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*Lifestyle magazine and property portal*

ISSUE 50  
JAN 2021  
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**inside...**

**10 Top Destinations  
in Southern Spain**

**Granada**

**10 Top Destinations  
in Northern Spain**

**Bilbao**

**4 Great  
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**Girona and Dali Museum**

**Wine  
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**Let's Talk Wine**



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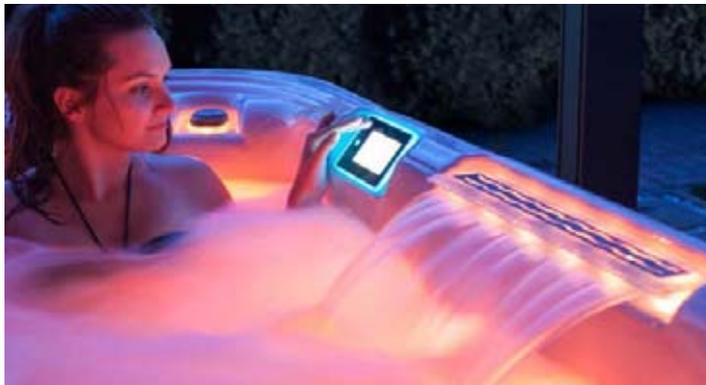
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Contents...

**Best  
Spanish  
Islands**

*Formentera*

**10 & 11**



**Food & Drink**



**19-23**



Wine Article:

**Let's  
Talk  
Wine  
6 & 7**



**12 'most beautiful'  
towns in Spain**

*Alcudia, Mallorca*



**32 & 33**

## Let's Learn Spanish



12

## Spain festivals Las Fallas Festival Valencia



38-39

24

Agents Towns  
LA Zenia



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# *A Life in* SPAIN

## Welcome to the January edition of ALIS.

Happy New Year. Let's hope this year is a lot better than last year. Hopefully things will now settle down after Brexit, and the covid vaccine will be rolled out. maybe, just maybe the new norm. will not be too bad!!

So what's in this edition?

We have some great new articles and features. The centre pages are now dedicated to food and drink and focus on a new region every month.

We also have the start of a new series of articles on Spains "Most Beautiful Towns". This is a great read thanks to Frank for writing this.

Enjoy this months magazine

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A woman in a black suit pointing towards the text.

## *Wine Regions - Valencia*

### Valencia Wine

Valencia is one of Spain's 17 administrative regions, known more for its paella and oranges than its wines. It is located at the centre of Spain's sunny east coast, which is completed by the Catalonia and Murcia regions to the north and south respectively. Valencia's administrative centre is the eponymous city of Valencia, Spain's third-largest city and the Mediterranean's largest port.

In addition to the Valencia DO title, this region is also home to the Utiel-Requena and Alicante DOs, and produces a small quantity of sparkling Cava. As yet, there is no single, archetypal "Valencian" wine style, although the gradual move towards quality (away from the bulk-produced quantity on which the region focused in the 20th Century) has revolved around rich, fruit-driven reds made from Monastrell. Traditionally, the region's wine portfolio has been spread across various styles: easy-drinking reds, whites and rosés, hefty doble pasta reds and fortified moscatels.

Archaeological evidence suggests that winemaking in Valencia dates back more than a thousand years, but the region has never held a particularly prominent place on the world wine map. In the modern era, Valencia's wine production has focused more on quantity than quality, although this is now changing gradually. A handful of wineries have updated their winemaking techniques and are now producing modern, fresh, oak-aged reds in line with contemporary wine fashion.

The Valencia DO title covers an impressive 32,000 acres (13,000 ha), divided unevenly between two distinct geographical areas. The smaller area, Clarino lies about 40 miles (65km) to the southwest of Valencia city, and dovetails with the northern edge of the Alicante DO zone; meaty reds made from Monastrell, Tempranillo, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot are the specialty here. The larger area, where the majority of vineyards are located, lies inland from the city, and spreads north and west into the foothills of the Sistema Ibérico mountain range. It can be further subdivided into three production zones, as described below.



The first, Alto Turia, is located roughly 45 miles (72km) northeast of Valencia city. As the name implies, this is an elevated (alto) area centered around the upper stretches of the Turia river. Vineyards here are planted at relatively high altitudes, 2300ft - 3600ft (700m - 1100m). This makes it the highest and coolest of the Valencia DO sub-zones, and therefore the best-suited to the production of dry white wines; Macabeo and the local Merseguera are the varieties of choice here.

Lower down the Turia valley lies the second production zone, where the region's sweet, idiosyncratic Moscatel de Valencia wine is produced. The vineyards here centre around the parishes of Chiva, Cheste, Godolleta, Montroy, Monserrat and Turís, at altitudes of 500ft - 1300ft (150m - 400m). Although slightly hotter

than Alto Turia, this area is cooled slightly by breezes from the Mediterranean. Moscatel de Alejandra is the variety behind the lusciously sweet wines made here.

Just to the east of the Turia valley lies the Valentino zone, which generates a wider variety of styles than its neighbours. White wines here are made from Macabeo and Merseguera, but also the French "international" varieties Chardonnay and Semillon. The preferred red-wine varieties here are Garnacha, Tempranillo, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot.

The Valencia DO laws are overseen by the local Consejo Regulador (wine authority), established in 1957.



