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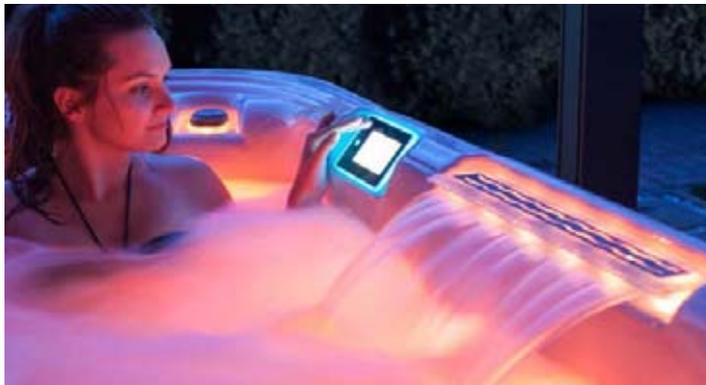
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A Life in **SPAIN**

Welcome to the December edition of ALIS.

It's Christmas!!! Somehow doesn't seem the same with all the restrictions together with false information clouding what we can and can't do. But anyway. We wish all our readers a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year. Let's hope 2021 is a bit better than 2020.

This edition of ALIS is based around Christmas in Spain, and includes the Christmas festive calendar and festivities

The recipe this month is for Turrón. A great Spanish favourite. Give it a go.

The company focus this month is on Legs & Co. This lingerie company has been trading for nearly 20 years and is now under new management. We wish Carol all the best for the future in her new business.

Enjoy this months magazine

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Calendar of Christmas in Spain



December 8th – Red Day - This is the public holiday of Inmaculada (Feast of the Immaculate Conception) which marks the beginning of the religious Christmas celebrations. Most notable in Seville.

21st December – In a few cities including Granada the celebration of Hogueras (bonfires) takes place. This date marks the winter solstice (shortest day) and where it is celebrated involves people jumping through fires to protect themselves against illness.

22nd December – All over Spain people never stray far from a TV or radio as the Christmas lottery is drawn over a period of many hours. Everybody in Spain buys tickets for this lottery in the hope of winning El Gordo (the fat one) and the winning number usually means that a good number of people from the same village become a lot better off overnight. Besides the big three prizes there are thousands of smaller prizes shared by people all over Spain. You can buy Spanish Christmas lottery tickets online.

24th December – Christmas Eve is called Noche Buena in Spanish (Goodnight) and it is the most

important family gathering of the year. In the evening people often meet early for a few drinks with friends then return home to enjoy a meal with the family. Most bars and restaurants close in the evening. Prawn starters followed by roast lamb would be a typical meal rounded off with a typically Christmas sweet called turrón which is a nougat made of toasted sweet almonds. Another typical festive sweet is called Polvorones which is made from almonds, flour and sugar. Cava, Catalan champagne, would be the chosen drink for the Christmas toast though plenty fine Spanish wines will also be consumed with the meal.

25th December – Red Day - Children may receive a small gift on Noche Buena or this morning but the day for presents is 6th January, Epiphany, when the Three Kings bring gifts for the children. Christmas Day is a national holiday in Spain so shops are closed yet it is not a day of great celebration but rather a calm day when people go out for a walk, drop into a bar, etc. Another large family meal at lunchtime is common though it's becoming more common to see families eating out on the afternoon of Christmas day.

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28th December – This is the day of Santos Inocentes (Holy Innocents) and is the equivalent of April Fools' Day when people play practical jokes on one another. Often the national media will include a nonsense story in their broadcasts. In some villages youngsters light bonfires and one of them acts as the mayor who orders townspeople to carry out civic tasks such as sweeping the streets. Refusal to comply results in fines which are used to pay for the celebration.

31st December – New Year's Eve is known as Noche Vieja. It is a big celebration all over the country with street parties and special nights in hotels and clubs everywhere. Until midnight people tend to stay at home and on the stroke of midnight it is traditional to eat 12 grapes, one on each stroke of the clock to bring good luck for the new year. In Madrid and other main cities revellers congregate in the main square (Puerta del Sol in Madrid) and eat the grapes along with a celebratory bottle of cava then head out into the night until after sunrise.

1st January – Red Day - A low key public holiday with plenty of people sleeping off their excesses.

5th January – There are processions all over Spain this evening where sweets are thrown from the floats to all the people who come out to watch. Every town has its own variation such as in the Sierra Nevada where the Three Kings (Wise Men) can be seen to ski down to the village.

6th January – Red Day - This is the Feast of the Epiphany (Día de los Reyes Magos) when the Three Kings arrived in Bethlehem. For Spanish children this is the most important day of the year when they wake up to find that Los Reyes Magos (the Three Kings/Wise Men) have left gifts for them in their house. Santa may leave them a token gift on December 25th but the Three Kings are their favourites, especially Baltasar who rides a donkey and is the one believed to leave the gifts. During the day of 6th the Three Kings continue their good work and are seen distributing gifts to children in hospitals all over Spain.

7th January – The day after receiving their gifts children return to school, their parents go back to work and Christmas in Spain is all over for another year.



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Spanish Recipes

Spain has some of the most varied cuisine in Europe. We are going to try to guide you through some recipes for you to try at home.

Good luck and enjoy.

Spanish Picadillo



Ingredients:

Ingredients for 2 people:

- 250 grams pork mince
- 3 or 4 cloves of garlic
- 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon of hot or smoky paprika
- 1/2 to 1 teaspoon of sweet paprika
- pinch of salt
- olive oil for frying

Method:

Preparation

- 1 Drizzle a little olive oil into a frying pan and throw your garlic cloves in. Don't peel them though
- 2 Fry over a medium heat until the skins are crispy
- 3 Peel the garlic and then mash it in a pestle and mortar with a pinch of salt
- 4 Mix the paste in with the mince and add the two types of paprika.
- 5 Keep stirring and mixing... and when you think you've stirred enough, stir more. Do it with your hands if you like... you want it really well mixed
- 6 Pop into a bowl, cover and refrigerate for at least 8 hours. I do ours in the morning, and then it's ready for that evening
- 7 Bring the bowl out of the fridge about half an hour before you're ready to cook so that it comes up to room temperature
- 8 Drizzle a small amount of olive oil into a large frying pan (perhaps a tablespoon full) and brown the mince
- 9 Keep stirring until it's cooked. Make sure you break the mince up
- 10 Spoon the mince onto plates
- 11 Stick a bit of leafy stuff on top if you want to make it look pretty

