

Spanish passport 1920-2010, basic guide.
Level 1.

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Spanish passports have a long history from the Middle Ages till now. Since the Discovery of America Spaniards have tried to migrate or move toward the new land. Spanish authorities established some conditions for the candidates, e. g. they were non convicted, not women, not poor,... and extended the earliest Spanish passports for Spanish and foreign nationals to migrate.

At the end of 19th century the Spanish colonial empire came to an end. From my point of view this chapter of my country's passports is "previous" and requires a historical and accuracy review. It's a very interesting period for researchers, historians, writers and, of course, passport collectors. I'll dedicate the final chapter of this history to those documents.

You can see some used passports in Spanish archives and libraries as is the National Historical Archive, National Library of Spain or El Escorial Palace Library. It is also possible to find some passports of the 19th century in flea markets, garage stores, antique dealers and the Internet.

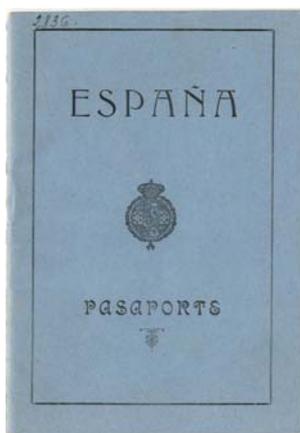
Now, I'm trying to concentrate on the first chapter of the history: the basic level of a collection of Spanish booklet passports. It covers the period from 1920 till 2010.

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Level 1. Spanish passport regulations were first introduced in the 20th century with the RD 12/03/1917 which established criteria for its expedition, but without giving a format, size, colour or other similar details. Probably the Spanish booklet passport first appeared around 1920, after the Paris Conference on Passports & Custom formalities and Through tickets. That's the point at which the "page" model passport was substituted by the new "booklet" model. Certainly the change of model was not immediate. First at all, on May 5th 1922, the Spanish government promulgated an RD which included the characteristics of the new model, and quoted from the Paris Conference. Also in 1926, the Geneva Conference on "Passports Characteristics" recommended the use of an "international type" of passport to all countries.



Regulation: RD 02/05/1922, art. 17.
Started expedition:
Finished expedition:
News: booklet
Size: 10,8x15,5 cm.
Cover colour: several
Number of pages: 12, 16, 24, 32
Coat of arms: Royal
Printer: several



The Spanish coat of arms with or without the "Toisón de Oro" (The maximum Spanish condecoration), with or without bay leaves, or Spanish flag colours included, opened a diversity of covers during a period of 14 years.

Earliest printers were local, each province had one which provided passports to the authorities, thus the criteria from province to province were dissimilar. You can see booklets which included 12, 16, 24 or 32 pages, different covers (colour, coat of arms, legend) and significant changes in size (around 5 to 7 mm per side).

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The first passport booklets after the establishment of the 2nd Spanish Republic included the Royal coat of arms. Some of them were added the legend “REPUBLICA ESPAÑOLA” and an ink overcharge on the Royal coat of arms.

Nevertheless during the 1st Republican period (1931-1936) different models of covers were printed, also of differing composition, name of nation, coat of arms, ornaments and cover colours. Each printer decided on his own model. Each province had one model, different only apparently because the contents were the same according the rules.

Every year, from 1931, there were minor modifications. Finally D 04/10/1935 but an end to these differences. From 01/05/1936 only one printer and only one Police force extended passports.



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Finally a new model of cover according to the Paris and Geneva Conferences was established in 1935, and was first implemented in the middle of 1936.



Regulation: D 04/10/1935
Started expedition: 01/05/1936
Finished expedition: 31/03/1939
News: covers
Size: 10,5x15,5 cm.
Cover colour: green
Number of pages: 32
Coat of arms: Republican.
Printer: Official.

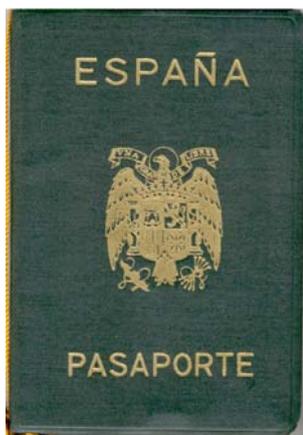
As far as I know I can confirm that from 1931 to 1936 the Spanish passport cover changed every year in colour, scheme, coat of arms, etc. Only after D 04/10/1935 (official entrance 01/05/1936) all Spanish passports had a green cover made from a mix of cardboard and textile. Also, all of them were printed by the same printer. It really is possible to find some old models dated after 01/05/1936.

Spanish passports which started to be issued on 01/05/1936 with green colour covers and technical security measures included, have a special history: These passports were issued by two different governments during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939): the legitimate republican authorities (ending on March 31st, 1939) and the rebel authorities (from July 18th, 1936 till around mid 1938). Rebel authorities proclaimed and established a new coat of arms based on D 02/02/1938 and the cover of the new rebel passport was the same that you can see below.



