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Lifestyle magazine and property portal

ISSUE 68
JULY 2022
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Town**

Pinar de Campoverde

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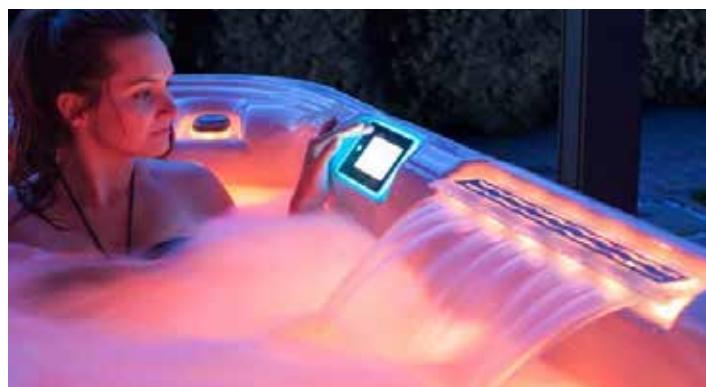
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A Life in SPAIN

Welcome to the July edition of ALIS.

It's hot, Damn hot. That's good if you're with a lady but it ain't no good if you're in the jungle. Name the film

I think someone just turned the thermostat up to maximum. Stay cool everybody and drink plenty of water There's an interesting article on page 38 about the safety of drinking tap water.

So what else is in this months magazine?

Go to page 16 and you can read all about how healthy the mediterranean diet is. This is with particular reference to Alicante.

Page 46 sees the last episode in the series Wigan Pier to Andalucia. Don't forget you can buy this book to read in more detail and at your leisure

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Top 10 Spanish Beaches

Spain has over 5,000 miles of coastline, much of which is graced with beautiful beaches. Though the tourists flock to the Costa Blanca and the Costa del Sol, there are gorgeous beaches all over Spain (well, where there's coastline, anyway!). over the next few months we will discover the top 10 voted beaches.

3. Ses Illetes, Formentera, Balearic Islands

According to viajar.com, Formentera is the best Balearic Island for beaches (beating Ibiza, Mallorca and Menorca) and Ses Illetes is the best beach in Formentera. They also rate nearby Cala Conta highly too.

This beach is located within Ses Salines de Eivissa and Formentera Natural Park, occupying a large area of the Es Trucadors peninsula, the extreme north of the island of Formentera, and facing west. There are more than 450 metres of beach divided into two parts by a small rocky area in the middle. Its name refers to several islets that lie off this stretch of coast and which are known by the names of: Illa de Tramuntana, Illa des Forn, Escull des Pou, Illa Redona and Escull d'en Palla. Their presence makes the landscape of this beach even more unique.

The most outstanding feature of this beach is its calm, shallow, turquoise waters, which, together with the fine white sand, create a paradisiacal landscape. Moreover, being a natural park, the surroundings are well cared for, with dune protection areas, access walkways and specific areas where you can park without causing an impact on the terrain. There are also various restaurants of different kinds to be found along these coasts. It is also an ideal beach for children, due to its safety and the different services available to visitors.

The great extension of this beach allows visitors to find a space on the sand without overcrowding, especially in the northern area with the Trucadors peninsula, an arm of sand that connects with the neighbouring Llevant beach. If you continue northwards you come to the end of the island, from which point you can see the island of Espalmador. To the south, the next beach is the Cavall d'en Borràs beach, separated by a rocky area known as Es Pujol d'en Palo and the small Des Carregador beach.

Ses Illetes is, without a doubt, one of Formentera's most spectacular beaches and is an ideal place to have a swim in the summer or to take long walks during the colder period of the year.



3. Playa del Silencio, Asturias

Voted the best beach in Asturias by 20minutos.es. Their readers also voted Asturian beaches in general to be the best beaches in northern Spain, narrowly beating those of Galicia.

As with Galicia, sunshine is not as certain here as in other parts of Spain

Every beach in Asturias is different, but this is entirely unique and stunning. Happily, it's something of a secret amongst locals. It's also kind of remote and requires a bit of a hike to get to. So generally you don't have to share the beach with very many people... you may even have the beach to yourself. Even if you aren't a beach goer, it's worth it to make the trek to the Beach of Silence just for the view from above. The Playa del Silencio is a slender crescent of sand at the foot of high, high cliffs. Hence, it does require a trek to get down to. If you do plan to sunbathe in tranquility, just take a snack and a towel. Don't bother carrying a chair or a bunch of stuff, you'll end up regretting it on the walk down. Also, leave the kids behind. This is a beach people visit with solitude in mind.

The trek from the parking lot is kind of long as well. What's really good is the walk takes you through a eucalyptus forest which smells amazing.



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Let's Learn Spanish

MAIN COURSES part 2

Phrases

Does this dish contain bones?	/ ¿Lleva espinas este plato?	/ ¿Yea-va ess-pea-nas ess-tay plah-toe?
Does this come as steaks or as fillets?	/ ¿Viene en rodajas o en filetes	/ ¿Ve-en-eh en roe-dah-hass o en fee-lay-tays?
Is this fresh or frozen?	/ ¿Es fresco o congelado?	/ ¿Ezz frace-ko oh kon-hel-lah-doh?
Are these locally sourced?	/ ¿Son de esta zona?	/ ¿Son day ess-tah thon-ah?
Do you have?	/ ¿Tienes?	/ ¿Tea-yen-ace ...?
How many do you get?	/ ¿Cuántas unidades son?	/ ¿Kwan-tass ooh-nee-dad-ace son?
Some more bread please	/ ¿Puedes traerme más pan, por favor?	/ ¿Pw-ed-ace try-air-meh mass pan pour fa-vour?

FISH / PESCADO / PES-CAR-DO

Cod	/ bacalao	/ ba-ka-lau-oh	Fried	/ frito	/ free-toe
Salmon	/ salmón	/ sal-mohn	Battered	/ rebozado	/ray-bo-tha-doh
Sea bass	/ lubina	/ lou-be-nah	Pickled	/ en escabeche	/ en es-ka-bay-che
Hake	/ merluza	/ mare-lou-tha	Steamed	/ al vapor	/ al vah-poor
Sole	/ lenguado	/ len-gwa-doh	In garlic	/ al ajillo	/ al ah-he-yoh

SEAFOOD / MARISCO / MAH-REES-KO

Prawns	/ gambas	/ gam-bass
Mussels	/ mejillones	/ meh-he-yon-es
Clams	/ almejas	/ al-meh-has
Octopus	/ pulpo	/ pull-poh
Squid	/ calamar	/ ka-lah-mah



Now try our wordsearch:

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



Pinar de Campoverde

Pinar de Campoverde (Pine Forest in/of the Green Field literally) is a small village located at the foot of the Sierra de Escalona mountain range, nine kilometres from Pilar de la Horadada borough council, in the province of Alicante, Spain. The town has around 3000 inhabitants and is ten kilometres from the Mediterranean coastline.





The town has only developed since the mid-1980s when many British, German, French and Scandinavian expatriates settled in villas. Originally, the area had been a large pine forest, next to the Rio Seco river and had little agricultural importance until much of the wooded area was cleared for orange and lemon groves. The name Pinar de Campoverde or Pinar de Campo Verde derives from the fact that the area was once pine woodland (Pinar) and its impression on its first residents was a 'green field' (Campo Verde)

Since the recent advent of tourism, the majority of the population are expatriates, mainly from the United Kingdom and Germany. The traditional centre of the village is based on the two kilometre long Avenida del Pino which runs from the main Pilar de la Horadada-Orihuela road to the municipal sports fields (Polideportivo) at the Río Seco.

