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Lifestyle magazine and property portal

ISSUE 63
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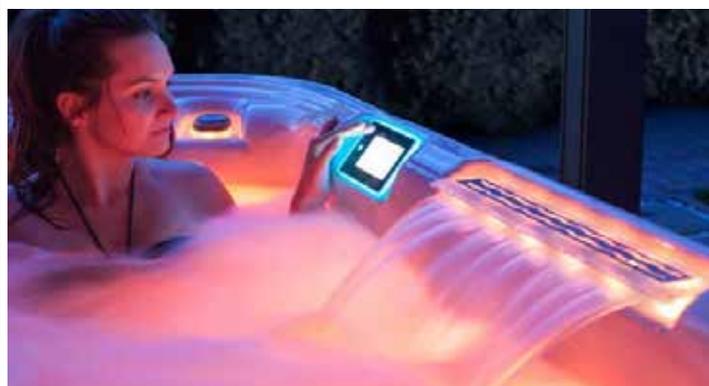
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A Life in SPAIN

Welcome to the February edition of ALIS.

February already. Where does the time go?

Well it looks like travel restrictions are getting easier, which means friends and family will soon be coming to visit for a winter holiday. At least the sun's out.

So what's in this month?

Feel Closer to Home focuses on Cartagena. One of my favourite cities. Steeped in history, this city has something for everyone. It even has one of the best rugby teams in southern Spain.

This month's trip by Taquilla Tickets is about the Fallas in Valencia. This spectacular show lasts several nights and attracts visitors from all over the world. A real must see, well worth a visit

Enjoy this month's magazine

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Most Iconic hotels in Spain

Ritz 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.

César Ritz was one of the most famous hoteliers in history. He himself supervised the construction of what is still today one of the most iconic hotels in Spain. As in the case of the María Cristina, George Mewès was the chosen architect. The great figure of the opening, in 1910, was Alfonso XIII. As we have seen in previous cases, it is clear that the monarch was the great driving force behind the great Spanish hotels of the early 20th century.

Although there were places like the aforementioned Hotel París or the Posada del Peine, there was a lack of a top luxury option in the capital. That is why the Ritz Madrid was allowed to rise. However, it met with

opposition from the city council due to its dimensions, which did not comply with municipal regulations.

Shortly after the Palace was finished, its owner took over the Ritz. For decades they would remain in the same hands. Its fame was based on its strict etiquette and a classic concept of luxury. It was also a priority place of residence for international dignitaries and figures visiting Madrid. Mata Hari, Himmler, Fleming and Ava Gardner are just a sample of its exclusive clientele over the years. Its last major refurbishment dates from 2018/2020.



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SPAIN 07

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Sports

Phrases

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

Vocab

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

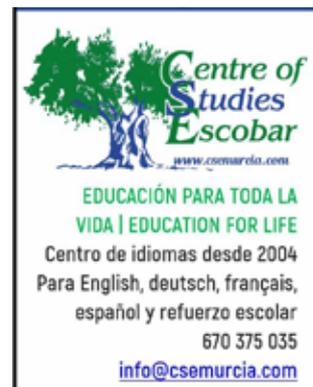


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 E I O L O V U N M O B O U S T W
 S H P E P S E H A B L I C G M G
 G N O I W J Q I M A A X L K P R
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A Life in
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CARTAGENA

If your ideal Spanish home is steeped in history and brimming with culture, then look no further than captivating Cartagena.

By Heidi Wardman

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History

Cartagena is a picturesque, ancient port city located in the province of Murcia, on the Costa Calida. Its South easterly, Mediterranean situation means that it benefits from long hot summers, mild winters and refreshing sea breezes that give respite from the heat at certain times of the year. The coast enjoys an average of 325 days of sunshine each year making it the perfect spot to buy your rental property, holiday home or permanent residence.

As one of the oldest cities in Spain, Cartagena has been dubbed a "hidden gem" many times, retaining its original charm in the face of progress, although certain areas have been modernized to increase its appeal. Christened "Qart Hadasht" by its founder, it holds over 3000 years of history within its walls, and its multicultural population still reflects the diverse cultures that have called it home over time.

First came the Romans, who changed the name to "Carthago Nova"; who were replaced by Muslim settlers; before it was finally claimed by the Punics, also known as "Carthaginians" and the Christians. This transition has helped to shape the characteristics of the city, such as the famous Punic walls which were built in the 3rd Century BC and acted as a defense against invasion.

Most of Cartagena's remaining places of interest are contained in an area enclosed by the city walls, long stretches of which are still intact. The four borders of the city include the broad Paseo de Alfonso XIII to the north, a strip of parkland and crooked avenue to the east, the seafront and modern harbour to the south and the former naval docks to the west.



Ferocious Battles

The evolving population has also brought about numerous tremendous battles, which are recreated through the local fiestas taking place during mid-September.

If you are planning to attend the fiestas, some of the highlights to look out for include the arrival of the "Sacred Fire" in the harbour, the Roman Senate and Hannibal's wedding; along with the nuptial celebrations and additional weddings in the Carthaginian streets, the Roman bike ride and the large craft market.

The arrival of the Carthaginian Navy, which includes a staged sea battle and impressive parade of the troops is also well worth a look, with grand firework displays to accompany each of the presentations.





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Castle

Another picturesque and historical place to visit is Torres Park, where you will find the “Castillo de la Concepción” and panoramic views across the city, taking in the harbour, mountains and fortress. The castle’s gardens are home to strutting peacocks which are extremely friendly, alongside of the “Centro de Interpretación de la Historia de Cartagena”, which for a small fee offers an interesting insight into the city’s colourful history through the centuries, via audio screens and a 10-minute film shown in English, French and Spanish.

It is quite a long walk up but well worth it for the breathtaking views alone, and there is a lift available should you require. Other points of great historical importance are the Grand Casino; and ancient cathedral, which is open to the public during the last four days of each month from 10:00 to 12:00.

Historic Port

Due to its strategic coastal position, Cartagena has historically provided an important naval port for the country, and played a significant role in the voyages of the famous Spanish Armada. In recent years, the navy has moved out of Cartagena to make way for tourism, also becoming a hotbed for underwater archaeology.

One related attraction that has truly put the city on the map is the ship-like shape of ARQVA, the Museum of Underwater Archaeology. The museum is half-submerged in the stretch of seafront just outside the city walls, and holds all manner of treasures from Spain’s marine history. Some of the highlights include remnants of a 7th Century BC wreck of a Phoenician ship, an Islamic serving dish depicting a ship and part of the cargo of the wrecked frigate, “Nuestra Señora de las Mercedes”, which sank in 1804 but whose remains the Spanish government successfully claimed back from the US in 2012.

