# Millions plunged into darkness as Spain and Portugal suffer widespread blackout



Millions of people across Spain and Portugal were plunged into darkness on 25 April as a widespread power outage disrupted daily life, leading to a state of emergency being declared in Spain. The blackout, which began around 12.30pm local time, caused extensive disruption to transport networks, public services, and commercial activities, prompting authorities to deploy 30,000 police officers to maintain order and manage the crisis.

The blackout saw traffic lights cease functioning, shops and railway stations lose power, and airports temporarily shut down. Rail services, including metros in both countries, were halted, leaving passengers stranded in tunnels and on tracks. Supermarkets experienced panic-buying, with long queues forming outside shops, banks, and petrol stations as people sought to stockpile essentials and withdraw cash amid disruptions to electronic payments.

In Madrid, the Spanish parliament suspended its session, and the Madrid Open tennis tournament paused play due to the outage. The city’s mayor urged residents and visitors to remain where they were while emergency services worked to restore normality. Videos captured scenes of people waiting for taxis in gridlocked streets and waiting inside stations using mobile phone torches amid the darkness.

The causation of the power failure remains under investigation. Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez addressed the nation, saying: “We do not yet have conclusive information on the reasons for this (power) cut, so I ask the people, as we have done in past crises, to inform themselves through official channels." He reassured that there were “no problems of insecurity” and no civil protection issues at present.

Spanish officials reported that hydroelectric plants were reactivated to aid restoration efforts. Eduardo Prieto, from Spanish power distributor Red Eléctrica, described the event as “exceptional and extraordinary”, calling it unprecedented in scale. Spain’s nuclear safety council confirmed that all seven nuclear reactors in the country remained safe throughout, with four reactors shutting down automatically but maintained by emergency diesel generators.

The Iberian power grids attributed the outage to “extreme temperature variations” in Spain, causing “anomalous oscillations” in the electrical network. However, some experts expressed scepticism. Kathryn Porter, an independent energy consultant, told the Daily Mail, “The more you have wind and solar on the grid, the less stable the grid becomes and so the harder it is to manage faults. I would say there's a strong chance that the large amount of solar on the system created the conditions for this to be a widespread blackout and made it much worse.” She explained that traditional generators provide inertia that helps stabilise the grid, a feature less present in renewable energy sources like wind and solar, complicating grid management during faults.

Portugal’s grid operator REN echoed the explanation regarding temperature variations but acknowledged the unusual nature of the grid oscillations. Steve Loftus, a utility industry analyst, remarked, “I don't see anything unusual in the weather that would cause this issue. The cynic in me wonders if there are people who don't want to admit that it's a renewables issue – if it was – because a lot of people are very invested in its success.”

Spain’s reliance on renewable energy has been rapidly increasing. The country generates an average of 56 per cent of its electricity from renewables, including wind, solar, and hydro power. On 16 April, just days before the blackout, Spain’s power grid operated entirely on renewable energy for the first time.

Portugal’s acting Prime Minister Luis Montenegro stated that while Spain was restoring power partly through imports from France and Morocco, Portugal’s power restoration might take longer as it relies mainly on domestic resources. The Portuguese National Cybersecurity Centre issued a statement ruling out a cyberattack as the cause of the power outage.

The outages affected many urban centres including Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Seville, and Lisbon, with public safety services and emergency responders active throughout. Members of the Red Cross distributed water and blankets, and emergency personnel coordinated evacuations from stranded trains.

British holidaymaker Adrian Coles, waiting to return to the UK after a weekend in Madrid, described the scene: “People are fighting over taxis and the streets are mostly at a standstill.” The widespread nature of the blackout highlighted the extent of the disruption across the Iberian Peninsula.

As power was gradually restored to around 60 per cent of Spain’s population, authorities continued to investigate the root causes of the event and coordinated efforts to stabilise the electricity grid to prevent further interruptions.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://news.sky.com/story/power-returning-in-spain-and-portugal-after-large-parts-hit-by-blackout-but-what-caused-it-13357374> - This URL corroborates the widespread power outage in Spain and Portugal, including the impact on major cities like Madrid and Lisbon, and the ongoing efforts to determine the cause of the blackout.
2. <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2025/04/28/spain-portugal-and-parts-of-france-hit-by-massive-power-outage> - This report supports the extent of the blackout, affecting millions, and its impact on transportation and public services, such as airports and hospitals.
3. <https://www.noahwire.com (Source)> - No direct information available; mentioned as the source for the article.
4. <https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/uk-world-news/live-updates-spain-power-outage-25952521 (historical context)> - Historical context or similar events might not be directly available, but this kind of URL would provide broader coverage on power outages and their impacts.
5. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/spanish-power-grid-operator-says-half-electricity-supplies-restored-2025-04-28/ (current status)> - Although not directly available in the search results, Reuters often provides comprehensive updates on such events, including the restoration of services.
6. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2025-04-28/spain-portugal-hit-by-mass-power-outage-as-investigations-begin (investigations)> - This would likely cover the investigations into the cause of the blackout and the economic impacts on the region.
7. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14657561/Net-Zero-blame-Spain-blackout-chaos-green-power-exacerbated-anarchy-30-000-officers-streets-panic-buying-emergency.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data