This strip has numerous bars and restaurants, estate agents and shops. There is also a medical centre and vets. On Sunday there is a small street market held in the centre of the village, close to the free car park.

The 'New' area, located to the west of the village has been in construction since the late 1990s and is almost exclusively inhabited by foreigners (although a few Spanish families do live amongst them). There is a second commercial area at the top of the village with a pharmacy and a few bars and shops, which have stunning views across the countryside.

Having been built on the side of the Rio Seco (dry river), the residential areas tend to be rather hilly and the 'old' area has very narrow footpaths in places. It is here you will find the Parque Central (Central Park).


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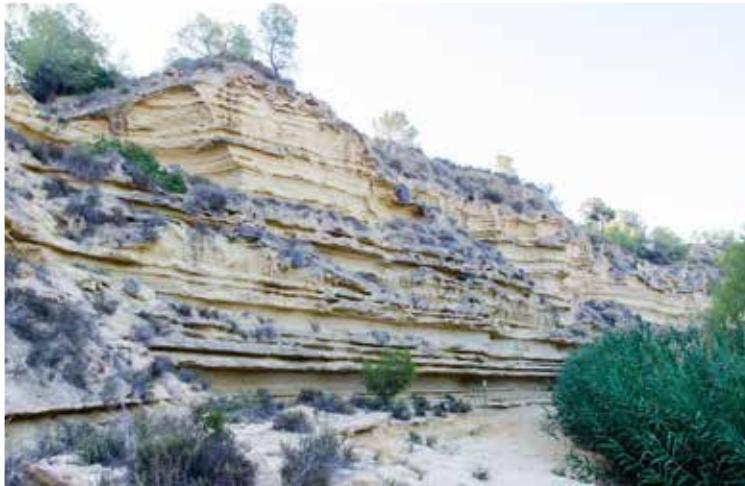
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The village boasts two supermarkets, the latest being at the newly built Plaza at the entrance to the village; the other at the far end, in the 'Old' area where you will also find the Sabadell bank. There is also a new garden centre on the main road into the village.

Every street and avenue in the village takes its name from a plant, herb or horticultural zone. Examples include Calle Bosque (Forest Street), Calle Lavanda (Lavander Street), Calle Meloncotonero (Peach Tree Street) and Calle Abedul (Birch Street).



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EXERCISING WELLBEING

You may or may not be aware that April was Stress Awareness month. How much do you know about what's affecting your wellbeing? How are you coping with everyday life?

Stress is an adverse reaction we get from excessive pressures and demand that is placed upon us. These pressures can come from situations in our personal lives or from the workplace and it's imperative we find mechanisms to cope with them so as to lead a happy life. The primary purpose of stress is to prepare the body for action so it's something we need to embrace and deal with, not avoid.

In today's world we're rapidly reducing the stigma that's related to stress, as our understanding and the effects it has on us grows. Stress is clearly an issue we all need to address and tackle, which can be outlined from some estimates taken from the Labour Force Survey:

The total number of cases of work-related stress, depression or anxiety in 2015/16 was 488,000 cases. The total number of working days lost due to this condition in 2015/16 was 11.7 million days. 2015/16, stress accounted for 37% of all work-related ill health cases and 45% of all working days lost due to ill health.

The first of 10 key steps to stress free living outlined by the International Stress Management Association is 'start to put yourself first'. Taking a step back and identifying any indicators of pressures building on you through work or at home is a healthy habit to adopt to improve general wellbeing.

There are many methods in managing our stress levels for us to explore and embrace. Find what release disconnects you from the stresses of daily life, whether it be through being active, creative or finding your zen; you have the power to improve your wellbeing and your life.



Making some small changes can really help manage your daily pressures. Here are some tips to get you started:

1, Digital Detox – we're all guilty of being glued to a smart phone or working endless hours in front of a laptop or computer monitor. This constant feed of information coming through to us, on top of our workload, can be overwhelming and really affect our wellbeing through heightened stress levels. So why not try some new initiatives to help? Have a screen-free lunch, get away from the desk and go for a walk. Have a smartphone-free commute to work and take a book with you instead. Switch the phone off for a couple of hours before bedtime and reap the rewards with a better night's sleep.

2, Daily exercise – This is great method in fighting stress levels. Exercise releases endorphins in the body, known as the feel-good chemical. After a good exercise session, whether it be a good walk or a gym session, you'll feel invigorated and mentally recharged.

3, Yoga, meditation or breathing techniques – These methods will focus your mind and is a great way to re-tune yourself, cleaning the clutter in your head to give you the chance to clearly think and prioritise.

4, Take a hot bath – Replace the quick shower in the evening with a nice relaxing hot bath before bed. Heat relaxes the muscles and if you add some candles and bath salts you'll soon forget about the problems that have been weighing you down all day.

5, New experiences – Being adventurous or at least open to new experiences should be encouraged for stress management too. Visiting new places and trying new things will help take you away from daily pressures and open new doors in your life to hobbies you never considered before that you can enjoy.

So, recognise your needs to manage your stress levels. Stay positive and do the things that work for you and keep you happy

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A Life in
SPAIN 15



Taste The Mediterranean in Alicante!

The Mediterranean diet is said to be one of the healthiest in the world, enriched with nutrients and bursting with flavour.... And you will find no finer example than the tasty cuisine served up in the city of Alicante.

By Heidi Wardman



Healthy

It is no secret that Spain is a nation of food lovers. Indeed, one of their favourite social activities is to gather together family and friends, then spend countless hours eating and drinking, with time being of little object! You might wonder therefore, why they are not all clinically obese and suffering all manner of ailments as a result. Well, in this case, the proof of the pudding is certainly in the eating, and the particular pudding that they are eating is actually protecting them from disease as opposed to causing it! Raise a toast to the good old Mediterranean diet! Lying within such close proximity to the Mediterranean Sea, Alicante city is a glowing example of this super healthy gastronomy, and the perfect place to sample some of Spain's signature dishes, such as paella.

Magic Ingredients

Dating back to the ages of Phoenicians, Romans and Muslims, Alicante city has developed its own unique way of cooking, based on the art of transforming simple, affordable ingredients into colourful, delicious dishes. Fish and seafood are firm favourites in Alicante city and across the Valencia Region, and traditionally eaten at celebrations such as weddings, christenings and even for

Christmas dinner in many households. Along with obvious links to the sea, the warm, Mediterranean climate in the Province of Alicante is known to produce very fertile agricultural land, hosting the perfect conditions for fruit and vegetables to thrive. Its principal produce include apricots, nectarines, plums, loquats, cherries, lemons, peaches, grapes, oranges, tomatoes and of course olives, which are farmed and sold locally.

Rice is prevalent in a range of dishes, as well as beans, chickpeas and other pulses. Throw in the abundant use of garlic and other spices to flavour dishes, along with olive oil, with its high concentration of monounsaturated fatty acids (MUFAs), and you can begin to see why the locals have longer life expectancies, and less risk of developing high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke. One of the city's most popular sauces, "Alioli", combines olive oil and garlic to make a delicious mayonnaise, which the locals will tell you is their secret to a longer, healthier life and use in abundance on bread, as a cooking ingredient, or as an accompaniment to meat, poultry or fish. The sauce was first created by the Arabians and now appears in kitchens across Italy, France and many other European and African countries.



