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*Lifestyle magazine and property portal*

ISSUE 66  
MAY 2022  
**FREE**

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### Buying in Spain

Six Steps To Owning  
Your Dream Home

### Agent Towns

San Javier

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by Piscinas Escribano

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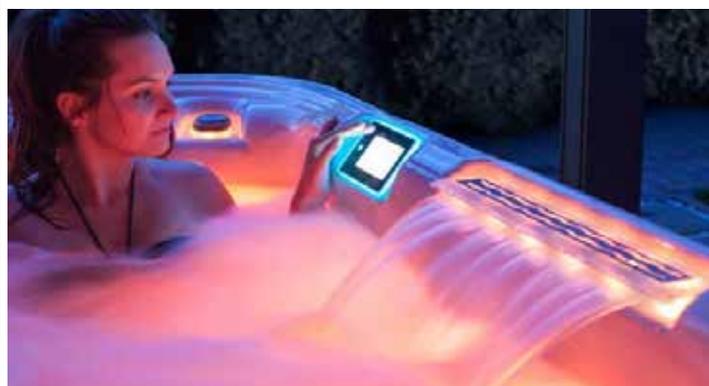
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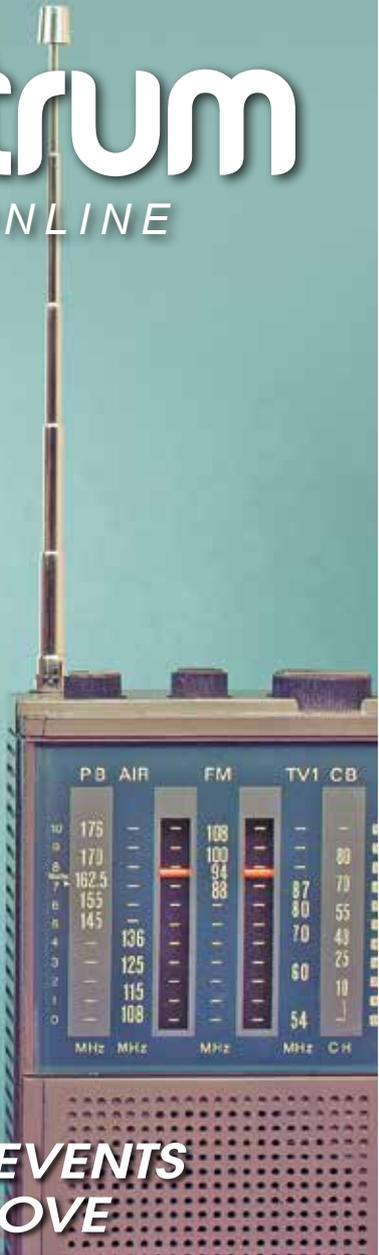
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**contact** A Life in **SPAIN** :  
**enquiries@alifeinspain.com**  
**peter.clarke@alifeinspain.com**

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# A Life in SPAIN

## Welcome to the May edition of ALIS.

Summer is finally here. Wall to wall sunshine for the next few months. So get your swimmers and head to the beach.

We have some exciting news coming for both readers and advertisers. Don't miss next months edition

So what's in this month?

Most Iconic Hotels is back in Barcelona at the Palacio Real. This is a true iconic hotel which is steeped in history

There's also an article on Rello. On a rocky ridge, in Altos de Barahona and looking out over the Escalote River, sits a small, completely walled medieval village, known as Rello.....

Enjoy this month's magazine

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# Most Iconic hotels in Spain

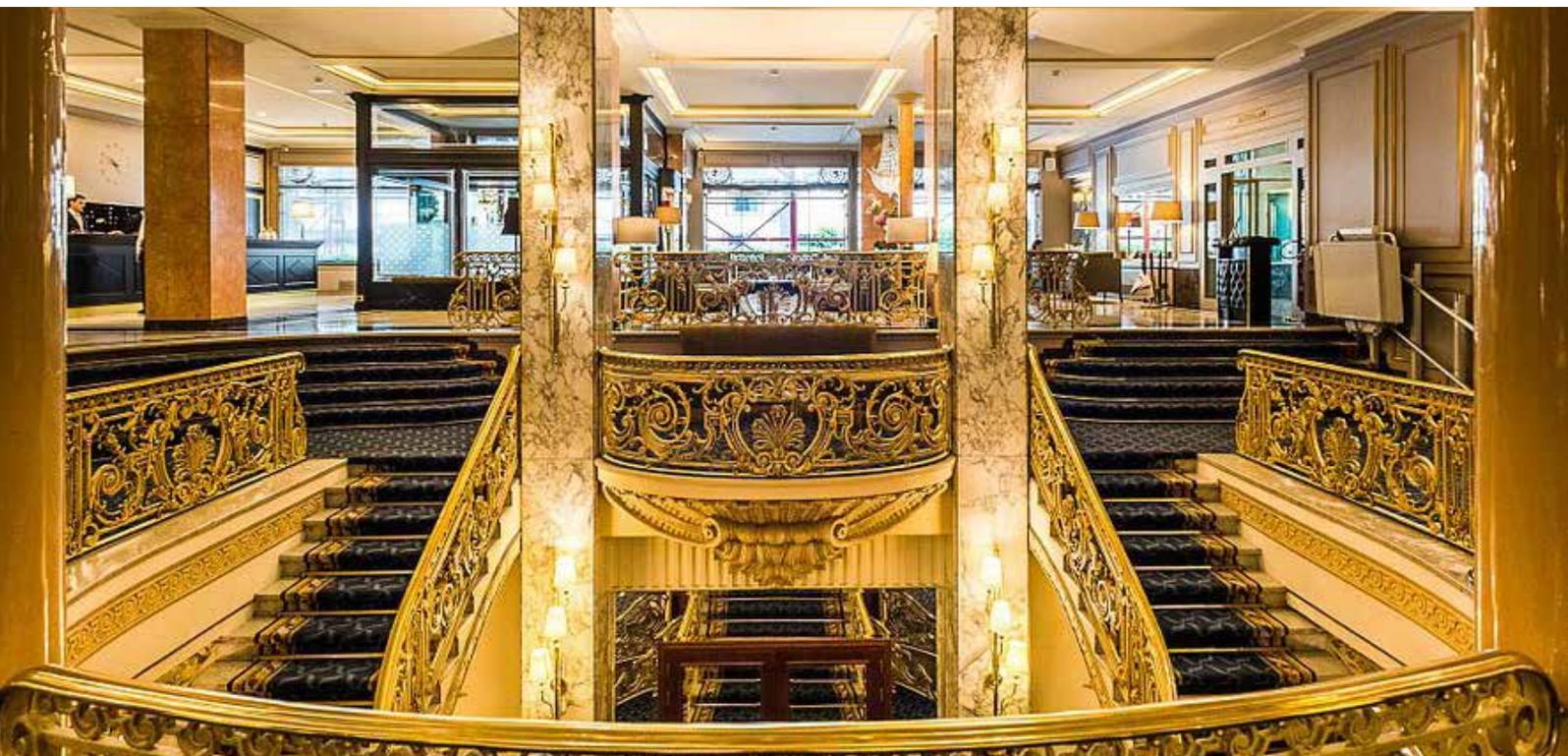
## *Palace Hotel, Barcelona*



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.

Back in Barcelona, the Palace was one of the first major hotels to be planned in the city. César Ritz received the commission, which came from a society of Barcelona investors including Eusebio Güell. In the minds of this group, led by Francesc Cambó, was the Universal Exhibition of 1929. However, the works took several years to complete due to the complicated social atmosphere that prevailed. The direct inspiration for this building was the Palace and Ritz in Madrid. Its location was the Gran Vía de Les Corts Catalanes, in the Eixample.

During the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera another of the most iconic hotels in Spain enjoyed great years; thanks to the regular presence of Alfonso XIII. It fared worse during the Civil War, when it was taken over by trade unions and collectivised. It was on the point of becoming an administrative headquarters, but managed to hold out. Once the conflict was over, it gradually took flight and consolidated itself as a reference point. Its last major refurbishment was in 2017, when it included a beautiful garden. As a curiosity, until 2005 its name was the Ritz Hotel, but due to rights reasons it had to become the Palace.



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# Let's Learn Spanish

## Barbershop

### Phrases

I'd like to get a haircut.

I'd like a shave.

Don't touch the top, please.

Would you like side or centre parting?

I would like a new style

Do you want it thinned?

I'd like to get my hair layered.

How much is it...?

Wash, cut and blow-dry

What product would you recommend?

Me gustaría cortarme el pelo.

Me gustaría afeitarme.

No toque la parte de arriba.

¿Quiere la raya al lado o al medio?

Quiero un nuevo estilo

¿Quiere que le haga un vaciado?

Quiero capas.

¿Cuánto cuesta...?

Lavar, cortar y peinar

¿Qué producto me recomienda?

May gus-ta-ree-ah core-tar-may el pay-loh

May gus-ta-ree-ah core-tar-may laspoon-tas

No tow-key la par-tea day a-ree-bah

Key-er-reylahray-yah al la-doh oh al may-dee-oh?

Key-er-oh oon nwe-bowess-tea-loh

Key-er-e kay lay a-gaonba-thee-oh

Key-er-oh ka-pass

kwan-toe kwes-ta

La-var, core-tar e pay-nar

¿Kay pro-dook-toe mehrey-coh-mee-en-da?

