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ISSUE 80
JULY 2023

FREE

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**North
Town**

Calpe

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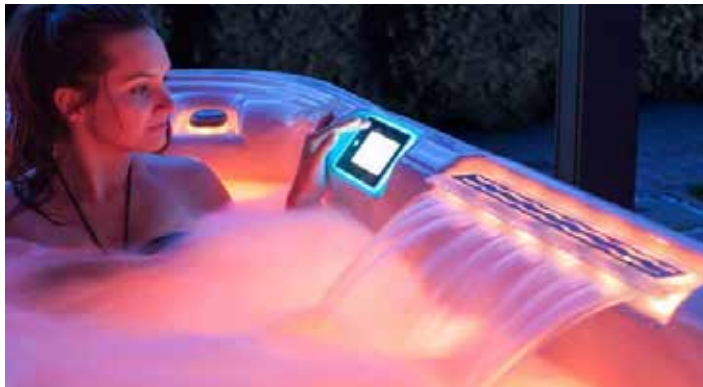
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Let's Learn Spanish



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A Life in SPAIN

Welcome to the July edition of ALIS.

We now have some new writers working for us. They will be digging away behind the scenes to unearth new and exciting facts about this great country and the advantages of living here.

Welcome to the team:

José Sanchez
Chantal Wiessner
Gines Garcia

So what's in this edition....

Spanish Recipes. This month is the summer classic, Gazpacho. Not one of my favourites unless microwaved for a minute first. :)

Page 44/45 has an article about Spains top 11 Blue Flag Beaches. Thank you José for your input. Great read

Thanks also to Chantal for sharing her journey to Spain. See page 46/47

Enjoy!

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Spanish Recipes:

Gazpacho



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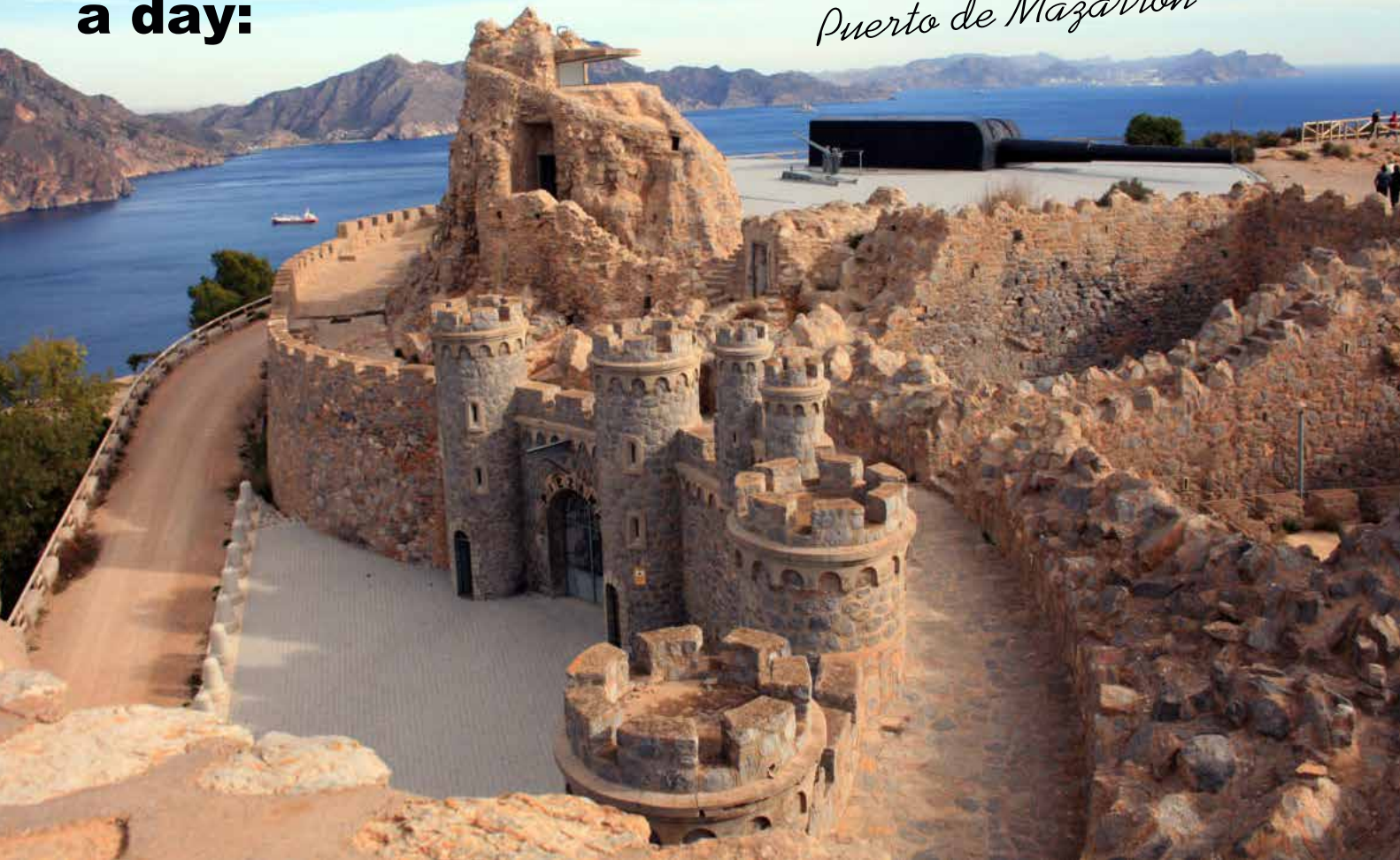
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Places to visit in a day:

Castillitos Puerto de Mazarron



If you find yourself anywhere near Puerto de Mazarron, this is a unique opportunity to visit the historic batteries at Castillitos and El Jorel. The drive (or cycle ride) is not for the faint hearted as the roads are narrow and steep with concrete protection but no crash barriers. The destination is, however, well worth the journey with fantastic views along the way.

The road to it starts from the E16 (Puerto de Mazarron to Cartagena) and is signed for Campillo de Adentro. At first it is a gentle climb which becomes more challenging the higher it goes. After a few kilometres there is a fork in the road. Take the left one. We believe the right one is now closed. Just as you get to see the buildings and a magnificent view over the bay, there is a gravel car park on the right. You will then have to walk about 200 meters to the start of the adventure.

There are no facilities and the whole area is totally inappropriate for those of restricted mobility. Children who like to wander about should be left at home.

The gun emplacements are a terrific sight and there is no restriction to exploring the buildings and the guns. They were made by Vickers UK and if you look hard at the big turrets you will find evidence of where exactly they were built (between 1926 and 1933).

The buildings look like Disney built them but they are original. The large gun turrets have been plugged to stop rubbish being poked down them or even small children for the “photo of a life time”. There is so much history attached to this place so look it up before you go. And take a picnic as you can spend a good few hours there if you can find some shade.

Take care and enjoy!



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Phrases

I would like 2 croissants, please	Pon me dos cruasanes, por favor	Pon meh dos crewsannes por favor
Could you slice this for me?	¿Me los puedes rebanar?	Meh loss pweh des rey ban are
Is this sweet or savoury?	¿Es esto dulce o salado?	Eszess toe doolthay oh sallahdoh
A bag of bread-rings please	Una bolsa de rosquillas de pan, por favor	Oo nah bolsah day ross keyyas day pan por far vor
Is this suitable for toasting?	¿Es apto para la tostadora?	Eszapp toe par rah lah toss tahdoor rah
Is this gluten-free?	¿Es esto sin gluten?	Eszess toe sin gloo ten
That is all thanks	Es todo, gracias	Esztoe doe gras see ass
How much is that in total?	¿Cuánto es en total?	Kwan toe esz en toe tal

Vocab

Breadcrumbs	Las migas de pan	Las me gas daypan
Roll	Un panecillo	Oon pan eh seeyoh
Baguette	Una barra de pan	Oo nah bar rah day pan
Loaf of bread (square)	Un pan de molde	Oonpan day mold eh
Loaf of bread	Un pan	Oonpan
Wholemeal bread	Un pan integral	Oonpan in taygral
Multigrain bread	Un pan de cereales	Oonpan day say ray al es
Rustic loaf	Un pan de pueblo	Oonpan day pwebloh
Toast	Pan tostado	Pantosstahdoh
Oven	El horno	El or no
Flour	La harina	Lah ah reenah
Yeast	La levadura	Lah lev ah do rah



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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.

