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Lifestyle magazine and property portal

ISSUE 52
MAR 2021
FREE

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in Southern Spain**

Cordoba

**10 Top Destinations
in Northern Spain**

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Let's Talk Wine



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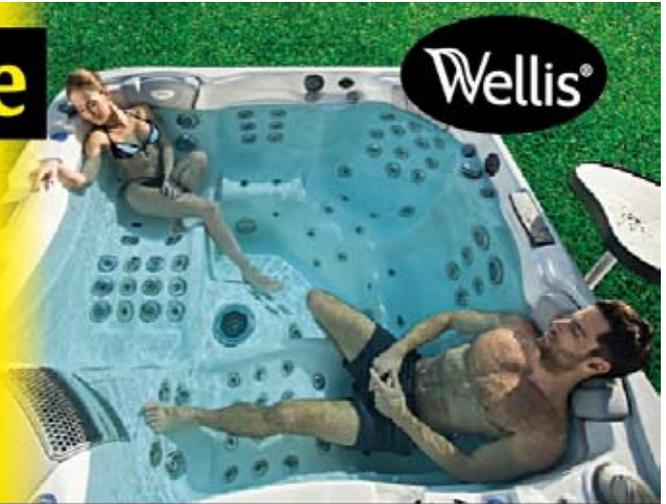
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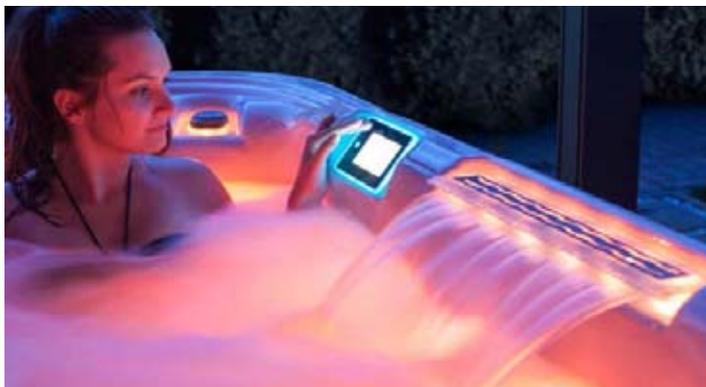
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A Life in SPAIN

Welcome to the March edition of ALIS.

Easter is just around the corner with all of its festivities. Semana Santa, as the Spanish call it, is one of the highlights of the Spanish religious calendar. We have an extensive 4 page guide starting on page 36.

So what's in this edition?

Best Spanish Islands continues on page 10. This month we look at Gran Canaria. This picturesque island sits in the Atlantic and forms part of the Canary Islands.

Wine region this month is focused on the little known region of the Ebro Valley. Situated in The Sierra de Cantabria mountains, this region is producing some great wines at present.

Enjoy this month's magazine

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A photograph of a woman in a black suit, smiling and pointing towards the text.

Wine Regions - Ebro River Valley

The Sierra de Cantabria mountains shelter some of Spain's most important vineyards, including those in Rioja and Navarra. Farther south, Calatayud, Campo de Borja, and Cariñena offer great value. To the east, vineyards nestled along the base of the foothills of the Pyrenees hold vineyards as well, where tributaries of the River Ebro nurture the vineyards of DO Somontano and the rare Moristel grape that charms many tasters with its tangy fruit and easy ways, along with more muscular Tempranillo, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and other red varieties.

The region's most important river isn't Rioja's namesake, Rio Oja, but the Ebro River. Snaking between the Sierra Cantábrica and the Sierra Demanda, the Ebro and its tributaries have helped carve out vineyards that have been celebrated for at least two centuries.



Rioja itself has three sub-regions — Rioja Alavesa, Rioja Alta, and Rioja Baja — and while each has distinct differences, there is no hierarchy of quality between them. Among the varietals grown here, Tempranillo is king, certainly, but Garnacha, Mazuelo (Carineña), Graciano and increasing numbers of other indigenous grapes are generating new ideas and styles in the region.

Reds, whites and rosés all have a home in the Ebro Valley, but the reds account for the greater part of its fame. Aging classifications are the primary means for differentiating red wines from one another: Joven (“young”) wines are for early drinking. Crianza wines are aged for two years (one of those in barrel) while Reserva wines (three years aging with one of those in barrel) can be age-worthy or offer serious immediate consumption. Gran Reserva wines are regarded as the region’s pinnacle. They are at least five years old and generally ready to drink, but they can age for years too.

If Rioja has been known as the traditional area of quality in the Ebro Valley, Navarra is not far behind both in its wines and in

the minds of Spanish wine enthusiasts. International grapes such as Cabernet, Syrah and Merlot have been more recently planted, alongside the DO’s historic Garnacha vineyards. The bold Garnacha is still beloved, but Navarra is finding its voice internationally and combining tradition with change.

Other areas in the Ebro Valley are also growing in popularity, especially the four Garnacha driven DOs of Aragon, Campo de Borja, Calatayud, Cariñena and Somontano. Juicy Garnacha is the primary driver, even in Cariñena, where its namesake grape is little planted.