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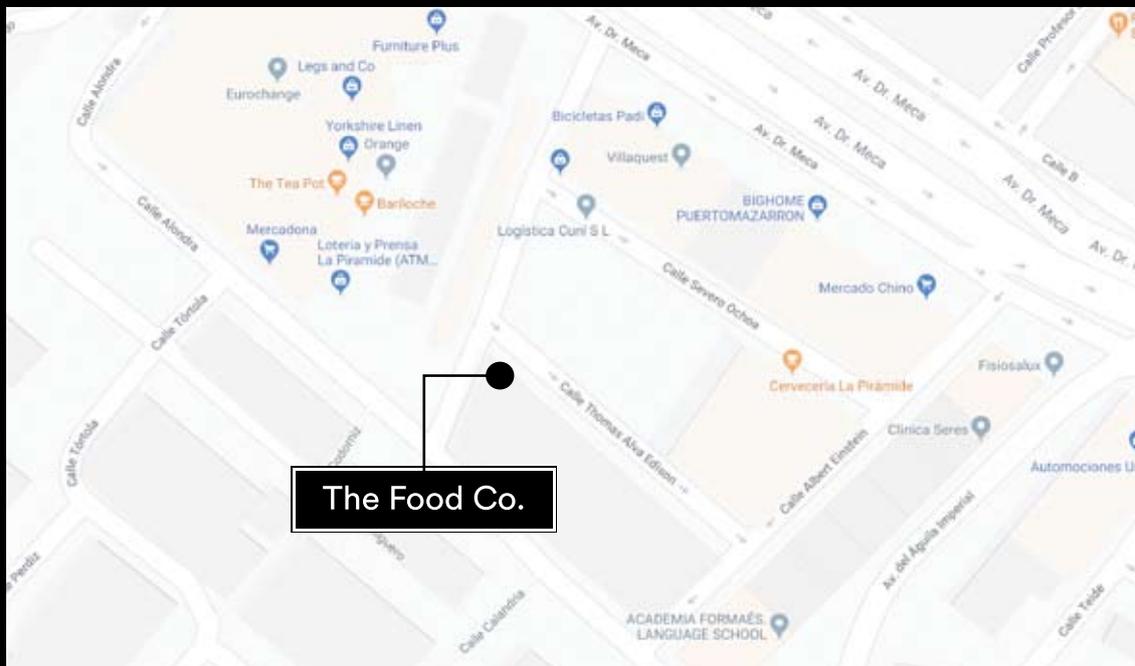
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## Update on driving licences

We know many of you have questions on driving licences. If you are a resident in Spain and have exchanged your UK licence for a Spanish licence, you will be able to continue to use this when you visit the UK from 1st January 2021; you will not need an International Driving Permit (IDP).

If you are resident in Spain and have not been able to start the process to exchange your licence before 30th December, you should sign up for email alerts at [gov.uk/livinginspain](http://gov.uk/livinginspain) to get updates on the future exchange of driving licences. In the meantime, you can use your valid UK licence to drive in Spain until 30 June 2021.

If you move back to the UK and hold a Spanish licence, you will be able to exchange it for a UK one without having to take a test.

If you are visiting Spain (you are not a resident) and hold a UK driving licence, you will not need an IDP for driving in the EU after 1 January 2021, but you might need a green card and GB sticker. Check [www.gov.uk/visit-europe-1-january-2021](http://www.gov.uk/visit-europe-1-january-2021) for more info.



## Best Spanish Islands - FORMENTERA

Spain has some of the most beautiful islands in Europe. The most popular Spanish Islands are equally divided between the Balearic Islands and the Canary Islands. All have unique features along with their warm, clear water and unspoiled beaches. From the glamour and glitz of Ibiza to the windswept volcanoes of Tenerife there is something for every traveller on the islands of Spain.

The island of Formentera is located in the Mediterranean Sea and is part of the Balearic archipelago. Together with Ibiza it forms the Pityusic Islands, separated by just 2 nautical miles (about 3 km).

Formentera is the smallest inhabited island of the Balearic Islands (83.2 km<sup>2</sup>) and has a peculiar indented shape giving it a large stretch of coastline (69 km) made up of numerous beaches and coves and curious coastal nooks and crannies.

It has a very flat profile, the highest point being Sa Talaiassa in the Mola plateau, just 192 metres above sea level.

It is an easily accessible and transitable island. Most of it can be reached by bicycle along its green routes and through its inland areas, where you will

find villages with an authentic Mediterranean touch. Besides cycling, you can also use motor vehicles to travel easily on its small network of roads. Its main artery (PM-820) crosses the island from east to west between the port of La Savina and the lighthouse of La Mola, separated by the longest length of the island, just under 20 km.

The island can only be reached by boat and, as a rule, Ibiza serves as a connection with Formentera and the rest of the world, the crossing from Ibiza to Formentera taking about 35 minutes.

From the moment you disembark on Formentera you can feel the characteristic sense of calm and you will immediately be captivated by its people, its unique atmosphere and its crystal clear, turquoise waters reminiscent of tropical climes.



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There is archaeological evidence that there was already a steady and permanent population on Formentera at the end of the third millennium B.C., although it is not yet known when occupation began. The megalithic tomb of Ca na Costa is from this period.

The Cap de Barbaria I, II and III sites also belong to the prehistoric period – although from slightly later times. Of the abundant archaeological evidence of occupation during ancient times, the Can Blai site is particularly noteworthy: a fortification from the early Roman period.