Serve hot

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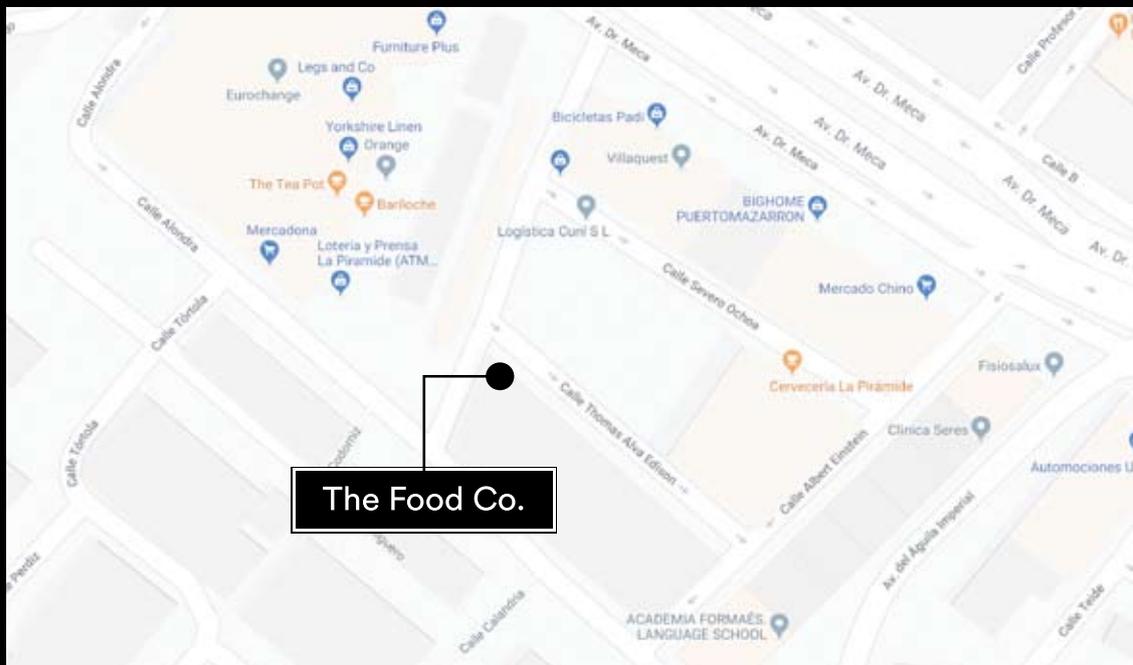
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Rosca de Reyes

With religious origins, the Rosca de Reyes is a traditional Spanish bread in the form of a ring, representing the Wise Men's search for the King of the Jews. It is believed that Melchior, Gaspar and Balthazar, the Three Kings from the East, travelled to Jerusalem following a star. On meeting with King Herod, they asked him where the new King had been born. King Herod, frightened by these words, asked the wise men to search for the child and bring word once they had found him, so that he may also go and worship the new king. Because Herod was afraid that the child might threaten his throne, he ordered the killing of every single baby under the age of two years old. The day when the wise men found the Baby Jesus is known as Epiphany, which is precisely the event represented by the Rosca de Reyes.

The dried and candied fruits that adorn the bread symbolize the crowns of the Kings, while the traditional figurines placed inside the bread represent Mary and Joseph fleeing to Egypt to escape from Herod's attempts to kill their baby. The tradition of eating Rosca de Reyes actually started in France, in the 14th century. The way it was eaten was almost a ritual in itself. A slice of bread was first given to a poor person or stranger, then the next slices were intended for those serving in the King's army, and the rest of the bread was distributed among the other guests. This tradition soon expanded to other countries in Europe and later to Latin America.

Nowadays, in France, the tradition involves the Rosca de Reyes being placed on a table, under which a child sits or they are blindfolded, so that when the bread is divided they are asked "Who shall receive this share?" and the child names someone. One lucky recipient will find the trinket, normally a bean although sometimes even a coin. The person who finds it is named "King" for the day.

In Mexico, the tradition of sharing the bread is slightly different, as little plastic babies are placed inside it to symbolize the baby Jesus. Guests then randomly take a share of the bread, and whoever finds the figurine automatically becomes his godparent. Then he or she has to make a party with tamales and atole on the following February 2nd.

Godparents usually dress up a statue of Jesus using traditional costumes. Sometimes they dress him as Saint Francis of Assisi or the Holy Child of Atocha and other typical depictions of Jesus. February 2nd is a very important day, when many Christians celebrate the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin, also known as the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple. This feast also honors Our Lady of Candelaria, a depiction of the Virgin Mary, and includes the blessing of water and candles. Far more than a quaint tradition, the Rosca de Reyes can help believers remember that God can turn darkness and bitterness into light and sweetness!



Let's Learn Spanish

Sports

Phrases

Do you like winter sports?	¿A ti, te gustan los deportes del invierno?	Ah teataygoo stan loss day portays del in vee yer no
Is there an ice-rink here?	¿Hay una pista de hielo aquí?	Eyeoo nah peastah day yell oh ack key
Where can I play ice hockey?	¿Dónde puedo jugar hockey sobre hielo?	Don day pwehdoh who garhock key sob ray yell oh
How far away are the slopes?	¿A qué distancia están las pistas?	Ah kaydistan sea yahesstanlasspeastass
Can I hire skis here?	¿Puedo alquilar esquí aquí?	Pwehdoh al key lahesskeys ack key
I take a size 40 ski boot	Tomo una bota de esquí talla 40	Tommoo nah boh ta dayesskeythai yah cwarrentah
How much is this snowboard?	¿Cuánto cuesta esta tabla de snow?	Kwan toe kwestahesstahtablah day snow
Where can I book ski lessons?	¿Dónde puedo reservar clases de esquí?	Don day pwehdoh res err varclasses day esskey

Vocab

Go skiing	Ir a esquiar	Ear are ess key are
Go cross-country skiing	Ir a esquiar campo través	Ear are ess key arecampohtrahves
Go snowboarding	Ir a hacer snowboard	Ear are athairsnow board
Go sledding	Ir en trineo	Ear en tree nay oh
Play snowball	Jugar a tirar bolas de nieve	Who garare tea are rahbol lass day knee ev eh
Make a snowman	Hacer un muñeco de nieve	Athairoon moon yeahkoh day knee ev eh
Go skating	Ir a patinar	Ear are pat teen are
Play ice-hockey	Jugar a hockey sobre hielo	Who gararehock key sob ray yell oh
Play snow-volleyball	Jugar a voleibol de nieve	Who gar a vol lay bol day knee ev eh
Snowflake	Un copo de nieve	Ooncop oh day knee ev eh
Ice	El hielo	El yell oh
Icicle	Un carámbano	Oon car ram ban oh



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South Town...