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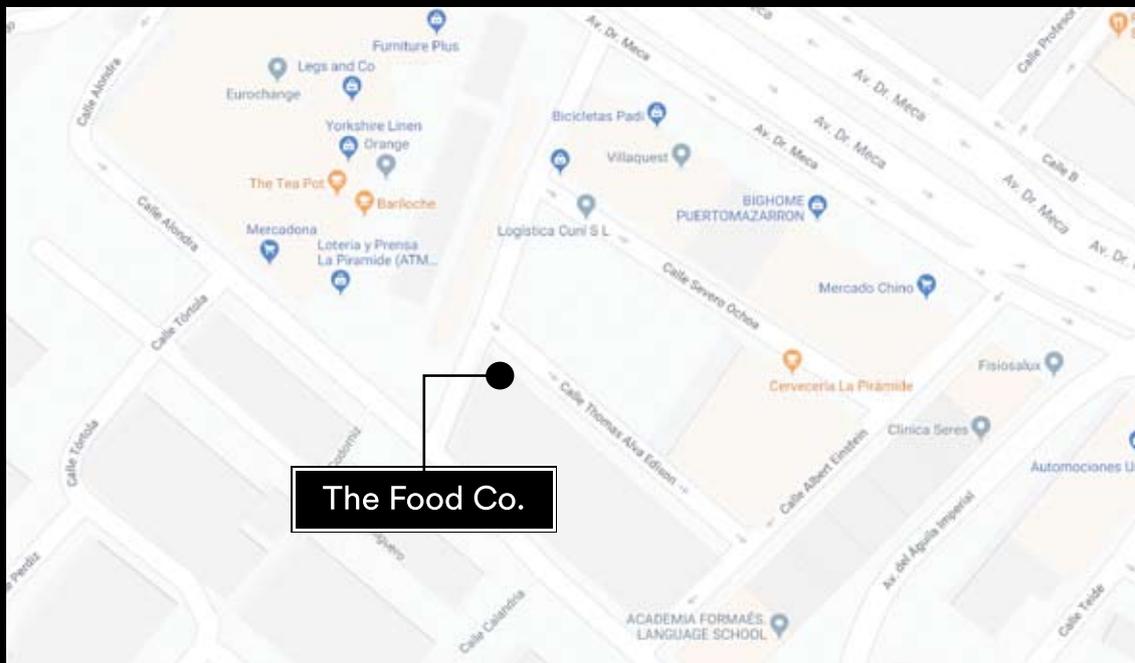
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Best Spanish Islands - *Gran Canaria*

Gran Canaria is a great little island. A miniature world with a melting pot of diverse landscapes which seem to be taken from different countries.

An island of beaches and mountains too. Plus great ravines where its strange natural surroundings are hidden away. A point in the ocean which has its own peculiar way of bringing together a sea of cultures. An amalgamation of sceneries, colours and flavours, ancestral traditions, bustling cities or out of the way hamlets.

All this and more awaits you if you just take to the roads that map out the 21 municipalities. Along winding roads where the climate can change as you go round each bend.

We invite you to get to know the fair weather island, around any of the 4 routes we have put together for our visitors: from north to south, or from east to west.

In antiquity, Gran Canaria was populated by the North African Canarii, who may have arrived as early as 500 BC. The Canarii called the island Tamarán ('land of the brave').

In the medieval period, after over a century of European incursions and attempts at conquest, the island was conquered on April 29, 1483 by

the Crown of Castile, under Queen Isabella I. The conquest succeeded after a campaign that lasted five years, and it was an important step towards the expansion of the unified Spain.

The capital city of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria was founded on June 24, 1478, under the name "Real de Las Palmas", by Juan Rejón, head of the invading Castilian army. In 1492, Christopher Columbus anchored in the Port of Las Palmas (and spent some time on the island) on his first trip to the Americas. Las Palmas de Gran Canaria is, jointly with Santa Cruz de Tenerife, the capital of the autonomous community of the Canary Islands



Nearly half of the island territory — 667 km² (42.7% of island)— is under protection from the Red Canaria de Espacios Naturales Protegidos (Canary Islands Network for Protected Natural Areas). Of the 146 protected sites under control of network in the Canary Islands archipelago, a total of 33 are located in Gran Canaria, the second most protected island in the group. There are seven different categories of protection:



Six nature reserves — El Brezal, Azuaje, Los Tilos de Moya, Los Marteles, Las Dunas de Maspalomas and Güigüi (total 7,153.1 ha)

Two integral nature reserves — Inagua and Barranco Oscuro (total 3,955.5 ha)

Two natural parks — Tamadaba and Pílancones (total 13,333 ha)

Two rural parks — Nublo and Doramas (total 29,893.4 ha)

Ten natural monuments — Amagro, Bandama, Montañón Negro, Roque de Aguayro, Tauro, Arinaga, Barranco de Guayadeque, Riscos de Tirajana, Roque Nublo and Barranco del Draguillo (total 5,264.9 ha)

Seven protected landscapes — La Isleta (in the capital Las Palmas de Gran Canaria), Pino Santo, Tafira, Las Cumbres, Lomo Magullo, Fataga and Montaña de Agüimes (total 12,680.9 ha)

Four sites of scientific interest — Jinámar, Tufia, Roque de Gando and Juncalillo del Sur (total 276.2 ha).







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Let's Learn Spanish

Spring

Phrases

Which is your favourite season?	¿Cuál es tu estación del año favorito?	Kwaless two esstath eeyon del annyo fav or ree toe
When are the holidays?	¿Cuándo son las vacaciones?	Kwan doh sonn lass vac katheeyoness
Is tomorrow a public holiday?	¿Es mañana festivo?	Ess man yan ah fess teevoh
Have you seen the almond blossom?	¿Has visto a los almendros florecidos?	Hass vee stow ah loss al men dross florreethee dos
Make me a floral bouquet	Hazme una rama de flores	Ath may oon nah rammah day flor res
I'd like a potted plant	Quiero una maceta	Key airrohoon nah mahthettah
What a beautiful view!	¡Qué vista más bonita!	Kay veestah mass bon kneetah
Have you seen the Easter Bunny?	¿Has visto al conejito de Pascua?	Hass vee stow al con nay he toe day passkwa

Vocab

Spring	La primavera	La pree mahverrah
Summer	El verano	Ell ver ran oh
Autumn	El otoño	Ell ottonyo
Winter	El invierno	Ell in vee airnoh
Easter	La Semana Santa	Lah say man nah santa
Easter egg	Un huevo de Pascua	Oon wev oh day passkwa
Chocolate	El chocolate	Ell choc oh lahtay
Lambs	Los corderos	Loss corrdare ross
Chicks	Los pollitos	Loss poyyee toss
Ducklings	Los patitos	Loss pat tee toss
Flowers	Las flores	Lass flor res
Blossom	La floración	Lah flor rah thee yon



Now try our wordsearch:

J Y C H O C O L A T E Q E M P E
 U B T I W Q T J S U P G P Y A I
 Q H P N L W I Z H Y C C O S T Y
 T O R V A S L E D D B S P P I Y
 A J T I Y B L V T B J K A M T M
 J Q V E X Y O E O O G E Y P O O
 X Z J R C R P R C V A J Y R N Z
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 Pollito
 Flor

