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ISSUE 73
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Town**

Gibraltar

**North
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Top 10

Destinations in
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**Wine
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A Life in SPAIN

Welcome to the December edition of ALIS.

Christmas is here. Friends have gone to the UK to visit the grandchildren, or the family are here visiting. Either way, let the party commence. Have a lovely christmas and prosperous new year from all of us at ALIS.

So what's in this edition....

This month we have an exclusive blog from Carol Hughes. Mapping out their journey and time in Spain. Funny but informative. well worth a read. See page 46

Then on pages 23-26 we have the top 10 most amazing destinations in Southern Spain. How many have you visited?

Whilst on page 16 we have a must read article about the Spanish christmas traditional days and events.

Enjoy this month's magazine

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Places To Visit In A Day

San Javier

With the demise of San Javier Airport, we can highlight the fact that there are many other attractions this busy little town has to offer. The municipality includes La Manga which offers enough to warrant a separate report but it offers the possibility of two seas with different waves, saltiness and temperature.

Probably most spectacularly, and with a bit of luck, you may witness the Patrulla Aguila aerobatic team which is based there. Now that commercial aircraft have been relocated to Corvera, it is possible that there may be more opportunities to see a free and spectacular display.

The local History Museum is well worth a look. Check out times etc on cultura@sanjavier.es

Like the rest of the Mar Menor, San Javier is perfectly placed to offer a wide range of water sports. Even just watching the paragliders whilst having a sumptuous meal or just a drink, can fill a couple of hours. The club and restaurants can be found by walking along the beautiful beach promenade from Los Alcazares towards the airport.

If you are in the area in July, you will catch the annual San Javier Jazz Festival. So far the acts are a work in progress (as usual every year) but confirmed artists include many world renowned musicians and singers. Next year there will be more free outdoor concerts so look out for those. For obvious reasons most concerts will be in the evening.

Check for more updates on www.jazz.sanjavier.es.

es There is much to explore in the area including the adjacent towns of Lo Pagan, Santiago de la Ribera and the salt flats nearby with its nature walks.

There is so much shopping to do in San Javier including (if you really need them) Lidl, Aldi and Iceland. There are hundreds of smaller local shops where you can satisfy all your retail therapy needs.

Eating out is no problem here. The bars and restaurants are superb and varied with an emphasis on sea food but a really good steak would not be hard to find.

In Santiago de la Ribera you will find a superb tourist office who will give even more information about what to do in a day in this vibrant area. Check out their website:- <http://www.turismo.sanjavier.es>

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Let's Learn Spanish

Shopping - Hardware

Phrases

Would you like me to help you?	¿Quieres que te ayude?	Ky-er-es kay tay eye-you-day
How much is this?	¿Esto, cuánto es?	Ess-toe kwan-toe ess
Do you have one of these?	¿Tienes uno de estos?	Tea-yen-ace oo-no day ess-toss
Could I borrow a tape measure?	¿Me puedes prestar un metro?	Maypwed-ace press-tahoonmet-tro
Give me a dozen.	Dame una docena	Dah-may oo-nah doh-ther-nah
I'd like 5 of these.	5 de estos, gracias.	Thin-ko day ess-toss grah-see-ass
Do you deliver?	¿Se hace entrega a domicilio?	Say ah-they en-tray-ga ah dom-me-see-lee-oh
Do you need anything else?	¿Necesitas algo más?	Nay-say-see-tasal-go mahs
I hope that's everything, thank you.	Espero que sea todo, gracias.	Ess-pear-roe kay say-ah toe-doe, grah-see-ass
How much do I owe you?	¿Cuánto te debo?	Kwan-toe taydeb-boh

Vocab

Long / length	Largo / largura	Lah-go / lah-gur-ra
Wide / width	Ancho / anchura	Ann-cho / ann-chour-rah
Tall / height	Alto / altura	Al-toe / al-tour-ra
Deep / depth	Profundo / profundidad	Pro-foon-doh / pro-foon-dee-dad
Some nails	Unos clavos	Oo-nosclav-oss
A hammer	Un martillo	Oon mar-tea-yo
Some screws	Unos tornillos	Oo-nos tor-nee-yos
A screwdriver	Un destornillador	Oon des-tor-nee-ya-door
A garden hose pipe	Una manguera de jardín	Oo-nah man-gehr-ra day har-dean
A light bulb	Una bombilla	Oo-nahbom-bee-ya



Now try our wordsearch:

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D V K L M A X A R U G R A L R R
D E D Z D B L I P R Z C F M J P
G S T F W K Q L X M E L Z X O P
T D E S T O R N I L L A D O R F
I A N C H U R A R B X V U X N V
H V A A R E U G N A M O G A I L
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An aerial photograph of Gibraltar, showing the city built on a rocky peninsula overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. The sea is a deep blue, and several ships are visible in the harbor. The city is densely packed with buildings, and the surrounding landscape is hilly and green. In the distance, other parts of the Iberian Peninsula can be seen under a clear sky.

South Town...

Gibraltar

Britain's place in the sun .

Gibraltar is an amazing co-mingling of past, present and future, and the list of things that a visit to Gibraltar should take in reality are as long as your arm, but there are some things that you just cannot miss.





Those things that literally speak to you or beckon you in to view their stories are things that every visitor to Gibraltar wants to be certain to take a peek at. What do you want to do first? Well of course that depends on what you like most. If nature is your thing the whales or dolphins, or the rare plants, or the monkeys are going to appeal to you.

Gibraltar is not just history or shopping or outdoor sports, or even beaches. In reality, it's all of the above.

If you're into shopping, well Gibraltar has some of the best goods and some amazing prices. What's your pleasure? Hiking, boating or just wandering around the town in search of something interesting?

The, tax status of Gibraltar makes it a place that is well worth shopping with the smaller stores and local shops as interesting and intriguing as the larger ones.

Experience a unique drive across the airport, where both pedestrians and vehicles cross, this is controlled by traffic lights and barriers Both RAF and civilians use the airport with daily flights from UK. See the land frontier with Spain.

Gibraltar diving schools are among the best in the world today, and feature dives for the beginner, the advanced and the very experienced open water diver, as well as wreck divers.

There are various diving schools that will allow you to try out your new sport, give you on site tuition, and see that you have all the equipment you need to safely dive the wrecks of Gibraltar. They offer equipment rental so that all you need to bring with you when you arrive is a towel.


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If you are, however an experienced diver and you would prefer to bring your own equipment with you, there is absolutely no restriction what so ever in bringing your own diving equipment to Gibraltar.