Admission to the museum is free on Saturday afternoons (from 15:00) and Sundays; and just 3 euros at all other times. Over the past decade, Cartagena has developed a reputation as a booming port of call for cruise ships, with a total of 150 liners expected to dock there during 2023, bringing around 230 000 tourists to the city and the Murcia Region. The majority of visitors are anticipated to hail from Germany and Great Britain, as well as France, Italy and certain parts of Asia.

Shopping

If your ideal location includes a selection of shops and amenities within easy reach then Cartagena will not disappoint, with a pedestrian zone on Avenida Mayor lined with a vast array of high street stores and boutiques. Starting at the Town Hall and following the avenue down to the “Plaza de Espana”, shoppers will find all of their favourite department stores, such as Mango, Zara, Celio, Springfield and Pull & Bear, as well as the popular Spanish clothing outlets Desigual and Sfera.

A more picturesque shopping experience will take you through the ancient narrow streets, which are home to small gift shops, book stores, exclusive fashion boutique, jewellers, shoe and perfume shops. Alternatively, for the chance to “shop til you drop”, Cartagena has a huge indoor shopping mall called “Espacio Mediterraneo”, where you can find everything you could wish for under one roof! High street names such as Massimo Dutti, Zara, C&A, Cortefiel, Pull & Bear, Bershka and Stradivarius can all be found here, alongside of a Carrefour superstore, a Cinema and a Bowling Alley. The first floor offers a spacious food court, with a selection of bars, restaurants and fast food caterers to suit all taste



Rugby

As Spain is such a distinguished footballing nation you may think that there is not much room for other ball games, and certainly not rugby! On the contrary, fans will be pleased to learn that Cartagena has a well-established and successful club, CRU Cartagena, which was founded by a keen group of University students over twenty years ago. The club went from strength to strength, commencing its journey by competing against other university teams before spending three seasons playing in a regional league.

The team went on to win two finals of the Spanish championship "Inter-EUITI", during 1995 and 1997, and reached the semi-finals of the same contest in 1996. During the 1995/96 season, CRUC was also invited to join the second category of the Valencia league, accelerating up the ranks to the premier league by 2002. Sadly the club was forced to leave the league due to bureaucratic matters and has spend the last few years playing against rival Spanish clubs in the Castilla la Mancha- Murcia league.

CRUC is currently playing in the Valencian league which is a much tougher league. They are still thriving and bringing home the silver wear.

The club welcomes male and female players of all ages and abilities, having also established a children's training school in 2003, which meets there every Saturday morning at 11:00. The senior male squad trains on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 20:30; and females on Mondays and Wednesdays at the same time.

There are also clubs for under 16's and Under 18's which meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 19:00. CRUC is always keen to recruit and nurture new talent, so do not hesitate to contact them if you feel that you might like to become involved. For more information you may also consult their website www.rugbycartagena.com.



Party Time!

Festivals and celebrations are an integral part of Spanish life, and should you decide to purchase property in Cartagena you will soon learn that it is the definition of a town which never sleeps! If you were lucky enough to be in Cartagena during Holy Week, you will probably have witnessed the fantastic parades which decorated the streets by day and night throughout the Easter period. Points of interest featured each year include the military precision of the penitents' marching, the bountiful floral decoration of the thrones, and the attention to detail in the costumes and embroidery. The fiesta plays out the bitterness and rivalry that existed between the horse riders the "Californios" and their dangerous enemies the "Marrajos", of the "Real e Ilustre Cofradía de Nuestro Padre Jesús Nazareno" society of Cofradias which was founded in Cartagena in 1641.

Another engaging fiesta to note in your diary is the "Mar de Musicas" or Sea of Music festival, which is a festival of new and world music held annually during July. A relative new entry to the city's fiesta calendar, the celebration has already achieved a unanimous recognition at both a national and international level, with its popularity growing year on year.

Set within the picturesque surroundings of Cabo de Palos, on the shores of the Mediterranean, each August is the "Habaneras" Music Festival. A hypnotic blend of sounds, colours and flavours, the festival celebrates the wonder of Habaneras music welcoming choirs from across the world. "Cartagena Jazz Festival" is another big event for the city, whose reputation has grown on a global scale since its inception in 1980.

Taking place each year during November, the festival incorporates a series of exhibitions, live open-air concerts, performances in cafes, bars and other venues across the city. The "Folklore Festival" takes place in La Palma, featuring a programme of folk performances, festivals, exhibitions and cabarets, which are meant to represent the traditions and dances of the "Campo de Cartagena". Finally, the "International Film Festival" is a real treat for movie lovers, filling the city with film trivia, animated stories, documentaries, and practically everything associated with the big screen.





Buying In Spain...Negotiate Your Way To A Great Deal?

We all love a bargain; and when you are talking in terms of thousands of Euros as is the case within the property market it is certainly worth pursuing. So it is useful to have a few tips up your sleeve which will help you to negotiate the best deal possible on your purchase.

By Heidi Wardman



Scope for Negotiation

ALIS is keen to assist you in getting the best value for money out of your Spanish property, and there are a few points that you should bear in mind before you sign on the dotted line. Firstly, it is important to recognize the differences between the UK and Spanish property markets; and what the margin for negotiation might be so that both parties are satisfied that they have struck a good deal. In the UK, vendors are typically allowed the freedom to drop the price by around 95 per cent of the asking price, as even in a good market they rarely expect to sell at this.

If you manage to haggle them down to 90 per cent you have done extremely well, and it is unlikely that they will be willing to discuss reductions beyond this mark. However, the strategy in Spain is very different, with developers deliberately pegging their prices at a much higher rate than they expect to receive, enabling the buyer to knock them down by several thousand Euros, as much as 35 per cent in some cases, and walk away feeling that they have been granted a really exclusive deal.

Others will be more open about their pricing structure, advertising the property with a given discount from the outset. Meanwhile, those in

a prime locations such as first line golf course, beachfront or penthouse homes, which developers know will sell quickly, might be advertised at the asking price from which there will be no scope for negotiation. There is also less flexibility on the price of new off plan properties, but this often depends on how sales are looking at the time. The best advice is never simply assume the one size fits all UK style strategy of negotiating at around 5 to 10 per cent, and if you are uncertain of the lengths that the vendor will go to in order to secure a deal then don't be afraid to test the water. After all, the worst that they can say is no, in which case they might offer an alternative solution which will still swing in your favour!



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Do Your Homework

Another useful negotiating tool is to find out how long a property has been on the market for, and how long has it been stagnant at the current price.

