

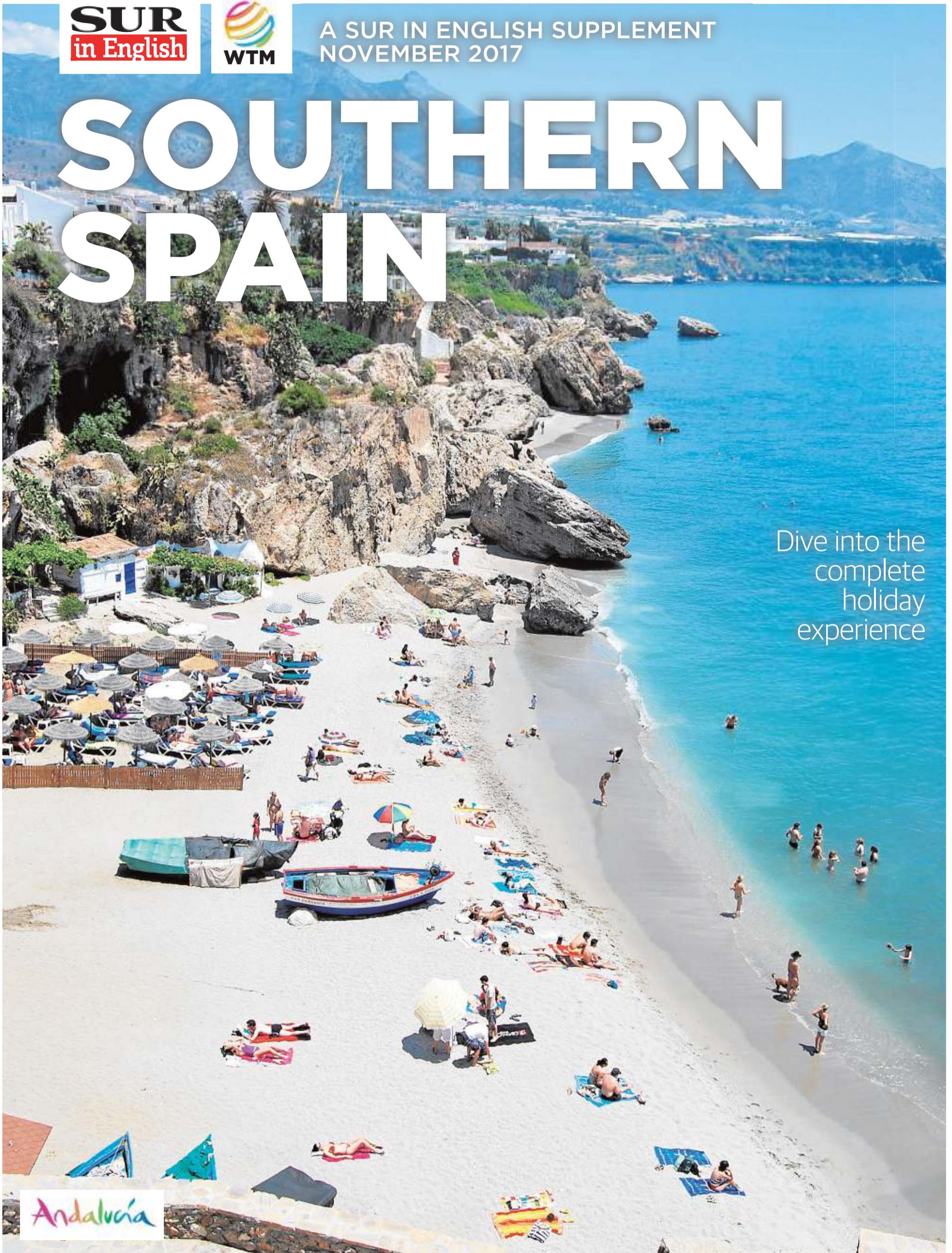
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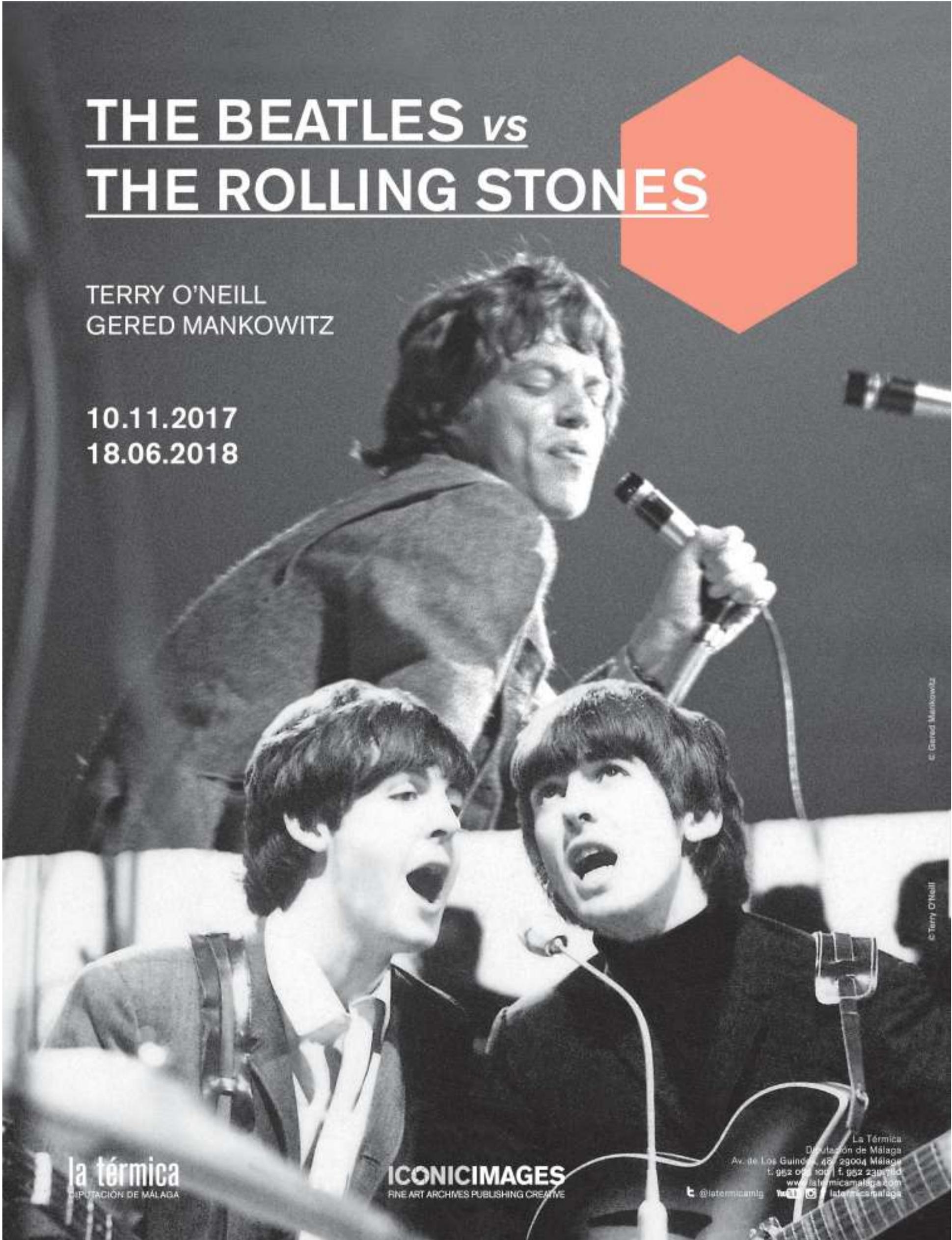


Andalucía

# THE BEATLES vs THE ROLLING STONES

TERRY O'NEILL  
GERED MANKOWITZ

10.11.2017  
18.06.2018



c: Gered Mankowitz

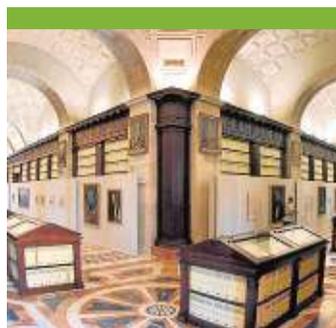
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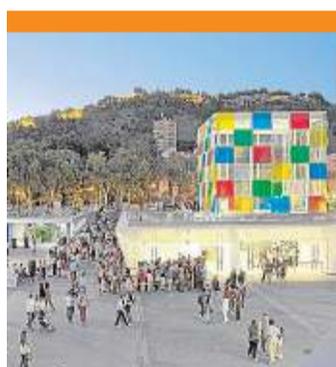
## ANDALUCÍA, A REGION WITH SUCH VARIETY

Whether Moorish monuments, top beaches or ski resorts, Andalucía can boast top attractions in all eight provinces.



## TOP BEACHES ENJOYED ALL YEAR ROUND

With 900 kilometres of coastline and a mild year-round climate, there are beaches to suit all tastes: from secluded coves to bar-lined strips.



## MÁLAGA, NOW KNOWN AS THE MUSEUM CITY

Now with other 30 museums and galleries, many of which are globally renowned, Málaga is maturing as a cultural destination, with a plethora of exhibitions and shows to choose from, including at the recently-opened Museum of Málaga.



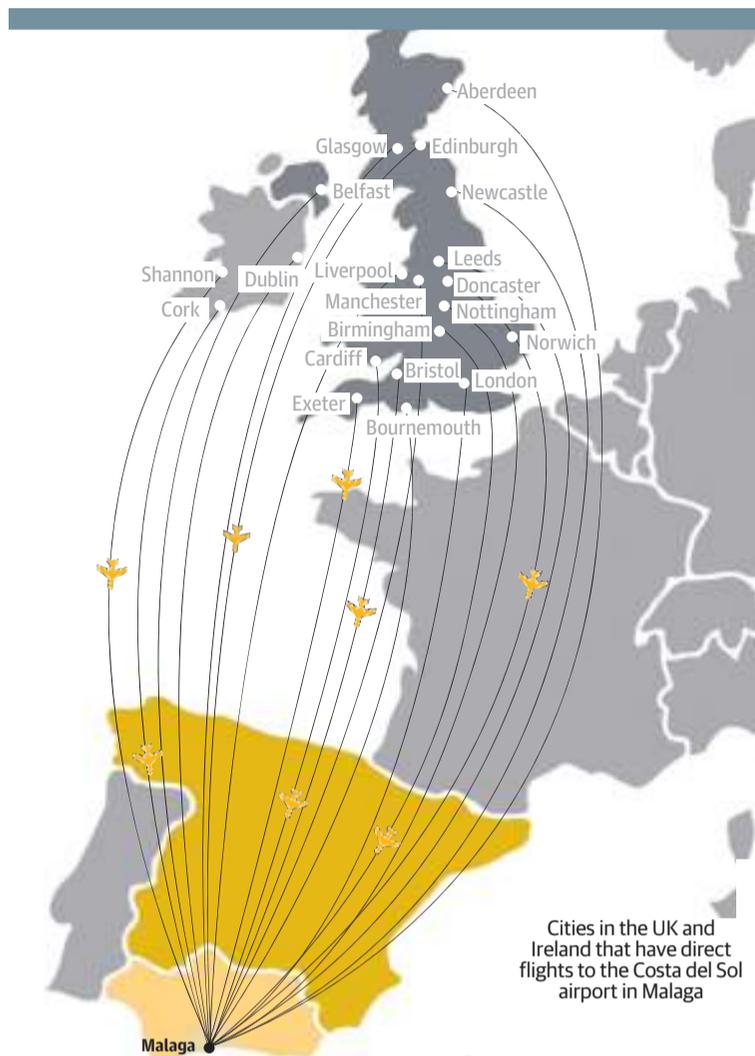
## LUXURY AND TOURISM UNITE IN MARBELLA

Marbella is a destination with a long-standing reputation for its commitment to luxury tourism. The town's long list of luxury services and leisure facilities continues to attract the big spenders. It's got every dimension of luxury.