### Vocab

Mustache

Beard

Goatee

Sideburns

Shave

Dandruff

Fade

Mirror

Towel

Scissors

Comb

Shampoo

Hair spray

Bigote

Barba

Perilla

Patillas

Afeitado

Caspa

Degradado

Espejo

Toalla

Tijeras

Peine

Champú

Laca

Bee-go-tay

Bar-bah

Pe-ree-ya

Pa-tee-yas

A-fai-ee-tah-doh

Kas-pa

De-gra-dah-do

Es-peh-ho

Toe-eye-ya

Tea-hair-ass

Pay-nay

Cham-pooh

La-ka



### Now try our wordsearch:

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

Caspa

Barba

Toalla

Degradado

Tijeras

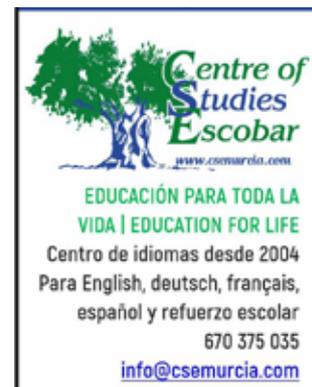
Champu

Peine

Laca

Perilla

Espejo



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# Puerto de Mazarrón

If you are dreaming of starting a new life in a Mediterranean paradise then look no further than the beautiful bay of Puerto de Mazarrón.

*By Heidi Wardman*



## Population

The attractive combination of year round sunshine and incredibly cheap properties have proven a powerful magnet for foreign investors, with British expats showing a particular interest in the area. The population more than doubled during the "noughties", with the Town Hall reporting that people of eighty nationalities lived within the municipality, including a significant number of Europeans, hailing from Germany, Belgium, Bulgaria, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, UK and Romania.

However during 2013 the number of inhabitants fell by 0.4%, which is thought to be as a result of large numbers of foreign investors selling up and returning to their homelands, due to the lack of employment opportunities and other consequences of the economic crisis. In spite of this, the foreign population is still thought to be around 16% with a high proportion of those being Brits.

In this sense, Puerto de Mazarrón is a great location for anyone wanting to move overseas but who is concerned about the language barrier and being isolated within a traditional Spanish town. Here you should find it relatively easy to make friends of a similar mindset, who are happy to offer advice on becoming established and give you the lowdown on life in Spain.



## Climate

Puerto de Mazarrón is a picturesque beach resort located in the Murcia region on the Costa Calida or "warm coast", and belongs to the inland municipality of Mazarrón. The town dates back to the Carthaginian era of history, and is currently home to more than 34,350 inhabitants, whilst also having a very good tourist infrastructure with hotel rooms, villas and apartments to rent as well as restaurants, bars and nightclubs.

Spanning some 318 square kilometres, from the Mar Menor, around the La Manga Strip and along the Mediterranean coast to Aguilas in the south, its position means that Puerto de Mazarrón enjoys a pleasant Mediterranean climate.

It relies on cooling sea breezes throughout the summer, with protection offered by the foothills of the Sierra de la Almenara Mountains against the cold North winds in winter. Statistics confirm that the area averages 325 sunny days, or nearly 3,000 hours of sunshine each year and the average temperature easily exceeds 20 degrees, making it an ideal spot for year round residency.



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## Amenities

You will be pleased to learn that the local authorities are accustomed to assisting foreigners with completing paperwork and dealing with their enquiries, and will usually be able to supply you with all the information that you need, in a language which you can understand. Plus, as it is an area with a significant foreign population, you will also find that there are English speaking staff in many of the local banks, supermarkets, pharmacies, bars and restaurants, as well as several businesses operated by British and Irish residents.

There is a modern Medical Centre or “Centro de Salud” and Dentist in Puerto de Mazarrón, as well as larger centres in the main town of Mazarrón and on Camposol. Puerto de Mazarrón is home to a very good Private International School, “Colegio Siglo XXI”, as well as several state schools that have a glowing reputation in terms of exam results and support network for foreign students. All of this will really help to make your transition to Spain far easier than you might find if you chose a traditional town, or piece of “Real Spain” as some might put it.

## Beaches

Being a coastal resort, Puerto de Mazarrón is particularly proud of its beaches, boasting a golden stretch of an impressive thirty-five kilometers in length. With thirty-three pristine beaches and cozy coves to choose from, and water temperatures rising to a soothing 20 degrees during summer, this is the perfect spot for sunbathing, swimming, scuba diving, fishing and practicing a wide range of water sports. There is certainly a beach to suit all tastes and requirements with six of them flying the coveted “Blue Flag” award for quality amenities and cleanliness.

Those situated close to Puerto de Mazarrón are the busiest, and the preferred location for many people in the Region of Murcia, being within close proximity of the shops, bars and restaurants. This area has gradually become one of the most important tourist destinations of Costa Cálida. Meanwhile, those further along the coast in the Protected Wildlife Reserve of Sierra de las Moreras are generally quieter and more private, with some allowing the more adventurous bather to achieve an all over tan!

## Recommended Sandy Spots

Puerto de Mazarrón itself lies around a wide bay, framed by the foothills of the breathtaking Almenara Mountains. It has a spacious sandy beach offering a variety of water sports including scuba diving along with a selection of gift shops, boutiques, cafes and restaurants.

Bolnuevo is a beautiful long beach of golden sand spanning over 1.5km and surrounded by various amenities. Shielded by the famous wind eroded rocks where the elements have carved fascinating sculptures, it offers idyllic bathing conditions even in winter, although the chilly waters are not for the faint hearted. There are various sports and recreational activities taking place along the beach and ample parking close by.

Los Perchelles is a picturesque, quite secluded cove situated just outside of Canadas de Gallego. It is accessed via a narrow dirt road lined with tomato plantations, which is suitable for all types of vehicles although you should be aware that there are always a number of cyclists and pedestrians along the route. At the end you will find a beautiful beach guarded by palm trees, and home to a wide spectrum of flora and fauna.

The beach of San Gines can be found in La Azohia, and is characterized by fine sand and a few pebbles. Covering 800m of coastline and 25m wide the beach features ample parking, lifeguards during high season, a diving zone, various restaurants, public phones, toilets and showers nearby. Having been praised for its cleanliness and high quality facilities this is an ideal choice for a family day at the seaside.



## Entertainment

The Town Hall is quite active in organizing competitive and sponsored events, including cross country runs or mountain walks, sub-aqua diving, cycling or sailing regattas. They are also responsible for hosting a plethora of music concerts, street parades and parties throughout the year in accordance with the regional fiesta calendar.

Those of greatest local significance include the Fiestas del Milagro in Bolnuevo and Mazarrón, which are normally celebrated on 17 November, with the Romeria and event known by the expat community as the "Bolnuevo Sardine Festival" taking place the Sunday after. A holiday known as "La Purisma" which takes place on 8 December is also of great local interest, when a huge celebration typically comprising a street parade, music, dance and plenty of traditional cuisine takes place to honour the Patron Saint of Mazarrón. On 19 of this month, a slighter less extravagant fiesta is observed, to honour the Patron Saint of Puerto de Mazarrón, San José.

## Living The Dream....

A Life In Spain spoke to Ray and Chrissie who relocated to Puerto de Mazarrón with their family in 2012, who gave us some insight into what it is like to be a foreign resident living in the vicinity. Chrissie said that Mazarrón had been a favourite holiday destination for many years, because it is not too built up with some great beaches and plenty of activities to entertain the kids. "I always dreamed of living here one day, but I had concerns about the upheaval involved for our three children, then aged three, six and eight". However, when Ray got made redundant from his job of ten years they decided that it was now or never. "We felt that we would never be able to afford it again if we stayed in the UK for any length of time with Ray out of work.

So we put the house on the market, and sold within 3 months; then booked on a viewing trip to look at various properties along the Costa Calida". Ray went on to say that "We liked Camposol, because it is well connected with a thriving international population, but eventually decided it was a bit "Too British" to suit our requirements. On the other hand, we found that the majority of people who live in Mazarrón are Spanish, but there is also a healthy contingent of Brits or at least English speaking residents, giving us the best of both worlds". He added that "There are so many really good, friendly bars and restaurants in Mazarrón

Town and Puerto de Mazarrón that we never get bored of the food or company. Whether we fancy a lively Spanish evening or some home comforts and British humour, it is all available on our doorstep!"