Huevo
 Verano
 Patito
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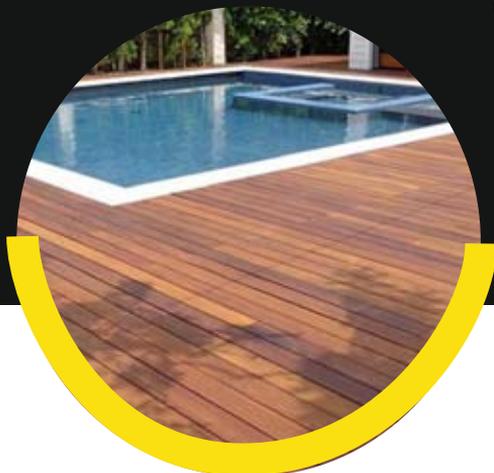
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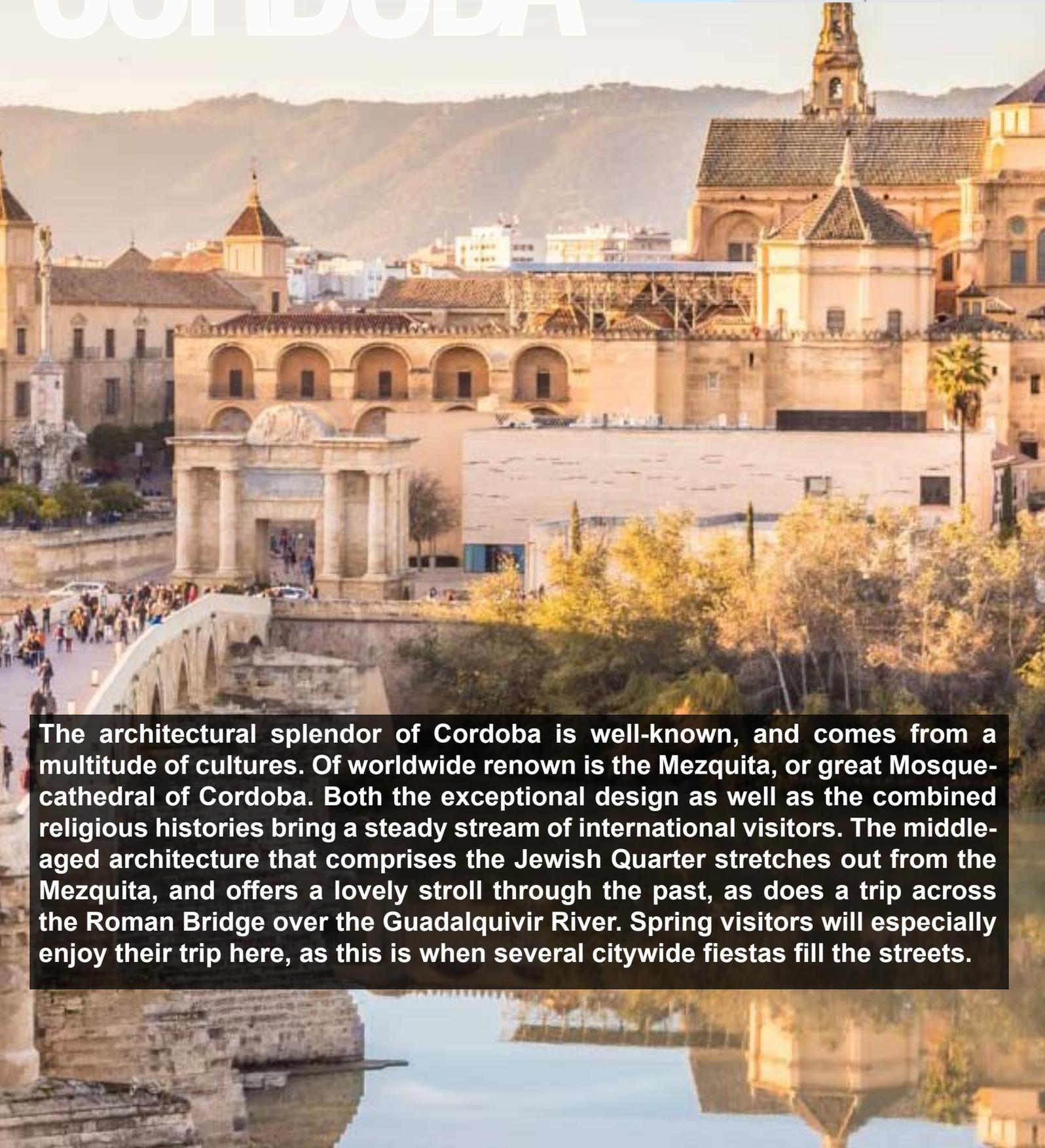
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10 Top Destinations in Southern Spain



CORDOBA



The architectural splendor of Cordoba is well-known, and comes from a multitude of cultures. Of worldwide renown is the Mezquita, or great Mosque-cathedral of Cordoba. Both the exceptional design as well as the combined religious histories bring a steady stream of international visitors. The middle-aged architecture that comprises the Jewish Quarter stretches out from the Mezquita, and offers a lovely stroll through the past, as does a trip across the Roman Bridge over the Guadalquivir River. Spring visitors will especially enjoy their trip here, as this is when several citywide fiestas fill the streets.

Córdoba is famous around the world for its Great Mosque. Its historic old town is a World Heritage site, full of little streets to be explored, courtyards full of flowers, inviting squares and lively taverns where you can enjoy a good flamenco performance or try the local cuisine. It is at its best in spring, when the fragrance of jasmine and orange blossom is ever-present, especially in May, the month of many of Córdoba's traditional fiestas.

Four cultures and plenty of life

The Great Mosque, the Alcázar de los Reyes Cristianos, the Synagogue and the Roman bridge are the prime examples of Córdoba's old quarter. The city reflects its Roman past and the coexistence of Christian, Islamic and Jewish cultures throughout its history. Recommended sights include the Jewish quarter, the Calahorra tower, the Roman theatre, Caballerizas Reales, Plaza de la Corredera...