Gibraltar features one of the most spectacular underwater scenery in the world today, and for the diver, it features a vast array of things to see and explore.,

Cradle of History, A welcome monument that's shaped like the rock, showing the first skull of Neanderthal man from Gibraltar as well as other photos that show the civilizations throughout the history of Gibraltar

The Changing of the Guard, Several times daily on Gibraltar, undertaken by Gibraltar's own Guard Company.

Whale Watching in the Strait - If you're interested in nature, then Gibraltar is one of those places that has some diverse nature to show you. Whales in the area include Humpbacks, Killer Whales False Killer Whales and several others. Dolphin Watching- Dolphins seems to love the Gibraltar and use the area waterways as a nursery. It's not at all uncommon to see them playing with their mothers in the waters around Gibraltar.

Barbary Macaques, The Gibraltar Monkeys in other words, the last free ranging primate in Europe

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Focus On Puerto De Mazarrón

This once quiet port is now a thriving, bustling hive of activity. With new shops being added all the time there truly is something for everyone.

Opposite Lidl you will find the Centro Comercial La Piramide. Where you will find several British run businesses. The latest edition to be bought to the area is the Food Co. selling exclusive British products this was the first Tesco's in Spain. They stock all of your favourites from baked beans to ready meals and from fresh dips to mushy peas.

The Food Co, is on C/ Thomas Alva Edison. It is a large well stocked store. Offering an extensive frozen range, Dried products, a chilled cabinet, beauty and Toiletries and of course plenty of Xmas goodies.

This area has seen a lot of transformation recently and now houses some great shops. In fact it is fast becoming the one stop shopping area for British and Spanish alike. Here is a selection of what is on offer.

Opposite Food Co. you will see a car ramp to take you upstairs. Here you will also find a host of British run shops and businesses including:

The Loft Hair and Beauty: The only british owned Hair salon in the port. Run by Leanne and the team.

Furniture Plus: Stocking UK inside and outside furniture. From beds to settees, and sun loungers to parasols and all at great prices.

i phone repairs Costa Calida: For all your tablet and mobile phone repairs.

Close to the Piramide centre is a new retail area called Mazarron Park. This boasts some large retailers such as Aldi, JYSK, Sprinter, Tedi and much more

After all that shopping you will probably just want to sit down with a cup of tea and a piece of cake. Well they have that covered too. Opposite

the pyramid centre is mazarrón park where you can find the Cheesecake Emporium

This truly is a one stop 'home from home' shopping centre. So what are you waiting for? Come on down, you wont be disappointed.

Legs & Co: Which is the longest established British lingerie shop having been established for over 17 years. Stocking UK branded Lingerie, clothing, Night wear and swimwear it carries all your favourite makes. They have an extensive Bra range covering most sizes and offer a free fitting size by their helpful staff. They can be found in Avenida Tierno Galvan 9 opposite Cee jays bar



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Spain at Christmas

Did you know?

Calendar of Christmas events

December 8th–Red Day -This is the public holiday of *Immaculada* (Feast of the Immaculate Conception) which marks the beginning of the religious Christmas celebrations. Most notable in Seville

21st December–In a few cities including Granada the celebration of *Hogueras* (bonfires) takes place. This date marks the winter solstice (shortest day) and where it is celebrated involves people jumping through fires to protect themselves against illness.

22nd December–All over Spain people never stray far from a TV or radio as the Christmas lottery is drawn over a period of many hours. Everybody in Spain buys tickets for this lottery in the hope of winning *El Gordo* (the fat one) and the winning number usually means that a good number of people from the same village become a lot better off overnight. Besides the big three prizes there are thousands of smaller prizes shared by people all over Spain. You can buy Spanish Christmas lottery tickets online.

24th December–Christmas Eve is called *Noche Buena* in Spanish (Goodnight) and it is the most important family gathering of the year. In the evening people often meet early for a few drinks with friends then return home to enjoy a meal with the family. Most bars and restaurants close in the evening. Prawn starters followed by roast lamb would be a typical

meal rounded off with a typically Christmas sweet called *turrón* which is a nougat made of toasted sweet almonds. Another typical festive sweet is called *Polvorones* which is made from almonds, flour and sugar. Cava, Catalan champagne, would be the chosen drink for the Christmas toast though plenty fine Spanish wines will also be consumed with the meal.

25th December–Red Day -Children may receive a small gift on *Noche Buena* or this morning but the day for presents is 6th January, Epiphany, when the Three Kings bring gifts for the children. Christmas Day is a national holiday in Spain so shops are closed yet it is not a day of great celebration but rather a calm day when people go out for a walk, drop into a bar, etc. Another large family meal at lunchtime is common though it's becoming more common to see families eating out on the afternoon of Christmas day.

28th December–This is the day of *Santos Inocentes* (Holy Innocents) and is the equivalent of April Fools' Day when people play practical jokes on one another. Often the national media will include a nonsense story in their broadcasts. In some villages youngsters light bonfires and one of them acts as the mayor who orders townspeople to carry out civic tasks such as sweeping the streets. Refusal to comply results in fines which are used to pay for the celebration.



31st December–New Year's Eve is known as Noche Vieja. It is a big celebration all over the country with street parties and special nights in hotels and clubs everywhere. Until midnight people tend to stay at home and on the stroke of midnight it is traditional to eat 12 grapes, one on each stroke of the clock to bring good luck for the new year. In Madrid and other main cities revellers congregate in the main square (Puerta del Sol in Madrid) and eat the grapes along with a celebratory bottle of cava then head out into the night until after sunrise.

1st January–Red Day -A low key public holiday with plenty people sleeping off their excesses.

5th January–There are processions all over Spain this evening where sweets are thrown from the floats to all the people who come out to watch. Every town has its own variation such as in the Sierra Nevada where the Three Kings (Wise Men) can be seen to ski down to the village.

6th January–Red Day -This is the Feast of the Epiphany (Día de los Reyes Magos) when the Three Kings arrived in Bethlehem. For Spanish children this is the most important day of the year when they wake up to find that Los Reyes Magos (the Three Kings/ Wise Men) have left gifts for them in their house. Santa may leave them a token gift on December 25th but the Three Kings are their favourites, especially Baltasar who rides a donkey and is the one believed to leave the gifts. During the day of the 6th the Three Kings continue their good work and are seen distributing gifts to children in hospitals all over Spain.

7th January–The day after receiving their gifts children return to school, their parents go back to work and Christmas in Spain is all over for another year



Spain at Christmas

Did you know?