LORCA



Lorca, was declared a Town of Historical and Artistic Interest in 1964 and is described as “the baroque city” due to the important baroque heritage of its historical centre. One of the most important in the Region, and the historical events that have shaped modern Lorca from the Iron Age to our time.

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Mention must be made of the numerous archaeological sites, the Columna Miliaria dating from Roman times, the Espolón Tower and the Alfonsina Tower, a Christian construction dating from after the Reconquest; the “Porche de San Antonio”, the gate through the old wall that surrounded the city (in the 10th century), the numerous churches and convents dating from different periods and built in different styles (15th century to the 18th century), the baroque palaces and stately homes, such as the Guevara Palace, the Palace of the Counts of San Julián or Casa de la Mula, the military fortress that restructures the medieval castle on an inexpugnable site, or the paved streets around Plaza de España, with popular architectural buildings imbued with strong traditional character, such as La Zapatería y La Cava.

The people of Lorca are the protagonists of, and the driving force behind, the changes that are taking place in the town, and aimed at designing a strategy that will help to interpret, establish themes and communicate its rich heritage, and with which will help to bring visitors to the historical, cultural, architectonic and artistic values of Lorca, in an attractive, interesting and unique way.

If you want adventure then Lorca “Workshop of Time” will give you as a visitor what you are looking for: the adventure of immersing yourself in everything that Lorca signifies. Its streets, its wealth of monuments and its urban atmosphere can all be appreciated via the following four Cultural Itineraries which when finally completed reveal a multiple, diverse and historical world;

“Entre el cielo y el suelo” (Between Heaven and Earth)
“Tiempo de contratiempos” (Timed and mistimed)
“La ciudad de los cien escudos” (The city of the one hundred coats of arms)
“Tiempo de devoción” (A Time for Devotion).

Your visit to the Archaeological Museum will bring to fulfillment your knowledge and enjoyment of the rich history of this city.

Lorca, “Workshop of Time” is also proposing a new Visitor Activity Centre in the recently restored Convent of Lorca building. The abundant historical evidence which remains from Lorca’s frontier times and from the time of the Moors and Christians has made Lorca one of the most important historical centres in the whole of Eastern Spain. Its castle with its imposing appearance is being converted into a theme area to be known as Fortress of the Sun. Here the visitor will be able to live out “an experience through the periods of History”.

You will also find centuries worth of craft traditions still being enjoyed; expert hands which can transform nature into hand-produced rugs, embroidery and pottery. In addition to all of this, Lorca, “Workshop of Time” savors and learns things from Easter week and other examples from its full annual calendar of traditional festivities:

The Feria Chica (Small Fair), in September, which pays homage to the Virgin of the Huertas (the agricultural country around Lorca)

The Day and Night Fairs, which greet the end of the summer and fill the streets with local snacks, wine and folklore

The Moors and Christians festival during San Clemente, with its horses, troops, armies and medieval markets.

Visitors are always made more than welcome in Lorca, and its year-round good weather, restaurants, hotels and first-class tourist infrastructures, all combine to add to the rural tourism on offer in the largest district in the Region of Murcia. The city and its nearness to its many mountain chains and areas of great natural beauty make Lorca a place to really have a good time.



Christmas in Spain



Most people in Spain go to Midnight Mass or 'La Misa Del Gallo' (The Mass of the Rooster). It is called this because a rooster is supposed to have crowed the night that Jesus was born. Christmas Eve is known as Noche Buena. In the days before Noche Buena, children might take part in 'piden el aguinaldo' where they go and sing carols around their neighbours hoping to get some money!

Most families eat their main Christmas meal on Christmas Eve before the service. The traditional Spanish Christmas dinner was 'Pavo Trufado de Navidad' which is Turkey stuffed with truffles (the mushrooms, not the chocolate ones!) or 'Pularda asada' (a roasted young hen), although they are not commonly eaten now. In Galicia (a region in north-west Spain, surrounded by water) the most popular meal for Christmas Eve and for Christmas Day is seafood. This can be all kinds of different seafood, from shellfish and mollusks, to lobster and small edible crabs.

Popular deserts and sweets include 'mazapán' (made of almonds, sugar and eggs), 'turrón' (made of honey and toasted almonds) and 'polvorones' (made of flour, butter and sugar).

After the midnight service, one old tradition was for people to walk through the streets carrying torches, playing guitars and beating on tambourines and drums. One Spanish saying is 'Esta noche es Noche-Buena, Y no Es noche de dormir' which means 'Tonight is the good night and it is not meant for sleeping!'

A few different languages are spoken in different regions in Spain. In Spanish Happy/Merry Christmas is 'Feliz Navidad'; in Catalan it's 'Bon Nadal'; in Galician 'Bo Nadal'; and in Basque (or Euskara in basque) 'Eguberri on'. Happy/Merry Christmas in lots more languages.

December 28th is 'Día de los santos inocentes' or 'Day of the Innocent Saints' and is very like April Fools Day in the UK and USA. People try to trick each other into believing silly stories and jokes. Newspapers and TV stations also run silly stories. If you trick someone, you can call them 'Inocente, inocente' which means 'innocent, innocent'. 28th December is when people all over the world remember the babies that were killed on the orders of King Herod when he was trying to kill the baby Jesus.

New Year's Eve is called 'Nochevieja' or 'The Old Night' in Spain and one special tradition is that you eat 12 grapes with the 12 strokes of the clock at Midnight! Each grape represents a month of the coming year, so if you eat the twelve grapes, you are said to be lucky in the new year.

Apart from Christmas, there is another festival that is celebrated in Spain that is about the Christmas Story. It is called Epiphany and is celebrated on 6th January. In Spanish, Epiphany is called 'Fiesta de Los tres Reyes Magos': in English this means 'The festival of the three Magic Kings'. Epiphany celebrates when the Kings or Wise men brought gifts to the baby Jesus.

Children have some presents on Christmas Day, but most are opened at Epiphany. Children believe that the Kings bring presents to them at Epiphany. They write letters to the Kings asking for toys and presents. And on Epiphany Eve (January 5th) they leave shoes on windowsills or balconies or under the Christmas Tree to be filled with presents. Gifts are often left by children for the Kings, a glass of Cognac for each King, a satsuma and some walnuts. Sometimes a bucket of water is left for the camels that bring the Kings! If the children have been bad, the Kings might leave pieces of coal made out of sugar in the presents!

Some big towns and cities have Epiphany Parades with each King having a big float that is shaped like a camel. Sometimes there are also real camels in the parade. The Three Kings in the Spanish Epiphany are:

Gaspar, who has brown hair and a brown beard (or no beard!) and wears a green cloak and a gold crown with green jewels on it. He is the King of Sheba. Gaspar represents the Frankincense brought to Jesus. Frankincense is sometimes used in worship in Churches and showed that people worship Jesus.

