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ISSUE 55  
JUNE 2021  
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in Southern Spain**

Malaga

**10 Top Destinations  
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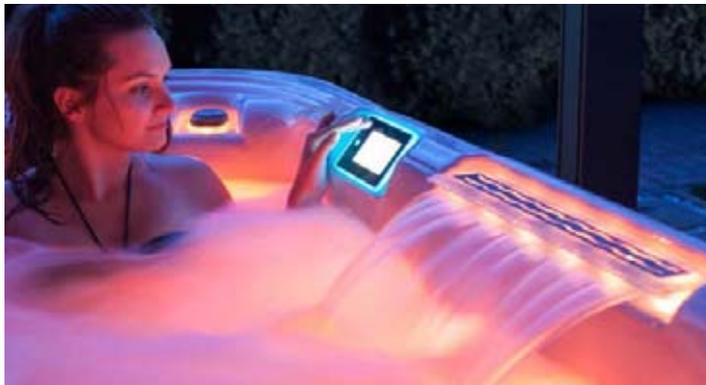
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# *A Life in* **SPAIN**

## Welcome to the June edition of ALIS.

This month I have to tell you about the little gem known as Casa Boquera. This family run hotel and winery can be found just outside Yecla. We found this place by chance, and had the pleasure of staying there last month. see centre pages for a more in depth profile.

So what's in this edition?

It's competition time....

see page 22 for our free to enter competition. This is your chance to win a 2 night stay for 2 people at Casa Boquera. The prize includes 2 nights bed and breakfast as well as wine tasting for 2 people.

Page 12 and 13 has an insite into the upcoming Tokyo 2020 summer Olympics. Re-scheduled to start next month. But will it actually go ahead?

Enjoy this month's magazine

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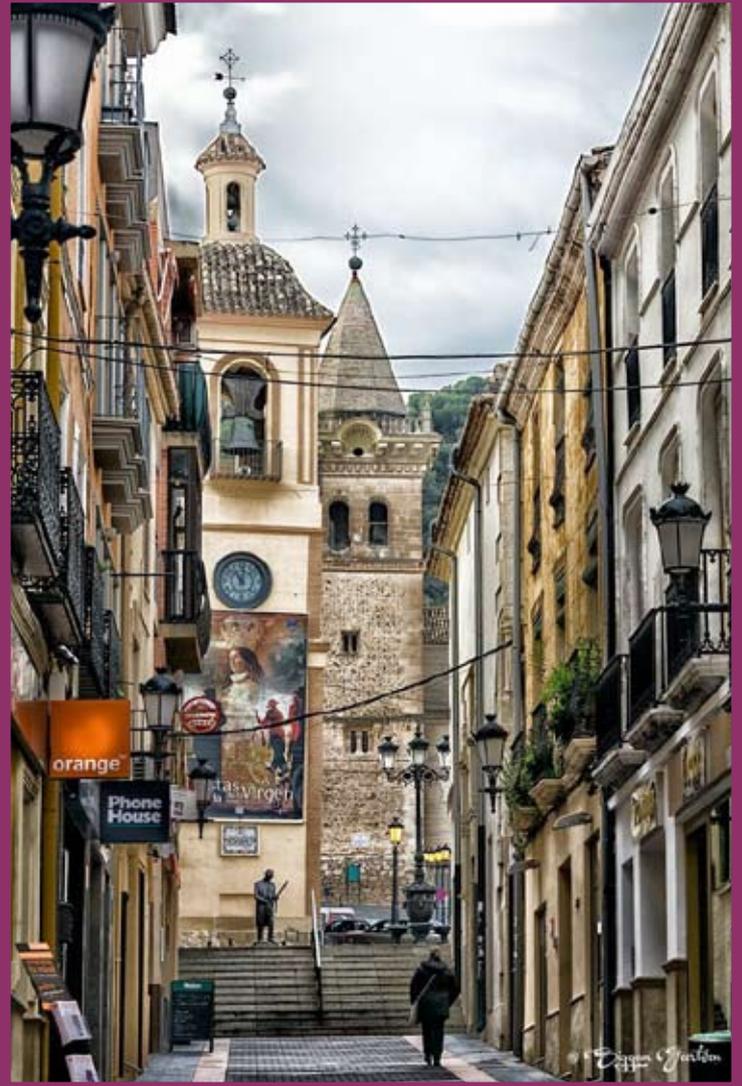
## *Wine Regions - Yecla*

Yecla is the smallest and northernmost wine zone in Murcia, in southeastern Spain. Named after the town of Yecla at its centre, the zone was delimited and granted official DO status in 1975. It is surrounded on all sides by other DO: Jumilla to the west, Alicante to the east and Almansa in the north. The classic Yecla wine is a rich, dark, fruit-driven red made from Monastrell grapes.

Although officially a single region, Yecla is unofficially divided into two zones, distinguished by their relative altitudes. The higher, northern Campo Arriba, with its older vines and more concentrated wines, is generally more highly regarded than the lower, southern Campo Abajo.

The climate here, 50 miles (80km) inland, marks the transition between coastal Mediterranean influences and the harsh continental climate of Spain's hot, arid interior. Rainfall is low, with less than 12in (300mm) falling annually. Thankfully, the limestone soils here

are efficient at storing whatever rainfall the region is fortunate enough to receive. Altitude also serves to moderate temperatures here; the zone sits at the eastern edge of the Cordillera Subbética mountain range. Most Yecla vineyards sit between 1312ft (400m) and 2625ft (800m) above sea-level.



Yecla's hot, dry summers are ideal for the late-ripening Monastrell grape variety, which dominates the local vineyards and wines. Roughly 80% of Yecla's total vineyard area is planted to Monastrell, the rest divided between Spanish favourites Garnacha and Tempranillo, and French "international" varieties Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah. The small quantity of white Yecla Blanco produced each year is made from Chardonnay, Macabeo and Airen.

Traditionally, the local red wines were made in a lighter, fruitier style than they are today. These were often vinified by carbonic maceration, and were intended for consumption within a couple of years of vintage. Today, the fashion has shifted towards conventional winemaking and complex, well-structured, barrel-aged examples which can be cellared for five years or so.

Viniculture was introduced to the Yecla area by the Phoenicians in ancient times, but wine did not become an important part of the local economy until the 20th Century. Yecla's economy has traditionally revolved around agriculture, particularly grain, fruit and oil (the Castaño family produce olive oil here to complement their broad wine portfolio). In more recent years, however, it has become better known for its quality furniture-making and, very recently, quality red wine. Since

the 1980s, the local wine producers and the Consejo Regulador (wine authority) have worked to produce distinctly Yecla wines, to create a distinctive personality for the region's wines.

The well-known Familia Castaño group is based here, and produces a range of Yecla wines (white, red and rosé), as well as a few from neighbouring Jumilla and Alicante. Also based here is one of Spain's largest cooperative wineries, Bodegas La Purísima, which serves as a reminder of the area's bulk-producing past. Yecla's ever-improving reputation has not gone unnoticed, as demonstrated by foreign interest in the region. Castaño partnered with investors from Switzerland to set up the Sierra Salinas winery in Villena (technically part of the Alicante DO zone), and Hollywood filmmaker and winemaker Francis Ford Coppola added a Yecla-grown wine to his portfolio.