A good way to explore the city is to take a guided tour of the sights, or follow one of the themed routes suggested in the Tourist Offices, including Roman Cordoba, the Caliphate route, or the Fernandine route of medieval churches. Just 10 kilometres from the city, with direct bus routes to it, is Spain's largest archaeological site, Medina Azahara, the ruins of the former capital of the Caliphate, a World Heritage site since 2018.

The charms of the city are not limited to its major monuments. Take a stroll to discover a tangle of narrow streets (be sure to see Callejón de la Luna and Calleja de las Flores), squares, fountains and courtyards decorated with flowers. Indeed,

Córdoba's main fiestas centre on these spaces. The Courtyards Festival, a World Heritage event, is famous, but in May the town also celebrates the May Crosses, the Battle of Flowers, and the Railings and Balconies competition. This is when the city is full of flowers, there are outdoor flamenco shows, and a festive atmosphere in the street. The month ends with the Feria de Córdoba.

Pleasures made in Córdoba

Going out for tapas, trying the traditional dishes of the local cuisine, discovering the equestrian arts, enjoying a flamenco show in a tablao or relaxing in an Arab bath are all special experiences in Córdoba.

The best-known areas for tapas are the historic quarter and the neighbourhoods of San Lorenzo, San Andrés and Santa Marina. Be sure to try local specialities like salmorejo (cold tomato soup), flamenquín (pork roll fried in breadcrumbs), aubergines with honey, mazamorra (cold almond soup), Iberian ham from Los Pedroches, cheese from Zuheros and wine from Montilla-Moriles.

You can enjoy the equestrian arts and the culture of the Andalusian horse all year round with shows in the Caballerizas Reales. Meanwhile, in the old town centre there are many tablaos with regular performances of flamenco music and dance.

Finally, you can relax in a modern hammam in the Arab baths in the Jewish quarter or when you book the "Andalusí Experience" in the Cordoba Tourist Office.



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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.



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Murcia

Murcia has a rich and varied gastronomy. Largely down to the many ingredients that you can find in the region, many of which are unique, like Calasparra rice, seafood and fish from Mar Menor or the fruit and vegetables from 'La Huerta'.

We also owe the richness of our food to a variety of different cultures that have influenced us when passing through. For example, thanks to the Muslim community La Huerta Murciana grew and developed itself, an important pillar of our gastronomy.

Ingredients and Products

There is a wide variety of products in Murcia, without which it would be impossible to speak of the region's gastronomy. Murcia is rich in fruit and veg from La Huerta, seafood and fish from the sea, and of course meat from its farms and many types of game. Also, you can't forget the fact that Jumilla wine and Calasparra rice, both native to Murcia, are known throughout the world.

'La Huerta' of Europe

The valley through which the River Segura passes through Murcia and its surroundings is called Huerta de Murcia. The river water, the earth (extremely fertile), as well as the farming techniques passed down by the Muslims, makes 'La Huerta de Murcia' one of Europe's leading producers of agricultural products.

There are many products that can be farmed from this area, however the most important are pepper and tomato. These two products are essential in Murcian cooking and you can't even begin to imagine how many different types of pepper and tomato we actually have. It's not only pepper and tomato that can be found in La Huerta! You can find many other vegetables of every kind, all used frequently in cooking too. For example, zucchini, aubergines, beans, artichokes, cauliflowers, and much more!

The most common fruits in Murcian cooking are citrus fruits (oranges and lemons). They are used in loads of recipes. Many people think Murcians use the lemon almost too much, we even put it in our soup! But there aren't just citric fruits, we have loads of others in La Huerta too



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Pavo relleno

Stuffed Turkey



Ingredients:

Ingredients for 4 people:

1 turkey or turkey of 3-4 kilos
The turkey can be stuffed whole or it can also be deboned, stuffed and flanged.

Ingredients for the stuffing:

500 g minced beef
500 g of minced pork loin head
50 g of Serrano ham
200 g raisins, soaked
200g pitted prunes
2 onions
2 apples
1 head of garlic
1 sprig of thyme
2 eggs
Grated garlic
Parsley
Pepper
Bread crumbs
Salt

Method:

A few hours before cooking, marinate the turkey with a glass of brandy and a sprig of rosemary inside. Leave in the refrigerator.

Mix the minced meat in a bowl, add salt and pepper, add garlic and parsley, the raw eggs, stir everything very well and add the breadcrumbs little by little until the filling is consistent.

Remove the thyme sprig from inside the turkey, season the inside and then fill the turkey with the mince, also introducing the hard-boiled egg and the chorizo in 4 strips. Then it is tied with thread so that the filling does not come out during cooking. Brush with olive oil and season the turkey on the outside.

Brush the baking tray with olive oil and place the turkey in the centre. Peel, chop and add the onions, apples, plums, raisins, garlic cloves, and a few sprigs of rosemary. Then drizzle the turkey with the brandy and wine; and then add half a litre of meat broth.

Bake at 180° for about 3 hours.

During cooking, baste the turkey from time to time with the juices from the tray that the meat is releasing.

Arroz con leche

Rice Pudding (served cold)



Ingredients:

Ingredients:

- 1/2 kg of Calasparra rice
- 1/2 kg of sugar
- 2 litres of milk
- lemon rind
- cinnamon stick
- and ground cinnamon

Method:

Wash the rice

Add a splash of water to a pot and add the rice, with a wooden spoon, stir it until the water is consumed.

Add the milk

Now add a litre of milk to the pot, half of the rice, also the lemon rind and the cinnamon sticks.

Rice is a delicate ingredient to cook, but the secret is to turn the heat up to the maximum when we add the litre of milk and when it starts to boil, lower it. We do not stop moving with the wooden spoon, so we help the rice to release its starch.

When we see that the milk has been consumed, we add a little more and also a little sugar, and continue stirring. Continue to add milk and sugar

Keep testing the rice, and remove from heat when cooked.

