

España

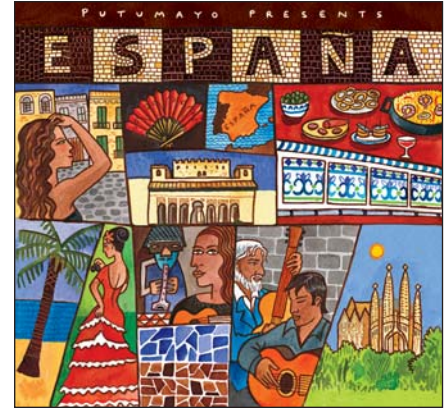
(PUT 294 Liner Notes)

The contemporary music of Spain is a fascinating blend of old and new, reflecting centuries of tradition, diverse regional cultures and international influences. Spain is comprised of 17 “autonomous communities,” many of which are home to distinct local languages or dialects, cultures and music styles. Among these, Andalusia, Catalonia, Galicia and the Basque Country are also considered “historic nationalities.”

Flamenco, Spain’s most recognized musical genre, originated in the southern province of Andalusia. It grew out of the interplay between Arab, Andalusian, Gypsy and Jewish cultures. The music of Galicia, which is located in Spain’s northwestern corner, reflects Celtic and Portuguese influences. Meanwhile, the Basque Country has a unique language and cultural expressions that are quite distinct from other parts of Spain.

Catalonia, on Spain’s eastern coast, has long been a melting pot of Catalan, Spanish, French and other Mediterranean influences. Barcelona, Catalonia’s largest city, is the hub of the flourishing “mestizo” (mixed) music movement, which blends *flamenco* and other Spanish styles with Afro-Cuban rhythms, Gypsy pop, reggae, blues, electronica and other genres. Madrid, the country’s capital, is an important center of Spain’s rock and pop world.

We hope you enjoy this collection of some of our favorite songs, which are just a sampling of the savory musical *paella* that is Spanish music today.



1. Peret

Para Poder Olvidarla

artist: peh-RET song: pah-rah poh-DAIR ohl-vee-DAR-lah

Some refer to Peret as “the Elvis of *rumba catalana*” as much for the seminal role he has played in bringing the style to a wider audience as for his occasionally garish wardrobe. Born Pere Pubill Calaf in Barcelona in 1935, Peret was a pioneer at blending *flamenco* with Latin rhythms and rock and roll. The result was *rumba catalana*, also called *rumba flamenco*, a style familiar to anyone who has heard the Gipsy Kings. Peret has also been a major influence on Manu Chao, Ojos de Brujo and others.

Peret was featured in the 1963 film *Los Tarantos*, which was nominated for an Academy Award and helped bring him wider fame. He retired from music in the early 1980s to become an evangelical preacher, but returned to recording and performing in 2000 with a successful album, *Peret, Rey de la Rumba*. It features many of Spain’s biggest pop stars joining him on new versions of his classic tracks.

“Para Poder Olvidarla” (To Be Able to Forget Her) is from Peret’s 2007 album *Que Levante el Dedo*. Now in his 70s, Peret still sings about love and loss.

2. Gertrudis

Remedios

artist: hair-TROO-dees song: reh-MEH-dee-ohs

One of the modern bands that owes a clear debt to Peret and the classic *rumba catalana* sound is Gertrudis, a popular group from the Catalan town of La Garriga, not far from Barcelona. Gertrudis adds elements of Colombian *cumbia*, reggae, funk, pop and other sounds to their energetic *rumba*, earning them a strong regional following. The band released its first album, *Teta*, in 2003.

“Remedios” (Remedies) is a *rumba* from the band’s 2005 self-titled album. The song tells of a sorceress named Remedios who is burned at the stake when she fails to keep the secrets of her customers. “They have spoken to me about Remedios / They have said that she has the solutions / To the strange things in your mind / To the pain of your hearts / She knows all your troubles / Because that night she crossed the line / That night the last remedy was sold / To a village that burned her.”

3. DePedro

Como El Viento

artist: deh-PEH-droh song: koh-moh el VYEN-toh

When Spanish singer and guitarist Jairo Zavala was invited to New Mexico to play guitar on an album produced by the American rock group Calexico, he decided to stay in town for a week longer to work with the group on a project he called DePedro. The resulting album reflects Zavala’s eclectic tastes, ranging from the South American ballads he heard growing up (his father is originally from Peru) to African music, reggae, blues, folk, *flamenco* and slinky, atmospheric rock. Zavala also continues to front the rock band Vacazul, the blues band 3000 Hombres and the surf rock group Los Coronas.

