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Lifestyle magazine and property portal

ISSUE 56
JULY 2021
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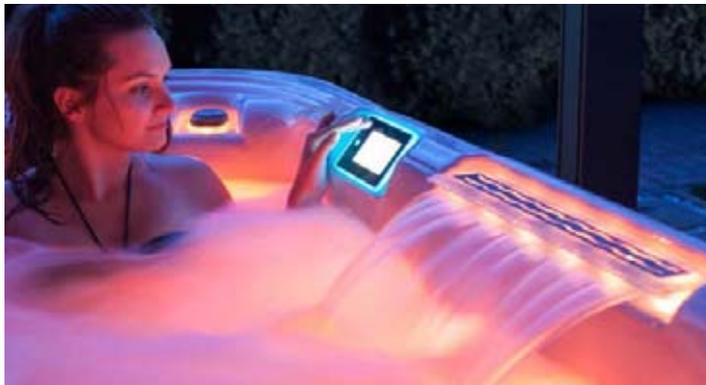
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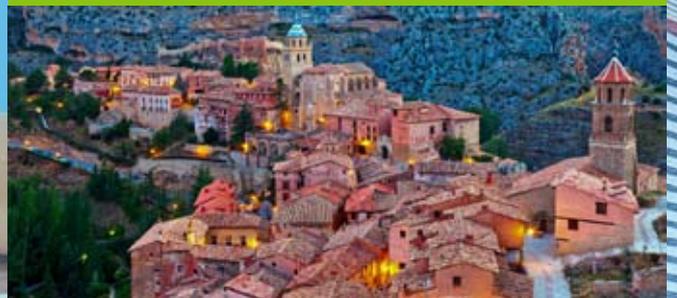
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A Life in SPAIN

Welcome to the July edition of ALIS.

Up on pages....Is this a sign of the return of some sort of normality for local businesses? We have had to increase our pages by 20% in order to keep up with the demand of our advertisers. With this, we have also added extra copies to the print run so hopefully even more of you will now get a copy of ALIS. Please support your local businesses wherever possible.

So what's in this edition?

It's competition time....

see page 33 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.

there is also an interesting article on the lead head, Mazarron, reopening to the public. At 5,000 years old, the Mazarron site is the oldest walled town in the Region of Murcia. See page 17

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Wine Regions - Rueda

Rueda is a wine region at the heart of the Iberian Peninsula, located just northwest of the Spanish capital, Madrid. It is known for its dry, aromatic white wines made predominantly from Verdejo, with small quantities of Viura and Sauvignon Blanc. These fresh, aromatic whites are an ideal complement to the heavy Tempranillo-based reds of neighbouring Toro.

Standard Rueda Blanco must be made from at least 50 percent Verdejo, a variety so aromatic that even substantial additions of neutral-scented Viura (aka Macabeo) do little to reduce its character. Relatively recent additions to the region's wine portfolio are the varietal wines Rueda Verdejo and Rueda Sauvignon,

which must be made from at least 85 percent of the stated variety. Rueda Espumoso is the area's sparkling wine, made in the traditional method with nine months in the bottle, aging on lees.

As of early 2014, the Rueda vineyard area covered 32,000 acres (13,000ha), planted almost exclusively to white-wine varieties. Verdejo vines occupy an impressive 90 percent of this land, demonstrating quite how far the variety has come since its renaissance in the 1980s (when this figure was closer to 50 percent). After a long period in the shadows, Verdejo's potential was "rediscovered" by the respected Rioja producer Marques de Riscal, which produces several white Rueda wines.



Viura and Sauvignon Blanc together constitute just 5 percent of Rueda's annual harvest. Palomino Fino, once much more popular but now being phased out, makes up less than 0.25 percent of the Rueda vineyard area. In among the sea of white wine, a tiny amount of tinto and rosado (red and rosé) is made here, from Tempranillo and Garnacha with a little help from Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot.

Here on the high plateau of Castilla y Leon, the landscape is wild and the earth low in nutrients. Plants are forced to work hard to survive, so only cereals and grape vines grow here with any vigor. The local soils, rich in lime and iron, are also a vital factor. These are very stony, yet provide good drainage and are easy to farm. The Duero wine region is marked on its northern edge by the Duero River, which then continues on to Toro, and Portugal beyond. Almost all of Rueda's vineyards are somehow connected to the Duero, located along its banks or those of its various tributaries. The finest Rueda vineyards are those closest to the Duero, where the soils have a higher limestone content.

The climate here is clearly continental, which means hot, harsh summers, and cold winters when temperatures often drop below freezing. Torrid, dry summer days are followed by crisp, cool nights, which refresh the vines and help to retain all-important acidity. The region is deprived of any

maritime influence by the Cordillera Cantábrica, the mountain range that separates it from the Bay of Biscay and the Atlantic Ocean beyond. To illustrate the importance of these mountains on Rueda's climate, on the other side of them lie Asturias and Cantabria – regions with relatively cool, fresh climates and fertile green landscapes.

A key turning point in Rueda's history was the phylloxera epidemic of the late 19th Century. Prior to 1865, the region was home to many hundreds of vineyards, but these had all but disappeared by the beginning of the 20th Century. When it came to replanting post-phylloxera, Palomino Fino was the variety of choice for most vineyards. Palomino is very well suited to oxidative wine styles (it is responsible for the vast majority of Sherry), which were the norm in Rueda at that time and are still made there in small quantities even today. The variety also thrives in hot, dry, nutrient-poor conditions, such as those found in Rueda and Jerez.

Fortified wines are still made in Rueda today, but in tiny quantities. Rueda Dorada is aged oxidatively in barrel for at least two years. Its colour is very much as its name suggests (dorada means "golden"), and its aromas are of toasted nuts and rancio. The minimum alcohol content for Rueda Dorado is 15 percent by volume. The lighter Rueda Palido is aged under a film of flor, and is not dissimilar in style to a dry fino Sherry.



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Do you know your flight number?
Do you like flying?
This is your seat
Fasten your seatbelt
No liquids or sharp objects
Is this your suitcase?
Welcome to Spain!

¿Tienes tu pasaporte?
¿Sabes tu número de vuelo?
¿Te gusta volar?
Este es tu asiento
Abrocha el cinturón de seguridad
Sin líquidos ni objetos agudos
¿Es esta tu maleta?
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Tee **yenays** two pass sahpourtay
Sabbes two **noo** mare roh day **vwell** low
Tay **goosetah** vol **lar**
Esstayess two ass see **yen** toe
Ab **roh** cha ell thin tour **ron** day seg gourreedad
Sin **lick** key doss knee **obhet** toss ag **goo** doss
Essesstah two mal **lettah**
Bee yen ven**knee** doss ah **esspan** yah

Vocab

Departures
Arrivals
On time
Delayed
Cancelled
Landed
A bag
A handbag
A backpack
A suitcase
Baggage reclaim
Lost luggage

Salidas
Llegadas
En hora
Retrasado
Anulado
Aterrizado
Una bolsa
Un bolso
Una mochila
Una maleta
Recogida de equipajes
Equipaje perdido

Sal **lee** das
Yeggahdass
Enor rah
Ray trassah doh
Ann noolahdoh
Ah terreethah doh
Oon nah **bowlsah**
Oon**bowl** sew
Oon nah moch**cheelah**
Oon nah mal **lettah**
Ray coh**hee** dah day eh key **pah** hays
eh key **pah** hay pair **dee** doh



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E A D N M N Y E Q U I P A J E K
P M M A L E T A O E F N C A W R
I R E T R A S A D O N L R I O M
U A Q X A T P T C H G X C A I K
B O A L I H C O M C I P I R Z O
O D A L U N A M A R O H M M S D
O S A L I D A S L L E G A D A S
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Aged 8

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Aged 13

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Aged 14

I have made new friends who help me to learn.

Aged 9

I now love maths again, because the classes are fun in this school.

Aged 16

They (the teachers) explain things better.

Aged 10

My children have never been so enthusiastic about school.

I can't stop them from telling me all the great things they have learnt that day.

Parent S

We learn lots of new and interesting things.

Aged 12

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Parent P

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Best Spanish Islands - *Lanzarote*

Lanzarote is the Canary archipelago's south-eastern most island. Although it covers no more than 800 square kilometres, it offers strikingly diverse landscapes. The legacy of the volcanic eruptions that took place in the 18th and 19th centuries is a spectacular scene of singular form and beauty. Next to unexpected landscapes made up of volcanic caves, lakes of lava and craters, lie beaches of golden sand and transparent waters.

What is more, the spectacular natural heritage has been jealously guarded by the people of Lanzarote; and not in vain, since the island was declared a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO in 1993. Furthermore, in 2015, it became the first destination in the world to receive Biosphere Responsible Tourism certification.