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Signature Dishes

The Valencia Region has its own traditional version of paella, Paella Valenciana, which is what is typically eaten in Alicante, although you will often be given a choice when dining out. The local variation is prepared over a wood fire and combines rice, chicken, rabbit, snail, tomatoes, bacoqueta (green beans) and garrofón (butter beans), with olive oil, salt, saffron, red pepper and water. It is quite a dry rice dish, containing no real sauce although brimming with flavour, and usually served with a squeeze of lemon and plenty of bread and alioli. Other popular rice dishes include "Arroz al horno" (oven-baked rice), "Arroz a banda" (rice with seafood), "Arroz negro" (black rice with squid in inky sauce), and "Arros amb fesols i naps" which combines a moist rice with mixed beans and turnips. "Fideuá" is another signature seafood dish enjoyed in Alicante city and other parts of the region, and was originally created in Gandía where an international competition is organized every year to promote it and reward its protagonists. Looking and tasting very similar to paella, Fideuá relies on saffron, garlic and tomatoes to influence the flavour, but rice is replaced by thin noodles in this instance.

De Tapeo!

One of the best ways to sample a good selection of local dishes without too much expense or concern that you may not like it is to head to one of the many tapas bars located across the city. Short of bull-fighting and flamenco, nothing is more Spanish than nipping out for your favourite tipple and tapas, but did you know that their origins can be traced back to Alicante itself? The trend began when bar owners

started to serve little delicacies placed on a slice of crusty bread, known as "montaditos" along with their beer or wine, to entice hungry travellers and farm workers. The idea was a huge hit and it wasn't long before bars across the country had adopted it and began to design their own signature tapas, which would range from small complementary nibbles, to larger servings known as "Raciones", which can be ordered from a menu and shared among friends. It is quite common for people to go "de tapeo" and hop from bar to bar, enjoying a few cheeky drinks and indulging on the tapas so there is no need to cook a meal when they return!

Typical Alicante Tapas include:

Arroz – a rice based dish, with just about anything thrown in, from seafood to vegetables.

Albóndigas – pork or beef meatballs in tomato sauce.

Caracoles – snails usually served in an oily garlic sauce.

Mejillones – mussels, often served in a tomato based sauce.

All y pebre de anguilas – seasoned eel nibbles with peppers.

Esgarrat - Barbecued and seasoned red peppers with cod.

Tortilla de patatas- Classic Spanish potato omelette.



Award-Winning Wines

As mentioned earlier, at the heart of every tapas tour are a good few glasses of local wine, with the Valencia Region and Alicante province in particular being home to some of the nation's most famous, award-winning blends. The municipality of Alicante is still registered with the D.O (designation of origin), Alicante Regulatory Council, as one of its production centres, and as one of the oldest in Spain remains emblematic of Alicante wines.

Historically, the city was one of the wine capitals of the Iberian peninsula, with thanks not only to its extensive and diverse production of wines, but also to its port which was actually constructed and promoted to export Alicante wines to other nations. According to the D.O there are 44 wineries spread across an area of 14 613 hectares of vineyards situated on both sides of the Vinalopó River in Alicante province.

Some of the types of grapes produced in Alicante are Garnacha, Monastrell, Tempranillo, Bobal, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Pinot Noir and Syrah, which are the red varieties. The white varieties are Moscatel de Alejandría, Planta Fina, Merseguera, Chardonnay, Verdil, Sauvignon Blanc, Airén y Macabeo.

Best-Sellers

The Vinalopó, an area along the banks of the river of the same name, adjacent to the Yecla region of neighbouring Murcia, has a continental climate with long hot summers. This makes for the perfect conditions for Monastrell (Mourvedre), which is very expressive and powerful on the palate.

Monastrell dominates the vine yard plantations and is harvested to produce the voluptuous red wines, as well as refreshing rosé and sweet wines which are served in the majority of restaurants across the

province. The shining star of the region however, is Fondillon, a semi-sweet, non-fortified, vino rancio (oxidized wine) whose origins date back to the 17th Century. Made from overripe Monastrell, sometimes also blended with Garnacha, it has a relatively high alcohol content, around 16% volume, and certain Fondillons are produced only using grapes from specific vintages, like Port.

The complex oxidation process gives it a distinctive amber/brown colouring, enhancing the rich, nutty flavours. Moscatel wine is another top selling wine, and made from an extremely aromatic white grape to produce a variety of dry and sweet white wines, which are popular throughout the country and often given as gifts at Christmastime.

Wine Tasting

In spite of Alicante's numerous accolades for its wine production, and glowing reputation among wine experts, wine tourism is not a big thing here compared to other parts of Spain. It does not have an official wine route, although many wineries do open their doors adhoc, inviting visitors to come on in and sample their goods. Therefore, there is little information regarding the location of Alicante wineries available online, and the best way to seek them out is in a Spanish wine guide, such as the Peñín Guide to Spanish Wine.

We recommend paying a visit to "Salvador Poveda", a uniquely modern facility in Monóvar, which houses its own museum and loves receiving visitors to showcase its selection of rich blends. Like its neighbour, Yecla, Alicante has made a huge investment in its wine making industry in recent years and promises that an exciting range of new blends will be available on the shelves of our local supermarkets and bodegas very soon!

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Food & Drink

Section

10 Restaurants you must visit in the Murcia Region

Spain has a rich and diverse array of restaurants and cuisine to tantalise your taste buds.

Built up over years of settlement and invasion, even the humble Paella has changed and been localised. Although, of course Valencia is still arguably the original and most authentic.

In order to help our readers to enjoy the local restaurants, we have compiled a list, of some of our favourites.

Why not tick off the ones you've been to, and visit the ones you haven't.

If you think we have missed your favourite, let us know so that we can give them a visit and maybe add them next year



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10 Restaurants you must visit in the Murcia Region

Don Lorenzo - Estrella De Mar, Los Urutias

Don Lorenzo is owned and run by husband and wife team Simon and Jo. Jo is the better looking one and so she works front of house making sure you are looked after, whilst Simon is head chef, cooking melt in mouth steaks and slow cooked ribs.

At Don Lorenzos they have a full menu including fabulous steaks, succulent ribs and much more. They serve vibrant seasonal dishes, Sunday carvery, home-made desserts. All rounded off by refreshing house cocktails. Large beer gardens as well as ample of indoor space make this a great restaurant all year round.

Recommendations – Steak and Ribs

Address: Estrilla De Mar, Los Urutias

Phone: 694 49 28 83 / 968 54 30 04



El Sibarita Restaurant – Torreagüera

El Sibarita is a hidden gem in the village of Torreagüera. With ample indoor seating, El Sibarita is more than big enough for large groups (we've had more than a handful of events there ourselves). Their menu is extremely creative and is updated regularly with some interesting additions. Over the years we've been astounded by the versatility of their chef, serving up some incredibly intricate dishes.

Considering the sheer complexity of some of their dishes, the final bill will definitely surprise you! A meal for 2 including 4 starters, a bottle of wine, a couple cocktails, main course and dessert, will give you change from 70€.

Recommendations – Magret de Pato

Address: Torreaguera, Murcia

Phone: 968 87 40 84

The Grove - Camposol

Alex and Manjit, owners of the Grove offer, a memorable dining experience with carefully selected dishes from the Mediterranean and international cuisine. All the food is freshly cooked with high quality ingredients.

This is one of our favourite restaurants. The welcome received by front of house Alex, and the attention to detail by head chef Manjit is second to none.