Fans of Calexico will recognize their influence on “Como El Viento” (Like the Wind), which features laid back brass riffs, subdued Southwestern guitar licks and a catchy, bouncy, reggae-influenced pulse. “I am only happy if I look at you / Your breath is enough / For me to feel like the wind / Like the wind that rocks my body.”

4. Burguitos

Por Los Besos Que Me Das

artist: boorg-EE-tohs song: por lohs beh-sohs kay may dahs

Fernando Burgos, known as Burguitos, started his music career more than 25 years ago in Valencia, the capital and largest city in the Southeastern province of the same name. Also a talented actor and painter, Burguitos started his first band, Piedras en el Riñon, in the late 1970s. In the 80s, he formed the comedic *salsa*/pop group Combo Potombo, followed by the band Stilo Grafico. In the early 90s, Burgos renamed his band Burguitos and they often blend *rumba*, pop and world music flavors with humorous and satirical lyrics to create a fun, upbeat sound.

“Por Los Besos Que Me Das” (For the Kisses that You Give Me), from the 2007 album of the same name, displays Burgos’ singer-songwriter skills. “For the kisses you give me / They make me lose my mind / It’s hard to know who I am / You hit the dance floor / I follow you with my eyes / I join your orbit / Let’s go to Pluto / And count the stars one by one.”

5. Calima

Lunita

artist: kah-LEE-mah song: loo-NEE-tah

Calima was founded in 2005 by Juanlu “El Canijo” Leprevost, who is best-known on the Spanish music scene as one of the co-founders of Ojos de Brujo. Calima’s debut album *Azul* earned raves from Spanish media and a Latin Grammy nomination for Best Flamenco Album. The band has performed at many important festivals across Europe and is fast developing a following for its hip, jazzy and soulful *rumba flamenco* sound.

Calima’s second album, *Tierra*, was released in 2009 and featured this song, “Lunita” (Little Moon). Its musical vibe is similar in spirit to the Ojos de Brujo style, although with more jazz fusion influences. The song tells of the pain of unrequited love. “Yesterday I spoke to the moon / I took a walk with her / She told me of her happiness / And also her suffering / She’s in love with the sun / How it hurts, love.”

6. Gossos featuring Dani Macaco

Corren

artist: goh-sohs featuring dah-nee mah-KAH-koh song: koh-ren

Gossos is one of the most popular Catalanian rock groups, having built a faithful fan base since they got their start in the early 90s. Formed in Manresa, a small city in the heart of Catalonia, the band began with an acoustic sound and over the years has become increasingly electrified and harder-edged. They have released nine studio albums so far and their most recent, 2007’s *Oxigen*, received rave reviews and won numerous awards.

Part of the album’s success surely comes from the catchy appeal of the love song “Corren” (Run), which features popular Barcelona singer Dani Macaco on guest vocals. “It’s late, I don’t know what time it is / But it’s been dark for a while / It’s easy to see that you are not here / I want to run, run down the streets.”

7. El Combolinga

Cumbia Caimanera

artist: el kom-boh-LEEN-gah song: KOOM-bee-ya kye-mah-NEH-rah

Founded nearly thirteen years ago in Madrid, El Combolinga’s guiding philosophy is “mestizaje,” or mixture, and this is reflected in their eclectic range of influences. *Flamenco*, reggae, rock, Afro-Cuban music, jazz, ska, African grooves — it all makes an appearance in the El Combolinga sound. The group has released five albums so far and their many concert appearances include touring the world alongside Bebe, one of Spain’s fastest rising stars.

El Combolinga’s latest album, *Mira Que Bien*, was released in 2008 and includes this electrified twist on a traditional Colombian *cumbia*. On “Cumbia Caimanera” (Caiman *Cumbia*), the group sings, “From the other side of the river, where there are no streetlights / Fountains are dry and we don’t put foot to ball / That’s where we the caimans live / Without a job or glamour / We have big mouths and our eyes are looking south / That’s why we sing looking towards the south.”

8. Uxía

Danza Ritual

artist: oosh-EE-ah song: dahn-sah ree-too-ahl

Uxía is one of Galicia’s most respected and internationally acclaimed singers. The province borders Portugal and its regional language, Gallego, is closely related to Portuguese. As a result, Uxía has long felt a kinship with Portuguese culture.

Uxía recorded her first solo album in 1986 and was a member of the seminal Galician folk revival band Na Lua until she left in 1991 to focus on her own work. In 1997, she recorded the album *La Sal de la Vida* alongside Spanish singer María Salgado and Sudanese singer Rasha. Over the years, Uxía has explored ways in which to connect her Galician roots with the traditions of other cultures both near and far.