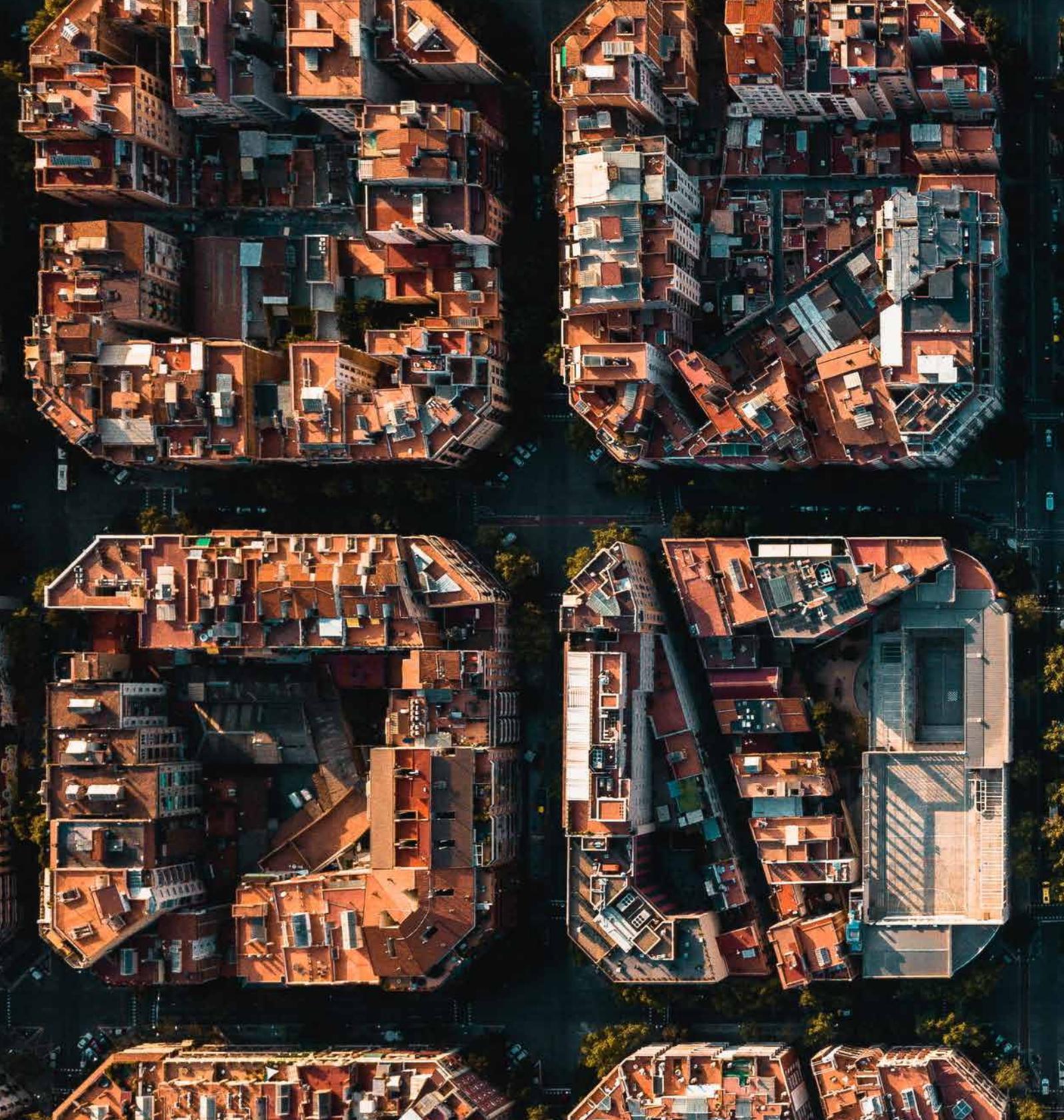
Chrissie went on to explain that "One of the most difficult choices we had to make was whether to put the children in a Spanish state or private international school. We felt that our two youngest would cope fine with the transition, but were quite concerned that our eight year old, Sam, may have missed too much of the Spanish curriculum to catch up.

However, after chatting to our new neighbours about their own experiences we felt assured that all three would be better off being thrown into a Spanish school where they would be forced to learn the language and absorb the culture." She confirms that it was a good decision, as the children settled and made friends very quickly. "Sam loved it from day one and was able to walk to school with a group of other kids of various nationalities who lived nearby. He struggled with certain subjects to start with, but the teaching staff were extremely sympathetic and prepared to spend time giving him extra attention until he grasped it!"

Finally we asked if they had any regrets, or if there is anything which they would do differently if they had the chance, what would it be? Chrissy commented that "The only thing I would change is when we came to live in Spain- we should have done it ten years earlier!" Ray finished that "We are more than satisfied with the area which we chose, even more so now that we have seen problems arising in other areas, which fortunately have not affected residents in Puerto de Mazarrón. I would say that we were very lucky though, and recommend anyone else considering relocating to do lots of homework before they agree to anything.

The internet is full of stories about expats who have relocated to Spain, some good, some bad, so you need to choose your sources wisely and don't just get swept away with the excitement of the moment! It is a massive decision which will change your life completely, so go into it with your eyes open and you will have a fantastic future ahead of you!"





## Buying In Spain...Six Steps To Owning Your Dream Home

Buying property in Spain might seem like a bit of a blur. However, when broken down into these six simple stages then things become a little clearer.....

*By Heidi Wardman*





## Stage One: Searching For Your Spanish Home

Your adventure will commence with your property search. This is the fun part where you get to look around a selection of properties and envisage yourself lounging on the terrace with a glass of vino in hand. It is best not to rush things at this stage, as you need to be sure that the area and property type that you are focusing on are right for you, as well as determine whether your budget will stretch to it. Once you are sure that you have found the property that ticks all the right boxes, you will need to obtain a copy of the "Nota Simple", an official document which specifies exactly what you are buying and what is registered according to Land Registry. It will also be beneficial to look into the annual IBI (Council tax costs) and rate of community charges required where applicable, to give you a clearer picture of the potential ongoing costs of your purchase. If you have appointed a Spanish Lawyer to assist you through the purchase process then they will be able to advise you on this matter. They should also perform checks to verify that the seller is the legal owner of the property, along with various other basic legal issues before you part with any cash.

## Stage 2: Reserving a Property

Signing a reservation contract and paying a deposit to secure the purchase is not a mandatory stage in the purchase process. However, if you wish to make sure that the property is not sold to anyone else whilst you are sorting out your legal matters and finances then it is advisable that you include this stage, removing the property from the active market. In doing this your chosen property will be considered "Sold subject to contract" as is the case in the UK. If you are buying the property through an agent, you will usually find that the company has its own reservation contract and procedure in place. You should always seek legal advice before signing anything or paying any monies as it will be difficult to reverse your decision once made. A good Spanish Lawyer will usually offer free advice at these early stages, and will be able to help you to protect your reservation fee in the event of you wishing to abandon the purchase. They will also be able to structure the purchase process allowing sufficient time to undertake initial legal searches, provide a cooling off period, and where required provide time for financial arrangements like a Spanish mortgage to be put in place.



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### Stage 3: Legal Implications

If the buying process, which you are entering into, requires you to sign a Private Purchase Contract, then this is equivalent to an exchange of contract in other countries and holds the same legal implications. At this point you will usually be expected to pay a deposit of around 10% to the seller. Once you have signed the contract you are legally obliged to complete within the agreed timescale, or risk losing your deposit or incur late payment penalties. The contract works to protect both parties, as at this stage the seller is legally required to sell the property at the price agreed at the point of signing. The purchase contract will also stipulate what expenses will be met by the buyer, and what fixtures and fittings will be included in the sale.

Your Spanish Lawyer may wish to include a series of “get out” clauses in order to protect you from legal action should things not go according to plan, such as “subject to Spanish mortgage”, “legal searches” and other matters. However, if one of the clauses needs to be actioned the buyer will need to prove that it was necessary and this will usually result in a lengthy and costly legal battle, before any monies are returned. Therefore, it is best to ensure that certain requirements can be, or have already been met, before you agree to sign. For example, if the buyer requires a Spanish mortgage, this should have been offered and meet all of the financial requirements. A valuation should have been undertaken and all related legal searches completed to ensure that there are no infractions or possible debts outstanding. This stage is particularly important in Spain, as any outstanding debts or fines remain attached to the property rather than its owner, so

are passed on to become the responsibility of the new owner if not cleared before completion. It is also important to ensure that the full asking price which you are expected to pay is documented, and that you will not be expected to hand over any additional cash sum to avoid payment of taxes as was often the case in the past. Before signing the purchase agreement it is important to be clear of who is buying the property (i.e. what name(s) should be included in the purchase agreement) as it is difficult to add or remove names later on once the paperwork is in place.

Vendors, Agents and their legal representatives are likely to push for the purchase contract to be signed quickly, without allowing sufficient time for all of the necessary checks to be completed. However, no matter how much pressure you feel that you are under you must safeguard yourself, as it is you who could end up in trouble if things go wrong, so they will simply have to wait. Likewise, the timescale allowed between offering to buy and the contract being exchanged has to be carefully managed by the buyer’s legal adviser to avoid the risk of another buyer getting in first and essentially “stealing” the sale. A good Lawyer will be able to work quickly and effectively to ensure the right level of due diligence has been undertaken so that the buyer can complete the purchase in a secure manner as soon as possible. As a buyer, you might be quite anxious whilst these checks are being undertaken, but try to remember that it is better to miss out on a property than to lose large sums of money and end up in court because you rushed into something without doing enough research during the early stages.



## Stage 4: Completion Process

Completion of a property purchase in Spain takes place within the official offices of the “Notaria Publica”. It is imperative at this stage that all parties connected to the sale or purchase of the property are present, including any bank personnel for redemption or subrogation of an existing loan, the bank providing a new mortgage; and the seller or their legal representative, who can either sign or bear witness to the signing of the contract.

Please note that if you choose to attend without the presence of a legal representative the Notary will insist that you can either speak fluent Spanish or arrive accompanied by a competent Translator. Before signing the contract you should take the time to understand all related costs and ensure that you have sufficient funds to cover these as well as all additional taxes. Any relevant cheques or banker's drafts should be written and available to hand over at the Notary's request. Please note that the Spanish Notary Office can be a very busy place, and due to people arriving late, paperwork not being correct and other problems, proceedings will quite often run significantly behind schedule. In certain circumstances one of the required parties, usually the representative from the bank, may cancel, so the appointment will have to be rearranged for a later date, therefore it is important to allow for such incidences when you book your visit if you do not reside permanently in Spain.