A property that has been for sale for sometime could be overpriced, giving you licence to try to encourage the vendor to reduce it to something more realistic, and more importantly, within your budget. Alternatively, if it has recently been reduced it is likely to be snapped up more quickly so you better act fast if you are really interested.

If you are buying through an Agent or Property Advisor, they should be well placed to offer guidance on how flexible a vendor is likely to be, which will enable you to compile a sensible viewing list of properties that are within reach. This will help to save time and prevent disappointment if something you have your heart set turns out to be beyond your budget.

Sell Yourself

If you wish to get a positive response from the developer or vendor, then it is important that you also promote yourself as a serious buyer. Both are quite accustomed to receiving a trail of viewers through the doors, all in search of their dream home in the sun. However, the reality is that only a fraction of these “potential buyers” is actually in a position to negotiate a sale, whilst the remainder are just window shopping and will continue to dream for the time being. Others will attempt to negotiate a purchase, putting in an offer long before they have looked into finance and without a penny to invest, based on the assumption that they will not have any trouble so can deal with the boring stuff later. This attitude is extremely frustrating for vendors, who have learned from experience that it is not worth wasting too much time or patience in accommodating their demands until they are in a better position to complete.

Therefore, whilst they will not be impolite or upset the viewer on the off chance that they might return in the future, they will not go over the top to gratify them either! To avoid being labelled as a “time waster” it is important to present yourself as someone who has all of their finances in place, even if this is only an agreement in principal from the bank, or as a cash buyer who is in a position to invest as soon as a desirable offer is on the table.

If the vendor knows that you are serious and would like to complete as soon as possible, you are more or less guaranteed their undivided attention and in a favorable position to get exactly what you want!



Gifts

In spite of the continuing poor state of the Spanish economy and extremely shaky property market, some builders are still reluctant to publicly reduce their house prices, perhaps because this gives the impression that they are struggling to attract interested parties.

However, they might be more willing to reward potential buyers with the offer of "gifts" included in the price, such as a furniture pack, air conditioning, a private swimming pool or even a car. The sum of these can easily substitute a sizeable discount, but the developer is more satisfied with the result as they have still received the asking price.

Be Realistic

Before you enter into negotiations of any nature it is important that you decide on a maximum budget that you are prepared or able to stretch to, and do not be tempted to spread your finances too thinly. It is best to have this figure clear in your mind before you undertake any viewings, to avoid setting your heart on something that you simply cannot afford.

It is also vital that you keep this price limit to yourself during the early stages in your property search, which will give you greater bargaining power later on. Once you have reached your limit, make it clear that you cannot pay any more than the offer on the table, and it is then up to the vendor to accept or decline.

Adopting this open strategy will save you time in the event of your offer not being accepted, allowing you to move on other properties which are more suitable rather than dwell on something that will never happen. Finally, ALIS recommends that you remain optimistic and realistic throughout your search, as ridiculously low offers may be taken as an insult and will not bode well for further negotiations should you wish to reconsider!

Do not expect the seller to simply accept your first offer as this might not square up to their expectations; and if it is a property which you really want, do not feel too proud to increase your bid if it is still within your budget, even if you have already made what you hoped was your "final offer". Primarily, the aim of the venture is to secure your dream home, and even if that means eating humble pie you will be grateful you did when you have the keys firmly in your grasp!

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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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- Wild Mushroom & Roast Garlic 'Tumbleweeds' with Sage Dip
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*To see our full menu visit our Facebook page or email us

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- Chicken Breast Stuffed with Feta Cheese and Spinach
- Homemade Steak Pie
- Duck Breast with Red Berry Red Wine Coulis
- Salmon Fillet with Lobster Sauce
- Wild Mushroom Risotto
- Pork Belly with Mediterranean Crushed Potatoes
- Rib eye with Chilli Butter, Spanish Chorizo & Gouda Cheese

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Castilla-Leon, modern cuisine

Castilla-Leon is the largest of the Spanish Autonomous Regions. It is comprised of nine provinces which share flavours and tastes but conserve their own traditions. Traditions of huge historical and artistic richness which are gastronomically reflected, together with Extremadura and Castilla la Mancha, in its nickname "España del Asado" (Spain of the Roast). Without a doubt, Castilla-Leon is best known for its roast suckling pig and lamb.

These may be the main dishes of the local cuisine, but they are by no means the only ones. There are many others well worth trying which are prepared with all sorts of different ingredients. For Castilla-Leon, cooking is almost a cult. The visitor only has to witness one of the many food conferences which can be dedicated to lamb, to pork, to game, to wild mushrooms etc. or take part in the age-old ritual called the "matanza" (home butchering), or visit the international trout week, to see just how important quality cooking is to the locals. There are numerous books and novels which make reference to the local cooking, including *Cantar de Mío Cid*, which raves about its culinary delights. In Castilla, the chef prepares his dishes with great care: lamb, hare, rabbit, partridge, pork, fried breadcrumbs, trout and pickles. This care is also reflected in the sweets, some of which are traditional recipes from old monasteries and convents, as can be seen in the name: "lazos de San Guillermo" (bow-shaped pastries), "yemas de Santa Teresa" (egg yolk confection), "toscas de la Virgen", "bizcochos de San Lorenzo" (sponge cakes), "virutas de San José" (fritters)... which have often satisfied the hunger the pilgrims on the Camino de Santiago.

Hot food for a cold climate

Soups, which can be light, thick or substantial, such as garlic soup, which tastes even better when an egg is poached in it, trout soup, typical from Órbigo de Leon, and Zamora soup, which is basically garlic soup with ripe tomatoes and hot chilli peppers - excellent for keeping away the cold. No other region of Spain produces such quantity and variety of pulses: white, red and black beans, Castilian and "Pedrosillano" chickpeas, various types of lentils, including the Armuña, which is protected by the Denomination of Origin. All these pulses are used to make excellent dishes, generally accompanied by poultry and pork products. Worth special mention is "Maragato cocido", which is prepared with great care and served in a different order than usual. Trout from Leon and Zamora are famous for being the best in Spain. Although they are not very large, due to the cold water in which they reside, their muscles have been developed by the choppy and sometimes quite rough waters, giving this fish an excellent taste.