After the Moorish period, Ibiza and Formentera became part of the Kingdom of Aragon in 1235. However, the difficulties in establishing a new population on the island were aggravated from the second half of the 14th century onwards, due to the effects of the Black Death and, subsequently, to the threat posed by piracy. There were numerous attempts to repopulate Formentera, but they did not materialise until the end of the 17th century. It was then that the process was finally set in motion and increased throughout the 18th century with people moving from Ibiza.

Towards self-sufficiency, there was a shift towards a system based on the tourism services sector as the main economic driving force, a fact that led to a progressive change from the practices of the past to others more typical of the globalised world. Tourism radically changed the island's economy and society.

To learn more about the history of Formentera, you can consult the Encyclopaedia of Ibiza and Formentera, as well as the bibliography listed at the end of this text. You may also be interested in reading the information contained in our Heritage Catalogue, visiting the Ethnographic Collection of Formentera or discovering the Image and Sound of Formentera.







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# Let's Learn Spanish

## Weather

### Phrases

What is the weather like today?	¿Qué tiempo hace hoy?	<b>Kay</b> tea <b>em</b> poathehoy
What was the weather like yesterday?	¿Qué tiempo hizo ayer?	<b>Kay</b> tea <b>em</b> po eetho eye <b>air</b>
When is the weather forecast?	¿Cuándo sale la previsión de tiempo?	<b>Kwan</b> doh sally lah pray viz <b>eon</b> day tea <b>em</b> po
It's sunny today	Hoy hace sol	Oyatheh <b>sol</b>
It rained yesterday	Ayer llovió	Eye <b>airy</b> oveeoh
It's not cloudy	No está nublado	No <b>esstah</b> nou <b>blah</b> doh
Is it snowing?	¿Está nevando?	<b>Esstah</b> nevan doh
It will be cold tomorrow	Mañana hará frío	<b>Manyah</b> nah ah <b>rafree</b> oh

### Vocab

The forecast	La previsión	Lah pray viz <b>eon</b>
The weather	El tiempo	El tea <b>em</b> po
It's hot	Hace calor	Atheh <b>calor</b>
It's cold	Hace frío	Atheh <b>free</b> oh
It's raining	Está lloviendo	<b>Esstah</b> yoveeendoh
It's snowing	Está nevando	<b>Esstah</b> nevan doh
It's sunny	Hace sol	Atheh <b>sol</b>
It's cloudy	Está nublado	<b>Esstah</b> nou <b>blah</b> doh
It's windy	Hace viento	Atheh bee <b>yen</b> toe
It's foggy	Hace niebla	Atheh knee <b>ebblah</b>
It's frosty	Hay escarcha	Eye <b>esscar</b> cha
It's stormy	Hace tormenta	Atheh tore <b>mentah</b>



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 W M K O E Z I A P X H H L Q G H  
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 S H P E P S E H A B L I C G M G  
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# 10 Top Destinations in Southern Spain



# GRANADA

Andalusia is an autonomous community that covers most of southern Spain. It has a diverse landscape, with a long Mediterranean coastline and its own mountain chain, and is known to have the hottest average temperatures in Europe. Andalusia is a rough translation of an Arabic word meaning “vandals”, due to the fact that it was raided and claimed by many different cultures and nations because of its prime location. This has created a series of cities and towns with a very multicultural architecture, cuisine, and history. They are home to a celebratory culture full of festivals and flamenco dancing, tapas and sherry. Here is a look at some of the must-see destinations in southern Spain:

This city at the base of the Sierra Nevada Mountains was founded as a Celtic settlement and has been inhabited for over 2500 years. Its breathtaking location near mountains is one of the loveliest in Andalusia. Granada's most famous attraction is the fortress/palace complex known as Alhambra, which was a Moorish palace for the emirs when the city was under Islamic rule. The adjacent Muslim neighborhood and many other cathedrals and castles are also worth the trip while here. Tapas and flamenco lovers will find that both are easy to find and quite excellent.

At the foot of the Sierra Nevada mountains, between the rivers Darro and Genil, lies one of the most interesting cities in eastern Andalusia. As well as its impressive Al-Andalus heritage, there are Renaissance architectural gems and the most modern facilities, fit for the 21st century.

Granada has an unmistakably Moorish flavour, as it was the last city to be reconquered by the Catholic Monarchs in 1492. The gastronomy, craftwork and urban planning are influenced by its glorious past.

Fountains, viewpoints and "Cármenes", houses surrounded by typical gardens of this city, create unforgettable corners in the city. It is no surprise that one of its historic districts, Albaicín, is a World Heritage Site, together with the Alhambra and Generalife. It was an important cultural centre for many centuries, under both Islamic and Christian rulers, and still boasts an admirable array of culture and leisure activities. Film, music or theatre festivals are complemented with permanent or travelling exhibitions on all fields of knowledge. Renaissance palaces are home to seminars, conferences and lectures, while the most innovative infrastructure is ready for larger-scale events.

The main attraction has to be the Alhambra Palace

The splendour of the Nasrid era, The Alhambra is a beautiful complex of buildings and gardens. Its leafy tree-lined walkways provide pleasant shade and coolness, enhanced by the abundance of water that flows in its streams.

