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ISSUE 83
OCT 2023
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**South
Town**

San Pedro del Pinatar

**North
Town**

Valencia

Top 10

Foods To Try In Spain

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Article**

Let's Talk Wine

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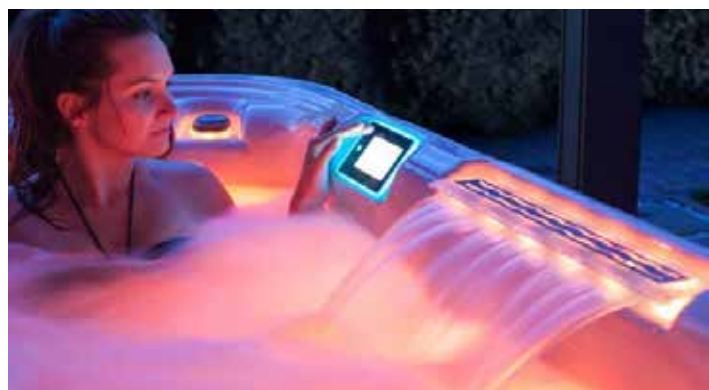
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A Life in SPAIN

Welcome to the October edition of ALIS.

October is one of the best months of the year. It's still warm enough to go to the beach, but the crowds have now gone so there's plenty of room.

Don't forget to join our Facebook group, A Life In Spain Property Sales. There's now over 65,000 members. So if you are buying or selling your home then this is definitely the place to look

So what's in this edition....

We have some great new series of articles continuing this month. Including
Page 16 - Events Calendar
Page 18 - Ruta Del Vino De Yecla
Page 21- Spanish facts
Page 37 - Regional Capitals

There's even more new articles next month as we crack the whip and get our team of researchers working their magic to bring you interesting facts and articles about Spain.

Enjoy!

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A Life in
SPAIN 05

Places To Visit In A Day

Mula and bullas

Only 40+ kilometers from Murcia on the very quiet RM15 lies Mula, a great little Spanish town with its imposing 16th century castle overlooking the plains below. The town is full of typical architecture and museums, one of the best of which is the extremely interesting "City of Mula Museum" where you will find everything you need to know about its art, history, culture and customs. Visitors can take a tour from pre-history to the recent history of the city. It is only closed on Tuesdays and is FREE

A special treat would be to visit the thermal waters of Baños de Mula just outside the town. Indeed it is well sign posted and would be spotted just before Mula on the Motorway. The Parador hotel houses the baths and you can book a small pool for about 6/10 people for your exclusive use. It is a great experience even though it is only very small. You will come out feeling much refreshed. In fact, ready for a gin and tonic in the bar.

For traditional food you could do worse than try the Casa Paco which can seat up to 400. For a smaller more intimate experience, just walk around the town centre where you are spoilt for choice of good places to eat or simply have a drink with some tapas.

Mula is a great place to start exploring the area and for more information visit the Tourist Information website www.mula.es

While you are in the area it would be a crying shame not to drive up the road to visit Bullas. A famous wine producing town full of interesting

things to do, not least exploring the varieties of wine that are produced around here. Life in this village revolves around its wine production and a visit to the Wine Museum is a must. There are tours which end in a wine tasting so check for these dates. There are many bodegas you can visit where you can sample before you buy. The predominant grape of the region (80%) is Monastrell which result in some very fine wines to suit all budgets. Some of the wine produced may only be available in local restaurants so try some of them too.

For much more information visit the website www.rvbullas.es/rutadelvino/portfolio/oficina-de-turismo-de-bullas/ or simply call in at the tourist office.

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Shopping

Phrases

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|--------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| How can I help you? | ¿En qué puedo ayudarte? | Enn kay pw-eh-doheye-you-dar-te |
| How much does this cost? | ¿Esto, cuánto cuesta? | Ess-toe, kwan -toekwes-ta |
| It's too expensive. | Es demasiado caro. | Ess day-mahs-see-ah-doh cah -ro |
| Do you have something cheaper? | ¿Tienes algo más barato? | Tea- yen -aceal-gomahs bah-rah-toe |
| How much does this weigh? | ¿Esto, cuánto pesa? | Ess-toe, kwan -toe pes-sah |
| Give me half a kilo. | Ponme medio kilo. | Pohn -me mey-dee-ohkey-lo |
| Give me half a dozen | Ponme media docena | Pohn -me mey-dee-yadoh- ther -nah |
| Anything else? | ¿Algo más? | Al -go mahs |
| No, that's all thank you. | No, eso es todo gracias. | Noess -so estoe -doe grah -see-ass |
| How much is it altogether? | ¿Cuánto es en total? | Kwan -toe es en toe-tal |

Vocab

| | | |
|-------------|-----------------|---|
| Fresh | Fresco / a | Frey -ess-ko / frey -ess-ka |
| Ripe | Maduro / a | Mah- dur -ro / mah- dur -ra |
| Seasonal | De la temporada | Day lahtem-pour- ra -dah |
| A discount | Un descuento | Oondes- kwen -toe |
| A bank note | Un billete | Oonbee- yet -tay |
| A coin | Una moneda | Oo -nah mon-eh-dah |
| The change | El cambio | Ell cam -bee-o |
| A tip | Una propina | Oo -nah pro- pee -nah |
| A receipt | Un recibo | Oon rey- see -boh |
| An invoice | Una factura | Oo -nah fak- tur -ra |



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



SAN PEDRO DEL PINATAR

San Pedro del Pinatar is at the touristic heart of the Costa Cálida. Situated between the Mar Menor and the Mediterranean Sea, this small seaside town is famous for its fishing background, therapeutic mud baths, salt flats and vast stretches of sand.