Remove cinamon stick and lemon rind

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Types of Spanish Cheese

Spain is a country of varied terrain and climate, so it's not surprising that it produces at least 100 separate recognized and named cheeses. Each cheese has a unique identity depending on the type and breed of animal, the wild herbs and grass it grazes on and the traditional production methods used to make the cheese. From the famed sheep's milk Manchego cheese of La Mancha, to the smooth rich cow's milk Cantabria from the north of Spain, there are Spanish cheeses for every palate.

Cheeses can be fresh, semi-cured or cured, with the flavour growing progressively stronger and more complex as they mature. Spain also has several blue cheeses, some aged in caves to produce unique blue veins of mould.

Here we'll list just a few of the Denominacion de Origen (D.O.) cheeses to give a taste of the range of Spanish cheeses available:



SHEEP'S MILK CHEESES

Manchego, is made from the whole milk of the pure bred Manchego sheep from La Mancha. It can be sold in three versions:

Fresco – the fresh cheese is aged for only 2 weeks, with a rich but mild flavour. Produced in small quantities it is rarely found outside Spain.

Curado is a semi-firm cheese aged for three to six months with a sweet and nutty flavour. It melts well and is often used in quesadillas.

Viejo, aged for one year is firm with a sharper flavour the longer it is aged and a rich deep pepperiness to it. It grates well but can also be eaten on its own or as tapas.

Idiazabal is a semi-cured or cured cheese from the Basque country with a robust flavour, which can be smoked on the outside.

Other Spanish sheep's milk cheeses to look out for: Roncal, La Serena, Zamorano, Nevat and Mirableu

COW'S MILK CHEESES

Cabrales is the renowned Spanish blue cheese. It can be pure cow's milk or blended with sheep and goats milk in spring and summer. It is produced by small dairy farmers in the Picos de Europa and is aged in natural limestone caves in the mountains where it develops its rich blue veins of penicillium.

Other Spanish cow's milk cheeses to look out for: Tetilla, Mahon and Cantabria

GOAT'S MILK CHEESE

Murcia al Vino is a firm cheese made from the milk of Murciano-Granadina goats. It is washed in red wine to give it a characteristic dark rind and floral aroma.

Other Spanish goat's milk cheese to look out for: Majorero and Ibores.

There are also some notable Spanish cheeses made with a blend of milks from all three animals or just cow and sheep, among them: Iberico, Picon, Quesucos de Liebana and Campo de Montalba



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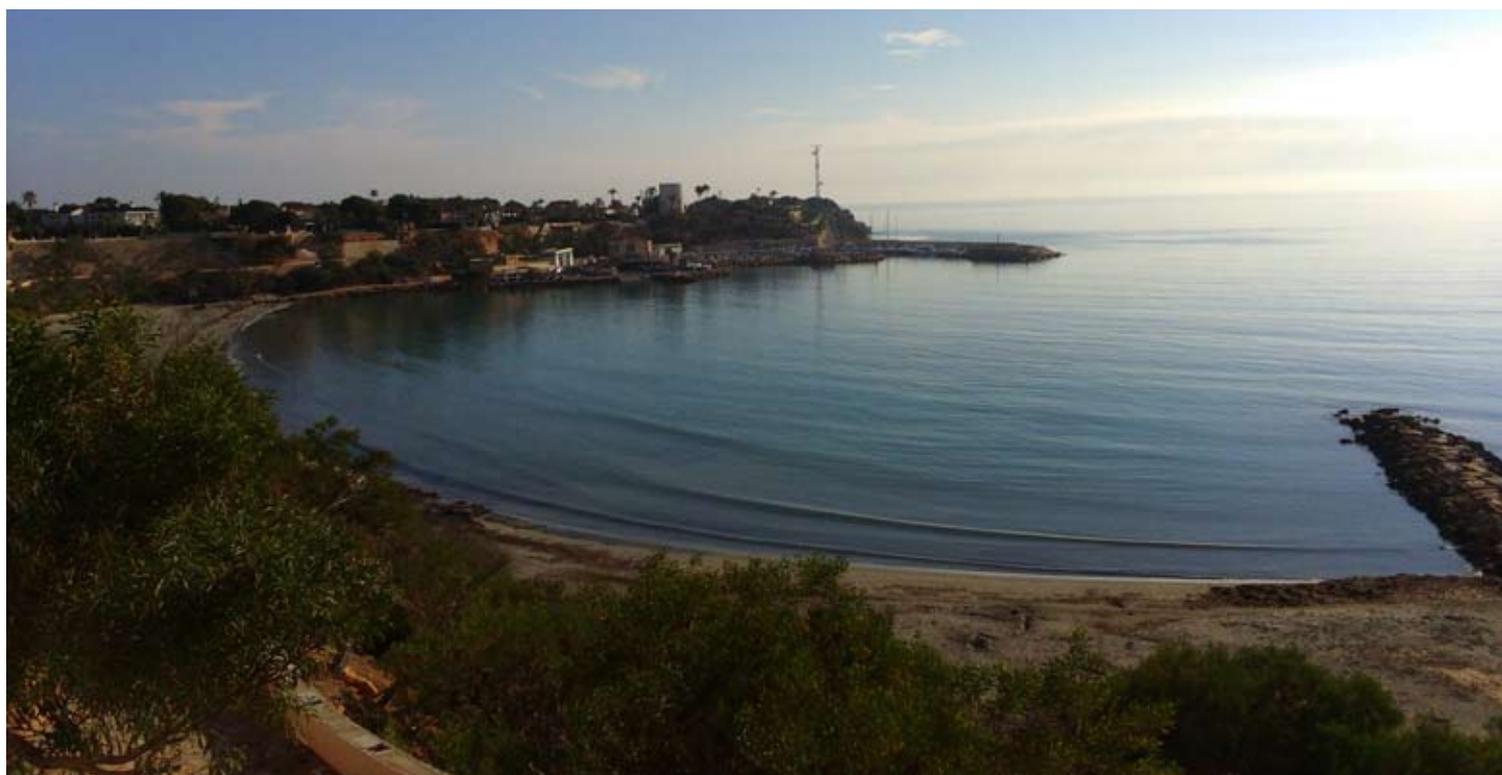
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Cabo Roig can be found 10 kilometres to the south of Torrevieja, on the southern Costa Blanca in eastern Spain.

around 30 minutes drive from Murcia International Airport.