In Lanzarote you will find everything from the liveliest tourist towns, with their unbeatable hotel facilities and recreational areas, to unparalleled landscapes, spots showing no trace of human presence, and solitary islets for the enjoyment of silence.

The Parque Nacional de Timanfaya, (Timanfaya National Park), a lovely succession of volcanic landscapes, is one of the island's greatest tourist attractions, together with the Art, Culture and Tourism Centres created by the local artist César Manrique. The original cultivation systems of the farmers of Lanzarote, who learned how to overcome the island's sterility and encourage the lava to exuberance, are another focus of attraction to visitors.

The benign climate, with its average annual temperature of 22° C, is also worthy of mention, since it makes Lanzarote the perfect destination for the practice of all kinds of outdoor sports.



Historical Timeline

1st millennium BC, first arrival of humans to Lanzarote.

1312, first confirmed visit of a European: Lancelotto Malocello. It is likely that Lanzarote owes its name to this Genoese explorer. He stayed for approximately two decades.

1402, arrival of Jean de Béthencourt, the Baron of La Grainville, and Gadifer de La Salle, a knight and crusader. These noblemen were received by Guardafía, the King of Lanzarote, and agreed a treaty of friendship and non-aggression.

1407, Maciot de Béthencourt, became the first Governor of Lanzarote by order of his uncle, the Baron. He married Princess Teguisse of Lanzarote. The origin of all the different branches of Bethencourt, Betancort and Betancor in Lanzarote, the Canary Islands and America can be traced back to them.

1584, Agustín de Herrera y Rojas is named 1st Marquis of Lanzarote by King Philip II. He was the prototype of a noble of his time, and stood out for his daring and courage from a very young age.

1616, Sir Walter Raleigh attacks Lanzarote, one of many piratical attacks that the island and the archipelago suffered during the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries.

1730-1736, first recorded volcanic eruptions. These gave rise to the current appearance of the island, turning Lanzarote into a legendary place.

1852, Arrecife becomes capital of Lanzarote. Under the Law of Free Ports of 10th August, Teguisse is no longer the economic and political centre of the island.

1982, César Manrique created the Foundation that bears his name. Queen Sofía is named the Honorary President. The Foundation becomes a cultural benchmark for the entire archipelago.

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SPAIN 11

The most significant festivals, religious celebrations and annual events

Find out about the most significant festivals, religious celebrations and annual events that take place in the towns and villages along the Costa Blanca and in the province of Murcia...

Spain is known for its festivals (fiestas), many of which originated in religious events but have evolved to be more general celebrations.

Every city, town and village has its own festival, which includes feasting, colourful processions, fireworks and partying.

Semana Santa - Holy Week

Easter week is the most important Catholic tradition of the year in Spain. It begins on Domingo de Ramos (Palm Sunday) and ends on Lunes de Pascua (Easter Monday).

There are street processions, with colourful confetti and a carnival atmosphere every night on the Costa Blanca, where religious icons are paraded through the streets, in re-enactments of the passion of Christ.

While celebrations take place all over the coast, noteworthy processions are:

In Crevillent on Tuesday before Good Friday

The Holy Burial Procession in Orihuela on Easter Saturday

The Palm Sunday procession in Elche, which dates back to 1371

In the province of Murcia, noteworthy processions are found in Cartagena, Jumilla, Murcia and Moratalla. Other festivals include:

The Easter fiesta in Lorca, during which a procession of citizens playing Romans, Christians and Egyptians move through the streets on elaborate floats, horseback or in chariots

In Murcia city, Salzillo's Holy Week sculptures are paraded through the town

The Royal Brotherhood of Our Father Jesus Resuscitated organises a single procession held in the morning of Easter Sunday to round off 10 days of procession and celebration in Cartagena

Moros y Cristianos - Moors and Christians

This festival commemorates the Reconquista, or the re-establishment of Christian rule in Spain.

Locals dress as either Moors or Christians for the occasion and re-enact battles. Costumes are spectacular and there are firework displays.

Towns celebrate Moros y Cristianos on different dates:

The town of Alcoy and Baneres in Alicante celebrate at the end of April

Altea celebrates in the last week of September.

For more information contact a town's tourist office

Fiestas Patronales - Patron Saints' Days

Each town and village in Spain has a feast day to celebrate its patron saint, who is thought to protect the town. These festivities generally last one week and processions and dancing replace work - most shops and businesses close down during this period. Often giant paellas are cooked in the streets and a beauty contest runs parallel to the event.

Dates vary from place to place but local tourist offices can provide information.

All Saints' Day (Festividad de Todos los Santos)

Celebrated annually on 1 November, Todos los Santos is a national public holiday (banks and shops close) honouring the dead. Traditionally, Spanish families get together at the graves of their deceased relatives and lay down flowers. There are religious services in the churches and cemeteries over the course of the day. Specific foods are associated with this event: these may vary from region to region.

Main Festivals Along the Costa Blanca

The Hogueras de San Juan - San Juan Bonfires

An amalgamation of the ancient pagan celebration of the summer solstice, and the Christian feast of San Juan in June, which sees Hogueras (paper maché figures) placed around town. Live music and dancing take place through the night.

The culmination of the festivities is El Dia de San Juan, when a huge palm tree-shaped firework is set off from Alicante castle and simultaneously the Hogueras are set alight. A beauty contest accompanies the celebrations. Five nights of fireworks, starting at midnight, follow the fiesta.

For more information see the Hogueras website



San Vicente Ferrer

This fiesta is one of the most important for the town of Teulada and honours the patron saint, Vincente Ferrer who was born and lived in the town. Ferrer is said to have blessed the town to protect it from the plague.

Ten days of colourful parades, live music and dancing and religious re-enactments take place in the week around 15 April.

Celebrations are also held in San Vicente del Raspeig the weekend following Easter Sunday.

For more information, see website [Teulada-Moraira](#)

Fallas - Fire Festival

This major pyrotechnic festival takes place for five days every March and honours Saint Joseph, patron saint of carpenters.

A vast array of paper maché figures known as ninots are made. These are satirical representations of local figures (actors, bull fighters). The figures are ceremoniously stuffed with fireworks and set alight on the day known as La Crema, the festival's culmination, although one ninot is saved by popular vote and placed in the Museum of the Ninot.

There are also boisterous, daily firework contests.

Valencia has the most spectacular Fallas celebrations, but there are also festivities in Benidorm, Bunol, Calpe, Denia, Gandia, Oliva, Pego, and Sueca.

For more information, see the [Fallas website](#)

Feria de Mayo - May Fiesta

This event in May was started by an Andalucian exile living in Torrevieja as a street party outside the bar he owned. It has now grown in popularity, staged on the Torrevieja fairground and celebrates all things Andalucian, including flamenco music, traditional costumes and Andalucian horses, which perform equestrian displays.

There are many stalls serving sherry, tapas and the ever-present churros y chocolate. Many well-known Spanish artists come to perform traditional music.

Main Festivals Along the Costa Calida

International Jazz Festival in San Javier

A celebration of international jazz held annually in the months of June and July in San Javier. This event brings together famous jazz acts from around the world.

For more information, see the [San Javier Jazz website](#)

Festival of the Holy Cross Caravaca (Fiestas de la Santisima Cruz de Caravaca)

This festival celebrates the arrival of the Holy Reliquary in 1232 in Caravaca de la Cruz, when the town adopted the Catholic faith. The festival spans four days in the beginning of May. There is a special mass, followed by a riderless horse race (caballos de vino) to the castle, mock skirmishes and processions of Moors and Christians.

See the [Ayuntamiento de Caravaca de la Cruz website](#)

Epiphany

Epiphany is marked with plays and processions in Aledo and Churro in the province of Murcia. There are plays and processions all over Spain, and there are important

performances in Aledo and Churro in Murcia. The three kings Melchor, Gasper and Balthazar distribute the gifts on 6 January.

Burial of the Sardine (Entierro de la Sardina)

This festival signals the climax of the April Spring Festival. There is a procession of 20 Sardinero-themed floats, giant (gigantes) and big-head (cabezudos) characters, torch-bearers, entertainers, demons and Brazilian samba groups. Afterwards, toys are distributed among the crowd. The night before the sardine burial, Ms Sardine reads a testament at the town hall.

For more information see the [Murcia Turistica website](#)

Aguilas Carnival (Carnaval de Águilas)

The carnival takes place a fortnight before the start of Lent in Águilas. Carnival groups unveil their costumes on Sunday and parades take place until Shrove Tuesday. Visitors can also sample local food and drink.

