

BOURBON SPAIN

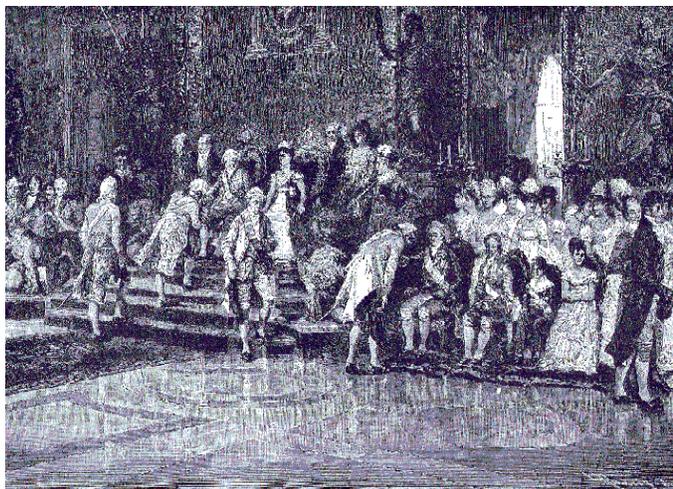
1712 to 1939

PEACE OF UTRECHT TO SPANISH CIVIL WAR

Era Summary—Bourbon Spain

Spanish Crown descends to the Bourbons—On the death of [Charles II](#) there was widespread concern that the Spanish crown would fall to the descendants of Louis XIV, the powerful monarch of France, upsetting the balance of power in Europe. As a result, most of western Europe was drawn into the [War of the Spanish Succession](#) (1700-1714), between France and an Austrian-British alliance. The war failed to prevent a Bourbon monarchy in Spain, but it did limit French influence. The Bourbon Kings were granted rule of much of the Iberian Peninsula, and maintained the Spanish Empire overseas, but they lost control of formerly Hapsburg territories in Italy and Northern Europe. It was finally agreed that the Spanish crown would descend to [Philip V](#), a grandson of Louis XIV, but that the two thrones of France and Spain should never be united.

Spain had lost a great deal of territory in Italy during the war so the first order of business of the Bourbon monarch was to attempt to regain these dominions. After this proved futile, Philip V's son Ferdinand IV, attempted to implement to "modernize" the government with a series of reforms. There was, however, much opposition to liberal ideas among the peasants and nobility alike. The progressive faction in Spain tended to be concentrated in the cities and among those who opposed the influence of the church. But a large majority of the Spanish people distrusted change and a strong traditionalist faction survived until the 20th century, making the implementation of progressive reforms very difficult.



RECEPTION AT THE COURT OF CHARLES IV

The Catholic Church held great tracts of land in Spain and was a prime target for modernist reformers. Confiscation of church property so that it could be put to "better use" was a popular goal for progressives and [Charles III](#) was an "enlightened despot" whose administration was full of such schemers. As a result of much intrigue in both government and the church itself, Charles III broke faith with the Jesuits, who had done so much to Christianize Spain's American colonies, and helped suppress the order in 1773. All Jesuits were forced out of Spanish dominions and their properties were split between local governments and religious orders in better favor with the Spanish court.

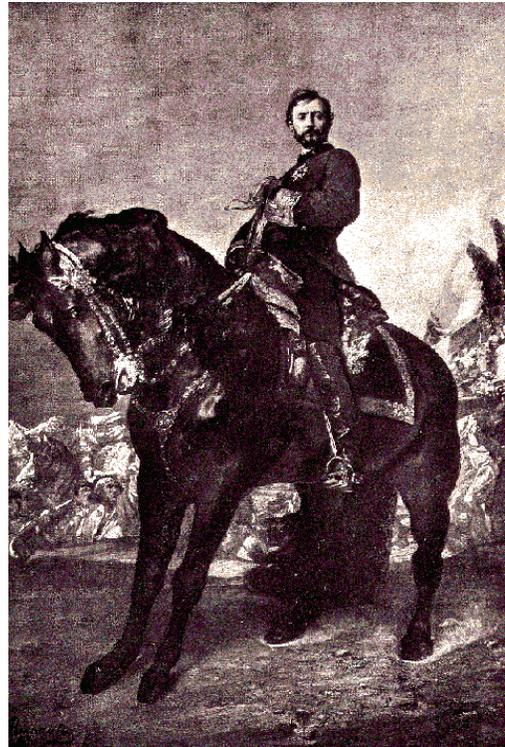
The Peninsular War in Spain—At about the time the French Revolution erupted, the Spanish government fell into the hands of [Maria Louisa](#) and her deplorable minister [Emanuel Godoy](#). Wanting to avoid war at all cost, they cravenly submitted to the demands of Revolutionary France. The Spanish people, however, vigorously objected to the tyrant Napoleon and rose against him when he deposed their king and put his brother [Joseph](#) on the throne. At the Battle of Bailen an inexperienced and ill-equipped Spanish force surrounded and defeated a French army, to the surprise of all of Europe. Napoleon responded by attempting to crush the insolent Spaniards, but the whole country rose against him. In the [Peninsular War](#) which followed, Britain joined forces with Spain to oppose Napoleon. Unfortunately, the British supported the liberal rather than the traditional faction in Spain, so many Spaniards fought as guerillas rather than serve under British command. For four years Spain was ravaged by war and during this time the Spanish colonies of Latin America took the opportunity to declare their independence.

