



Essential Vegetarian & Vegan Shopping List for Your First Supermarket Trip in Spain

Planning your first supermarket trip in Spain? If you're a vegetarian or vegan staying in self-catering accommodation, a trip to a Spanish supermarket will be among the first things on your to-do list.

If the thought of navigating the aisles of a Spanish supermarket and ensuring your purchases are vegan or vegetarian friendly is daunting don't worry! I've put together this list of essential food items, staple ingredients, easy meal solutions, and helpful Spanish vocabulary to make your shopping experience stress-free. From must-have cooking basics to quick and convenient vegetarian-friendly foods, this guide will help you stock up with confidence 😊

Cooking Essentials

These are must-haves for simple cooking and meal preparation.

- **Olive oil** (*Aceite de oliva*) – Look for "**virgen extra**" (extra virgin) for the best flavor.
 - **Vinegar** (*Vinagre*) – In addition to red and white wine vinegar which is widely available, look for "**Vinagre de Jerez**" (sherry vinegar) or "**Vinagre de manzana**" (apple cider vinegar).
 - **Salt & Pepper** (*Sal y pimienta*) – Salt is often sold in 1kg bags, look for smaller packets. You will also find ready-ground pepper with the spices.
 - **Pimentón de la Vera** (Spanish smoked paprika) – A must for seasoning vegetables and beans - this will give even the most basic of dishes an authentic kick.
 - **Herbs & Spices** (*Hierbas y especias*) – If you want an easy way to add herbs and spices to your meal, look for mixes in the seasoning section. An alternative to fresh garlic is garlic powder (*ajo en polvo*) which you will find in the same section.
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Breakfast Basics

These will provide you with the foundations for a variety of breakfasts.

- **Bread** (*Pan*) – Fresh **barra** or **pan de pueblo** from the bakery section. Bread is best bought fresh and daily. However you will find breads with longer life like sliced bread (*pan de molde*) if you want something quick for toast. ⚠️ Check ingredients for milk or lard (*manteca de cerdo*).
 - **Toasted biscuits** (*Pan tostado*) - Ideal for breakfast topped with avocado or cheese spread
 - **Cereal** (*Cereales*)
 - **Coffee & Tea** (*Café y té*) – "**Café molido**" (ground) or "**soluble**" (instant).
 - **Hot chocolate** (*Chocolate de taza*) - you will find a variety of formats including powder and tablets. This is often vegan and you add your own heated milk. ⚠️ Check the labels for milk or dairy.
 - **Dairy Milk** (*Leche de vaca*) –
 - **Whole milk** – *Leche entera*
 - **Semi-skimmed milk** – *Leche semidesnatada*
 - **Skimmed milk** – *Leche desnatada*
 - **Lactose-free milk** – *Leche sin lactosa*
 - **Fresh milk (pasteurized, short shelf life)** – *Leche fresca*
 - **UHT milk (long shelf life)** – *Leche UHT*
 - **Goat's milk** – *Leche de cabra*
 - **Sheep's milk** – *Leche de oveja*
 - **Plant-based milk** (*Bebida vegetal*) – "**Leche de soja**" (soy), "**leche de avena**" (oat), "**leche de almendra**" (almond).
 - **Jam or Marmalade** (*Mermelada*) - in addition to flavours you are used to, keep an eye out for more unusual flavours like tomato.
 - **Butter** (*mantequilla*), **Margarine or Vegan Butter** (*Margarina vegetal*) – ⚠️ Check labels for dairy-free options.
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Pantry Staples

A few of these will provide you with the foundation for a variety of stove-top meals.

- **Pasta** (*Pasta*) – ⚠️ Some premium brands may contain egg, therefore look for "**sin huevo**" (without egg).
- **Rice** (*Arroz*) – "**Arroz redondo**" (short grain) or "**arroz largo**" (long grain).
- **Lentils; beans & Chickpeas** (*Lentejas, alubias y garbanzos*) – Look for pre-cooked in jars/cans ("**cocidos**") to save having to soak and cook dried legumes.
- **Tinned tomatoes** (*Tomate triturado or tomate troceado*)..
- **Tomate Frito** - this is another 'must have'. There is no real equivalent outside of Spain and this versatile sauce can be used in many, many ways.
- **Canned olives** (*Aceitunas en conserva*) – ⚠️ Watch out for olives (and other preserves) which are flavoured with anchovies (*anchoa*), this is surprisingly common.

- **Stock cubes** (*Caldo vegetal*)
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Fresh Vegetables & Fruit

You may prefer to buy fresh fruit and vegetables as you need them as you will find a great selection throughout Spain. However, if you are looking to stock up on some basics, you may want to add some of these to your shopping list.