SAN PEDRO DE

Located at the northern end of the Mar Menor, it's name comes from a small church the fishermen dedicated to San Pedro in an area of pine trees. With its agricultural and fishing character, still carried on today, this is a great town where history and modern technology meet.

It has busy tourist activity in the summer especially in Lo Pagán, where its mud baths are particularly famous and good for your health. San Pedro del Pinatar continues to be a very popular Spanish holiday destination and the population increases during the summer months as people from Madrid (and other Spaniards) with second homes descend on the area. Lots of free entertainment is provided by the council.

The area is also famous for its salt lagoons where you can see rare birds and flocks of flamingoes going about their daily rituals.

It's history stretches back to the Roman era, from which remains of houses have been discovered and during which the exploitation of the salt flats of Coterillo was begun; salt flats which are still working today. These wetlands were formed with the dunes and the beach of La Llana. This is also the oldest of the Regional national parks of Murcia. It is also a refuge for over one hundred bird species, among which the flamingo is worthy of particular mention.

Besides the park, where it is possible to observe the fauna and flora as well as unique constructions such as the salt mills, it is also worth paying a visit to stately homes such as the Casa del Reloj, which was home to the death of Emilio Castelar, the Palace of Villar de Felices, the Ethnographical Archaeological Museum and the Fish Market.

Monuments and places of interest

1. Ethnographic Archaeological museum. Calle Dr. Mirón de Castro: Here you will find paleontological fossils, objects, etc. It has an exclusive room for submarine archaeology and another one for the ethnographic type dedicated to the last centuries.
2. Museum of the Sea: marine and marine article collections.
3. Conservation and research center of the Humedales "Las Salinas" (Avda. de las salinas): offering interesting exhibitions on the natural park and the work in the salt mines.
4. "Casa del reloj" or Villa of San Sebastian (Avda. Artero Guirao): an example of modernist architecture. The Spanish president, Emilio Castelar y Ripoll, died here in 1899. Since the end of the 20th century it has been reconstructed and turned into a restaurant.
5. Church of San Pedro Apostle (Plaza de la Constitucion): this is a temple that became a Franciscan hermitage in the 17th century.
6. Palace of counts Villar de Felices or Casa of the Russian (C/ Victor Pradera s/n): building in neo-mudéjar style constructed in the 19th century by order of Baron de Benifalló.
7. Fish Market in Lo Pagán (Explanada of Lo Pagán): a traditional fish auction can be seen here.
8. The "Salinas y Arenales" natural park.

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Los Alcázares Town is home to more than 15,000 inhabitants, of varied nationalities, but mostly Spanish. It offers a rich local, gastronomic and beach culture that is the envy to the other regions of the Spanish coast.

Its festivals and gastronomy attract a large number of tourists each year, making each year better and more interesting. Among its festivities, it is worth mentioning "La fiesta del Caldero" or the "XIX Berberistic Raids" that are close to be held from Thursday, March 29 to April 1.

Four days of MEDIEVAL MARKET, one of the largest in Spain, attended by more than two hundred artisans from different national and international points.

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domestic animals, caravan trips of dromedaries and donkeys, bird flight exhibition, geese ride, fakir show , musical animation, puppets, street theatre, ... environment that surrounds children and adults, that invites them to participate in each of these activities and participatory workshops that take place during the day in the RINCÓN INFANTIL.

Activities that are transferred to FESTIVE CAMP, in the "PeñasHuertanas Park", where more than seven hundred people who make up the Berber peñas, dress as peasants, pirates, fishermen, courtiers or buffoons ... in a show of coexistence during these four days; and in which all visitors are welcome to eat, drink or dance every night with live entertainment.

Put it in your agenda and do not miss it!





Megarsa

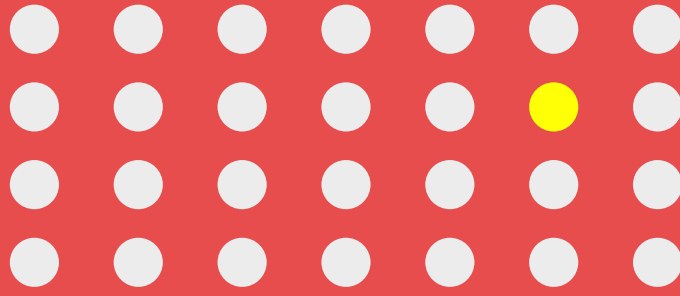
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Spain's Events Calendar



In November, Spain hosts several festivals and celebrations that showcase its rich cultural heritage. Here are some notable events that take place during this month:

All Saints' Day (Día de Todos los Santos) - November 1st: This is a national holiday in Spain, where people honour and remember their deceased loved ones. Families often visit cemeteries, clean the graves, and leave flowers.

La Castanyada - November 1st: Particularly celebrated in Catalonia, this festival coincides with All Saints' Day. It involves eating roasted chestnuts (castanyes), sweet potatoes, and panellets (almond pastries), and drinking muscatel wine.

Fiesta de San Martín - November 11th: Celebrated primarily in the region of Castile and León, this festival commemorates St. Martin of Tours. It features traditional events such as processions, livestock fairs, and wine tastings.

Fiesta de Santa Cecilia - November 22nd: This celebration honors the patron saint of music, Santa Cecilia. Musicians and music lovers organize concerts and parades in cities like Madrid and Valencia.

International Jazz Festival of Barcelona - November: Barcelona hosts this renowned jazz festival, featuring performances by national and international artists in various venues across the city.