Cured hams and sausages

"Botillo" is a regional emblem of Leon. The pig's stomach

is stuffed with abundant meat from the spine, ribcage and tail and boiled. For the locals, this meal is a kind of ritual and they eat it accompanied by potatoes. Hot spicy chorizo and cecina (cured meat) are the starters served at this feast and those who have been lucky enough to participate describe it as nectar. Sausages and cured ham from Guijuelo (Salamanca) and Ladrada, black pudding from Burgos, "farinato" from Ciudad Rodrigo (sausages stuffed with bread and pork fat), sausages from Zaratán (Valladolid) and chorizo from Villar Cayo (Burgos) and Cantimpalos (Segovia) are just few examples of the very wide variety of pork products which were traditionally the main source of protein. Cured ham and sausages from Guijuelo (Iberian pork exclusively fed on acorns) can be compared with the better Jabugo ham from Huelva or Extremadura. The Castilian countryside is a land of doves, pigeons and other game. Logically this is reflected in its gastronomy by such dishes as pigeon stuffed with the boletus wild mushroom and roasted or doused in wine, the excellent partridges cooked Segovian style, the quails in breadcrumbs or the rabbit in garlic sauce. "Empanadas" (meat or fish pastries), similar to those from Galicia are found in El Bierzo, hearty "hornazos" (sausage and egg tarts) at Avila, Segovia and Salamanca. These are just a few examples of simple country fare which has been converted into festive dishes and recognised for their culinary quality.

Wines

The wines from Castille-Leon with Denomination of Origin are Cigales, Bierzo, Ribera del Duero, Rueda and Toro. The rosé wine is the most appreciated wine of the Cigales variety, whereas wines with the Bierzo or Ribera del Duero D.O. are mainly intensely red. Rueda wines are white, with a pallid yellow colour and generally young. The wines of the D.O. Toro tend to be very fruity. Ribera del Duero is one of the best wine-producing regions in the world, with the legendary Vega Sicilia at the head.

Christmas food in Castile and León

To whet your appetite, a selection of cured meats and sausages, such as Iberian ham from Guijuelo, pork jerky and cold cuts. To start, a trout soup prior to the main which could be a juicy suckling pig or crispy roast lamb. Aside from the main event, you could also feast on light and colourful Savoy cabbage, seafood platters and dishes prepared with cardoon or the tasty black truffle from Soria. For the finale, sample the sweet taste of Ávila yemas (egg yolk cakes) or the popular candied fruits.

Grandmother's meatballs



Ingredients:

Ingredients for 4 people:

350g of minced beef

350g minced pork

1 onion

1 piece of garlic

1 slice of bread (crumbled)

parsley

3 spoonfuls of flour

1/2 cup of white wine

1 egg

3/4 cups of olive oil

salt

2 sprigs of thyme

Method:

Peel the onion and chop it finely, peel the clove of garlic and chop it in the same way.

Heat about 2 spoonfuls of oil in a frying pan and cook the garlic and half the onion until they start to brown.

Beat the egg in a bowl as if for an omelette, add all the meat, the fried onion and garlic with its oil, the bread-crumbs, chopped parsley, salt and pepper.

Mix everything very well, form the meatballs with your hands and dip them in the flour.

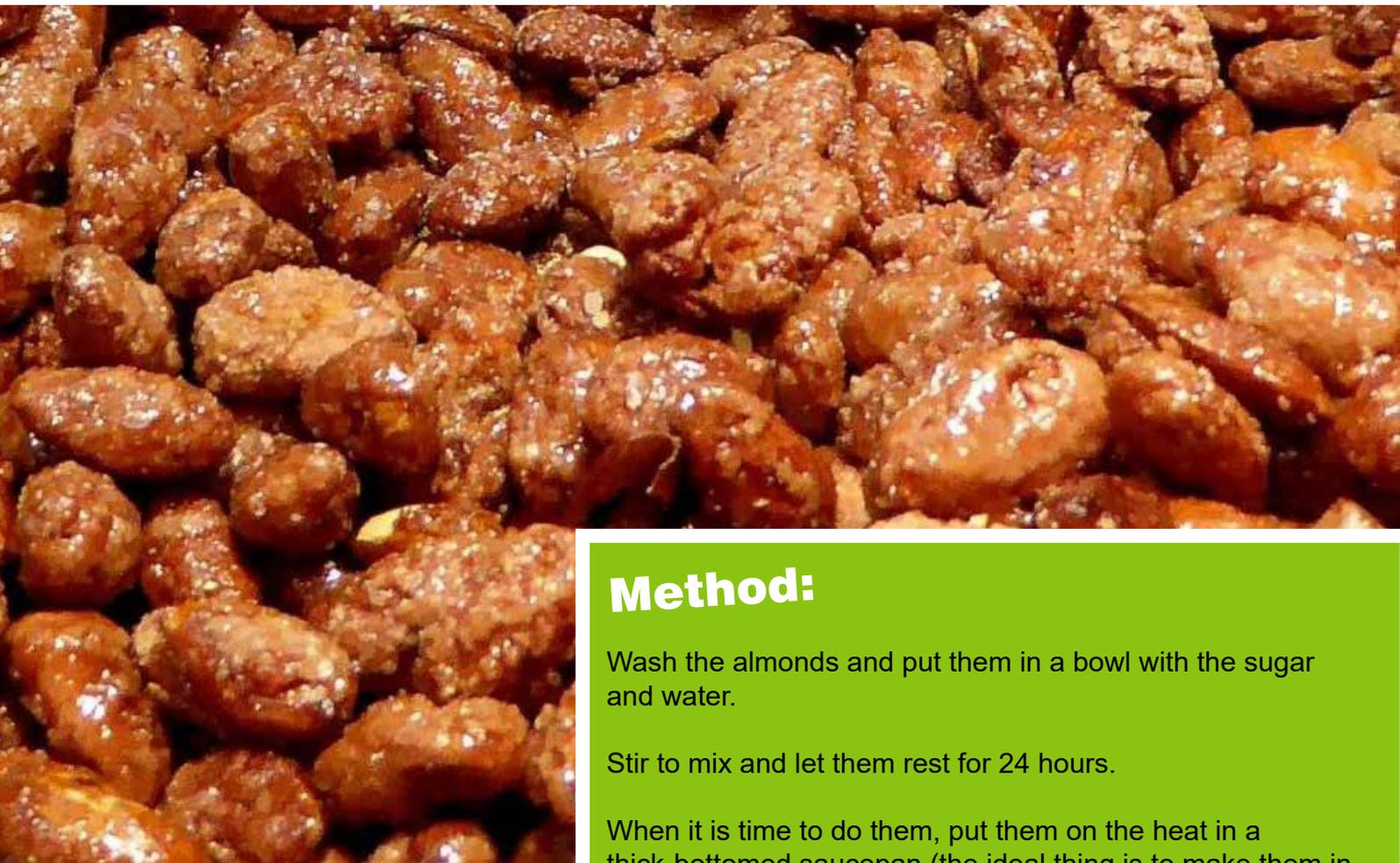
Heat the oil in a frying pan and fry the meatballs until they are lightly browned, remove them, dry them and put them in a casserole.