- **Onions & Garlic** (*Cebolla y ajo*) - Look for dried as an easy alternative or frozen if you have access to a freezer.
 - **Prepared Salad** (*Ensaladas y Verduras Preparadas*)
 - **Tomatoes** (*Tomates*).
 - **Bell peppers** (*Pimientos*) – Red ("**rojos**"), green ("**verdes**"), yellow ("**amarillos**").
 - **Courgettes** (*Calabacín*).
 - **Spinach or Lettuce** (*Espinacas o lechuga*) - Look for bags of ready prepared leaves to save preparation time and reduce waste.
 - **Potatoes** (*Patatas*) – Look for "**para freír**" if making tortilla.
 - **Seasonal Fruit** – Bananas (*plátanos*), apples (*manzanas*), oranges (*naranjas*). You will also likely find bags of oranges for making orange juice.
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Easy Ready-to-Eat Foods

These easy-to-find prepared foods will provide a great fall back when time is short. They are also ideal for taking out to eat al-fresco.

- **Tortilla de patata** – Pre-made Spanish omelette.
 - **Gazpacho or Salmorejo** – Chilled tomato based soups. (⚠️ Check salmorejo for egg content.)
 - **Tinned pisto** (*Pisto en conserva*) – Spanish-style ratatouille which can be eaten hot or cold, makes a quick meal with pasta or rice.
 - **Hummus** – Found near fresh dips.
 - **Pre-cooked rice packs** (*Arroz precocido*).
 - **Pre-cooked lentils or beans.**
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Snacks & Extras

You'll find plenty of snack options. Keep a look out for some of the following which you will find in even the smallest of supermarkets.

- **Crisps (patatas fritas)** - Look for *Patatas fritas churrería*. These are crisps cooked in a traditional style and not only are they superior to many well-known brands of crisps, they also represent good value for money.
 - **Nuts & Seeds** (*Frutos secos y semillas*) – Almonds (*almendras*), walnuts (*nueces*), sunflower seeds (*pipas*).
 - **Dried fruit** (*Fruta deshidratada*) – Figs (*higos secos*), apricots (*orejones*), dates (*dátiles*).
 - **Crackers & Breadsticks** (*Galletas saladas y colines*).
 - **Dark Chocolate** (*Chocolate negro*) – Most 70%+ dark chocolates are vegan, but ⚠️ check the labels just in case.
 - **Fruit Juice** (*Zumo de fruta*) – Look for "**sin azúcar añadido**" (no added sugar).
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Shopping Tips for Spanish Supermarkets

Here are some tips to ensure your first shopping trip to a Spanish supermarket goes smoothly!

- ◆ **Supermarkets have specific opening hours** – Many smaller ones close in the afternoon (2-5 PM), especially outside big cities. Most shut on Sundays (but you may find small supermarkets open on Sunday).
 - ◆ **Have a euro for the trolley** – Some supermarkets trolleys are released using a euro coin which is refunded when you return the trolley. This isn't universal and depends on the supermarket..
 - ◆ **Bring your own bags** – Supermarkets charge for plastic bags, so either bring your own or be prepared to pay for bags.
 - ◆ **Pay by cash or card (you may need your passport)** – Supermarkets will a variety of payment options. If you are using a card from a bank outside of Spain, you may need to show ID).
 - ◆ **Serve by numbers** – In some supermarkets, counters where service is required (for example the cheese counter where cheese is cut to order), you are expected to take a numbered ticket and wait for your number to be called..
 - ◆ **Look for "Bio" or "Eco" sections** – These often have more vegan and organic options.
 - ◆ **Bread is sometimes sold by weight** – In some supermarkets, you need to weigh and label it yourself before checkout
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Essential Spanish Vocabulary for Vegetarian & Vegan Shopping

- **Vegetarian** – *Vegetariano/a*
 - **Vegan** – *Vegano/a*
 - **Dairy-free** – *Sin lácteos*
 - **Egg-free** – *Sin huevo*
 - **Meat-free** – *Sin carne*
 - **Lard-free** – *Sin manteca de cerdo*
 - **Gelatin-free** – *Sin gelatina*
 - **Rennet-free cheese** – *Queso sin cuajo animal*
 - **Plant-based milk** – *Bebida vegetal*
 - **Vegan-friendly** – *Apto para veganos*
 - **Contains animal products** – *Contiene productos de origen animal*
 - **Ingredients** – *Ingredientes*
 - **Allergens** – *Alérgenos*
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Find More Veggie-Friendly Shopping & Cooking Tips

We hope you've found this guide helpful! For more free recipes, meal ideas, and shopping guides specifically created for vegetarians and vegans in Spain, visit [Vegisi.com](https://vegisi.com).