




## Maria Xiao Yao

**Nickname:**

Xixi

**Nation:**

Portuguese (before 2012) 

Spanish (after 2012) 

**Date of birth:**

19 May 1994

**Height:**

175 cm

**Place of birth:**

Calella, Spain

**Playing hand:**

 left

**Style of play:**

Shakehand grip

**Coach:**

Yanfei Shen

**Current world ranking (week 51 - 2024):**

59

**Current European ranking (December 2024):**

7

**Clubs as the active player(s):**

UCAM Cartagena TM

## Senior Career Highlights

### October 2024:

- Secured a historic bronze medal in women's singles at the European Table Tennis Championships in Linz, Austria, becoming the first Spanish woman to achieve an individual medal in this championship.
- Clinched the gold medal in mixed doubles alongside Álvaro Robles at the European Table Tennis Championships in Linz, marking the first time a fully Spanish pair won this title.

### July 2024:

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- Earned an Olympic diploma at the Paris 2024 Summer Olympics in mixed doubles with Álvaro Robles, the first in Spanish table tennis history.

#### March 2024:

- Won her fourth national title at the Absolute Spanish Table Tennis Championship in Tarragona, demonstrating her dominance in national competitions.

#### August 2022:

- Achieved a bronze medal in women's doubles at the European Table Tennis Championships in Munich, Germany, highlighting her prowess in doubles play.

#### June 2018:

- Secured a gold medal in the women's team event at the Mediterranean Games in Tarragona, Spain, contributing significantly to Spain's success in the tournament.

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### Breakthrough Moments and Achievements

#### October 2024:

- **Historic Bronze Medal in Women's Singles at the European Table Tennis Championships** in Linz, Austria. Maria Xiao became the first Spanish woman to win an individual medal in this event, marking a historic achievement in Spanish table tennis.

#### October 2024:

- **Gold Medal in Mixed Doubles** at the European Table Tennis Championships, alongside Álvaro Robles. This victory made history as it was the first time a fully Spanish pair won the European mixed doubles title.

#### July 2024:

- **Olympic Diploma in Mixed Doubles at the Paris 2024 Summer Olympics**, partnering with Álvaro Robles. This was the first Olympic diploma in Spanish table tennis history.

#### March 2024:



- **Fourth National Title at the Absolute Spanish Table Tennis Championship** in Tarragona. This victory solidified her status as one of Spain's top table tennis players and showcased her continued dominance in national competitions.

#### August 2022:

- **Bronze Medal in Women's Doubles** at the European Table Tennis Championships in Munich, Germany. This achievement highlighted her strong performance in doubles and her ability to compete at the highest level in Europe.

#### June 2018:

- **Gold Medal in Women's Team Event at the Mediterranean Games** in Tarragona, Spain. Her contributions were crucial in helping Spain secure the top spot in the women's team event, further establishing her as a key player in Spanish table tennis.

#### 2017:

- **Advanced to the Top 16 in Women's Singles** at the World Table Tennis Championships, marking a significant milestone in her international career. This achievement demonstrated her ability to compete at the global level and was a sign of her rising prominence in the sport.

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### Medals and Titles

- **European Championships:**

2024 Linz, Gold medal – first place, Mixed doubles

2022 Munich, Bronze medal – third place, Doubles

2024 Linz, Bronze medal – third place, Singles

- **Mediterranean Games:**

2018 Tarragon, Gold medal – first place, Team

2022 Oran, Bronze medal – third place, Singles

### Junior Career and Early Achievements

#### Medals and Titles

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**2010:**

- Represented Portugal at the Summer Youth Olympics, competing in both singles and mixed team events, gaining valuable international experience.
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### **Breakthrough Moments and Achievements**

**2012:**

- Served as Portugal's reserve player for the London 2012 Summer Olympics, reflecting her status as a promising young talent.
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### **2024: Detailed Overview and Achievements**

#### **Medals and Titles**

**October 2024:**

- Bronze medal in women's singles at the European Championships in Linz.

**October 2024:**

- Gold medal in mixed doubles at the European Championships in Linz with Álvaro Robles.

**July 2024:**

- Olympic diploma in mixed doubles at the Paris 2024 Summer Olympics.

**March 2024:**

- Victory at the Absolute Spanish Table Tennis Championship in Tarragona.
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### **Breakthrough Moments and Achievements**

**2024:**



MONTREUX (SWITZERLAND) 2025

- Achieved the first Olympic diploma in Spanish table tennis history in mixed doubles with Álvaro Robles.

2024:

- Became the first Spanish woman to win an individual medal at the European Table Tennis Championships.

## Biography and Career

María Xiao was born to Chinese parents, both professional table tennis players who emigrated from China to Spain seeking better opportunities in the sport. She spent her early years in Madeira, Portugal, where her parents moved for professional reasons. Initially representing Portugal, María switched allegiance to Spain in 2012. She has since become a pivotal figure in Spanish table tennis, representing the country in multiple international competitions, including the 2020 and 2024 Summer Olympics.

## Early Life and Background

Born in Calella, Spain, María was introduced to table tennis by her parents, Xiao Daili and Yao Li, both accomplished players. The family relocated to Madeira, Portugal, during her childhood, where María's passion for table tennis flourished. She began her international career representing Portugal but transitioned to compete for Spain in 2012, embracing her birth country's nationality.

## Playing Style and Personality

María is known for her left-handed shakehand grip and formidable backhand, making her a versatile and strategic player. Her playing style is characterized by agility, precision, and tactical intelligence. Off the table, María is recognized for her dedication, resilience, and commitment to advancing table tennis in Spain.

## Legacy and Future Goals

As of December 2024, María Xiao stands as a trailblazer in Spanish table tennis, achieving historic milestones and inspiring a new generation of players. Her recent successes have elevated the sport's profile in Spain. Looking ahead, María aims to continue her competitive career, with aspirations to secure further European titles and make a

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## Conclusions

María Xiao Yao has established herself as one of Spain's most iconic and accomplished table tennis players by the end of 2024. From her early years in Madeira, Portugal, to her groundbreaking achievements representing Spain, María's journey exemplifies dedication, resilience, and excellence. Her 2024 season stands as a testament to her commitment, marked by historic milestones and a gold medal at the European Table Tennis Championships.

Her legacy extends beyond her accolades, as María has played a pivotal role in elevating table tennis's profile within Spain and inspiring future generations. Looking to the future, María remains focused on furthering her career and achieving new heights on the European and global stages. She will undoubtedly continue to be a formidable presence in international table tennis, leaving an enduring impact on the sport.

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