Take most of the oil out of the frying pan, leaving about 2 spoonfuls, and cook the remaining onion until it is transparent.

Add half a spoonful of flour, stir quickly and add the wine. Mix and pour on to the meatballs.

Add 1/2 cup of water and the thyme, cover and cook over a gentle heat for 20 minutes.

Caramelised almonds



Ingredients:

Ingredients for 4 people:

1 cup of almonds (unpeeled)

1 cup of sugar

1 cup of water

Method:

Wash the almonds and put them in a bowl with the sugar and water.

Stir to mix and let them rest for 24 hours.

When it is time to do them, put them on the heat in a thick-bottomed saucepan (the ideal thing is to make them in a copper saucepan or pan).

Stir them occasionally with a wooden spoon. When a bit of the water has been taken up and the froth turns a whitish colour, stir them without stopping, scraping the sides of the pan or saucepan with the spoon until they are dry.

When they are almost dry it is a good idea to take them off the heat and to finish the process until they do not stick to one another.

Tip them on to marble or a similar surface, separate them and let them cool.

They keep for quite a long time in jars or sealed containers.

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7. How their Will had been affected now Brexit has happened.
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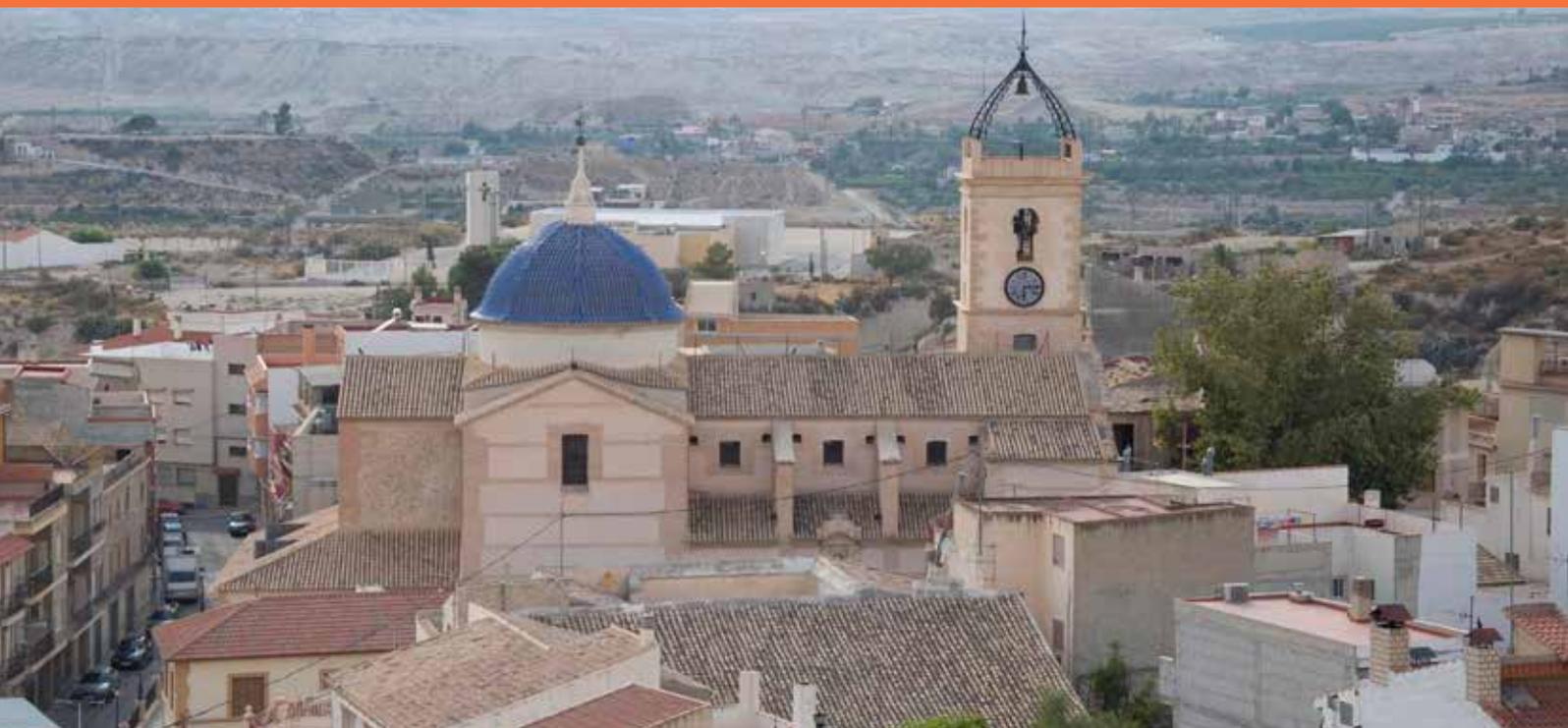
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6. Your Spanish documents can be legalised with our notary in Torrevieja (our fee includes this) or you can arrange directly with your own notary at your own expense.



Not far from the capital of the Murcia Region, Fortuna is famous for the abundance of its hot springs. Water, scarce in this area, flows freely in Fortuna, giving rise to a number of fountains such as la Higuera, la Cueva Negra or los Baños, thermal springs that were already popular in Roman times and which have today converted Fortuna into an important spa town.

The history of the town goes back to Iberian settlements, the remains of which can still be seen in outlying districts such as Caprés, Castillejo or Cortao de las Peñas. The Arab domination is still visible in the Castillico de los Moros (Moors' Castle). The town's cultural heritage is enriched with the Baroque-style Parish Church of La Purísima, the Convent and the Town Hall (which conserves some beautiful panneaux), all constructed in an aesthetic modernist style.

The surrounding countryside (at times desert-like) is covered with the water that flows from its thermal springs. Visitors can admire the Cortao de las Peñas (two mountains split apart by the movement of the earth), or the Humedal del Ajaque and Rambla Salada, protected wetland areas of great beauty.

CARESS OF LEANA

The Balneario de Leana (Leana Spa Resort) in Fortuna is one of the oldest spa resorts in Spain. It was reconstructed on Roman Therms. It became the most important healing centre in the Region along with the santuario de la Cueva Negra (Black Cave sanctuary), popular for its Tituluspictus (Roman inscriptions in objects). The healing nature of these waters was known among ancient cultures, such as Iberian and Greek. It's sure that its effects are great if people continue coming here to charge their batteries.

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How much is your house in Spain worth?

When we face the purchase or sale of a home we always have the same doubt: is it expensive or cheap? How do I calculate it? It does not matter if you are the owner, the buyer, the landlord or the possible tenant, everyone doubts about what would be the appropriate price of a house for sale or rent.