About town

The delightful town of old Cabo Roig has broad avenues lined with palms and landscaped gardens with views of the Mediterranean to the La Manga peninsula and the Mar Menor providing a picturesque setting alongside the lovely beaches.

Golf

Cabo Roig is an excellent location for golfers, being close to many fine championship courses, including the three Villamartin courses. The world famous La Manga golf complex is also within easy reach.

Beaches

There are many fine blue flag beaches close by. The beach next to Cabo Roig marina is very popular, with excellent views.

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Toledo

Toledo is known for being a melting pot of cultures, and that is evident in everything from the cuisine to the architecture. A guided day trip to Toledo will start right in the incredible Old Quarter, where you'll be able to admire Arabic, Gothic and Renaissance architecture right next to each other. A short walk from the Santa Maria La Blanca Synagogue, which is one of the oldest in Europe, you can see Mezquita Cristo de la Luz, a church that was constructed as a mosque more than one thousand years ago. In the Church of Santo Tome, you'll discover "The Burial of the Count of Orgaz", one of El Greco's most influential artworks.

The Cathedral of Toledo will undoubtedly be the focal point to which your eye is drawn, thanks to towering position on a hill overlooking the city. Once inside, you can admire works by the likes of Goya, Rubens and El Greco. Built in the 13th century, the cathedral is also home to the portraits of all the cardinals from the church dating back for more than 500 years.

Christians, Muslims and Jews. Followers of the three religions lived side by side for centuries and left their mark in Toledo. It is one of Spain's most interesting and intriguing cities, where you can see a Gothic cathedral, a 10th century mosque and two synagogues in the space of just a few metres.

It was once an Imperial City, and its beauty was depicted in the paintings of El Greco. Visitors to the

city should be sure to see its views, visit the Alcázar, walk around its winding streets, or see a sunset from the Alcántara or San Martín bridges. Less than 80 kilometres from Madrid, it's worth spending more than a day to see the city lit up at night and explore it in more depth.

One of the largest heritage sites in Europe

Go through the city walls—the Bisagra, Cambrón and Sol gates are still in use—and into the maze of streets of Toledo's old town centre, a World Heritage site. You could begin the tour at the mosque Cristo de la Luz. At over a thousand years old, it is Toledo's oldest monument and one of the most important examples of Spain's Hispano-Islamic and Mudéjar architecture. The next stop is in the cobbled streets of the old Jewish quarter, a charming area which boasts two important sites: the synagogue of Santa María la Blanca - the oldest in the city - and the synagogue of El Tránsito, now the Sephardic Museum. This area also includes a museum of one of Toledo's most famous and beloved residents, the Mannerist painter of elongated figures known as El Greco. However, his most famous work, the Burial of Conde Orgaz, is in the nearby church of Santo Tomé. The Christian legacy includes the 13th century Cathedral and its stained glass, one of the city's star attractions, the Monastery of San Juan de los Reyes - built to honour the Catholic Monarchs - and the imposing Alcázar which dominates the city.

What to visit

Toledo Army Museum

El Greco Museum

Alcázar fortress in Toledo

Monastery of San Juan de los Reyes

Santiago del Arrabal Church

Church of Santo Tomé

Cristo de la Luz mosque

Sephardic Museum

Santa María La Blanca synagogue

El Tránsito synagogue



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OVIEDO

The former Ovetum has been closely linked to the Asturian monarchy since its foundation (8th century), and even became the capital of the Kingdom. This fact has left an unquestionable medieval flavour in the historic quarter, which in modern times has been given a carefully-considered urban layout which is easy to move around.

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This town is an exceptional starting point to approach examples of pre-Romanesque art with World Heritage status, the coastline of the Costa Verde, incredible natural landscapes for all kinds of sports and, of course, a first-class gastronomic culture.

A pedestrianised historic quarter makes strolling in Oviedo a pleasure, from the University to the Cathedral, and from the palace of the Marquis of San Félix to the Camposagrado. A walk littered with statues which appear on the pavements on sites of historic importance. To take a rest, there are a great many squares and small squares filled with chigres (cider bars).

The tower of Oviedo's Cathedral marks the starting point of any tour of the provincial capital. Built in the flamboyant Gothic style, its tower, rose window and entrance portico guard the greatest symbols of Asturias. The chapel of San Miguel, or Cámara Santa, houses the Holy Chest, the Cross of los Ángeles and the Cross of la Victoria, relics also visited by the pilgrims heading for the holy city of Santiago de Compostela.

The University of Oviedo can be considered the last building in the historic quarter before arriving at the New Districts. Its plateresque façade, from the 16th century, gives way to a cloister which hosts any number of cultural events throughout the year. The nearby façades of the palaces of Toreno and Camposagrado are worth a visit. At any point on a tour of Oviedo we can sample the

region's gastronomy. Our tasting must include Cabrales, Vidiago or Gamonedo cheeses, Asturian fabes (haricot beans), pixín (monkfish), seafood or "carne gobernada" (stewed meat). For dessert the choice is enormous: rice pudding, frixuelos (a kind of crêpe), almond cake... Oviedo, located in the centre of Asturias, provides easy access to the entire province via a variety of routes.

A branch of the Pilgrim's Route to Santiago de Compostela, the so-called Northern Road, runs along the entire coast of Asturias, from Colombres to Tapia de Casariego. While Oviedo is also linked to León and Lugo. A tour which brings us closer to the culture of Asturias and its influence on the Pilgrim's Route to Santiago de Compostela through its churches and pilgrims' hospitals. The Cider Route, focusing on the region's emblematic drink, covers an area in which apple trees flood the landscape, where we can visit factories, lagares (the presses for extracting the juice from the apples) and the Nava Cider Museum. Those interested in the mining industry of Asturias can tour the Nalón and Caudal valleys for a closer look at the unusual industrial landscapes.