Festival Internacional de Jazz de Madrid - November: Similar to Barcelona, Madrid also holds its own international jazz festival, showcasing jazz music from around the world.

Valencia Cinema Jove - November: This international film festival focuses on showcasing the work of young filmmakers. It takes place in Valencia and presents a wide range of films from different genres.

Olive Fair (Feria del Aceite) - November: Held in the Andalusian town of Martos, this fair celebrates olive oil production. It includes activities like tasting sessions, exhibitions, and parades.

Please note that some festivals and celebrations might vary in terms of specific dates or regional variations. It's always a good idea to double-check the exact dates and locations of these events before planning a trip to Spain.



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Ruta del vino de Yecla

By José Sanchez



There are three wine routes certified by the Spanish Association of Wine Cities (ACEVIN) in the Region of Murcia, and included in the Spanish club of wine routes: Bullas, Jumilla and Yecla. The “monastrell” grape is used to make all the wines, thus bringing together the rich heritage and landscape of its three wine routes.

These routes have definitely added value to a large part of the existing tourist attractions in these towns, offering activities and experiences for all tastes: a visit to a wild cattle farm, wine tasting in wineries, harvesting with the family, wine pairing, and events such as “La Noche Tinta” and the wine tourism marathon in Yecla. You can also hop on the Wine Bus for one of its organised outings. To access all the information on what is scheduled and how to take part in the experiences and events, you only have to visit the following website: experiencias.rutadelvinoyecla.com

Yecla

The Murcia highlands offer so much to the viticulture and oenology enthusiast; archaeology, culture, nature, local cuisine and festivals. With over 30 establishments associated with the route, including board and lodging, wineries, oil mills, restaurants, active tourism companies, travel agencies and wine bars, this area gives the visitor first-hand knowledge of everything related to wine.

Mount Arabí, with its magical archaeological sites and cave engravings or the mysterious “cazoletas” bowl-shaped carvings in the rock, and the Archaeological Museum with the “Bust de Adriano” (Hadrian’s bust), should be on your list of things to see, as should a stroll through the Plaza Mayor, the Concha Segura Theatre, and in the “Santuario ICastillo”. For the more adventurous, the Sierra Salinas, one of the unspoiled natural beauty spots in the region, is excellent for hiking or cycling. Yecla also has the spectacular “Basílica de la Purísima” with its large white and blue dome: it is the symbol of the town. Its festivities, such as San Isidro and the “Fiestas de la Virgen”, declared of national interest to tourists (Interés Turístico Nacional), are events that will fascinate as well as surprise you.

The best way to accompany a glass of Yecla wine (these wines have been protected with a “Denominación de Origen” or Appellation of Origin since 1975) is with its local cuisine. Visit one of the wineries and vineyards, taste the Yeclano gazpacho (very similar to the manchego gazpacho), the “gachasmigas” the fried cheese with tomato, the “libricos”, a sweet made of thin wafers with layers of honey or chocolate, and the “tortas fritas” (fried cakes). These are just some of the delicious dishes that this town has to offer



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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





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TOP 10

foods to try in Spain

Whether you're on a city break in Barcelona or Madrid, or you've plumped for a countryside or coastal retreat, Spanish food is full of flavour and character.

From tasty tapas to superb seafood and traditional roasts, food in Spain is all about making the most of the best local produce. We asked travel writer Annie Bennett to pick 10 of the best dishes to try on your travels.

Don't leave Spain without trying...

1. Gazpacho

The reddest, ripest tomatoes, olive oil, garlic, bread, peppers and cucumber are blended until silky smooth, then chilled and poured into bowls or glasses.

So delicious, so refreshing. In Andalucía in southern Spain, people have it every day in summer and there is always a jug on the counter in tapas bars. Also try salmorejo from Córdoba, a thicker version that is often served with pieces of Ibérico ham on the top.



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2. Paella

In the Valencia region, they claim you can eat a different rice dish every day of the year, but let's stick with the most traditional version for now.

Ingredients for paella Valenciana include chicken or rabbit, saffron, runner beans and butter beans. But the all-important element is the rice, ideally the bomba or Calasparra varieties grown on Spain's east coast, which are particularly good for absorbing all the flavours.

3. Tortilla Española

Eggs, potatoes, onions... that's it –and some purists even consider that adding onion is a gastronomic crime of the highest order.

The Spanish omelette is so much more than the sum of its parts. The potatoes and onions are slow fried in olive oil then mixed with the beaten eggs for the flavours to mix before cooking.

Add chorizo, ham, spinach, courgettes or whatever you have to hand to make a tasty meal out of next to nothing



4. Gambas al ajillo

You walk into a tapas bar, the barman is handing a customer an earthenware dish of sizzling prawns, the tantalising aroma hits your nostrils and you just have to order some too.

To recreate it at home, just fry some sliced garlic and green chilli in olive oil, throw in the prawns for a couple of minutes and add some parsley.

Couldn't be simpler, couldn't be tastier



5. Tostas de tomate y jamón

Black pigs roam among the holm oak trees in western Spain in search of the acorns that give marbled magenta Ibérico ham its distinctive nutty flavour.

Rub thick pieces of toast with garlic and tomato, pour on some olive oil and top with slices of jamón for a quick, delicious lunch.



7. Pollo al ajillo

Any Spaniard will tell you that the best garlic chicken ever is the one their grandmother makes. And of course they are right.

Unpeeled cloves of garlic are fried in olive oil to flavour it, then taken out before adding pieces of chicken. When that's cooked, the garlic goes back in with some rosemary, thyme and some dry sherry or white wine.