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I'd like to buy a post box	Quiero comprar un buzón	Key <b>airroh</b> comm <b>prahoon</b> boo <b>thon</b>
2 letters to the UK please	2 cartas para Reino Unido	Doss <b>car</b> tass <b>pahrarray</b> no oon <b>knee</b> doh
Normal or fast service?	¿Servicio normal o rápido?	Ser <b>vee</b> thee yo nor <b>mal</b> oh <b>rap</b> pee doh
This is a registered letter	Esta es una carta certificada	<b>Esstahessoonnah</b> <b>cartah</b> sir tiff fee <b>cah</b> dah
I'd like to send this parcel	Quiero mandar este paquete	Key airroh man <b>daressstay</b> pack <b>kettay</b>
How much is it?	¿Cuánto es?	<b>Kwan</b> toe ess

### Vocab

A card	Una tarjeta	<b>Oon</b> nah tar <b>hettah</b>
A letter	Una carta	<b>Oonahcar</b> tah
An envelope	Un sobre	Oon <b>sob</b> ray
A stamp	Un sello	Oon <b>sellyo</b>
A parcel	Un paquete	Oon pack <b>kettay</b>
Sellotape	Fiso	<b>Fee</b> sew
An address	Una dirección	<b>Oon</b> nah dear rek thee <b>yon</b>
A postcard	Un postal	Oonpos <b>stal</b>
A padded envelope	Un sobre acolchado	Oon <b>sob</b> ray ah col <b>cha</b> doh
A box	Una caja	<b>Oon</b> nah <b>cah</b> hah
The sender	El remitente	Ell rem me <b>tentay</b>
The receiver	El destinatario	Ell des teen nattarree oh



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Aged 13

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Aged 14

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Aged 9

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Aged 16

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Aged 10

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# Best Spanish Islands - *La Palma*

**La Palma is also known as San Miguel de La Palma, is the most north-westerly island of the Canary Islands, Spain.**

La Palma has an area of 708 square kilometres (273 sq mi) making it the fifth largest of the seven main Canary Islands. The total population at the start of 2019 was 82,671, of which 15,716 lived in the capital, Santa Cruz de la Palma and about 20,467 in Los Llanos de Aridane. La Palma has “sister city” status with El Dorado Hills, California. Its highest mountain is the Roque de los Muchachos, at 2,423 metres (7,949 ft), being second among the peaks of the Canaries only to the peaks of the Teide massif on Tenerife.

In 1815, the German geologist Leopold von Buch visited the Canary Islands. It was as a result of his visit to Tenerife, where he visited the Las Cañadas caldera, and then later to La Palma, where he visited the Taburiente caldera, that the Spanish word for cauldron or large cooking pot – “caldera” – was introduced into the geological vocabulary. In the centre of the island is the Caldera de Taburiente National Park; one of four national parks in the Canary Islands.

Like all of the Canary Islands, La Palma originally formed as a seamount through submarine volcanic activity. La Palma is currently, along with Tenerife, the most volcanically active of the Canary Islands and was formed three to four million years ago. Its base lies almost 4,000 m (13,123 ft) below sea level and reaches a height of 2,426 m (7,959 ft) above sea level. About a half a million years ago, the Taburiente volcano collapsed with a giant landslide, forming the Caldera de Taburiente. Erosion has

since exposed part of the seamount in the northern sector of the Caldera. Since the Spanish have kept records, there have been seven eruptions – all of which have occurred on the Cumbre Vieja:

1470–1492 Montaña Quemada

1585 Tajuya near El Paso

1646 Volcán San Martin

1677 Volcán San Antonio

1712 El Charco

1949 Volcán Nambroque at the Duraznero, Hoyo Negro and Llano del Banco vents

1971 Volcán Teneguía



At the time of European colonization, the Canary Islands were inhabited by native Canarians, referred to collectively as Guanches, although the natives of La Palma are more correctly known as Auaritas. The origin of these natives is unclear but they are believed to share common ancestry with the Berbers of North Africa.

The Guanches had a Neolithic culture divided into several clans led by chiefs. Their name for La Palma was Benahoare. The main remnants of this culture are their cave dwellings, enigmatic petroglyphs and paved stone paths through the mountains. After the Spanish occupation of La Palma, the native Canarians vanished by either being killed, sold into slavery or by assimilating into the Spanish population.

It is believed that the Canary Islands were known to the Phoenicians and Greeks, but the earliest written evidence is by the Roman writer Pliny The Elder, who quoted Juba II of Numidia, but Juba's writings were subsequently lost. The Genoese navigator Lancelotto Malocello reached the archipelago in 1312 and remained for two decades until expelled by a native uprising.

In 1404 the Spaniards began the conquest of the

islands. Though the first landing on La Palma was in 1405, it took until 1493 and several bloody battles until the last resistance of the natives was broken. The conqueror of La Palma was Alonso Fernández de Lugo, who defeated Tanausu, the last king on the island. He ruled the area known as Acero (Caldera de Taburiente). Tanausu was ambushed after agreeing to a truce arranged by Fernández de Lugo and Juan de Palma, a Guanche who had converted to Christianity and who was a relative of Tanausu.

For the next two centuries, settlements on La Palma became rich as the island served as a trading post on the way to the New World. La Palma received immigrants from Castile, Majorca, Andalusia, Portugal and Catalonia.



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# The 2020 Summer Olympics officially the Games of the XXXII Olympiad

*Tokyo 2020*

For now, plans for the 2020 Summer Olympic Games in Japan's capital of Tokyo are a bit of a question mark after the Games were officially postponed to "safeguard the health of the athletes and everyone involved" due to coronavirus. This is the first time that the Olympic Games have been postponed and rescheduled, rather than cancelled.

The International Olympic Committee has said that it hopes to start Tokyo 2020 next month (July 2021). Initially they said that despite the delay, the Games will ultimately go on before summer 2021.

It will be Tokyo's second time hosting a Summer Olympics, 56 (or slightly more) years after their first time in the spotlight. And when they finally do take place, these Games will see the introduction of some exciting new sports including: skateboarding which will make its Olympic debut, as well as karate, surfing and sport climbing.

There will be plenty of classics to watch as well, from the ever-popular swimming and gymnastics events to track and field and team sports. And while Olympic trials are up in the air for many sports, we'll most likely be seeing the return of superstars like the 2016 gymnastics standout Simone Biles, swimming record-setter Katie

Ledecky and track star Sydney McLaughlin, who was just 16 when she competed in the Rio Olympics and has been on the rise ever since.

## When will the 2020 Olympics start?

The 2020 Summer Olympics were initially due to begin on July 24, 2020 and to run until Aug. 9, 2020, with the opening ceremony on July 24 and the closing ceremony on Aug. 9. (Some preliminary events would have taken place as early as July 22.) Most of the big swimming events were set to take place over the first week, while the track and field competitions ramp up in the second half.