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A Life in
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12 new 'most beautiful' towns in Spain

Castellar de la Frontera, Cadiz

Located on a mammoth rock formation, the old town of Castellar de la Frontera has played host to human civilisation since the bronze age. The population is divided into the old town of Castellar (pictured), the new town of Castellar that began to be built in 1971, and the hamlet of Almoraima. The 12th century fortress sits in the old town, looking down on the narrow streets and modest homes which give this town such a genuinely Spanish vibe.

Castellar de la Frontera is located in the region of Gibraltar, in the south east side of the province of Cádiz, Andalucía, Spain.

It is formed by three cores of population. The old village of Castellar – which is located inside of the fortress of a medieval castle from the XIV century - , the new village of Castellar was built in 1971, and Almoraima.

It is a township of easy access through two ways:

If you come from the oriental part of Andalucía (Almería, Jaén, Málaga) to Castellar, you can access through the highway of the Mediterranean A-7 (direction Malaga-Algeciras), from exit 130 direction Guadiaro-Castellar-Sotogrande. After driving 10km by the secondary road A-4100, a mountain track of great landscape beauty, comes to Castellar.

If you come from the occidental side of Andalucía (Sevilla, Cádiz) you can access to Castellar through the Highway A-381 (Jerez-Los Barrios) to the regional road A-405 (Algeciras-Ronda) that, after 20 kilometers, will set you in our town.

The history of Castellar de la Frontera is a little bit particular. We can talk about two periods: the first, full of historical anecdotes, it is located in the Old Village of Castellar de la Frontera. The second is more recent and it goes thirty years back, the date in which most of the villagers of the old village left their houses to move to the new part of the city. This way, in 1971 the New Village of Castellar was born, and with it, a new part of history.

In addition of these two cores of population, next to the railway station, there is another one which is not free of historical transcendence. We refer to Almoraima.

The old village of Castellar de la Frontera is located in the interior of a medieval fortress.



Due to its strategic situation in the peak of a mountain, the land of Castellar has been a place for settlement of numerous cultures. The first manifestations of human presence are some important lithic industries which show the man of Paleolithic and Neolithic past.

We can also talk about other settler's past such as the Iberian. It is believed that these were the authors of the construction of a military Tower called "Lascutana Tower".



However, the Muslims are the settlers who left more footprints and who marked a very important period. They were the authors of the fortress erected as consequence of the invasions and rivalries against the Christians. They founded the village which is located in the interior of the fortress. Castellar played a fundamental role in the wars between Castellians and Muslims.

It was under Arabic domain until 1434 B.C when Juan Arias de Saavedra conquered the village and brought it back to the Christian Crown.

From here onwards, this village has based its economy in agriculture, cattle industry and the resources the hill provided them with until 1960, when the construction of Guadarranque dam started, which allowed the population to specialize in other works.

By the end of the 60's, the Restoration and Agrarian Development Institute built a new village, the New Village of Castellar de la Frontera, located 8 km from the village-fortress.

During the roman colonization, this village took the Lascutana Tower that the Iberians built and created there a settlement of which purposes were observation and the defense of the roman road which went from Carteia (next to the bary) to Córdoba. They have also found remains of houses in places near this settlement.

In 1603, the Monastery of Saint Miguel of La Almoraima

was built, and it was occupied by the Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mercy's monks.

In 1868, the Monastery of Saint Miguel of La Almoraima became a property of the Medinaceli Duke. In 1982, a halt is built next to the railway line Algeciras-Bobadilla, which was exclusively reserved for the Ducal house and their guests. With time, this halt was in the Almoraima station, which is also at the same time the station of the New Village of Castellar was built.

In 1945, the "Empresa Corchera Almoraima" was created. This was also to be the economic centre of most of the inhabitants of the municipal term of Castellar. Around the courtyard of cork, several houses compounded by cabins were built. Almoraima, little by little was growing its number of inhabitants. In 1962, the owners of the cork enterprise built houses for their employers, although these were insufficient and there were still many cabin houses or huts made of poor materials. By these years, Almoraima had more than 1500 inhabitants.

With the construction of the New Castellar, a large part of the population that lived in Almoraima, moved to the village built 1km far from them. Nowadays, it has about 200 inhabitants.



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Spain festivals | Easter in Spain

Locally known as Semana Santa (Holy Week), Easter is the most important celebration in Spain and stands out for its epic brotherhoods' processions and unique, age-old traditions specific to each region.

The atmosphere that characterizes the festivities is usually solemn, the picture spectacular, and everything seems fully immersed in emotion. Don't let yourself be fooled, though – this is still Spain, which means neither the strong religious beliefs nor the sombreness of the moment can hide the nation's fervor for pomp and lively fiestas.

In 2021, Easter Sunday falls on April 4th.

Here's a closer look at the distinctive customs and traditions that accompany Semana Santa in various Spanish provinces.

The destinations featured have some of the most famous and spectacular Easter festivities in Spain, but there are many other towns and villages throughout the country that are worth a visit during this special time of year.

Designated a Fiesta of International Tourist Interest of Spain, Holy Week in Viveiro, Galicia makes for a fascinating religious and cultural experience, offering an eye-catching visual spectacle and great atmosphere.

Other notable Semana Santa festivities are held in Hellín (Province of Albacete), where spectacular tamboradas (drum-playing ritual) complement the processions, and Castilblanco de los Arroyos – a small city in the Province of Seville, where they have a very unique custom of manufacturing Judas dolls (Juas) that are later placed in various corners of the city and set on fire.

Although not as spectacular as in other Spanish

regions, Semana Santa in Catalonia has its fair share of peculiar celebrations. For instance, the Silence Procession in Badalona dates back to the 17th century and distinguishes itself for being extremely quiet and lit only by candlelight.

Other noteworthy festivities include Tarragona's Procession of Loneliness where only women can take part, the Death Dance in Verges, and the Andalusian-style processions in L'Hospitalet de Llobregat, near Barcelona.

Here's a closer look at the distinctive customs and traditions that accompany Semana Santa in various Spanish provinces.

Semana Santa in Murcia

Holy Week in the region of Murcia is marked by a number of events and religious processions that generally stand out due to their strict order and distinctive characteristics, closely related to the area's history and culture.