It was the largest political and aristocratic centre of the Moslem West. The Palace premises comprise beautiful rectangular courtyards and numerous fountains, as well as the Nasrid buildings that served as living quarters for the monarchs and their servants. The oldest building is the Alcazaba citadel. One of the most important structures is the La Vela tower, which offers one of the loveliest views of the Alhambra. The courtyard of the Lions with its fountains is one of the most beautiful in the compound.

What to visit

The Alhambra Museum

The Alhambra

Granada Science Park Museum

The Generalife

Granada Cathedral

La Cartuja Monastery





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# Food & Drink

Spanish cuisine is one of the best in the world due to the quality and variety of ingredients it uses, it is the pride of the country.

It is difficult to talk about the national cuisine of Spain as a whole. But the traditional food is made up of many regional cuisines. Each one influenced by the climate, history, and customs of that region. However you can distinguish common characteristics in all Spanish cuisine. First of all Spanish food is in fact quite simple. The base is onion, garlic and peppers. Usually it uses herbs, sage and olive oil. The simplicity and the quick preparation are also common in many regional recipes. Typical Iberian Peninsula cooking methods include stewing in wine, cooking with pecorino cheese, or grilling or roasting.

Modern Spanish cooking is very varied, unique and impossible to recreate. It was influenced by the Romans, Moors and Americans.

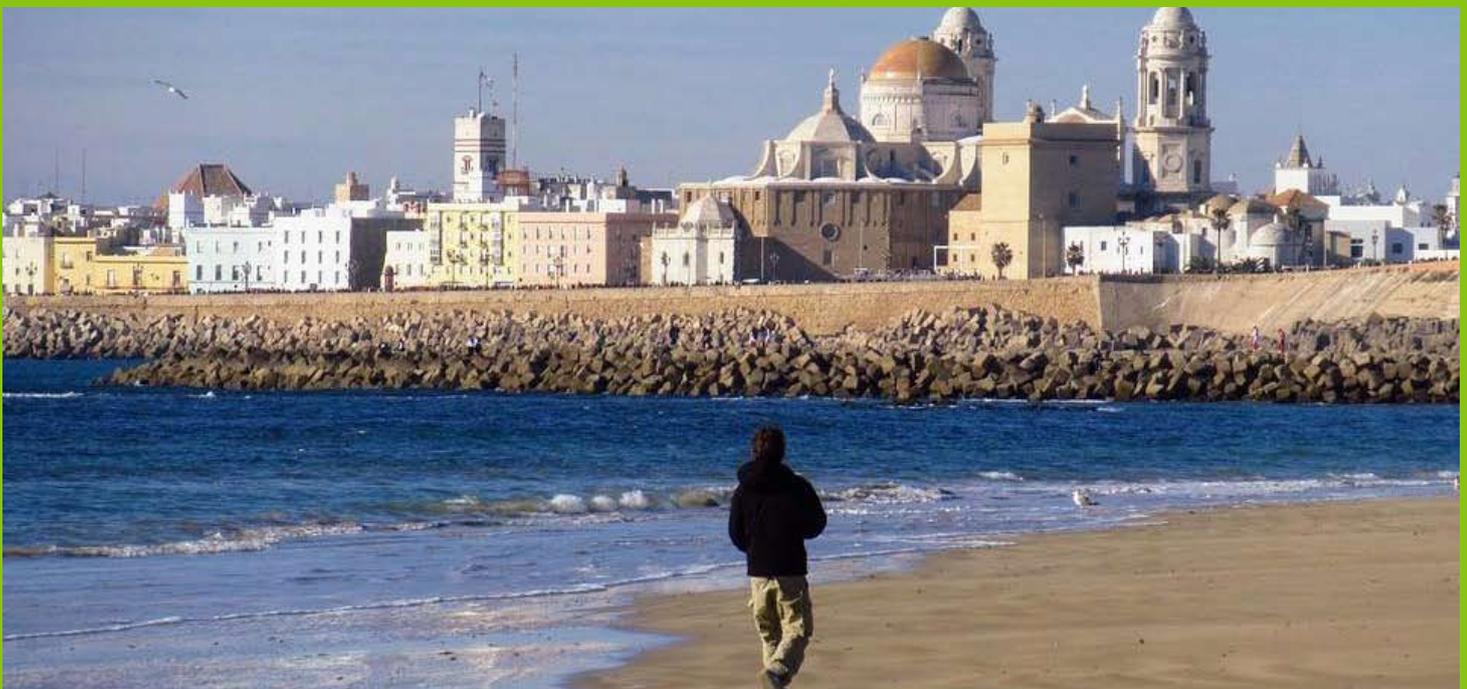
## Andalucia

Andalucia is best known for its beaches, sunny weather and flamenco. But food is a hugely important part of southern Spain - indeed, the Mediterranean diet was recently recognised as being part of UNESCO's world cultural heritage. A key part of Andalusian

life is eating out. It is so reasonably priced in most parts of Andalusia, especially if you know where to go, that going out for tapas - tapear - is many people's preferred way to spend an evening (especially in Granada, where you can still get a free tapa with each drink).

Spain's chefs are widely acknowledged as being among the best in the world and Andalusia's chefs are held in high regard too. If you're at the beach, head to your nearest chiringuito - beach-side restaurant.