## GREEN SPACES AND NATURAL BEAUTY

You don't have to move far from the coast to appreciate Andalucía's natural beauty. It is a haven for a wide variety of flora and fauna; the subtropical climate means that there are many notable gardens and parks planted with species from all around the world.



Cities in the UK and Ireland that have direct flights to the Costa del Sol airport in Málaga



Andalucía, the southernmost region in Spain, is divided into eight provinces: Málaga, Seville, Huelva, Cadiz, Córdoba, Jaén, Almería and Granada.

## A GREAT CLIMATE FOR GREAT GOLF

Also known as the Costa del Golf, the region can boast nearly 120 golf courses, many of them hosting major dates on the European Tour and set against the backdrop of beautiful natural scenery.

## SEVILLE, THE TOP TOURIST DESTINATION

Seville has never lacked the attractions to be one of the favourite destinations for travel-

lers from all over the world. It is an enchanting city with an exceptional historic and artistic heritage. This is why Lonely Planet has placed it as the Number One city to be visited in 2018, the first Spanish city to receive this award.

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**MALAGA.** The World Travel Market in London is always an important event for Spanish tourism. However this year's edition is more significant than ever as the Spanish tourism industry has to send out a reassuring message to the world in the light of recent events in Catalonia. This message of tranquility and optimism is delivered by the Secretary of State for Tourism, Matilde Asián, who speaks to SUR before the important event in London.

**-What is Spain's role today in the context of world tourism?**

For the second year running, Spain has been named world leader in tourism competitiveness by the World Economic Forum. That body examined a series of variables, and Spain obtained very good results. We have also achieved this in a very short time. The position as a world leader also reflects our domestic economy, and the role that tourism plays in Spain. Tourism has been a motor for growth and employment during the years of crisis, has contributed to the creation of work when other sectors could not, and has compensated the deficit. We can say that Spain is a global benchmark in terms of tourism.

**-What is the secret?**

Firstly, Spain has been able to meet the increasing demand for quality tourism services. Our country already has indisputable attractions for tourists, such as the climate, geographical location, cultural heritage etc, and because of the positive efforts in both the public and private sector, it has been able to take advantage of its potential for tourism.

**-What are the keys to this international leadership?**

Security is a key element, the quality of our infrastructure, our good connectivity, our historic and cultural heritage, our traditions, our gastronomy... proper management at all levels of the administration - the government, regional authorities, local entities - and the private sector has enabled us to achieve the levels of efficiency in managing tourism which we have today.

**-Growth figures indicate that if things continue as they are now, Spain will become the greatest tourist power in the world. Is that correct? Are we prepared for that?**



Matilde Asián, Spanish Secretary of State for Tourism. :: SUR

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TOURISM  
**MATILDE ASIÁN**

## "PEOPLE LOVE SPAIN - ONE OF THE KEYS TO OUR SUCCESS IS GREAT TOURIST LOYALTY"

Matilde Asián says that Spain is going to this year's World Travel Market with the challenge of managing its great success in tourism

We have a major challenge ahead of us which is managing our success in tourism. We are world leaders in competitiveness; we are looking at a very positive picture. Spain has many treasures to be discovered, and the government of Spain is committed to continuing with this quality.

**-Has the situation in Catalonia affected tourism at a national level? Could it be damaging to the image of Spain?** We have definitely noted a slowing-down in the growth of tourism in Catalonia from the surveys we carry out at Turespaña. After the attacks in Barcelona Turespaña started

to monitor the situation on a weekly basis, through surveys at hotels. They also look at flight reservations and the information we receive from our tourist offices abroad. That has shown us that, regrettably, there has been an impact. The figures we obtain from our monitoring services have been supported by the demonstrations which have taken place by those who are affected: the business organisations, hotels, travel agencies, even shops, have said growth in tourism has slowed down since 1 October. I'm convinced that when things get back to normal tourism figures in Catalonia will be back to their usual highs.

**-As the head of tourism in Spain, what can you tell us about tourism and security?** Security is a key element in tourism, as we have seen from

**"For the tourist security is fundamental. And Spain is a very safe destination"**

**"I'm convinced that when things get back to normal, Catalonia's tourism figures will be back to their usual highs"**

**"Spain's tourism model doesn't depend on prices, but on quality"**

the exhaustive survey carried out by the World Economic Forum. Commitment to safety has to be an essential feature. One important example is the collaboration between the Secretary of State for Tourism and the Ministry of the Interior on a Tourism Security Plan whose objective is to increase security in tourist areas.

**-Is the quality-price ratio in Spain still acceptable, or has the euro put us in a similar situation to other countries?**

For many years Spain has had a tourism model whose competitiveness depends on quality, not price, and we must continue that way.

**-Does the sector have a recipe for good health?**

The best recipe there is for good health in tourism in our country is to continue with the change of model which was begun in 2012, with a commitment to innovation, technology, sustainability etc. This recipe has had good results. We are confident that work done well, serious and rigorous work, will continue to pay off.

**-What role do Andalucía and the Costa del Sol play in tourism in Spain?**

Andalucía and the Costa del Sol are key elements in tourism in Spain. Andalucía is the fourth most-visited region by international tourists, the fourth in terms of accumulated spending by tourists and a favourite destination for Spanish tourists as well. Andalucía has been populated by different cultures who have left a spectacular heritage, such as the Mosque in Cordoba and the Alhambra in Granada. It also has wonderful countryside, a fine climate, the highest mountain in the country, beautiful beaches..., all ingredients which make it a benchmark for tourism at a world level. With regard to the Costa del Sol, it has been a pioneer. It placed Andalucía and Spain in the international markets. It was a revolution in terms of holidays. And now, as well, the Costa del Sol is leading its own renewal with the support of the Spanish government,

which is collaborating on updating infrastructure in the area. It continues to be a first class destination.

**-What does the World Travel Market signify for Spain?**

We are talking about one of the most important holiday fairs in the world. More than 5,000 destinations will be represented. We have to bear in mind that Spain is the top destination for British people when they travel abroad, and for Spain the UK is our principal source market, not only in terms of numbers of visitors but also in spending. Also, the WTM is a great opportunity to keep making ourselves known.

**-With the new advances in technology, is the Spanish tourism sector as up-to-date as it could be?**

We have developed a strategy of Intelligent Tourist Destinations and we have implanted it in different Spanish cities, where it has been well received. We are continuing with that strategy. Some other countries are even interested in our methodology.

**-In which tourism segments does Spain's potential lie?**

Spain's strategy is centred on year-round tourism and diversification. We want our visitors to get to know Spain better, because many parts are still quite unknown, and we also want them to visit us all year round. Starting from that basis, we have studied the markets that already know us and identified a profile of a potential tourist we call cosmopolitan. These are tourists who like to discover something new, travellers who set trends. They are open to new ideas, they want quality and show a special interest in culture, urban life, fashion and shopping; they like to stay in rural areas and enjoy typical gastronomy, and they are also more likely to spend money. In places further afield we use a strategy based on improving our connectivity and the policy regarding visas: we want to make it easier for people, while still ensuring maximum security.

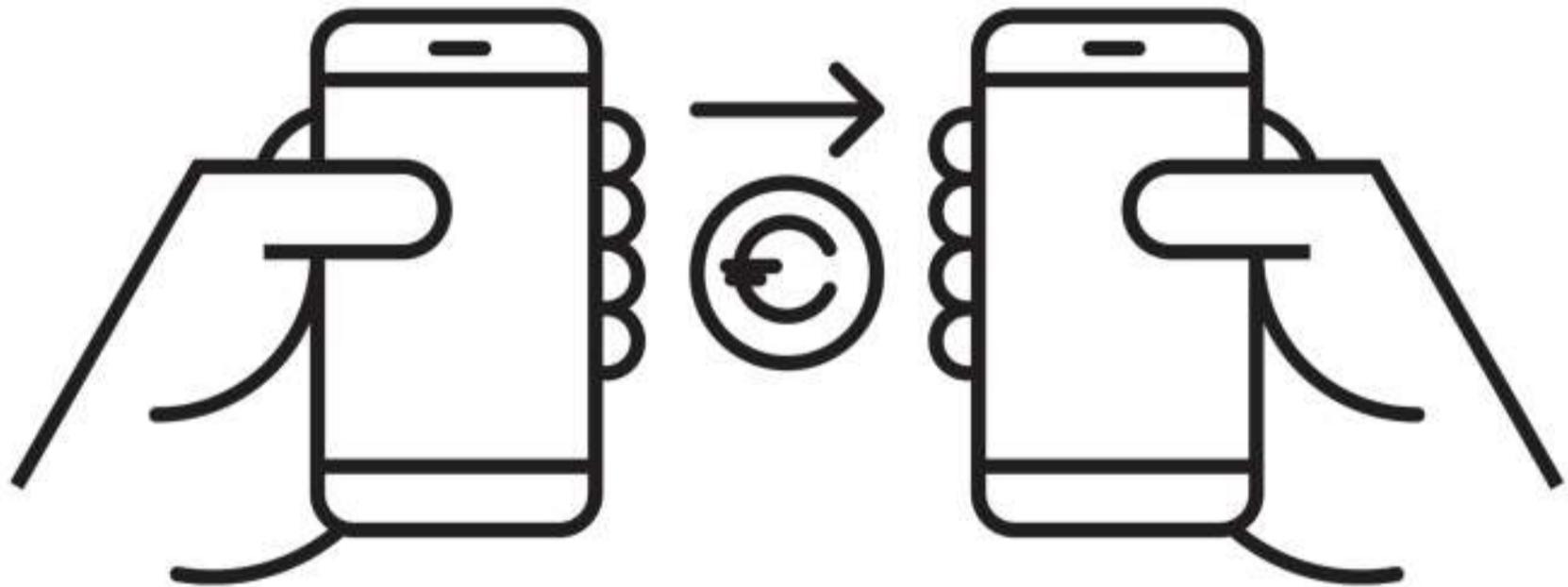
**-Do you think our way of life is a great attraction?**

Yes, indeed. People like Spain. One of the characteristics of our visitors is their loyalty. About 84 per cent of them return. We have a long reputation as an open country, and that is a competitive advantage that we must not lose. We have traditions and culture that are known all over the world, and tourism is key to preserving and maintaining our traditions in the face of phenomena such as globalisation, which has a tendency to standardise leisure activities.