If you've never been why not? What are you waiting for. You won't be disappointed

Recommendations – Caesar salad, Steak pie

Address: Sector B, Camposol commercial centre

Telefone: 692 34 28 59

Email: roveinthegrove@gmail.com

El Pasaje de Zabalburu – Murcia City

Hidden towards the back of Plaza de Las Flores in Murcia city centre, El Pasaje de Zabalburu is one of the best restaurants in the entire region of Murcia, with its squid ink croquette being voted the best tapa in the region. Apart from the croquettes, El Pasaje is full of incredible dishes that will definitely have you coming back for more. Our personal favourite is the "Queso Explosivo", melted cheese fried in breadcrumbs, seasoned with popping candy! A strange combination I know, but the two ingredients compliment each other fantastically. They also make for a great conversation piece for anyone who doesn't know what to expect.

You can choose from either the seated dining area at the rear of the restaurant if you prefer more of a formal dining experience, or you can sit at the bar area and enjoy the delicious tapas they have to offer. It's not all tapas though, there are also some beautiful fish and meat dishes, as well as their enormous house salad.

Recommendations – "Queso Explosivo"

Address: Plaza San Pedro, Murcia

Telefone: 622 62 21 67

Luces Restaurant - Cartagena

Luces is a boutique restaurant nestled in the heart of the historic city of Cartagena. Luces can be found in the square near the main Navy base

Enjoy a unique dining experience in, with quality sourced ingredients, exquisite presentations and an exclusive wine list chosen by top sommelier Javier Zapata, this restaurant is truly one of the best in the area.

Recommendations – everything

Address: Calle Villamartín, 13, Cartagena, Murcia

Phone: 675 33 67 01

Email: info@luces.me

Los Cazadores – Corvera

On the main road into Corvera, Los Cazadores is a beautifully designed restaurant with beautiful food at extremely competitive prices.

Los Cazadores specialise in grilled meats but they also do offer plenty of different dishes such as marinated venison and their enormous César Salad. There are a couple of different seating areas in the restaurant. You can choose from either the bar area or the seated dining area. The bar area has tall tables and bench seating next to an incredibly well-stocked bodega.

Recommendations – Gamón Masala

Address: Carretera Fuente Alamo, 3, Corvera

Telephone: 968 38 02 25

Email: hola@loscazadoresdecorvera.es

La Cabaña Buenavista – El Palmar, Murcia

La Cabaña Buenavista. A Michelin Star wonder in El Palmar, Murcia, halfway down the main motorway into the city centre. Unlike some of the other restaurants, you will undoubtedly have heard of this restaurant already. Whilst not the cheapest of restaurants, you will leave having just had a world class experience.

Their tasting menu leads you round the ground of the Finca, where you will try at least 14 different foods that can only be described as individual works of art. The isn't much to say about La Cabaña Buenavista that will truly serve the restaurant and staff justice. You must see to believe.

Recommendations – Tasting menu

Address: Buenavista, Finca Buenavista El Palmar,

Telephone: 968 88 90 06

La Mary – Murcia City

La Mary is a beautiful restaurant on a tiny little back street between Santo Domingo and Plaza Romea in Murcia City centre.

Although the restaurant doesn't have any outdoor dining space, being in the city centre you are spoilt for choice with the wide number of cocktails and wine bars all within a 5-minute walking distance to the restaurant. Sitting in the restaurant, you could be fooled into thinking that you're in a luxury back street restaurant in the south of France.

Recommendations – “Costillar” Off the bone beef rib with a hoisin sauce and beetroot puree.

Address: Calle González Adalid, 13, 30001 Murcia

Telephone: 968 21 36 46



10 Restaurants you must visit in the Murcia Region

Escuela de Pieter – La Manga

Escuela de Pieter is an absolutely stunning restaurant situated towards the top of La Manga strip. The restaurant spoils its guests with arguably one of the most spectacular sunsets in the region and its own private beach.

The outdoor dining area features a wide variety of seating arrangements, from circular booths to beach-side tables and tall bar stool tables, all without feeling crowded or over-looked by other guests.

The service and knowledge of the staff are impressive and the variety of food is wide enough to please most, from vegetarians to meat-eaters. Our recommendation is the Paella. Fresh and authentically made, the paella at Escuela de Pieter is a definite crowd-pleaser.

Telephone: 968 437 059 / 617 329 326

Address: La Manga del Mar Menor,

Email: reservas@escueladepieter.com

Cafe Cielo Bar – Marina de Las Salinas

Cafe Cielo Bar is a family run business who have worked tirelessly over the past 9 years to establish themselves as one of the best restaurants in the San Pedro del Pinatar port. Over the years they have modified their menu to keep up with the times. Now catering for the vegan and celiac market, there is definitely something for everyone on the menu.

We recently visited Cielos and were blown away by the food and especially impressed by the attention to detail and knowledge of their products. We tried the Lamb Leg "Burger", a blend of minced lamb meat and 15 herbs and spices on a potato rosti with a side salad and for the vegan eater at our visit, sauteed mushrooms marinated in red wine with roasted almonds complemented with a cannellini bean and garlic puree, enough to get even the most full-blooded meat-eaters watering at the mouth.

Cafe Cielo Bar also boasts an extensive wine list, including some rare vintages with 98 points on the Peñins Guide. A must visit for an avid wine connoisseur.

Recommendations – Ask the staff about their selection of rare wines

Address: Marina de Las Salinas, San Pedro del Pinatar

Telephone: 686 12 08 54

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Anyone for afternoon tea?

Tea is the main stay drink for most of us, other than water. It is the most drank beverage in the world, yet unknown to so many it does have some genuine health benefits.

Tea is an ancient drink and is part of many countries cultures, research over the years has shown some positive health benefits. Loose leaf teas are full of healthy antioxidants which can help protect your body cells against free radicals, which play a role in many of today's medical conditions like diabetes, cancer and heart diseases.

Green tea has always being regarded as a good source for detoxing, and assisting in weight loss. But many people are now drinking Matcha green tea, which has ten times the antioxidant properties of green tea.

It is best drank as a Latte or in a Shake because of its powder form. It is high in caffeine so it will always give you a natural lift, and aids in weight loss, but due to these incredible properties we advise you not to consume more than two drinks per day. (If in doubt regarding its suitability Consult your GP)