But on March 24, the IOC announced the Games would be officially postponed, taking place "no later than summer 2021." It is now scheduled to be held from 23 July to 8 August 2021.

## Where are the 2020 Olympics being held?

For the second time in its history, Tokyo is hosting the summer Olympics; they first hosted back in 1964. (Japan has also been home to two Winter Olympics, at Sapporo in 1972 and Nagano in 1998.) Tokyo is the first city in Asia to host an Olympics twice.

Ahead of the postponement announcement, Tokyo looked to many of its preexisting facilities to stage the summer's events. The city has been renovating stadiums and rebuilding where they can: of 43 venues, 25 were already standing, while eight are new and 10 more temporary, as the Los Angeles Times reports. The Nippon Budokkan is getting fixed up as the site of judo competition and karate, for example, while the Baji Koen Park will host equestrian events and the Yoyogi National Gymnasium will be the spot for handball. (Back in 1964, it was the centre of the swimming and diving events.) But the big site — the Tokyo National Stadium — has been the focus of a major overhaul. Originally, the Stadium was to be rebuilt to the specifications of a design by the late architect Zaha Hadid. That plan was scrapped due to cost concerns. The ultimate design is one by a Japanese architect, Kengo Kuma, at about half the price.

The decision on a host city for the 2020 Summer Olympics was determined back in 2013 in Argentina. The three final contenders during the bid process were Istanbul, Madrid and Tokyo; Tokyo ended up ahead with 60 votes to 36 once the field had been narrowed down to Istanbul or Tokyo. Hosting the Olympics is a complex proposition for any city: while it offers potential economic upsides, thanks to increased construction, investment and tourism, many cities also struggle to make later use of the expansive facilities and housing that the Games require.

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## What sports are in the Summer Olympics?

The 2020 Summer Olympics will award medals across 339 events, representing 33 different sports. Five are new sports entirely (baseball/softball, skateboarding, surfing, sport climbing and karate), while others — like basketball — see the inclusion of new events within the discipline. Nothing has been dropped since 2016, which also saw the return of golf and rugby.

Here is the full list of sports, and the number of events within each sport:

Aquatics (49),  
Archery (5),  
Athletics (48),  
Badminton (5),  
Baseball/softball (2),  
Basketball (4),  
Boxing (13),  
Canoeing (16),  
Cycling (22),  
Equestrian (6),  
Fencing (12),  
Field Hockey (2),  
Football (2),  
Golf (2),  
Gymnastics (18),  
Handball (2),  
Judo (15),  
Karate (8),  
Pentathlon (2),  
Rowing (14),  
Rugby (2),  
Sailing (10),  
Shooting (15),  
Skateboarding (4),  
Sport climbing (2),  
Surfing (2),  
Table Tennis (5),  
Taekwondo (8),  
Tennis (5),  
Triathlon (3),  
Volleyball (4),  
Weightlifting (14),  
Wrestling (18).



There's still a lot up in the air about who will end up competing at the 2020 Summer Olympics, putting many athletes' plans up in the air. Plus, many Olympic trials don't take place until late in 2020; for track and field and swimming, for instance, trials to determine who will end up as an Olympian aren't until June 2020, just a month before the initially scheduled Olympics themselves. Now, it's unclear which sports will move their trials and when those will happen as the timing of the Games remains unknown.

Other sports, like many of the team events and the marathon, choose their qualified athletes based on performance in international competitions over the course of 2019 and early 2020. NBC's Olympics-dedicated Twitter account is a good place to keep track of preliminary and qualifying events.

The biggest change to the Olympics for 2020 is the addition of the five new sports and the return of baseball (absent in 2016), plus a few new events, like the three-on-three basketball competition.

One change sure to receive a lot of attention are the adjusted gymnastics team rules: instead of fielding a team of five athletes, each country will be whittled down to four all-around contestants, with two more team-mates added to compete only in individual events.

## Where will the 2024 Summer Olympics be held?

The 2024 Summer Olympics will be held in Paris and the 2028 will be in Los Angeles.



## 10 Top Destinations in Southern Spain

# MALAGA



From the outside, this city has a subdued and modern shell. The historic, Gothic heart of town is another world completely. This is the birthplace of Picasso, and has a large collection of museums to enjoy. Those seeking older historic sites will enjoy the Roman theatre, and Azcalba, the Moorish castle. The grand 11th Century Gibralfaro castle is a must-see for those who love lavish manors. Malaga is well-known for its tapas bars and has a reputation of being one of the tastiest cities in the region when it comes to this kind of cuisine.

Beyond its 16 sunny beaches, this Andalusian city on the shores of the Mediterranean has a fascinating cultural side. And the birthplace of Pablo Picasso has reinvented itself in recent years, inaugurating museums for all tastes.

If you take the combination of sea and culture and add a lively atmosphere, plenty of tapas served in its bars, fashionable neighbourhoods like Soho, areas such as the port that have been transformed to offer a more modern image, and monuments with centuries of history, the result is an exciting city everyone would want to discover. Because if everyone says that Malaga is prettier than ever then it must be true.

### A journey in time

Malaga is a city full of historical spots such as the Alcazaba, one of the largest Moorish fortresses in Andalusia, or Gibralfaro Castle, which offers the best views over the city. At the foot of the castle there is a Roman theatre and an old town to stroll around. Its streets offer attractions such as the Atarazanas Market to have a vermouth, and monuments like the Cathedral, known as 'La Manquita' (one-armed), due to its unfinished right tower. You can't miss visiting its roof; a unique experience. Here in the city of Picasso, you can visit the excellent Picasso Museum in the centre, and the home where he was born.

But Malaga doesn't only live on its past. In recent years it has inaugurated the Carmen Thyssen Museum, the only Pompidou Centre outside France -its coloured cubes have become an icon- or the Saint Petersburg Russian Museum Collection

.But anyone looking for a more underground culture simply must visit the Centre for Contemporary Art, the urban art on the city's buildings or the alternative establishments in Soho.

### Essence of Malaga

Several things make Malaga a unique place. To start, beyond its monuments, a sunny day spent on the legendary La Malagueta urban beach is a must. Anyone who wants to delve into traditional flavours should visit the seaside neighbourhood of Pedregalejo and try the typical grilled sardines on skewers.

Another emblem of Malaga Without a doubt is its pedestrian street Marqués de Larios, a busy thoroughfare decorated with flowers and which you must visit at least once on a trip to Malaga. At night, this area and its nearby streets become the perfect spot for tapas at establishments that have become an institution, such as Bodega El Pimpi; and for trying the ajoblanco chilled garlic soup.

Malaga is also known for its Film Festival, its Holy Week, its innovative restaurants... But above all, Malaga is joy. And it's catching.



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## Little life change no 5.

By Hilary Quinlan and Murcia Golf Homes

Go Plastic Free to Save the Sea.