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**Beaches.** The Costa de la Luz, in the provinces of Huelva and Cadiz, is famous for its lengthy expanses of soft white sand :: SUR

JAVIER  
ALMELLONES

DESTINATION  
ANDALUCIA

## A REGION WITH SO MANY DIFFERENT FACES

Stretching from Almeria to Huelva, Andalucía is one of the most complete destinations in the world, thanks to the fact that its eight provinces are so diverse. Without leaving the region, tourists can visit thousand-year-old monuments, sunbathe on glorious beaches, play golf on top-class courses or enjoy sport in the snow at one of the principal ski resorts in southern Europe.

With its very extensive range of tourist facilities, Andalucía seems to have been especially designed to satisfy all types of visitor. Those who are looking for excitement, with adrenalin-pumping sports such as climbing, flying or hiking, will find the perfect setting for all of these in different parts of Andalucía, and while they practise them they can enjoy impressive views over the stunning countryside.

Lovers of gastronomy will also discover that Andalucía offers quality food, products, and recipes which in some cases have been traditional for hundreds of years. Hams from Huelva, prawns from Sanlúcar, avocados from Malaga and salt-cured tuna fillets from Cadiz are just some of the specialties of a region which has an abundance of two fundamental pillars of the Mediterranean diet: wine and extra virgin olive oil.

Andalucía today is one of the few places in the world which can boast a spectacular range of culinary products thanks to its land and its seas. It is a privileged region be-

Andalucía is justifiably proud of its wide range of top class tourist attractions in all eight provinces, such as the Sierra Nevada, the Atlantic beaches and monuments dating back to Moorish times



**Cordoba.** The Mosque-Cathedral. :: SUR

cause the variety of its ecosystems has meant that non-native species could develop with maximum guarantees of safety and quality.

Andalucía has a wealth of natural spaces: seas, mountains, desert, meadows, plains, fields, rivers, marshes and woods; different climates, ranging from subtropical to desert, passing through high mountain and Mediterranean; hours of sunshine; soil rich in nutrients and different types of land; the cultural legacy of the civilisations which set-

tled here; the tradition, imagination and creativity of its people; innovation and avant-garde technology. All of these contribute to the fact that Andalucía can be considered Europe's biggest 'pantry'.

There is also a huge variety of culture on offer. Andalucía is home to some of the world's most important monuments, such as the Giralda cathedral tower in Seville, the Alhambra in Granada and the Mosque-Cathedral in Cordoba.

There are remains dating

back thousands of years from the civilisations that made this region their home in the past, such as Phoenicians, Romans, Visigoths and Moors.

Standing between Europe and Africa, and the place where the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea meet, this region has been coveted by numerous cultures since history as we know it began, and even before that.

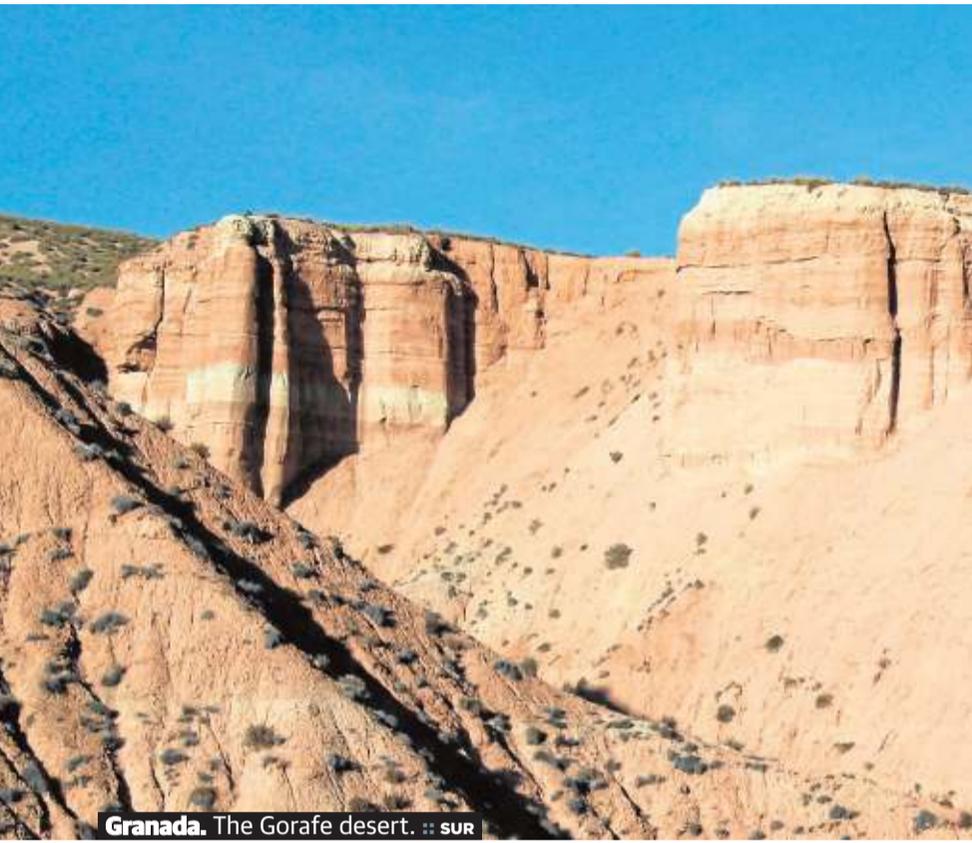
Its culture can also be enjoyed by visiting the important museums in the different provinces. The heritage of Velázquez, Murillo and Picasso gives us paintings, sculptures, jewellery, images and archaeological remains in the form of cathedrals, museums, churches, monasteries and palaces, acting as guardians of a spectacular collection of art.

Even in the most far-off parts of the region one is likely to find a top quality altarpiece, a painting by a grand master or the most elaborate gold and silverwork.

### Nature

Rural and nature tourism is another of this region's strengths. Without leaving the area, you can visit places of such environmental importance as the Doñana and Sierra Nevada national parks, or the natural parks of Los Alcornocales and the Sierra de las Nieves, among others. Mountain peaks more than 3,000 metres high, extensive wetlands and remarkable geological formations are all to be found in Andalucía for those who want to explore a variety of landscapes, many of them totally astonishing.

The diversity of countryside ranges from the warm valley of the Guadalquivir to green mountain ranges, volcanic areas such as the Tabernas desert or the snow-cov-



Granada. The Gorafe desert. :: sur



Granada. Winter sports in the Sierra Nevada. :: sur

ered peaks of the Sierra Nevada. This wealth of nature is accompanied by lovely inland 'pueblos blancos', or white villages, which can be found in such picturesque settings as La Alpujarra, Grazalema, the Genal valley and the Sierra de Aracena, among others.

Another fundamental pillar of tourism in Andalucía is

its 1,100 kilometre-long coastline, with virgin beaches, magnificent cliffs, marshlands filled with life and an underwater world which is still barely known.

Every year millions of visitors come to the Mediterranean and Atlantic beaches of Andalucía, which all have different characteristics. The

### Andalucía is home to some of the world's most important and unique monuments and historic buildings

Costa de la Luz in Huelva and Cadiz provinces, the Costa del Sol in Malaga, the Costa Tropical in Granada and the Costa de Almeria are some of the most popular coastal destinations in Europe.

#### Festivals

The variety of festivals and celebrations in Andalucía is

as wide as the region's geography, and the calendar resembles an encyclopaedia which sums up the arts and customs of its people and places.

There are festivals to celebrate spring and the sowing of new produce, patron saints, grape harvests, pilgrimages, crafts, gastronomy, music, re-

ligious beliefs and much more.

The Carnival celebrations early in the year kick everything off to a rumbustious start, with satirical songs and comedy. At Easter the religious brotherhoods carry their most valuable treasures in procession to accompany the images of Christ and the Virgin Mary, following a route which is faithfully repeated every year. The Corpus Christi festival in June is the perfect motive for a brilliant procession, and the May Crosses are a spectacular combination of the religious and the profane.

Flamenco is the most genuine expression of Andalusian folklore, and the flamenco festivals in the summer have performances to suit all tastes.

Andalucía is also famous for its artisan ceramics and pottery, metalwork and jewellery, leather for clothes and saddlery, textiles, which range from blankets to lace and shawls, and craftsmen continue to showcase a whole range of skills including furniture making, weaving vegetable fibres, binding, working in stone and marble, making musical instruments and many others.



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COSTA DEL SOL  
BEACHES

El Cañuelo, one of the beautiful beaches near Maro, Nerja. :: J. A.

# SPECIAL BEACHES ON THE COSTA DEL SOL

Despite being one of Spain's most developed coastlines, the Costa del Sol boasts numerous stretches of beach that maintain those special sensations of the Mediterranean

## J. ALMELLONES

**MALAGA.** The Malaga coastline, otherwise known as the Costa del Sol, is world famous as the home of some of Europe's most popular tourist resorts. With the success of the tourism industry came development and urbanisation to the point that today most

people think they have to travel east to Granada and Almeria or west to Cadiz and Huelva to find stretches of sand that are not lined with giant apartment blocks and bars and restaurants.

However hidden between the busy resorts there are still some tranquil, unspoiled bays and beaches, each with that special something that many thought could only be found on quieter points of the Mediterranean. Protected by rugged cliffs or dunes, these



The rock on Mazagarrobo beach in Torrox. :: J. A.

beaches are a welcome escape from the main tourist strip. Others, much easier to access, have other features that make them special.

## Cala de la Doncella (Nerja).

Among all the beaches in the Maro cliffs nature reserve, this

bay, located between Peñón del Fraile and Punta Caleta, stands out from the rest for its beauty and its state of conservation. It soon becomes clear why this small and idyllic beach remains unspoiled: access isn't easy, but you have a choice, get there by boat or cross country.

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**El Cañuelo (Nerja).**

Another gem of a beach sheltered by the Maro cliffs, which is much more accessible and comfortable than Cala de la Doncella, is Playa del Cañuelo. However access to the beach in peak tourist season by car is prohibited. Instead visitors park further away and can either walk down to the beach or get there by a shuttle bus that runs throughout the day.