Regulation:
Started expedition:
Finished expedition: 31/05/1938
News: Coat of arms, D 02/02/1938
Size: 10,4x15,4 cm.
Cover colour: green
Number of pages: 32
Coat of arms: St. John eagle.
Printer:

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Regulation: D 20/06/1958
Started expedition: 01/06/1958
Finished expedition:
News:
Size: 10,5x15,5 cm.
Cover colour: green
Number of pages: 32
Coat of arms: St. John eagle
Printer: DGS

After the Spanish Civil War (ending 01/04/1939) according the law, the only Spanish passport was issued by the authorities from Madrid (the Franco government). Only in 1958 did the authorities provide new legal regulations which modified the republican Decree of 04/10/1935.

During those years, and onwards, passports changed size (they were reduced), the number of pages was fixed (32), and some changes related to personal description were made, also finger prints were suppressed and security measures were increased.

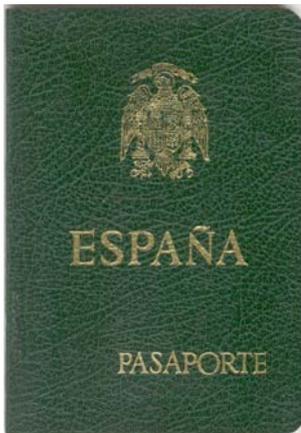


Regulation: D 20/06/1958
Started expedition:
Finished expedition:
News: materials, coat of arms colour
Size: 9,8x15,3 cm.
Cover colour: green
Number of pages: 32
Coat of arms: St. John eagle
Printer:



Regulation: D 3276/1971
Started expedition:
Finished expedition:
News: DNI pg. 2
Size: 10,4x14,5 cm.
Cover colour: green
Number of pages: 32
Coat of arms: St. John eagle
Printer:

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Regulation: RD 3129/1977
Started expedition:
Finished expedition:
News: size, cover distribution
Size: 9,0x13,0 cm.
Cover colour: green
Number of pages: 32
Coat of arms: St. John eagle
Printer: FNMT

After the death of the Dictator Franco (1975), the nation became a democracy. The first passport detail to be changed was the coat of arms. Those years the FNMT started to print all the Spanish passport booklets, excluding all the private and official companies that printed it till now.



Regulation: RD 3129/1977
Started expedition:
Finished expedition: 31/12/1988
News: coat of arms, text pgs. 1-6.
Size: 9,3x13,0 cm.
Cover colour: green
Number of pages: 32
Coat of arms: Constitutional
Printer: FNMT

The following evolution occurred after the accession of Spain to the European Community (1986) and the assumption of the "European passport" model, which implied different changes. First of all the new cover colour: lilac.



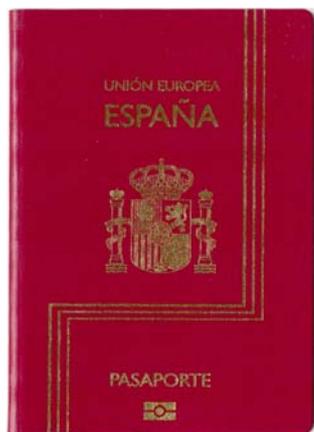
Regulation: RD 1064/1988
Started expedition: 01/01/1989
Finished expedition:
News: covers + colour, 1 OCR line.
Size: 88x125 mm.
Cover colour: lilac
Number of pages: 32
Coat of arms: Constitutional
Printer: FNMT

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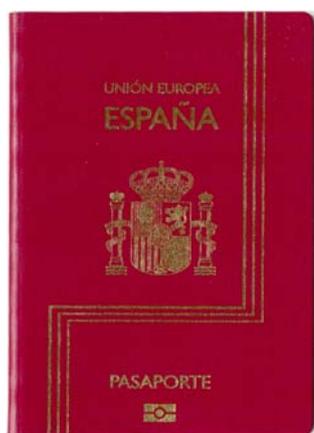
Later on, new “European passport” evolutions were implemented with the introduction of the “Informatized model” (2000), “Electronic model” (2003) and “Biometric model” (2009).



Regulation: RD 896/2003
Started expedition: 24/07/2003
Finished expedition:
News: Integrated photograph
Size: 88x125 mm.
Cover colour: dark red
Number of pages: 32
Coat of arms: Constitutional
Printer:



Regulation: RD 896/2003
Started expedition: 14/08/2006
Finished expedition: 26/06/2009
News: Chip, 2 OCR lines.
Size: 88x125 mm.
Cover colour: dark red
Number of pages: 32
Coat of arms: Constitutional
Printer: FNMT



Regulation:
Started expedition: 2009
Finished expedition:
News: biometric data
Size: 88x125 mm.
Cover colour: dark red
Number of pages: 32
Coat of arms: Constitutional
Printer: FNMT

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Photographs.

Numbers, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11 From the book “Policía Española. Notas e imágenes”.
Fundación Policía Española. Madrid, 1999. 219 p.

Numbers, 1-3, 7, 8, 9, 12-22, personal collection.

Legend.

- Art. Article.
- D. Decree.
- DNI. National Identity Document.
- FNMT. National Manufacturing Money and Fiscal Stamps.
- RD. Royal Decree.

* All the dates are revisable. Especially those that do not refer to a legal regulation, official or commercial enterprises or brands.