But there is no definitive recipe for this much-loved dish



6. Patatas bravas

Perhaps the most ubiquitous of tapas, patatas bravas vary quite a bit around the country, but all versions involve chunks of fried potato.

In Madrid, bravas sauce is made with sweet and spicy pimentón (Spanish paprika), olive oil, flour and stock –but never tomatoes.

Some people add garlic, some a dash of fino sherry, while others selfishly insist on keeping their secret ingredients to themselves.

8. Cochinillo asado

People might claim they are going to Segovia to see its astounding Roman aqueduct, fairytale castle or elegant cathedral, but really all that is just to build up an appetite for lunch.

And in Segovia that means either roast suckling pig or lamb.

The meat is cooked in huge wood-fired ovens and is so tender it is cut with the side of an earthenware plate





9. Pisto

The Spanish version of ratatouille turns up all over the country in different guises, but is most typical in the towns and villages across the plains of La Mancha, south of Madrid.

Onions, garlic, courgettes, peppers and tomatoes are slow fried in olive oil –this is not a dish that likes to be rushed.

It's usually served as a starter, sometimes with fried eggs or chorizo, but is great as a side dish too.

10. Turrón

Spaniards devour massive amounts of turrón, or almond nougat, at Christmas, although it's available all year round.

Most of it is made in the small town of Jijona in the province of Alicante, using locally-grown almonds mixed with honey and egg white.

There are two basic types –a soft, smooth version, called Jijona, and hard Alicante turrón, which contains pieces of almond.

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Bierzo: a great new brand

It is undeniable, El Bierzo wines are fashionable. The mencias rub elbows with the most prestigious strains of Spain and the godellos break into the panorama of the whites with unusual force. Without a doubt, we are in fashion. El Bierzo and its landscape, its history, its Camino de Santiago, its monumental palatial, monacal and military heritage. All this, today is a must in tourism. There is no longer a restaurant worth its salt, a sommelier with a professional level or a sensitive consumer who does not know the sensory records of the Mencía red grape and the Godello white variety.

Another example of the success and quality of DO Bierzo wines is the article published on the website of the Peñín Guide, one of the most prestigious guides in the sector nationwide, and titled Bierzo, walking in the right direction. "Bierzo is unique not only for its mencia wines, but also for the marked Atlantic character of its red wines. Closer to the Atlantic freshness than the continental strength of other of its Castilian-Leonese neighbours," or so they say. For his part, Carlos González, director of the guide did not hesitate to ensure that "Bierzo knew how to make the leap with mastery of the most massive elaborations to the most selective and linked productions, really, to the concept plot and vineyard". The wines of El Bierzo are a great new brand. Justice has been done.

Mencia is undoubtedly a different strain, which transfers different aromatic series, structure and different sensory records to the glass. Years ago, among the wines clearly accentuated by the personality of the Mencía, strengthened by a criterion in the aging in wood that far from masking the grapes, contributes to prolonging their life and reaching a magnificent balance. Today the Mencía variety grown in the Bierzo obtains magnificent results between prescribers and specialized critics. Thus, the 100% elaborated red wines have achieved high scores. Undoubtedly, the Mencía is in fashion, but a fashion that is limited to the north-west of the Iberian Peninsula and that is its true value: differentiation. Standing out in a world of tempranillos, garnachas, monastrelles and cabernets demonstrating a defined personality in the wines. But not all are the same. It depends on the age, on your ability to age and, fundamentally, on the soil, which gives the wine its unique mineral features

and nuances, as is the case with the vineyards located on well oriented slopes in the region.

Godello, which is the white grape is queen to Bierzo wines. It is part of the genetic heritage of Spanish viticulture and in the north-west of the Iberian Peninsula has its small taifa kingdoms scattered around the slopes of its valleys and mountains. But something we have very clear is that the Godello grape strains that we grow in El Bierzo develop their vegetative cycle in a special microclimate, in the environment of a gigantic pot that wine literature has called the northwest volcano. And that is where the true potential of Godello white grape is. Which has demonstrated its primary virtues by rescuing aromatic series in young wines and excellent white behavior whose fermentation and aging criteria have doubled Godello's sensory records. Today we could not understand a tasting panel without those notes of greenfruit, without those bitter and pleasant backgrounds, without that persistence of the white of the northwest. In El Bierzo we bet on the Godello, we believe in its qualities and we know its quality. Therefore, we will continue developing new vintages with the white of the Spanish north-west.



Wine of the month

Gotín del Risc

Grape variety: Mencia 100%, DO Bierzo

Fermentation in stainless steel conical tanks with a controlled temperature for 10 days and for a total of 20 days maceration. Then aged in French oak barrels from the Burgundy region, with the close monitoring and supervision of the technical department. When the wine is at its optimum bottling, the total duration of the breeding has reached 9 months.

Production Area: Valtuille de Arriba Average

Age: 50 Years Soil Composition: Stony presence of slates, quartzites and other minerals

Altitude: 550 meters

The sharp fruitiness character lets it show all the qualities and characteristics of the Mencia variety. Its barrel ageing, complete these qualities, bringing subtlety and elegance. Its entry on the palate is silky, fruity, persistent and very friendly.

Pairing:

Suitable to drink with starters like aperitif wine, really nice to take with some grilled vegetable, smoked salmon with fresh cheese, or cesar chicken salad. A really fresh drinkable medium body red wine.



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North Town...