The Notary will read through all of the paperwork carefully, and often ask questions which need clarification or possibly require additional pieces of evidence which have not been submitted, which will result in the appointment being suspended until the issues are addressed. Either you if attending in person, or your Lawyer if they have been granted Power of Attorney, will be required to have a certified passport or original passport and original NIE certificates available. The Notary will also request to see evidence of the full payment required for completion and be able to verify their source before the contract is signed.

## Stage 5: Registration of Ownership

Once monies have been exchanged and the contract is signed, the Notary will present you or your legal representative with a photocopy of the deeds. The original document is sent to land registry to record the change of circumstances. The registration process can take up to three months, and once completed the original deeds and all invoices relating to the

transaction become available for collection by you, the buyer.

It is important to check for yourself that registration has taken place and the property transferred into your name, and that you or your Lawyer has received the original copies of all documents and invoices. Should you wish to sell the property in the future you will need all of this evidence to complete the sale and avoid paying Spanish capital gains tax on costs incurred at purchase through lack of evidence of these costs.

## Stage Six: Celebrate!

Now that all of the i's are dotted and t's crossed, you are the proud owner of your Spanish dream home. So all that is left to do is pop open a refreshing bottle of cava and raise a toast to your future in sunny Spain! Salud!



A promotional graphic for 'Terra Natura Murcia'. The background is a vibrant green with a leaf pattern. On the left, a close-up photograph of a lioness's face is shown, looking slightly to the left. On the right, the 'Terra Natura Murcia' logo is displayed in a white, torn-paper style. Below the logo is the coat of arms of Murcia, a crown, and the text 'Ayuntamiento de Murcia'. At the bottom, a wooden sign with a distressed texture contains the text 'A FULL DAY OF FUN, FOR ALL THE FAMILY...'.

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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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# Galicia: Sea and Land

Its cuisine is one of the main tourist attractions of Galicia: the exquisite delicacies of this region are based on the high quality and variety of the local products used in the preparation of dishes. Country, farm and sea products are unique in their characteristics and quality. Furthermore, it cannot be forgotten that one of the main pillars of Galician cooking is the professionalism of its experts. Galician chefs are found world-wide.

The importance of its gastronomy is manifested at the more than 300 gastronomic fiestas which are held in Galicia throughout the year. The origins of these exaltations to local produce, which arouse much interest in visitors, lie in the many local and regional traditional fiestas held during harvest time or religious holidays, such as the "romerías", where promises are made to the patron saint and then completed with a traditional meal. Some of these fiestas attract great crowds and have been recognised as of national tourist interest.

## Sea

Traditionally Galicia, with its 1,200 kilometre coastline and countless sea ports and harbours, has always been a region where the sea is all important, one of the main activities of its inhabitants being that of fishing. Today, Vigo is the main fishing harbour in Europe and the Galician rias are the main producers of mussels in the world. Its exceptional coastline, formed of the highest cliffs in Europe, and the placid waters of the rias, together with the rich nutrients found in this part of the Atlantic Ocean, have given rise to a unique ecosystem which supplies the most exquisite culinary products.

Barnacles from the coast which have been bashed by the strong Atlantic waves, crayfish, scallops, spider crabs, "nécoras" (small crabs), shrimps, "bueyes de mar" (large crabs) and lobster from the rias, together with the oysters, mussels, cockles, clams, octopus, cuttlefish, turbot, red bream, sardines, sargo (similar to bonito), sea bass and many other types of fish which populate the Galician waters. The centuries-old fishing tradition of Galicia has resulted in fish markets which offer the best variety of deep-sea fish, such as tuna, hake, cod, pollock and the delectable mackerel. Simple recipes for top quality products. This is the traditional cooking of Galicia: what really counts is the raw material.

## Land

If the coast is rich in produce, interior Galicia is no worse off. Peppers with Denomination, such as those from Padrón, potatoes from Bergantiños, parsnip tops throughout the region; "Pan de carballo" and "cea" and corn. Nuts such as chestnuts, walnuts, hazelnuts and almonds; and we must not forget the wild and tasty mushrooms, the blueberries and forest honey. Vegetable dishes include Galician broth, made of green beans, chard, French beans,

cabbage and parsnip tops, potatoes and haricot beans. The most important meat in Galicia is beef. It is eaten very young as veal, and the best animals bear the "ternera gallega" seal of quality.

This meat is used to prepare hundreds of recipes, such as the exquisite sirloin steak, the popular "caldeiro" (type of stew) and "Galician cocido", made with potato and chickpeas. The visitor who prefers his meat well-done, must try Galician ox, which has crossed borders and been incorporated into the cuisine of other Spanish regions, such as the Basque Country. Another speciality is roast suckling kid, which is always present on the best tables and at celebrations. Furthermore, its poultry range includes the free-range cockerel and of course the famous capon, a free-range castrated cock which has been carefully raised and fed and is a speciality at Christmas.

With regards its cheese, the majority are prepared using cow's milk. Galicia maintains Denominations for such cheeses as Tetilla, Ulloa, San Simón and O Cebreiro. Its cooked ham is used to prepare the typical ham with parsnip tops. Interior Galicia loves its sausages, the most important with regards originality being the "androlla" sausage and "botelo", which is smoked and then cooked. Its "chorizos" and "salchichones" (salami-type sausages) are of top-quality. Furthermore, other parts of the pig are used to make Galician stews such as streaky bacon, snout, the meat around the vertebrae, trotters, etc. Galicia also cultivates its own wine and boasts five different Denominations of Origin. The most famous of its liqueurs is the "aguardiente gallego", a high-proof distillate which is used to make the traditional mulled drink known as "queimada" (sugared "aguardiente" which is flamed). Coffee liqueur, cherry liqueur and herb liqueur.

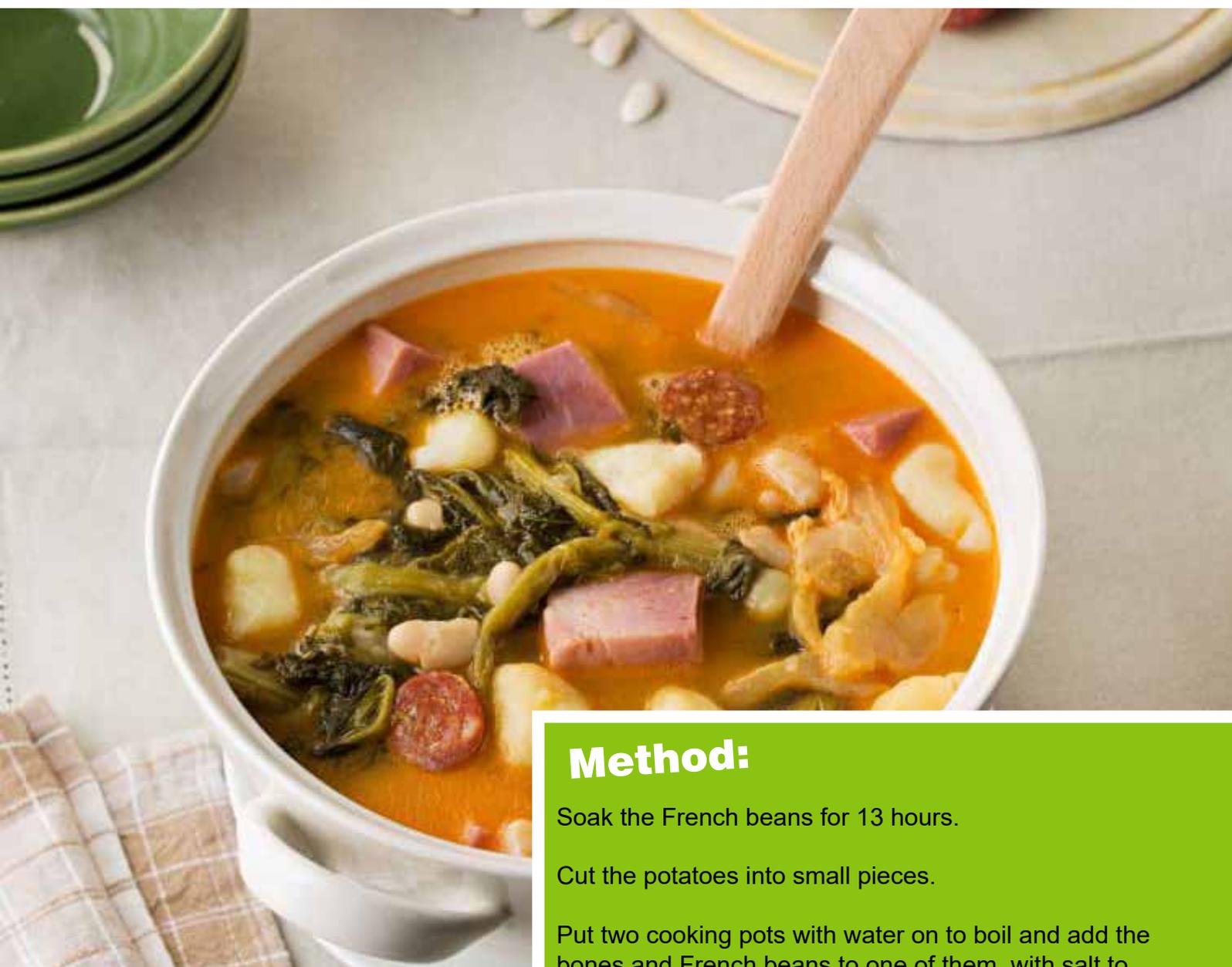
## Both sea and land

**EMPANADA:** The dish, which must be one of the most versatile that has ever existed, that unites interior Galicia with its coast is called "empanada" (filled pastries). "Empanada" can be stuffed with pork rib, meat, pork loin, beef loin, sardines, octopus, cod with raisins, bonito...almost anything you can imagine.