Traditions

Most people in Spain go to Midnight Mass or 'La Misa Del Gallo' (The Mass of the Rooster). It is called this because a rooster is supposed to have crowed the night that Jesus was born. Christmas Eve is known as Noche Buena. In the days before Noche Buena, children might take part in 'piden el aguinaldo' where they go and sing carols around their neighbours hoping to get some money!

Most families eat their main Christmas meal on Christmas Eve before the service. The traditional Spanish Christmas dinner was 'Pavo Trufado de Navidad' which is Turkey stuffed with truffles (the mushrooms, not the chocolate ones!) or 'Pularda asada' (a roasted young hen), although they are not commonly eaten now. In Galicia (a region in north-west Spain, surrounded by water) the most popular meal for Christmas Eve and for Christmas Day is seafood. This can be all kinds of different seafood, from shellfish and molluscs, to lobster and small edible crabs.

Popular deserts and sweets include 'mazapán' (made of almonds, sugar and eggs), 'turrón' (made of honey and toasted almonds) and 'polvorones' (made of flour, butter and sugar).

After the midnight service, one old tradition was for people to walk through the streets carrying torches, playing guitars and beating on tambourines and drums. One Spanish saying is 'Esta noche es Noche-Buena, Y no Es noche de dormir' which means 'Tonight is the good night and it is not meant for sleeping!'

A few different languages are spoken in different regions in Spain. In Spanish Happy/Merry Christmas is 'Feliz Navidad'; in Catalan it's 'Bon Nadal'; in Galician 'Bo Nadal'; and in Basque (or Euskara in basque) 'Eguberri on'. Happy/Merry Christmas in lots more languages.



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December 28th is 'Día de los santos inocentes' or 'Day of the Innocent Saints' and is very like April Fools Day in the UK and USA. People try to trick each other into believing silly stories and jokes. Newspapers and TV stations also run silly stories. If you trick someone, you can call them 'Inocente, inocente' which means 'innocent, innocent'. 28th December is when people all over the world remember the babies that were killed on the orders of King Herod when he was trying to kill the baby Jesus.

New Year's Eve is called 'Nochevieja' or 'The Old Night' in Spain and one special tradition is that you eat 12 grapes with the 12 strokes of the clock at Midnight! Each grape represents a month of the coming year, so if you eat the twelve grapes, you are said to be lucky in the new year.

Apart from Christmas, there is another festival that is celebrated in Spain that is about the Christmas Story. It is called Epiphany and is celebrated on 6th January. In Spanish, Epiphany is called 'Fiesta de Los tres Reyes Mages': in English this means 'The festival of the three Magic Kings'. Epiphany celebrates when the Kings or Wise men brought gifts to the baby Jesus.

Children have some presents on Christmas Day, but most are opened at Epiphany. Children believe that the Kings bring presents to them at Epiphany. They write letters to the Kings asking for toys and presents. And on Epiphany Eve (January 5th) they leave shoes on windowsills or balconies or under the Christmas Tree to be filled with presents. Gifts

are often left by children for the Kings, a glass of Cognac for each King, a satsuma and some walnuts. Sometimes a bucket of water is left for the camels that bring the Kings! If the children have been bad, the Kings might leave pieces of coal made out of sugar in the presents!

Some big towns and cities have Epiphany Parades with each King having a big float that is shaped like a camel. Sometimes there are also real camels in the parade. The Three Kings in the Spanish Epiphany are:

Gaspar, who has brown hair and a brown beard (or no beard!) and wears a green cloak and a gold crown with green jewels on it. He is the King of Sheba. Gaspar represents the Frankincense brought to Jesus. Frankincense is sometimes used in worship in Churches and showed that people worship Jesus.

Melchior, who has long white hair and a white beard and wears a gold cloak. He is the King of Arabia. Melchior represents the Gold brought to Jesus. Gold is associated with Kings and Christians believe that Jesus is the King of Kings.

Balthazar, who has black skin and a black beard (or no beard!) and wears a purple cloak. He is the King of Tarse and Egypt. Balthazar represents the gift of Myrrh that was brought to Jesus. Myrrh is a perfume that is put on dead bodies to make them smell nice and showed that Jesus would suffer and die.



Spain at Christmas *Did you know?*

Rosca de Reyes

With religious origins, the Rosca de Reyes is a traditional Spanish bread in the form of a ring, representing the Wise Men's search for the King of the Jews. It is believed that Melchior, Gaspar and Balthazar, the Three Kings from the East, travelled to Jerusalem following a star. On meeting with King Herod, they asked him where the new King had been born. King Herod, frightened by these words, asked the wise men to search for the child and bring word once they had found him, so that he may also go and worship the new king. Because Herod was afraid that the child might threaten his throne, he ordered the killing of every



single baby under the age of two years old. The day when the wise men found the Baby Jesus is known as Epiphany, which is precisely the event represented by the Rosca de Reyes.

The dried and candied fruits that adorn the bread symbolize the crowns of the Kings, while the traditional figurines placed inside the bread represent Mary and Joseph fleeing to Egypt to escape from Herod's attempts to kill their baby. The tradition of eating Rosca de Reyes actually started in France, in the 14th century. The way it was eaten was almost a ritual in itself. A slice of bread was first given to a poor person or stranger, then the next slices were intended for those serving in the King's army, and the rest of the bread was distributed among the other guests. This tradition soon expanded to other countries in Europe and later to Latin America.

Nowadays, in France, the tradition involves the Rosca de Reyes being placed on a table, under which a child sits or they are blindfolded, so that when the bread is divided they are asked "Who shall receive this share?" and the child names someone. One lucky recipient will find the trinket, normally a bean although sometimes even a coin. The person who finds it is named "King" for the day.

In Mexico, the tradition of sharing the bread is slightly different, as little plastic babies are placed inside it to symbolize the baby Jesus. Guests then randomly take a share of the bread, and whoever finds the figurine automatically becomes his godparent. Then he or she has to make a party with tamales and atole on the following February 2nd.

Godparents usually dress up a statue of Jesus using traditional costumes. Sometimes they dress him as Saint Francis of Assisi or the Holy Child of Atocha and other typical depictions of Jesus. February 2nd is a very important day, when many Christians celebrate the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin, also known as the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple. This feast also honors Our Lady of Candelaria, a depiction of the Virgin Mary, and includes the blessing of water and candles. Far more than a quaint tradition, the Rosca de Reyes can help believers remember that God can turn darkness and bitterness into light and sweetness!

Spanish Christmas - Picadillo

This recipe is so simple... but to get the best flavour it does need to marinade for a bit. It is literally spicy mince with fried eggs on top. Have fun and let us know how you get on.