VALENCIA

Valencia, a large city on Spain's eastern coast is well known amongst holidaymakers and expats as an under rated place. For decades, UK visitors to Spain's Costas only ever holidayed in the typical "bucket and spade" resorts up and down this wonderful region, however an increasing number of people are starting to discover Spain's cities and what they can offer too.

VALENCIA

Spain is a big place, far bigger than old Blighty, and it's sometimes easy to forget that there is so much to see and do in this vast and diverse country and one reason why us Brits can't get enough of the place. Valencia is but one area and is in some ways, just like any other metropolitan area in Europe, with wide (and traffic clogged roads) and the people themselves, the characters that make up the place, scurrying about on their daily business in the shadow of huge high rise blocks of apartments.

Valencia has a mix of old and new buildings, giving it a real special feel of it's own. From medieval castles and towers, to modernist and art deco architecture, and of course a glut of massive shopping centres and plenty of places to eat and drink too of course!

Visiting a city in Spain, as opposed to a resort, allows a glimpse into the real working day of the people and of real life, away from the the normal sights and sounds of a resort vacation in Spain.

A lot of people don't realise just how big the city is and what is on offer here. For example, did you know it has a tube train system like a smaller version of the London Underground?

Or do you realise that the holy grail, the cup that Jesus was supposed to have drank from at the last supper, is kept in the cathedral in central Valencia?

The city is jam packed full of culture and history, stuff you really want to stick around for, and explore the old lanes and streets as well as the wide tree-lined shopping areas of this truly awesome city!

One of the Plazas worth seeing is the Plaza del Reina, or "Queen's place" in English, located in the old town area and a magnet for more or less each and every tourist that comes here.

It's a great place to hang out, with plenty of places to eat too, however be warned that you will pay top tourist prices here. Eat where the Spanish eat, that's best, but armed with a good and detailed map so you can find these obscure places, although in this area you have to be really "in the know" to find a good paella.

One of the cities more controversial claims to fame is that it has what is supposed to be the Holy Grail, the actual cup that Jesus drank from at the last supper, although that claim is also upheld by several other places around the world too.

The cathedral is a lovely old place and well worth visiting, however the grail is one of the must-see attractions for those of a religious following. The authors David Rhead and Jose Marin looked in great detail at the story of the cup and suggested that the cup had travelled from Rome centuries ago, however when the Muslim rulers took

over Spain, it was put into hiding for centuries and only returned to the city in 1427 by the gloriously named King Alfonso the magnanimous!

Whilst the prospect of wandering around a food market is not everyone's first choice of what to do whilst on holiday, the historic market in central Valencia is a bit different and is actually well worth visiting.

No chance of a White Christmas here, but hey - you can enjoy Christmas in relative warmth. Valencia gets very pretty over Christmas: lots of gorgeous illuminations and lots of energy in the streets. The main area to see the Christmas setting is of course the centre of Valencia, especially all the landmarks such as Plaza de la Reina and Plaza de Ayuntamiento. Plaza de la Reina will host the Christmas crafts market - good for souvenirs and local delicacies. Plaza de Ayuntamiento will host the main Nativity Scene - those compositions will be throughout the city over Christmas.

Christmas in Valencia is an outdoor affair. Christmas markets pop up in the city's squares, streets and market buildings to offer tourist and locals alike everything from toys and Christmas decorations to handcrafted products such as pottery and glassware.

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The most famous Christmas market is the one located around the Central Market, with more than 60 stalls selling an exciting range of items from 1 December to 6 January. Then there's the Mercado de Reyes (the Kings' Market), one of the biggest with close to 250 stalls, which takes up residence in the streets surrounding Cabanyal Market from 3 to 6 January.

You'll be able to find a range of hand crafted products at the ARTEVAL Craft Fair in Plaza de la Reina, next to the Cathedral, while the impressive Colón Market building will be hosting a range of Christmas stalls and activities throughout the festive season, including carol singing from 30 November to 6 January and the PROA Craft Fair from 13 December to 6 January.

The City of Arts and Sciences will also be hosting a Christmas market from 23 December to 6 January, with children's activities and craft demonstrations.



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Spanish Regional Capitals

Salamanca



There are 44 regions in Spain. Here we highlight 12 of the regional capitals

Salamanca is a historic city located in western Spain, and it is the capital of the province of Salamanca and the autonomous community of Castile and León. Known for its rich history, architectural beauty, and prestigious university, Salamanca is often referred to as “The Golden City” due to the golden hue of its sandstone buildings.

Here are some key highlights about Salamanca:

History: Salamanca has a long history dating back to the Roman era. It flourished as a cultural and intellectual centre during the Middle Ages and Renaissance, attracting scholars and artists from across Europe.

Architecture: The city’s architecture is a blend of different styles, including Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, and Baroque. The Old City of Salamanca, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, boasts magnificent landmarks such as the Old Cathedral (Catedral Vieja), the New Cathedral (Catedral Nueva), and the House of Shells (Casa de las Conchas).

University of Salamanca: Founded in 1218, the University of Salamanca is the oldest university in Spain and one of the oldest in Europe. It played a vital role in the spread of knowledge during the Renaissance and has a prestigious reputation for its academic programs, particularly in the fields of humanities and languages.



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Plaza Mayor: Salamanca's main square, the Plaza Mayor, is one of the most beautiful and vibrant squares in Spain. It features stunning Baroque architecture, arcades, and numerous cafes and shops, making it a popular gathering place for locals and tourists alike.

Casa Lis: This Art Nouveau museum houses a remarkable collection of decorative arts, including glassware, ceramics, and sculptures. The building itself is an architectural gem, characterized by its iron and glasswork.

