish cooking is various; it was much influenced by Romans and Moors, and later Americans. The primordial Spanish cooking is simple as peasant food. Basically it is the onion, garlic, sweet pepper and verdure. They do not eat very spicy food, but on the other hand the saffron is used plentifully. One can’t but mention the “tapas”, different Spanish light snacks. They are served up to beer, wine, cider or like a snack before the dinner in every bar or cafe every day or night. At first the farmer bread or olive was served up to dinner, but now tapas become so popular that as snacks they are served up with everything from the paella to the Spanish omelette.

The first course is usually the cream soup, for example, semolina cream soup with almonds. Such soup is like our soup. The cream soup is followed by the interim special snack of macaroni with stewed vegetables without garnish. In this case the vegetables are not served up as the second course. The meat second course is usually stewed or broiled. The poultry meals are very popular along with the meals of beef, veal, pork and lamb. Chicken and seafood can enter into the composition of famous paella. Paella is the true Spanish meal which presents cooked rice with the addition of a great number of ingredients, beginning with chickens and ending with oysters, prawns and vegetables. Paella is different in different regions! Puddings are the most popular dessert; Spanish people like sweet pies with almonds cream as well.

They prefer natural red wines and mineral water. Spanish beer is notable for its high quality and low cost. The Spanish beer can be of two types: “good or very good”

Bar and restaurants

Italy

If you come to bar to drink a cup of coffee or a glass of juice and you are not going to pass away the time, don’t hasten to sit down. Coffee and juice will be twice more expensive at the table, than it will be in the bar.

Restaurants in Italy are open from 12 a.m. till 15 p.m. and in the evening from 18 till 24 p.m., that is why from 15 till 18 p.m. you can eat only in bars or in cafeteria. In Italy it is usual to give a tip. The tip is about 1 euro to chambermaid, receptionist, and waiter. To tip more than 5 euro is not acceptable.

Spain

The variety and wealth of national cooking multiplied by the adherence to culture of “plate and tablecloth” promoted that everywhere it is easy to find a place for good cooking, both in domestic surroundings and in the famous blue-chip restaurants everybody can find suitable quality-price ratio according to one’s taste or habit.

Restaurants in Spain are open till 24 p.m., sometimes till 3-4 hours at night. It is a custom in Spain to give a tip, it is even officially accepted. It is given both by tourists and locals. The tip given is about 10-15% of the service cost to chambermaid, receptionist, waiter, taxi-driver, porter and driver of sightseeing bus.

Mentality

Italy

Italians are very interesting people! On the one hand they are eccentric talkers with expressive facial expression and active gesticulation to attract attention in any way, on the other hand they are staid and loving their family people. Italian men are always gallant to every woman, but family is sacred, and the head of the family is always carrying about the photo of his wife and children. This people like to talk about their family, job and they like to boast about their own achievements.

If you ask an Italian man to show you the way in the street, he will explain in detail or offer to take you to the place. There is one little problem: there are few English-speaking people and the gesticulation could help in this case.

Spain

The basic element in Spanish mentality is vitalism (display of love to life in all respects), individualism and humanism. Spanish live realizing their energy in passionate impulse. Life for Spanish is a drama, where the role of main character is played by him/her, so personal experience, sympathies and attachments have a greater importance than abstract ideas and principles. The Spanish attitude to surrounding reality is formed from a position "I and world". The centre of attention is focused on a human being with his/her feelings, congenial soul, and friends and only then on the country and humanity in general. They spend a lot of time in bars, restaurants and coffee houses. These are the most comfortable places for meeting with friends and colleagues.

Business

Italy

When Italians introduce themselves, they usually add to the first name their profession or specialty, for example: "Vincent, journalist". So, if you introduce yourself, you need to do the same.

It is accepted to make compliments to lady even on a formal party. Of course, don't forget about siesta, it lasts from 13 till 16 p.m. This is the hottest time, when all banks, shops, restraints are closed, and it is impolite to make an appointment or even to call each other.

Italians like when their business partner shows interest to Italy like a country, which is the mother of many kinds of arts and useful crafts. To show the respect and knowledge in this sphere produces a good impression.

It is very important for Italians to carry on negotiations with people who occupy a similar position in business. To bridge business relations it is enough to make an exchange of business letters with offers. It is of great significance that the informal meeting with partners were included on the programme of the business time-table. Hospitality plays a key role in Italian business culture. Invitations to lunch and dinner are to be expected when doing business there. On such occasions a small exclusive group will usually be present. Each attendee will have a particular interest in your visit. Dining does have certain protocol in Italy. However, do not place too much emphasis on this as more time would be spent worrying about etiquette mistakes than enjoying the experience. Major etiquette tips are that the most honoured guest sits at the middle of the table or on the right of the host; the host always pays; pass dishes to the left; keep your knife in the right hand and fork in the left and do not answer phone calls at the table (Полянина Н. Б. Английский язык: межкультурная коммуникация. Конспект лекций. Красноярск. ИПК СФУ 2008).

What is common for Italians? They have a fast pace of business doing, intensive communications and open attitudes. They are sensitive to basic and widely accepted etiquette

Spain

It is very difficult to have business relations with Spanish, because they are very unreliable people regardless of social position. Punctuality is not about them. They abhor the limitation of individual liberty. If you try to remind about the business scheduled long ago, you

would be answered “manana”, what means tomorrow, next week or month, some time or never.

If invited to a Spaniard's home, you can bring chocolates, pastries, or cakes; wine, liqueur, or brandy; or flowers to the hostess. If you know your hosts have children, they may be included in the evening, so a small gift for them is always appreciated. Always request your check when dining out in Spain. It is considered rude for wait staff to bring your bill beforehand. Remain standing until invited to sit down. You may be shown to a particular seat. Always keep your hands visible when eating. Keep your wrists resting on the edge of the table. Do not begin eating until the hostess starts. Use utensils to eat most food. Even fruit is eaten with a knife and fork. If you have not finished eating, cross your knife and fork on your plate with the fork over the knife. The host gives the first toast. An honoured guest should return the toast later in the meal. It is acceptable for a woman to make a toast. Indicate you have finished eating by laying your knife and fork parallel on your plate, tines facing up, with the handles facing to the right. Do not get up until the guest of honour does. (Полянина Н. Б. Английский язык: межкультурная коммуникация. Конспект лекций. Красноярск. ИПК СФУ 2008).

Siesta is also a tradition in this country with the exception for the official institutions. These people always find time for rest. They are not in a hurry, and they hurry nobody.

Spanish are serious, though open-minded, and delicate, they have a wonderful sense of humour. They are good at team work and appreciate personal relationships and contact