If you choose to cook at home then you have a great choice of ingredients, all produced on your doorstep, in Andalusia: fresh seafood - some of which you won't even recognise, as it doesn't exist back home - from the many hundreds of km of coastline; locally grown fruit and vegetables are of top quality; jamon serrano, ideal for an Andalusian breakfast, on toast with olive oil and crushed tomato, or a sandwich. Olives are a delicious and healthy snack, and grown all over the region.



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# Rabo de Toro Estofado

## Stewed Oxtail



### Ingredients:

Ingredients for 6 people:

- 2 oxtails, cut into pieces
- 2 onions, peeled, whole
- 1 bay leaf
- a few peppercorns
- 2 whole cloves
- ¼ kg carrots, peeled
- 250 ml white wine

### Method:

Place the oxtail pieces in a large pot with plenty of water.

Push the whole cloves into the onions and add with the bay leaf, peppercorns, carrots and wine;

Heat on high until boiling and then lower the heat and let simmer, uncovered, three to four hours or until the meat begins to fall off the bone.

Set the meat pieces on the serving dish and discard the bay leaf and cloves.

Use a hand blender to purée the remaining broth and vegetables, and serve this sauce over the meat (salt to taste first).

This dish is very nice accompanied with fried potatoes or sautéed mixed vegetables.

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# Membrillo

## Quince Jelly



### Ingredients:

Ingredients:

1 ½ kg ripe quinces

1 ¼ kg sugar

water

### Method:

Wash the quinces and dry thoroughly with a cloth.

Cut into chunks, removing the seeds and centre core, and place in a pot with just enough water to cover.

Bring to a boil and then cook on medium heat, uncovered, until the fruit is quite tender.

Off the heat, use a hand blender to purée the fruit and then add the sugar.

Return to the stove and cook on medium-high heat, stirring frequently, until it begins to thicken.

Pour into individual serving dishes or a casserole dish or platter and let cool.

Serve with a mild Spanish cheese, such as Manchego fresco (uncured), or spread on bread as jam.

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## Beaches

La Zenia boasts a fine blue flag beach with great facilities for both families with children, and those looking for water sports.

## Eating out & entertainment

La Zenia is a popular resort for both Irish holiday-makers and residents and is home to the famous Paddys Point bar, one of the best known bars along the Costa Blanca.

## Golf

There are three superb golf courses nearby: Villamartin, Campoamor and Las Ramblas.

## Leisure & recreation

Within easy reach is the Orihuela Costa Resort Complex with its outstanding leisure facilities including an Olympic sized swimming pool, tennis, squash, a well equipped gym, bowling and a bar and restaurant.

The surrounding countryside is abundant with beautiful orange and lemon groves and close by you will find two lakes where flamingos and other birds nest.

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## Girona and Dali Museum

The city of Girona is just 100 km (60 miles) from Barcelona, Girona is filled with medieval architecture. A few miles further away is Figueres, home to the iconic painted Salvador Dali.

As you approach the banks of the Onyar River, you'll see the medieval walled city of Girona ahead.

As you follow your guide along cobblestone streets, don't forget to snap plenty of pictures of the Jewish Quarter, which has been in place since the Middle Ages, the incredible facade of the 11th century Girona Cathedral or the panoramic views over the colourful houses on the Onyar.

Why not drive to Figueres. Once you arrive, prepare to see the breathtaking collection of modern works at the Dali Theatre Museum. As you browse through the countless pieces by Dali, you'll gain insight into his creative genius and cultural influences. End the day with a walk through Figueres, and admire the charming city and take some photos to remember the trip.

### History

The first historical inhabitants in the region were Iberians; Girona is the ancient Gerunda, a city of the Ausetani. Later, the Romans built a citadel there, which was given the name of Gerunda. The Visigoths ruled in Girona until it was conquered by the Moors in 715. Finally, Charlemagne reconquered it in 785 and made it one of the fourteen original counties of Catalonia. It was taken temporarily from the Moors, who recaptured it in 793. From this time until the Moors were finally driven out in 1015, the city repeatedly changed hands. It was sacked by the Moors in 827, 842, 845, 935, and 982. Wilfred the Hairy incorporated Girona into the County of Barcelona in 878.

In the 11th century, Alfonso I of Aragon declared Girona a city. The ancient county became a duchy in 1351 when King Peter III of Aragon gave the title of Duke to his first-born son, John. In 1414, King Ferdinand I in turn gave the title of Prince of Girona to his first-born son, Alfonso. The title is currently carried by Princess Leonor of Asturias, the second since the 16th century to do so.

A lane in the Jewish Quarter. Girona's Jewish community was lost as a result of the Expulsion.

The 12th century saw the Jewish community of Girona flourish, having one of the most important Kabbalistic schools in Europe. The Rabbi of Girona, Moshe ben Nahman Gerondi (better known as Nahmanides or Ramban) was appointed Great Rabbi of Catalonia. The presence of the Jewish community of Girona came to an end in 1492, when the Catholic Monarchs outlawed Judaism throughout Spain and Jews were given the choice of conversion or exile. Today, the Jewish quarter or Call is one of the best preserved in Europe and is a major tourist attraction. Just north of the old city is Montjuïc, or hill of the Jews in medieval Catalan, where the Jewish cemetery was located.