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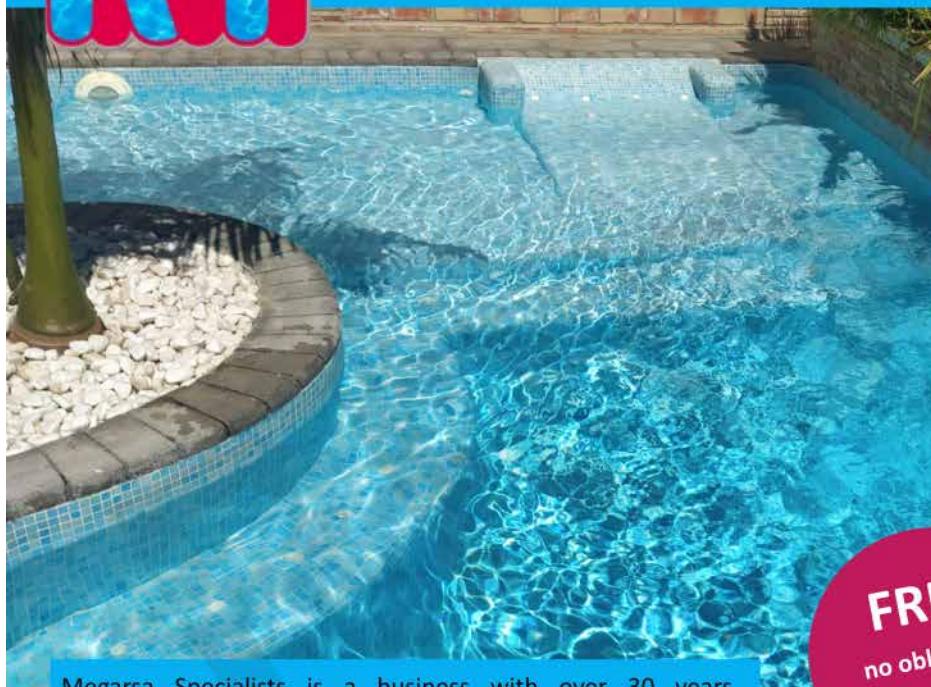
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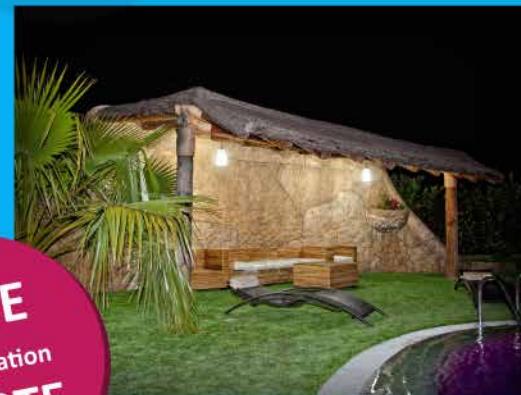
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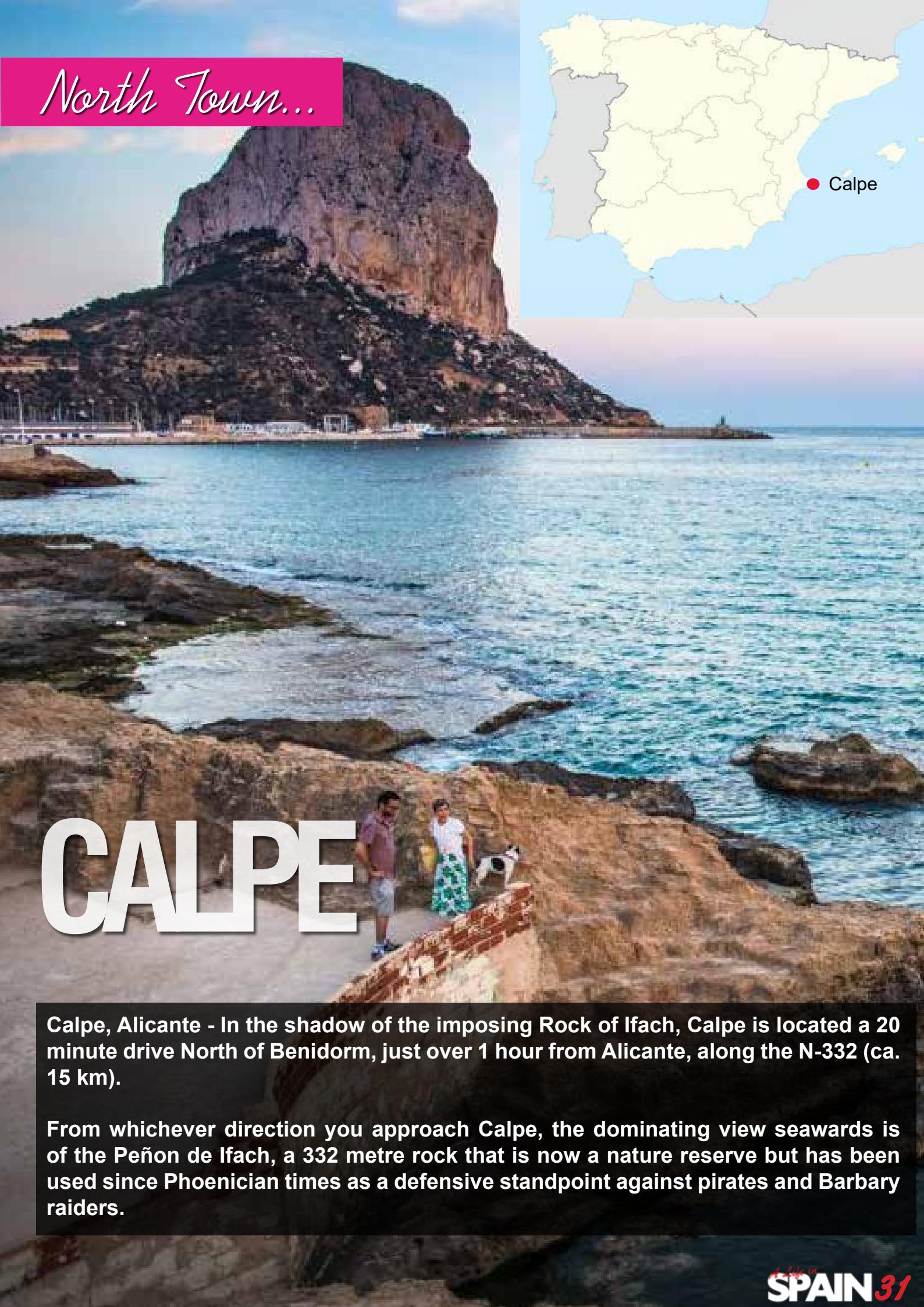
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North Town...



CALPE

Calpe, Alicante - In the shadow of the imposing Rock of Ifach, Calpe is located a 20 minute drive North of Benidorm, just over 1 hour from Alicante, along the N-332 (ca. 15 km).

From whichever direction you approach Calpe, the dominating view seawards is of the Peñon de Ifach, a 332 metre rock that is now a nature reserve but has been used since Phoenician times as a defensive standpoint against pirates and Barbary raiders.

The town itself has many contrasts, where the traditional fishing village and bustling port combine well with modern roads and architecture; it boasts a long Paseo Marítimo (seaside promenade) lined with bars and restaurants, and several kilometres of fine sandy beaches. The two main safe and sheltered beaches have excellent leisure facilities, including sailing, windsurfing and diving centres.

There's always enough to provide an interesting day out in and around the town. The old town is brightly decorated in lots of streets with huge murals and there are plenty of little shops to separate you from your holiday euros.

One benefit of the internationalism here is that there are some excellent restaurants you can dine in. If you want to try local food you'll find plenty of good rice dishes which you could sample, as a traditional paella, al horno (oven-baked), or amb fessols i naps (with beans and turnips) or if you're in a fish frame of mind try putxero de polp or borreta de melva (octopus or fish stew respectively).

Latter-day colonisers are firmly ensconced here, creating a spot by the sea where German bakeries rub shoulders with Scandinavian design stores and British bars where you can have a full fry-up breakfast (until late) or a pint of bitter.

One of the town's main industries is the fishing fleet and each morning at five the boats leave the harbour at the foot of the Peñon de Ifach. Twelve hours later they return, to a welcoming chorus of screeching

seagulls, ducking and diving for scraps. As late as 1978 the catch was auctioned on the beach but now it goes under the hammer in the quayside auction house, where a public gallery allows visitors to try and make sense of the rapid-fire buying process. Having failed to do so, you can see the result of a hard days work laid out on display at the restaurants a few metres walk away.

Where lesser dineries try and tempt you with photos of the delights of their kitchens, here the real McCoy lies awaiting your selection. On display in cool cabinets you will see great slices of merluza, daintily dappled salmonete, long, succulent lubina, thick steaks of atún and fat silvery dorada. If you are on a budget a plate of deep-fried boquerones will only set you back seven euros, but if you feel like splashing out the super mariscada is a great floral crustacea display of brown lobster, pink gambas, rose cigalas and deep red carabinero.