PINAR DE CAMPOVERDE

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 Río 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 veterinarian. 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 Río 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).

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 (Lavender Street), Calle Meloncotonero (Peach Tree Street) and Calle Abedul (Birch Street).

The footpaths in the village are block paved in green.



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There is a chillout bar during the summer with outdoor sofas on the lawns overlooking the lake where you can enjoy a cocktail and some live music. It is 1 kilometre to Sucina Village which offers restaurants, bars and great fiestas during the summer, there is a free bus at the weekends from HRGR. And of course the golf course itself is one of the best and most popular 18 hole Championship golf courses around. It was designed by Jack Nicholas and it is sponsored by Nike.

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Free things to do in Alicante

Valencia, Spain is a beautiful region that's full of mountains, towns, and cultural events that all seem to be catered toward creating the perfect holiday for everyone. Not only does the region offer something for the whole family as well as solo travellers, but it does so at the most affordable price of all: 100% free.

Over the next few months we will be featuring places to visit and things to do for free. So if you want to discover the local secret of the canyon hike in Rio Chicamo that ends in a wild swimming hole, swim amongst hundreds of colorful fish (and the occasional octopus) when you go snorkeling in Torrevieja at the hidden gem of Cala de la Zorra, and experience the magical waters of Torrevieja's pink lake as you float into the final sunset of your envious holiday.

1 of 30 - Castillo de Santa Barbara – A 9th century castle on the coast of Alicante that's open to the public from 10.00 – 22.00 seven days a week. The entrance to the grounds is free, but the elevator lift and any tours require a small fee per person. Though even if the castle is closed during your visit, the walk/drive up (there is free parking at the top) to the castle boasts amazing views of Alicante town and you can see almost the entire bay of Alicante.

The Santa Barbara Castle is located on the top of Benacantil Mountain, 166 metres above sea level. Archaeological remains of the Bronze Age, Iberian and Roman Age have been found on the slopes, but the origin of the fortress is in the late ninth century with the Muslim rule.

2 of 30 - La Salina de Santa Pola – Unlike the other salt lakes in the area, this one has a small path open to the public all the way around it. There are multiple places to stop and take a look at the flamingos, ducks, and other migrating birds on the way, complete with information boards (in Spanish). There is also a free information centre at one end open from 9.00 to 14.00 every day of the week.

The enormous extensions of water that invade this nature reserve are amazing. As is seeing the flock of flamingos that wander from one side to the other, looking for food. It's a true pleasure to see the freshwater wetlands and the extensive areas whitewashed by the salt. It's definitely a relaxing walk with several places to take pictures of the many species of birds. There's also a handful of interesting birds, some amphibious species along the shore, and some plant life you'll only see in this area.

This location was declared a nature reserve first in 1988 by the Valencian government and then again in 1994 by the national government, with the aim to preserve too few "natural jewels" that still remain on Alicante's Costa Blanca. There are places to park along the CN-322 highway, but be sure to be careful where you leave your car, as many thieves can be present in summer.

3 of 30 - Santa Pola's south beaches – The town's two most

southerly beaches are major hotspots for kitesurfers. But even if you don't participate in this water sport, why not pack a picnic and enjoy a lunch with an acrobatic show. Date night anyone?

There are also some great bars and restaurants with fantastic views overlooking the beaches. What better way to watch the sunset.

4 of 30

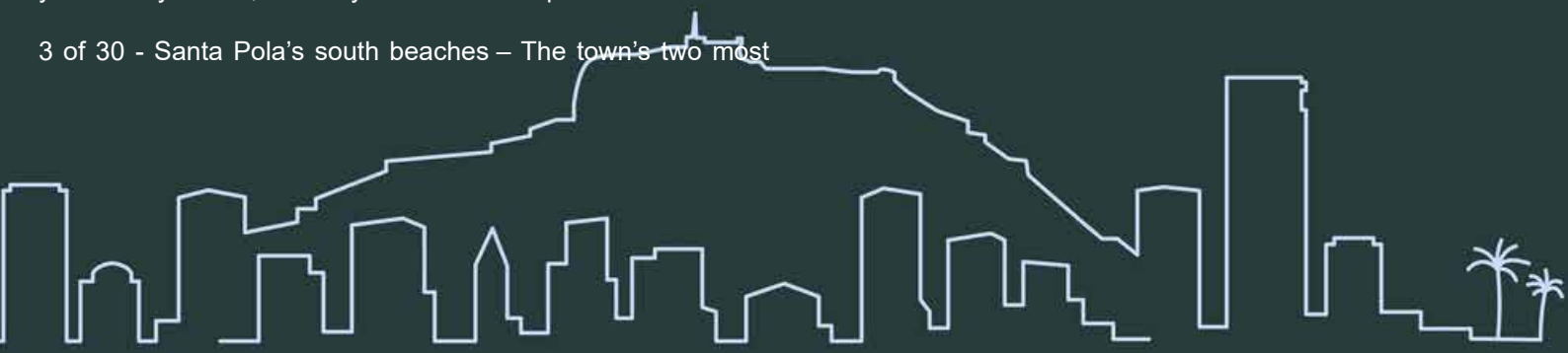
Volvo Ocean Race Museum - Located near Alicante's docks is a fantastic, albeit small, museum that's dedicated to the history of the Volvo Ocean Race. The photography shown in the back room is amazing, though given it's the best out of 22,000 photos it's no wonder. The exhibits here are in English as well as Spanish (the videos are native English with Spanish subtitles) and the guys at the front desk are great for a chat. Hours: 10.00-14.00 Tue-Thur, 10.00-18.00 Fri, & 10.00-14.00 Sun (winter); 11.00-21.00 Tue-Sat & 11.00-15.00 Sun

5 of 30 - Els Archs – Els Arcs is situated in El Castell De Guadalest, Spain. An easy hike with a wonderful view a bit off the main loop. Els Archs can be found in the Serrella mountain range, Malla de Llop, is over 1,300 metres (4,300 ft) high. The remains of an Arabic castle, Penya Castellet, and many trails are found in the area, popular for walking and mountain biking. The area has a rich history with three settlements around the village: Pla de Petracos, Bitlla and Pla d'Alt (The High Place). The ruins of these settlements are now being rebuilt as modern homes.

Five kilometres outside the village in the area known as Pla de Petracos are ancient cave paintings said to have been painted over 5000 years ago. Caves at the archaeological site have a viewing platform, and the paintings are explained on six interpretive panels. Three kilometres outside the village is the enormous natural arch, Els Arcs.



Santa Barbara Castle



6 of 30 - Guadalest – A unique village that's seemingly built into the rockface it's sitting on top of. There is also a castle here with free lower grounds and multiple hikes nearby that give stunning views of this 'Eagle's Nest' village. Even though Guadalest is a small village anchored in a small valley with the same, it is an extremely busy tourist attraction; so much as to be declared a Historic-Artistic monument in 1974. It is best known for its castle, which is literally hanging on the cliff.

Guadalest is of Islamic origin and at the time of its construction was considered a very valuable fortification. It was conquered by Jaime I and given to Vidal de Sarria whose family owned it up until 1335 and then later to Prince Pedro of Aragon. The now almost non-existing Castle of Saint Joseph, which can be seen in one of the rockiest points of the cliff, played an important part in the structural defence of the old city. It was originally constructed in the XII century, was reformed in the XV and in XVI centuries, was affected by an earthquake in 1644 and left to what it is nowadays.