Girona has undergone twenty five sieges and been captured seven times. It was besieged by the French royal armies under Charles de Monchy d'Hocquincourt in 1653, under Bernardin Gigault de Bellefonds in 1684, and twice in 1694 under Anne Jules de Noailles. In May 1809, it was besieged by

35,000 French Napoleonic troops under Vergier, Augereau and St. Cyr, and held out obstinately under the leadership of Alvarez until disease and famine compelled it to capitulate on 12 December. Finally, the French conquered the city in 1809, after seven months of siege. Girona was the centre of the Ter department during the French rule, which lasted from 1809 to 1813. The defensive city walls of the western side were demolished at the end of the 19th century to allow for the expansion of the city, while the walls of the eastern side remained untouched but abandoned.



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# 10 Top Destinations in Northern Spain



# BILBAO

**“The city of the Guggenheim” is an alternative name for this Basque Country destination as, since this original museum was built in 1997, Bilbao has been transformed forever. In fact, now it stands out for its groundbreaking structures created by prestigious architects, and which make it an international benchmark for modern design.**

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Although, curiously, its unique character comes from combining avant-garde with the traditional feel of its old town, full of charming streets and bars offering pintxos, proof that they are passionate about gastronomy around here. All this has earned Bilbao a place of honour on the lists of Spain's most interesting cities.

### A walk full of contrasts

A visit to this city in the north of Spain could start with the Guggenheim Museum. It is one of the most surprising examples of 20th century architecture as Frank Gehry used 33,000 ultra-thin titanium plates to create its curious curves. Inside, it shares the world's most important private collection of modern and contemporary art with New York and Venice. Bilbao is home to another of Spain's most important art museums: the Museum of Fine Arts. The city's commitment to creating a ground-breaking, imaginative image also includes the Euskalduna Conference Centre, Norman Foster's metro stations, the Isozaki and Pelli towers, the Zubizuri bridge designed by Calatrava or new cultural centres such as La Alhóndiga by Philippe Starck, built over an old wine cellar. On the other hand, it's impossible to imagine Bilbao without its characteristic old town, with over 700 years of history. It's a pleasure to stroll around the famous "Seven Streets" and discover iconic buildings such as the Cathedral or the elegant theatre inspired by the Paris Opera House, the Arriaga, and a combination of shops and cafes ranging from traditional to cool.

### Two strengths: Basque cuisine and a green city

The city of Bilbao is proof that gastronomy is an art in the Basque Country, one of the areas with the most Michelin Stars per person in the world. Plaza Nueva and its surrounding streets are full of busy bars serving their famous pintxos: small, delicious bites of food. Here, foodies can find their place among the buzzing bars, family-run restaurants and prestigious chefs. And they will also have the chance to visit the La Ribera Market, a beautiful building where you can have the produce that you purchase cooked for you, or where you can sample a selection of pintxos and Txakoli wine to the beat of live music. Cultural and culinary Bilbao is also a green city, with parks such as Doña Casilda de Iturrizar, surrounded by hills (dare to ride the Artxanda cable car, a classic option to get a bird's eye view of Bilbao). The estuary is another symbol of the regeneration of Bilbao. You can spot people paddle surfing on the water, or take a boat to the famous Hanging Bridge of Portugalete, declared a World Heritage Site. And if that's not enough, the beaches and stunning cliffs of Getxo are just over 30 minutes away on the metro.



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# 12 new 'most beautiful' towns in Spain

*Alcudia, Mallorca*

There is nothing better than finding a hidden gem that transports you to 'the real Spain.'

From hilltop pueblos to unreported foodie hotspots, there's still huge parts of this country which have yet to be saturated by hordes of tourists. In a bid to recognise the rural wonder of Spain, the Association of Beautiful Villages was created to celebrate some of the country's most unsung wonders. Each year, 12 pueblos are added to the list, which, following the latest batch released, will have 94 from January 1, 2020.

Situated in the north of Mallorca, Alcudia has a rich history, having been inhabited by the Phoenicians, Greeks and Romans, which all left behind clues of their civilisations, some of which remain on view in the stunning old town.

The town has been praised for its period homes, ancient walls and two huge historic gates at the entrance of the city.

The area where Alcúdia is located has been inhabited since the Bronze Age, but it is with the arrival of the Romans that the city makes its entry in the history books. The Romans used the beaches of Alcúdia bay when they captured the island in 123 B.C. Shortly after this the capital Palma was founded and then the city of Pollentia. From Pollentia it was possible to view both the bay of Pollenca and the bay of Alcúdia. Pollentia served as a guard for other invaders. The city was also mentioned in Rome since they here produced excellent fabrics that were used in the most exclusive togas.

After Rome lost its position as the dominant power in the western Mediterranean, Pollentia was attacked by pirates and several times by the Vandals. Finally, the city was abandoned, and the remaining population left to create a new town at a more protected location. This town became Pollenca and the area where Pollentia stood was left to ruins.

During the rule of the Moors, a farmstead was created very close to where the ancient village of Pollentia had been. The farm was called Alcúdia, which is Arabic for "on the hill". In 1229, the Moors were attacked by the bloody King James I of Aragon, who occupied the area. In 1298, King James II of Aragon bought the farmstead Alcúdia and founded the new town. A church, a graveyard, a house for priests, and a square were created in the same year. The construction of the walls was also initiated at the same time and finished in 1362.

The city plan that was made at the time remains the same for Alcúdia today. During the Renaissance, walls were reconstructed, and a second wall was constructed outside the first one. This wall has since been torn down and only details show where it once was.