Melchior, who has long white hair and a white beard and wears a gold cloak. He is the King of Arabia. Melchior represents the Gold brought to Jesus. Gold is associated with Kings and Christians believe that Jesus is the King of Kings.

Balthazar, who has black skin and a black beard (or no beard!) and wears a purple cloak. He is the King of Tarse and Egypt. Balthazar represents the gift of Myrrh that was brought to Jesus. Myrrh is a perfume that is put on dead bodies to make them smell nice and showed that Jesus would suffer and die.

Christmas in the Basque Country

In the Basque country (which is a part of northern Spain and southern France), on Christmas Eve, children's presents are delivered by a magical man called Olentzero. He's a big, overweight man wearing a beret and smoking a pipe. He dresses like a Basque farmer.

Christmas in Catalonia

In the Catalonia province of Spain there's a Christmas character called 'Tió de Nadal' (the Christmas log) or he's sometimes known as 'Caga tio' (the pooping log!). It's a small hollow log propped up on two legs with a smiling face painted on one end. From the 8th December (the Feast of the Immaculate Conception) Catalan families give the log a few morsels of food to 'eat' and a blanket to keep it warm. On Christmas Day or Christmas Eve, the log then 'gives out' small gifts! People sing a special song and hit the log with sticks to help its 'digestion' and the log drops sweets, nuts, and dried fruits. When garlic or an onion falls out of the log, all of the treats are finished for the year.

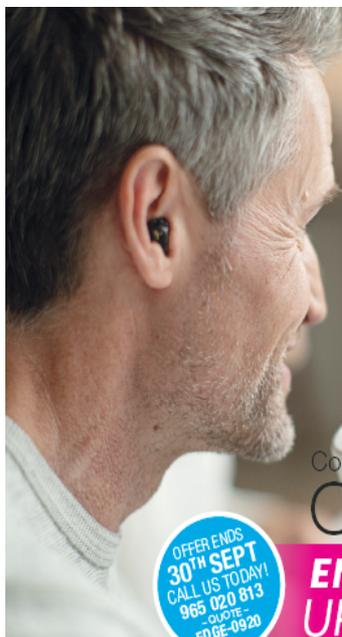
A special cake called 'Roscón' is eaten at Epiphany. Roscón means 'ring shape roll'. It is very doughy and is bought from a bakery on Epiphany morning. Roscón can be filled with cream or chocolate and contain a little gift.



Christmas in Spain

The first thing that the visitor will notice is that Christmas in Spain is not as huge a commercial occasion as is the case in many other western countries. Christmas lights are usually lit in the main cities in the first week of December by which time the shops are fully stocked with Christmas supplies. Nothing like the US and UK where the end of summer marks the build up to Christmas.

Christmas trees are common in the home but again they don't appear until the second half of December. Also in the home there are intricate, miniature nativity scenes called Belénes which depict life in the village where Jesus was born. The Belén always include the baby Jesus, Mary, Joseph as well as the Three Kings, Baltasar, Melchior and Gaspar.



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Sangria It's hard to avoid summer sangria these days. Bubbly sangria, rosé sangria, Hennessy sangria, red, white, blue sangria, the Spanish wine punch has deviated so far from its simple origins it's nearly unrecognizable. For years, sangrias have been gracing red and white picnic cloths and restaurants with outdoor seating. Sangria seems endlessly adaptable, vaguely Spanish, and unmoored from any set traditions. But traditional sangria goes back, way back, as wine mixed with whatever is nearby.

Early Greeks and Romans mixed their wine with sugar, spices, and whatever was on hand (sound familiar?). It was called "hippocras," and it was sometimes heated like mulled wine. Hippocras is likely the common ancestor of both sangria and mulled wine, and was drunk everywhere because water was bacteria-filled and unsafe to drink. A touch of alcohol made the liquid drinkable, and mixing the watered-down wine gave it flavor. People who lived in modern-day Spain were doing something similar with grapevines planted by the Phoenicians around 1,100 B.C., and then with vines planted by the Romans after.

But in the 700s, the Spanish wine business, and by extension the Spanish sangria business, faltered. Islamic Moors conquered the peninsula in 711 A.D. Sangria didn't return until the Moors' rule ended in 1492, and with the return of wine there was the return of sangria.

Variations on house sangria — which means blood in Spanish, in reference to the red wine used — ruled in Spain. Traditionally, it's been made with Spanish Tempranillo and other wine from Rioja with added citrus fruit. But even then, no Sangria was made the same.

In the 1700s and 1800s, a style of sangria was made in England and France using traditionally French grapes. There was also white sangria, sparkling sangria, and sangria made with peaches, which was called zurra. The drink in all its forms had flashes of popularity in the U.S. in Spanish restaurants and certain city alcoves.

The current craze for sangria in the U.S. dates back to the 1964 World's Fair in New York City. Spain's sponsored pavilion featured the drink, and Americans have been thirsty for sangria ever since.

Today, under European law, all sangria must be made in Spain or Portugal and have less than 12 percent alcohol by volume. The best sangria, however, is homemade. Check out VinePair's sangria guide to find your next favorite summer drink.





