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Mediterranean Hotspots: What to Choose Italy or Spain?

Italy and Spain are both popular spots for holiday getaways in Europe, but they are substantially different from each other even though they share some similarities. Their languages are alike, the weather is comparable, and their attractions are similar, but they are inherently different on a core level, that is, culture, people, and politics. On that note, this essay will serve to highlight the key similarities and the crucial differences between these two Mediterranean countries. Italy and Spain resemble each other but are ultimately not the same.

Firstly, it is important to recognize what makes these two countries similar. One notable similarity is their languages. Italian and Spanish both derive from Vulgar Latin, which means “ordinary.” It is the less formal version of the Latin language. The Arabic language has also influenced the two languages. In Spain’s case, the Arabic influence on their language can be connected to the time when North-African Berbers ruled most of the Iberian Peninsula, and this started with their conquests that began around 711 A.D. On the other hand, the influence of Arabic culture on Italy’s language can be traced back to the first Muslim settlement in Sicily. This era began around 902 A.D. and ended with the eradication of all Muslim settlements when Christian Rule prevailed.

Additionally, the two countries’ cultures are very similar in some aspects, especially when it comes to celebrations, siestas, and food. In a year, Spaniards celebrate around 27



festivals. Italy and Spain both celebrate Carnival, where people dress up and dance until sunrise, for example. Both countries also enjoy seafood cuisine, the juiciness and versatility of tomatoes, and olive oil.

Naps are also a common cultural aspect that both countries share. Mid-day naps are called 'siestas' in Spanish and 'riposos' in Italian. The sun sets in these two countries much later than in Northern European countries. This means that they get to enjoy more sunlight for a longer time. Thus, people often enjoy 'siestas and riposos' to have the strength to party in the evening. Many local shops in Spain close in the afternoon only to reopen later in the evening, letting the locals enjoy their rest.

Regardless of these similarities, the core differences that constitute both countries are easily noticed. As a political entity, Spain has been there for centuries, but Italy has only been unified very recently, at around 1871. Spain also had massive colonial empires in the past, while Italy has not. Spain's established past and history can be felt in the stability of their country. Policies the country enforces, as a whole, are more organized, their cities are cleaner, and while corruption does not evade their government, it is not as bad as in Italy. The corruption in Italy's government is as bad as the corruption that exists in developing countries. The government's neglect can be seen in the pollution and trash in big cities such as Rome.

On a less tangible level, Spanish people tend to be much less emotionally volatile than Italians. Italians have a reputation for being very theatrical, such as gesturing a lot while conversing and so on. Spanish people have the reputation of being loud and lively, just like the Italians, but come off much less emotionally intense and oscillating than the Italians. Lastly, the Spanish are much more accepting of multiculturalism, homosexuality, and change in general.



Spain has a very big and accepting LGBTQ community, but Italians have more archaic views and attitudes when it comes to such topics.

In conclusion, Italy and Spain do share many similarities with each other that are apparent to the observer. They are geographical neighbors, so their customs, cuisines, and languages are similar. However, even if they share this likeness, the core attitudes of Italians and Spanish people are inherently different.

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