Further details can be found at the [Carnaval de Águilas website](#) (in Spanish)



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10 Top Destinations in Southern Spain



CADIZ

This is believed to be the oldest continually inhabited city in all of Western Europe, and was founded over three millennia ago by Phoenician sailors. A visit here means seeing long coastlines of public beaches, waves on crashing seawalls, and examples of thousands of years of architecture. The must-see time to visit is during Carnival, which is the third-biggest celebration of this kind in the world. During the rest of the year, guests flock here for seafood, surfing and flamenco dancing.

Founded 3,000 years ago by the Phoenicians, Cádiz is the oldest city in Western Europe.

The different people who settled here left an important cultural imprint, whose influence still remains in the character of the city's people. This peninsula, right on the Andalusian Atlantic coast, has been able to preserve an important historical legacy - the result of its commercial importance - together with excellent beaches and an exquisite regional cuisine. The Costa de la Luz, divided between the provinces of Huelva and Cádiz, also offers a multitude of destinations combining culture and leisure. And, for nature lovers, there is nothing better than touring the Doñana National Park, declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

The former Phoenician Gades and Roman Gadir experienced its most splendid period when, in the 17th Century, it had the Ultramar (Spanish overseas empire) trade monopoly. This rise attracted attacks by pirates, which made the city fortify itself, constructing defensive bastions, castles and watchtowers on each flat roof. These are some of the characteristics of the city, in which the balcony railings are also outstanding.

A visit might begin in Puerta Tierra, the entry point through the walls and the dividing line between modern and old Cádiz. On one side, wide avenues, beaches (La Victoria, Santa María and La Cortadura), sailing clubs and modern sporting facilities. On the other, a Cádiz with more flavour and history, that of the old districts: El Pópulo, the old medieval town; La Viña, fishing district and centre of the local tradition of satirical verses, or Santa María, living temple to flamenco. Streets with distinct characters but which have maintained a uniformity in the look of their houses which together form an exceptionally beautiful pattern.

On the Atlantic front rise the dome and yellow tiles of the Cathedral, looking towards Campo del Sur. Baroque and Neoclassical in style, its crypt guards the remains of the composer Manuel de Falla. Beside it are the old Roman theatre and the old cathedral.

What was a royal square, parade ground and market, originating on land won from the sea, is also worth a visit. This is the Plaza de San Juan de Dios where the Neoclassical structure of Cádiz City Hall stands, looking towards the nearby port.

Many lively squares lie along any route. In the Plaza de España, beside the port, stands the palace of the Provincial Government and Monument to the Liberal Cortes (Parliament). In the tree-lined Plaza Mina you can visit the Cádiz Archaeological and Fine Arts Museum, which has interesting Phoenician exhibitions, while in the Plaza de San Francisco you can visit the church of the same name. The city's most important shopping streets begin around the Plaza de las Flores. There is a good reason why the Central Market is located here. Another square, that of Tío de la Tiza, is the heart of the district of La Viña, where the Carnival, a Festival of International Tourist Interest, begins with the traditional satirical verses.

Cádiz has important religious buildings that tell us of Andalusian religious feeling. In Santa María, the church

that gives its name to the district and the Convent of Santo Domingo are important. Near La Viña the parish church of La Palma awaits, while at the other end of the city, next to Candelaria Bastion, stands the church of Carmen.

Right in the centre of Cádiz you can visit the Cádiz Municipal Historical Museum, the Tavira Tower, one of the most symbolic in the city, and the Oratory of San Felipe Neri, a National Monument in which the Liberal Constitution of 1812 was debated.

And for the best views of the Atlantic Ocean there is nothing like a stroll in the garden walks of the Alameda de la Apodaca, the Genovés Park and La Caleta beach. This beach is the only one in the old town and is framed by the Santa Catalina and San Sebastián castles. Its sands give way to the bathing area of La Palma and El Real. You can continue as far as the beaches of the modern city, passing through Campo del Sur and stopping at the Mártires, Capuchinos and San Roque bastions.

The former Gades offers you its Parador de Turismo, the "Hotel Atlántico". Staying in the heart of the old town in a room with sea views is ideal preparation for tasting the rich cuisine of Cádiz. The capital brings together the wealth of the whole province and offers us langoustines from Sanlúcar, sole from San Fernando, wines from Jerez (sherry) and Cádiz "turrón" (a kind of nougat). Cold meats include Iberian ham, always from the mountains of the interior.

The exceptional geographical position of Cádiz enables you to go to beautiful places like the Costa de la Luz, El Puerto de Santa María, Puerto Real (whose old quarter is a historic-artistic site) or Chiclana de la Frontera. At the western end of the Cadiz coast lies Sanlúcar de Barrameda, well known for its manzanilla, with Denomination of Origin, and for being one of the entrances to the Doñana Natural Park, declared a World Heritage Site.

Inland, Jerez de la Frontera awaits, a city with one of the most famous wines in Spain, (also with Denomination of Origin) and home to the "cartujano" horses. It is a good starting point for doing the White Villages Route. This way you will discover Serranía de Ronda - the natural parks of Grazalema and Los Alcornocales - as well as places with impeccable white houses like Arcos de la Frontera, Medina Sidonia or Vejer de la Frontera. Another highly recommended tour is the Roman Bética Route, which takes you to places in the former Roman province, from Santiponce (Seville) to Tarifa (Cádiz), a good place for walking in the old town and going windsurfing.





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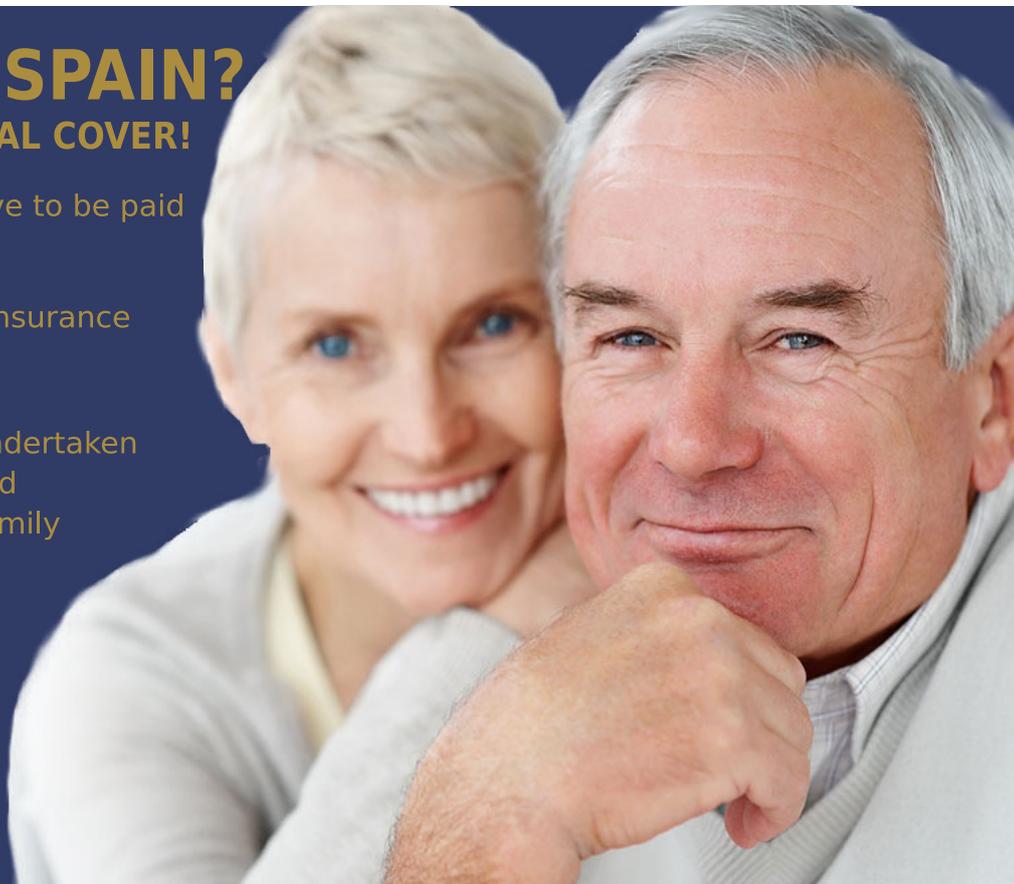
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THE LEAD HEAD REOPENS TO THE PUBLIC AFTER TWO DECADES

At 5,000 years old, the Mazarron site is the oldest walled town in the Region of Murcia

You can now visit the Cabezo del Plomo. The Deputy Mayor for Historical Heritage, Ginés Campillo, officially reopened the calcolytic deposit to the public after decades of neglect. Along with the mayor, the architect Francisco Javier Jiménez Bello and the archaeologists Consuelo Martínez and Luis Alberto García, editors of the conservation, consolidation and enhancement project, attended the official reopening of this Asset of Cultural Interest (BIC). Also, the Councilor for Tourism, Raquel Raja, and the councilors of the Government Team Miguel Ángel Peña and Francisco José García were present at the event.