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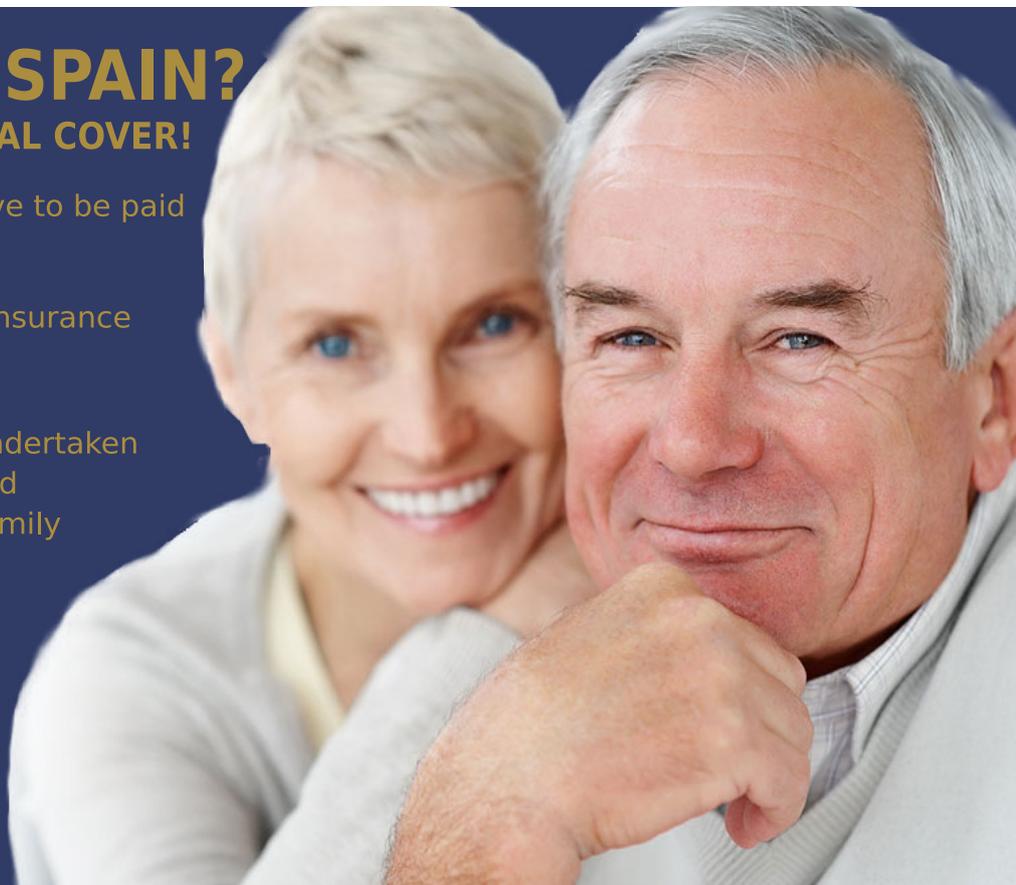
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Wine Regions - The Mediterranean Coast

The warmth of the coast from the French border to Almería can be mitigated by high altitudes, whether in Cataluña or in Valencia.

Throughout most of this area, world-class wines are appearing in places such as Priorat and Montsant, as well as established areas such as Penedés. Cava, the most famous sparkling wine in the world after Champagne.

This massive area includes much of present day Cataluña; there is a DO by that name as well that encompasses many of the top areas. These vineyard areas, whether near or far from the coast, share exposure to the warm winds of the Mediterranean. Many of the vineyards can be fairly moderate in climate and coastal, as in Alella, or remote and mountainous, as in Priorat. In Cataluña, elevation and proximity to the sea are crucial to understanding what is made there and why.

Alella offers some delicious whites from the Pansa Blanca grape (known as Xarel-lo in Cava country); it can be aromatic and expressive. White wines prosper in a number of sites along the Mediterranean, though not as frequently as the reds. Empordá makes some generous and textured Garnacha Blanca based wines, as do Montsant and Priorat. The Penedés region, home of 95% of the country's Cava, is awash in white grapes: Parellada, Macabeo (or Viura) and Xarel-lo (or Pansa Blanca).

As throughout most of Spain, the greater number of prized wines are reds. DO's such as Conca de Barbera, Costers del Segre, Empordá, Pla de Bages and Terra Alta have a dizzying array of wines from both international and indigenous grapes. Garnacha is far more planted than is Tempranillo; heat is a stronger factor in these regions and Garnacha a more forgiving grape. Syrah and the Bordeaux varieties show up in more elevated and protected sites.

The great success story in recent years is in and around the Tarragona region where some vines end up as Cava and some harbor red grapes. Priorat and its baby

brother Montsant have unquestionably changed Spain's wine landscape; these craggy hills and mountains allow Garnacha, Cariñena, along with small amounts of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah to bake into powerful, heady wine, especially when coaxed from the old vines found throughout.

For some, Montsant is "poor man's Priorat," but that does a disservice to the area's burgeoning reputation. Its elevations and terrains are not as extreme as Priorat, and Priorat's famed licorella soils give way most often to limestone. But the quality/value ratios are absurdly stacked in the drinker's favor.

The prices charged for some Priorat wines are as lofty as the stark pinnacles above these mountainous vineyards. Twenty years ago this entire area and its wines were nearly forgotten. In the early 1980s, a group of mavericks—René Barbier, Rioja's Alvaro Palacios, Carlos Pastrana, Dafne Glorian, and José Luis Pérez—moved to Priorat. They created fantastic wines almost from the beginning, and they continue to improve the wines of the region.

The fame and pricing have attracted some to the region, but a quick buck is unlikely. As Alvaro Palacios of L'Ermita is quick to point out, the region itself is so difficult to work that only small amounts of very high-quality wine can be made. Anyone seeking to make wine through compromise will likely fail. The quality in Priorat, and the prices, shall remain high.



These wines are powerful and warm, if not occasionally hot, but they carry a fresh and even slightly racy core that gives them shape and complexity. The landscape too is distinct; the licorella soil mix of granite and slate adds a firmly mineral note that underpins every wine, regardless of the grapes.

Closer to the coast, Penedés is home to more than Cava, but sparkling wine is the 800-pound gorilla among the vines. The region is broken into the Alt-Penedés, Mitja-Penedés, and Baix-Penedés, reflecting the disparities in elevation within Penedés, with some vineyards planted in sites higher than 2,500 feet. All the grapes (especially the dominant three, Macabeo, Xarel-lo, and Parellada) at those altitudes can be intensely tart, akin to the raciness of Champagne.

Many American consumers see Cava as limited to the wildly successful grocery-store brands. But there are complex and layered versions of Cava, as well as rich rosado styles to be discovered. Nine months of aging on the lees is required for standard Cava; Reservas must stay 18 months on the lees, and Gran Reservas require 30 months.

Further southwest down the coast, the average temperatures go higher, and the opportunity to make light wines is baked away. Instead the Levante, an area around Valencia and Murcia, is wholly dependent upon water, and the grapevines suffer without it. Areas such

as Alicante, Bullas, Utiel-Requena, Valencia and Yecla do good work where the producers are dedicated to quality, and where the vineyards are elevated enough to provide cooling nighttime temperatures.

One of the stars here is Jumilla, which is not so different from its neighbours except in its track record. The last two decades Jumilla has crafted delightful wines, whether from Monastrell (or Mourvèdre, as the French call it), Garnacha or blends with other grapes. But most wines are very reasonably priced and are often rich and delicious. The Bobal grape is exciting too but prospers more often in Utiel-Requena.