Food and Culture: Salamanca offers a vibrant culinary scene with traditional Spanish cuisine. The city is known for its delicious cured meats, such as jamón ibérico, and other regional specialties like hornazo (a type of meat pie). Salamanca also hosts various cultural events and festivals, including the renowned Salamanca International Film Festival.

Nightlife: Salamanca is a lively city, especially at night, thanks to its large student population. The numerous bars, clubs, and taverns in the city centre cater to a vibrant nightlife scene, where visitors can enjoy live music, dance, and socialize.

Language Learning: Salamanca is an ideal destination for learning Spanish. Many international students flock to the city to immerse themselves in the language and culture. The University of Salamanca offers Spanish language courses for foreigners, attracting students from all over the world.

Salamanca is a captivating city that blends its rich heritage with a youthful energy. Whether you're interested in history, architecture, culture, or simply experiencing the vibrant atmosphere, Salamanca offers a delightful destination for visitors.

Spanish recipe

'Caldereta' (meat stew)

Ingredients...

Ingredients for 4 people:

1/4 k of lamb cut into small pieces
1 lamb's liver
2 large onions chopped
1 chopped sweet pepper
1 slice of bread
1 spoonful of cayenne pepper or paprika
(according to taste)
3 chopped cloves of garlic
2 dl of olive oil
1 dl of water
1/2 l of meat stock
2 dl of red wine
Thyme, oregano, 1 bay leaf, pepper & salt

How to cook it...

Preparation:

- 1, Sauté the lamb and liver in a casserole dish with a little oil.
- 2, Fry the onions, pepper, bread and garlic cloves separately in a frying pan for five to ten minutes.
- 3, When it is golden, but not brown, add to the casserole dish with the lamb.
- 4, Mix the liver, two of the garlic cloves, the thyme, oregano, wine, cayenne pepper and water.
- 5, Mix well and add to the casserole dish with the lamb.
- 6, Cover with the stock and cook slowly for forty-five minutes.
- 7, Check the flavour half way through cooking.



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A life in
SPAIN 39

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History of Spain Part 4

Before moving on with our "History of Spain", it must be said that over the past two months, we have been swamped. Our Market bus trips and Mazarron Port trips have been very welcome for many people. September included Zoco Market, The Chinese Terracotta army, and Mojacar's "Night of Candles". October is looking good too! We have a day trip to Valencia on the 1st. The 9th, 10th, and 11th of October see us heading toward Benalmadena and Gibraltar. This is a nice trip: Benalmadena Marina is a lovely place to visit, and Gibraltar is a unique British Territory!!

Sunday the 15th of October sees us heading to Benidorm and Benidorm Palace for a Diana Ross and the Supremes Tribute act, Sensational!!! Bullas Wine tasting (and lunch) is on the 18th of October. On the 24th of October, we are visiting Cartagena to see one of the best operas ever: Don Giovanni. Finally, on the 26th of October, we are visiting a Chocolate Factory.

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We ended part 3 of our "History", with Spain trying to administer huge worldwide territories. Nationalism and Protestantism met head-on in the Dutch uprising of 1556. The conquest of America was an attempt to annex the territory and control the population. Just as the Roman Empire had done, language, religion, laws, administration, and crossbreeding provided the vehicles for the "Hispanisation of America", all of which guided the continent firmly into the Western Fold. Many Spaniards, including Bartolome de la Casas, spoke out against the abuses of the conquerors. This gave rise to the so-called "Black Legend" of Spanish cruelty in the Americas. It was Spain who first advocated the idea of International Law.

The Spanish Empire invented an administrative apparatus that was very complex for the time and was based on a system that put security before everything else and was given huge prestige. Spain was getting on with things but was ignoring the populace. The breakdown of the system became evident in 1640 with the rebellion of Catalonia and the separation of Portugal. The decline of the Spanish Empire which was brought about by "monetary exhaustion", coincided with a gradual disintegration of the confederated system, which was subjected to centralist practices. Also, Spain was a victim of its own success: With the Americas and the expansion of oceanic navigation shifting the European geo-economic axis from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, and more precisely to the basins of the Thames, Rhine, Seine, and Scheidt, relegating Spain to sideline position.

Spain still maintained its status as a great power and a key player in Europe with the Americas and Naples still under its control. Following the "Treaty of the Pyrenees" in 1659, Spain ceded its hegemonic role to the French kingdom of Louis XIV, which made the "Sun King" into the arbiter of European politics and France into the model for what was to become the reformed government of 17th-century despotism. Charles II, the last of the Spanish Hapsburgs, was childless and he bequeathed his inheritance to a grandson of his sister Maria Theresa and Louis XIV of France, Philip of Anjou. Philip was crowned King of Spain and the Indies in 1701. Philip V as he was known, inaugurated the dynasty of the Spanish Bourbons. His reign prolonged the Enlightenment in Spain and a period of foreign policy balance, reform, and internal progress.

Balance and peace in Europe were the two goals pursued by Spain in the 18th century. However, events were to unfold that changed this forever! The death of King Charles II of Spain became a major event in Spanish history. In his will, Charles II gave his crown to Philip, Duke of Anjou and Grandson of King Louis XIV of France. This provoked a backlash from England, Holland, Prussia, and Austria who saw the move as jeopardising the balance of power in Europe.

King Charles III began his reign in 1759 and his Prime Minister, Floridablanca, managed to keep Spain out of military conflicts. This was despite a small intervention in the American War of Independence. It must be said that Charles III's legacy was a country at peace now, and well on the road to progress. Spain's improved financial management was brought about by less being spent on foreign ventures, and more taxes were collected. This came about as a result of a more efficient fiscal system but also because Spanish society was more prosperous. The Bourbons were remarkable figures of reformism throughout Europe during the "Enlightenment" era. The Bourbons sought progress and efficient organisation for the country according to their thoughts at the time.