7 of 30 - Ifach Rock, Calpe – A giant rock only 35 minutes north of Benidorm that offers some good climbing. However, quite a few people have needed rescuing from here over the years, so only climb this if you absolutely know what you're doing.

For those that don't want to climb up the sheer face of this cliff, there is also a hike all the way to the top. NOTE: The walk around the bottom does not ever meet up with the one that goes to the top; actually, it doesn't even go all the way around the base. Not that it's not a nice place for a picnic

8 of 30 - El Palmeral - A free attraction situated right in the heart of Elche. Despite the numerous other palm trees you can see all around Spain, El Palmeral is still worth a visit especially if you're lucky (or skilful) enough to pluck a few wild dates. Along with the large number of palm trees, this park also offers a bare river covered with beautiful paintings, gorgeously decorated fountains (both drinking and non), and other exotic plants. It is also located fairly close to the historical church, which though isn't free to enter (2 euros/adult), is a marvel to look at anyway. Parking nearby is only free on Sundays.



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San Javier ciudad del aire

Two seas with their beaches and two famous festivals are San Javier's main tourist attractions. Under an intense blue sky, the "Patrulla Aguila or Eagle Patrol and the General Air Force Academy, have made aeronautics an essential part of this town.

There are two coastal enclaves in San Javier Santiago de la Ribera and a good part of the coastline of La Manga del Mar Menor, Both offer very different characteristics in terms of waves, temperature and salinity, which means we have a choice of what kind of water we want to bathe in, as well as being able to practice different water sports at any time of the year: canoeing, kite surfing sailing, diving, kayaking - these are some of the sports offered by companies devoted to active tourism in the municipal area. A number of them are associated with the Mar Menor-Cabo de Palos Nautical Station, the first to be created in national territory, in the mid nineteen nineties. The mild climate in this area means that you can go swimming as well as take pleasant walks along its beaches, not only in spring and summer, but also in autumn and winter, when locals and tourists alike can continue to enjoy its warm waters and contemplate its landscapes and sunsets

Bike lovers can cycle along a part of the 7.500 km Eurovelo 8 Mediterranean route that runs from Andalusia to Cyprus in 15 sections, crossing the Region of Murcia on a 217 km route and passing through San Javier, allowing you to contemplate the Mar Menor while you enjoy your ride

It also has a long GR92 route for those who prefer hiking and being close to nature. And for those who like a round of golf, there is an 18-hole course, designed by Dave Thomas, just five minutes from the Mar Menor beaches.

San Javier is one of the Spanish cultural capitals because of its summer festivals, one of which is considered to be the oldest in the Murcia region, the San Javier International Festival of Theatre, Music and Dance, which has been held since 1962.

Also noteworthy is the San Javier International Jazz Festival, declared of national tourist interest since 2018; It takes place during the first three weeks of July, and attracts jazz fans from both here in Spain and from abroad.

Detailed information about these festivals can be found on the following website:

www.festivalessanjavier.com





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Another interesting getaway is at the beginning of December, with the celebrations in honour the town's patron saint, St. Francisco Javier, with a varied program of cultural, religious and sports activities, The actual saint's day is December 3rd. and is therefore the most important day of the festivities. During the celebrations, tourists and visitors can enjoy the local cuisine on the Ruta de la Tapa" (the tapa route), which begins the last week of November and ends once the festivities are over. Prawns from the Mar Menor the "pastel de cierva", a cake made with butter, flour and sugar dough, stuffed with poultry and hard-boiled egg, the "arroz caldero", a rice dish prepared with different varieties of fish stock, salted fish roe and vegetables - these are just some of the delicacies that can be enjoyed on one of the many terraces overlooking the sea in Santiago de la Ribera or La Manga del Mar Menor, not only during the festivities, but at any time of year.

Later in December during the Christmas festivities, there are various activities, including competitions where locals make nativity scenes and decorate balconies, as well as the "Belén de España (Spanish Nativity Scene), one of the largest and most important in the whole of Spain, which can be seen every year in the main square, until Epiphany (January 6th)

But if there is one single thing we should highlight in San Javier, it has to be aeronautics. It is in this town that the first naval air base in Spain was built You cannot fully understand the essence of San Javier without the General Air Force Academy

A CLOSE AND LONG-STANDING RELATIONSHIP WITH AERONAUTICS HAS LED TO THE CREATION OF THE "SAN JAVIER CIUDAD DEL AIRE" BRAND NAME

A little over 100 years ago, under the name of "Escuela Elemental de Pilotos" (Elementary School for Pilots), the first flight courses were held, and later in 1943 the present-day academy was founded, where 76 classes of graduates have since been trained, in addition to the "Patrulla Águila" (Eagle Patrol), now a global benchmark in acrobatic flight. The relationship of San Javier with aeronautics is as close as it is old, and is part of the daily life of the locals, where it is common to see the pilots practising and going through their paces, or participating in the Santiago de lo Ribera festivities.

by José Sanchez



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Interesting facts about food in Spain.

Spain makes 44% of the world's olive oil, more than twice that of Italy and four times that of Greece. More than a quarter of Spain's oil (10% of the total world production) comes from Jaen.

Nearly three-quarters of the world's saffron is grown in Spain.

The original paella was not considered a seafood dish but had chicken, rabbit and pork (and sometimes snails). There is some debate over the origin of the word.

Tapas is not a type of food but a way of eating it. Tapa means cover and was traditionally a slice of cheese or ham placed over a drink.

The Spanish (in particular, the people of Cadiz) claim to have invented fried fish. Great Britain had links to Cadiz in the eighteenth century and it is thought that the British imported the idea of fish 'n' chips from there.

'Dominations of Origin', common in wine labelling, is also used in Spain to guarantee the quality of ham,

olive oil and even paprika.

Though Spain is more famous for its red wine than white, the majority of its vineyards have white grapes.

The fortified wine sherry comes from the city of Jerez in Andalusia. 'Sherry' is a corruption of Shariz, the Persian name for the city. In Spanish, sherry is simply called 'vino de Jerez' (Jerez wine).

Tomatoes, potatoes, avocados, tobacco, and cacao (for chocolate) were all imported into Europe by Spain.

Spain is one of the top five importers of Scotch whiskey in the world.





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13 new 'most beautiful' towns in Spain

THERE'S nothing better than finding a hidden gem that transports you to 'the real Spain.'

From hilltop pueblos to unreported foodie hotspots, there's still huge parts of this country which have yet to be saturated by hordes of tourists. In a bid to recognise the rural wonder of Spain, the Association of Beautiful Villages was created to celebrate some of the country's most unsung wonders. Each year, 15 pueblos are added to the list.

Olivenza, Badajoz

This town has enough walls to make Donald Trump jealous. Founded in the 13th century, it remained in Portuguese hands until 1801.

You can only enter Olivenza through the huge gates which would have been used as the entry and exit for cavalry, soldiers or visiting diplomats in the medieval era.

Once inside, Instagrammers will go snapping mad for its white-washed streets, featuring stately homes, charming squares and historic buildings.

Robledillo de Gata, Caceres

This small town, nestled in the Sierra de Gata, stands out for its unique combination of architecture. Stone, mud, wood and slate houses surround its historic centre, just a stone's throw away from its perfectly preserved oil mill and the church of Santa María de la Concepción. A small jewel from the 16th century.

It's no surprise it has been declared a site of Cultural Interest by Extremadura.

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Ponte Maceira

Pastrana, Guadalajara

Pastrana is the capital of the Alcarria region, south of Guadalajara. Sitting 760 metres above sea level, what it lacks in size it sure makes up for in rich architectural heritage.

Then came the 16th century Ducal palace and the 16th century church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. There's also a fascinating tapestry museum, exhibiting the medieval equivalent of Snapshot stories.