The Peñon de Ifach (Rock of Ifach) is the largest single rock in the Mediterranean called the Northern Rock by the Phoenicians to distinguish it from the Southern Rock at Gibraltar. It has been a Nature reserve since 1987 and provides a shelter for a number of rare plants and home to over 300 species of animals including colonies of sea birds that use it as a nesting ground.



The more lively visitor might choose to shin up the path to the peak, which is some 330 metres high, however you can also walk through the tunnel which leads to the top, from where you have breathtaking views of the surrounding villages and countryside - you can even see across to Ibiza on a clear day! The round walking trip takes about two hours and there is a nature school that provides information on the flora and fauna to be found. Expert climbers, who want the most direct route, can climb the southern face of the rock that drops sheer from summit to sea.

Fiestas in Calpe

Fallas de San José - Feast of St. Joseph - 19th March

Big statues of wood and cardboard are burnt at Midnight on the 19th March on the feast of St. Joseph to celebrate the beginning of Spring. There is a procession through the streets of the old town, a giant paella in Constitution square, sardines and sangria for all present and a firework display at Midnight.

Moros y Cristianos - the Moors and Christians Festival - 21st to 24th October.

Calpe celebrates its own Patron Saint 'Santísimo Cristo del Sudor' and the Moors and Christians festival at the same time. Legend has it that Santísimo Cristo del Sudor helped protect the village as the Moors tried to enter. Two battles are re-enacted along the beaches and in a mock castle, specially constructed for the occasion. There are musical acts, fireworks and plenty of food and drink for all.

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We all want to make the most of the summer but apart from thinking about the beach, on vacations, or about that dreamed trip, it's important that we all take the necessary steps to ensure our homes stay safe and secure. Unfortunately, the probability of being burglarized or robbed at home is tender to be higher during the summer!

As we are likely to spend more time away from home, even for days if we plan to go on holiday, we want to give you some tips on how to minimise the chances of your home being burgled and, in the unfortunate event that it does happen, to make sure you're covered!

- Talk to your insurance agent to make sure that your contents cover are properly calculated, including furniture, white good and electronic appliances, clothes, jewelry, personal belongings, etc.
- Make sure that your doors and windows are in good condition and check all locks are working and get a home security system to help reduce the chance of being a burglary victim.
- Make your home look lived in, for example, you could invest in some timer switches for your lights to give the impression that someone is home.
- Ask your neighbours or a friend to keep watch of your home and collect the post from your postbox
- Create a list of emergency contacts if anything was to go wrong in your home.
- Don't share holiday plans or pictures on social media or adjust your privacy settings to make sure you are not

sharing personal information with the wrong people

- Beware of squatters! Make sure your home insurance covers the Legal Defense in case of illegal occupation of the property

But in summer, it's not just a possible burglary of your home that you need to watch out for. There are small inconveniences that come with the heat, such as annoying pests and insects!! Fortunately, there are home insurance policies that include pest control, fumigation, and disinfection services.

In summer we also like to enjoy our home outdoors, and it is interesting to have a cover for our garden furniture, even for the garden itself, in case of a summer storm! You may also have a second home for holiday rentals. In that case, make sure that you have a specific cover for holiday rentals, including public liability for your guests.

LIBERTY SEGUROS has adapted its Home Insurance plans to provide solutions that best suit your individual requirements giving you the option of being covered for all these eventualities. Understanding that every customer's needs are unique, it has created additional coverages to allow you to enhance and complement your home insurance cover. Regardless of the plan you choose, you can now add Optional Packs to your home insurance to ensure your plan is perfectly tailored to you.

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A wine coin

With this article we will talk about the only Spanish currency dedicated to the world of wine: the Republican "peseta" of 1937. These metal pieces, which were short lived but widely popular, played an important role within the republican side: to serve as a transaction value during the Civil War, difficult times with monetary shortages.

The National currency factory (FNMT) had worked normally since the proclamation of the Second Spanish Republic (April 14th, 1931) until the outbreak of the spanish Civil war (July 17th, 1936). 4 months after starting the contention, due to the fear of losing Madrid by the nationals, republicans moved the factory to the Levante area in Valencia, where new factories were built to produce coins and bills. The quick evacuation of the FNMT to the new improvised Levantine facilities, with deficient means of production, was also reflected in the coinage. They had to use simpler and cheaper metals, like brass or iron, and somewhat defective dyes that didn't produce good quality coins.

The precarious socio-economic situation also reduced the size and weight of some pieces compared to the previous monetary system. Specifically for the "peseta" that concerns us in this article, and apart from the devaluation which meant the metal change, the design was the same: 23 millimeters diameter and 5 grams in weight, keeping certain continuity with the close past. Firstly, the war caused citizens to monopolize Silver coins, they kept these coins for emergencies, because of the intrinsic value. Following this, nickel and copper coins were employed as raw material in munitions factories. Due to "the hidden silver" and without small change coins, small supply stores struggled to stay open. The price of the kilogram or litre of most products was less than one "peseta". This meant that the Republican State had to supply new coins with lower denomination. On March 19, 1937, The 1 Peseta coin was introduced, although its distribution by the Republican territory was very slow. The new republican pieces were a novelty, for the first time since the implementation of the peseta in 1868, the coins were not made of silver, but a metal with lower intrinsic value: Brass. The design of the republican peseta issued in 1937 was clearly affected by political ideology at that time and by the artistic movement against the spanish crisis, this explained the disappearance of the national coat of arms.

On the reverse of the coin we have the Roman personification of "Hispania", It didn't have the traditional Republican attribute: the Phrygian cap. It was represented by the naked effigy of a female figure with long hair; next to her the inscription "REPVBBLICA ESPAÑOLA", written with the typical capital "V". On the reverse there was a representation of a vine stem with a bunch of arranged grapes next to the value of the coin: "1 Peseta". Below this, was the date: 1937. This wine motif possibly showed the republican want for victory and prosperity. Vine was considered, by classical civilisations, as a plant from which they extracted the drink of the gods: wine.

Popularly, the currency described was known as the "grape peseta" or "rubia" (blonde); this last name was due to the female portrait with a golden mane thanks to the metal used. On the other hand, the Republicans ironically argued that the new brass pesetas had the three necessary factors for men: money (the coin itself), the woman on the front and wine represented by the vine on the back.

During the war, wine was considered a staple food by the soldiers and the civilian population because of wine having a high quantity of calories and also helping to increase positivity. Also, the euphoria and analgesic purposes, which are myths still valid in today's society, which momentarily allowed to escape the cold and, above all, from a raw and ruthless reality of the civil war.

The high consumption of wine, forced the republicans to take dissuasive measures by distributing posters around cities. Lastly, the Spanish civil war, initially provoked an increase in wine consumption, but eventually condemned most vineyards to abandonment and the destruction of numerous wineries throughout the country.



Wine of the month

Capellanía 2015

Grape variety: Viura 100%, DOCa RIOJA

Capellanía single-vineyard. Planted in 1945 located on a plateau at an altitude of 485 metres, the highest point of the Ygay Estate, close to Logroño. 18 months ageing in French barrel oaks.

A limited production wine from a centennial single vineyard, which has been kept for a year and a half in new French oak barrels and one year in bottle; giving an astonishing complexity, structure and elegance. It is a very singular white wine, with the soul of a red wine which surprises all who taste it.

Pairing: Scarlet shrimp tartar, Capellania white wine gelatine, ginger and coriander; partridge with warm salad, grilled foie gras and mushrooms with redcurrant and mango vinegar; creamy carnaroli rice with squid cooked in its own ink and red piquillo pepper cream; glazed and baked poultry.