**Carabeillo Chico (Nerja).**

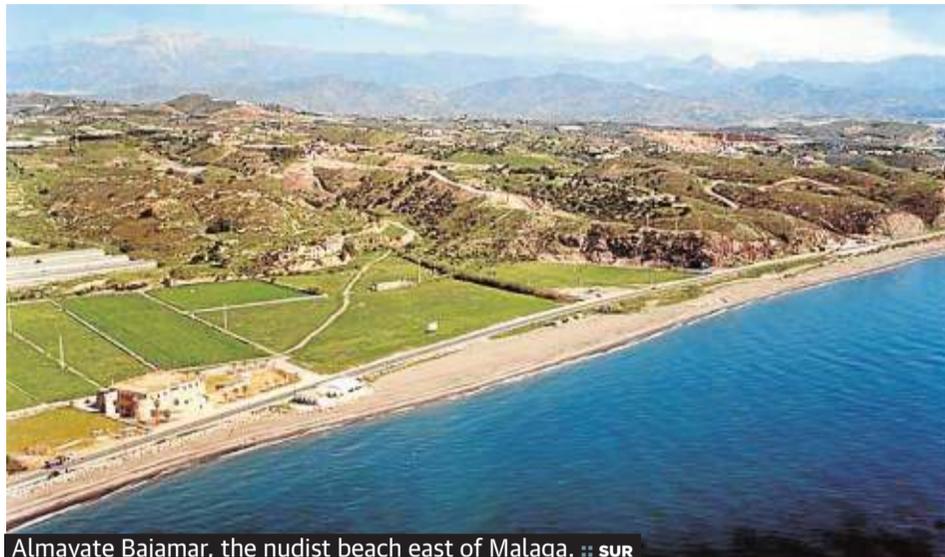
Still at the eastern extreme of the Costa del Sol, and a stone's throw from the busier Burriana beach is a haven of peace for those looking for a quieter day's bathing without moving far from Nerja and its famous Balcón de Europa. Access, from Burriana beach, is a little complicated.

**Mazagarrobo (Torrox).**

Among the most interesting bays on the Axarquía coastline is the Mazagarrobo beach also known as Tajo de la Virgen. This is a stretch of just over a kilometre of sand with a width of some 20 metres. The beach is popular with scuba divers.

**Almayate Bajamar (Vélez-Málaga).**

The Malaga coastline offers several beaches where nudism is permitted and welcomed: Pino (Nerja), Guadalmar (Malaga), Benalnatura



Almayate Bajamar, the nudist beach east of Malaga. :: SUR

(Benalmádena) and Costa Natura (Estepona) are among them, as is Almayate just outside Torre del Mar. Just behind this beach is a nudist campsite.

**Torre de Benagalbón (Rincón de la Victoria).**

For many the charm of this stretch of coastline is that there is no seafront promenade. This makes it a little quieter than the rest of the beaches in the area. The sand, as in much of the Axarquía coastline, is fine and dark.

**Guadalmar (Malaga).**

At the other extreme of the city's municipal boundary, just past the Guadalhorce estuary nature reserve, lies another ref-



Punta Chullera beach in Manilva. :: SUR

uge from the crowds for those searching for a quieter day on the sand. A trip into the nature

reserve itself, a favourite spot for birdwatchers, completes an excellent day out.

**La Butibamba (Mijas).**

This beach is located in La Cala de Mijas, where there is an old watchtower. The quiet bay boasts fine sand.

**Peñón del Cuervo (Malaga).**

At the easternmost point of the city of Malaga, between the districts of El Palo and La Araña, you will find the beach known as the Peñón del Cuervo, or Raven's Rock. It is named after the spectacular craggy rock formation at one end.

**Cabopino (Marbella).**

This beach, at the easternmost point of the municipality of Marbella, almost at the border with Mijas, is one of the geological wonders of the Andalusian coastline. The wide strip of sand runs alongside the Artola dunes, which are protected under the category of natural monument.

**La Chullera (Manilva).**

The stretch of the Malaga coastline closest to the Strait of Gibraltar boasts the beach known as La Chullera, alongside an old watchtower of the same name. Accessible via the lane to the low Chullera cliffs, this is an area classed as an ecological reserve.

**Playa Ancha (Casares).**

Casares municipality has two

kilometres of coastline and by far the most impressive beach is the one known as Playa Ancha. This beauty spot has crystal clear water with rocky areas that stretch out into the Mediterranean. Access to the beach is via the residential area known as La Perla de la Bahía.

**Realejo (Marbella).**

Not far from the busier Los Monteros beach, Realejo is a more peaceful haven in natural surroundings. In fact the tranquility comes as a pleasant surprise bearing in mind its location close to some of the Costa del Sol's busiest tourist beaches.

**Sohail castle (Fuengirola).**

Located at the feet of the town's Sohail fortress, this beach is one of the quietest in the bustling tourist resort of Fuengirola. It is one of the few beaches that allow bathers to take their dogs. The beach runs between the end of the seafront and the Peñón del Cura beach, but bathers with four-legged companions need to ensure they are within the designated area.

There are other beaches that allow dogs on the Costa delSol, in Torre del Mar, Casares, Marbella (El Pinillo and Ventura del Mar) and Arroyo Totalán (near Rincón de la Victoria).

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## PILAR MARTÍNEZ

✉ pmartinez@diariosur.es

**MALAGA.** At this year's World Travel Market in London, Andalucía will be unveiling a new strategy to promote the culture of the region, which is already attracting an increasing number of visitors from the UK. However, the regional government's Minister for Tourism, Francisco Javier Fernández, prefers to remain cautious about results until the impact of the Brexit negotiations and the situation in Catalonia become clear.

**-A new World Travel Market, at which Andalucía is revealing record figures. What are your objectives at the fair this year?**

-Yes, after 2016 being a truly extraordinary year for Andalucía and with 2017 looking as if it will also give us record figures, we are already looking ahead to 2018. The WTM is a forum at which trends are confirmed and we can gain an insight into what the markets are doing: it is important for us, because the British are the principal international clients for Spain and also for Andalucía. So, our aim is promotion, but also anticipation. We are going to London to strengthen our links with our most important market, to show them our new products, and also to express our thanks for the way they have responded so far.

**-What do the figures show about the way this market will evolve and about the present situation?**

-I believe they are very good, although I like to be cautious because tourism is a very sensitive industry and any distorting element can change the way things are going. Nevertheless, we can be very satisfied because last year 2.82 million British people chose us for their holidays. That was about 16 per cent more than the previous year, and is an extra 388,000 tourists. British visitors accounted for 26.3 per cent of all foreign tourists to Andalucía and 10 per cent of the total number of visitors in 2016. That was the sixth consecutive year in which this market has grown after what occurred between 2007 and 2010, so we can say that we have recovered lost ground and are back at the pre-crisis level. We also have to bear in mind that these are clients with strong loyalty to the destination because they are satisfied with their experience with us.

**-How might the Catalonia situation and the Brexit negotiations influence British tourism to Andalucía?**

-The withdrawal of the UK from the European Union is an unknown phenomenon and



Francisco Javier Fernández. :: SUR

ANDALUSIAN MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT  
**FRANCISCO JAVIER FERNÁNDEZ**

# "WE ARE PLACING THE FOCUS ON CULTURAL TOURISM FOR NEXT YEAR"

The regional Minister for Tourism is confident that Andalucía will continue to attract more visitors from the UK

its possible effects on tourism are going to be strongly linked to the negotiation process. That is why we need to be prudent and keep calm, because any pessimistic discourse would only lead to more uncertainty and have a potentially negative effect. Especially as so far Brexit has not affected the loyalty that this market has always shown to our region. Also, the most recent figures

for this year show that the number of British people coming to Andalucía is continuing to rise, and so are overnight stays. However, with regard to Brexit our Department has looked at the different scenarios which could occur and has designed a plan of specific measures in that respect. It is important to remain cautious over the question of Catalonia as well, because as I said ear-

lier the sector is very sensitive to uncertainty and flees from any sort of problem. The Spain tourism brand is very powerful and any possible effect will depend on how long the situation lasts and the type of source market. The further away the markets are, the more Spanish destinations could be affected.

**-How do you plan to consolidate the growth of the UK**

**market?**

-Around 85 per cent of British tourists who visit Andalucía come on holiday or to enjoy some leisure time and what they like most is the climate and visiting our monuments. Well, the climate is as good as it can be, but we can improve our cultural attractions even further so we are going to concentrate on that in our promotion in forthcoming months. In fact, we have just launched a national and international strategy to respond to the new demands of travellers in this segment and, something extremely important, promote year-round tourism. Culture is one of our finest attractions but we can't just sit back and enjoy it: we have to make the most of it as a way of generating the economy and employment, because it transcends the segment itself and benefits others as well, such as shopping, gastronomy or even nature. We are going to promote Andalucía through three initiatives: 'Your Roots', which aims to attract visitors with historic links with us; 'Universal Footprint', based on the resources recognised by Unesco, and major events next year such as the Year of Murillo and the 5th Centenary of the first terrestrial circumnavigation (1519-2019). Andalucía will be a leading cultural destination in 2018 and we are going to the WTM to tell people what they should be sure not to miss.

**-What activities are you planning at the WTM to attract British tourists?**

-As we do every year, we are coming to London with a packed agenda. We have our own 550 square metre stand at which we expect to receive over 12,000 visitors. We are going together with the provincial tourist boards and more than 200 businesses from Andalucía and we expect to make at least 3,000 commercial contacts while the fair is taking place. We also have something called '360° Action', which will be promoting the destination on the stand, as well as outside the Excel centre and in London, and there will be an event in the Angel Central shopping centre. We want this major online and offline campaign to reinforce our participation in the fair, raise awareness of the image and brand of Andalucía and not only bring more visitors to our stand but also show that we are different from the rest and improve our share of the UK market.