Ponte Maceira, A Coruna

Ponte Maceira, in Galicia, wouldn't look out of the place in Lord of the Rings.

Adorned with cobbled streets, the town sits next to the Tambre river, and is accessible by a 13th century bridge which was actually built on the foundations of a Roman bridge.

The natural landscape effortlessly blends in with the town, with plant life, water and vegetation around every corner, offering an 'at-one-with-nature' vibe

Alcudia, Mallorca

Situated in the north of Mallorca, Alcudia has a rich history, having been inhabited by the Phoenicians, Greeks and Romans, which all left behind clues of their civilisations, some of which remain on view in the stunning old town.

The town has been praised for its period homes, ancient walls and two huge historic gates at the entrance of the city.

Castellar de Frontera, Cadiz

Located on a mammoth rock formation, the old town of Castellar de la Frontera has played host to human civilisation since the bronze age. The population is divided into the old town of Castellar (pictured), the new town of Castellar that began to be built in 1971, and the hamlet of Almoraima. The 12th century fortress sits in the old town, looking down on the narrow streets and modest homes which give this town such a genuinely Spanish vibe.



Teguise, Lanzarote

Teguise is the largest municipality on Tenerife and one of the oldest, and, like much of the island, is surrounded by dark volcanic plains. Strolling through its steep and narrow streets, you will find white-washed houses with wooden balconies, palaces and different religious buildings which point to a long and complicated history.

Head to Santa Barbara castle, which now homes a Pirate Museum, or the Spinola palace, located in a stately mansion from the 18th century. The old church of Guadalupe and the convent of San Francisco are also noteworthy stops.



Monteagudo de las Vicarias, Soria

Monteagudo de las Vicarias boasts narrow alleys leading to a medieval walled enclosure. Housing a majestic castle, the fortress sits on the edge of a steep hill, making it perfect for looking out for would-be enemies back in the day.

The town is packed full of centuries old architecture, including the church of Nuestra Señora de la Muela and the chapel of Our Lady of Welcome.



Culla, Castellon

A small medieval town of just 200 people, Culla sits atop a 1,100-metre high hill. It has two distinct areas, the historic centre (casco antiguo), featuring houses made of thick stone walls, and the lower area boasting rows of whitewashed houses.

Remnants from its past include the ruins of the old Arab castle, the Frare Pere tower and several walls and towers from the 13th century.



Mogrovejo, Cantabria

Located 460 metres above sea level, Mogrovejo is surrounded by beautiful forests of oaks, holly and chestnut.

The historical centre has remained virtually intact throughout the centuries and is home to an important group of popular Lebaniegas houses. It also preserves other unique buildings, including a 13th century watch tower.



Betancuria, Fuerteventura

Surrounded by volcanic plains, Betancuria was founded in 1404 by Gadifer de la Salle and Jean de Bethencourt, and became the ancient capital of Fuerteventura. Despite being one of the least populated municipalities, it has a very important past, highlighted by the church of Santa Maria, which was the first ever cathedral in the Canary Islands



Atienza, Guadalajara

This historic town in the Sierra Norte de Guadalajara is full of medieval references. Its famous castle, situated at the highest point of the town, was built as far back as the 800s!



Castrillo de los Polvazares, Leon

This town is located in the region of Maragateria, some 850 meters above sea level. It retains its original medieval architecture, with its streets and houses of red stone with green windows and white frames, which has been declared an Historic-Artistic site by Leon. It's also famed for its fantastic and varied offerings of traditional Leon cuisine.



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The wine keeper; THE CORK

In my professional and occasionally hedonistic life, I have uncorked thousands of bottles of wine of all ages. On this occasion I will give some humble advice on how to deal with uncorking old wines, and understanding that the cork is a good quality one.

If the cork is mediocre quality, the wine can fail even after a few years of lying down. What are these premature accidents? The plug may have more cavities than normal or low elasticity. In both cases the wine can ooze and oxidize. The most feared defect is "cork taste", a false term when it is actually "musty taste" and which can occur even with the best quality corks.

The right CORK

The ideal cork we like to see after uncorking is the one that only appears dark on its lower surface or one centimeter of its contour at most. This happens in wines are not preserved beyond 15 years. But sometimes it can happen in younger bottles, since it depends on whether it was badly corked or whether its state of preservation has suffered thermal alterations, which causes expansion of the glass and then the cork has not been able to neutralize despite its flexibility. It is very important to know that the elasticity of the cork begins to decrease after 10 years. We have a very clear example in a cava or champagne bottle wine. It is easy to observe how in a cava cork that was corked three months ago, it expands as much in a piramidal way and we can perceive that it makes re-corking the bottle by hand impossible. compare this cork with the cylindrical stemmed mushroom cork type of sparkling wines kept longer, it is not the same.

If we go to longer periods of conservation, it is always a risk even in optimal conditions to taste wines that have been stored for more than 20 years. I have always said that wines do not die a natural death, they are simply killed by the stopper, both condemned to live inseparable. With rare exceptions, the corks at the end of this period soften, lose elasticity and their fragility reaches such a point that it is necessary to patiently insert the corkscrew spindle, even drilling the stopper until the tip protrudes from its lower part to be able to extract it whole. This practice, not very orthodox under normal conditions, is necessary if we do not want a portion of the cork to remain in the neck with the difficulty of extracting it in a second attempt. In general, the length of the spindle of conventional corkscrews is shorter than that of the stopper, which forces part of the upper flat section of the spindle to be inserted into the cork.

Damage to wine components (acidity, alcohol, coloring extract and tannins) is irreparable over time. The cork can become clogged in the way that the micro exchange of oxygen over the wine is practically non-existent before affecting it. This fact occurs during the time thermal conditions has not changed and the rest of the bottles have been absolute and quiet. It is only possible in old wineries such is the case of some Rioja wineries whose corks became simple and fragile shutters unable to withstand the slightest extraction. I remember the historic tastings in the Bodegas del Marqués de Murrieta, where we tasted wines from 1925, 1938, 1946, 1958 and 1964 vintages. From each vintage it was necessary to uncork at least 5 bottles to find a reasonable

one to drink. But when we found the reasonable one.... It was more than amazing. This winery has an exceptional cellar of this famous house where the wines are found in an environment of humidity and always constant temperature, between 10 and 14 degrees Celsius, perfect conditions to keep the wine bottles.

I had the fortune to taste very old wines in Bordeaux and Burgundy too. These bottles were re-corked by the winery owners with new corks every 15 years and filled with wine from the same vintage until practically touching the wine with the cork. In this way, the risk of the cork will be minimal, except if the new plug is contaminated with TCA or any microorganism. It is not the first time that we have been amazed because of the longevity of French wines which is due to this "re-corking" practice. Also keep in mind that the length of the corks they use for aging wines reaches 55 millimeters, when in Spain 45-48 stoppers are used with the excuse that this measure is sufficient to seal the bottle. It would be true if the stopper had the flexibility in harmony with the expansion of the glass. However, a longer length for obvious reasons will preserve the wine inside the bottle so much better.

Wine expiration date.

I decided a long time ago, that this reference that critics and consumers like to say so much: "time to store a wine" or "to drink until... .." is not for me. I have drunk wines guarded during 20 years, that had the recommendation to drink in 5 years maximum, and vice versa. How can a "drink limit date" be set if we don't bear in mind the deterioration process of the cork during the bottle storage conditions? It is evident that the consumption deadline, according to these experts, is based on an optimal behaviour of the cork. Once we reach this limit, we are not forced to empty the bottle down the sink. Simply means that the most characteristic appearance of this wine at its optimum moment of consumption begins to decline.

The wine particularities like the aromas, colour, tasting notes, structure, body, tanins feelings... changes from the moment of bottling until it reaches forty years aged in the bottle. If the cork is in perfect conditions, we can consider that the wine can be able to be kept longer than 40 years and it will be in the same condition (with the 40 years old wine characteristics, taste and particularities). But the most important idea to consider, aside from the importance of the storage conditions, is that we must know in our personal standards which kind of wine we like to drink; It is only possible by opening the wine bottle.