“You are still the spider / That spins my fate,” Uxía sings on “Danza Ritual” (Ritual Dance), “And together we shall dance / A ritual, creole and impure dance.”

9. Xabier Lete

San Martin, Azken Larrosa

artist: hah-byer leh-teh song: san mar-TEEN ahz-kehn lah-ROH-sah

The Basque Country is an “historic nationality” that spans the Pyrenees Mountains between Spain and France. Born in 1944 in the Basque village of Oyarzun (Oiartzun), Xabier Lete is one of his region’s most beloved singer-songwriters. Proud of his Basque heritage, Lete’s writing often addresses the region’s struggle to maintain its unique culture.

Lete began his writing career as a journalist and then joined the band Ez Dok Ainaru, composing and singing in the Basque language (which locals call Euskera). He is also known for his poetry and plays.

“San Martin, Azken Larrosa” (Saint Martin, The Last Rose) appeared on Lete’s 1992 album *Hurbil Iragana* and refers to the day of Saint Martin on November 11, which roughly heralds the start of winter: “Come, darling, and let’s cut the last rose together / As Saint Martin Day will come soon / And so, patiently / We will put out the last light together.”

10. Gecko Turner

Te Estás Equivocando

artist: geh-koh turner song: tay es-TAHS eh-kee-voh-KAHN-doh

Born and raised in Badajoz, Spain, a city within the Autonomous Community of Extremadura near the Portuguese border, Gecko Turner listened to an eclectic range of music growing up. A fan of Bob Dylan, The Beatles and The Rolling Stones, he also enjoyed reggae, funk, blues, jazz and many other styles which have influenced his songs. After living for a while in London, Turner returned to Spain and began touring with the band Perroflauta.

Turner’s first solo album, *Guapapasea!*, was released in 2006. “Te Estás Equivocando” (You Are Getting It Wrong), from that album, is a catchy, reggae-flavored track with a bit of a Manu Chao vibe. “Hey, girl / Whatever you want is gonna happen / Ain’t it the same, love and pleasure? / You are getting it wrong, mama / You gotta learn from your mistakes.”

11. Biella Nuei

Pasapeanas

artist: byeh-lah noo-wey song: pah-sah-pay-ah-nahs

The musical collective Biella Nuei has been studying and performing traditional music from the Aragón region since the early 80s. Situated in the north of Spain at the base of the Pyrenees, Aragón’s music tradition features styles such as *fandango*, *polka* and others. Local instruments include *salterio* (a string drum), *chiflo* (a three-holed flute), *gaita de boto* (a type of bagpipe), as well as numerous percussion and stringed instruments. The members of Biella Nuei are not purists, however, and they often incorporate instruments and music elements from other regions of Spain and the Middle East. In addition to recording four albums, group members direct instrument-making workshops, publish books on Aragonese traditions and teach music classes at the Saragossa Folklore School.

“Pasapeanas” is from the group’s most recent album, *Sol d’ibierno*, which was released in 2006. This excerpt reflects the Celtic flavors that have seeped into Aragonese folk music over the centuries, along with influences from the traditional music of Italy, France and North Africa.

Torrijas de Natillas (Spanish Bread Pudding)

Ingredients:

1 loaf of stale bread
8 egg yolks
4 1/2 cups (1 liter) milk
1/2 cup and 3 tbsp (150 grams) sugar
2 cinnamon sticks
flour
olive oil

Garnish:

4 tbsp powdered sugar
powdered cinnamon
4 tbsp raspberry sauce
12 raspberries
12 currants

Preparation

Set aside 1/2 cup of the milk and heat the rest in a saucepan with the sugar and the cinnamon sticks. Beat the egg yolks with the reserved milk. Add some of the hot milk, mix well, and pour the mixture back in the saucepan.

Cook until thick, stirring constantly.

Cut the bread into inch-thick (2 to 3 cm) slices and place in a deep dish. Cover the slices with the custard and wait until they are well soaked. Coat the slices in flour and fry until brown on both sides in a frying pan with abundant oil.

Drain on paper towels and place in a serving dish.

Mix the powdered sugar with the powdered cinnamon and sprinkle on the toast. Garnish with raspberry sauce, raspberries and currants. If desired, aromatize some with a hint of anise. Makes 4 servings.

Recipe courtesy of Chef Eva Arguiñano, head of bakery and pastries at Karlos Arguiñano’s restaurant Zarautz in the Basque Country, Spain. www.hogarutil.com