For Campillo “the recovery of this site exemplifies, once again, the City Council’s strategic commitment to the recovery of the cultural and historical heritage of Mazarrón as a sign of identity and respect for our history, but it also highlights the objective that we have to complement the tourist offer of the municipality ”offering other alternatives to traditional sun and beach tourism. Similarly, Consuelo Martínez has advanced that “we are preparing a new archaeological intervention project in which it is contemplated to excavate other areas still unexplored” from the first works developed by Ana María Muñoz Amilibia, who was the first professor in the field of Archeology in Spain.

In this first phase of actions, the works on the site have focused on the preservation of the existing remains in their cultural and environmental context, as well as on guaranteeing access to society, facilitating their understanding through a narrative discourse embodied in information panels. . In this sense, we have carried out the removal of weeds in the environment, the replacement of the informative posters, the improvement of the path that runs through the complex and the recreation of one of the houses and the consolidation of the fortified structures that protected the area. populated.

The oldest walled town in the Region

Located in the Sierra de las Moreras, the Cabezo del Plomo easily connected through a boulevard to the Guadalentín Valley, the main communication route since prehistoric times between the coast and the highlands of Andalusia. On a high place and easy to defend, the town was surrounded by rich lands for agriculture, livestock and hunting; and a short distance from the sea, where they could fish. It also had an underground aquifer, mineral wealth and stone with which to build houses. It was, without a doubt, the perfect place for our ancestors to settle more than 5000 years ago.



The town occupied an area of 3,200 square meters and was inhabited by a stable and organized group. A wall protected the south and west flanks, the north and east being protected by the hill itself. Measuring almost a meter and a half high, the wall had more or less regular spaces with defensive bastions, the first of which was at the northern end the entrance to the town. The houses with a circular plan were raised, like the wall, on a wall of considerable width with two parameters of stone and filled with mud. The baseboards were made of stone, although it is probable that the walls were made of adobe. The roof was a network of reeds and mud on which some stones were placed to achieve greater consistency. The door threshold measured between 50 and 60 centimeters.

Inside the house, the floor was made of yellowish rammed earth and, together with the tools necessary to ensure the family’s subsistence such as arrowheads and flint tools, ornaments made of shells, bone have been found. or stones. At the foot of the hill, there was a tomb type toolos. A rectangular chamber built with large stones without an access corridor and in which three niches were found. Taking into account that the defensive bastions of the wall could be inhabited and that the remains of 11 houses have been found, it is estimated that between 70 and 80 people resided here.

Populated for approximately 500 years, Cabezo del Plomo is the first documented walled town in the Region.



Most Iconic hotels in Spain

Palace Hotel in Madrid

Large hotel buildings are synonymous with luxury. In a continuous flow of customers, they are usually among the best-known buildings in their cities, next to cathedrals, former colleges or old fortresses. It is no coincidence that the image that their guests receive depends to a large extent on their stay. They are also places where major festivals, events and celebrations are held. Resisting the passing of the decades or rising from the ashes, the most iconic hotels in Spain continue attending to those who can afford to pay for one of their rooms.



The Palace in Madrid, one of the most iconic hotels in Spain.

The Westin Palace was the best hotel in Spain when it opened on Spain's National Day in 1912. At that time the greatest competition came from the Ritz and the now closed Hotel París, in the Plaza de Sol. It was designed by the Belgian hotel magnate George Marquet at the request of Alfonso XIII. From the beginning it included individual bathrooms and an internal telephone service among its initial features. Two services that today are taken for granted in which it was a pioneer. The location where it was built was key to its immediate success. Next to the Neptuno fountain, Sol, the Retiro, Gran Vía, Cibeles, the Barrio de las Letras, etc. are all within a stone's throw.

Another element that made it unique was the material used to build it. Reinforced concrete was a risky alternative due to its novelty, but the works went smoothly and the building's resistance has been more than proven. The ground floor was also defined as a very entertaining space from the moment it opened. La Brasserie was a tavern that brought together great minds among its imported beers. With a continuous readaptation through the times, it has not stopped being a hotel and gastronomic reference in the capital of Spain.

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Little life change no 6.

By Hilary Quinlan and Murcia Golf Homes

Plastic Free living - get a refillable ceramic or metal cup for hot drinks and carry it with you.

I have treated myself to a nice ceramic cup with whale motif from Starbucks with a plastic sealable lid (ok it's a plastic lid but at least it isn't single use) but pricey at €22. I used to take a lot of takeaway hot drinks to the office or in the car from the restaurants after breakfast, but I have stopped doing that. The easiest thing in Spain is to drink the coffee at the bar rather than take away.

But for longer drinks like teas, I drink a lot of camomile tea in the winter, it is so easy to carry in these refillable cups. However, ironically Starbucks are serving everyone in the restaurant with plastic coated paper cups with plastic lids, they could just as easily serve clients with ceramic cups and mugs in the restaurant but they do not.

Why!!!!!! If you look you can see all the unnecessary plastic coated paper cups. For better priced metal and glass refillable drinks bottles and cups, Carrefour in Dos Mares have a great selection. My hot and cold thermos which was heavily used all weekend, is ideal for cold water during the day and hot water in the evening for tea. To me all drinks taste better out of plastic

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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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*To see our full menu visit our Facebook page or email us

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With a red wine, wild mushrooms and baby onion reduction

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Pork Belly | 11.90 €

Lamb Shank | 14.50 €

Fillet Steak a la Siciliana | 22.50 €

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Baked Cod | 11,90 €

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Aragon

Aragon, a developing cuisine

The Autonomous Region of Aragon has inherited its rich gastronomy from the different cultures which have passed through the region over the centuries. It knows how to exploit its local products and today its cuisine is described as classical. The great geographical diversity of this region has given rise to top quality products which are as varied as the land's orography. Aragonese cuisine is based on popular stews which vary in accordance with the area where they are prepared. Traditional recipes are currently being modernised but will always maintain their characteristic simplicity and honesty. The Aragonese market garden offers a great variety of fruit, vegetables and pulses, including the thistle and borage which, due to their increasing popularity, are often seen on the menus of top restaurants, haricot beans, onions from Fuentes, asparagus from the banks of the River Ebro and the oils from Lower Aragon, whose excellent quality is due to the olive used in their preparation. The fruit grown in Aragon is admired throughout the rest of mainland Spain: pears, apples, cherries, plums, peaches with D.O. from Calanda and recently cultivated strawberries, which are as good as the best wild specimens.