## Christmas food in Galicia

The seafood is a must, be in the form of a seafood platter or in dishes such as octopus a feira, stuffed scallops or clams prepared sailor style. For mains, we suggest a fish classic (cod with cauliflower) or a typical Galician meat based dish, lacón con grelos (pork shoulder with turnip tops). The most traditional Christmas desserts are the Santiago tart and the filloas (crepes), as well as a selection of marzipan and seasonal cakes made with chestnuts or apple.

# Galician broth



## Ingredients:

Ingredients for 4 people:

3 dl of water

1 fresh bone of cured ham or pork shoulder

1 beef bone (preferably with marrow)

100 g of French beans

25 g of animal fat

1 bunch of parsnip tops

1kg of potatoes

Salt

## Method:

Soak the French beans for 13 hours.

Cut the potatoes into small pieces.

Put two cooking pots with water on to boil and add the bones and French beans to one of them, with salt to taste.

When they are half-cooked, remove the bones and add the potatoes, without removing from the flame.

Place the parsnip tops in the other cooking pot to eliminate any sourness.

When they come to the boil, remove and add them with the animal fat to the cooking pot with the potatoes and beans.

Leave everything to simmer until it is well-cooked and add salt if desired.

This recipe can be enriched with more pork and spicy sausage.

# Roast baby goat



## Method:

Crush the garlic, thyme and salt, add a splash of oil, spread the shoulders with this mixture

Place in the oven to cook for about 90 minutes at 180°C.

Sprinkle with water and its own juice

## Ingredients:

### INGREDIENTS FOR 4 PEOPLE:

4 shoulders of suckling goat

600 g each

2 gloves of garlic

1 dl of olive oil

1/2 l of water

1 sprig of thyme and some salt

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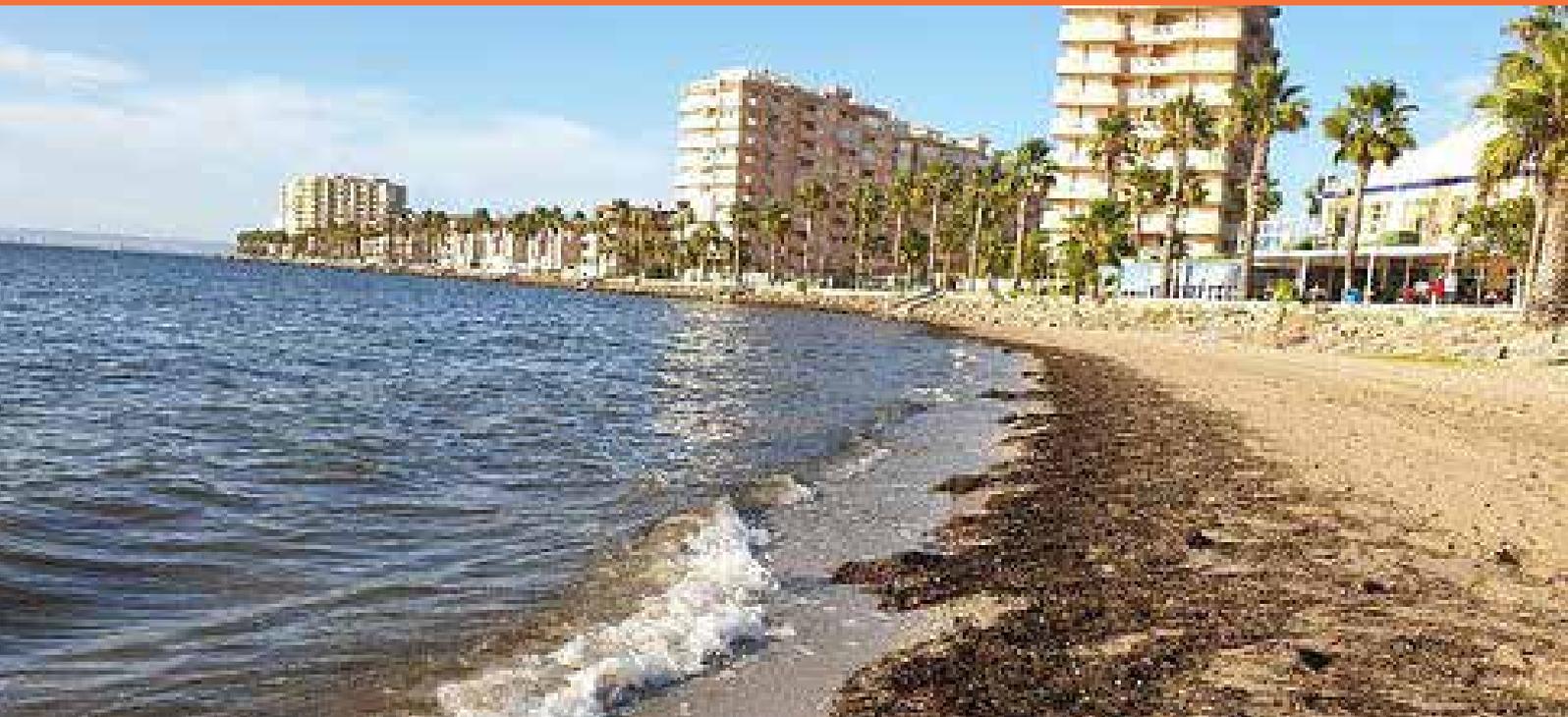
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Famous for its summer festivals and its dedication to agricultural and nautical activities, San Javier, located in the Mar Menor, goes way beyond the mere expectations of beaches. Cool air and the fresh taste of seafood provide alternatives to this area, whose main tourist hotspots are Santiago de la Ribera and La Manga del Mar Menor.

Located on the coast of the Mar Menor, its history began after the period of the Berber invasions in the area. It arose around a shrine that was built at the beginning of the 17th century and dedicated to the Apostle San Francisco Javier. Its territory, which is dedicated to agriculture and the sea, has the outstanding coastal locations of Santiago de la Ribera and La Manga del Mar Menor, both of eminent tourist interest.

Santiago de la Ribera was created in 1888 with the construction of a shrine dedicated to the Apostle St. James. Currently, this modern-looking town has a beautiful sea front and holds on to its fishing village flavour. La Manga, which mostly belongs to the municipality of San Javier, offers the possibility of choosing between two seas with different temperatures, saltiness and waves. Moreover, its special qualities for water sports and its wide range of leisure and accommodation possibilities have turned it into a magnificent tourist resort. San Javier perhaps widens the options for the rural tourist with its many inland villages and protected areas away from the coast, such as Cabezo Gordo, and make it an excellent alternative to bear in mind if you're looking for something other than its excellent beaches.

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## A Culinary Guide To Hondon Valley.

*If you are keen to sample some traditional Spanish cuisine you cannot beat the Hondon Valley, where every dish is a tribute to the nation's rich gastronomy.*

By Heidi Wardman.



## Wine Production

With an economy that relies heavily on agriculture, it is no surprise that the food served in the Hondon Valley is one of the best examples of the regional gastronomy. Fresh, basic ingredients lie at the centre of each dish, and you can taste Spanish culture and tradition in every bite. The rich, fertile valley is a hotbed for numerous root crops, citrus fruits, almond and olive groves, whilst also being an internationally recognized wine region. Indeed, if you are a wine lover you are certainly in for a treat here, and the locals are only too happy to educate you on their famous blends and allow you to sample them for yourself.

The Hondon Valley was added to the Alicante Wine Route in 2012, which was established to promote tourism in the area and give a much needed boost to the local economy. A total of 2 300 hectares of terrain are dedicated to the cultivation of Denomination of Origin Grapes "Vinalopó", which is spread over seven municipalities -Agost, Aspe, Hondon de los Frailes, Hondon de las Nieves, La Romana, Monforte del Cid and Novelda.

Collectively these towns produce six varieties of white grape, Aledo Ideal, Dominga, Doña María, Rosetti and Victoria; and a variety of black skin grape. The most distinctive characteristic of these grapes is the cultivation process, which is known as "paper bagging" and gives the grapes a unique aroma and flavour, whilst simultaneously protecting against the elements and from pests. The bagging and collection are both done manually, creating many job opportunities for local residents during harvest time.

During each season, some 250 million bags must be distributed across the grape vines, before harvesting takes place between September and the beginning of January in accordance with the variety. Residents regard it as a great honour to be given the opportunity to participate in the grape harvest, and will even leave their normal job to join the team.





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Beautifully presented Rosa Style Villa, walking distance to local amenities, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, solar electric, alarm system, gated entrance, off road parking, car port, dual A.C, ceiling fans, sun terrace, private pool 8.5 x 4.5, solarium, low maintenance gardens. Being sold part furnished.