Choose sauces and spices in glass.....as my journey continues, I am now getting down to the nitty gritty. Ketchup, BBQ sauce, olive oils and spices. In my local supermarket Lesco I can find olive oil in a glass bottle with a metal lid, mustard and HP sauce.

However, I have been looking for BBQ sauce everywhere and eventually found one in El Campillo Gourmet Supermarket in San Javier. There I found pricey Jack Daniels BBQ Sauce at almost €5! I bought it and a bonus was the spice range, good sized jars and well priced. I stocked up on cayenne peppers and jars of Thai green curry paste which is hard to find in Spanish Supermarkets.

I love the new minimalist aspects of my life, it's easy to choose a product like a yogurt or a sauce from the overpacked shelves. Sometimes too much choice is stressful, it also seems to devalue the product. Having found artisan yogurt in a beautiful ceramic pot in Carrefour I am delighted. However when you can't find what you need and you have to buy plastic it is really frustrating.

But little changes make big waves and my journey is taking me to new and interesting places.

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The Schalde couple have always had a love of wine, and following a holiday to their holiday home in Torrevieja, they decided to follow their dream. So 9 years ago they started by buying an old finca with a small vineyard just outside Yecla. Soon after renovating this they bought the neighbouring plot of land and set about cultivating it and planting new vines, and so the dream was born.

Next followed the building of the Casa Boquera boutique hotel and the winery. In the following pages we will talk more about this and the restaurant. Then finally Katherine put the final jigsaw piece in place by passing her sommelier exams. This now means she can conduct wine tasting and courses of her own excellent wines, and believe me the wines are excellent.

Casa Boquera can also cater for all types of celebrations including marriage ceremonies. Casa Boquera offers a safe and secure environment. Most importantly in the current situation, ALL covid related hygiene standards are met and surpassed by all staff.



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**Pork Belly** | 11.90 €

**Lamb Shank** | 14.50 €

**Fillet Steak a la Siciliana** | 22.50 €

Stuffed with blue cheese and spinach

**Baked Cod** | 11,90 €

With white beans and chorizo with a splash of tomato sauce

# Casa Boquera - Hotel

Casa Boquera is situated in the middle of their own vineyard. The accommodation surrounds a private garden with a swimming pool and beautiful views over the vineyards and valley. With 11 rooms they can offer a personal and quiet retreat with your own private terrace. All rooms are furnished differently with spacious bathrooms and top quality beds.

The kitchen serves a breakfast buffet with freshly squeezed orange juice, eggs, bacon and even baked beans. You can enjoy your start of the day, either inside in the dining room or out on the many terraces depending if you want the sun or the shade. A set breakfast can be brought to your room if you prefer.

The cafeteria and pool bar is open all day and offers a menu with Spanish and European food. Or maybe you want a lunch basket to take with you when you go cycling. This is also possible.

For a larger lunch or dinner, they offer you the downstairs restaurant, where they serve two different menus: one rustic and traditional, and one gourmet style. The restaurant opens normally from eight to midnight. All red, white and rosè wines are from their own winery and are all organic.

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# Casa Boquera - Restaurant

The definition of “the good life” is often related to food and wine. At Casa Boquera they have taken this to heart and wish to give you a perfect experience at their on site restaurant.

They have composed two menus to choose from. The ingredients are closely related to the surroundings and the actual season, and are therefore changed at least four times a year.

The open plan kitchen gives you the opportunity to see the masters at work and creates at the same time a homely, relaxed atmosphere. Perfect for friends and family as well as business relations.

Take the opportunity of dining in a vineyard and visit the wine cellar. Choose the perfect wine or let them recommend one for you.

They can seat upto 40 people inside and can offer celebrations for up to 180 guests when using the enclosed terrace. They have of course composed special menus for special occasions.

Welcome to the good life and the Casa Boquera Restaurant!



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# Casa Boquera - Winery



Casa Boquera is a small family winery located in the "El Serral" Valley in Yecla (Murcia).

The area, known as La Boquera, is characterised by its microclimate and its terroir, made up of sandy and calcareous soils, which makes it very suitable for growing vines, obtaining wines with a very unique character.

The red varieties that their farm has are: Monastrell, a native variety of the area and the great protagonist of the wines. Petit Verdot, Syrah and Garnacha Tintorera.

The total hectares that the vineyards have is 20 Ha, all of them located around the winery for better control and evaluation, and giving the hotel and restaurant privileged views.

The winery was built during the spring of 2016. The winery is small but equipped with the most respectful technology towards wine and adapted to the winemaking tradition of the area.

Proof of this is that the entire winery is heated to ensure that the temperature is optimal for the correct conservation of the wine, and the continuous addition of preservatives and the control of the oxygen level in the tanks that can reduce the quality of the wine is avoided.

All the facilities are designed to achieve the highest quality of wines.

The harvest is carried out in small boxes to take maximum care of the quality of the grapes, as well as to avoid oxidation.

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The treatment and selection of the grapes is carried out on the day of harvesting, first in the field as they select bunch by bunch by the harvest team, and then in the winery at the selection tables, removing all grapes that are not in optimal ripened condition or correct hygienic conditions. Then the destemming is carried out, but they do not crush the pips; and later the incubation is carried out by means of very respectful systems with the grape.

The entire fermentation process is carried out in small stainless steel tanks that guarantee a perfect fermentation control. This process lasts about 10-20 days, depending on the type of fermentation suitable for each variety. At the end of this process, the grape is pressed with a pneumatic press that fully respects the structure of the grape without causing breakage, but only fatigue. After this process, the wine for aging or barrel is determined according to the organoleptic properties obtained.

The wines are 100% organic, with the personality of the area where mineral tones stand out due to the typical terroir of the area. Wines with medium-high layers of colour where the typical ruby red of Monastrell dominates.

Both young and old reds are made with the Monastrell variety as the protagonist.

They also produce a very small production of rosé and white wines, but never exceed in total 100,000 bottles per vintage to continue maintaining the style so typical of family wineries where every detail counts and makes each bottle unique.

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# Casa Boquera - The Harvest

If you want to see and experience the harvesting of the grapes first hand then why not join the Casa Boquera team in their “Perfect Harvest”, an event that can be done anytime during the six weeks of harvest, between the beginning of September to mid October

We start the day with coffee / tea and some information about the day, our story and about the grapes and wine in general. You will then be divided into groups.

Then we go out into the vineyard and cut grapes.

The winemaker then awaits us in the bodega and we are told the secrets of selection. Then we try to do the selections ourselves and will be judged by the winemaker

Lunch with drinks included and relaxation by the pool.

Then after lunch we do wine tasting, blind tasting and a quiz, all just fun.

We then tread grapes the old fashioned way before we compete to see who gets one litre of grape juice first.

We round off the day with a rustic barbecue and drinks all included during the meal.

Both meals and drinks included: 140 euro.

After this we highly recommend staying at the hotel, but this is not included in the harvest price  
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*A Life in*  
**SPAIN 23**



The medieval town of Aledo has a population census of about 1,000 inhabitants, and can be found within the region of Bajo Guadalentín. This municipality is located at the foot of the southern slope of Sierra

Espuña, at a height of more than 650 meters. To the north, south and east of Aledo is Totana, and to the west is Lorca. The easiest way to get to Aledo is via Totana. Head to Totana off the A7 and follow the signs

The first records about Aledo dates back to the tenth century, and is of Muslim domination, who used Aledo as a fortified position.