**-What would you say to British people who are already thinking of holidaying somewhere else?**

-Well, it depends. If they already know Andalucía I would

## "TOURISM BIG DATA PUTS US AT THE FOREFRONT"

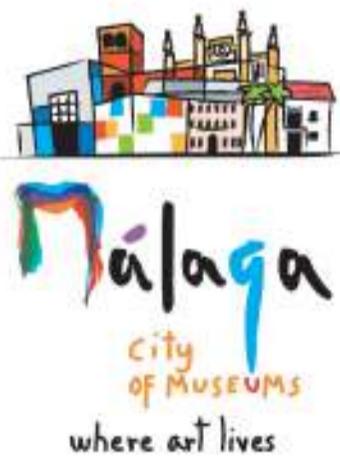
**-The WTM showcases the latest trends in tourism. What does Andalucía offer in terms of the technological revolution which is advancing faster than even the sector itself?**

-It is true that technology is advancing at an amazing rate and it isn't easy for destinations to evolve at the same pace, but anyone who doesn't embrace the new technologies will lose business so it is essential to make efforts in this field. We are doing that, and I believe we are doing it well. In fact, Andalucía will have a tourism Big Data which will enable the sector to improve the decision-making process and design strategies which can increase the destination's competitiveness, detect changes and new trends and support planning and promotion. This new tool is going to place us at the forefront of the present digital era, because it is the first regional one of this type in the whole of the European Union. It is part of a complete digital strategy set up by the Junta to transform Andalucía into an intelligent and increasingly more competitive destination. Among other things, it will help us to know our visitors better, identify market opportunities and carry out monitoring.

say that as it has so much to offer there are bound to be places they haven't discovered yet and shouldn't be missed. We work hard on designing new products to enrich what we have to offer. If they have never been, I would say they shouldn't wait any longer. Not only is it a destination with something for everybody, with its history, an exceptional climate all year round and unbeatable cultural heritage, but visitors can also enjoy experiences which will make their trip unforgettable. They have to taste, smell, look and touch, because Andalucía comprises hundreds of small and major things which make it unique. And, above all, they will be welcomed with open arms, a smile and professionalism. Andalucía is an intensive experience. Everybody should come.

<p><b>COLECCIÓN DEL MUSEO RUSO</b></p>	<p>Annual exhibition: <b>The Románov dynasty</b> Until Jan 21 2018</p> <p>Temporary exhibition: <b>The Jawlensky group</b> Until Jan 21 2018</p>	<p>museo<b>PICASSO</b>málaga</p>	<p>Temporary exhibition: <b>We are completely free. Women artists and realism</b> Until Jan 28 2018</p>	<p>Museo CarmenThyssen Málaga</p>
<p>'Singing to you softly' by Ignacio Tovar Until Jan 21 2018</p> <p>Temporary exhibition: <b>Leiro</b> Until Jan 7 2018</p>	<p><b>cacmálaga</b> Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Málaga</p>	<p>Temporary exhibition: <b>The raisins of Málaga and decorative arts</b> Until Jan 28 2018</p>	<p> museo del patrimonio municipal 2007-2017 X ANIVERSARIO</p>	<p>Temporary exhibition: <b>Juan Gris, María Blanchard and cubism (1916-1927)</b> Until Feb 25 2018</p>
<p><b>FUNDACIÓN PICASSO</b> MUSEO CASA NATAL AYUNTAMIENTO DE MÁLAGA</p>	<p>Temporary exhibition: <b>Guernica and other disasters. Callot / Goya / Picasso / Oteiza / José Manuel Ballester / Javier Arce</b> Until Jan 21 2018</p>	<p><b>Centre Pompidou Málaga</b></p>	<p>New collection: <b>The Modern Utopias</b> From Dec 4 2017 to March 2 2020.</p> <p>Temporary exhibition: <b>Daniel Buren</b> Until Jan 14 2018</p>	<p><b>MUSEO REVELLO DE TORO</b></p>
<p>New permanent fashion exhibition: <b>Too much is never enough</b></p>	<p> Museo Automovilístico</p>	<p>Temporary exhibition: <b>New auroras will be born, by Jorge Rando</b> From Nov 6 2017 to Feb 25 2018</p>	<p> Museum Jorge Rando</p>	<p>Permanent collection: <b>104 works by Málaga artist Félix Revello de Toro. Pedro de Mena's workshop</b></p>

**Museum of Málaga:** Permanent collection, Art and Archaeology Collections focused on Málaga and the province. Visitable storehouse or reserve of Cultural Assets. **MIMMA Interactive Museum of Music of Málaga:** Permanent collection, a visit to different cultures and eras through music. **Museum of Glass and Crystal of Málaga:** Permanent collection, more than 3,000 pieces of crystal from diverse eras. **Ars Málaga (Palacio Episcopal):** Permanent collections, Ars Sacra (selection of Heritage of the Dioceses of Málaga) and The sacred metallurgy (African paleo coins). **And much more.....**



Malaga city centre has a wealth of beautiful historic buildings. :: SUR



DESTINATION  
MALAGA

ANTONIO  
GARRIDO

# A FASCINATING CITY YOU CAN EXPLORE IN JUST 48 HOURS

**M**alaga has always had the reputation of being a 'home from home', a place where everyone feels welcome, and that is still the case today.

One advantage of this lovely city is that its main attractions are close together so it is easy to explore in 48 hours, although after such a short break most visitors feel sad to leave and decide to return in the future.

The world-famous artist Pablo Picasso came from Malaga, and in a while we will see the house in which he was born. However, let's start our tour in the historic city centre, close to the Picasso Museum in Calle San Agustin which pays tribute to the works of Malaga's favourite son.

## Roman theatre

This impressive monument was built upon the side of a hill in the 1st century AD, in the time of Augustus. By the end of the 3rd century it was no longer used as a theatre and was turned into a quarry instead.

While there's plenty to see in Malaga to fill a week, fortnight or even more, the principal monuments can all be taken in on a short city break

Excavation works have revealed tombs, troughs for making the famous garum sauce and ceramics with Christian motifs. When it was a theatre it was medium-sized, with three staircases leading up to its stands. At the top there was a passageway, the 'vomitorium', so people could enter and exit the building quickly.

Malaga's Roman Theatre has now been partially reconstructed by the council and has returned to its original purpose, creating a very atmospheric setting for performances of the classics.

## Gibalfaro castle

The Gibalfaro castle was at the peak of its glory during the time when the Moors ruled Andalucía. According to author Medina Conde construction started in the year 787, during the time of Abderraman I. At the end of the 13th century, during the reign of Muhammad II, it was rebuilt, and then enlarged by Yusuf I in the first half of the 14th century. He also ordered the 'coracha', the pathway between the castle to the Alcazaba fortress.

In 1925, by which time it was considered to have no military value, the castle passed into the council's hands and they decided to create a public park on the site. In 1938 Juan Temboury, who was responsi-

ble for the castle, ordered urgent repairs to be carried out to the building.

The entry to the Gibalfaro castle is through an archway which was created in the irbican in 1991. There are lovely views over the city, as we walk through the adarves along the wall. The path follows the irregular outline of the building, which has eight towers. This is definitely a good place to stop and take photos, because the views over Malaga and the bay are quite extraordinary and, it goes without saying, beautiful.

## The Alcazaba fortress

We have a choice now: we can either continue walking or go up in the lift. Obviously in the past there was no choice, but it must be said that walking up is more tiring. The lift takes us to the palaces which were created by King Badis in the 11th century; they were all repaired in the 13th and 14th centuries.

It has been said, and it seems a reasonable theory, that this was where the idea for the Alhambra in Granada took root, as a royal residence inside a military building. Badis built a pavilion with interlocking fretwork arches.

Between the Alcazaba and the castle is the aforementioned 'coracha', a path which winds between the walls and

which can be seen on the coat of arms which the Catholic Monarchs presented to the city.

### Plaza de la Merced

When Ferdinand and Isabella, the Catholic Monarchs, re-took the city, they set up a market in the outlying area and that space was occupied by several different buildings, most of them ecclesiastical.

One of them was the church and convent of Los Mercedarios, and that is where the iconic square which is now known as the 'Plaza de la Merced' obtained its name. Nowadays nothing remains from those times, but the square is still a romantic place to pause for a while and imagine how it must have been in the past.

The square has been remodelled several times over the years. Its most symbolic feature is the monument to General Torres and his companions who were shot on San Andrés beach in 1831, in the reign of Fernando VII.

The monument represents freedom from tyranny, and a plaque bears the name of the general and 48 others who rebelled against the despotic government of Spain at that time. The memorial is a monolith with bronze crowns, very classical in style.

### Birthplace of Picasso

On the north side of Plaza de

la Merced we find the 'Casas de Campos', which were named after their owner. On the second floor of number 15, Pablo Ruiz Picasso was born in 1881. Many of his paintings feature the pigeons which he loved to watch in the square as a child.

The house was classified as a historical monument in 1983 and five years later the Pablo Picasso Municipal Foundation was created. The building underwent major remodelling a decade later, and was inaugurated in 1998.

The Foundation specialises in documentation and has a magnificent library and film archive. It also organises regular exhibitions and in recent years it has acquired a large number of additional works by Picasso.

### 'One-armed lady'

Malaga's most important monument is its cathedral, which is surprisingly known locally as 'La Manquita', meaning 'little one-armed lady', because one of its towers was never completed.

It began life on the site of a mosque after the Catholic Monarchs conquered the city in 1487, and is dedicated to La Encarnación de María.

In 1525 the authorities decided to build a new cathedral and work progressed well until in 1588 Bishop García de



The memorial to Torrijos in the Plaza de la Merced. :: SUR

### The Roman theatre was turned into a quarry centuries ago but is now used for its original purpose again

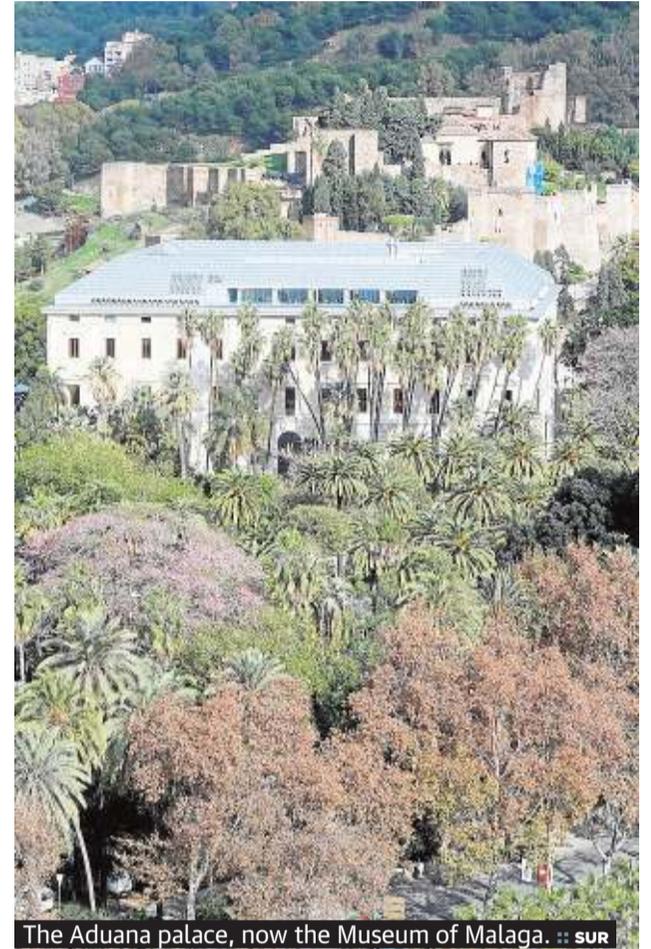
Haro decided for financial reasons to suspend it and hold services in the original building, which was consecrated.