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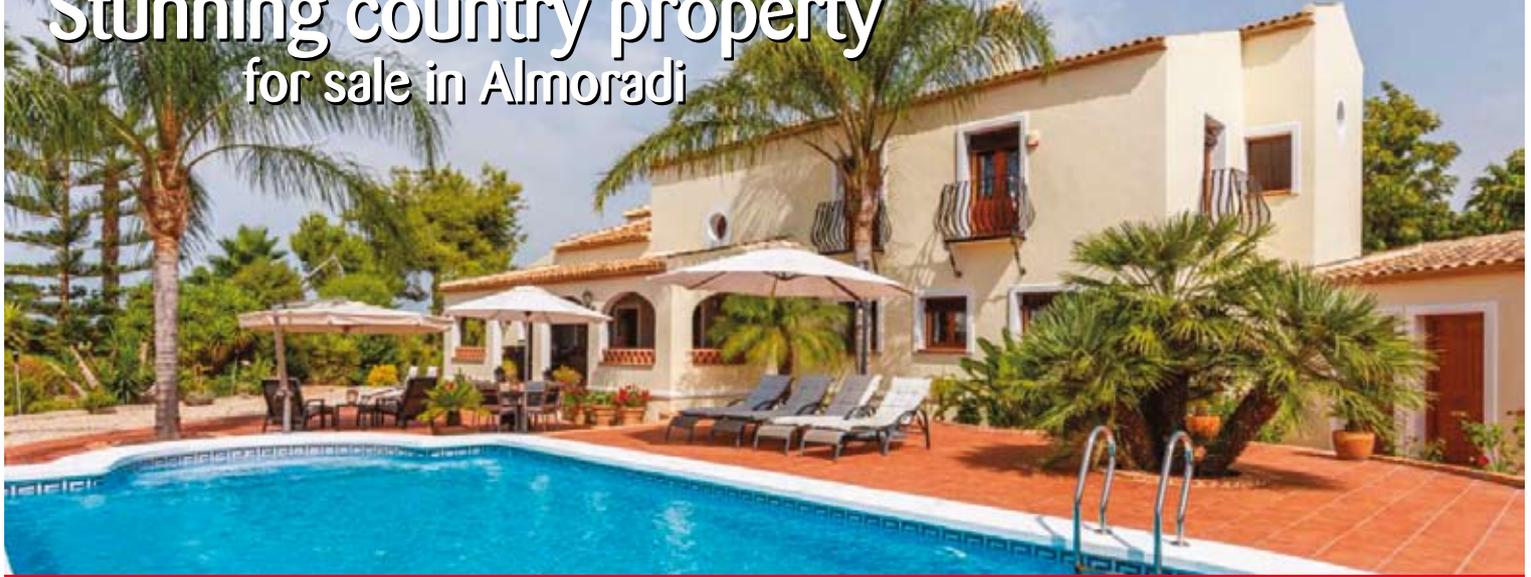
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4 Great weekend trips in Spain

Part 1

Ávila and Segovia



These 2 great cities will allow you will see everything from Roman aqueducts to Gothic cathedrals. Why not stay in Segovia, and visit Ávila for a day trip.

Ávila is known for its religious significance and its role as the birthplace of iconic female mystic, Saint Teresa. Once you arrive in Ávila, soak in the incredible views from the vantage point of Cuatro Postes. Then, make your way to the most popular religious structures in the city: The Gothic Avila Cathedral and the Romanesque San Vicente Basilica. Amble along cobblestone streets, snapping as many pictures as possible of the famous medieval walls and the towers dating back to the 11th century.

There is a walkway 1,700 metres long on top of the iconic city walls of Ávila, open to the public. The views of the cathedral, the Plaza del Mercado Grande and the countryside around the city are well worth the walk. The cathedral was originally fortified and is attached to the city walls. It is believed to be Spain's first Gothic cathedral. The other symbol of the city is Saint Teresa de Jesús, whose presence is everywhere in the city, from the statues in her honour to the name of Ávila's most famous sweet: yemas de Santa Teresa.

You can visit the Convent of Santa Teresa, built on the site of the house where she was born. The Museum of Saint Teresa stands next to it. The Real Monasterio de Santo Tomás, the Basilica of San Vicente and the Basilica of San Pedro are also interesting religious sites. To learn more about Christian mysticism and its representatives in Ávila, we recommend visiting the Mysticism Interpretation Centre.

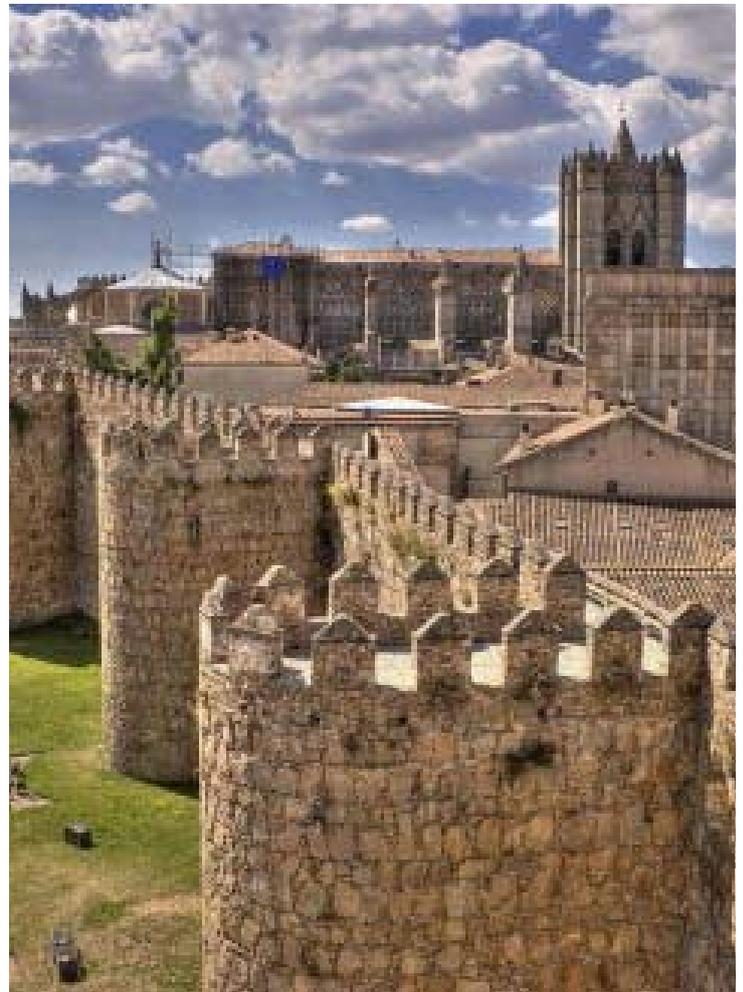
Segovia. Learn about this medieval city, its Roman history and its magnificent location between the Clamores and Eresma Rivers. When you arrive, start by basking in the sheer engineering skill and beauty of the Roman aqueduct, which boasts two tiers and is one of the best preserved landmarks left by the ancient Romans in Spain.