The streets of Lorca are taken over by penitents, horses, and chariots, as well as colossal floats carrying fantastic baroque statues depicting scenes from the Old Testament. The most prominent features of Lorca's wonderful biblical parades are the great rivalry between the city's main brotherhoods – the Whites and the Blues, as well as the striking Semana Santa costumes, which are typically embroidered on silk and decorated with religious scenes. There are also a couple of small museums in Lorca dedicated to these exquisite outfits.

Cartagena's Holy Week processions are especially famous for their rigor, symmetry, and outstanding attention to detail. Each brotherhood in town is divided into small groups, whose members are meant to take care of a single float while wearing identical clothes.



All groups march to the rhythmic beat of the drums and when they stop, they do it in unison with military-like precision.

Another unique characteristic of the Semana Santa parades in Cartagena is the display of lavishly decorated floats filled with flowers, huge chandeliers (cartelas), and painted wooden sculptures created by both talented contemporary artists as well as classics such as Francisco Salzillo, Federico Coullaut-Valera, or Mariano Benlliure.

The charming university town of Murcia celebrates Easter with the same stately and elegant processions that characterize the region, but thanks to the multitude of masterpieces by Francisco Salzillo – the city's famous son, they seem even more spectacular in their baroque splendor. Handing out sweets is another traditional custom at Murcia's Semana Santa parades.

Semana Santa in Castile and León

While the Semana Santa festivities in Andalusia are the most spectacular, the ones in Castile and León are often regarded as some of the most authentic, solemn, and austere in the entire country. Among the cities that hold remarkable processions are León, Zamora, Salamanca, Avila, Segovia, and Valladolid.

In Salamanca, Zamora, and Valladolid, Semana Santa has been declared Fiesta of International Tourist Interest of Spain. Around 22 dramatic processions of pasos accompanied by ancient wooden sculptures of Jesus Christ and Virgin Mary in grief, along with hundreds of penitents carrying flags, crosses, or candles make Semana Santa in Salamanca one of the most important celebrations of its kind in the northwestern autonomous community of Castile and León.

The events unfold against a spectacular background and feature a series of particularities, including the processions performed by the University of Salamanca's Brotherhood of the Students.

Another highlight is the extraordinary artistic value of the pasos, which have been created by famous Spanish sculptors such as Mariano Benlliure, Luis Salvador Carmona, or Alejandro Carnicero, and are regarded as some of the best artworks of the Castilian School of Imagery.

The age-old rituals that date back to the 13th century, along with the rich historical and architectural details of Salamanca's UNESCO-listed Old Town add a dose of drama and splendour to the unique atmosphere.

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Things are a little different in the Romanesque city of Zamora, where the penance processions are usually basked in silence, meditation, and soberness.

In Valladolid, where Holy Week is the most important Catholic event of the year, art and religion blend harmoniously to create dazzling images while commemorating the death of Jesus Christ. Most of the processions are considered exquisite displays of Castilian religious sculpture, featuring spectacular statues and floats created by famous Spanish artists many centuries ago.

A completely unique tradition here is the Sermón de las Siete Palabras (Sermon of the Seven Words) – a local ritual held in the morning of Good Friday in Valladolid's Plaza Mayor after being proclaimed throughout the city by brotherhoods' members on horseback. Another peculiar feature of Semana Santa in Valladolid is the performance of various theatrical plays that illustrate scenes from the Passion.

Semana Santa in Andalusia

Although each Spanish region, and even city and village, has its own particular customs and practices during this time of year, Semana Santa celebrations are nowhere else as elaborate and spectacular as they are in Andalusia, the sunny south of the country.

Here, the most important Catholic holiday is commemorated with a week full of colour, art, religious fervor, and extravagant processions. By far, the most spectacular events take place in Málaga and Seville, where the streets are taken over by flamboyant parades and intricate religious displays depicting biblical scenes.

Like everywhere in Spain, the festivities begin on Palm Sunday (Domingo de Ramos) and last until Easter Monday (Lunes de Pascua), with the most dramatic and passionate parades held on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday.

In Málaga, Semana Santa is celebrated with religious and military parades accompanied by music, inviting incense and floral scents, as well as lots of colour and cheer.

One of the most distinctive features, however, is the presence of tronos – huge ornate floats that are carried through the streets of Málaga by hundreds of church members. These remarkable thrones depicting scenes from the Passion are escorted by groups of penitents wearing long purple robes and women in black holding lit candles. From time to time, the silence is broken by spontaneous saetas – typical Spanish religious music with flamenco influences, usually performed from a balcony during a major public procession.



Although Easter celebrations in Málaga are of huge proportions, it's Seville's Semana Santa that has crossed the boundaries becoming a world-famous event. During the Holy Week, the gorgeous Andalusian capital comes to life with thousands of pilgrims that gather here from all corners of the world to witness the city's extravagant pasos.

A paso is an enormous float adorned with life-size wooden statues of biblical characters, designed especially for religious processions. In Seville, these are considered genuine artistic masterpieces, some of them dating back as far as the 16th century. Each movable float belongs to a brotherhood, or cofradia (there are over 50 in Seville), and has its own distinctive characteristics.

A common feature, however, is the team of costaleros who convey the pasos on their necks and shoulders through the crowded streets.

The age-old rituals that date back to the 13th century, along with the rich historical and architectural details of Salamanca's UNESCO-listed Old Town add a dose of drama and splendor to the unique atmosphere.

The highlight of Holy Week in Seville is the night of Maundy Thursday, when all the processions start their march to the Cathedral. Known as La Madrugá, the night between Holy Thursday and Good Friday is the most important and spectacular moment of Seville's Semana Santa.

On the dawn of Good Friday, people gather in front of Seville Cathedral to commemorate the trial and all the events that have led to the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ.

This tense and solemn atmosphere changes dramatically on Easter Sunday (Domingo de Resurrección), when the news of the Resurrection of Christ brings plenty of joy and excitement among locals. Lively, colourful parades replace the sober processions; the floats are festooned with flowers; the weighty silence is expelled by exultant music; and people indulge themselves in all kinds of traditional sweets and pastries such as torrijas (slices of bread soaked in milk and eggs, and fried in olive oil) and pestihos.

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