In the 17th century work began again. The choir stalls were built, but the original construction had deteriorated to such an extent that the Church

considered demolishing what had been constructed so far.

However, this didn't happen and in the 18th century, it was decided that the works should be resumed. The council contracted José de Bada to oversee the project, which began on the main façade. The authorities insisted on maintaining the same style as the construction so far, even though this was no longer in fashion.

In 1782 the money ran out again and work on the cathedral stopped until quite recently, although there were some attempts in the 19th and



The Aduana palace, now the Museum of Malaga. :: SUR

20th centuries to finish the incomplete tower.

So there we can finish our tour of the main monuments in Malaga city centre, but there is still a great deal to see, including its many churches, the iconic port and La

Malagueta bullring (which Picasso used to go to with his father when he was a child). Malaga should be enjoyed slowly so 48 hours will not be enough to explore all its delights but never mind; after all, you're sure to return.



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DESTINATION  
MALAGA

# MALAGA MATURES AS A CULTURAL DESTINATION

With more than 30 museums Malaga can truly claim to be a 'city of culture'

JAVIER ALMELLONES

The city in which Picasso was born has taken another major step towards establishing its position as one of the greatest cultural destinations in Europe, with the recent inauguration of the Museum of Malaga.

This new museum in the former Customs Building received over 43,000 visitors in the first month it was open, which reflects the importance of its collections of paintings and archaeological items.

With this new addition, the capital city of the Costa del Sol can truly claim to be a 'city of museums' and a major cultural destination. Following on from other recent additions such as the Centre Pompidou and the Russian State Museum of St Petersburg, Malaga has now become a city in which tourism and culture go hand in hand.

Apart from the approximately 30 museums which can be visited in the city, there are other important places of interest including the cathedral, the Alcazaba fortress, the Roman theatre and the Gibralfaro castle, to name just a few.

This segment of tourism



Centre Pompidou. The iconic Cube with artist Daniel Buren. :: N. S.

is proving an essential source of income for the city. In fact, the economic impact generated by tourists and visitors who come to Malaga to see its museums is around 547 million euros, according to a study carried out by the Costa del Sol Tourism and Planning company.

This report was drawn up from about 700 surveys which were carried out at the entrances to the museums and another 300 in the districts of the city between November and December last year.

According to this study, the city registered 81.4 visits to museums for every 100 overnight stays, positioning it ahead of other cities which

were also analysed for the report such as Valencia (55.5 visits for every 100 overnight stays), Madrid (51), Barcelona (33.4) and Seville (21.2). The eight most-visited museums in each of these cities were analysed.

The study also shows that five out of the top ten museums in Spain are in Malaga: the Contemporary Art Centre is second on the list, the Picasso Museum third, the Pompidou Centre eighth, the Carmen Thyssen Museum ninth and the 'Fundación Picasso-Casa Natal' (the house in which Picasso was born) is tenth.

With regard to residents, Malaga is in second place with 321 visits to museums

for every 100 inhabitants, second only to Barcelona because of its famous Barcelona Football Club museum.

By destination and according to the number of visits received by the eight principal museums in each city, Malaga is the fourth destination in Spain with 1.8 million visitors. It is behind only Madrid, with more than nine million, Barcelona with 6.2 million and Valencia with 1.9 million.

The museums analysed in the study are the Contemporary Art Centre (CAC), the Picasso Museum, the Pompidou Centre, the Carmen Thyssen Museum, the 'Fundación Picasso-Museo Casa Natal', the Municipal Heri-



Museum of Malaga. More than 40,000 people visited the



Carmen Thyssen. A piece by Juan Gris.:: EFE

tage Museum (MUPAM), Ars Malaga-Bishops' Palace, the Russian Museum Collection, the Motoring and Fashion Museum, the Interactive Music Museum (Mimma), the Revello de Toro Museum and the Glass and Crystal Museum.

Nearly all the visitors to Malaga city visit a museum while they are there, and say they have been to the Picasso Museum (82.1 per cent), followed by the Carmen Thyssen (62.5 per cent), the Pompidou Centre (49.1 per cent), the Russian Museum Collection (26.3 per cent), the Motoring and Fashion Museum (14.9 per cent), the Contemporary Art Centre (11.4 per cent) and the Picasso Foundation.

## The Museum of Malaga

The 'Museo de Malaga' opened last December in the iconic Palacio de la Aduana, the former Customs Building. It was one of the most eagerly-awaited inaugurations in the history of the city as the idea for the museum was

first suggested back in 1973.

It houses the provincial Fine Arts and Archaeological museums and its eight rooms contain 2,000 works of fine art and over 15,000 archaeological pieces.

The museum opens every day of the week except Mondays, from 9am to 8pm Tuesdays to Saturdays and 9am to 3pm on Sundays.

## Temporary exhibitions

Most of Malaga's art museums have a permanent collection and also hold regular temporary exhibitions.

At present the temporary exhibition at the Picasso Museum is We are Completely Free. Women Artists and Surrealism, which began last month and continues until 28 January 2018.

It features the work of 18 spirited and rebellious female artists who were, in many cases, ignored for being female, overshadowed by their male partners and had to wait a very long time to gain international recognition.

The Carmen Thyssen Mu-



museum in the first month. :: SUR

seum's present temporary exhibition is Juan Gris, María Blanchard and Cubism 1916-1927, with works from an important period when the original founders of this movement, Pablo Picasso and George Braque, were moving on to other things. The exhibition opened last month and continues until 28 February.

The Russian State Mu-



Russian Museum. Art in the permanent exhibition. :: SUR

seum of St Petersburg holds two temporary exhibitions a year, and at present visitors to this museum in the Tabacalera building can see Alexei and Andreas Jawlensky: The Adventure until 21 January.

Alexei Jawlensky's work features in major collections all over the world, but this exhibition is unusual because it displays some of his paintings together with those of his son Andreas, who showed tremendous tal-



Picasso Museum. Women Artists and Surrealism. :: SUR

ent at a young age and whose paintings are in a very different style to those of his father.

The Centre Pompidou of Malaga, which is the only branch of the Pompidou Paris outside France, is currently holding an exhibition of works by Daniel Buren, the French artist who designed the striking multicoloured 'cube' at this art gallery and museum in the city's port area.

Buren has created works specifically for this exhibi-

tion, which continues until 14 January, based on one of the most representative characteristics of his art: projection. Using different types of natural, artificial, luminous and architectural projections, the display leads visitors on a tour of some of the lesser-known parts of the museum.

At the Contemporary Art Centre (CAC Malaga), visitors can currently see 15 paintings and drawings by Ignacio Tovar, in an exhibition called Singing to you

Softly, which continues until 21 January.

This abstract artist from Seville finds inspiration in flamenco song, and names his works after the lyrics and the names of famous flamenco singers and dancers.

As well as their exhibitions, most of the museums and art galleries in Malaga also organise complementary activities such as workshops, educational visits, music performances and some, including the Motor Museum, are also used as wedding venues.

## Museo Carmen Thyssen Málaga

# Juan Gris María Blanchard

AND THE CUBISMS (1916-1927)

6.OCT.2017 > 25.FEB.2018

With the collaboration of

Fundación **Cajasol** **Obra Social "la Caixa"**



Juan Gris, Seated Woman, 1917 (detail)  
Carmen Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection on loan of the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid

## :: PILAR MARTÍNEZ

✉ pmartinez@diariosur.es

**MALAGA.** Malaga is a fashionable destination nowadays and for that reason the city's mayor, Francisco de la Torre, says that at the World Travel Market this year the council will be "putting the emphasis on the fact that this city still has the ability to surprise visitors" to continue its ongoing success in the British market. Convinced that the situation in Catalonia and Brexit negotiations will not have an effect, he is sure that the number of British tourists who visit the city will continue to increase.

**-Malaga city is doing really well as a tourist destination and part of its success is its appeal to international visitors. How important is the British market?**

-The British market is one of the fundamental pillars upon which Malaga's growth as a tourist destination rests. Although the city is growing in practically all the international markets, the British is the main one after the Spanish market. In fact, tourists from the UK account for 16 per cent of the total number of foreign visitors to Malaga. That has been the case for some years, but the figures continue to be extremely positive. This year for example, between January and August 83,000 visitors from the UK stayed in hotels in the city and that is 22.46 per cent more than in the same period last year. There were 175,000 overnight stays, an increase of 12.33 per cent. It is obviously a market we need to continue to look after.

**-Are there signs that this is likely to continue?**

-Yes, absolutely. Although it is logical that we are all concerned about how Brexit will affect the British market, in Malaga and the rest of Spain the figures are extraordinary. As a destination we are well known to British tourists. They started coming to Spain before either country was part of the European Union and they will continue to come when Britain leaves. Malaga is not just a passing trend for the British. Tourists from the UK value our facilities, climate, history, friendliness... in fact, the British are among those who stays longest in the city. Having said that, I must stress that we need to keep looking after this market and working for it. Malaga council is working hard to sign agreements with tour operators and agencies to attract tourists and make sure that we can adapt to suit their needs.

**-Will Malaga have its own**



Francisco de la Torre. :: Ñ. SALAS

MAYOR OF MALAGA  
**FRANCISCO DE LA TORRE**

## "MALAGA WILL BE PROVING THAT IT STILL HAS THE ABILITY TO SURPRISE"

De la Torre points out that the capital of the Costa del Sol is the only city in Spain to have its own stand at the WTM

**stand again at the WTM this year? And do you think a presence at this travel fair is essential?**

-Of course. That is already one

of our signs of identity. We are the only city in Spain to have its own stand in London. Maybe when we began to go to the WTM with our own

stand some people couldn't understand why, but now it is accepted as fact. We are going to the fair this year with a busy agenda. For instance, we have more than 30 appointments with professionals in the sector as well as presentations and press conferences. That's why it's important that we have enough space to work. It is hard work, to be honest, but it gives results: Malaga has a presence at the WTM which none of the other cities in Spain or Europe have. So Malaga will always have its own stand at this fair. As it does at the other major tourist fairs, like the ITB and Fitur. It is a

**"The number of British tourists keeps rising despite the logical Brexit concerns"**

**"We hope to sign new partnership deals through professional contacts at WTM"**

**"I don't think we're being too bold in saying that Malaga has done a good job"**

way of obtaining the best return for our presence there. In fact, in the markets in which Malaga isn't as well-known, or the ones we can't attend on our own, we go under the umbrella of the Andalucía or Costa del Sol tourist boards with no problem.

**-What surprises is the city planning for this fair?**

-This year we want to emphasise the fact that Malaga still has the ability to surprise. No other destination can offer a package like ours, which is suitable for tourists of all types. In fact, the Strategic Tourism Plan for Malaga is based on the need to open up the destination to all profiles of tourists, and being able to offer each of them what they are looking for. That's why we are going to promote experiential tourism at this fair, because of Malaga's ability to treat tourists as the protagonists of their own experience in the city.