All obstacles to trade and industry were removed, and all of the ports in the kingdom provided a major boost to trade. However, in Spain as well as the rest of Europe still governed by ancient regimes, the land problem consisted of huge areas taken from the market and placed in the hands of either the Church (which owned 15% of cultivable area) and the municipal councils or the nobility. Tax reductions, special privileges and territorial domains were reduced. The number of gentry fell from around 700,000 to 400,000 by 1787.

The Bourbons also did away with a large proportion of minor administrative policies. Councils were reduced and Secretarias (Ministries) were introduced. Senior Civil Servants were recruited from the local and enlightened lower nobility. These civil servants were people of their time, enlightened in their thinking and convinced of their reforming missions. The Treaty of Fontainebleau was a secret agreement of 1762 in which France ceded Louisiana from America to Spain. It allowed the French army to march across the Pyrenees and advance towards Portugal. Although the French entered Lisbon, they did not leave Spain. The Bonapartes attempted to unify, but this did not go down well with the Spanish population. The result was a general uprising on the 2nd of May 1808. This war lasted six years and was called by the Spanish "The War of Independence". It was a war that raged throughout the whole of Spain.

Senior Provincial Juntas were set up but in the face of military defeats and a lack of financial resources they eventually saw the need for a much higher structure to coordinate their efforts. And so, a Central Junta was created. This Central Junta was founded in the City of Cadiz.

Keep your eyes open: Taquilla Tickets will be visiting!!

The first gathering of the Cortes (Parliament) was held on the 24th of September 1810 and was attended by approximately 100 representatives. "The Constitution of 1812" proclaimed that the figure of the king was sacrosanct and immune, and not subject to liability, and had the right to enact laws. Primary schools were contemplated for every town in the land, plus a single education system for the entire kingdom. Freedom of expression was also established.

On the 11th of February 1873, the National Assembly (Both Congress and Senate) proclaimed the First Republic by 258 votes to 32 against. Following four successive presidencies, the coup d'etat led by General Pavia dissolved the National Assembly in 1874, and the monarchy was restored in the person of Alfonso XII, Isabella's eldest son.

As usual, you can contact us as follows
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We are pretty sure that you know how to get in touch with us BUT, just in case:

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The villa is distributed over three floors. Glass fronted entrance leads in to the bright reception area. on this level you have a newly fitted kitchen with modern appliances, white gloss units and a functional centre island, linked nicely to the dining area with patio doors leading out to the sunny rear terrace. On this floor, there are also three double bedrooms, one currently used as an office and one with an en-suite shower room, also a spacious family bathroom with walk in shower.

There is a separate utility area and the lounge is a comfortable size with large sliding doors leading out to the rear terrace. Within the sizable 616m2 plot, at road level, is a detached large garage with space for three cars plus plenty of storage. Upstairs, to the right of the landing area, is a huge (70m2) master suite, with two matching His and Hers shower rooms and a large walk in wardrobe area. Extra wide sliding windows give an impressive view out to sea from the bed. To the left of the landing is a further double bedroom with an ensuite shower room, sliding door access with a large private terrace, again with amazing sea views.

Steps from the rear terrace lead down to the lower pool area, surrounded by glass panels allowing un-interrupted sea views. On this pool terrace level is a lounge/dining area with a fully functional kitchen and bar area with bedroom, shower room and toilet. This space is perfect for entertaining guests, or could be used as a self-contained apartment.

Check out this amazing property on our website www.primepropertymurcia.com using the reference 2015 or contact us on 868 580 320. See our advert on page 9 for more details.



Hobbies

Photography

Spain offers a variety of incredible locations for wildlife photography, ranging from beautiful national parks to unique coastal areas. Here are some of the best places for wildlife photography in Spain:

Doñana National Park: Located in Andalusia, Doñana National Park is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of Europe's most important wetland reserves. It is home to a wide range of bird species, including flamingos, herons, and raptors. The park also has populations of Iberian lynx, wild boars, and deer.

Sierra de Andújar Natural Park: Situated in the region of Andalusia, this park is renowned for its population of Iberian lynx, one of the world's most endangered wild cat species. In addition to lynxes, you can also find various bird species and other mammals such as deer and wild boars.

Coto Doñana: Adjacent to Doñana National Park, Coto Doñana is another great spot for wildlife photography. It offers diverse habitats, including marshes, dunes, and pine forests, attracting numerous bird species, including flamingos, spoonbills, and avocets.

Garajonay National Park: Situated on the island of La Gomera in the Canary Islands, Garajonay is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is characterized by its lush forests and misty landscapes, offering opportunities to capture unique flora, including the Canary Island pine, as well as bird species like the laurel pigeon and Bolle's pigeon.

Picos de Europa National Park: Located in northern Spain, this park is known for its stunning mountainous landscapes. It is home to several rare and elusive species like the Cantabrian brown bear, Iberian wolves, and chamois. The park also provides excellent opportunities for landscape photography.

Cabrera Archipelago Maritime-Terrestrial National Park: Situated off the coast of Mallorca, this national park consists of a group of islands and surrounding waters. It offers a diverse marine ecosystem with dolphins, sea turtles, and seabird colonies. The park is accessible by boat, and the underwater life provides unique opportunities for underwater photography.