Serving Suggestions: We recommend decanting the wine some minutes before serving to let it breathe and show its full aromatic potential. Recommended serving temperature around 14º



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Is It Safe To Drink The Tap Water In Spain?

Regularly on Social Media sites you will see the question "Is it safe to drink the water in Spain?" The short answer is generally "Yes", though in reality you would probably prefer not to.

In general terms in most urban areas of Spain it is perfectly acceptable to drink the water from the tap; however the quality can vary from good to very poor and this inconsistency means that most people in Spain prefer to drink bottled water.

When comparing the tap water in Spain to that in the UK, the main difference that people notice is the discolouration and the unpleasant taste and odour. This is mainly due to the different, often higher levels of chemicals introduced into the Spanish water supply particularly chlorine. Whilst boiling water will kill bacteria, it will not remove the chemical impurities.

Chlorine is important as it kills harmful bacteria associated with serious disease but research has shown that as well as the unpleasant taste, there are considerable health risks associated with consumption of excessive chlorine.

In Spain, chlorine can only be removed from the water at the point of use ie immediately before it comes out of the tap!

One of the other main problems with the water in Spain is that it is very hard, with high concentrations of calcium and magnesium. Consequently you will find that limescale builds up quickly and it can have a severely damaging effect on pipes, water boilers and domestic appliances such as kettles, irons, washing machine and dishwashers. Heating costs are increased and the lifespan of appliances is significantly reduced.

So what is the solution? The solution depends on your particular problem but without doubt one of the most simple and cost effective options is to install a water filtration system. A drinking water filtration system fits underneath your sink and give you bottled water quality straight from the tap. The Whole House System which is attached to the mains supply, removes sediment and prevents limescale build up

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4 appliances to save electricity at home ...or maybe not.



Home automation and gadgets such as smart plugs serve to lower the electricity bill, although the investment may not always compensate the savings achieved.

The goal is to reduce the electricity bill. But is there any way to control your consumption? Home automation and ingenuity come together to create new gadgets that promise to help you spending less energy such as electrical meters connected to your mobile to plugs that claim to be "smart." But do they really save that much electricity?

In this article we will try to solve this dilemma.

1. Electric meter: to control electricity consumption.

The arrival of the hourly rate has not been easy to understand for the average consumer. Having to check daily the different prices of electricity in the wholesale market has not settled among most users. Neither has the user been able to enjoy great benefits by adjusting their tasks to the most economical rates.

A solution has been the launch of electric meters that control the consumption at all times. Thus, the less active consumer can receive recommendations on his mobile phone to reduce his electric bill without great complications, while the more active user may even have a more precise vision of how much electricity certain appliances connected to the mains are actually using.

But do they really save money? The answer is not that simple, since it depends a lot on the use that is given to it. First, they promise to reduce the bill between 10% and 15%. However, it should be taken into account that this type of equipment cost about 120 Euros, so you have to apply well all recommendations to amortize their cost.

2. The Google thermostat

Google also wants a piece of the cake with the sale of their gadgets thanks to home automation. Thermostats that promise to control the temperature of our home to balance the well-being of the family and the cost of energy. You can remotely connect with your home from the smartphone to set the temperature before you arrive to your house.

Now, is this device worth the investment or not? Well, the version of this device is marketed in Spain for more than 225 Euros makes it possible and can have control of the boiler, central heating and the hot water. However, there is no air conditioning. Therefore, it is not the most interesting solution during the hot months and in this part of Spain we do tend to have long summers.





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3. The smart plug.

Phantom consumption represents more than 10% of the total energy used in a home, according to data from the Institute for Energy Diversification and Saving (IDAE).

I wrote an article not long ago called "Appliances consume electricity even when you switch them off".

The question is: can you avoid paying for leaving some devices in standby mode? This is the basis on which you can start saving with the new smart plug.

Its main function is to control the on and off of any device, either programming it or doing it from a mobile application. In this way, it is possible to turn on any device that is needed on arrival a few minutes before, such as the water heater, preventing it from consuming all day. It is also a good ally to create the illusion that there is someone at home when you are not, preventing any intruders from entering the home by programming the switching on and off during the day.

The question, once again is whether it compensates or not. In this case, the price of this plug is not much (less than 36 Euros), so amortizing it may take little time. So for savers, this is a good ally to start lowering the electricity bills without making a big initial outlay.

4. The smart meter, the device that everyone has or will have soon.

Home automation can be a great companion in the war against oscillations in the price of electricity. However, it is important to get the most out of one that is already

installed and allows you to have a lot of information on consumption.

The large electricity companies take advantage of the intelligent meter to give real data on the energy expenditure that is done in each home. This information serves to have a control of what is consumed compared to previous months, as well as identify the hours in which more light is needed. But, does it make savings possible or is it pure marketing?

First, it is a device that is compulsory, so its cost is already part of your receipt. However, it can be used for the benefit of the user. Thanks to this sneak, you can know if the rate is the most indicated. And, why keep a fixed price contract if the highest consumption is done at night? Moreover, if the situation were reversed, is there no company that offers a rate that fits our habits with lower rates? In short, this is the device that helps save the most if you pay attention and dedicate a bit of your time.

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The King (Of the Waltz) and The Boss

By Taquilla Tickets

Oh WOW!! Ladies and gentlemen. In this edition of this brilliant magazine, we are concentrating on just two events. Not just two "normal" events. We are talking about two spectacular events that have worldwide appeal. We all comment on shows or concerts that we have seen or are coming up, and the adrenaline starts to flow as we recall, or look forward to, an event that lightens our hearts. We at Taquilla Tickets have two such events waiting for you in 2023 !! We think that these two events will create a whirlwind of activity as soon as this magazine goes to print.

So, the first of these events is on 13th, 14th and 15th March 2023. Some of you may remember that in February of this year (2022) Taquilla Tickets took three coaches to Madrid to see the brilliant Andre Rieu, in concert, at the Wizink Centre in the heart of beautiful Madrid. Well, he is coming back to Madrid with his world famous Johann Strauss orchestra. Taquilla Tickets and our wonderful guests had a fantastic time in Madrid. Not only did we tour beautiful Madrid, we were treated to a spectacular concert by the one and only "King of the Waltz". From the "march on stage" by the whole orchestra and singers, to the brilliant finale, we all witnessed a master at work. Tickets for this forthcoming event have already gone on sale, and we at Taquilla Tickets have another opportunity to buy tickets, on your behalf, to secure you a seat to see Andre, the orchestra, and the fabulous singers.

Please don't wait in the hope of getting a ticket at a later date. These tickets are already in high demand. If you did come with us last year, you will know that the Wizink centre in Madrid has some pretty unusual seating arrangements. On our guests behalf, we have arranged seating in a much more easily accessible area of the arena. So, to ensure that you get a ticket (according to availability), payment for this, the hotel, and the coach, is required, IN FULL, so that we can secure you a seat. We know that tickets will sell fast so please book your



place(s) NOW!!!!

And so, we have another iconic legend to present to you. "THE BOSS", Bruce Springsteen will be in town for his only concert in Spain. Taquilla Tickets are absolutely delighted and honoured to be able to offer a chance to see this legend of rock, in magnificent Barcelona, on the 27th, 28th and 29th April 2023. Of Dutch, Irish and Italian descent, he spent his youth on South Street, New Jersey. After seeing the Beatles on the "Ed Sullivan Show" in 1964, he brought his first guitar for \$18.95. From 1969 to 1971 he learnt his trade by "gigging" all over America. He is so popular that he has sold over 150 million records worldwide. Ever wondered why he is called "THE BOSS" ? During the early days of his career he took to approaching the venue's owners and collecting the nightly pay to share out with the other band members. The nickname stuck, and is still used today. With songs like: "Born to Run, Wall of Sound, Thunder Road and Junglebook", he is a unique talent and he has dedicated his life to music.