After the initial amazement at this magnificent feat of engineering, with 167 arches held together only by the balance of forces, it's time to visit towers, Romanesque churches, synagogues, Renaissance palaces, convents, gardens, hidden courtyards, a fortress which could have inspired the creators at Disney... In Segovia you don't need a bus to see them all. You can enjoy each step and make the most of the walk.

Next up is the Alcazar, a brilliant castle dating from the 11th century that served as inspiration for today's Cinderella Castle at Walt Disney World. A guided tour through Alcazar lets you get close to the stunning turrets and see the exact spot where Queen Isabella herself was crowned in the 15th century.

Apart from its monuments, the city of Segovia has a wide range of cultural attractions all year, and its streets and other spaces always have music, dance, theatre or literature to enjoy. Its best known festivals include Titirimundi, the Segovia Music Festival and the Hay Festival. As well as traditional museums like the Antonio Machado House-Museum (the famous writer lived here from 1919 to 1932), surprising new spaces are emerging, like La Cárcel, a former prison which now offers exhibitions, film seasons, microtheatre, and so on.

If you want something traditional for lunch, the most famous local dish is suckling pig in the legendary Mesón Cándido or in some new restaurant contributing a touch of modernity. If you prefer, you can visit a Michelin starred restaurant like Villena.



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LA MARINA

La Marina is located on the Costa Blanca South between Santa Pola and Guardamar del Segura. La Marina is basically split into two distinct parts, the old coastal town and beach area, and the purpose built residential development (urbanisation La Marina), a short distance inland on the other side of the main coastal road the N-332.

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The coastal part of the town has some fantastic sandy beaches, which even in the peak season are so big that they never get packed, and you can always find a spot away from the crowds to enjoy the sunny weather.

La Marina is a small town in an area of protected pine forests and it comes alive during the summer months when people fill the town to enjoy the small but busy beach tourist resort. Clearly, La Marina is a great location for a beach holiday, if that is all you want from a holiday then you won't need to go anywhere else, as everything you need for a great family holiday in the sun is right here in La Marina.

Enjoy a traditional Spanish experience by visiting the street markets which are held every Thursday and Sunday from 8am to 2pm. Here you will find stalls selling local produce including fruits, vegetables, leather goods such as handbags, shoes, belts and purses. Road access to La Marina is very good. The AP-7 autoroute (motorway) comes down from Alicante airport and goes south to Murcia Corvera airport.

Also the N-332 goes directly past the outskirts of the urbanisation of La Marina and this also goes from Alicante airport in the north all the way down to Murcia Corvera airport to the south.

To the south of La Marina are urbanisation Bella Vista and urbanisation Las Pesqueras, then comes Guardamar del Segura, a much larger coastal town with great beaches. To the north of La Marina is Santa Pola with its miles of sandy beaches and a large town centre. Also just north of La Marina are lots of salt lakes such as Salinas del Brac del Port which create a very healthy atmosphere for people suffering from health problems such as allergies or arthritis.

La Marina Urbanisation

La Marina is a popular place where many people live all year round especially in the growing La Marina urbanisation which is

slightly inland off the coast (and separate from the actual town of La Marina) and just off the N-322. It has plenty of shops, bars and restaurants so you have plenty of facilities on your doorstep that you can easily walk to. There are four supermarkets including SuperValue (the tourist office is opposite here). There is also a newsagent, optician, bank, and an ice-cream parlour.

In Spanish, the word urbanisation is urbanizacion and means a housing development. La Marina is broken down into three main areas: La Marina, La Escuera and El Oasis. The post code (in Spanish 'códigos postales') is 03170.

You may also see it referred to as Marina Oasis and smaller parts include the blocks of Marina Sol, Marina del Mar 1, Urb. Jazmin, Urb. Oasis, Isla Christina, Lo Grane and Residencial Oasis. It is well-designed with plenty of parks and green zones where you can play football or walk dogs.

The La Marina urbanization has all its own amenities, making it pretty much self sufficient, and of course there are a glut of rental properties in the area. There is a local bus service which will take you to the shops, bars and restaurants on the urbanisation. The Vega bus goes to the beach 2km away. A good option is to rent a villa with pool. This means that for most days you can simply laze by the pool, cook on the barbeque and make the most of the superb weather conditions that are enjoyed here throughout the year.

With a car you will be able to get out and about and visit the numerous coastal resorts, as well as attractions like the Rio Safari park between Santa Pola and Elche. You can also get to local golf courses, of which there are plenty in the area. Don't forget a trip into the city of Alicante where the best shopping area can be found. Likewise for culture, maybe a visit to the Santa Barbara Castle is also ideal.



Legs and Co

Under New Management – Legs and Co, Mazarron, is Spain's longest established British lingerie shop, opening in 2003. After many years building this successful business Donna Clarke has decided to concentrate on growing their other businesses with her husband. She has sold Legs and Co to Carol Hughes.

Carol had struggled finding quality bras which fit well since moving to Spain, especially as she had breast cancer 7 years ago, so needed a well-fitting bra. She was pleasantly surprised when she found Legs and Co, as they cater for all needs. They have wired / non wired, and stock mastectomy bras. All items are very reasonably priced. Carol was so impressed with the concept that she bought the business. Carol has said she will not be making any major changes to the shop - although she will be introducing some exciting new lines.

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Friday. They are closed Saturday and Sunday, although Carol will open for you at different times if you can not make those hours. Just give her a call on 711 023 232.

For a limited time, Carol is offering an exclusive deal only available to readers of "A life in Spain" Magazine - see voucher below for details. She looks forward to welcoming customers new and old.

Carol would like to thank Donna Clark and wish her every success with her new business venture

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Free things to do in and around Alicante *part 4*

Alicante is a beautiful region that's full of mountains, towns, and cultural events that all seem to be catered toward creating the perfect holiday for everyone. Not only does the region offer something for the whole family as well as solo travellers, but it does so at the most affordable price of all: 100% free.

25 of 30

Castillo de Orihuela – Located right on the edge of the Orihuela town, this ruined castle is estimated to have been built sometime during the Moorish period. However, as there aren't any documents concerning its construction, its start date ranges anywhere between 711 and 1243, or maybe even a bit before. There is also a cave within the walls of the castle called Cueva de Calor.

Orihuela Castle, also known as the Castle of Glorious Ruins, is situated on the hill of San Miguel, at an altitude of over 200 metres. During the Spanish War of Succession, a huge explosion, caused by a lightning strike, destroyed the castle and, finally, after various storms throughout the 17th century, the earthquake of 1829 caused the collapse of the building, making restoration impossible.