At some crucial time in one's life this could be an essential question. It might be because a large sum of money is required for an emergency, or it might be that an exchange for a larger or smaller property is wanted or simply just because you want to know the value, full stop.

Well, if you read these coming articles you will find in the last part an approximate method to put a value to your home which can be reasonably accurate but a degree of impartiality is required during the calculation.

Now, it will be important to bear in mind that there are several formulas for the calculation and that the valuation value of the real property varies, both in time and by the purpose of that valuation.

Same house, different valuations done by experts

As mentioned earlier, your home may have a different valuation depending on its goal. Thus, for example, the value that the property can achieve for sale and the value that is set in a sale to request a mortgage will not be the same.

The difference is established by the rules applicable to the valuation of housing in Spain; Order ECO / 805/2003. This regulation argues that market value is simply what a third party is willing to pay, an aspect that will have a lot to do with market conditions at that time.

For instance a mortgage appraisal is done by a bank. The value will be obtained by a professional and prudent appraisal normally is carried out, which will take into account the market conditions and many other aspects. An important point for this calculation is that it will exclude all speculative elements.

To the previous valuations ones can add more valuations for the same property, as for example the fiscal value. In this case, the method that Hacienda will use for the settlement of taxes will depend on the autonomous community in which the house is located. The application of a coefficient on the catastral value of a dwelling or the establishment of a minimum per built-up meter are some of the systems used to calculate the value for taxes purposes, which may not coincide with the real value, in fact it rarely coincides.



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Methods to value a property

When you want to present an alternative appraisal to a bank or an official body, or in cases where a legal valuation is required (divorce or inheritance, for example), it will be necessary to commission an official report, namely a property valuation performed by an accredited professional.

Normally it will be an architect, who will be responsible for the that appraisal, in the case of housing, will generally be carried out following the comparison method, which is delimited in the regulations and which will take into account six market values or sales of comparable properties.

But this will not be the only criterion to establish the price, since issues such as price developments, the market situation and everything the technician can extract from a home visit will come into play. Its age, if improvements have been made, its energy efficiency, its distribution or the services of the building will be determining factors for the result of this appraisal, which, in addition, has a short period of time due to the fluctuations of the market.

So, as you have seen, it is not only possible to know how much your home is worth, it is very likely that at some point you will need to request an appraisal of it. Therefore, when you need it, do not hesitate to consult several experts who, do not forget, will have to be accredited professionals.





Wine Regions - Rioja Wine Route

The Rioja Oriental Wine Route is located between the regions of La Rioja and Navarre. The area is full of family-run and traditional wineries, that live side by side the large and industrial ones. The whole area offers numerous options for sampling the region's gastronomy and nature, as well as its interesting historical and artistic heritage throughout the towns and villages that comprise the route.

What are the wines like?

You will find red, rosé and white wines. The reds have fresh, intense aromas, with vivid colours and are fresh and fruity on the palate. The wines are

well-balanced with the Tempranillo grape variety predominating, although there is also a notable presence of Graciano, Mazuelo and Garnacha, all of them of an excellent quality and flavour. The rosés encompass a complete range of colours and stand out for their intense bouquet and fruity flavour. The predominant varieties are Garnacha and Tempranillo. The range of colours is also characteristic of the white wines. They are fruity on the palate and surprising on the nose with fresh fruit aromas. Among the whites, the predominant varieties are Viura, although Tempranillo is becoming more and more popular.



What I can find

There are numerous wineries with programmed tours of their facilities and vineyards to learn about the wine-production along the route first hand. You will have the opportunity to try some of the local cuisine, prepared with some of the highly-regarded local products, such as the extra virgin olive oil or the pears, both with a protected designation of origin, as well as the mushrooms and cauliflower.

We recommend sampling the fardelejos, a typical sweet from this region, made from a base of ground almonds and pastry. If you are planning a few days to cover the Rioja Oriental Wine Route, you will encounter legendary castles, itineraries that follow the footsteps of dinosaurs, ancient Iberian Celtic settlements, old railway tracks that have been turned into hiking paths surrounded by pure nature or even some surprising caves dug out of the rock.

How to get here

There are several airports in the vicinity. The nearest is in Agoncillo, in the middle of the route with direct connections to Madrid. Also the airports at Zaragoza (100 kilometres away) and Bilbao (around 150 kilometres) offer numerous international flight connections. Another option is by train. The main stations are Alfaro and Calahorra.

Also, the station in the capital of La Rioja, Logroño, is approximately 20 kilometres away. From here you can find various connections with stops along the Rioja Oriental Wine Route, such as Agoncillo, Alcanadre and Rincón de Soto. Finally, if you are travelling by car, the AP-68 motorway and the N-232 highway cover the route and are linked to cities like Logroño, Zaragoza and Bilbao.



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or

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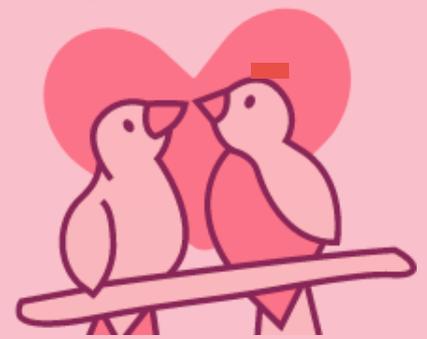
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Top 10 Attractions

"Playa de la Concha"

The Concha beach or the "Playa de la Concha" is without a doubt the most symbolic beach of the coastal city San Sebastián, in the Basque Country. The beach is located in the Concha bay and many times it is referred to as the most beautiful city beach of Europe.

La Concha belongs to the best city beaches around the whole world (the second best city beach according to Travel and Leisure Magazine). The "Donostiaras" or the citizens of "Donostia", which is the Basque name for San Sebastián, surely are lucky people. In this article we provide you with some advice and information about the bay and we want to make sure you will enjoy your San Sebastián holidays to the fullest.

Where is Playa de la Concha?

La Concha is the most centrally located beach of San Sebastián. It is located in the stunningly beautiful, shell shaped Concha bay. The shape of the bay explains the name "Concha" that has been given to it. On one side of the bay you will find the Urgull mountain, next to the harbour and the city hall, and on the other side of the shell you will find the Igueldo mountain. From the city hall you can get to the golden sand beach and the clear blue water in less than a minute. A real luxury, in our opinion!

How big is the Playa de la Concha?

The Concha beach is very spacious. It has a length of 1350 meters and an average width of 40 meters. We say average, since the tides can strongly influence the size of this beach on the Atlantic Ocean.