So here you have my recommendation: Keep close your cork screw, open all type of wine bottles, enjoy the learning road, and create your own wine standards.

Wine of the month

FENTO 2019

This white wine, made principally with Treixadura, Loureiro blanco and Al-bariño, each variety provides different nuances to the wine and make Fento an elegant, complex wine with an enveloping, fresh palate.

It is a blended white wine made in the Condado sub-area of the D.O. Rías Baixas. Rías Baixas Location and climate: A beautiful green area, Rías Baixas has been likened to a vision of the Garden of Eden. The cool, damp climate is dominated by its proximity to the Atlantic Ocean; however, there are varying microclimates within the five different designated sub-zones of the region.

If I had to sum up the best food pairing for Fento in one word it would be seafood. Which makes sense considering where it comes from on the coast of Galicia in the Rias Baixas region of northern Spain. Oysters, Fresh white crab, Fresh prawns or shrimp, Mixed shellfish platters, Steamed mussels or clams, Simply grilled fish such as seabass, squid or sardines, Light creamy cheeses like this dish of burrata and beetroot as well as goats cheese, Seafood pastas and risotto like this smoked haddock and leek risotto, Ceviche (marinated raw fish) and also Sushi and sashimi.



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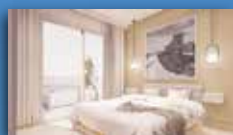




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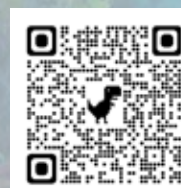
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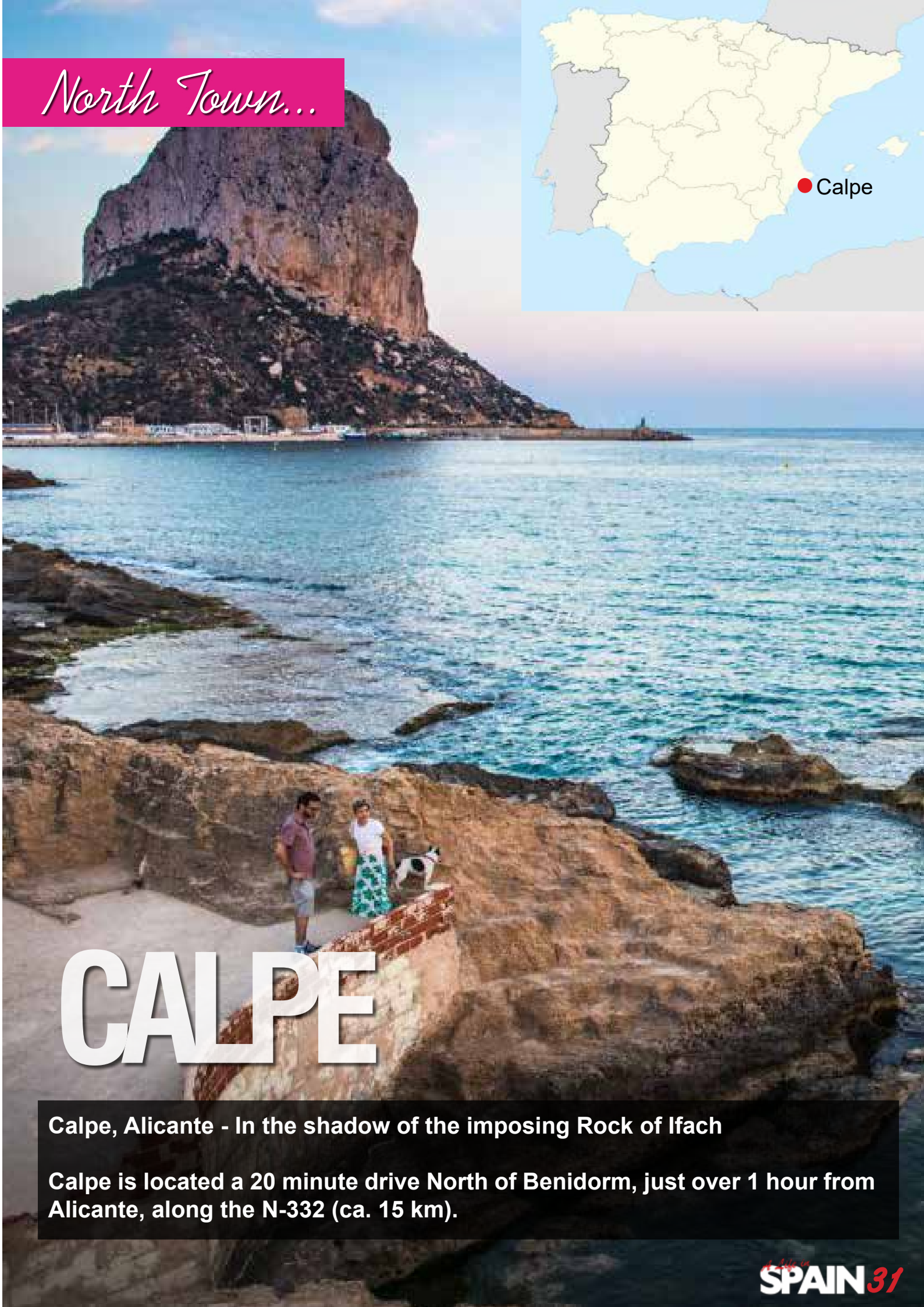
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North Town...



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).

CALPE

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 so you can dine from around the world. 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 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.

Some of the many German residents have set up the Calpe Carnaval Club to promote the pleasures of the oompah band during their own carnival in February.

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.

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.

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.



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

Calpe celebrates its own Patron Saint 'Santisimo Cristo del Sudor' and the Moors and Christians festival at the same time. Legend has it that Santisimo 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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29th June - The Conclusion

The WeBuild In-Port Race in Genova sees the last starts and finishes in the VO65 Sprint and an epic the around the world race for the IMOCAs

11th Hour Racing Team crowned as winners of The Ocean Race

11th Hour Racing Team en route to Genova Grand Finale on Thursday as winners of The Ocean Race

After racing around the world and overcoming challenge after challenge, 11th Hour Race Team is today en route to Genova as confirmed winners of The Ocean Race.

On Thursday 29 June, the World Sailing International Jury awarded the team 4 points of redress - based on an average of their strong results in the race to date - to put them at the top of the leaderboard.

The final leaderboard sees 11th Hour Racing Team 3 points clear of Team Holcim-PRB in second place, with Team Malizia in third, Biotherm is fourth place and GUYOT environnement - Team Europe is fifth.

11th Hour Racing Team are the first US-flagged team to win the Race, and sailor Francesca Clapcich will arrive in Genova on Thursday afternoon as the first Italian sailor to win the race.

“I’m absolutely ecstatic,” commented Skipper, Charlie Enright (USA). “This race takes everything out of you - emotionally, mentally, and physically. I’m incredibly proud of our whole team who have worked tirelessly for three years to get to this point. There have been highs, some incredible highs, but also lows that have knocked us all, but they were all worth it to hear this news today.”

Speaking from onboard Mālama as the team delivered the boat to Genova, Skipper Charlie Enright (USA) commented, “When we launched our campaign in 2019, we never could have anticipated that it would finish in this way. Any sailor will tell you that they want to win races on the water and not in the jury room, and after winning three legs back to back we felt exceptionally strong and confident going into the final leg. We are pleased with the jury’s decision, although we wish we had had the chance to battle it out for this final leg on the water as Holcim-PRB have been exceptional competitors and pushed us all the way.

“To be the first US team to be lifting this trophy is an exceptional honor, and to be sharing the message and showcasing action and innovation for ocean health has made this a truly impactful, global campaign. It’s not the way I would have drawn this up, but the victory is sweet all the same,” Enright concluded.