Ingredients (serves 2)

250 grams pork mince

3 or 4 cloves of garlic

1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon of hot or smoky paprika

1/2 to 1 teaspoon of sweet paprika

pinch of salt

olive oil for frying

Method

Drizzle a little olive oil into a frying pan and throw your garlic cloves in. Don't peel them though

Fry over a medium heat until the skins are crispy

Peel the garlic and then mash it in a pestle and mortar with a pinch of salt

Mix the paste in with the mince and add the two types of paprika.

Keep stirring and mixing... and when you think you've stirred enough, stir more. Do it with your hands if you like... you want it really well mixed

Pop into a bowl, cover and refrigerate for at least 8 hours. I do ours in the morning, and then it's ready for that evening

Bring the bowl out of the fridge about half an hour before you're ready to cook so that it comes up to room temperature

Drizzle a small amount of olive oil into a large frying pan (perhaps a tablespoon full) and brown the mince

Keep stirring until it's cooked. Make sure you break the mince up

Spoon the mince onto plates

Stick a bit of leafy stuff on top if you want to make it look pretty

Serve hot



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TOP 10

Most Amazing Destinations in Southern Spain

Andalusia is an autonomous community that covers most of southern Spain. It has a diverse landscape, with a long Mediterranean coastline and its own mountain chain, and is known to have the hottest average temperatures in Europe. Andalusia is a rough translation of an Arabic word meaning “vandals”, due to the fact that it was raided and claimed by many different cultures and nations because of its prime location. This has created a series of cities and towns with a very multicultural architecture, cuisine, and history. They are home to a celebratory culture full of festivals and flamenco dancing, tapas and sherry. Here is a look at some of the must-see destinations in southern Spain:

10. Jerez de la Frontera

This small city is believed by many to be as quintessential Andalucía as anyone can find. Though larger cities like Cadiz and Seville will advertise this honor, Jerez is well known on several fronts without much lip service at all. It is the centre of Spanish horse culture, and home of the invention of fortified sherry wine.

Eleven European palaces and one looming Moorish palace and fortress are available for tours. During one of the many festivals here, there is ample opportunity to see traditional flamenco dance in the city where it was invented.





9. Doñana National Park

The Doñana National Park is located in the fertile river delta where the Guadalquivir meets the Mediterranean Sea. It is an ecological paradise of sand dunes, marshes and plains that serves as a refuge for many species of wildlife. Birders will be treated to views of thousands of different African migratory species.

More local endangered species can also be seen by lucky people, like the Iberian lynx and the Spanish Imperial Eagle. As it was once a home for nobility, the visitors centers and marine museum are all housed in repurposed castles and manors, and are worth seeing as well.

8. Marbella

Once a small white village of fishermen, Marbella is now one of the most cosmopolitan beach resorts on the Costa del Sol. The beaches with its fine sand and the Mediterranean with its clean blue water are the main attractions here, although there are numerous historic attractions well worth exploring too.

An ancient walled city boasts virtually the same footprint as it did during the 16th century. When not sunning on Marbella's palm-tree-lined beaches, visitors can walk the Golden Mile to view some of the most luxurious homes and resorts in Europe. The area around the yacht-filled marina Puerto Banus boasts the city's best boutiques, restaurants and bars.

7. Cadiz

This is believed to be the oldest continually inhabited city in all of Western Europe, and was founded over three millennia ago by Phoenician sailors. A visit here means seeing long coastlines of public beaches, waves on crashing seawalls, and examples of thousands of years of architecture.

The must-see time to visit is during Carnival, which is the third-biggest celebration of this kind in the world. During the rest of the year, guests flock here for seafood, surfing and flamenco dancing.



6. Malaga

From the outside, this city has a subdued and modern shell. The historic, Gothic heart of town is another world completely. This is the birthplace of Picasso, and has a large collection of museums to enjoy. Those seeking older historic sites will enjoy the Roman theatre and Azcalba, the Moorish castle.

The grand 11th Century Gibralfaro castle is a must-see for those who love lavish manors. Malaga is well-known for its tapas bars and has a reputation of being one of the tastiest cities in the region when it comes to this kind of cuisine.



4. Ronda

Located in and around the deep El Tajo gorge, Ronda is one of the oldest cities in Spain. It's nearly impregnable position made it a stronghold against Catholic troops in the 1400s. Completed in 1793, the Puente Nuevo bridge spanning the 30-story high gorge is one of the city's most impressive features.

The city's architecture received its influence from the Romans and Moors who once ruled the area. Ronda is also home to the Plaza de Toros, the oldest bullring in Spain, an arena that has attracted writers ranging from Ernest Hemingway to Alexandre Dumas.



5. Sierra Nevada

This mountain range in Spain is one of the southernmost ski destinations in all of Europe. It also contains the highest mountain of continental Spain, Mulhacén at 3,478 meters (11,411 feet) above sea level.

The range towers over the city of Granada, and offers a number of fun activities for travellers. In addition to winter slopes, visitors here can enjoy the National Park that serves as a biosphere reserve, an astronomical observatory and telescope, and access to a number of adventure guide services. During summertime, these mountains are a mecca for hiking, rock climbing, and mountain biking.



3. Cordoba

The architectural splendor of Cordoba is well-known, and comes from a multitude of cultures. Of worldwide renown is the Mezquita, or great Mosque-cathedral of Cordoba. Both the exceptional design as well as the combined religious histories bring a steady stream of international visitors.

The middle-aged architecture that comprises the Jewish Quarter stretches out from the Mezquita, and offers a lovely stroll through the past, as does a trip across the Roman Bridge over the Guadalquivir River. Spring visitors will especially enjoy their trip here, as this is when several citywide fiestas fill the streets.





2. Seville

This is the largest tourist destination in southern Spain, and home to many attractions. The cathedral here, adorned with a Moorish bell-tower, is the third largest church in the world by some measurements, though some say the world's largest by measurement of volume.

A host of museums, ancient architecture, palaces and churches are available to explore in Seville, along with the usual big-city amenities of excellent food and cultural activities. Finally, a two-week visit here in April can be amazing- the sombre Santa Semana (holy week) and celebratory Feria de Abril that follows is a world-renowned celebration.

1. Granada

This city at the base of the Sierra Nevada Mountains was founded as a Celtic settlement and has been inhabited for over 2500 years. Its breathtaking location near mountains is one of the loveliest in Andalusia.

Granada's most famous attraction is the fortress/palace complex known as Alhambra, which was a Moorish palace for the emirs when the city was under Islamic rule. The adjacent Muslim neighbourhood and many other cathedrals and castles are also worth the trip while here. Tapas and flamenco lovers will find that both are easy to find and quite excellent.