The main villa becomes a fortress around the 11th century when it was dominated by Christian population. Aledo, its castle, aljama, villages and dependencies were given by Alfonso X El Sabio, (who is believed to have written some of his Partidas in that castle) to the Master of the Order of Santiago, Palay Perez Correa, as a reward for his victories Against the Muslims

There are some quaint little gift shops, and fantastic views where on a clear day you can see the Mediterranean. Combine your trip with a drive into the Sierra Espuña for even more breath taking views.

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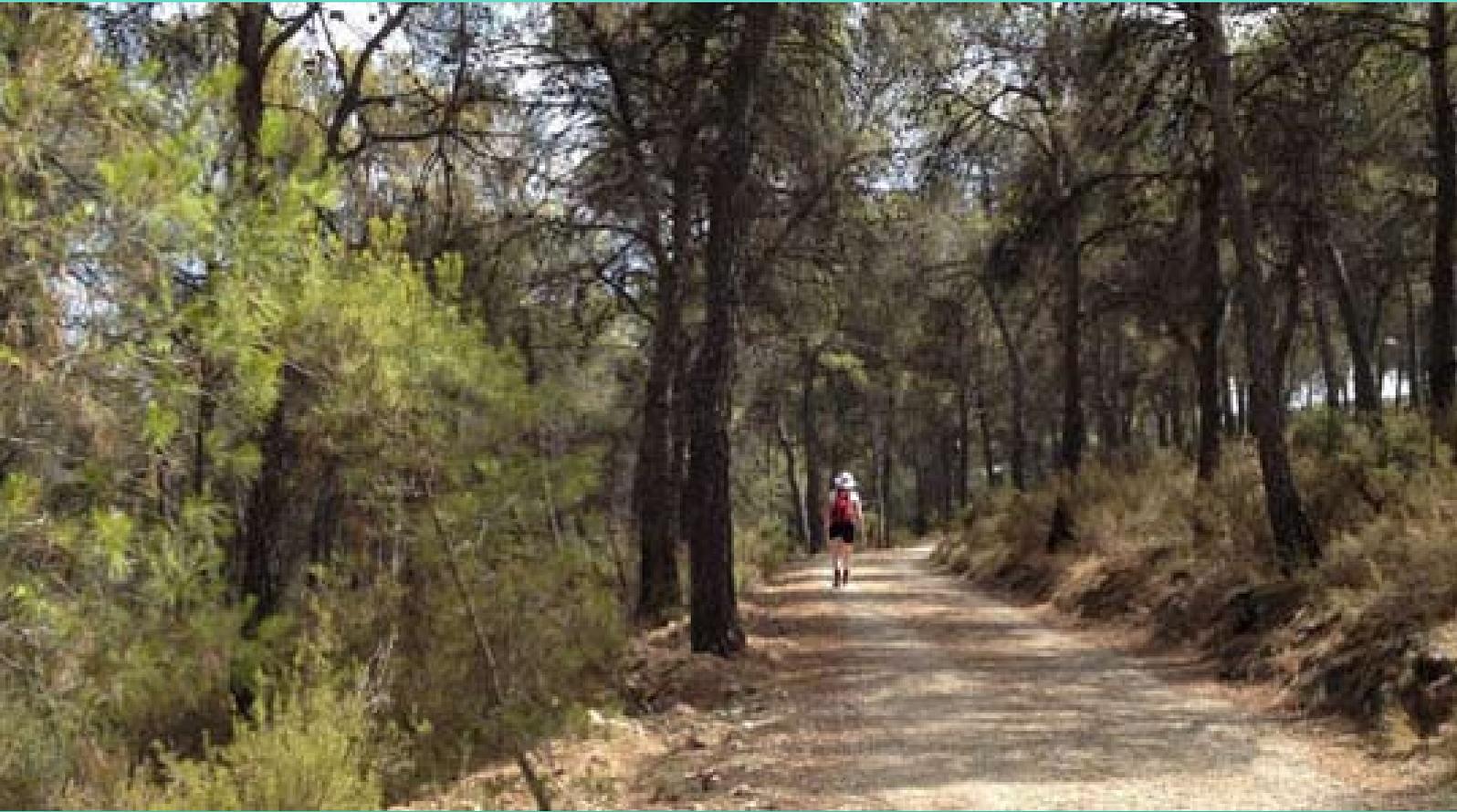
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# Walking routes

## El Berro – Gebas



This walk gives you a good impression of how hard the local population has to work to grow almonds, figs and olives in this inhospitable area. The irrigation canal La Noguera that you follow is a silent witness of this. You walk along the ridge of the Llano del Pico with beautiful views of the Sierra Espuña and the Barranco de Gebas. You also go through a tunnel and an old excavated canal.

The walk leaves at the info sign next to the entrance to Camping Sierra Espuña. You walk into the village and via a staircase you arrive at an old washing place that was still used until the 50's of last century. You leave the village and walk by a rock wall where you have a nice view of El Berro. A little further you arrive at the junction where you come out of the forest on the way back. Here you keep following the GR252.

Along the way you will encounter some beautiful almond orchards and eventually arrive at an irrigation canal. You literally walk on the irrigation canal until you come to the excavated canal. The path runs through the wide excavated canal with a glimpse of the valley here and there. In a bend you suddenly come at a tunnel. You go through the tunnel, a flashlight is not really necessary but can help. Once through the tunnel you start to turn to the valley where Gebas is located. At the information pole, you leave the GR252 that descends to Gebas. You continue on the flank and quickly reach the comb that keeps following you for a long way. Here you have beautiful views of the surrounding valleys and on the Barranco de Gebas, the impressive moon landscape. You leave the path of the ridge to continue through a forest. At a certain moment you turn right and you start a fairly steep descent to get back on the path of the way out. From here it goes back to El Berro by the same road.

**Distance:** 8 km

**Duration:** 2.30h

**Grade:** Easy

**Type:** Circular

**Height gain:** 272 meters

**Way mark:** PR-MU 69 - White-Yellow dash

**Wheelchair:** Not suitable

**Dog:** Allowed on a lead



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# 10 Top Destinations in Northern Spain



# GAZTELUGATXE

Gaztelugatxe is an islet on the coast of Biscay belonging to the municipality of Bermeo, Basque Country (Spain). It is connected to the mainland by a man-made bridge. On top of the island stands a hermitage (named Gaztelugatxeko Doniene in Basque; San Juan de Gaztelugatxe in Spanish), dedicated to John the Baptist, that dates from the 10th century, although discoveries indicate that the date might be the 9th century. With another small neighbouring island, Aketx, they form a protected biotope that extends from the town of Bakio until Cape Matxitxako, on the Bay of Biscay.

