



But a French and a Spanish presence are highly visible too. Most Andorrans speak both languages besides Catalan.

French francs and Spanish pesetas are valid Andorran currency and, when making purchases, you can ask for change in either money.

(We paid for our hotel in pesetas. A double at the **Canut Hotel** ran about \$60.)

France and Spain maintain schools and strong commercial links and run their own post offices. The latter's rules can be confusing to visitors like me who tried to buy stamps with Spanish currency in a French post office.

"Only French money here," said the pretty postal clerk, sweetly but firmly.

My 45-minute detour to a French bank to buy francs took a lot longer because the young teller chatted at

length with a matronly customer ahead of me on various ways to prepare a *carabassa*, a plump golden pumpkin she was carting home from the market.

This leisurely, *dégagé* approach survives in Andorra despite the bustling consumerism. Though most stores stay open until 8 p.m., the 3-hour afternoon siesta endures as a revered tradition.

Even obtaining citizenship is an unhurried affair. An immigrant must wait 20 years for the privilege.

But then, look at the advantages: an Andorran citizen pays no income tax and no sales tax, has postage-free mail service inside the country, enjoys a sunny, invigorating climate and, according to a recent global study, boasts the highest longevity rate in the world.

Seems well worth the wait!

SAN MARINO

For our journey from tiny Andorra to even tinier San Marino, we proceeded by bus back to Barcelona, then took a brief 1½-hour Airbus flight to Milan and a smooth *rapido* rail trip down the Italian Adriatic coast to the trendy resort of Rimini, the main "gateway" to San Marino.

The world's oldest and smallest republic, San Marino lies wholly inside Italy.

Most of its 1,700-year history tells of serene seclusion, but turbulent times came, too, when enemy neighbors and ambitious ecclesiasts sought to annex or dominate the little land.

Tradition says the tiny state was founded in 301 A.D. by a freedom-loving Christian stonemason named Marinus, who fled persecution under Roman rule in his native Dalmatia.

Marinus and his band of pious followers crossed the Adriatic Sea, trekked inland and scaled the steep peaks of 2,500-foot Mt. Titano to establish a place of defensible refuge. The tiny mountaintop commune later became known as San Marino, in honor of its founder.

Today, the little Italian-speaking state squeezes its 24,000 citizens into a scant 24 square miles and still makes room for three million visitors a year.

Lofty goal

Just outside the Rimini railway station, my wife and I took seats aboard the hourly bus for the 10-mile trip southwest to San Marino.

Past clusters of terra-cotta-roofed houses, rows of bottle-green cypresses and mauve jacarandas, we sped along the ascending highway.

Within half an hour, the three ancient landmark castles atop Mt. Titano loomed on the horizon like turrets on the hulk of a giant, grounded ship.

Crossing the frontier into San Marino was a nonevent. Relaxed Italian and San Marinesi border-control officers hardly glanced up as our bus rumbled by, heading for the twisting, precipitous road up the mountain.

With nervous gulps, silent prayers and a skilled driver, we negotiated the hairpin turns to arrive at the outermost of the three

AFFORDABLE EUROPE

CENTRAL / EASTERN EUROPE

FALL / WINTER SPECIALS

AIR & LAND from NYC	DAYS	from
BUDAPEST.....	8	\$ 709
PRAGUE.....	8	783
VIENNA.....	8	789
SOFIA.....	8	775
BUCHAREST.....	8	824
BRATISLAVA.....	8	999
WARSAW.....	8	858
ISTANBUL.....	8	799
ATHENS.....	8	789
SKI BULGARIA.....	8	959

AIR ONLY from NYC to:	O/W	from	R/T
SOFIA.....	\$ 373		\$ 575
PRAGUE.....	333		515
BUDAPEST / VIENNA.....	312		494
KIEV.....	373		575
MOSCOW.....	364		579
ATHENS.....	328		519
BUCHAREST.....	342		544
TEL AVIV.....	417		669
WARSAW.....	327		515

Add-ons from all major US cities available.
Airport Tax, \$36 and up, additional.

For brochures and reservations please call:



20 East 46th Street, Suite 1003 New York, NY 10017

Fax: 212 822-5910 Phone: 212 822-5900