So, as you can imagine, tickets for Andre Rieu and Bruce Springsteen will sell out very quickly. To ensure that you get your ticket(s), we have to ask you to pay IN FULL (Travel, Insurance, Concert Ticket and Hotel accomodation). Come with us to enjoy one, or both, of these brilliant artists. We can't emphasise enough that if you want to come with us, we need to order your ticket(s) as soon as we can. Two excellent concerts and two excellent artists !!!!!

visit our Website: taquillaticketscondado.com OR, if you are visiting Condado, call in to our office (inside "Sparkle") We are also on "WhatsApp": Sally 0034 657346445 - Nigel 0034642501568.

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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.

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).

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FROM WIGAN PIER TO ANDALUCÍA

The bells of death go ting-a-ling-a-ling
For you, but not for me.
First World War Song

I used to quite like Mike Parkinson, until he became so doggedly persistent about burying me. It seems such a liberty when the man is all of seven years older than I. But whenever I switched on the telly that earnest, craggy Yorkshire face was there, regarding me with soulful sincerity, while that earnest, craggy Yorkshire voice reminded me that the grave was gaping wide for fogies such as I.

The other Wednesday, Val and I went to the English market in Mollina. Right at the entrance to the site there was a chap selling odds and ends from a stall, so we stopped to buy a couple of books.

'That'll be just two euros, please, and I have a little gift for you.'

He smiled with all the warmth of a crocodile on Colgate and handed me my purchases together with a square white envelope with a tastefully etched black border. 'No, don't open it until you're back at home.'

Light dawned. Here was yet another corpse-napper. I dropped the little gift into my shopping bag, where it remained until I tipped it, unopened, into the recycling bin.

Val and I wandered off separately into the main part of the market. Like Lonnie Donegan's old man, I hadn't gone but a few yards when a lady leapt out and grabbed me by the gorblimeys:

'Good morning! May I ask if you have a funeral plan?' Now call me old-fashioned (and, believe me, I'll take it as a great compliment if you do) but I grew up in the working-class Lancashire of the 1950s. When somebody died we stopped the clocks, drew the curtains, sliced the ham, and buttered the barm cakes for the wake. We would have seen it as the zenith of impertinence and the nadir of bad manners and worse taste if some tacky tout had tried to discuss the disposal of our mortal remains in Wigan Market Hall between the tripe and the black puddings. We didn't ignore mortality, rather the opposite in fact. My parents weren't much into the churchy stuff but my formidable grandmother took care of my religious upbringing, which included the message that in the midst of life we were in death and should live each day as if it were our last. I attended my first wake, Grandma's oldest sister, great Aunt Polly, at the age of three, and she lay quietly in her box on the kitchen table until it was time for the men in black toppers to

cart her off to the holy bone yard.

'Well yes, as a matter of fact, I do have a funeral plan. In the unlikely event that my tearful spouse can't manage to raise the cash for a casket I comfort myself with the knowledge that we've brought up two strapping great lads, fed them, clothed them, financed them through school, university and graduate school and seen them safely into stable employment. The very least they can do is bury me.'

'Ah, yes, but in Spain...'

'¿Vas a informarme que los entierros en España deben tener lugar durante los dos días después de la muerte?'

'I beg your pardon?'

'You don't speak Spanish?'

'Not much.'

'I see, but you were just about to tell me how things are done in Spain.'

The psalmist prayed 'Lord, let me know mine end and the number of my days', but we ordinary folk are seldom vouchsafed that information. (Would we really want it?). Val and I know fine well that either of us could pop off before breakfast though, like the Duracell bunny, we may tick along for a bit longer yet. We have a couple of centenarians and a stack of nonagenarians in both our families including my great uncle Richard who drank copiously, smoked like a chimney and lived cantankerous and clear-minded to the age of ninety-three, gleefully booby-trapping his Detroit home with shotguns and tripwires to shred the deserving burglar.

So, whilst we know very well that it will happen we don't know when it will happen and more to the point we don't really know where it will happen. As the insurance ad puts it 'el uno nunca sabe' and one of the things I definitely don't savvy is whether I shall pop my clogs in sunny Andalucía or in rainy Aspull (my family's home village in Lancashire for those readers sadly unaware of the geography of God's Own County) or even, as I hope my travelling days are far from over, some totally unexpected corner of the globe. Mind you, what with Covid-19, the burgeoning nuclear programmes of Iran and North Korea and the fact that the loonies seem increasingly to be in charge of most parts of the planet, it's not beyond the realm of possibility that Armageddon is just around the corner, and in the words of dear old Tom Lehrer, we'll all go together when we go. And what price your brass handles then?

We got back from the market and were in the process

Part 16: The Tills of Death

of unloading the shopping from our geriatric Ford when the telephone rang.

'Do you speak English?'

'It depends,' I replied warily.

'Oh good, I represent the Guiri-Gone Expat Disposal Service SA. Have you and your partner given any thought to funerals?'

'We have indeed. Would Saturday at 10.00 am suit you? I don't think we could manage the tramites any earlier than that and, assuming we survive, of course, we have a lunch date at two, but I'm sure we could squeeze you in. Flowers or good cause? Classical, rock or pop? Dugout, niche or crem?'

'Excuse me, I think we're at cross purposes, I'm offering you our funeral service.'

'And I'm offering you ours.'

'But I'm not dead.'

'Neither am I, but we'll be delighted to correct the omission at no extra charge. Do you have any preferences as to exit method?'

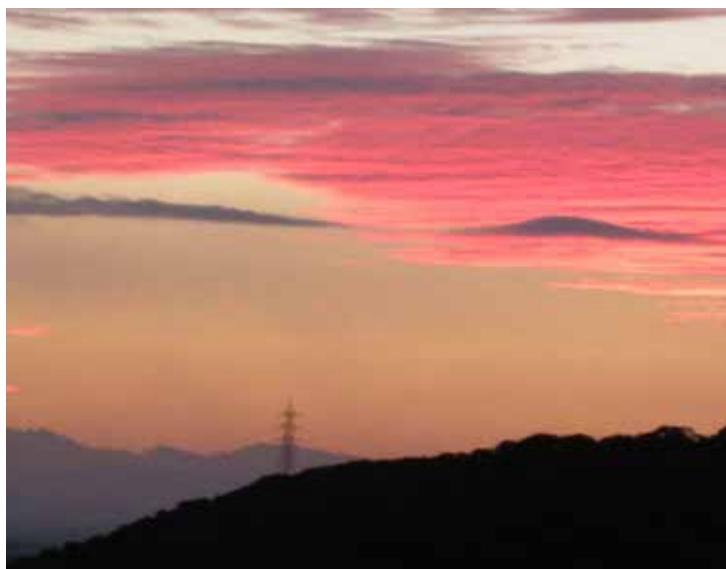
'Are you mad?'

'I don't think so. At least, I'm not the one who's just rung up to pester a complete stranger in the hope of

making a buck out of his cadaver. Hello...hello... Oh dear, we seem to have lost the connection.'

So thanks, but no thanks, Mike (and all you other hearse-chasers out there). Viva Emu! And you know exactly where you can park your Parker pen.

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