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The word gaztelugatxe [gaʒtelugatʃe] comes from the Basque gaztelu “castle” and atx “rock”, forming “the rock castle”. The word atx and its derivatives are usual in Basque toponyms related to rocky summits: Aketx, Untzillatx, Atxulo

The Basque coast is rough in this area. The sea ceaselessly erodes the rocky coast creating tunnels, arches and caves. The island of Gaztelugatxe is in the centre of this section of coast next to the small Aketx island, a sanctuary for marine birds.

Next to the hermitage there is a small shelter with sea views that is used for picnicking and for refuge from the wind.

The hermitage is accessed by a narrow path, crossing the solid stone bridge, and going up 231 steps (other sources cite the number as 229 or 237). According to legend, after the slightly strenuous climb to the top of the crag you should ring the bell three times and make a wish.

### Hermitage

The small church, 80 metres above sea level, dates from the 10th century. In the year 1053 it was donated, by don Íñigo López, Lord of Biscay, to the monastery of San Juan de la Peña near Jaca in Huesca. Medieval burials from the 9th and 12th centuries have been found on the esplanade and in the hermitage.

In 1593 it was attacked and sacked by Francis Drake. Among other incidents, it has caught fire several times. On November 10, 1978, it was destroyed in one such fire. Two years later, on June 24, 1980, it was re-inaugurated. The hermitage belongs to the parish of San Pelayo in Bakio.

The hermitage also houses votive offerings from sailors who survived shipwrecks.

A little known fact... HBO filmed scenes for season 7 of its fantasy series Game of Thrones at the islet





# MB Services

*Michael Bowins*



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Michael is also in the process of acquiring his RITE qualifications for all cooling and heating Systems. This is the only qualification recognised in spain for this type of work.

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# 12 new 'most beautiful' towns in Spain

## *Monteaquedo de las Vicarias, Soria*

Monteaquedo de las Vicarias boasts narrow alleys leading to a medieval walled enclosure. Housing a majestic castle, the fortress sits on the edge of a steep hill, making it perfect for looking out for would-be enemies back in the day.

The town is packed full of centuries old architecture, including the church of Nuestra Señora de la Muela and the chapel of Our Lady of Welcome.

### **Situation**

Monteaquedo de las Vicarias is located in the southeast of the province of Soria, right on the edge of the province of Zaragoza, nine kilometers from the Madrid-Barcelona highway. From Soria, Monteaquedo is accessed by the regional road C116 that joins Almazán with Ariza, being the last Soriano village.

### **History**

Monteaquedo was a walled villa on a spur, of which there are some remains and, mainly, its Puerta de la Villa or Arco, to the southwest. In 1168 the council of Soria wanted to appropriate it, but the king did not give it to them and would obtain, in 1238, the privileges called Vicarages. In 1311 the village was given to the infante Don Pedro, returning to the crown when his daughter married the infante Don Pedro de Portugal.

It was an important square during the civil war between Peter I the Cruel and Enrique Trastámara; the latter would grant it to Beltrán Dugesclín, later buying it. The Mendozas, lords of Almazán, began to be present in the village at the beginning of the fifteenth century. The entirety of the castle was

built by Juan Hurtado de Mendoza from 1415, and his grandson, Pedro de Mendoza, was appointed Count of Monteaquedo in 1475. At the end of the fifteenth century began the construction of the Gothic parish.

### **Natural Environment (Pantano)**

It is important both for its history and for its ecological value. The construction dates back to 1878, one of the oldest in Spain. From then until now it has undergone significant changes, highlighting two: the capture and channeling of the waters of the Nagima River, and the expansion.

It is also one of the most important wetlands in the Community; area chosen for nesting and important point of passage of migratory birds, especially in the months of September and March. It also has a rich aquatic vegetation of palustre. Consequently it is an area highly visited by ornithologists, and of great interest to all nature lovers.

There is also a bird observatory accessible for people with disabilities and reduced mobility, as well as a viewpoint in the upper area of the swamp.



## Festivities

The main festivities in honor of Our Lady of No. de Bienvenida are held on August 25th. On the day of the eve, that is, August 24, a procession takes place that consists in moving the image of the patron saint from her hermitage to the Church.

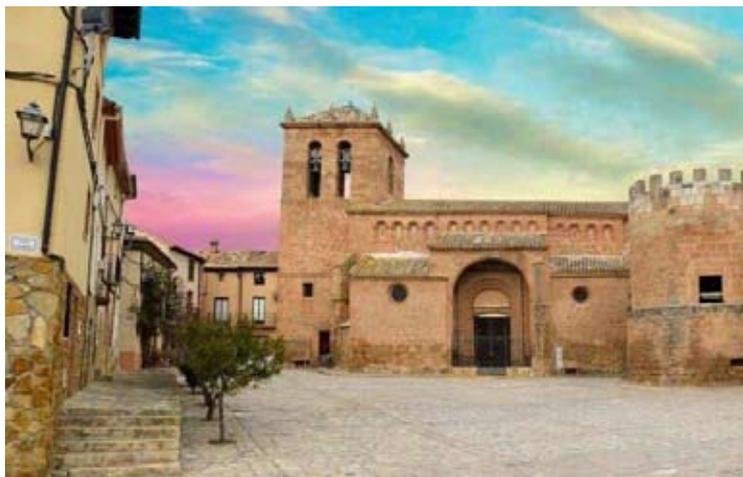
The four banzos are then auctioned. Our Lady enters the cover temple for those who have bid more for the banzos and after her all the locals enter the Church to sing the salve.

On August 25th, the big day of the festivities, the festive events start at 8:00 hours. Subsequently there is a procession that culminates with a solemn mass in the Church at 12:00 hours. In the afternoon the Virgin is taken out again to pray a rosary through the streets of the village.

On the 26th the Mass of the Dead is held. An act after which there is a habit of eating chocolate with biscuits.

## Bulls

This tradition is part of the culture of the people; therefore every year at parties there are bullfighting events both in the square, with the celebration of a heifer, and in the street, with several locks in which the main doors that give access to the villa are closed so that the heifers cannot escape.



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# Oasys Mini Hollywood

## By Taquilla Tickets

Have you ever wanted to be in films on the set of a western? Well here is your chance!

Oasys Mini Hollywood in the Tabenera desert is the place to visit.

This themed park is a mix of action, fun, history, wildlife and relaxing by the pool.

At scheduled times of the day you can experience a "real life" wild west shoot out, with live actors on horseback, elaborate stunts and much more....

Imagine! Walking through those swing saloon doors and ordering a drink with the bar keeper whilst waiting for another great show, the famous can can dancers with their authentic costumes and routines, so much fun!

The saloon is an iconic part of a lot of wild west films including, "A fist full of dollars" and "a few dollars more" with its layout exactly as you can imagine in the film's.

This saloon is in the heart of the park. Throughout the day there is a third show not to be missed with the Cow girls, whoop and woo and Yee haa with them as they entertain the crowds.

Throughout the day you can see all the live actors keeping in character for your enjoyment and photo opportunities.

Why not take the time to enjoy the famous buffet for your lunch, with a huge variety of freshly prepared foods suitable for all tastes !