Modernised cooking

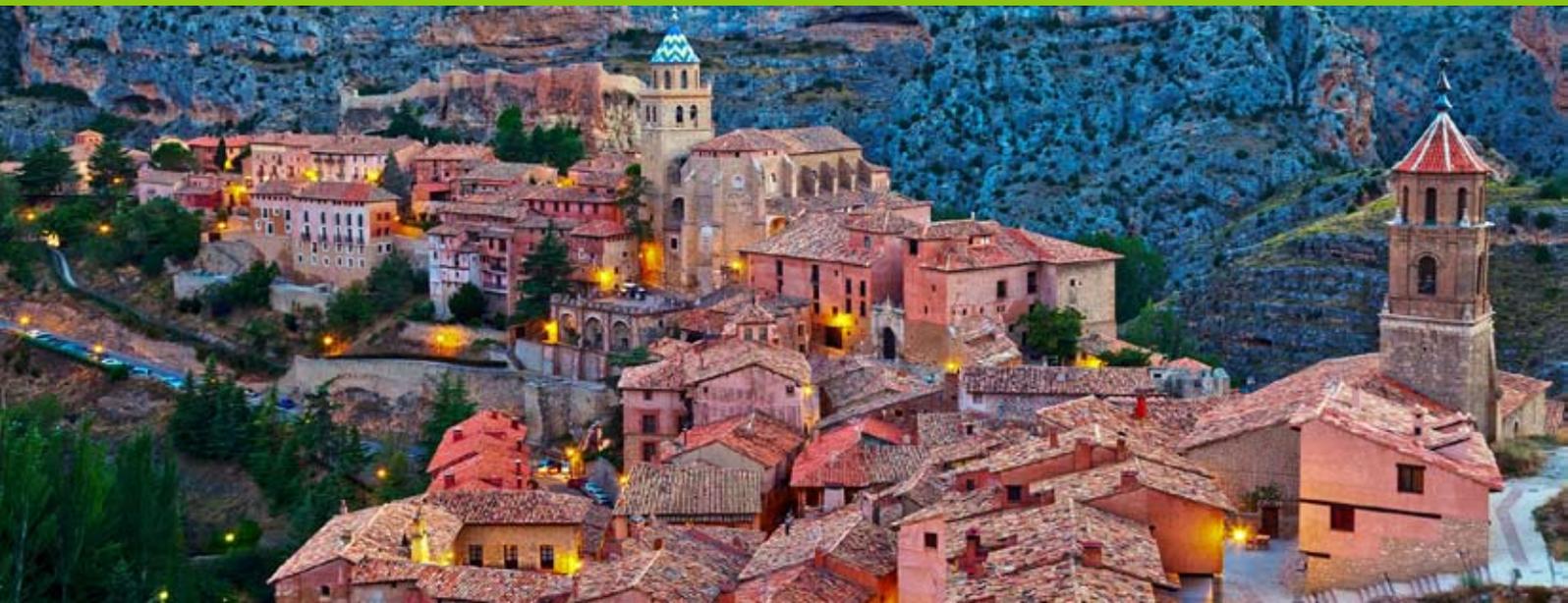
The Autonomous Region of Aragon is a land of hearty dishes bursting with aroma and taste and which frequently contain meat, especially lamb. Ternasco with D.O. is very appreciated □ (the Spanish word "ternasco" comes from the word "tierno" - tender - and refers to the suckling lamb) and has been exported to other autonomous regions in Spain. Chicken is also very popular and years ago used to be eaten at festivals, giving rise to a very admired Aragonese dish: "pollo al chilindrón", a chicken stew (lamb can also be used) which is prepared with onions, tomatoes and red peppers. Also worth special mention are the wonderful sausages and salted meats, such as cured ham from Teruel, "arbiello" and "longaniza" sausages from Aragon. There is one product which can only be found in this region: "fardeles" from Calatayud and Daroca, which are made with pork liver and spices. Rabbit and hare stewed in their own blood ("civet"), partridge, deer, roe deer and wild boar are excellent examples of its game cooking.

Diversity on offer

But not all Aragonese cooking is based on meat. This region also prepares dishes using river ingredients. Trout, eel...even the frog can be used to make natural well-seasoned dishes. Bread is another basic component of this cuisine which adopts many forms and names depending on the region..Fruit is often eaten at the end of a good meal, but there are also excellent and traditional local desserts. The chestnut is used in the preparation of many sweets. The almond is used to make "guirlache", made from toasted almond and lots of caramelised sugar. Fairy cakes are found throughout the region and often fruit is used to prepare a typical dessert, such as "frutas de Aragón" (sugar-candied fruits covered in chocolate). "Almojábanas" (cheese flavoured rolls), "tortas de alma" made with pumpkin, honey and sugar, "trenza de Almodévar" with nuts and raisins soaked in liqueur, and many other dishes make this region a paradise for the sweet-toothed traveller.

Christmas food in Aragón

Lamb from Aragón. This is the star dish of the Aragón Christmas table. A suckling lamb stew with a smooth flavour. For dessert, the guirlache (the typical Aragonese nougat made from a combination of almonds, anise and caramel) is the most popular choice, although the filled dobladillos (a type of turnover) are equally in demand. In general, stews made with cardoon (artichoke thistle) feature highly on the festive menus and sweet treats made with almonds.



Cod al ajoarriero



Ingredients:

Ingredients for 4 people:

700 g of flaked cod

500 g of potatoes

500 g of tomatoes

2 red peppers

1 onion

4 garlic

10 spoonfuls of olive oil

1 sprig of parsley salt

Method:

Heat half the oil in an earthenware dish and brown the peeled garlic.

Add the cod and sauté for a further 5 minutes over a very low flame.

Peel the potatoes, wash and cut in thin slices. Peel the onion and dice very finely.

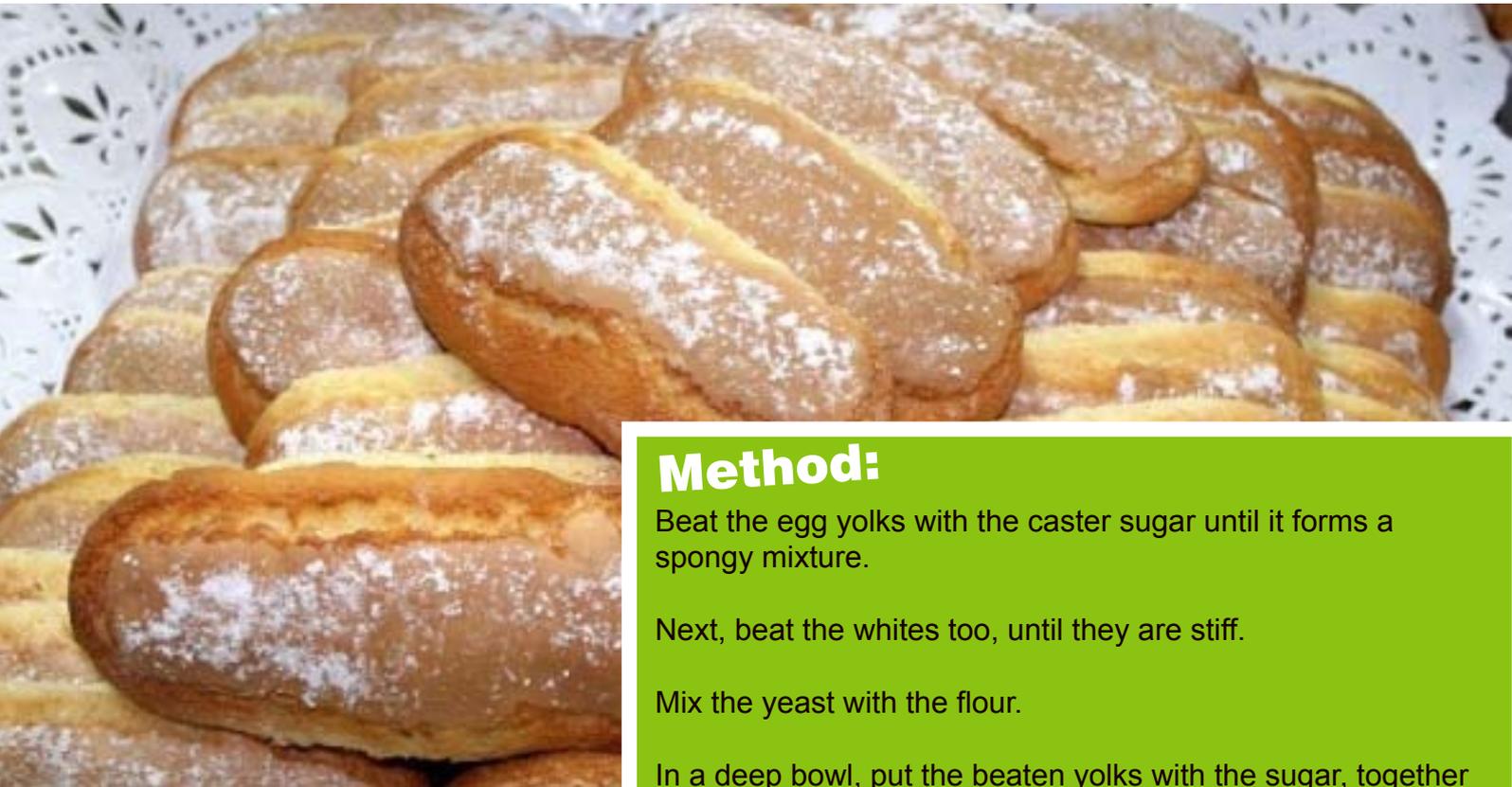
Heat the oil in a pan and sauté the onion until it is transparent. Add the potatoes and fry, stirring occasionally so that they don't stick.

Plunge the tomatoes into boiling water for a few minutes, peel and chop.

When the potatoes are halfway through cooking, add the chopped tomato and the pepper, cut in strips, and sauté.

Add this sauce to the cod, along with some chopped parsley, mix well, check the seasoning and cook over a low flame until it is ready. Around 10 minutes. Serve immediately

Calatayud sponge cake



Ingredients:

200g of flour

2 spoons of yeast

3 spoons of fine sugar

125g of ground caster sugar

6 eggs

Oil

Method:

Beat the egg yolks with the caster sugar until it forms a spongy mixture.

Next, beat the whites too, until they are stiff.

Mix the yeast with the flour.

In a deep bowl, put the beaten yolks with the sugar, together with the mixture of flour and yeast and the stiff whites.