To follow the race...
 Visit www.thecoceanrace.com



The last day of racing in this 14th edition of The Ocean Race took place at the Grand Finale in Genova on Saturday afternoon.

It was a day of celebration as well as competition with the afternoon and evening set aside for awards night and prizegiving ceremonies.

Sunny skies, very light and shifty winds and enthusiastic crowds on shore and on the water were the order of the day as this six month, around the world odyssey came to a close.

IMOCA

1	11th Hour Racing Team	29
2	Team Malizia Team Malizia	25
3	Biotherm	19
4	Team Holcim - PRB	17
5	GUYOT environnement - Team Europe	10

VO65

1	WindWhisper Racing Team	19
2	Team JAJO	17
3	Mirpuri/Trifork Racing Team	12
4	Viva México	10
5	Austrian Ocean Racing powered by Team Genova	8
6	Ambersail 2	0

Top 10 Destinations in Southern Spain

9. Donana 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 centres and marine museum are all housed in repurposed castles and manors, and are worth seeing as well.

What you will find

Exploring the protected paths around Doñana gives you the chance to see some of the most endangered species on the planet, like the Spanish imperial eagle and the Iberian lynx. Doñana is home to more than 230 species of birds and you might be lucky enough to see breathtaking scenes such as the “pink carpet” that the flamingo colonies create when they feed. In fact, the marshlands are a staging, breeding and wintering site for thousands of European and African birds. Among the varied landscapes, you’ll be amazed at natural phenomena like the mobile dunes (some over 30 metres high) which move from the beach and bury all the pine groves in their path.

Routes around the Park

If you fancy exploring the Park on your own, you can get information at any of the visitor centres, and you will find paths, walkways, bike trails, observatories and much more. But if you really want to immerse yourself in all its ecosystems, and truly get to know them, you should book an off-road guided tour, bicycle tour, horse riding excursion along the beach at sunset, photography or ornithology course. One particularly special way of getting to know Doñana is to board the tourist boat, the Real Fernando, which cruises up the last section of the Guadalquivir river.

The considerable cultural offer of Marbella is completed by the Spanish Contemporary Engraving Museum, considered to be the most important of its kind in Spain. Situated in the Hospital Bazán (16th century), it houses an interesting collection of engravings from the 19th and 20th centuries, with works by grand masters of the stature of Picasso, Miró or Dalí.

Gastronomy, festivals and surrounding area

Fried fish, “ajoblanco” (cold soup with almonds, oil and garlic) or “gazpacho” are some of the tasty suggestions from Marbella’s cuisine. Under

the Designation of Origin Málaga standard, excellent sweet dessert wines are produced.

From Marbella’s calendar of festivals, it is worth highlighting the Fair and Festivals of San Bernabé, which are held during the first half of June. The programme includes concerts, bullfighting festivals and other activities.

Holy Week and the festivals in honour of Marbella’s patron saint, San Pedro de Alcántara, which take place in October, are other red letter days.



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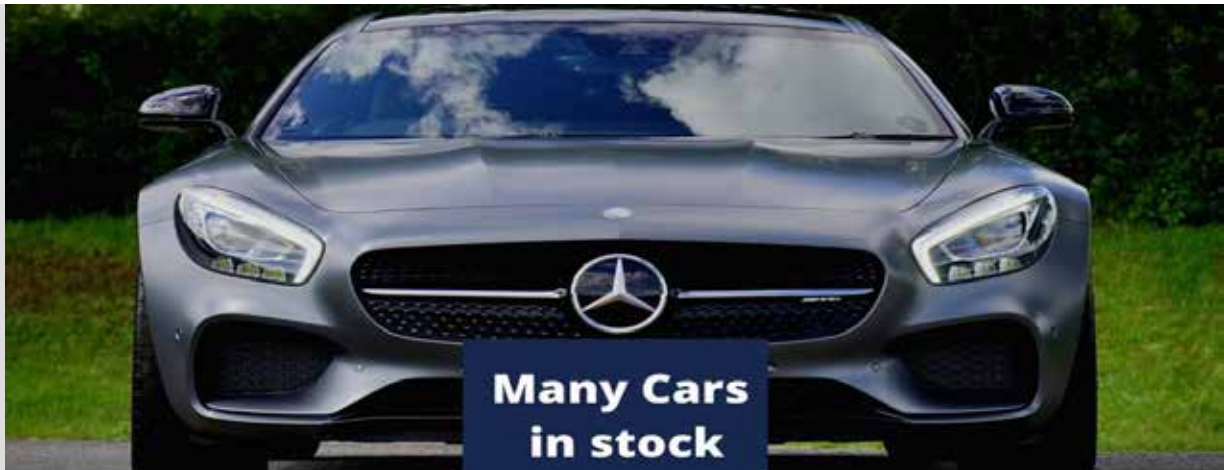
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Within Doñana you'll come across the famous white village of El Rocío, a meeting point for hundreds of lay brotherhoods during the procession of El Rocío, one of the most famous and popular in Spain (held between May and June). Another iconic event takes place on 26 June, in a tradition dating back more than 500 years, when the Almonte ranchers organise the Saca de Yeguas, rounding up the wild horses you can see grazing in the National Park. While you're here, make sure to explore tourist destinations like Huelva, La Rábida and its Muelle

de las Carabelas, Sanlúcar de Barrameda and Moguer, and try local specialities like white prawns from Huelva or Iberian ham. There are also other worthwhile natural spaces nearby, such as Sierra de Aracena y Picos de Aroche Natural Park, and the Rio Tinto Mining Park.



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Spanish Recipes

Spain has some of the most varied cuisine in Europe. We are going to try to guide you through some recipes for you to try at home.

Good luck and enjoy.

Gazpacho



Ingredients:

Ingredients for 4 people:

For the gazpacho

- 1 cucumber, peeled and chopped
- 1 red pepper, deseeded and chopped
- 1 green pepper, deseeded and chopped
- 1kg ripe plum tomatoes, cored and chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed
- 2 spring onions, trimmed and finely chopped
- 75g stale crusty white bread, chopped
- 2–2½ tbsp sherry vinegar, or to taste

For the toasts (optional)

- 8 thin slices of country-style white bread
- Olive oil, for brushing

Method:

Place the cucumber, peppers, tomatoes, garlic and spring onions in a large bowl. Add the bread and season well with salt and pepper. Add the sherry vinegar and a couple of tablespoons of olive oil and mix together with your hands, pressing down to squeeze out the juices. Cover and chill. Leave to marinate for at least 30 mins or overnight.

Put the vegetable mixture into a blender and whiz until smooth. Check the consistency. If it is still rather thick and not very rich, add another glug or two of olive oil until you reach a consistency you like. Taste and adjust the seasoning as necessary. You might need a little more vinegar. Cover and chill again, until really cold and you're ready to serve.

Meanwhile, make the toasts, if using. Brush the slices of bread generously with olive oil. Place a large griddle pan over a medium heat. Once hot, add the bread and toast on either side until golden and crunchy. Drain on kitchen paper, then season with a little salt and pepper.

To serve, stir the gazpacho and taste again as the seasoning may have changed as the soup is now very cold. Adjust as necessary, then serve ice cold with gazpacho ice cubes, sprinkled with chopped basil, an extra drizzle of olive oil and the toasts alongside, if using.



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A life in
SPAIN 39

Taquilla Tickets July

By Taquilla Tickets

History of Spain Part 1

Hello everybody and welcome to the July edition of this fabulous magazine. For this month we have changed the format of this article. As most of you will know, you can find out what we are up to by logging in to Taquilla Tickets Facebook page, popping into our office on Condado de Alhama, or even going to CAT'S Bar to see Nigel. So, by way of change, we are going to try and bring you a history of Spain and include some of the places that we are, or have, visited over recent times. We hope this works....!