As Napoleon's empire began to collapse, the Peninsular war came to a close and [Ferdinand VII](#) was restored to the throne. Unfortunately this brought little peace. Spain was still so divided between traditionalists and modernists that it was nearly ungovernable. While traditionalists had much of the population on their side, money and foreign influence was on the side of the modernists, so the liberals gradually gained strength. In 1820 there was a liberal *coup d'etat* in Spain, and shortly afterward Mexico declared independence (but the alliance between Conservatives and liberals quickly broke down and Mexico suffered a century of civil war). Meanwhile, the liberal reign in Spain was short lived and in 1823 Ferdinand was restored to the throne. He remained in power until his death in 1833, but displeased everyone with his vacillations so that he was distrusted by all sides.

The Carlist Wars—A Divided Country—Before 1830, Ferdinand had no children so the throne was expected to pass to his traditionalist brother, Don Carlo. In order to prevent this, the liberals passed a law allowing the crown to pass to Ferdinand's infant daughter, [Isabella II](#). This led to a long-running conflict which came to be known as the [Carlist Wars](#). The First Carlist War lasted from Ferdinand's death in 1833 until Don Carlo went into exile in 1843, and it was during this period that the regents for Isabel's government allowed confiscations of a great deal of Church property. This was a strike against the Church at its Carlist supporters, but it also served to enrich a generation of landowners and financiers who benefited from the confiscations.

About the time the first Carlist War ended Isabella was declared sovereign, but for most of her reign the government remained in the hands of ministers who attempted to maintain order by appeasing both conservatives and progressives. Isabella governed poorly, sometimes favoring traditionalist causes, but leading a decadent personal life. Her court was filled with intrigue and corruption, and she was deposed by another liberal coup in 1868.

The conspirators who overthrew Isabella, however, had no clear plan of government, and could not agree on the terms of either a republican government or a constitutional monarchy. Amedeus, a prince of the House of Savoy was offered the Spanish crown, but abdicated after three years, declaring that Spain was ungovernable. During his reign, a third Carlist uprising broke out, resulting in four more years of civil war and anarchy. By 1876 however, the revolution was spent and its leader, the son of the Don Carlos, went into exile. At this point Alfonso XII, son of Isabella II, was restored to the throne.



Constitutional Monarchy—For the following forty-five years, Spain was ruled as a constitutional monarchy under Alfonso XII, and his son Alfonso XIII. The strife between modernists and conservatives continued unabated, but the popularity of the king helped to unify the country somewhat. For most of this period the government was run by ministers who systematically rigged elections and alternated power between liberal and moderate political parties. This tended to suppress the conservative faction and provided a way to avoid accountability for unpopular measures.

PRIM RALLYING THE SPANISH PATRIOTS

Weakened by nearly a century of civil wars, a corrupt government, and widespread resistance to modernization, the Spain was in no condition to defend itself when the United States declared war in 1898. The justification for the [Spanish American War](#) was that Spain had cruelly repressed peasant rebellions in Cuba and the Philippines. Both rebellions, however, were orchestrated by secret societies (i.e. Freemasons) with the intention of overthrowing Spanish rule and making her colonies protectorates of the United States. Predictably, Spain suffered a humiliating defeat, but the disaster had a silver lining. The fact that Spain was financially exhausted and was longer an imperial power helped her remain neutral during World War I. This improved her condition since much of the rest of Europe was devastated by the Great War.

The Spanish Civil War—The conflict between traditionalists and liberals continued for the first decades of the twentieth century. In 1921 a military dictatorship took control of government and ruled until 1930. Soon after, Alfonso XIII went into exile and a Second Republic was attempted, but this only worsened the long-running dispute. When liberals were in power they pass laws against the Church and attempted to secularize the country and when conservatives were elected to undo the "reforms" the left responded with strikes and uprisings. Both left and right were composed of factions with irreconcilable goals so there was little hope of peace or unity no matter who was in power. Eventually a center-left coalition wrestled power from conservatives, and shortly afterward a *coup d'état* led by Francisco Franco ushered in a bitter civil war.

The [Spanish Civil War](#) (1936-39) was fought between the conservative Nationalist Party and leftist Republicans, but various international political parties that were active throughout Europe at the time (Communists, fascists, socialists, anarchists, etc.) became involved in the conflict. The struggle for power among Republicans ended up helping the Nationalists and the conservative party prevailed after three years of brutal conflict. The Spanish Civil war ended just as the Second World War began in Germany and once again Spain benefitted by its neutrality during a conflict that engulfed almost all the rest of Europe.