**-You regularly sign deals with airlines and tour operators. What plans do you have at the WTM this year?**

-It can't be any other way. Our conception of these tourism fairs is that they are an ideal place to work. The council's Tourism Department organises a busy agenda of appointments, signing of agreements and professional meetings. This year we are expecting to have more than 30 meetings, although in the end there are likely to be even more. Malaga's success in tourism is such that more and more professionals come to the stand, even if they haven't made an appointment, and ask about the city and its facilities. In any case, this year we have already confirmed several collaboration agreements with companies specialising in the cultural segment, such as Typically Spain and Barrhead Travel, and also with major cruise lines, with the aim of increasing the numbers in that sector.

**-The WTM is one of the biggest showcases for tourism in the world. Will you be taking advantage of the chance to reach markets that are**

**more distant but are emerging and have important spending power?**

-Yes, of course. Like all the big fairs the WTM enables us to get closer than ever to our potential clients, and it is therefore easier to meet and make agreements, advance negotiations which have already begun, or even make contact for the first time. Malaga is regularly taking part in major tourism events around the world. In the past month, for example, the city has been at the fairs in Tokyo and Buenos Aires, and those are just two of many. Logically the contacts we make can be followed up at this fair in London, and that is what we do every year.

**-Are you worried about the impact that the situation in Catalonia or the Brexit negotiations could have on the British market?**

-Obviously any situation which creates uncertainty is not positive for the tourism sector, which has always been sensitive to situations such as these, so of course it is logical that I am concerned. However, it is also the case that the UK, as I mentioned earlier, is a sufficiently mature market to know that Spain is a safe, solid, democratic destination, so I am convinced that the situation in Catalonia will be resolved without affecting tourism in any significant way. And on the other hand, the impact of Brexit will depend on the type of withdrawal that finally takes place, although British tourists are not going to stop coming to Spain because their own country is leaving the European Union.

**-Why do you think Malaga is so fashionable?**

-I hope I don't seem too bold if I say that Malaga knows how to do a good job. Collaboration with businesses, workers and institutions has enabled Malaga to become the famous destination it is today. Thanks to this involvement, which is reflected by the Tourism Forum of Malaga, the city has been able to reinvent itself, creating a successful product which is attractive to all types of tourists. As well as our natural and historic attractions we have been able to introduce cultural facilities which place Malaga among the most dynamic destinations in Europe. If on top of that we add our gastronomy, our friendly people, the climate, our leisure facilities, then you can see why it leads to the growth we are now enjoying. What we have to do now is continue working to ensure that it is not just a passing phase, but a trend that continues over time.

# MARBELLA

★★★★★  
5 Star Destination



*Natural Luxury*



One of the town's popular beaches. :: J-L



The iconic arch welcomes drivers to Marbella. :: J-L



DESTINATION  
**MARBELLA**

# MARBELLA, WHERE LUXURY TOURISM AND HISTORY GO HAND IN HAND

Marbella's Golden Mile - which begins at the western edge of the town and stretches four miles to Puerto Banús - is home to some of Marbella's most luxurious villas and palatial beach-front homes.

**TONY BRYANT**

Situated in the foothills of the Sierra Blanca, between Malaga and Gibraltar, Marbella has long had a reputation for its exclusiveness, much of which is boosted by the prominent nightlife and its distinguished visitors and millionaire residents.

The town is committed to providing every concept of luxury and has some of the top golf courses, five-star hotels and Michelin-starred restaurants in Andalucía. It also boasts an impressive selection of designer shops offering the world's most fashionable merchandise, from Gucci handbags to Prada sunglasses and Rolex watches.

**Tourism history**  
Marbella was once a small jasmine-lined village with only 900 inhabitants, but following the arrival of the Marquis of Ivanrey in 1943, the town began to become popular, es-

pecially among his rich and famous friends.

He acquired a country estate located between Marbella and San Pedro called El Rodeo, and later built a resort there called Venta y Albergues El Rodeo, which was the beginning of tourism in Marbella.

Prince Alfonso of Hohenlohe-Langerburg, the marquis' nephew and descendant of a high-ranking aristocratic family, acquired another estate. In 1954, he opened this as the Marbella Club, an international resort aimed at movie stars, business executives and the nobility.

Both these resorts were frequented by members of European aristocratic families, including Bismarck, Rothschild and Thyssen-Bornemisza, transforming Marbella into a destination for the international jet set.

In 1966, Prince Alfonso brought in a Beverly Hills architect, who developed the high-class Puerto Banús. The resort opened in 1970 and celebrities in attendance included Juan Carlos (then Prince of Asturias), Prince

Rainier of Monaco and his wife Grace Kelly.

Marbella's Golden Mile - which begins at the western edge of Marbella and stretches four miles (6.4 km) to Puerto Banús - is home to some of Marbella's most luxurious villas and palatial beach-front homes.

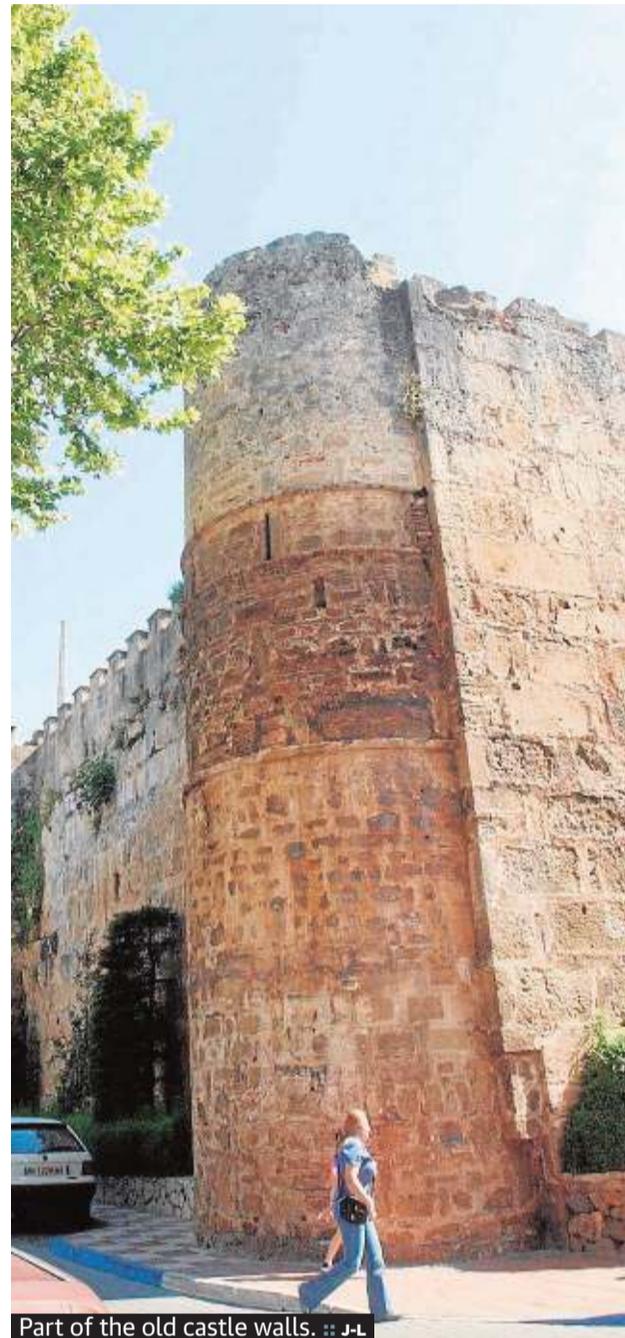
**Rich and famous**  
The Golden Mile is the epitome of luxury, extravagance and opulence. This is, after all, the playground of the rich and famous. This includes the likes of Saudi Arabian King Fahd, who had a summer palace and a mosque built on his sprawling estate.

It is also home of some landmark hotels, among them the Melia Don Pepe, the Hotel Marbella Club and the Hotel Puerte Romano.

Puerto Banús is one of the main destinations for visiting tourists. It houses an exclusive leisure and shopping area in its famous marina. This is not just any port. Here one can admire some of the most luxurious yachts, speed boats and sailing vessels, while also appreciating the top of the



The Plaza de los Naranjos is at the heart of the old town. :: J-L



Part of the old castle walls. :: J-L

there. A stroll through the streets of the town is a linguistic adventure. This is further endorsed by the wide scope of cultural events and international festivals that Marbella offers during the summer season.

### Culture

Besides the typical Andalusian cultural events, a variety of annual festivals are held in Marbella, mainly between June and October. These include the Marbella International Opera Festival, the Marbella Reggae Festival, and the Marbella International Film Festival, held at different locations around the town in June.

One of the biggest summer events is the Starlite Festival, a live musical extravaganza that presents concerts by national and international artists, which takes place in the old lime quarry throughout July and August.

Marbella has an abundance of art galleries, cultural centres, wine bars, and bodegas - in some of which, the pulsating rhythms of flamenco, one of Andalucía's secret treasures, can be experienced.

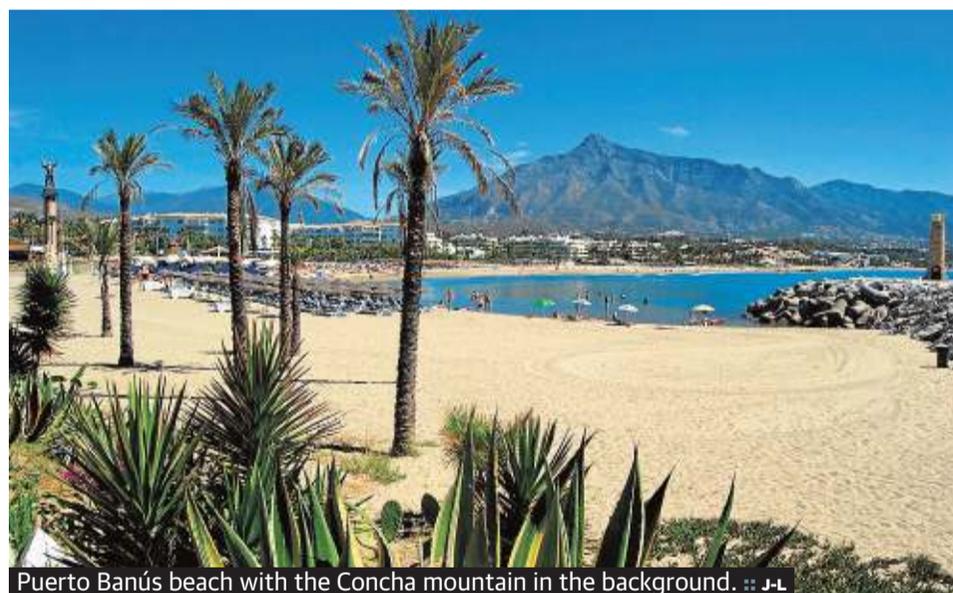
### Old town

Despite being a benchmark for luxury in Spain, Marbella never forgets its history and traditions, as the old town will demonstrate.

