



Image credit: NASA

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The Iberian Peninsula

Lighting up the western coast of the Iberian Peninsula in the lower center of this image from November of 2017 is the only European capital city to lie on the Atlantic coast - Lisbon, Portugal. The intensity of its electric light output contrasts its legacy as one of the oldest cities in the world - older by centuries than either Paris or London, and even older than Rome.

400 miles into the peninsula's interior lies Madrid, the capital city of Spain. The rays of light darting in every direction from the city's dense center reveal an extensive network of suburban municipalities that comprise the Madrid metropolitan area.

While a daylight photo is likely to tell us more about surface features, night time photos such as this one say much about population patterns, especially as applied to urban settings where electric power is easily acquired.

This image suggests that the Iberian coastline is a popular place to settle. And why not - both its Atlantic and Mediterranean shores provide residents with advantages such as access to shipping, thriving fishing industries, and top notch recreation. Unfortunately these areas will also be the first to suffer as climate change leads to rising sea levels.

Coincidentally, the length of both coastlines is nearly identical - 1,030 mi along the Mediterranean and 1,027 mi along the Atlantic.



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