After lunch the perfect way to spend your afternoon taking a walk around the wildlife sanctuary where you can see 800 animals and 200 different species, reptiles, mammals and more..

Don't forget to go and see the wonderful parrot shows where these very intelligent macaws put on a performance, you can see the brilliant relationship they have with their trainers !

Take a walk around the carriage and cinema museums. The most emblematic chariots and diligences that became into a legend to Gary Cooper, Clint Eastwood, Lee van Cleef... preserved in perfect condition after their use in major film productions.

After that exciting day, how about taking a walk through the cactus gardens and spending the remainder of it in the relaxing pool area, complete with water feature, slide, splash pool and a large swimming pool.

Oasys mini Hollywood is the perfect way to spend the day, suitable for all ages.

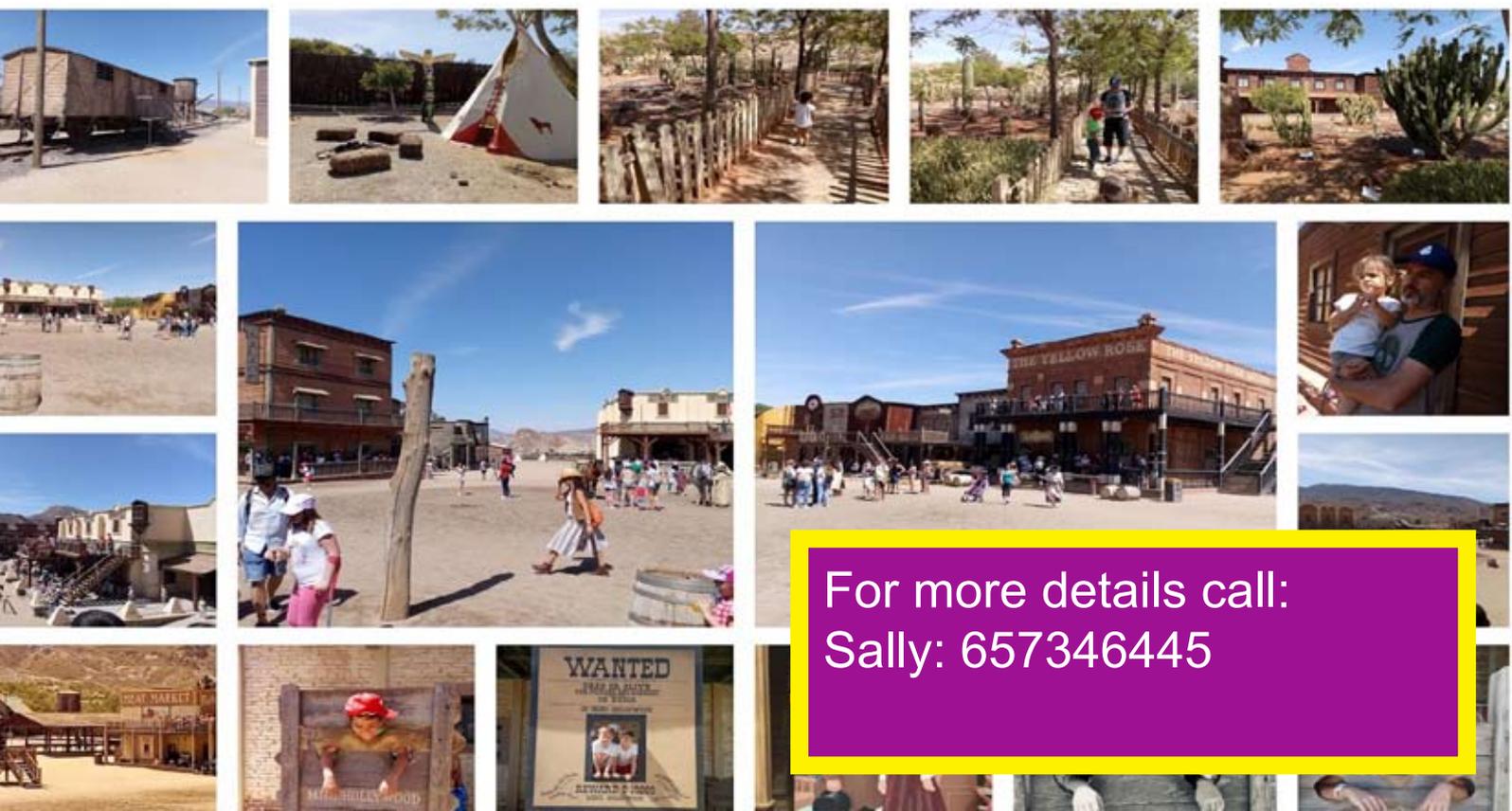
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# What to do after a car accident in Spain

Traffic accidents are more common than we would all like. Distractions behind the wheel and other human factors such as drinking alcohol or not having enough rest before facing a car trip are the most common causes of collisions. Thousands of accidents still take place on Spanish roads yearly, so it's important to know what to do after a car accident in Spain.

When a traffic accident occurs, the driver who caused it and the insurance company of the guilty vehicle have the obligation to compensate all those injured for the damages suffered as a result of the accident. Either personal or material.

We have compiled 9 important aspects that we should all be aware of, because anyone, whether we have a driving licence or not, can be involved in a claim.

1. Notify the Police or Civil Guard and later go to a hospital

First of all, it's an obligation to have the Agreed Statement of Facts ("parte amistoso de accidentes") with you and use this to inform your insurance company.

Then of course, it is always important to have the report

from the police, and more so when the consequences of the accident are serious, as the report describes the details of the accident and is therefore a very important document in the future claim.

After completing the report, you should go to the hospital if you have suffered injuries in order to issue the injury report, which will also be useful as documentation for the subsequent claim. Sometimes health care is provided at the scene of the accident, so there will also be an ambulance report.

In cases of minor whiplash, pain is usually noticeable the next day. Likewise, it is necessary to go to a medical centre within 72 hours after the accident, to receive the necessary treatment and to issue an injury report.

2. Inform the insurer and claim

Once the accident occurs, the culprit of the accident must report it to his insurer in the shortest possible period of time. In insurance policies the term is normally set at seven days.

In the event of any physical injury or material damage for which the victim is not guilty, there is one year to claim compensation.



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### 3. Motivated offer from the insurer

The insurance company has the obligation to present a reasoned offer of compensation within a maximum period of three months from the receipt of the claim. Here the compensation offered will be detailed, accounting for personal and material damages. To calculate the amount to be disbursed, the insurer should take into account the Accident Scale ("Baremo de Accidentes").

### 4. Check if the insurance policy has legal defence coverage

In the event of being harmed by a traffic accident, when reporting the claim to the insurance (by telephone or fax) it must be checked whether the insurance contract includes legal defence coverage (it is stated in the conditions of the policy, usually at the end of the policy).

This legal defence coverage allows the option of hiring the services of external lawyers from the insurance company. This way, the highest possible compensation for a traffic accident can be achieved.