You can find the end of the Concha beach at the "Pico de Loro" (the so called parrot's beak); this is a small passage of rocks which disappears during high tide. Behind this "Pico de Loro" the Ondaretta beach starts, this beach is also located in the Concha bay and its border is marked by the Igueldo mountain.

A great beach for a walk

Thanks to the fact that the beach is so long, the Concha beach is the best location of the city for a long walk along the coastline. In summer you can do this in your swimsuit, like even the locals like to do, but you enjoy the views here all year long.



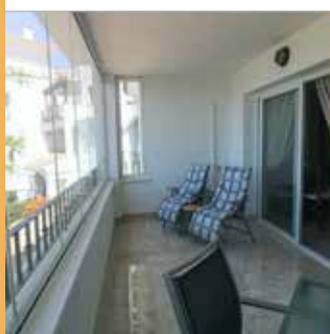
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Why is La Concha so unique?

The beach, affectionately called “La Concha” by the local citizens, is perfect for sunbathing, swimming, and paddling, due to its extensive size. Since the bay is surrounded by mountains, it also perfectly protected against the wind and high waves. Besides this, we can promise you that you will never forget the breathtaking views that you can see from the beach. Because let’s be honest, how many beaches in Europe do you know that are surrounded by green mountains and from which you can see cute, white boats and an island?

A quiet bath in the bay

The Santa Clara island seems to rise from the sea like a mountain. You can swim to this island from the Concha beach, or you can choose to get on a boat or use a kayak.

Besides this, La Concha is also known for its the local swimmers that you can find here all year long. The water of the Atlantic Ocean might be a bit colder, but this won’t stop the locals, especially older, citizens of San Sebastián to go for a daily swim, which is supposed to have a great influence on your condition. Even in winter and when it snows, you will still find some people swimming in the ocean!

This sandy beach, which is protected from the wind by the mountains, is also a perfect place for families with younger children. You can easily walk many meters into the sea, which makes the water accessible for people of all ages and there is a lot of space for playing in the water. Due to its protection, the water in the bay is also pretty quiet, which makes it extra safe for children.

On the beach you can also find the elegant, white Perla spa center, which represents the Belle Epoque style. This spa is partially placed on the beach and this makes the gracious beach complete. So, you can perfectly end your beach day with an afternoon in the spa and a dinner in the restaurant on top of it. Both in the spa as well as in the restaurant you will enjoy great views of the sea through the big windows.



Valencia & Las Fallas

By Taquilla Tickets

OK, first of all let's get our words right: Fallas is pronounced "Fi-yas".

Taquilla Tickets is arranging a three day extravaganza (15th, 16th and 17th March) to the beautiful city of Valencia. Why Valencia ? Because every year the city hosts a spectacular display of "Craftsmanship and Fire". So special is this Festival that UNESCO has listed this as "An intangible Culture Heritage of Humanity". So, if those big boys think it's good, then who are we to argue ? What's it all about ?

This Festival is all about Giant Puppets (Or Ninots). In fact over 700 of them are displayed by parades around the city. These are not just ordinary small "puppets". They are absolutely huge, and are made of papier-mache and wood, and filled with firecrackers. They range from three to twenty (yes twenty!) meters high, and some even bigger than that.

The five days and nights that the Festival lasts are really one continuous street party. The culmination of the five days ends with the burning (OH NO!!) of these beautiful works of art. Why burn them ? The Festival goes back a long, long way, and it celebrates the arrival of Spring. On the 19th March carpenters used to burn the wood that held up their lights during winter. As time passed, all sorts of things were added to these fires, and gave the structures a "human like" appearance. Over time this has expanded to the stunning figures of art that we see today.

Valencia comes alive for this Festival so, during the days and nights, street food fairs are all over the place: Tapas, Paella, mouth watering sausages and ribs, or even seafood are cooked on the biggest grills that you have ever seen !

Every single year the "puppets" change. The work that goes into them over the course of a full year is so hard to believe.

During "Fallas" as it is called, many people wear their "Casal Fallero" dress of regional and historical costumes from the different eras of Valencian history.

An entire Suburban area of Valencia has been designated the "Ciutat Fallera" (Falles City). Sculptors, Artists, Painters spend months and months building these outstanding structures.

So, if you would like to come with us on this very special trip then please contact us on:

Sally: 0034 657346445 (WhatsApp is good too). You can also contact us on our email address which is: taquillaticketscondado@gmail.com

Nigel: can be found at Cat's Bar on Camposol A from Tuesday-Friday 10.15-13.30

OR

You can call in to our Condado de Alhama office from 10.00-13.30 Mon-Friday. We are situated within the office of "Sparkles" in the main square.



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Driving Licence

Driving in Spain. Post brexit, latest rules as an Expat from a third country regarding your driving licence.

This is going to affect so many people coming to Spain, and some that are already here, that I thought we should publish the latest Spanish government law regarding the changing of driving licence.

Basically, the critical date is 31st December 2020.

If you arrived in Spain AFTER 31st December 2020 and have not submitted your driving licence to traffic for change before 31st December 2020, then you need to take the Spanish driving test and obtain a Spanish driving licence. It appears there are no exceptions.

This is the only way you can continue to drive.

You have 6 months from arrival in Spain to do this.

Failure to obtain a spanish licence will mean that you are driving with no licence and no insurance.

The clampdown and potential spot checks are going to start on the 1st March 2022.

There is of course a slim chance that the UK and EU governments will find a solution before 1st March. But as the saying goes, Don't hold your breath.

Following the letter of the law, if you have been here more than 6 months, and arrived after 31st December 2020, then you are already technically driving illegally.

Information published by the DGT on its web;

“As of the 1st of March 2022, the system for driving licences issued by the British authorities will be that established for licences issued in non-EU third nations.

Driving licences issued by the British authorities will be valid for driving in Spain for a period of six months, from the holder's date of entry or from the date of obtaining their legal residence in the country.

The United Kingdom ceased to belong to the European Union effective as of the 31st of December 2020, so all traffic agreements within the EU are no longer applicable to holders of licences issued by the UK:

- As of the 1st of January 2021, licences issued by the British authorities will enable you to drive in Spain until the 28th of February 2022 and will not be valid for driving in our country from that point onwards, the established in article 21 of the general driver's regulation being of application from said date.

- For those in possession of a British driving licence, who requested the exchange, replacement, or renewal before the 31st of December 2020, we remind you that they will be processed provided that they verification by the United Kingdom authorities before the 1st of January 2021 has taken place. Applications submitted after the 30th of December 2020 will not be processed.

- If you did not request an exchange before the 31st of December 2020, you will have to obtain a new Spanish driving licence.