Then add the fine sugar.

With the help of an icing bag, put this mixture into parchment paper cake cases greased with oil.

Put them all on a baking tray or sheet and bake in the oven at a low heat for 20 minutes.

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A Life in
SPAIN 27



Toledo is one of the Spanish cities with the greatest wealth of monuments. Known as the “city of the three cultures”, because Christians, Arabs and Jews lived together there for centuries, behind its walls Toledo preserves an artistic and cultural legacy in the form of churches, palaces, fortresses, mosques and synagogues. This great diversity of artistic styles makes the old quarter of the capital of

Castile - La Mancha a real open-air museum, which has led to it being declared a World Heritage Site.

Toledo is also a city linked to deep popular traditions, as the procession of the Most Holy Corpus Christi, a festival declared of International Tourist Interest, demonstrates every year. The city of Toledo has its origins in Toletum, the name the Romans gave to this settlement on the banks of the River Tago after its conquest in 190 BC. The city maintained its importance for centuries and, in the Visigothic era, became the capital of Hispania (6th C.).

The arrival of the Arabs in the 8th century, together with the presence of Christians and Jews, made Toledo the “city of the three cultures”. This was one of the Toledo’s most splendid periods when, among other important events, the Toledo School of Translators was founded. Later, when Carlos V came to the throne in 1519, the city became an imperial capital. The way that Christians, Arabs and Jews lived side by side for centuries has been reflected in the form of a great artistic and cultural legacy.

The maze of streets making up the historic centre of Toledo is only bounded by walls in which many gates were opened. The Bisagra gate, presided over by two bodies and a great imperial shield forms the main access to the city within the walls. This noble gate, of Muslim origin, includes a central courtyard and was altered during the reign of Carlos I (Emperor Carlos V). The Alfonso VI gate or Vieja de Bisagra gate, built in 838, is one of the most faithful reflections of Muslim art in the city.

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The Sol gate was built in the 13th century in Mudejar style and contains the remains of a paleochristian sarcophagus. Via these and other entrances you can reach picturesque places, like the Plaza de Zocodover. In the Arab period, this central space housed an important market, and festivals and all kinds of social events were held here. Nowadays the square, surrounded by buildings with porches, continues to be one of the busiest places in the city.

Synagogues, mosques and churches jostle in the narrow streets of Toledo, which is characterised by the mixture of artistic styles. The Mosque of Cristo de la Luz, which predates the Christian reconquest, was built in 999 as a copy of the Mosque at Córdoba. It is an unusual building with a square floor plan covered by nine caliphal vaults (a type of groined vault leaving the centre free). To this, a Romanesque-Mudejar sanctuary was added in the 12th century. Good examples from the Mozarabs (Christians who lived under Moslem rule) are the churches of San Sebastián and Santa Eulalia, while the Mudejars left in Toledo a style with rich Arab decoration. Horseshoe arches, lobed windows and other architectural elements can be appreciated in various buildings in Toledo.

Santiago del Arrabal is one of the best examples of this style in the city, which has led this church also being known as the Mudejar Cathedral. The origin of its construction is uncertain, although it was probably in the time of King Alfonso VI when the church was built, taking advantage of an old mosque. The outstanding features of the early structure are a tower which recalls a Muslim minaret. The same Mudejar style can be seen in the church of Santo Tomás, famous for housing El Greco's famous picture entitled "El entierro del Conde Orgaz" (The burial of Count Orgaz).

A 14th-century Mudejar tower stands above the rest of the building, which dates from the 12th century and has Visigothic elements on its main façade. If there is one person's name that defines Toledo it is that of El Greco (16th-17th C.). His House-Museum, a palace with the atmosphere of the period, exhibits some of the best works of the painter who made the city world famous. Remains of the Jewish community are still preserved in the city in the synagogues of Santa María la Blanca and El Tránsito. The former, built possibly in the 12th century, is also a good example of Toledo's Mudejar art. It has five naves with decreasing heights as well as the characteristic geometrical and botanical decoration and horseshoe arches.

Meanwhile, in the synagogue of El Tránsito, built in 1357, you can admire one of the best Mudejar coffered ceilings of all those preserved in Toledo, along with walls richly decorated with geometrical and botanical designs and Hebrew inscriptions. Nowadays, this Jewish place of worship houses the Sephardic Museum, in which an interesting collection of pieces of art and various objects used in Jewish ceremonies are exhibited. One of the most outstanding buildings in the city is the Cathedral, considered one of the high points of Gothic art. The construction of this monumental building, with a basilica floor plan and five naves. In 1226, although it was not finished until the 15th century. This is reflected in the great superimposition of styles in the building and the large number of renowned artists who left their mark on the church: from Pedro Berruguete, to Enrique Egás, Petrus Petri and Juan Guas. On its main facade the outstanding feature is the doorway, made up of three doors: Infierno (Hell), Perdón (Forgiveness) and Juicio (Judgement). The exterior is topped by the two cathedral towers, one of them in flamboyant Gothic style and the other in Gothic-Renaissance

Cuisine Toledo's cuisine has various specialities based on game products, like stewed partridge, Toledo-style quail or venison with wild mushrooms. With the other provinces of La Mancha it shares pisto (based on pepper, tomato and onion), Castilian soup and migas (dish made with breadcrumbs and pork products). To round it off there is the famous La Mancha cheese and marzipan (made from ground almonds and sugar). These dishes may be accompanied with the wines of La Mancha and Méntrida, each with a Denomination of Origin. The most important date in Toledo's calendar is Corpus Christi, which is celebrated nine weeks after Easter. This festival, which has centuries of tradition and has been declared of International Tourist Interest, has its culminating moment in a large and colourful procession going round the historic centre of the capital of La Mancha.

There are many possibilities for accommodation in the city, although it is advisable to book well enough in advance at any time of year. One of the best options is the Toledo Parador, situated on the neighbouring Emperador Hill and from where you can get a wonderful view of the city. Other interesting places in the province of Toledo are Talavera de la Reina, with its Collegiate Church of Santa María la Mayor; Ocaña, with its Gothic-Mudejar church of San Juan Bautista; Guadamur, with a beautiful castle; and Oropesa, whose 14th-century castle-palace houses the local Parador de Turismo. In the south of the province, at the foot of the Montes de Toledo, is the Cabañeros National Park, a protected area that combines Mediterranean woodland in the mountains and meadows on the wide plains.

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Approximately 15 minutes from Casa Boquera, the city and its environment, with its cultural, archaeological and gastronomic diversity, will enhance the experience of visiting our accommodation. There are many tours to enjoy. You can follow ancient steps through archaeological sites like the ones in “Monte Arabí” and “Torrejones”, visit a number of monuments, like “Yecla Castle” and “Concha Segura Theatre”, or museums, like “Replicas del Greco”. Yecla has a beautiful cathedral, La Purisima, which is a must to see!

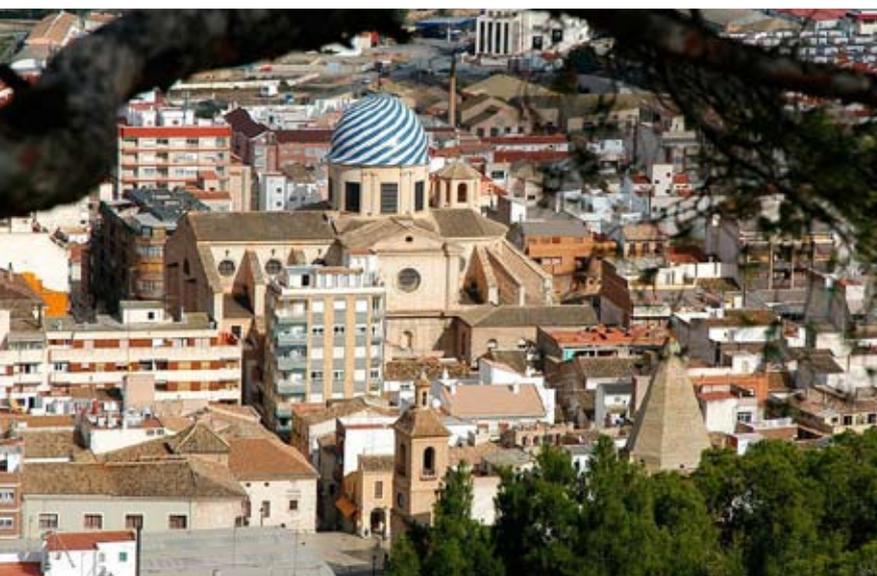
If you are looking to enjoy Spanish nature, then we are surrounded by the “Salinas Mountain Range” where the highest point is the national park of “El Carche”.with its 1370 meters. Here you will find many roads and trails for walking, biking or trips with our quads. And of course, hunting.