## **Pride of Hondon**

“Bodegas Cerdá” was founded in Hondon de las Nieves in 1885, to become one of the longest standing businesses in the area. It is a family-run wine merchant and shop, which was extended in 2007 to create an impressive wine museum, tasting room, gift shop and restaurant. The building is truly outstanding and said to be the “Pride of Hondon”; with its proprietors showing great attention to detail in maintaining the traditions of the Spanish wine making industry. Visitors are cordially invited to observe the entire production and bottling process, so that they may develop a true understanding of the magical world of wine making and more importantly, the secrets behind their favourite tittle. Customer satisfaction is paramount to the production process, so the family insists that consumers try before they buy, although the majority of customers have remained loyal to the bodega for years and buy their preferred blend in 5 litre measures, straight from the barrel. However, they do bottle the better quality reserves, which can be purchased in presentation cases as gifts.

## **From The Kitchen**

It is not only the fine wine that has put Hondon’s food and drink industry firmly on the map. Local dishes such as “gachamiga”, “ajos y giraboix” and a variety of rice-based recipes also help to define the gastronomic pleasures of the valley. Gachamiga is served in many traditional towns and villages throughout the province, with local variations being cooked up in the Hondons. This original version uses basic ingredients such as flour, water, olive oil, salt, garlic and potatoes, and was historically a favourite lunchtime meal for local farmers and huntsmen. When cooked it resembles breadcrumbs and is often combined with spicy sausage and peppers to create a more substantial meal.

“Migas con uvas” is another popular breadcrumb based dish, combining bread, chorizo, bacon, garlic and grapes. With an abundance of these juicy fruits growing in the region, you will find that they appear in many recipes, not only wine production, and are also exported to other parts of the country to be used in the Spanish “Twelve grapes at Midnight” New Year tradition. Ajos y giraboix is a wonderful winter warmer, often served as part of Menu of the Day at local restaurants or as a lunchtime meal at home. It is a type of stew typically containing chickpeas, potatoes, eggs, rabbit, lamb, garlic and sun dried tomatoes, with the occasional addition of white and black pudding. Meanwhile during the hot summer months it is more acceptable to serve

a cooler dish such as an omelette with salad and bread, such as the Zarangollo Murciano.

This is a loose omelette consisting of courgettes and onions. Although the valley is technically part of Alicante, it lies very close to the border, and therefore certain urbanizations such as Macisvenda and Barinas are considered a part of Murcia. This means that there are many Murcian bars and restaurants as well as families living in the villages, serving their own regional delicacies and giving locals a broader experience and choice of Spanish cuisine.

## **Rice Recipes**

Rice forms a significant part of the diet throughout most of Spain, and the valleys are no exception, having their own take on the traditional recipes. The longstanding favourite, Paella Valenciana, is served in homes, bars and restaurants throughout the two villages, and combines rice, chicken, seafood, green beans, olive oil, saffron and seasoning. However, various other rice specialities are also eaten in Hondon, making good use of the freshest, finest produce of the valleys. Arroz y conejo con caracoles Serranos is the valley’s answer to Paella, made popular due to the large number of snails and wild rabbits which roam the hillside. Local huntsmen are seen stalking the rabbits in season, whilst local people head out collecting snails in plastic bags and will often sing a special song to encourage the snails to show themselves and then thank them for doing so! This makes it a very economical meal often prepared for the family when they visit on a Sunday and occurs when the egg is baked on top of the rice casserole forming a tasty coating that perfectly complements the sauce and rice. It is traditionally cooked in a clay pot over a wood fire with a “costrera” (metal cover) placed over the rice when it is nearly cooked, before embers are laid on top to brown the egg crust.

## **Eating Out in the Hondon Valley**

If you are a fan of Spanish cuisine but not too confident in reproducing these authentic dishes in your own kitchen, do not dismay as this gives you the perfect excuse to eat out and let someone else do the dishes from time to time. Furthermore, with such cheap meal deals to be had at the local Spanish restaurants you do not need a special occasion to head out for dinner. There is no better way to discover the best eateries in the area than to ask the locals, so ALIS spoke to Frailes residents, Jan and Pete, who were happy to give us their personal recommendations.

## Delicious Nibbles in Nieves

If you travel down the mountain towards Abanilla from Macisvenda, you will find two very good and very different restaurants: Restaurante “El Fielato” in El Tolle, which is a delightful conversion within an idyllic setting; and Restaurante “La Cueva Del Peregrino” in El Partidor, is a little further down the road on the right side. The latter offers a prime example of traditional Spanish cuisine, with food cooked in authentic wood stoves, whilst part of the restaurant is in a cave giving it an air of romance and mystery.

Jan said that this is definitely the place to come if you are a fan of suckling pig or baby goat! Hondon de las Nieves boasts a plethora of great eateries, including “Vamboo” with its wide selection of Spanish snacks and tapas, and Bar Restaurante “Polideportivo” which you will find hidden within the sports centre on the edge of the village. Heading towards the village square you will come across Meson “El Moreno” with its fine selection of Spanish fayre, and Dutch restaurant “Solo Hazlo”, which is popular for its special menu nights. Meanwhile, if you are craving some of your old favourites from home, “Central Bar” is your best bet, serving hearty, home cooked meals just like your Mum used to make!

## Something Different

Popular Spanish restaurant “El Fogon del Frailes” is situated on the road towards Barbarroja, and is a favourite with the natives who tend to go there to dine on Sunday lunchtimes as well as special occasions.

There is ample parking here and a courtyard to the rear which is used for larger events, fiestas and parties. The village now has an Indian Restaurant, “Punjabi Virsa” whose owners also run a venue in Catral, which is located at the quieter garden centre end of the village plaza. The villagers had been longing for an Indian venue for many years, so were thrilled when it opened its doors to serve over 100 authentic dishes. The restaurant offers an early bird menu, comprising three courses with poppadoms and drinks included, for 9.95 euros.

This is served daily between 17:00 and 19:00, and comes highly recommended for flavour and quantity. Italian Ristorante / Pizzeria “Pizzeria D’Antonio” is another newcomer to the village, and you will find it in Casas Galiana, near the petrol station. The menu is quite limited and basic, but in pleasant surroundings and the staff are very friendly. The portions are also said to be extremely generous, with huge steaks and enormous pizzas that are fired in an authentic clay oven. Finally, if you head out towards La Canalosa you will stumble across a selection of quaint, rural Spanish venues such as Restaurante “La Masia”, which is particularly recognized for its delicious rice specialities.



## *Wine Regions - Duero River Valley*

The seat of power for much of Spain's history, this area hosts extremely elevated but easily workable vineyards along and beyond the banks of the Duero River.

Some of the famed wine names in Spain reside in Ribera del Duero, such as Vega Sicilia and Pesquera, and regions such as Toro and Rueda are on the shortlists of anyone pursuing emerging Spanish brands.

Castilla y León is the political name of this area, but most of the greatest wines are from vineyards around the Duero River. Indeed Spain's most famed winery, Vega Sicilia, anchors the DO known

as Ribera del Duero (meaning, the "banks of the River Duero"), fuelled by the ubiquitous Tempranillo grape, Spain's most planted red. The Duero River travels 460 miles from high in the Sistema Ibérico, forms part of the border between Spain and Portugal and then empties into the Atlantic at Oporto, a town that gives its name to a famous Portuguese fortified wine.



The table wines grown along its banks are nearly as intense as Port but are far more practical at the table. Roasted lamb and goat are genius here, and the cold Atlantic seems far away in climate and cuisine. Though many of the vineyards have only a gentle, round contour, this is high elevation viticulture: days are warm or even hot; nights are cold. Ripening is slowed; the wines become rich and ripe but hang on to their dusty, astringent structure. The less expensive wines are for immediate, delicious drinking; the top wines (Vega Sicilia, Pingus, Pesquera and many others) can last decades.

The region's success has seen vineyards expand, and now names such as Sardón del Duero, Arribes, Arlanza, Cigales and other seeming satellites are garnering well-deserved attention. Rosés have been Cigales' mainstay, but the Tempranillo grape has more to say, it would seem. Tempranillo shines even more brightly in Toro; if the name conjures bulls, it's a region making powerful,

even massive wines. Subtlety is not Toro's strong suit, but lovers of internationally styled wines are embracing the region's hard charging reds. On the other side of the Duero River, the Rueda DO has claimed its own international spotlight with the Verdejo grape, offering a white wine likened to (and occasionally blended with) Sauvignon Blanc. But it owns its own unique citrus aromas and pear texture and flavours



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# The majestic walled city of Rello

On a rocky ridge, in Altos de Barahona and looking out over the Escalote River, sits a small, completely walled medieval village, known as Rello. It is located in the south of the province of Soria and belongs to the region of Berlanga. This village has one of the best preserved medieval features in Castile and Leon, to the extent that it has been declared an Asset of Cultural Interest.

The walled complex of Rello at the top of the mountain is worthy of a fairy tale, where the natural beauty of the surrounding landscape stands out. But there is no more incredible sensation than to walk through its narrow, cobbled streets, which, together with the castle and its towers, take all visitors back to an ancient era from the moment they pass through the only and main entrance to the village.

However, very few people have the privilege of knowing about the existence of this extraordinary and peaceful place, today practically forgotten, where only 15 inhabitants remain.