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Festive Greetings from teaandinfusions.com

We've had a great year introducing our loose leaf teas, and infusions, to new and seasoned tea drinkers alike. We have such an enormous diversity of flavours, to tempt you. However even for the biggest Grinch, you cannot help but notice that the festive season is well and truly upon us.

The darker cooler days and nights lend themselves to our fine selection of winter teas. Ones which instantly spring to mind are the Chai's, warm and spiced, full of festive spirit, which go well with a mince pie or two. Or a Smokey Lapsang Souchong tea, to tempt your curiosity. Then it's time to deck the halls with a steaming Hot Mug of Red Berry infusion.

As we start planning our festive celebrations and parties, and all of these begin to take a place in our calendar. It is then the really tricky decisions starts, the dreaded present search! For children of a certain age it's so easy, they are even quite willing to provide us with a lengthy list! But as we get a little more mature, most of us seem to have accumulated everything we want and need.

Finding something a little different, as a present or even a stocking filler, or secret Santa, becomes trickier each year. For the tea lover it shouldn't be an issue. We have a wonderful selection of loose leaf teas just waiting for you to try.

An inexpensive tea themed gift idea, could be buying a one person cafetiere or tea pot. Along with a selection of our teas to go with it. Thus making the present very personal to the recipient. Be adventurous and choose a different selection, which may not be the receiver's regular tea of choice.

Try some of our suggestions, Turmeric chai, Rooibos, Genmaicha, Sencha green tea.
Or Black chai, Lapsang Souchong, Redberry Rooibos, Peppermint.

Even Red-berry, Camomile, White tea and Mango, Green tea and Ginger.
Plus all of the usual teas such as Darjeeling, Kenyan, English breakfast tea, Earl Grey, extra Strong and so on.

Once Christmas has passed, we have that lull before the New Year, and yet more excess. With resolutions that last until temptation overpowers us! They usually evolve around, eat healthier, lose weight and get fit. Simply switching to Green tea could help with all three of these.

Best Wishes for the Christmas and New Year, from teaandinfusions.com



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An aerial photograph of Toledo, Spain, showing a dense cluster of historic buildings with terracotta roofs. In the background, the large, white Alcázar of Toledo with its four towers and blue-tiled roofs stands out against the sky. The city is built on a hillside, with trees interspersed among the buildings.

North Town...

TOLEDO

Toledo is one of the Spanish cities with the greatest wealth of monuments. Known as the “city of the three cultures”, because Christians, Arabs and Jews lived together there for centuries, behind its walls Toledo preserves an artistic and cultural legacy in the form of churches, palaces, fortresses, mosques and synagogues. This great diversity of artistic styles makes the old quarter of the capital of Castile - La Mancha a real open-air museum, which has led to it being declared a World Heritage Site.



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

The maze of streets making up the historic centre of Toledo is only bounded by walls in which many gates were opened. The Bisagra gate, presided over by two bodies and a great imperial shield forms the main access to the city within the walls. This noble gate, of Muslim origin, includes a central courtyard and was altered during the reign of Carlos I (Emperor Carlos V). The Alfonso VI gate or Vieja de Bisagra gate, built in 838, is one of the most faithful reflections of Muslim art in the city. The Sol gate was built in the 13th century in Mudejar style and contains the remains of a paleochristian sarcophagus. Via these and other entrances you can reach picturesque places, like the Plaza de Zocodover. In the Arab period, this central space housed an important market, and festivals and all kinds of social events were held here. Nowadays the square, surrounded by buildings with porches, continues to be one of the busiest places in the city.

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

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

A 14th-century Mudejar tower stands above the rest of the building, which dates from the 12th century and has Visigothic elements on its main façade. If there is one person's name that defines Toledo it is that of El Greco (16th-17th C.). His House-Museum, a palace with the atmosphere of the period, exhibits some of the best works of the painter who made the city world famous. Remains of the Jewish community are still preserved in the city in the synagogues of Santa María la Blanca and El Tránsito.

The former, built possibly in the 12th century, is also a good example of Toledo's Mudejar art. It has five naves with decreasing heights as well as the characteristic

geometrical and botanical decoration and horseshoe arches. Meanwhile, in the synagogue of El Tránsito, built in 1357, you can admire one of the best Mudejar coffered ceilings of all those preserved in Toledo, along with walls richly decorated with geometrical and botanical designs and Hebrew inscriptions.

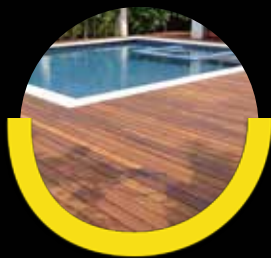
Nowadays, this Jewish place of worship houses the Sephardic Museum, in which an interesting collection of pieces of art and various objects used in Jewish ceremonies are exhibited. One of the most outstanding buildings in the city is the Cathedral, considered one of the high points of Gothic art. The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

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

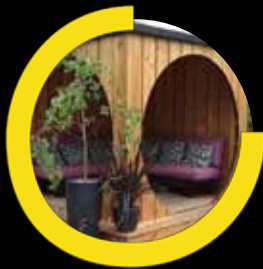
There are many possibilities for accommodation in the city, although it is advisable to book well enough in advance at any time of year. One of the best options is the Toledo Parador, situated on the neighbouring Emperador Hill and from where you can get a wonderful view of the city. Other interesting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



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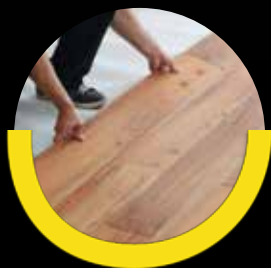
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Spain is located on the Iberian Peninsula in Western Europe, south of France. The peninsula lies between the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. Creating a natural border with France are the Pyrenees Mountains. Spain is surrounded on three sides by water. To the north is the Cantabric Sea, to the west is the Atlantic Ocean, on the east, is the Mediterranean Sea. Just across the Strait of Gibraltar lie Morocco and Algeria. With so many miles of coastline, it is easy to understand why Spaniards consume so much seafood!

Spain's Geography and Climate

Not many people realize it, but Spain is the most mountainous country in Europe after Switzerland and has a wide variety of climates from the hot, dry region of Andalucía in the South, to the lush, green and humid zones of Galicia and Asturias in the North and Northwest. In Spain, you can ski in Granada one day and go to the beach the next! Spain lies at approximately the same latitude as California, so it has similar weather.