The Casa Boquera guests can join in the many festivals of Yecla , the major one being San Isidro in the middle of May, but also the carnival in February and the wine festivals in the autumn. Not forgetting the celebrations and possessions of Easter and Christmas!

Yecla is, and has been, the major quality furniture producers in Spain and is host to one of the most important furniture fairs in the world “The Furniture Fair of Yecla”, So if you are looking for furniture, this is the place to be!

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Walking routes

Los Escullos - La Isleta del Moro



The rugged mountain and rocky landscape of Cabo de Gata is isolated and geologically one of Europe's most special. The Sierra de Gata mountain range is the largest volcanic rock formation in Spain, with sharp peaks and amazing coloured steep rocks.

This is a beautiful walk from Los Escullos to the small fishing village of La Isleta del Moro. The walk goes along the coast, over the rocks to the small peninsula. Along the way you have beautiful views of the bay and the two extinct volcanoes. From the rock in Isleta del Moro you have a beautiful 360 ° view. The tour is completely unpaved and even for the most part runs over a narrow footpath. The way back goes approximately along the same road, in total 9 km.

Distance: 9 km

Duration: 3h

Grade: Easy

Type: Circular

Height gain: 200 meters

Way mark: None

Wheelchair: Not suitable

Dog: Allowed on a lead



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This lovely detached Fortuna style villa on a 350m2 plot of land offers 2 bedrooms and 1 bathroom complete with low level entrance, sun terrace, pergola, lounge, dining room, kitchen, garden, solarium, off road parking, oil central heating, air conditioning, rejas and mountain-countryside views.

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10 Top Destinations in Northern Spain



SANTANDER

A city that seems straight out of a storybook and whose life revolves around the bay, recognised as one of the prettiest in the world.

Santander (Cantabria), in the north of Spain, is a combination of green mountain landscapes with white sand beaches, elegant mansions and palatial architecture with avant-garde buildings and the unmistakable echo of its seafaring past. Many cities within a city, perfect for discovering

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City of monarchs and fishermen

Santander was the destination par excellence for royalty at the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries. A stroll through the old quarters, with its majestic buildings, transports us to this distinguished past, the greatest witness of which is undoubtedly the Magdalena Palace, the jewel in the city's crown. This iconic building, located in the highest part of the peninsula of the same name, is one of the essential sights of Santander, allowing you to observe (and photograph) an impressive panoramic view of "the bride of the sea".

The city is affectionately known, framed by the beach and mountains. Santander fuses this palatial magic with a fishing tradition, which today can be enjoyed especially in the area known as the city's fishing district: the perfect place to try the most traditional local cuisine, so closely linked to the sea, with dishes such as rabas (fried squid), maganos (squid with onion) or fisherman-style clams. This identity of contrasts is completed with the "new" Santander, the part that has embraced the latest cultural and artistic trends, which is evident in places such as the Botín Centre, designed by the architect and Pritzker Architecture prize winner, Renzo Piano.

A family occasion

Santander is a perfect city for a family holiday, as apart from its sights and culinary attractions, it also has activities children will love, such as boat trips around the bay, the La Magdalena mini zoo or the Maritime Museum. Enjoying a day of sunshine on one of Santander's beaches is another essential plan: don't miss the ones at El Sardinero, El Camello, Mataleñas, La Concha and Los Peligros.

Prehistory and Archaeology Museum of Cantabria Flavióbriga.

Most of the 1,200 objects on display in this museum date from the period between the Upper Palaeolithic and the Iron Age.

There are also items from the Roman era, mostly from Julióbriga and Castro Urdiales, the ancient Flavióbriga. Of note in the medieval collection is the ivory belt buckle from the Santa María de Hito archaeological site.

Centro Botín

A cultural space dedicated to contemporary art, music, film, theatre, and literature. The building, designed by the Pritzker Prize-winning architect Renzo Piano, is set in the Pereda Gardens in an exceptional location on the Santander Bay.

Opened in 2017, this work by Piano, in partnership with Spanish architect Luis Vidal, is expected to become an architectural and cultural symbol of the city. The construction recalls a stone breakwater, in two volumes over slender columns, as tall as the trees surrounding them, and partly suspended over the sea, designed to harmonise with the setting.

Two galleries, lecture rooms, work spaces, a roof terrace where the public can enjoy a unique view of Santander and its bay, and a 300-seater auditorium which also offers an impressive view, with the sea and the mountains forming the backdrop. Location: in central Santander, next to the seafront promenade.





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12 new 'most beautiful' towns in Spain

Olivenza, Badajoz

This town has enough walls to make Donald Trump jealous. Founded in the 13th century, it remained in Portuguese hands until 1801. You can only enter Olivenza through the huge gates which would have been used as the entry and exit for cavalry, soldiers or visiting diplomats in the medieval era. Once inside, Instagrammers will go snapping mad for its white-washed streets, featuring stately homes, charming squares and historic buildings.

The town of Olivença was under Portuguese sovereignty between 1297 (Treaty of Alcañices) and 1801, when it was invaded by the Spanish during the War of the Oranges and ceded to Spain that year under the Treaty of Badajoz. Spain has since administered the territory (now split into two municipalities, Olivenza and also Táliga), whilst Portugal invokes the self-revocation of the Treaty of Badajoz, plus the Treaty of Vienna of 1815, to claim the return of the territory.

In spite of the territorial dispute between Portugal and Spain, the issue has not been a sensitive matter in the relations between these two countries. Olivenza and other neighbouring Spanish (La Codosera, Alburquerque and Badajoz) and Portuguese (Arronches, Campo Maior, Estremoz, Portalegre and Elvas) towns reached an agreement in 2008 to create a euro region

Olivenza is located on the left (east) bank of the Guadiana river, at an equal distance of 24 kilometres (15 miles) south of Elvas in Portugal



and Badajoz in Spain. The territory is triangular, with a smaller side resting on the Guadiana and the opposite vertex entering south-east and surrounded by Spanish territory. By an agreement between Spain and Portugal, the left bank of the river was recognized as being Portuguese territory (to a non-defined width, though), which sets the de facto border in that area.

Besides the town, the municipality of Olivenza includes six villages: San Francisco (Portuguese: São Francisco), San Rafael (São Rafael), Villarreal (Vila Real), Santo Domingo de Guzman (São Domingos de Gusmão), San Benito de la Contienda (São Bento da Contenda), and San Jorge de Alor (São Jorge da Lor). Another village, Táliga, was detached to become the seat of a separate municipality in 1850.

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Total population is 10,762 (2002), of which 8,274 live in Olivenza. The total area is 750 square kilometres (290 sq mi). Like the surrounding regions, population density is low, at 11 inhabitants per km².

Some monuments include the church of Saint Mary of the Castle (Spanish: Iglesia de Santa María del Castillo, Portuguese: Igreja de Santa Maria do Castelo), Holy Ghost Chapel (Capilla del Espíritu Santo, Capela do Espírito Santo), Saint Mary Magdalene Church (Iglesia de Santa María Magdalena, Igreja de Santa Maria Madalena, considered a masterwork of Portuguese Manueline architecture), Saint John of God Monastery (Monasterio de San Juan de Dios, Mosteiro de São João de Deus), the keep (torre del homenaje, torre de menagem), and the ruins of the Our Lady of Help Bridge (Puente de Nuestra Señora de Ayuda, Ponte de Nossa Senhora da Ajuda, destroyed in 1709 and never rebuilt).

There are still traces of Portuguese culture and language in the people, although the younger generations speak Spanish only. At the beginning of the 1940s the city was reportedly mainly Portuguese-speaking, but after the 1940s a language shift towards Spanish took place.

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PUY DE FOU

By Taquilla Tickets

Well readers!! What can we say? Have you ever heard of the phrase "It's Showtime?" Taquilla Tickets is very proud to announce that we are going to travel to the beautiful city of Toledo, which is approximately one hour from Madrid. Why are we going there?

Well, France's best-kept themed park secret is PUY DE FOU (Pronounced PYI DY FU). Puy de Fou France opened in 1978.

What is it? It is a rural theme park without any rides !! It started as an open air amateur dramatics night where volunteers in the grounds of a ruined castle re-enacted the bloody history of the Vendee in Western France. It has become one of the country's biggest success stories. Its trademark is a spectacular extravaganza shows !! So successful was Puy de Fou that someone had the bright idea in 2019 of establishing a themed park in Spain, and Toledo was chosen to build, from scratch, everything needed to become the "Biggest Show in Spain". In fact, Puy de Fou has been awarded the "Worlds best Park" on two separate occasions.