Franco ruled Spain as a dictator for nearly four decades, but after taking violent measures against his political enemies in the early years of his regime and outlawing opposition political parties, his rule was relatively peaceful. He was an ardent anti-Communist and Spain transitioned peacefully to a constitutional monarchy in 1974.

Characters—Bourbon Spain

18TH CENTURY

Philip V	1683–1746	Grandson of Louis XIV, first Bourbon King of Spain.
Giulio Alberoni	1665–1752	Spanish statesman active during the War of the Spanish Succession.
Elizabeth Farnese	1692–1766	Queen of Philip V who ruled the Spanish court in the early 18th century.
Charles III	d. 1789	'Enlightened Despot' who tried to modernize Spain, suppressed Jesuit order.
Ensenada	1702–1781	Spanish minister of Ferdinand VI. Promoted peace, reform, and public works.

NAPOLEONIC ERA

Maria Louisa	1751–1819	Queen of Charles IV, who promoted her favorite Godoy to prime minister.
Ferdinand VII	1784–1833	Conservative, restored to the throne of Spain after the Napoleonic Wars.
Emanuel Godoy	1767–1851	Decadent minister, favorite of Spanish queen. Blamed for fall of monarchy.
Jose de Palafox	1776–1847	Spanish general who defended Saragossa during Napoleonic Wars.
Agustina of Aragon	1786–1857	Heroine of the siege of Saragossa. Behaved heroically under fire..

19TH CENTURY

Zumalacarregui	1788–1835	Courageous Basque general who led conservatives during the First Carlist War.
Don Carlos	1788–1855	Rival claimant to the Spanish throne who initiated the Carlist Wars.
Maria Christina	1806–1878	Queen regent who championed cause of Isabella II against the Carlists.
Isabella II	1830–1904	19th century queen of Spain who lived a life of scandal and dissipation.
Espartero	1793–1879	Liberal General who opposed the Carlists and briefly ruled as regent.
Alfonso XII	1857–1885	Son of Isabella II who took the throne after a <i>coup</i> overthrew the First Republic.

20TH CENTURY

Alfonso XIII	1886–1941	King of Spain for 45 years, from birth until he was deposed in 1931
Francisco Franco	1892–1972	General who led the Nationalists during Spanish Civil War. Ruled as dictator.

Timeline—Bourbon Spain

18th CENTURY

- 1714 [War of the Spanish Succession](#) brought to a close, [Philip V](#) retains the throne.
- 1727 Spain fails to retake Gibraltar during War with England.
- 1740-48 Beginning [War of the Austrian Succession](#).
- 1754-63 [Seven Year's War](#), Florida lost to Spain.
- 1759 [Charles III](#) ascends throne and attempts "modern" reforms.
- 1773 Suppression of the Jesuits throughout Spanish dominions.
- 1778 Spain joins [American Revolutionary War](#) in order to fight against Britain.
- 1788 Spain falls under control of queen [Maria Louisa](#) and [Emanuel Godoy](#).

NAPOLEONIC REVOLUTIONARY ERA

- 1808 [Napoleon](#) over-runs Spain, initiates [Peninsular War](#).
- 1810 South American governments declare independence from Spain.
- 1814 [Ferdinand VII](#) is restored to the throne. Refuses liberal constitution.
- 1817 Much of South America lost to Spain after the *Battle of Chacabuco*.
- 1820-23 Liberal *coup d'etat* briefly establishes a Republican government.
- 1821 Mexico declares independence from Spain.
- 1823 Peru and Ecuador win independence from Spain.

LATER 19th CENTURY

- 1823 Ferdinand VII, supported by France, is restored to the throne.
- 1833-43 [Carlist Wars](#), Traditionalists seeks to place [Don Carlos](#) on the throne.
- 1835 Ecclesiastical confiscations—Monastic orders dissolved, property confiscated.
- 1843 [Isabella II](#) ascends to throne of Spain at age 13.
- 1846 Second Carlist War.
- 1868 Isabella II deposed, exiled to France.
- 1869 Liberal constitutional monarchy attempted under Amedeus of Savoy.
- 1873 First Spanish Republic attempted, collapsed almost immediately.
- 1874 [Alfonso XII](#) raised to the throne of Spain.
- 1898 [Spanish American War](#), Cuba and Philippines lost to Spain.
- 1931 Second Spanish Republic quickly descends into anarchy.
- 1936-39 Nationalist victory in the [Spanish Civil War](#).

Recommended Reading—Bourbon Spain

CORE READING ASSIGNMENTS

- I Ober - *History of Spain* The House of Bourbon to The Treaty of Peace (10)
I Horne - *Greatest Nations - Spain* Spain Under the Bourbons to The New Monarchy (4)
II Bonner - *Child's History of Spain* Philip the Fifth to Spain in Our Day (12)

SUPPLEMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Abbott - *Romance of Spanish History* The Spanish Bourbons to The Revolution (4)
Morris - *Historical Tales - Spanish* Elizabeth Farnese to Manila and Santiago (6)

I: Introductory, II: Intermediate