There is evidence (based on findings within the Burgos province) that human activity has been found as long as 800,000 years ago. Debates are still going on concerning the origin of these early settlers, who may have entered the peninsula via Africa via the Straits of Gibraltar. However, it is probably more likely that these settlers came over the Pyrenees. Certainly, utensils and works of art found on the peninsula are from this period. The Iberian Peninsula was the Western boundary of a process of "cultural dissemination" (ideas, opinions, and cultures of many people).

From around 1100 B.C until around the middle of the 3rd century B.C., it was the Phoenicians who mastered commercial and cultural progress (You must have seen their ships on the large roundabout near Burger King in Puerto de Mazarron!!). Anyway, the Phoenician and the Greek territories ranged from the Algarve to the Eastern shores of the Mediterranean. Both of these cultures were eventually displaced by the Romans and Carthaginians respectively. And so, between the 12th and the 4th century B.C. huge differences emerged between the Iberia that extended from the northern Mediterranean to the Atlantic coast in the south. The inland territory was inhabited by various tribes, some of which were Celts. With a very limited structural order, these people became migratory herders and moved their stocks of animals from North to South. Shepherds and sheep were the conquering heroes of grazing lands and played a massive role in the geo-history of the Iberian Peninsula.

In the 4th century B.C. the people on the Iberian coast formed a group of city-states. The earliest written records about the peninsula date from this period. The Romans gave the name Hispania to the peninsula and, similar to the Greeks, they followed the same commercial pattern. Hispania is allegedly a Semitic name (a collection of languages including Hebrew and Arabic) derived from Hispalis (Seville). By the way, Seville is being visited by Taquilla Tickets in January 2024. Unlike the Greeks, the Roman introduction to Iberia was the result of a power struggle with Carthage to gain control of the Western Mediterranean during the 2nd century B.C. It was around this time that the Iberian Peninsula entered the arena of international politics. By that, it means that it was a coveted strategic objective.

The Roman invasion and conquest of the peninsula did not happen overnight. It took place over a long period between 218 and 19 B.C. The Carthaginians were well-established in the Northeast of the peninsula, and the Romans believed that the Ebro River was the natural boundary with Gaul which was then a Roman province. Oops, Bad mistake!!!

While Hannibal was trekking his army across the Alps, the Roman legions were attacking his Spanish base at Carthago Nova or, as it is better known to us, Cartagena.

If you have not been to Cartagena then look out for a possible trip by Taquilla Tickets.

The seaport and the mines would have been a very important "catch" for anyone. Hannibal's eventual defeat by Publius Cornelius Scipio in 209 B.C. not only marked the beginning of the end of Hannibal's army in Italy, but it was also, most certainly, the beginning of the Roman conquest of Spain. The Romans were "all-powerful", and they didn't just want to replace the Carthaginians, they wanted the whole of the peninsula! Surprise, Surprise!! The people of the interior didn't much like this, and the Roman plans were met with considerable resistance. Of the many confrontations that took place in inland Hispania, probably the biggest was a conflict that lasted 20 years. It was the so-called "Celtiberian-Lusitanian War", and took place between 154-134 B.C. The war tactics of the Lusitanian chief, Viriathus, were very much celebrated by Latin historians.

The Roman presence in Hispania lasted around 700 years and, during this time, the basic boundaries in relation to other European countries were established.

The Romans left behind more than a territorial structure; they left behind institutions such as the family unit, language, religion, law, and the concept of different municipalities. The Romans adapted existing ideas and simply improved them. More of that over the next few months.

How do you like this idea of "The History of Spain"? Please let us know.

During the month of July, we will have visited (or will visit) Zoco Market, Tabarca Island, Watched Unrisen Queen, La Zenia, Benidorm, Benidorm Parks, Grand Circus Maximus, Sir Rod Stewart in concert, Iron Maiden in concert, Valencia, Mojacar, An amazingly brilliant Astronomy night, Benidorm Palace and the Chinese State Circus. WOW!! That's a lot of places to visit! We also have to mention that the legendary Sir Tom Jones in concert will be visited by Taquilla Tickets on the 1st of August, and Simply Red on the 6th of August. Stay in touch with us for many more brilliant trips.

As usual, you can contact us as follows from 1st July - 31st August:

Al Kazar office is open 7 days a week from 09.30 - 14.30 AND in the evening from 17.00 - 21.00 also 7 days a week !!!

We are pretty sure that you know how to get in touch with us BUT, just in case:

You can contact Sally: 0034 657 346 445

You can contact Nigel : 0034 642 501 568

For more details call:
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Olive Oil

What is Extra Virgin Olive oil

Olive oil is a vegetable oil made from freshly harvested fruits called olives. Almost all of the whole olive is oil, and for this reason, since ancient times, that applying pressure onto the olive produces the oil. In previous years it was a primitive mill called "Almazara" but now everything is done via machine.

Extra Virgin Olive Oil is only produced from the first press and is the most natural oil from the olive. It is the only oil, of those currently on the market, which is extracted from the fruit without the use of solvents. It is therefore an entirely natural product, whose unique aroma and flavour can really be experienced. The process, without chemicals involves washing, decantation, centrifugation and filtration.

The Extra Virgin Olive Oil is an essential and irreplaceable part of the Mediterranean diet and has been for hundreds of years and will continue to do so. On 16 November 2010, this was recognised by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage, ensuring it's protection and distribution across the world to allow the whole population to sample the quality of the oil and allowing people to improve their health.



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11 Blue Flag beaches in Spain

The Blue Flag is a quality certification only the best beaches are awarded with. For a beach to obtain a Blue Flag, it must not only stand out for its innate features, but also according to the services that are offered there, and other aspects such as security or accessibility. Spain is the country with most Blue Flag beaches in the whole world. Indeed, 15% of all the Blue Flag beaches in the entire planet belong to Spain. As of today, in Spain there are 621 beaches that have this certification, which makes it pretty hard to choose which one to visit first! Nonetheless, this list of 11 fantastic beaches might help you decide.

Silgar in Pontevedra

Pontevedra is one of the Spanish provinces with most Blue Flags in the country. Silgar, a fine sand beach with a 600 metres' length, is one of them. It's located in the municipality of Sanxenxo, and it's an urban beach, perfect for those who love cool water. Moreover, if we avoid going during holiday periods, we'll find ourselves in a really quiet place, where one can enjoy the calm and peacefulness of the beach while swimming or sunbathing. To end with, the beach provides plenty of services, like eating in the beach bars and renting sunbeds or hammocks for a nice rest, listening to the pleasant sound of the waves.

The beach of La Albufereta in Alicante

This beach lies between the neighbourhoods of Serra Grossa and Tossal de Manises, right in the city centre of Alicante (or Alacant in Valencian). It is said that this is the area where the city was born originally, since there are remarkable archaeological remains nearby. Likewise, about 800 metres away from the beach rest the remains of a sunken Roman ship.

La Albufereta, with its calm waters and the 400-metres-long sandbank, is the perfect spot for swimming and sunbathing. When it comes to the services, the beach has toilets, showers, walkways for disabled people, and rentable parasols and pedalos, as well as a few places to eat.

The beach of Sancti Petri in Cádiz

Sancti Petri is an old fishing town in Chiclana de la Frontera. Hence, we can see multiple wall paintings celebrating the sea in Sancti Petri's streets. The beach is crossed by many sand dunes, and one can even see the castle of Sancti Petri from there. Another aspect worth mentioning here is the fact that the beach rests in the Bahía de Cádiz Natural Park, surrounded by a spectacular landscape. Next to it there is Playa de la Barrosa, a beach offering a different setting and longer walks. Regarding gastronomy, this area hosts several fishermen restaurants where one can taste the best delicacies of the sea.