Monfragüe National Park: Located in Extremadura, Monfragüe is a paradise for birdwatching and wildlife photography. It is particularly famous for its population of raptors, including the Spanish imperial eagle, griffon vulture, and black stork. The park also features scenic landscapes with rugged cliffs and the Tajo River.

Remember to check specific guidelines and regulations for photography in protected areas and to respect the welfare of the wildlife when photographing them.



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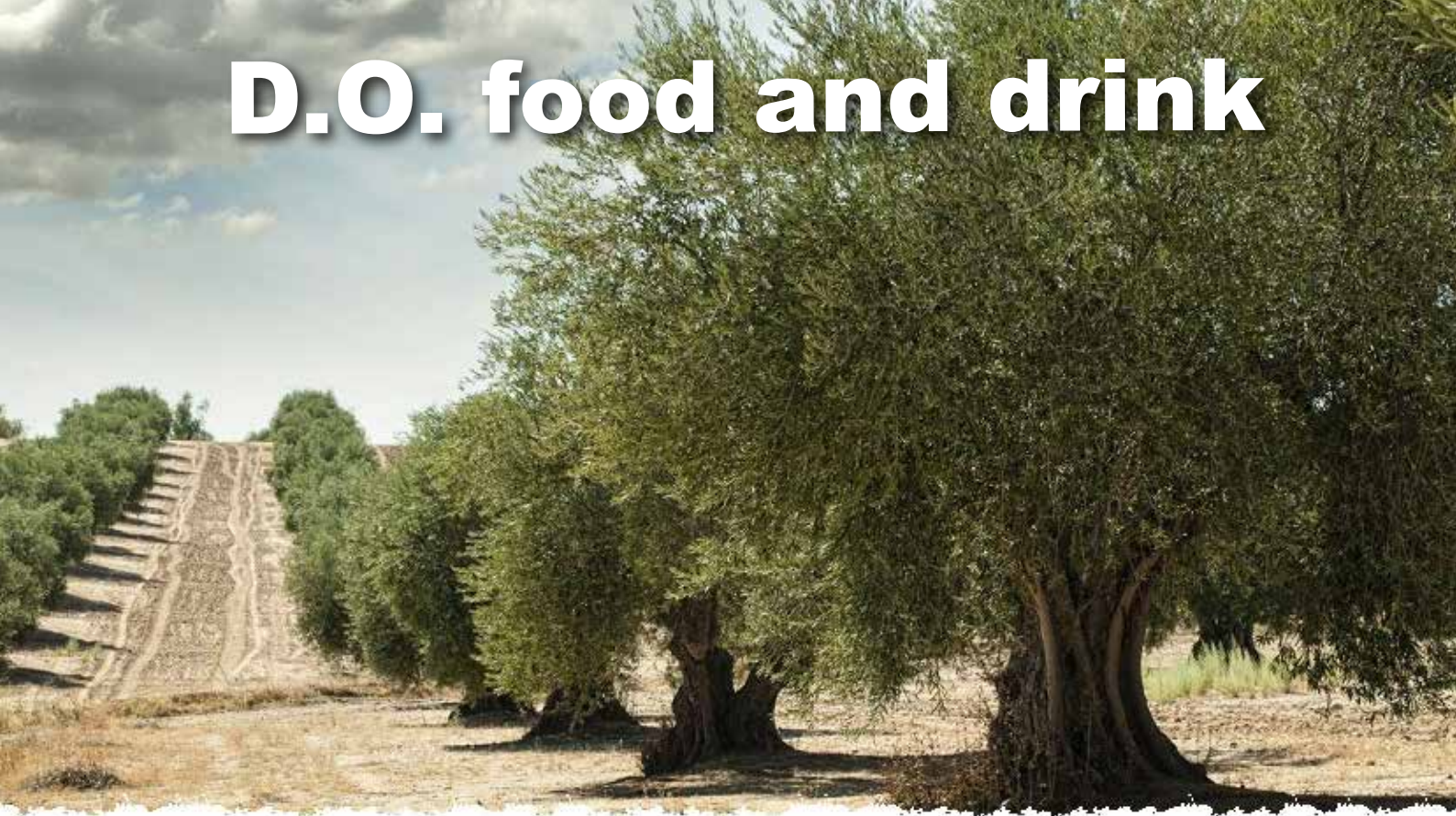
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A wide variety, and delicious too

There are over 250 foods and drinks protected by this quality control system. Getting to know them will also give you the chance to visit different regions of Spain. There is a wide variety of products: from cheeses, vegetables, pulses and cured meats, to drinks, sweets and spices. Nevertheless, there is one group that stands out especially - wines. Who hasn't heard of wines from La Rioja or cava sparkling wine? Alongside them there are other D.O. wines of extraordinary quality that you could sample in a very enjoyable way: by going on Spain's wine routes.

To go with the wine there are top-quality foods such as Iberian cured ham: some of the most famous hams are those bearing the seals of Guijuelo (Castile-León Region), Dehesa de Extremadura (Extremadura Region), Huelva and Trevélez (both these last from Andalusia). As far as cheeses are concerned there is also plenty of choice, including, Cabrales (Asturias), Idiazábal (Basque Country), Mahón (Balearic Islands), Tetilla (Galicia), Manchego (Castile-La Mancha) and Palmero (Canary Islands).



For those with a sweet tooth, there are products like honey from Granada or "turrón" (almond sweet) from Jijona (Region of Valencia). Salads take on a whole new meaning with an olive oil from regions like Jaén or Cordoba, and vinegar from Huelva or Jerez. If you like paella and rice dishes, then try one from Albufera, Valencia, seasoned with saffron from La Mancha - the results are spectacular.





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