## The majestic wall of Rello

If Rello still preserves the medieval essence hundreds of years later, it is precisely because of its imposing wall. The entire area where the settlement is located is completely fortified. The wall is flanked by various towers and topped with battlements, which are perfectly preserved. In fact, of all the villages and towns in Soria established on a rock, such as Medinaceli, Calatañazor or Peñalcázar, Rello is the one that has best preserved its entire walled enclosure.

Although there is little documentation about the origin of Rello, it contains a very important historical legacy under the vestiges of its stone walls. The settlement of the wall is said to date back to the 12th century, at a time characterised by continuous Christian and Muslim invasions. This being so, it is not surprising that it was decided to create a fortified perimeter to protect the inhabitants of the municipality. Later, in the 15th century, the fortress was reformed, when Rello had already reached the lordship of the Count of Coruña.

## Rello Castle

At one end of the wall is the Rello Castle. It is believed that it could have been built in the 15th century; although some historians point out its existence already in the 11th century. Today you

can still see the remains of the keep, which was half destroyed by a lightning, a cistern and the wall that separated the castle from the rest of the old town.

The Rollo represented the administrative category of the village of Rello. Also, according to its inhabitants, this iron bar was a place of atonement for the faults committed by prisoners; serving as an example and lesson for the people of that time. In fact, the word "yerro" means a fault or crime committed out of ignorance or malice; against divine and human laws.

## The Muslim Watchtower of Tiñón

Legend has it that the caudillo Almanzor went there to die on his return to Medinaceli from Calatañazor; where he had been defeated. The watchtower of Tiñón is another of the things to see in Rello; as it represents one of the most significant elements of the municipality. Indeed, it may be the most appreciated of them all because of the historical value it acquires.

At present, there are more than twenty Muslim watchtowers in the province of Soria, strategically located in the Duero Valley. These towers thus formed an integral part of the fortified route of the Islamic cities. In the case of the Watchtower of Tiñón, it is dated between the 9th and 10th centuries.

## Torre del Agua (Water Tower)

Despite being a great unknown to many, the Altos de Barahona are considered the most important moorlands in Spain; with great ornithological value. Thus, the place is designated as a Special Protection Area for Birds; as well as being declared a Site of Community Interest (SCI). It also forms part of the Natura 2000 Network. In this area you can also visit other towns such as Torrevente, Barcones, Marazovel, Alpanseque and Pinilla del Olmo.



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# Top 10 Attractions

## *The Palacio Real (Royal Palace) of Madrid*

Home to the Kings of Spain from Charles III to Alfonso XIII, Madrid's Royal Palace takes us on a journey through the history of Spain. Though it is no longer the royal family's home, it continues to be their official residence.

Long before Madrid became the capital of Spain, Emir Mohamed I chose Magerit (the city's Arabic name) as the site for a fortress to protect Toledo from the advancing Christians. The building was eventually used by the Kings of Castille until finally becoming what would be known as the Antiguo Alcázar (Old Fortress) in the 14th century. Charles I and his son Philip II turned the building into a permanent residence for the Spanish royal family.

However, in 1734 a fire burnt the Palace of Los Austrias to the ground, and Philip V ordered the construction of the palace that stands today. Following the untimely death of Filippo Juvara, the architect originally commissioned to design the palace, it was his pupil Juan Bautista Sachetti who eventually drew up the final plans. Seventeen years passed between the laying of the first stone in 1738 and final completion of the work commissioned by

Philip V. However, it was Charles III (known as the "Mayor of Madrid" due to the large number of reforms and initiatives that he undertook in the city) who became the first monarch to occupy the new building. His successors Charles IV (responsible for the creation of the Hall of Mirrors) and Ferdinand VII added many decorative details and furnishings, such as clocks, items of furniture and chandeliers.

The palace, inspired by sketches made by Bernini for the construction of the Louvre in Paris, is built in the form of a square and looks out over a large courtyard with galleries and a parade ground. The decoration of the palace's rooms and their layout has gradually changed over the years as the building has been adapted to suit the needs of its residents.



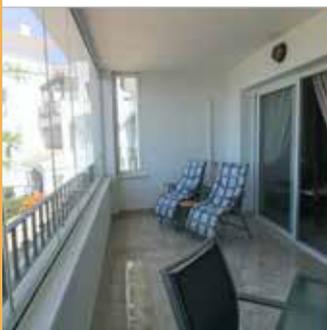
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It comprises over 3000 rooms, including: the Main Staircase, designed by Sabatini with over 70 steps; the Throne Hall featuring a ceiling painted by Tiepolo; the Hall of Halberdiers, which Charles III turned into the Guards Room; the Gasparini Room, with its grand 18th century decoration on a floral theme; the Royal Chemist's with natural medicine cabinets, ceramic pots made by the La Granja factory, and even prescriptions given to members of the royal family; and the Royal Chapel, which is home to a collection of string instruments made by the legendary Antonio Stradivari.

### **The Royal Armoury and the Painting Gallery**

The Royal Armoury is one of the most significant collections of its kind, housing weapons and armour worn by the kings of Spain and other members of the royal family since the 13th century. The Painting Gallery is home to a large number of artistic treasures, including Virgin with Child by Luis Morales, Portrait of Isabella the Catholic by Juan de Flandes, Salome with the Head of John the

Baptist by Caravaggio and works by such artists as Velázquez, Goya, Federico Madrazo and Sorolla.

### **The Royal Kitchen**

Reopened in October 2017 after a major renovation, the palace's splendid Real Cocina are the oldest well-preserved kitchens of a European royal residence, notable for their size and the excellent state of their accessories. They occupy a large part of the first basement and their current appearance is the result of the redecoration ordered by Queen Isabella II and Alfonso XII between 1861 and 1880.

### **Changing of the Guard**

Don't miss the Changing the guard (held on Wednesdays and Saturdays, weather permitting) and the magnificent Solemn changing the Guard, which takes place on the first Wednesday of each month, weather permitting (except January, August and September).



# Summer 2022

## By Taquilla Tickets

Taquilla Tickets Summer 2022. Doesn't time just flyyyyyyyyy ??

Here we are again, and it's nearly Summer. Although Summer doesn't officially start until the 21st June, we thought we would give you a taste of what we have going on for part of the Summer.

We will highlight a few things in this article, and we will carry on with articles for June, July and August. We can help you with: Discount Zoo, Waterpark and Theme Park Tickets. Commencing on 15th June Taquilla Tickets will be running a bus every Wednesday to the Waterpark and Zoo in Murcia City. We can transport you to the Waterpark and Zoo for €10 for adults and €8 for children. Obviously, the cost of Waterpark tickets and zoo are extra to this. OR, you can just buy the tickets for both the Waterpark and Zoo from us, and make your own way there !! A great day out for the whole family.

We realise that getting to the Beach is hard for a lot of people. So, from the 17th June and every Friday and Saturday, Taquilla Tickets will collect you from Condado and Camposol B, and drop you off at either Bolnuevo or Puerto de Mazarron so that you can soak up the sun, have some lunch and a few drinks and come back with us ! Our coach will take you at 9.45am and bring you back at 5pm on Friday's OR, we can take you down on Saturday evening at 5pm and bring you back at 23.30pm. NOT BAD EH!! The cost will be €10 for adults and €8 for children. And that's a return journey too !!

Taquilla Tickets is your "One Stop Shop" for: Zoo, Waterpark and Theme Park Tickets.

We can also organise Quad Bike Tours, River Rafting, Kayaking, Chauffeured Trike Tours, Boat Trips, Fishing Trips, Snorkelling, Paragliding, Hot Air Balloon Experiences AND A WHOLE LOT MORE !!

Do you fancy a "Rootin, Tootin, Shootin day out ? Well, we can take you to the Fabulous OASYS Mini Hollywood Theme Park. This is a cracker of a trip for Adults and Children alike. READ ON:

OASYS is a Spanish Western-Styled Theme Park near the town of Tabernas in Almeria Province in Andalusia. It was originally named Yucca City, and was designed by Carlo Simmi. The whole set was built for Sergio Leone's 1965 now famous film "For a Few Dollars More", starring Clint Eastwood. "The Good, The Bad and The Ugly" was also filmed here in 1966. After filming this Blockbuster, the "Extras" in the film brought the complete set and turned it into a tourist attraction. A Hotel Group now owns the whole set, and you can have great fun watching: Bank Raids, the Final moments of Jesse James. Cowboy stunts and the world famous dancing girls all add excitement to a brilliant day out. A Cowboy style saloon, a Fun Barn for

the children, along with a zoo and Big Cats and Western Stores so that you can buy your very own Stetson. And a Buffet Lunch Too !! You can even go to the swimming pool to cool off if you want to. We are set to ride into town on the 12th June !!!

An absolute favourite trip of ours is a visit to the very pretty town (or Pueblo) of Mojacar in the South East area of Almeria. This trip has always been popular, and is one of the loveliest "White Villages" in the Almeria region. You can wander around the shops in the narrow lanes, grab some Tapas and a drink, enjoy the spectacular views, and discover "Mojacar(Indalo) Man" at every turn. Maybe light a candle in the very small but beautiful church of Santa Maria. The Fresco at the back of the church was painted by a German Artist called Michael Sucker, who lived in the village for nine years. After this, we will take you down to "Mojacar Playa" where you can have food (if you didn't get any in the Pueblo), stroll along the beach or just sit and take in the sea views. A very, very nice day out !! ALL THIS FOR €25.00.

