

## TUTORIAL - PURCHASING RENFE TICKETS ON-LINE

Before attempting to purchase a train ticket on the decidedly vexing, considerably confusing and constantly changing [www.renfe.es](http://www.renfe.es), do yourself a favor --- take the time to read carefully the helpful tutorial, **Buying Renfe Tickets Online**, found on the Insider Spain Pages of **Trip Advisor**. See <http://tinyurl.com/ctgmr5>

These detailed instructions are continually revised, making them the only online tutorial kept constantly up-to-date and consistently dependable.

Below you will find answers to some **Frequently Asked Questions** about Renfe, the Spanish Rail Network.

### DO ALL TRAINS LEAVE FROM THE SAME STATION IN MADRID/BARCELONA?

- No, Madrid and Barcelona have two railway stations that serve different destinations. Your PDF ticket will have the station printed at the top.
- In Madrid, trains to Segovia, Valladolid, Santander, Bilbao, San Sebastian and Valencia (\*temporarily) plus the Elipsos Trenhotels to Paris depart from **Chamartín**.
- From **Atocha**, one catches the trains to Zaragoza, Barcelona, Huesca, Córdoba, Seville, Málaga, Cádiz, Toledo, Logroño and Pamplona.
- In Barcelona, the Elipso Trenhotels to Paris, Zurich and Milan depart from the **Estació França**.
- From **Estació Sants** one catches the Ave to Madrid, Euromed to Valencia and the commuter trains (Cercanías /rodalies)

### WHAT ONLINE DISCOUNTS ARE AVAILABLE?

- For most high speed and long distance trains (Ave, Alaria, Alaris, Alvia, Arco, Euromed and Talgo), Renfe offers two discounted fares.
- The **Web** fare provides a 60% discount off full fare. It must be purchased a minimum of 15 days in advance.
- The **Estrella** fare is a 40% discount, which must be purchased a minimum of 7 days in advance.
- A **Tarifa Ultima Hora** fare, a 50% discount, is available on some trains, some routes, which can be purchased online a maximum of 24 hours prior to departure.
- These are **not** available on the medium distance **AVANT** trains, which offer only one class of service and one discount-a 20% discount for a round trip ticket for the same day, and a 10% discount for a round trip made within 15 days.

### WHAT IS THE TARJETA DORADA?

It is a card available to **those 60 and over**, of any nationality, which can be purchased at any Renfe station or Spain travel agency (but not online) for 5 euros. Holders of this card receive a 40% discount on tickets for trains Monday - Thursday. For weekend departures, the discount is 25%. But for commuter trains (Cercanías), cardholders receive a 40% discount any day of the week. The card is valid for one year.

## **IF I MISS MY TRAIN, CAN I RECEIVE A REFUND?**

No, if you miss your train, you forfeit your money.

## **CAN I EXCHANGE OR CANCEL MY TICKET BEFORE THE TRAIN DEPARTS?**

- **Web** fares are non-exchangeable. If you cancel your ticket you'll receive a refund of 50% of the ticket price.
- **Estrella** fares are exchangeable with a service fee of 15% for a same day train and 20% for a train on another day.
- If you cancel your ticket, you'll receive a refund of 70% of the ticket price.

## **WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TURISTA AND PREFERENTE CLASSES OF SERVICE?**

1. **Turista** (tourist) class: cars have a 2-2-seat configuration, ample legroom, and passengers receive a headset for video (movie) and four music channels.
2. **Preferente** (business) class: cars have a 2-1 seat configuration, thus fewer passengers, greater seat pitch, passengers receive headsets for video and music channels, a newspaper and copy of the Renfe Paisajes magazine, a set meal (breakfast, snack or dinner), free drinks (wine with meal and after dinner cordials) and access to the VIP Club Ave lounges.

The **AVE** trains offer a third, more expensive, class of service, the **Club Car** with 30 leather seats and a 2-1-seat configuration, similar to the Club car of a US Northeast corridor ACELA train. The meal served is a la carte, with "open bar" service throughout the journey, a *waste of your travel dollar*.

## **I'M A MAC USER. CAN I PURCHASE AN ONLINE TICKET?**

Yes. Although the Renfe site is optimized for the Windows operating system, one can also use a Mac with the latest version of **Firefox**. Safari will not work as yet.

## **WHAT CREDIT CARDS DOES THE RENFE ONLINE SYSTEM ACCEPT?**

Users have reported successful purchases using MC, Visa, Discovery, and Capitol One. American Express does not appear to work. But before attempting an online purchase, you should call your credit card issuer to alert them that you will be making a purchase on the Renfe site so that your credit card fraud department does not block your purchase.

## **WHICH PHONE NUMBER SHOULD I CALL IF I HAVE TROUBLE COMPLETING MY ONLINE PURCHASE?**

The online purchase "help-line" number is +34 902 10 94 20.

## **WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE AVE AND THE AVANT?**

Both are high-speed lines. The Ave runs on long-distance routes. The AVANT, *media distancia*, makes shorter runs, such as from Madrid to Toledo and to Segovia, and offers only **one** class of service. The AVANT carriages are identical in comfort to the tourist class carriages of the AVE.

## **WHY CAN'T I FIND WEB AND ESTRELLA FARES FOR THE MADRID-BARCELONA AVE?**

1. If you chose your language as English on the home page, you will be switched to <http://www.renfe.es/horarios/english/index.html>, where discount fares do not appear.
2. Start your purchase here: <https://w1.renfe.es/vol/>
3. Select Madrid, then Barcelona, choose "single" for one way, "return" for round trip, choose your date, the number of tickets, click *Buscar*, and all trains for that date will appear. In the last two columns the W, *Web fare*, and the \*Estrella fare will appear, if available. If you see no W or \* fares, it is because they have already sold out.

## **WHY ARE THERE TWO SEGOVIA STATIONS LISTED ON THE TIMETABLES & PRICES PAGE?**

The old, pokey, uncomfortable 2-hour Regional trains still run from Madrid to the original Segovia station. Avoid these! The new high speed train runs to the purpose-built AVE station, Segovia-Guiomar, opened Dec. '07, four km. outside the city, connected to the city via bus. The high-speed train tickets are those sold on-line.

## **WHERE CAN I FIND INFORMATION ABOUT THE SERVICES AVAILABLE AT RENFE STATIONS?**

Information of services is available at: [www.adif.es](http://www.adif.es)

For info regarding Madrid's Atocha station, for example, type Puerta de Atocha in the station box, click on Services and Accessibility. You'll see what services are available - luggage trolleys, left luggage locker, banks, restaurants, and tourist information. Click on Information to see the current weather, a map to locate the station, means of transportation to reach it. Under Information of Interest, you'll see *Consigna*, which means left luggage facility, and its hours of operation.