Regional and Cultural Divisions

Spain has been invaded over the centuries by various people, including the Phoenicians, the Romans, and the Moors. For centuries Spain was divided into small feudal kingdoms that had their own money, culture, languages and food! Although Spain is one country and two basic ingredients common to all regions are garlic and olive oil, there are large regional differences in cuisine.

The Culinary Regions of Spain

Generally, Spain can be divided into six culinary regions:

- 1 The North of Spain where we find lots of sauces and seafood, such as the regions of Galicia and Asturias.
- 2 The Pyrenees, home of the chilindrones, sautéed peppers, tomatoes and onions dish that accompanies many of the region's dishes.
- 3 Cataluña region where casseroles or cazuelas abound.
- 4 The Eastern region, which includes the Autonomous Community of Valencia, where the primary dishes are rice-based like the popular Paella Valenciana.
- 5 Andalucía, where fried fish is a staple and bars don't serve a drink without a tapa to munch on.
- 6 Central Spain where roast meats and cocidos or stews

dominate the daily diet. This would include the region of Castilla-Leon.

A Culinary Crossroads

Over the centuries, Spanish cuisine has been influenced by many other cultures, both invaders and visitors, as well as from its colonies.

1100 B.C. The Phoenicians arrived in the South, and established a colony called Gádir, the modern day Cádiz. This became an important trading centre. The Phoenicians stayed for centuries, establishing more colonies in what is today Huelva and Malaga.

218 B.C., the Romans arrived at the Iberian Peninsula. It was then that the Romanization of the Peninsula began and what we could consider the start of the history of Spain as a nation. The Romans brought not only their government, culture, and art, but their agricultural technology, too. Grape-growing and wine-making, olive cultivation and pressing techniques came to the Peninsula. Hispania (the Roman name for the Peninsula) was part of the Roman Empire for over 500 years. During this period, a blending of cuisines took place, with Hispania being an important producer of food for the Empire.

711 A.D., the Moors crossed the Strait of Gibraltar from Africa and invaded the Peninsula. They quickly established themselves in South and Central Spain and they flourished for many centuries. The Moors brought with them advanced agricultural technology, rich spices, new fruits and vegetables.

1492, with the discovery of the New World came revolutionary changes to Spanish cuisine, as well as the rest of Europe. The Spanish explorers brought back many new and exotic foods, such as potatoes, tomatoes, corn, avocados, papayas, peppers and cacao for chocolate.

If you like variety, then Spanish cuisine is for you. Want a change? Try another region's food



TIPS for a Christmas Gift

Maybe because wine is so versatile or because the good “foodies” always appreciate a drinkable gift, giving wine at Christmas as a present is a true classic whether you are a wine lover or just a fan of it. Giving wine is not only something that we can consider as part of Santa’s stocking, but also as something to share in any dinner or social gathering that is part of the festive period.

Although for many, giving wine at Christmas is a natural exercise, for many others this act automatically falls from our list of gifts because it is considered complicated to get the right one. A doubt that we like to solve today, we will talk about four tips that will help us to choose the right wine at Christmas.

TRY NOT TO BE CONVENTIONAL

The simplest is to buy the most common wine, or to choose wines because you know it, or you know that this special person has already tasted or usually likes to order in the restaurants. It is safe, without any doubt, but the truth is that giving the usual wine can make our good intention fail because of the lack of originality. Also, remember that giving wine is a way to entertain, to search an experience and a funny moment. We have to look for a wine that breaks up the expectative and goes out of the ordinary. One who, after being uncorked and aired, reminds whoever enjoys it who has given it to us.

However, let's put it in a positive: knowing what wines you drink on a regular basis can help us get an idea of what your tastes or preferences are. An authentic guide that can help us choose the gift according to them, either in the composition of the grapes that make up the wine or even opting for a wine that has spent more time ageing in the cellar.

ASK AN EXPERT

What about us? with a sommelier or a wine lover expert to guide you. it can really turn on the light in the middle of the darkness!!! Search for your professional wine assistant, they will help you to illuminate this exciting world of wine. Without a doubt, they will be the ones who can guide you in choosing the most suitable wine. And, returning to the previous point, it will be with that information that they will be able to identify what type of wine is suitable for the person to whom we give it. Maybe you have to visit La Diligente store !!!

But what happens if we don't know what wine they usually drink or what their preferences are? Well, curiously and as incredible as it may seem, aspects that are not relevant to us, such as how they like coffee, what type of food they prefer or how their character is, will help an expert to decide which is the right wine.



PLEASE NOTE THE WINE RECEIVER

Giving wine to a customer is not the same as to a friend or a couple. But, above all, when we gift wine, we have to do an exercise that is rarely done when we make gifts: park our preferences and personal tastes to get in to the skin of the other person. A real key to succeed with our choice.

DON'T DECIDE QUICKLY, TAKE YOUR TIME IN THE WINE STORE

Wine and its enjoyment require calm. But we lose it when choosing a wine to give away? It is here when, perhaps, more time is needed choosing not only the winery or the type of wine but also checking other aspects that will define the character of the bottle. Select the vintages and tasting cards of each wine will be a fundamental review before purchasing a bottle; almost in the same way that, if the wine is intended to be enjoyed at a certain Christmas dinner or lunch, you need to know the menu to be able to pair it.

And, if after these four tips to give wine at Christmas, we still have some doubt there is only one option and that is not to buy a single wine but to buy three different ones. A way to make our gift even more personal and to expand the range of what the person may like or even notes that may accompany the dishes. And it is that wine has that virtue: offer a wide range of flavours. Wine lovers will enjoy the gift better if we choose a new range of flavours to enjoy. It will be the right one if the choice of wine is made as the wines themselves are made: dedicating time and care. Like “la Diligente” wines are.



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Spanish Walks

Spain has some of the most diverse countryside in Europe. With spectacular mountain ranges and vast open spaces. We have discovered some excellent walks and over the next few months we will help you to discover them as well. Good luck and enjoy.

El Berro – Gebas

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

The walk leaves at the info sign next to the entrance to Camping Sierra Espuña. You walk into the village and via a staircase you arrive at an old washing place that was still used until the 50's of last century. You leave the village and walk by a rock wall where you have a nice view of El Berro. A little further you arrive at the junction where you come out of the forest on the way back. Here you keep following the GR252. Along the way you will encounter some beautiful almond orchards and eventually arrive at an irrigation canal. You literally walk on the irrigation canal until you come to the excavated canal. The path runs through the wide excavated canal with a glimpse of the valley here and there. In a bend you suddenly come at a tunnel.