The beach of Isla Canela in Huelva

Isla Canela is a Blue Flag beach we can find only 5 kilometres away from Ayamonte. Its golden fine sand extends for more than 5 kilometres in a setting full of marshes, natural gullies and dunes, all those elements that define a paradisiacal beach. Its waters are blue and crystalline, and the soft waves invite us to swim. We can also have a great time snorkelling, kitesurfing or windsurfing there.



Silgar in Pontevedra



The beach of Isla Canela in Huelva

La Concha de Artedo in Asturias

The peculiarity of this beautiful beach in Cudillero lies on the fact that it comprises two different sections. The first one is made of boulders, and the second one is covered by sand, hence there's a beach for every taste. With a length of 700 metres, this beach feels sheltered and it's framed by a breathtaking landscape.

Fishing and scuba diving are two considerably popular activities in the area. The walls of Punta Austera are a perfect scenery for the latter, since one can always find sea sponges and soft corals there. Moreover, this beach is a key stop in the Way to Santiago, more specifically in the section between Cudillero and Luarca.

The beach of Galdana in Menorca

This heavenly Blue Flag beach can be found in the south of Menorca, in the municipality of Ferrerías. With a length of 400 metres, this is the largest beach in the island, and the perfect opportunity for enjoying the finest sand in the Spanish territory. Likewise, if they wish to find themselves in paradise, the travelers may rent hammocks and parasols, as well as other services that make our stay on the beach a nicer experience. Last but not least, we can also rent items for water sports.

Butihondo in Fuerteventura

For those who have a preference for nudism, Butihondo is one of the best Blue Flag beaches that allow said practice. It lies next to Morro Jable, in the south of the island. Butihondo spreads for three kilometres, and it's divided into different sections. The turquoise waters and golden sand reminisce the Caribbean coast. There are plenty of touristic services, including beach bars, apartment houses, hotels, car parks, and water sports companies.

The beach of Comillas in Cantabria

Right at the heart of Comillas, this beach offers a wide range of services for the visitors. The fine golden sand spreads for almost a kilometre, and it's accessible for disabled people. Really close to the beach we will find the Oyambre Natural Park. In addition, one can make the most of the day and visit some of the most interesting spots in Comillas, such as Gaudí's El Capricho.

Platja del Cavet in Tarragona

This beach is a little far from Cambrils, hence it's usually less crowded than the others—a positive quality for those who seek quiet and peacefulness. This Blue Flag beach extends for 700 metres, and even though it's widely referred to as a sandy beach, it also encompasses rocky areas; this is probably why snorkel is so popular there. Just like the other beaches, Platja del Cavet provides a wide range of services, like hammocks, parasols, toilets, lifeguards and water sports training schools.

The San Juan reservoir in Madrid

It might seem difficult to believe, but there are also inland beaches that have been awarded with the Blue Flag certificate. We will find one of them in the Community of Madrid, more precisely in the San Juan reservoir. Indeed, we don't need to travel to the coast in order to enjoy the sun and go for a swim. Water sports are also quite common in this reservoir all over the year. There are also inland Blue Flag beaches in Extremadura, where we can find eight of them.

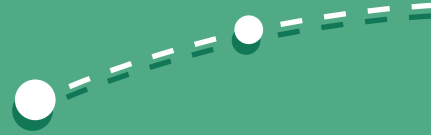
The beach of Poniente in Murcia

Poniente in the village of Águila in Murcia is an urban beach made up of gravel and sand. It extends for over a kilometre and it's the perfect spot for those who don't really like bathing in cool water. Besides, it provides all the services needed for having a great time, including beach bars, showers, walkways, lifeguards or changing rooms, among other things. To end with, it's a good thing that this beach is made accessible for disabled people.



The beach of Comillas in Cantabria

Why Spain! BY



“My contribution to A Life In Spain aims to share my personal experiences in deciding, planning, moving and now living in Spain. My hope is that someone finds it useful, helpful, insightful or helps anyone considering moving to Spain (or another country), the courage to follow that dream.”



In April 2018 I spent a month or so in Spain walking an ancient pilgrim path across the north of the Iberian peninsula. I completed my Camino de Santiago, taking the most famous Camino Frances route. It was a life-changing experience, as it is for many. I fell in love with the people, countryside, villages and culture. Life is simple on the Camino. Your priorities include health, safety, water, food, bed, shower and helping others. I love that. I love the concept that by taking less, you are giving more. It was my Camino experience that gave me the courage to “put my big girl pants on” and move solo (and recently widowed) from Australia to the Austrian Alps.

Fast forward to April 2022. I was at the end of my tether in Cyprus. Again. I was desperate to get off this island. I had finally decided it wasn't possible for me to compromise

my values in a way that could ever accept, make peace with and foster respect for its culture. I am grateful my experiences in Cyprus unlocked childhood trauma I was not consciously aware of before. I have been focused on healing that, that journey continues. I've also been focused on finding an alternative European destination, that my boy (a Cyprus hunting dog) and I can call home. Hopefully for the next ten or so years anyway.

Between May 2020 and September 2022, I thoroughly researched Estonia, Latvia, Hungary, Ukraine, Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro, and Turkey. I even made reconnaissance trips to some of these countries I had not visited before. None of these options felt right. So, I procrastinated. Unable to decide where to go but desperate to leave Cyprus it eventually felt like a sign. A sign to return to Australia. They had re-opened international borders in November 2021. As I began making plans to move, this uneasy anxious feeling took hold in my stomach. I was not ready to return to Australia despite how much I miss my sister and friends. Procrastination and indecisiveness set in, again.

In comes Ray, a recent emigrant to Cyprus in September 2022. We became friends. While he had only been in Cyprus a few weeks, he was constantly comparing living in Cyprus to hell on earth but living in Valencia, Spain as heaven on earth. In my experience, the truth usually falls somewhere in the middle. But this got me curious!

Why hadn't I considered Spain before? I have no clue why.

Off I went, on a new mission to discover if Spain could be a better fit for my boy and I. Nowhere is perfect and happiness comes from within of course.

I joined all the relevant expat Facebook groups. I also joined many Spanish and Andalusian nature, hiking, skiing, environmental, animal welfare, real estate, regional, town and community groups and pages. I trawled through content for hours and hours daily.


I checked and compared the Quality of Life Index, the Cost of Living Index and a host of other Indices relating


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FB: Moving to Spain (Our Journey in Spain)



to doing business, tax and immigration. I got professional legal, immigration and tax advice. I double-checked that advice. I knew that obtaining employment in Spain would be difficult if not impossible for me. I knew that I would be paying much more taxes in Spain but, nowhere is perfect and it's worth trying for me.

It was also very easy (and cheap) to bring my dearly beloved Cyprus hunting dog to Spain. Intra EU pet moves are very straightforward, unlike the return to Australia for example.

Based on my research and a healthy whack of gut feeling, I decided on Andalusia for many reasons, including my capacity to finance establishing and building my new chapter here.

I further decided to focus my search in the provinces of Granada and Malaga, due to its proximity to the coast and mountains, especially the Sierra Nevada. The Moorish-Christian history fascinates me, the architecture, the town and village festivals, the diverse and contrasting landscapes, micro climates and let's not forget, the abundance of UNESCO protected heritage and nature sites.

My prevailing concerns related to Spain's bureaucracy and tax regime, globally renowned for being complex and onerous but, nowhere is perfect and it feels worth it for me.

My concerns over the Andalusian summer heat haven't been experienced, yet. But, I can ride out the hot months to appreciate the skiing later for three months. Totally worth it for me.

I did burn through a few lawyers, Accountants and other agents. There are some mugs out there with professional-looking websites designed to take advantage of people eager to move to Spain and get all their ducks in a row! Again, nowhere is perfect, they exist everywhere but, be buyer beware.

It's now November 2022. I have finally decided my dog and I are moving to Spain. We depart Cyprus permanently on February 22, 2023. Exactly three years to the day I arrived. I am beyond excited to accept what is and start our new chapter.

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