During the 16th century pirates attacked the city several times. The population shrank, and there was from time to time a risk that the city would be abandoned totally. In 1779 a decision was taken to support the city by constructing a harbour. This really improved the economy of Alcúdia and the village was saved. But it remained a rather small and poor village.



In the 1920s the first tourists began to visit Mallorca and also Alcúdia. This was in a very limited scale and the economy of the village stayed weak. In the early '70s it started to be clear that the future of Alcúdia would be in tourism. 15 years later the old harbour of Puerto de Alcúdia had developed into a major resort for European tourism. In the '90s the construction boom calmed down and several regulations were put in place to secure the quality of the resort. The focus is on visitors searching for both relaxation and activity. A golf course has been constructed and both bicycle and hiking trips are commonplace. The old town has been preserved and pedestrianised. It has now become one of the most visited villages in Majorca.

The old town has a 14th-century wall and it is possible to step up on the wall and follow it almost all around the village. There are remains of a Roman town just outside the medieval town walls, in front of the Church of St. Jaume, belonging to the ancient city of Pollentia (see also the Italian Pollentia). There is also a small Roman theatre. North of the town is a bull ring from the 19th century.

The old town also hosts a market both on Sundays and Tuesdays all year round. Inside the walls there are several popular restaurants and bistros famous for good home-cooked food in small settings. In Port d'Alcúdia most of the restaurants are located around the marina. Most of these restaurants are only open in the tourist season. Further north and west are some coves and beaches ideal for sunbathing, swimming or snorkeling. The beach at Alcúdia is 14 km long and stretches as far as C'an Picafort. Alcúdia joins onto Playa de Muro which is home to S'Albufera; a natural park that is very popular with birders.

Alcúdia celebrates the festival of St. Jaume every summer. It goes on for nine days at the beginning of July. Before the festival starts the town is decorated and each street picks out a theme for that year's look. During the festival several traditional evening festivities are arranged in the old town such as the Night of the Romans where the streets are full of locals dressed in traditional ancient Roman dresses. There are also outdoor theatres, sport tournaments, exhibitions and the traditional bullfight. The fiesta is finished with La Noche de Sant Jaume, a fireworks display and philharmonic concert by the old walls.

Alcúdia hosts also many other fairs and festivals throughout the year. During the summer, there are plenty of al fresco events, with dramatised tours of the old town, and theatre productions in the old Roman amphitheatre. The Alcúdia Jazz Festival starts at the end of August and runs for a month. International sporting events are held down the road at the port, with an Ironman Triathlon twice a year, beach volleyball and beach rugby... There is an agricultural fair in the Autumn at the beginning of October and a nautical fair in April, which features the cuttlefish.

Taking place every three years is the Triennial of Sant Crist, a religious procession where the population slowly walks barefoot through the town in silence, for several hours. The origin of this procession dates back to 1507. According to tradition, the image of Sant Crist sweated blood and water, thus putting an end to a drought. Alcúdia is home to UD Alcúdia who play at Els Arcs, which has a capacity of 1,750.

Alcúdia is home to one of Europe's largest hotel complexes, Bellevue. With 8 swimming pools and 17 apartment blocks the complex is set in 150,000 square meters of gardens.



# La Rioja

## *The Wine Region*

Of course, everyone knows the wines from La Rioja. This area of Spain has over 500 wineries and is internationally famous for the quality of its wines. As well as wine tasting, a visit to this region also offers a range of activities which take place in and around the extensive vineyards, including horse-riding, hot-air ballooning, 4x4 routes...

This region is also closely linked to the famous Way of Saint James pilgrim route, and has a whole host of cultural attractions. Apart from its capital, Logroño, you'll be able to explore other places such as Santo Domingo de la Calzada and its cathedral, San Millán de la Cogolla, site of the Suso and Yuso monasteries, declared World Heritage Sites by the UNESCO, and known for being the birthplace of the first written words in the Spanish language.

Culture and wine together make an unbeatable combination. And add to that some amazing natural attractions... In La Rioja you'll find Mediterranean forests, high-mountain areas, lunar landscapes... And don't miss the Sierra de Cebollera Nature Reserve or the Arnedillo Biosphere Reserve.

### **Rioja Wine Harvest Festival**

Logroño goes all out to celebrate the Rioja Wine Harvest Festival, known traditionally as the festivities of San Mateo.

The town is filled with colour and fun in a celebration where wine and grapes take centre stage. There are numerous activities on offer, including traditional foot-crushing of grapes and the offering of the first must to the Virgen de Valvanera. Bull-running with young bulls, parades of floats, music, popular meals and ball games are a few of the other options in this special festive programme. For more information: check the website of the Logroño town council .



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# The Grand City of Granada

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Have you visited The Grand City of Granada yet? Well this is a must for anyone who seeks History and Culture at its best. It has a population of 112,523 ranking the 13th most Urban cities in Spain.

Granada gets its name from the visual that as the hills make out an amphitheatre shape, high above the city looks like an opened pomegranate (Pomegranate translated in Spanish is Granada) For eight centuries Granada was ruled by the Arabians, This made a huge impact on the look, architecture and history of Granada.

It is Situated within the community of Andalucía at the foot of the north western hills of Sierra Nevada Mountains. Sierra Nevada is a huge tourist attraction for Ski enthusiasts of all ages and abilities with all facilities catered for, ski hire, ski schools, Food and beverages, ski lifts even if you didn't plan on coming down the mountain via skis its well worth the experience with spectacular snowy views.