You go through the tunnel, a flashlight is not really necessary but can help. Once through the tunnel you start to turn to the valley where Gebas is located. At the information pole, you leave the GR252 that descends to Gebas. You continue on the flank and quickly reach the comb that keeps following you a long way. Here you have beautiful views of the surrounding valleys and on the Barranco de Gebas, the impressive moon landscape. You leave the path of the ridge to continue through a forest. At a certain moment you turn right and you start a fairly steep descent to get back on the path of the way out. From here it goes back to El Berro by the same road.

Courtesy of www.trailexplorer.eu

Distance: 8 km

Duration: 2 1/2 h

Grade: Easy

Type: Circular

Height gain: 272 meters

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

Wheelchair: Not suitable

Dog: Allowed on a lead





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How much is your house in Spain worth? (Part 1)

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

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

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

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

Same house, different valuations done by experts

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

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

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

is that it will exclude all speculative elements.

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

Methods to value a property

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

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





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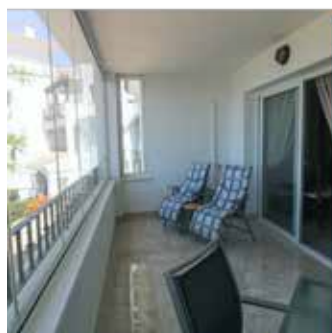
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But this will not be the only criterion to establish the price, since issues such as price developments, the market situation and everything the technician can extract from a home visit will come into play. Its age, if improvements have been made,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

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

Do it yourself valuation

In the following articles I will explain other methods that might not be as exact as that carried out by a professional but it might give you an approximate estimation of the actual market value of the property.

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Beautiful Salamanca

By Taquilla Tickets

Salamanca in Northwest Spain is the capital of Salamanca province which, in turn, is part of the Castile and Leon region. It really is a stunning city. The history of Salamanca dates back to the Celtic era and is famous for its sandstone architecture and its world-famous university, which was founded in the 1100s. An intellectual centre during the 15th and 16th centuries, the university continues to be vibrant due to the very large student population here, and it is the third oldest existing university in the world.

Salamanca is one of Spain's greatest and most historical cities. In 217 BC the city was attacked and plundered by Hannibal, and he really tore the place to pieces. After Hannibal, it became a Roman settlement and then the Moors ruled until the 11th century. In 1988 the old town of Salamanca became yet another UNESCO world heritage site (It's not surprising that so many cities in this beautiful country are UNESCO sponsored). The city is referred to as the "Golden City".

This is because the local stone has a yellow tone to it. Salamanca has one of the most beautiful plazas in the whole of Spain (Plaza Mayor). The plaza was completed in 1755, and its main purpose then was bullfighting. Now the plaza is full of bars, restaurants, and beautiful 3-story buildings (including Casa de las Conchas or "House of Shells", The beautiful Clarecia Building. You can climb up the towers and see some amazing views. The Monterey Palace, The Anaya Palace with its magnificent Imperial staircase) are built of local sandstone which make this plaza a "site for sore eyes".

A few steps away from Plaza Mayor is the "Palacio de la Salina". This Palace has wowed visitors with its wonderful ornate architecture which dates back to the 16th century. It used to be a salt warehouse (hence the name Salina). The highlight of this Palace is the magnificent courtyard. You won't be disappointed !!

The "New and the Old" Cathedrals stand side by side (16th and 11th centuries), with Gothic and Romanesque style architecture. The "Plaza Patio de Escuelas Menores" is the place to see the masterpiece of the facade of Salamanca University. Covered in Plasteresque (Silver-smith like) ornamentation, it really is a masterpiece of construction. This wonderful city is very "pedestrian friendly", so finding your way through these lovely stores ladies, makes life easier to shop!

What else to see? Well, at night Salamanca transforms itself. The city lights come on and the buildings become stunning photo opportunities. One of the best places to take your pictures is the Roman Bridge (Puente Romano) which dates back to the 1st century AD, and a walk along the riverbank. Maybe dinner around the Plaza Mayor followed by after-dinner drinks, maybe Plaza San Justo or the Gran Via to do just that late into the night (now you're talking!!).

There is so much to see and do in Salamanca and all of the major tourist sites and attractions are within walking distance of each other.

On day 2 of our trip, we are driving for approximately 1 hour to visit the gorgeous village of La Alberca in Salamanca province. This was the very first rural village in the whole of Spain to be given "National Historic Heritage" status. It also happens to be one of Spain's most beautiful villages. Many of the houses are half-timber. Cars are not allowed in the village square. So, with columned arcades beneath the houses, it is like taking a step back in time. Come with us and see for yourself!

So, when are we going? Well, we have a trip planned to visit this gorgeous city on the 20th, 21st, and 22nd of February 2023. If you would like to join us then you can contact us in the usual ways

We are gradually working our way around Spain and we intend to visit many more wonderful cities and places. There are so many places to go. So, if there is somewhere that YOU would like to visit, please let us know where and why and we will try to get there !!

This is probably a very good time to wish you all (Client or not) a very Happy Christmas and a great New Year (Oh, don't forget Three Kings in Cartagena on 5th January). We are going there too!

A great big THANK YOU to MATEO coaches and drivers. You have looked after us very well. Feliz Navidad

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Top 10 Destinations in Southern Spain

2. Seville

This is the largest tourist destination in southern Spain, and home to many attractions. The cathedral here, adorned with a Moorish bell-tower, is the third largest church in the world by some measurements, though some say the world's largest by measurement of volume. A host of museums, ancient architecture, palaces and churches are available to explore in Seville, along with the usual big-city amenities of excellent food and cultural activities. One fun must-see here is the diary of Christopher Columbus, which is housed in the Museum of the Indies. Finally, a two-week visit here in April can be amazing- the sombre Santa Semana (holy week) and celebratory Feria de Abril that follows is a world-renowned celebration.

A monumental city

You can see it for yourself in the few metres that separate the Giralda tower, the Cathedral and the Real Alcázar of Seville. La Giralda is a city icon and one of its main charms lies in its viewpoint. The views of Seville are fantastic with its courtyards of orange trees, typical in Andalusia, and a close-up of the largest Gothic temple in Europe, the Cathedral. A visit to the Real Alcázar reveals an extraordinary palace full of details. If you visit in the summer, take advantage of the night visits and the festival held in its gardens.

Seville is much more than its undeniable monumentality. It is a city of lively streets and large open spaces such as the huge Plaza de España, María Luisa Park or the avant-garde Metropol Parasol. And if you want to enjoy the authentic atmosphere of Seville, try going for tapas in the old town, in popular areas such as Alameda, Macarena, Nervión, Los Remedios or Triana. Marinated 'pescaíto' (fish), small filled rolls, typical snails, fino (white wine), manzanilla (sweet wine) or a cold beer are a must on any tapas outing. courtyard of the Lions with its fountains is one of the most beautiful in the compound.