Translated by Torre Vieja Translators

Supplied by InsureSpain

Rules are changing all the time since Brexit. Please make sure you check on an official website for the latest information.





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FROM WIGAN PIER TO ANDALUCÍA

Just below El Cortijo del Rector there is an era, where, in days long gone by, grain was threshed with long-handled wooden flails or trampled out by oxen or burros. Nowadays it's a parking place for us and our two neighbouring houses. To enter it you have to drive up the narrow camino and make a tight, steep left turn. One morning we returned from our weekly shopping to find a strange car parked right on the bend and all but blocking the access, so it was only with some difficulty that I managed to squeeze past it.

Clearly some debris must have rattled against the other car because a minute later, crossing the terrace to empty the ash pan of the wood-burning stove, I heard the scream of a car engine from the era below. Looking over the wall I saw that the driver of the strange car had backed his vehicle close up to ours and, with the handbrake full on was, spraying it with gravel.

'What on earth is he doing?' asked José el Vecino who happened to be passing.

'He's trying to damage my car,' I replied. And I held out the heavy steel ash pan over the roof of the aggressor's vehicle four metres below. With a rapid reverse turn, the idiot screamed off down the camino, and we all breathed a deep sigh of relief and hoped that would be the end of the incident.

'Who the hell was that?' I asked José.

'That was your neighbour's son-in-law Manolo.'

Several weeks later, in the small hours of the madrugada, we were startled awake by what seemed to be a series of explosions sounding quite near to the house. The dogs of course went crazy Biggles's high yelp counterpointing Boris's deep bass. Eventually, the racket subsided, and we decided that local teenagers had been having fun with fireworks and went back to sleep. Leaving the house the following morning, I discovered that all the windows of our car had been smashed and a brand-new set of tyres slashed to shreds. The vehicles of two expatriate neighbours, one British, one Belgian, had also been vandalized.

'Have you had a row with anybody who might have been nursing a grudge?' The Guardia Civil officer asked the obvious question and, like a total gobbin, I said 'No'. We like to keep peace with our neighbours and surely a slight misunderstanding over a bit of gravel couldn't lead to this raging resentment and wholesale destruction? In any case, more cars than

ours had been destroyed and nobody in his right mind would smash up the cars of people with whom he had no quarrel.

During the next week or so, vague rumours circulated about a xenophobic gang, bent on driving us foreigners out of the valley, and our neighbours Paco and Graciela kindly offered us the use of their garage just to be on the safe side.

'Mind you,' said Graciela, 'I don't believe this stuff about hassling foreigners. The same thing, only worse, happened to the father of Manolo, our son-in-law, and he's Spanish.'

'Worse?'

'The criminals drove a tractor along the street where he lives and smashed up all the vehicles including Manolo's dad's car.'

'So, our vandal couldn't have been Manolo,' I said later to José el Vecino. 'He'd never stoop to that kind of thing if it had happened to his own father.'

José regarded me pityingly: 'A while ago, Manolo's father lent him quite a lot of money on condition that the loan would be repaid by a certain date. When it became clear that Manolo had no intention of repaying it, the father threatened to take legal action. The following night, the father's car was rammed with a stolen tractor, together with all those others, no doubt with the idea of putting the Guardia onto a false scent.'

'The same ploy somebody used when our car was vandalized.' 'Exactly the same. And he's got away with that kind of thing at least three other times, to my certain knowledge.'

Though I'm perfectly content with my trusty old Ford, I'll happily spend half an hour browsing any used car lot. A while back, I was intrigued to come across an elderly police cruiser for sale, still in its original paintwork, though of course with the insignia removed.

'Don't even think about it,' said Val, 'we have quite enough junk cluttering up the old homestead.' But I know somebody eventually gave the old cop car a home because I later saw it several times in and around the pueblo.

At a bend in the lonely road eastwards across the sierras, there is a big pig farm on a low hill, with a very smelly slurry pit below. I'm told that this road was

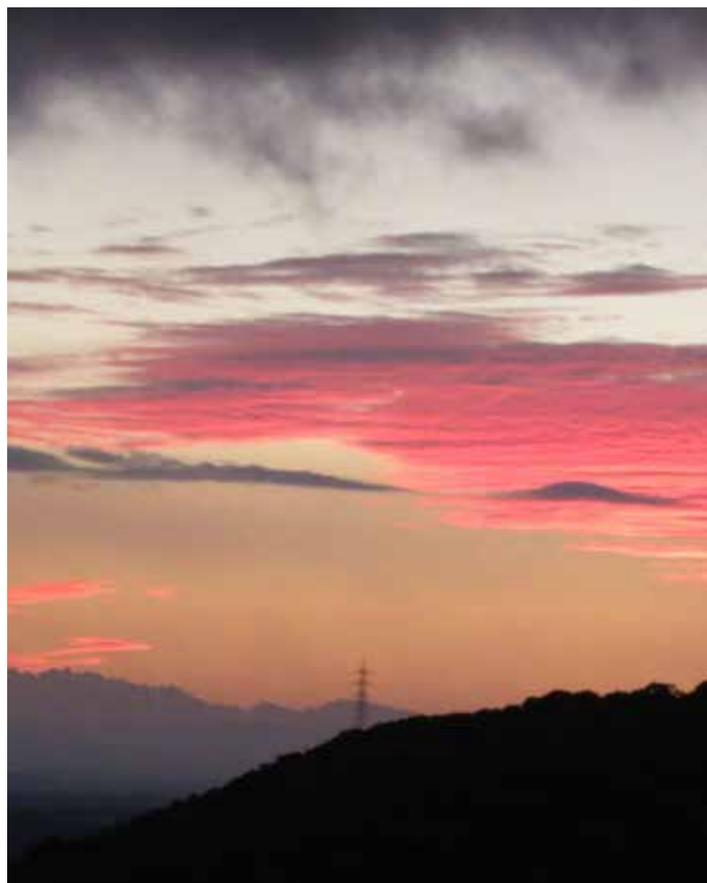
Part 11: Dangerous Corner

used each weekday on his way to and from work by Manolo the car smasher.

Manolo's working day began very early, and one misty Monday morning, soon after dawn, there was a parked car, painted in familiar green and white livery, blocking the narrow roadway below the farm.

Three muscular men, in khaki pants and brown leather jackets, stood with folded arms at the roadblock, but it was only after Manolo had come to a halt and switched off the engine, that he realized that the green and white car was not carrying the Guardia Civil insignia.

That slurry pit is very deep, and local folklore has it that neither Manolo nor his car has been seen since that day. I can't absolutely swear that this part of the story is true, but I can certainly vouch for the fact it's quite a few years since we saw either of them anywhere near El Cortijo del Rector.



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