26 of 30

Cruz de Enmedio – A rugged hike up a mountain home to many semi-wild goats. There is a small hut at the top, but no water (or rather, none drinkable) so make sure you bring enough with you. The ridge requires some scrambling and on one side it has a good drop overlooking gorgeous views.

27 of 30

Cueva de Calor - A narrow cave located on top of Castillo de Orihuela. It's a small hole that quickly tapers down into a narrow tunnel that requires maybe twenty feet of crawling and slithering like a snake. It then opens up into a slighter wider cavern with a few rock features. However, one needs a rope, caving buddy, and experience to safely carry on from here. A flashlight/torch will be needed within six feet of the entrance and though the rock doesn't look very

stable, there is clear signs of constant use.

La Cueva de Escalericas – An ancient burial cave located on the outskirts of Orihuela. You'll need flashlights/torches to explore this historical place as it plunges a good 50m down. Directions to La Cueva de Madaria: Park at 38.1185225, -0.9654259. Walk up the road to the top of the small hill and keep carrying on along the irrigation pond. The path will turn from concrete to dirt and near the end of the pond, it will have a branch on the left-hand side leading towards the mountains. Take this path for about 150m or until you see a stone wall built into a semi-circle. A much smaller path will lead up to it. Continue on past the semi-circle of stones for roughly 20-30m until you see the cave entrance.

28 of 30

Rio Chicamo – Search for Casa Cueva El Chicamo on Googlemaps, NOT Rio Chicamo to find this canyon walk that's only an 45 minute drive from Murcia. It is also recommended doing this as a return instead of as a loop – unless you just follow the road on the way back.

29 of 30

Turia Gardens – Nine kilometres of parkland is interconnected by bridges designed with different eras of architecture in mind. There are a five 'definitely worth seeing' according to those that have visited, one of which is the San Jose – a bridge designed in accordance to the style of the 15th century. Hours: Jul – Aug (10.00 – 14.00, 17.00 – 21.00) Rest of year (10.00 – 20.00)



30 of 30

City of Arts and Sciences – Though not everything in this futuristic 'city' is free, a good section of it is. For instance, the lower floor of El Museu de les Ciències Príncep Felipe (Prince Phillip's Science Museum) is completely free to explore and so is L'Umbracle – a garden and art structures landscape. And of course, just wondering around looking at the artistic, futuristic-styled buildings is also completely free!



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Year Built varies but around 2009

Layout difficulty 5 (1 easy to 5 hard)

Approx. tee interval 10 min.

Buggy recommended Not necessary

Buggy allowed in fairway Yes

Maximum Handicaps Gents: 27 Ladies: 34

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Lemon Tree Market

By **Taquilla Tickets**



The lemon tree market is situated in the rural part of Guardimar - Torrevieja. If you have never been before, this hidden gem is on a dirt track nestled within lemon and orange Groves.

It attracts a huge amount of people every Sunday, where the local traders sell their wares. From personal experience with taking coaches of eager customers looking for a bargain and local produce, this markets ticks all the boxes with its vastness and wide variety of fresh fruit and veg, fresh fish and meat, fresh flowers, clothes and personalised gifts perfect for Christmas. After a long walk and mooching in and out of interesting stalls, you can choose from 4 long rows of cafes and bars where you can tuck into homemade tapas, paella, postres and more, They even have a separate Bodega where you can purchase quality wines from local merchants.

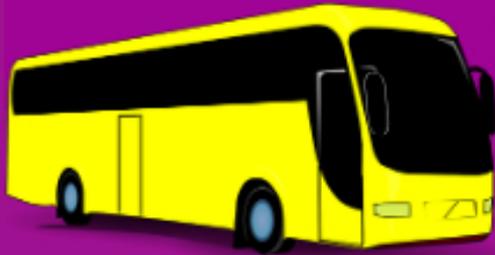
This particular trip is organised by Taquilla Tickets, situated on Condado de Alhama, Within the Sparkle office on the Al kasar.

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Turrón - The Spanish Nougat

Turrón is a very old, traditional sweet of Moorish (Arabic) origin. It has been a popular sweet for centuries, even outside Spain's borders. It is said that the Moors invented turrón over 500 years ago in Jijona, a small town about 30 miles or so north of Alicante.

Jijona's economy is still focused on the production of turrón and there is even a museum of turrón that chronicles the process and history of the sweet. In addition, it is located within the factory that makes both "El Lobo" and "1880" brands of turrón. If you visit the museum from mid-June to mid-December, you can watch the turrón production from a balcony high above the factory floor.



Types of Turrón

There are two traditional, basic types of turrón: soft Jijona or turrón blando, which is so smooth it has the consistency of peanut butter, and hard Alicante or turrón duro, which is like a thick almond nougat candy, similar to the texture of peanut brittle.

Turrón is made with honey, and the wildflowers that bloom in the mountainsides all around the town of Jijona are food for the bees that produce it. The honey, together with the almonds from nearby orchards forms delicious turrón in the hands of artisan candy makers, called turroneros. In 1939 a Denomination of Origin for turrón from Jijona was created, and in 1991 the rules of the denomination were revised.

Alicante and Jijona Turrón

Alicante or turrón duro is made by roasting, then chopping the almonds and mixing with honey. The mixture is then simmered over heat and stirred constantly with large wooden spoons. Egg whites are added to bind the mixture and it is cooled. Once cooled, it is cut into pieces that resemble bricks, wrapped in a paper-thin wafer, sealed in plastic and packed.

Jijona or turrón blando takes more work. Once the turrón duro is cooled, the blocks are ground up with almond oil to form a sticky paste. Then, it is reheated and beaten for hours until it forms a soft, even mix. Egg white is then added as a binding agent and cooled in square metal containers to be cut into thick slices and packed in plastic.

The world of turrón is much larger than just Alicante and Jijona turrón. There are so many different flavours of turrón, it is hard to keep up. For example, new varieties include yema or egg yolk, praline, chocolate, and even kiwi!

Qualities of Turrón

Rules strictly control whether a turrón may be labelled with "Suprema" or "Extra." The best quality is "Suprema" and to wear that label, the soft turrón must contain at least 60% almonds and the hard, 64% almonds. After that, there is "Extra," "Estándar" (standard) and "Popular." Most factories only produce turrón "Suprema" or "Extra." The typical Spanish housewife will be looking for those words on the package label when she goes to the supermarket to buy for her Christmas dinner. Chocolate turrón deserves a little more description, not only because it is delicious, but because it too has qualities including "Extrafino," "Fino" and "Popular," depending on the percent of cocoa and milk it contains. It is made from a base of cocoa butter, extracted from the cocoa beans. Some of the chocolate turrón also has dried fruits and nuts mixed in the centre.



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