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# All about dog laws in Spain

Spain can be a great place to be a dog owner because there is so much space and nature. And dogs are a human's best friend! Unfortunately, Spain is also one of the European countries with most stray dogs. According to the ONG Animal Esdaw, there are about 800.000 dogs living on the Spanish streets. This is extremely sad and must change quickly.

If you decide to get a dog, you should be aware that this is for life, at least for as long as the dog lives. Be aware of dog laws in Spain. People tend to look only at the lovely puppies and forget that dogs get bigger, cost a lot of money, and require a lot of your attention. A dog must be walked at least three times a day, might destroy your furniture or shoes, and can get ill and throw up on your floor or worse.

## 10 Important Dog Laws in Spain

Every country has its own laws regarding owning a dog. Here I will sum up the 10 most important laws to consider. Please follow these laws because the fines are huge. Laws vary per "comunidad" in Spain, so please make sure you read into local laws. The ones I mention here are on a national level.

1. **DOCUMENTATION:** Every dog needs to be documented (pet passport), before reaching the age of 3 months. The dog must be microchipped and registered in the "Registro de Animales de Compañía". When a dog gets lost or dies, this must be communicated as well.

2. **HEALTH CARD:** Another obligation is that every dog needs to own an official health card, where all vaccinations must be registered.

3. **CIVIL LIABILITY:** The dog needs to be covered by a civil liability policy. In case the dog is a potentially dangerous dog (PPP) this coverage should be adapted with a higher coverage (180.000 euro) and the chip number must be mentioned.

4. **ADMINISTRATIVE LICENSE:** in case of potentially dangerous dogs, they need to obtain an administrative license and be registered in the Potentially Dangerous Animal Registry.

5. **CLEANING:** When walking the dog in public spaces, the owner must clean all the feces of the dog and spray water over their urine.

6. **ON A LEASH:** Dogs need to be walked leashed; the owner must be in control of its movements. Potentially dangerous dogs are obliged to always wear a muzzle in public spaces. For this type of dogs, the dog leash cannot be any longer than a maximum of 2 meters.

7. **CHILDREN'S PARKS:** Dogs are never allowed in children's parks or other children's areas. Dogs cannot take a bath in public fountains, nor drink directly from water taps in public spaces.

8. **OBLIGATIONS FOR THE OWNER REGARDING THE DOG:** The dog needs a safe and sheltered space to live and sleep. The dog needs to receive the correct hygiene and medical attention when necessary. The owner should also make sure the dog gets all necessary vaccinations on time, to prevent diseases.

9. **PROHIBITED:** Leaving a dog in a car, on a terrace, balcony, or other limited spaces.

10. **INSURANCE:** Pet insurance is optional but recommended. For more information regarding pet insurance in Spain, consult Caser Pet Insurance.

Treat your dog the best way possible! Owning a dog is one of the best things in life, but it has its responsibilities too and with that some downsides.

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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

I hate the dreadful hollow behind the little wood,  
Its lips in the field above are dabbled with the blood-  
red heath,

The red-ribb'd ledges drip with a silent horror of blood,  
And Echo there, whatever is asked her, answers  
Death.

Alfred Tennyson, Maud

El Cortjo del Rector is a place of light. The summer sun rises over the hill directly behind us, arrives at the first of our three patios by nine o'clock and only leaves our westward terrace fourteen hours later as it sets beyond the Torcal de Antequera and the distant Pillars of Hercules. In contrast, it is midday before the first tentative fingers of sunlight touch the dense tree cover of the Dreadful Hollow and by five o'clock cold blue shadows are reaching out towards the silent house.

Some say the house is cursed, though Dolores, who lived there for fifty years before she retired to the pueblo, and is still fit and active well past her 90th birthday. The little dwelling she knew as a bride, a wife, a mother and a widow still exists, buried so deep under Gwyn's improvements that the place looks more like a gaunt Welsh Methodist chapel than an Andaluz cortijo.

The house in the Dreadful Hollow is on the far side of the bridge over the arroyo only four hundred metres below El Cortjo del Rector though completely invisible to us. There was a time when we could walk down the steep rutted camino and cross the deep chasm of the arroyo to enjoy a drink and a chat with the people who lived there but now the woods are advancing on the dark, shuttered house, termites are on the march and there is a pervading stench of desolation and decay.

The trouble began when Gwyn, realizing that he could not make enough money in Spain to sustain the standard of living he wanted for his young family, went to work in England. It was the wettest winter Andalucía had known in years. The arroyo rose and when it finally sank it left a knee-deep wall of mud across the bridge. The old cortijo had stood clear of the rocky height behind it but Gwyn's massive extension left insufficient drainage space between the house and the cliff. Water came in through the walls.

Delyth, abandoned in a leaking, isolated house with two young children, raged between resentment and

despair. She surfed the internet and began a flirtation. That flirtation went nowhere but somewhere along the line there was a divorce. Gwyn never returned to the Dreadful Hollow. Delyth got the house but couldn't afford to keep it up.

After Delyth left, I walked along the arroyo with David Gatley, an old friend from the El Salvador years. The house in the Dreadful Hollow stands so close to the watercourse that Gwyn had had to build his patio to the side rather than in front. The limestone cliff behind the new patio was unstable so Gwyn had raised a thirty-foot wall of concrete blocks to prevent it from shedding rocks onto his family and friends as they sat below. Flush to the cliff at its base, the highest courses of the wall stood proud of its top, so loose rubble could collect behind them. So could water.

David stopped and stared at the wall. 'That will come down,' he said.

We had both lived through tropical storms in San Salvador that hurled the steel manhole covers of the Paseo Escalon twenty feet into the air. Our Andaluz tormentas are less frequent but every bit as violent. Tree trunks, twice the thickness of a man, are swept down the arroyos with boulders the size of a small SEAT. Mud and debris spew onto the carreteras isolating us from the pueblos on either side. As we stand in our porch the solid wall of water pouring off the roof makes us feel that we are in a cave behind a cataract. The arroyo screams like a jet engine at full throttle. Gwyn's wall came down.

When we visit our son and his family in a small Minnesota township we revel in the ability to slide open the big French doors and step out onto a deck overlooking a broad green expanse of grass and trees. There is also a slight sense of unease. As always, I am the first out of bed in the mornings and when I let Riley the Schnauzer out I sometimes find that the doors have not been locked the previous night. This is not how things are at home.

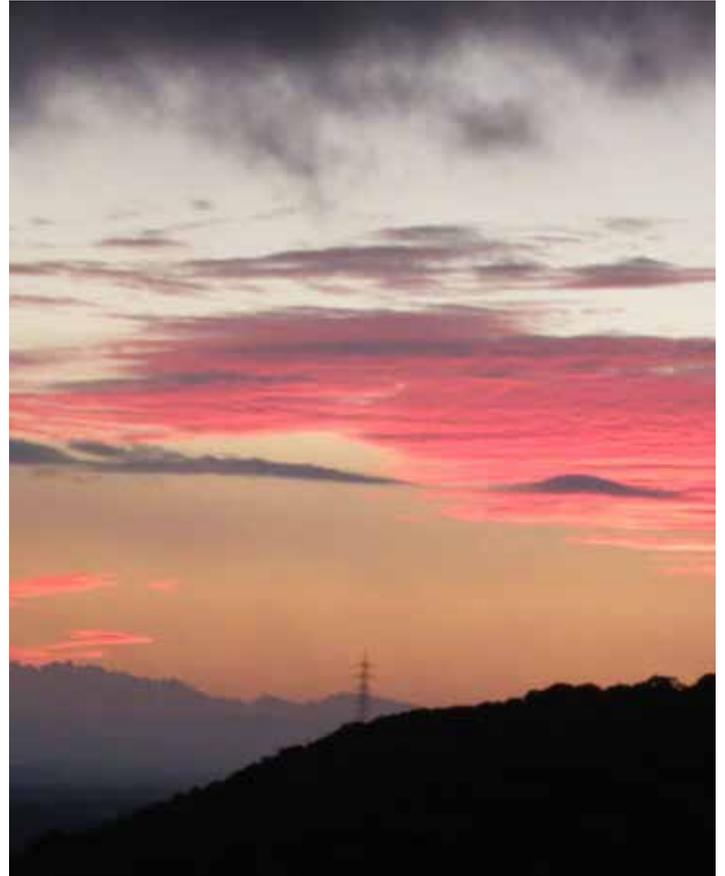
Like almost all Spanish houses, El Cortijo del Rector has rejas, wrought iron grilles to protect the windows and doors. When he made his improvements to the house in the Dreadful Hollow, Gwyn rejected rejas in favour of more picturesque wooden shutters. An isolated and unoccupied dwelling, screened by trees, sounds like a line from a burglars' charter. During the next couple of years thieves stole everything that could be stuffed into their swag bags and some things that

# Part 14: The dreadful hollow

could only have been transported in a truck. Locking the stable door long after the horse was long gone, Delyth found tenants who said they had no money but promised to look after the house in return for the accommodation.

Disliking the dark and the damp, a succession of tenants came and went. The last was a young woman lovely enough to be a Tennyson heroine and already on a tragic path. The mystery of her lonely death in the house in the Dreadful Hollow has never been solved.

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