

Catalonia and Girona

Where is Catalonia?

Catalonia is a historic region of Spain, **encompassing** the north eastern **provinces** of Girona, Barcelona, Tarragona, and Lleida. The autonomous community of Catalonia occupies a triangular area in the north eastern corner of Spain. It is bordered by France and **Andorra** to the north, the Mediterranean Sea to the east, the **autonomous** community of Valencia to the south, and the autonomous community of Aragon to the west. The Pyrenees separate Catalonia from France, and to the west the pre-Pyrenees and the Ebro River basin mark the border with Aragon.

The autonomous community of Catalonia was established by the statute of autonomy of December 18, 1979. The government consists of a Generalitat (an **executive** council headed by a president) and a **unicameral** parliament. The capital is Barcelona.

Why does Catalonia want to be independent from Spain?

The Catalan region has long been the industrial **heartland** of Spain – first for its **maritime** power and trade in goods such as textiles, but recently for finance, services and hi-tech companies.

It is one of the wealthiest regions of Spain - it accounts for 19 per cent of Spain's **GDP**, equal with the Madrid region. Catalonia's contribution to the Spanish economy is twice that of Scotland's to the UK.

Catalonia was an independent region of the Iberian Peninsula – modern day Spain and Portugal – with its own language, laws and customs.

Subsequent kings tried to impose the Spanish language and laws on the region, but they abandoned their attempts in 1931 and restored the Generalitat (the national Catalan government).

General Francisco Franco, however, set out to destroy Catalan **separatism** and with his victory at the Battle of Ebro in 1938 he took control of the region, killing 3,500 people and forcing many more into **exile**.

The region was granted a degree of autonomy once more in 1977, when democracy returned to the country. Calls for complete independence grew steadily until July 2010, when the **Constitutional** Court in Madrid overruled part of the 2006 autonomy statute, stating that there is no legal basis for recognising Catalonia as a nation within Spain.

Why every cyclist should visit Girona?

The **Catalan** city, 90 minutes north of Barcelona and south of the Pyrenees, can count more than 150 professional cyclists among its residents, with countless more **amateur** and recreational riders joining the **expat** community or **jetting in** for a short stay and a slice of life as a pro. Girona has become a modern-day cycling **Mecca**.



Catalonia and Girona - Vocab

1. encompassing _____
2. provinces _____
3. Andorra _____
4. autonomous _____
5. executive _____
6. unicameral _____
7. heartland _____
8. maritime _____
9. GDP _____
10. Iberian _____
11. subsequent _____
12. separatism _____
13. exile _____
14. constitutional _____
15. amateur _____
16. expat _____
17. Mecca _____



What else I would like to know.....