Its other biggest tourist attraction, nestled very Nicely, is known as the Alhambra Palace.

When we visited Granada, the first experience we had was when we went out for a light beverage, as we ordered our drink it came with a free Tapas, delicious and traditional, so on we went to another bar and the same happened again, this is one of the traditions throughout Granada.

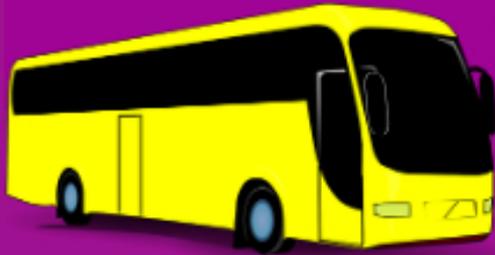
We had organised for our group to take a tourist trip to the Alhambra Palace, This was an amazing experience for all, when we passed the entrance we were given Headsets set to our preferred language and guided around and inspired with the amazing History and spectacular views, very Highly recommended, a great tip is to take a snack, bottle of water and some good walking shoes, there is so much to see you will not want to rush it, Amazingly architected and such beautifully kept gardens.

We cannot wait to Return to the Beautiful City of Granada. If you are interested in Taking a visit with us we are going again (Covid regulations allowing) on Tuesday 13th April 2021,



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# Spain festivals

## Las Fallas Festival – Valencia

Whilst thousands of festivals are celebrated all over Spain throughout the year there are only a few that bring overseas visitors specifically for the event. The Fallas fiesta which takes place in Valencia from 15th to the 19th of March every year is undoubtedly one of those ‘super-festivals’ attracting many foreign visitors as well as Spanish tourists from all over the country. This was the first major festival I ever went to in Spain and to this day cannot get over the sheer craziness of it all.

San José (Saint Joseph), the patron saint of carpenters, is the official focus for the festival. It all started back in the Middle Ages when carpenters used to hang up planks of wood called ‘parots’ in the winter to support their candles when they were working. At the onset of spring these pieces of wood would be burned as a way of celebrating the end of dark, winter working days. After a while they began to put clothing on the ‘parot’ and then started to try to make it identifiable with a well-known local personality. These became the forerunners of the contemporary ‘ninots’, the enormous cardboard, wooden, polyurethane, Styrofoam, cork, plaster and papier-maché figures of today. The authorities later decided to link the burning of the ‘parots’ with Saint Joseph’s Day to try to stop it getting out of control!

Nowadays, each neighbourhood has an organising committee, the ‘casal faller’, who raise the necessary finances for constructing the ‘ninots’. There is even an area of the city called the ‘Ciutat Fallera’ where whole groups of workers and designers spend months creating all the incredible towering tableaux. The ‘ninots’, which are placed at key places throughout the city, are often cruel satirical lampoons of well-known Spanish and international celebrities or politicians.

### A Day at the Fallas

If you decide to go to the Fallas festival prepare for an early start. Each day begins with a startling wake-up call known as ‘La Desperta’ at the ridiculous time (in Spain) of 8am. You’ll just love being woken by brass bands marching down the streets accompanied by those preposterously loud firecrackers; which themselves activate car and shop alarms – just to make sure you’re ready for a day’s fun.



All day, you'll see processions and hear explosions and then at 2pm 'La Mascletà' begins when there are organised pyrotechnical explosions all over the city, especially in Valencia's main square, the Plaza Ayuntamiento. At first you'll think they're earth-shattering but they're just an appetizer for what will come later.

On each night there is a firework display in the old river bed and they escalate in degrees of spectacle culminating in La Nit de Foc (the Night of Fire) on 18th March. The following night la Cremà takes place when all the 'ninots' are burnt. Neighbourhoods will have their own 'falla infantil' for the children at about 10pm and then, at around midnight, the neighbourhood 'fallas' will begin. The final, grandest fire, in the Plaza Ayuntamiento, won't get under way until 1am at the earliest with huge crowds waiting in eager anticipation of the burning. The 'ninots' will all have been stuffed full with fireworks, the street lights switched off and the firemen will be in position when the 20 to 30 foot models, which took months of painstaking construction, will be razed to the ground. Each year, one 'ninot' is spared the ordeal (as a result of a public vote) whilst the rest suffer a spectacular fate.

### A Festival of Noise and Fire

However loud you think this is going to be you'll be wrong. There is no way of beginning to describe the amount of noise generated. Pregnant women are forbidden from attending and each year people are injured or faint. It

is true that you should keep your mouth open to allow the sound to escape and not echo around your head – or something like that – but be prepared to feel the ground shake beneath your feet and your head to spin uncontrollably. This is an adrenaline rush with few equals and a completely unique experience.

And please don't think you can rest up during the day to prepare yourself for the evening's bombardments. After you've been unceremoniously startled awake at 8 o'clock the whole of Valencia is one enormous street party, with various parades, pageants, beauty shows, paella competitions and bullfights all over the city.

Whilst photos of the event give you some idea what the effigies are like they cannot portray the atmosphere of the city during this crazy fiesta. You'd be forgiven for thinking you were watching a news report on TV from a war zone!

Courtesy of Spanish-fiestas.com

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