You will have an unforgettable experience which is full of emotion with shows for the whole family. This stunningly spectacular show is based on Spain's discovery of the New World. Christopher Columbus met with the Spanish Queen Isabela. Together they plan for an expedition to unite East and West. This is a huge undertaking !!

Eventually, aboard the "Santa Maria", they set sail from the Port of Palos (Modern day Huelva) in Southwest Spain, in the province of Andalucia. During the day you can wander around the Port of Palos and

immerse yourself in the sights and sounds of everyday life. Different shows and exhibitions will be shown throughout the day too. However, at the setting of the sun Puy de Fou and its cast of over two hundred actors produce what is billed as "THE BIGGEST SHOW IN SPAIN", and is called "El Sueno de Toledo" or Toledo's Dream. This is a show where history comes back to life, bursting forth from the ramparts of the city. Experience a show as you have never seen before, and is "THE BIGGEST SHOW IN SPAIN".

It has been said that Puy de Fou has better shows than Disney !! With a stage of over 5 Hectares, you must see this to believe it.

Taquilla Tickets would love to take you on this magnificent journey but, please be advised, that tickets are selling at a pretty hectic rate.

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Autonomo Fees in Spain

Welcome to Typical Non-Spanish: for expats living in Spain

If you're an expat living in Spain or want to take the leap, Typical Non-Spanish has you covered. An informative and fun 'one-stop-shop' for tips on forging a life in Spain, covering everything from insurance and bureaucracy to culture and cuisine. With pointers from real expats, Typical Non-Spanish offers insight into life in Spain so that you can make your new country your new home.

All about Autonomo Fees in Spain

So, you've decided to start your own small business or work as a freelancer. As soon as you send your first invoice, you will have to start paying an autonomo fee in Spain. Autónomo is the official Spanish term for self-employed workers in Spain. To clarify, an autónomo can have people working for him or her; it is not necessarily a one-man business.

Starting as an autónomo is not the cheapest option

in Spain, considering that if you went bankrupt or were issued with a claim through a lawsuit, you would be personally responsible for the financial consequences. In the worst case scenario, when in debt, they could take away your house and personal belongings or savings. If you want to prevent running this financial risk for you and your family, you should consider starting a small business (an SME, or PYME in Spanish).

The Spanish monthly fee is the highest in the European Union and this has been a source of many complaints over the years. Discover the different fees below and which might apply to you by continuing below:



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Different Autonomo Fees in Spain

Now there is a so-called “flat fee” for new autónomos for the first two years, which makes it much more accessible for new autónomos to get started and grow their business. The fee will now be €50 a month for the first year.

For the next six months, the fee goes up to €137.97; and the last six months of the second year, the fee will increase again to €192.

Self-employed workers in Spain who have been registered for a period of more than two years pay a minimum monthly fee of €286.10 euro.

These fees are the same as in 2020 and are not subject to review/change until 1 June 2021. The general autónomo fee in Spain will then be set at €289.

When you register as an autónomo, you can choose to pay the minimum fee or pay more than what you owe to slightly increase your government pension in the long term. Most people opt for the minimum fee and start a private pension scheme under their own conditions.

The current minimum fee is (except for the first two years) €286.

The maximum fee is €4,070.

For more information, consult the Seguridad Social website.

Gestors and Paid Leave for Autonomos in Spain

The Spanish Tax Authorities are improving conditions for autónomos bit by bit. It's a good idea to hire a gestor (a private professional that specialises in Spanish administrative bureaucracy) to help you with your tax return. If you pay your taxes too late or file



a false or incorrect return, expect hefty fines. There is a new condition for recent mothers that return to work as an autónomo, to pay the flat-rate Spain autónomo fees as mentioned above, without having to wait three years to restart.

Not every autónomo generates the same amount of work for a gestor. Therefore, the fee can vary, but on average they will charge you between €50 – €150 a month for their services.

Parents who take maternity or paternity leave will no longer need to continue to pay their social security fee every month during that period. The only condition is that you have been paying your autónomo fee in Spain for more than 12 months.

Starting your own business can be a particularly good idea but make sure you're up to speed on these monthly fees before you take the leap.

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The estate agent who sold us our house, a plausible British crook, I'll call him Andy, was clearly not content with his commission: 'As absentee owners, you'll need someone to manage your property.'

'And what would that cost me?

'Oh, we'll work something out. Don't forget to leave me your account details and your PIN.'

Of course I didn't do that, though I did something almost as foolish which was to accept Andy's recommendation of a builder to undertake the first stage of our renovation.

The builder was a plausible Spanish crook, I'll call him Diego. When we returned from India to inspect his work it looked fine except for the mountains of rubble dumped in the huerta right in front of the house.

'Diego, before I pay you, you'll need to move that lot.'

The rubble duly disappeared, but as you've already guessed, Diego didn't put himself to the inconvenience of hauling it away. He simply dumped it in the drain behind the house, which is why we were met by a flood when we opened the front door on our return from India. The new roof leaked too.

From Nick's deep, warm Lancashire tones we knew instantly that here was a man we could trust with our very lives, and the impression was confirmed when he turned out to be from Val's home village of Orrell three-and-a-half miles west of Wigan. We were still working abroad, so at the end of the Christmas vacation we left him with our to-do list which included installing a screen in the upstairs bathroom for which we foolishly paid him in advance. By the time we returned in the summer, Nick had disappeared and there was no sign of the new screen. I repeatedly emailed him demanding a refund, but Nick produced a series of increasingly

inventive fictions, clearly intending to hang onto my cash until either I gave up hope or one of us died of old age. Fortunately, Nick was not only a crook but also a stupid crook. Some years previously I had used the services of a formidable firm of litigators whom I'll call Messrs Soo, Grabbitt and Runne. In sending my final demand to Nick, I copied it to a fictitious Mr Hardman Grabbitt at the firm's chambers in High Holborn. The money appeared in my bank account the following day. This triumph stands as a monument to the only time in my life I have ever got the better of a so-called builder.

Shaun's first task was to install our wood burning stove. This worked perfectly, until the soot built up, and it dawned on us that Shaun had not included any means of cleaning the chimney. Shoving a brush up the stove was not an option because the flue runs at a sharp angle through a wall which is a metre thick. So, whenever it needed sweeping, I had to sit on the roof, dangling a ten pound grandfather clock weight on a clothes line to break up the debris in the chimney, which then spilled out in choking clouds into the living room when we opened the door of the stove.

Javi had done work for British friends in the pueblo, and he arrived with glowing testimonials. A handsome chap in his early thirties, we found additional reassurance in the fact that he was the leader of a radical group campaigning for fairness and an end to incompetence, muddle and dishonesty in local politics. He assured us that he was the man to solve one of our chronic bugbears. Our staircase, the only means of access to the upper storey, descended right in the middle of the main living room, effectively cutting it in two.

'It's simple,' said Javi, 'we'll install a caracol.'

The beautiful and expensive spiral staircase, hardwood and steel, arrive in kit form. Javi's team erected it and it looked splendid. The only problem was that nobody taller than a hunchbacked gnome could have walked up it without cracking his skull on the low beams.

'No problem,' said Javi, 'we'll turn it into a straight staircase.'

'That's what we had in the first place.'

'We'll shorten it by removing the upstairs landing.'

'So, if I miss that narrow top step on my way to pee at three o'clock in the morning, I'll sleepwalk into space; one small step for a man, two broken legs if he doesn't land on his head.'

Part 4 - The Monkey Speaks



Finally, after more than ten years of Andaluz hokey-cokey, three steps forward, two steps back, I did what I ought to have done in the first place and went down the hill to speak with José el Vecino.

'Talk to Mono,' said José.

'Mono?'

'He's really Juan Antonio, but everybody around here has an apodo, a nickname.'

I telephoned Juan Antonio and sure enough a cheerful voice replied 'Habla el Mono', 'the Monkey speaks'.

So we talked to Mono, and following the detailed plans drawn up by our architect, he built us a two-storey extension, housing a wide, elegant staircase, with floor-to-ceiling shelving on the landing to accommodate part of our library.

Unlike any of our previous builders, Mono actually seemed to take a personal interest in our quirky old cortijo. Rediscovering a 'lost' living room fireplace he reopened it, and it now provides a glass-shelved space for my brass cannon, my 18th century Indian daggers and a host of other mementos from our wandering life on four continents.

Mono is a powerful individual with arms like Popeye, and the day before the new staircase was installed, I watched him grasp the edge of the floor above and nonchalantly swing himself from the lower level to the upper landing, using only the power of his mighty arms.

'I begin to understand the nickname,' I said.

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