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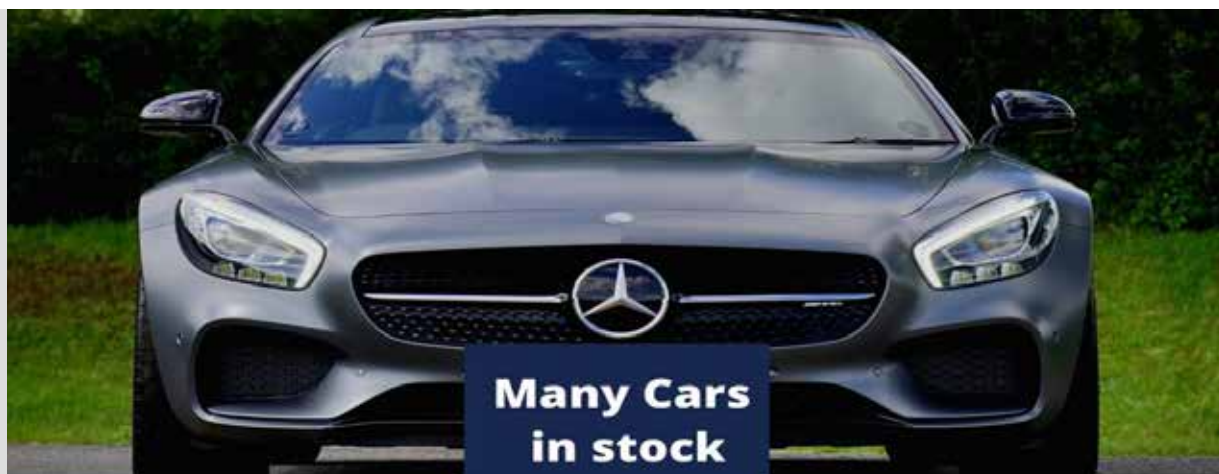
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Popular tradition of the south

In Seville, tradition is always in fashion. From flamenco shows and Spanish guitar music to typical ceramics and crafts, which are always a good souvenir of the city. There are plenty of shops and workshops in Triana. And it's easy to enjoy flamenco at one of the many 'tablaos' or neighbourhood 'peña' groups. In fact, Seville hosts what is perhaps the most important international festival of this art: The Biennial.

The tradition of Seville is also reflected in its more international festivals. Two good examples are the April Fair and Holy Week. The first is all about joy and passion for popular Andalusian art, an unbeatable chance to enjoy the sound of the Spanish guitar, flamenco fashion and festive Seville. Holy Week is a passionate festival full of emotional moments. To understand it, the best option is to witness one of the much-visited religious processions or hear a live 'saeta' (emotional flamenco song dedicated to the religious figures).



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The Journey - Vintage Pilgrim by Carol Hughes, owner of Legs & Co.

11th Feb

The Plumber has started in the bathroom today; he is in the process of taking all the green tiles off the walls can't wait to have a comfortable bathroom.

11th Afternoon The house is still not ours; it is still not registered in the seller's name, the lady who owed it died, her son is selling the house. I am getting a little worried. The solicitor has recommended we do not do any renovations, until the house purchase has gone through!! Too late for that! it is ok them saying that, the house was uninhabitable the way it was. A new boiler is in and tiles are half off in the bathroom, electrician is starting on Wednesday as the electrics are unsafe. My furniture is arriving Thursday, and Gray is booked to come and sort our bug problem. Bit stressed is an understatement I am now worrying what if sale falls through.

(Below is the time frame for house sale)

We instructed solicitor in the purchase of the property the beginning of November 2018

Signed a power of attorney on the 22/11/2018

26/11/18 purchase agreement was signed

Was informed by the estate agent when we viewed property that all paperwork was ready, and house would take no more than 4 weeks to complete !! good job I have a good solicitor and didn't use the sellers solicitor. I found my solicitor off the British embassy's recommended solicitors so that is giving me comfort. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/spain-list-of-lawyers> .

10/12/18 was informed that the property is in the wrong name as the lady who owned it died and her

son is selling the property. It can take 2-3 weeks for name change documents to go through.

17/12/18 informed house will not complete on the 31/12/18 as the house has more meters in the Cadastre than the land registry. So, they think the property is bigger and there are buildings that are not in the deeds, also change of owner is still pending.

13/01/19 still no news re completion.

13/02/19 Title deeds Still in process.

25/02/19 Title deeds are ready and should complete next week.

1/03/19 – House complete it is all mine! Phew!

I know it was a little drawn out, but I also know the sale was done right. I have every faith in Sun Lawyers and Maria Jose Diaz. They have been fabulous and even now are just at the end of an email and help in any way they can.

12th Feb

My hubby woke me in the middle of the night saying, well shouting very excitedly! "All reet Goose I caught a Salmon" then he started snoring again! Idiot! He is nuts. (my youngest son calls me Goose)

I need to get a PO BOX – we cannot get mail to the house. No one can find us, you have to WhatsApp your location to anyone that is trying to find us, and then half of the time have to meet them and get them to follow us to the house. We do not get mail, so I have gone to the local Correos in Fuente Alamo.

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Arrived!!!

Argh, no one speaks English google translate to the rescue again. Managed to inform them I needed a PO box. She has given me a form in Spanish to complete, I had to provide my NIE and passport. I finally have a mailbox, and a postal address Go Me! Wow, I get excited over the simplest things these days.

I have managed to arrange the internet via email! I'm on the ball today that's another thing off the list. The Internet is going on Wednesday tomorrow! I am a superstar.

I'm freezing can't wait for my jumpers to arrive, well I didn't think I would need them in Spain!! Good Job Charlie had a blanket in the car, it's the only time I have known him wrapped up in his basket, normally his fur coat is enough.

All the tiles are off in the bathroom, and there is a hidden space behind the wall! The room goes back about another foot. Wull has left for the day I wish

I knew where to get a Skeleton from. I want to hide one in there for him in the morning, with just the arm hanging out! We have no bathroom at all today, we have a toilet but it not flushable. So you have to use a bucket and we are having to strip wash feel so scruffy never liked camping.

13th Feb

Electrician arrived today he is chiselling out walls I have dust and muck everywhere I was not built for this life

But still smiling, dumb (Charlie) and dumber are to too!

Stay tuned part two coming soon

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