### 5. Total loss after a traffic accident

If the vehicle is declared a total loss, the owner of the vehicle can request compensation for the damages in two ways:

Repair of the vehicle by restoring it to its state prior to the accident. This happens when they agree to pay the mechanic's bill.

An indemnity according to the market or market value of the vehicle, according to the age it is, and according to what is stated in the conditions of the insurance policy.

### 6. Own damage coverage

If the insurance contract has been subscribed to all risk, there is the possibility to request compensation from the insurance company for the loss even if it was our fault. Normally insurance policies include a clause where this type of compensation is established, which will consist of the market value of the vehicle, that is, the amount that is received when selling the used vehicle; or in the value of the vehicle according to the supply and demand of the market.



### 7. Compensation for damages caused in accidents

After a traffic accident, it is possible to claim compensation for damages caused, whether personal or for example the inability to use the vehicle for a period of time. Said damages are, among others, compensation for the time off or for the consequences caused as a result of the accident, or the reimbursement of the bills for the taxis used or the rental vehicle, if the insurer does not provide one.

### 8. Motivated response of the insurer when they don't want to take over the compensation

In the event that the insurance company does not want to take charge of the compensation for any reason (either because it understands that it is due to our exclusive fault, or because it understands that there is a circumstance that limits or excludes liability), it must provide a reasoned response and founded on the reason that prevents you from making the compensation offer. This will allow the injured party to claim damages before civil law.

### 9. Passengers in traffic accidents

In the case of passengers being involved in the accident, we must report the drivers of both vehicles and their respective insurance to receive the corresponding compensation, since we must not forget that the driver of a vehicle is responsible for what happens to all the passengers.

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# FROM WIGAN PIER TO ANDALUCÍA

‘Buenos días.’

We looked up from our reading, surprised to see a neat, compact, smiling, middle-aged man standing with one hand on the terrace gate.

‘I’m your neighbour, may I?’

‘Of course, please come in and sit down. Can we offer you something to drink?’

‘A refresco would be very welcome, thank you, and what a pleasant surprise that you speak a bit of Spanish!’

‘I think you may find that I speak more than a bit,’ I replied, ever so slightly nettled by this casual treatment of my only linguistic achievement.

Our visitor indicated the cotton bag at his feet ‘I’ve brought you some fruit and vegetables. Only a few because I’ve no idea what you like, but that’s my huerta down by the arroyo. If you see anything you fancy just help yourselves. It’s been a bumper spring and there’s far more than we can ever eat.’

Four families are our nearest neighbours at El Cortijo del Rector. José and his wife María inhabit the lower storey of the big old farmhouse down by the arroyo and a few hundred metres to the right of us. Their daughter Mari lives in the upper story of the same house with her husband Antonio and their children Alberto and Rocío. Antonio, who is handsome enough to be a matador or an operatic tenor, is the brother of Josefa, who lives just to the left of us. José’s cousin José and his wife Josefina live next-door-but-one with their son José. This may sound like too much genealogy but it illustrates an important point. Most of the people here are related either to each other or to the Holy Family, or both, so if any conversation is to avoid confusion, nicknames are essential. The José who came to our gate that spring morning is known as José el Vecino, José the Neighbour.

José the Neighbour is well-named. In our early days at El Cortijo del Rector I hardly know where to start. None of our olive trees have been pruned for years. If you neglect an olive tree it throws out more and more straggling sunward shoots that shadow the centre of the tree causing branches that should form flowers and fruit to die away. It’s a fairly straightforward matter to cut off the long shoots but how on earth do you clean out the mess from the middle and let the sun shine in?

‘Like this,’ says José el Vecino, who has suddenly materialized at my elbow.

He reaches into the interior of the tree, grasps a complex

tangle of live green and dead dry twigs, squeezes hard, and magically the dry stuff crumbles to powder, leaving the live shoots to be shaped with my shears.

‘And how do I get rid of the yerbas?’ I ask, indicating the waist-deep jungle of weeds and wildflowers choking every inch of my land.

‘You won’t need to. By June, they’ll have withered and died. Of course, the seeds will survive, so it’ll all be back again next spring unless you pile it up and burn it.’

‘There’ll be an awful lot to pile up.’

‘True, but I’m sure you have una mano de hierro.’

‘An iron hand? If you think I’m going to tackle that lot with a rake...’

‘I’m joking. No, you’ll need Juan Antonio and la goma.’

Juan Antonio is the shy agricultural contractor who lives on the carretera below El Cortijo del Rector. He attaches half a dozen big old truck tyres, chained flat to the ground, to the rear of his big low-slung Fiat tractor and drags this contraption at staggeringly high-speed up and down our steep slopes and through the tight spaces between the trees, clearing out the dead vegetation and leaving it in rough piles ready for burning.

Most of the better-off farmers in our neighbourhood drive shiny late model tractors. They look impressive with multiple bells and whistles, but with their high centre of gravity they are not well-suited to our precipitous slopes and deeply incised valleys. In contrast, José el Vecino negotiates the pendientes of our adjoining huertas in an ancient clanking full-track that sounds like a panzer division bent on a return match with Poland.

‘What time does the invasion begin?’ I ask him.

‘Would nine o’clock suit you? Let’s have breakfast first, bread and olive oil.’

Olives are harvested in the autumn and early winter. Nets are spread out on the ground supported at the lower edge so the fruit doesn’t trickle away down the hill. Olives being spherical many of them do escape, which is why there is a fortune waiting for the genius who manages to breed the square olive.

Traditionally, the fruit was knocked off the trees with sticks but these days the trees are shaken with mechanical harvesters which consist of a long vibrating metal hook driven by a two-stroke power pack strapped to the operator’s back.

# José el Vecino

Shaun, an expat neighbour keen to involve himself in what he called the real Spain, volunteered to help José with his harvesting. José, fifty-five and five-feet-five, kept it up all day. Shaun, thirty-five and a muscular six-feet-two had to give up after a back-breaking couple of hours.

two-stroke power pack strapped to the operator's back. Shaun, an expat neighbour keen to involve himself in what he called the real Spain, volunteered to help José with his harvesting. José, fifty-five and five-feet-five, kept it up all day. Shaun, thirty-five and a muscular six-feet-two had to give up after a back-breaking couple of hours.

Don't be deceived by the old tractor and the even older Land Rover. José el Vecino is a modern scientific farmer who supplements the daily TV report with his own well-equipped little weather station which focuses precisely on our microclimate of La Cañada. Like most of his contemporaries he never went to school but his parents paid for a few lessons each week from an itinerant schoolmaster, so José can read and write, and he got as far as calculus in mathematics which is more than I ever did, but none of that explains his endless curiosity and his vast knowledge of the folklore, politics, language and history of his country.

José's deadpan humour takes a little getting used to. The



other day we had just finished our shopping in the pueblo and were loading our purchases into the car when José and María appeared. 'Come and see our new apartment,' said José.

'Don't tell me you are deserting us and the campo.'

'Not yet, but the time will come, and we thought we'd better buy something more convenient for the cemetery.'

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