The Casco Antiguo (old town) of Marbella includes the ancient city walls and its two historical suburbs, Barrio Alto and the Barrio Nuevo. The town retains nearly the same layout as in the 16th century and an example of its Castilian Renaissance can be found in the Plaza de los Naranjos, erected in the heart of the old town after the Christian reconquest.

Three remarkable buildings can be found in this quaint square: the town hall, built in 1568 by the Catholic Monarchs in Renaissance style, the Casa del Corregidor, which combines Mudejar, Gothic and Renaissance elements, and the Chapel of Santiago, the oldest religious building in the city, believed to date from the 15th century. Other buildings of interest in the centre are the Baroque style Church of Santa María de la Encarnación, the Casa del Roque, and the remains of the Arabic castle and defensive walls.

Marbella has grown since it was first discovered back in the 1950s. Its geographical location, its climate - where the number of days when the sun doesn't shine can be counted on one's fingers - make this the tourism capital of the Costa del Sol.



Puerto Banús beach with the Concha mountain in the background. :: J-L



Luxury vehicles and designer boutiques in Puerto Banús. :: J-L

range Porches, Lamborghinis and Rolls Royce's of its millionaire sector.

### A golfer's paradise

For many people, luxury can be defined by Marbella's excellent golf courses and there are now 21 of them along its 27 kilometres of coastline, each with its own individual character. These clubs are among the most beautiful in Europe, enjoying a location of unparalleled beauty with views of the Sierra Blanca, Gibraltar and the Mediterranean. Among the most renowned are the Valderrama Golf Club, The Marbella Golf and Country Club and the Los Naranjos Golf Club.

### Beaches

Being a coastal town, Marbella is certainly not short of beaches, some of which have been awarded the blue flag of excellence. Of the most favoured is Banana Beach, the unofficial name for the stretch of beach at the east end of Playa El Cable, which is popular with young in-crowd. Another is Funny Beach, so called because it once hosted a karting track of that name on the land just behind the beach.

These beaches have several

### Marbella has become a truly international town; a stroll through the streets is a linguistic adventure

water sports centres offering jet skis, kite surfing and a host of other leisure pastimes.

If one would like a unique and unforgettable experience while visiting Marbella, then a helicopter flight is a great option. This fascinating and beautiful region, with its widely varied landscapes and historical monuments left by the Romans and Moors, can be enjoyed from the bird's eye perspective of a helicopter.

There are numerous chiringuito beach bars, luxury beach clubs and waterfront restaurants, serving some of the most mouth-watering seafood and local cuisine.

### International

Today, Marbella is one of the Costa del Sol's major tourist centres, thanks to the high quality of the facilities and services it provides. It is a cosmopolitan town because people of so many different nationalities have moved

Puerto Banús.,  
Marbella :: J-LDESTINATION  
COSTA DEL SOL WESTA UNIQUE  
DESTINATION IN  
MANY WAYS

The Mancomunidad de Municipios de la Costa del Sol Occidental is an association of 11 municipalities on the Western Costa del Sol whose slogan is 'Together we care for our quality of life'.

Working together, the Mancomunidad is committed to creating a form of tourism which is extremely varied and unique and which reflects the qualities which make the Costa del Sol so exceptional.

Its tourism model has been enriched so it not only includes the popular 'sun and sand' holidays which have made this area famous, but now boasts a huge variety of leisure facilities, culture, sport and gastronomy: in other words a unique form of tourism in this privileged area which has achieved its current success through hard work and quality facilities and services.

The eleven municipalities covered by the Mancomunidad de Municipios are Ojén, Istán, Benahavís, Casares, Mijas and Benalmádena, and the coastal towns of Fuengirola, Torremolinos, Marbella, Estepona and Manilva, all of them in the province of Málaga.

Some of these are small mountain villages, offering visitors a traditional way of life, while the others can boast beautiful beaches, watersports, nightlife and shopping.

What they all have in common, though, is a fascinating history, including im-

Through the Mancomunidad association, 11 municipalities on the Costa del Sol are working on attracting visitors all year round



portant monuments and archaeological sites. Combined with their culture, gastronomy and beautiful landscapes, they make the Costa del Sol impossible to beat as a holiday destination.

In recent years golf tourism has been an important addition to the region, and so has health tourism, where people come from abroad for private treatments which would be much more expensive or are not available in their own countries, and combine their stay with a holiday.

These are both important for another reason: this type of tourism is not restricted to the summer months because these visitors come to the area all year round, helping to create more stable employment in the region.

It is this year-round tourism the authorities in general, and the Mancomunidad in particular, are keen to enhance, and all the municipalities in the association are committed to finding ways to attract visitors all through the year.

In larger towns with suitable facilities conference tour-

ism is seen as an ideal option, and language tourism is another attraction for those who want to immerse themselves in the Spanish language and live like the locals do, at any time of year.

One project designed by the Mancomunidad to attract year-round tourism is called 'Bicycle Sleep', and it is aimed at thousands of cycling fans and triathletes, mainly British, German and Scandinavian.

They have already indicated that they find the Costa del Sol a unique place for cycle tourism, and this segment is becoming increasingly popular with international tourists who want to fill their leisure time with the types of sports activities which make their holidays truly different and exciting.

## COSTA DEL SOL WEST

*Villages and resorts that work together as part of the Mancomunidad de Municipios: Ojén, Istán, Benahavís, Casares, Manilva, Marbella, Mijas, Fuengirola, Estepona, Benalmádena and Torremolinos.*





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SPORT GOLF

# COSTA DEL GOLF: TOP QUALITY COURSES IN AN INCOMPARABLE SETTING

The diversity of choice, with nearly 120 courses catering for all needs and abilities, makes the area perfect for a golfing tour



DARYL FINCH

For those with a passion for golf, the Costa del Sol offers an experience unrivalled anywhere else in Spain. For this reason, perhaps inevitably, it has become known as the 'Costa del Golf'. However, Andalucía as a whole is regarded as one of the most important destinations on the European Tour, because of the number and quality of its courses and the climate that allows for year-round leisure.

If you are a golfer, you couldn't ask for more: there are nearly 120 golf courses in the whole region - split

between each of Andalucía's eight provinces - and half are on the Costa del Sol. Many of the golf courses are world-class with some designed by legendary players such as Seve Ballesteros, Jose María Olazábal, Gary Player and Jack Nicklaus, among others.

Not only are the numbers impressive, the variety is there for all to see. There are courses for beginners, amateurs and professionals, courses that are floodlit so you can play at night, and even courses which have been adapted for disabled players.

If quality is a key factor in your choice, then seven of Andalucía's golf courses have been included in the Top 20 in Spain and all but one are in Malaga or Cadiz



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provinces. In Sotogrande, you have both the world-famous Valderrama (which recently played host to the Andalucía Masters won by Sergio García) and Real Club de Golf (the first European course designed by Robert Trent Jones); Finca Cortesín and La Reserva, both in Malaga province, on the Costa del Sol; as well as San Roque's Old and New courses. Seville's Real Club de Golf also makes the list.

However, there are many more. In fact, at the last count, Malaga province had nearly 70 courses, Cadiz has over 20 and Almeria eleven. There are also courses in Granada, Cordoba, Huelva and Jaén.

If location is most important when making a choice, many golf courses are beside or within easy reach of a lovely beach, some are close to a large city or important town, and there are plenty tucked away amid stunning scenery.

#### A luxury experience

Andalucía is a leading destination not only for its golf courses but also its golf resorts, which can rival those anywhere else in the world. Top class hotels and rental apartments, spa and hydrotherapy centres, gyms, restaurants and entertainment for children are all on offer for those who don't want to stray far from the greens.

For some luxury is defined by excellent golf courses, and Marbella is way ahead of other towns in providing sporting facilities to complement its 5-star ho-



Antequera Golf, in the heart of Andalucía. :: SUR



An immersion in nature at Santa María in Marbella. :: SUR

tels. Golf, which depends so much on the weather, is almost obligatory for any business traveller or visitor who wants to stretch their muscles after spending the morning in a spa.

Like padel, this is no

longer a sport which is exclusively for those with deep pockets, and there are now 21 golf courses along Marbella's 27 kilometres of coastline, each with its own individual characteristics, including Santa María Golf & Coun-

try Club, and Guadalmina, where local golfer Azahara Muñoz successfully defended her women's Open de España title in September.

This diversity of choice is what truly makes the area perfect for a golfing tour.

## SANTA MARÍA GOLF

Santa María Golf is considered to be one of the best looked-after golf courses on the Costa del Sol. It prides itself in being situated between small valleys of pine trees and cork oaks, and less than 200 metres from one of the best beaches in Marbella.

The course offers players a challenging game in an environment with views to both the sea and forested mountains.

The clubhouse is an impressive Spanish Cortijo of the 19th Century with two floors and is surrounded by extensive gardens.

## LA DUQUESA GOLF

La Duquesa Golf, across from the marina of the same name in Manilva, is an 18-hole course which was designed by Robert Trent Jones.

Its layout is spectacular, with views over the Mediterranean and as far as Africa on a clear day. The golf course is the icing on the cake for Manilva tourism, as golfers who come to play their favourite sport soon discover all the other delights the municipality has to offer.

## ANTEQUERA GOLF

Situated in a privileged location at the base of the El Torcal Natural Park (awarded UNESCO National Heritage status in 2016), Antequera is ideally situated for visiting all of Andalucía.

Considered an ecological golf course, players form part of the natural environment and can get to know an area that evolves constantly throughout the seasons of the year.

While playing the course, players are surrounded by 16 lakes, aromatic plants native to the region, as well as olive trees, oaks, shrubs and protected plant species.

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In Sotogrande European royalty mixes effortlessly with holidaymakers of all backgrounds and nationalities. :: SUR

SUMMER LEISURE  
POLO

# POLO FOR THE PEOPLE

The Santa María Polo Club was built in 1965 in the early days of tourism; the first spectators rolled up in flip-flops

NEIL HESKETH

The people of Andalucía have always had a love of horses and skilled horse riders. Nowhere is this more evident than in the sophisticated surroundings of seaside Sotogrande. Here, at the Santa María Polo Club, an annual grand-slam festival of top in-

ternational polo takes place, along with many other tournaments throughout the year. These spectacles of high-quality sport and socialising are free to enjoy for all spectators, making for an exciting and different holiday experience in the sun.

The gallop of the horses, the whack of the ball, the gasps of the crowd, the clinking of glasses and the laughter of good friends. If your only contact with polo has been through the gossip col-

umns of the newspapers, you're in for a treat and also a surprise at just how easy it is to pick up the rules and terminology as a spectator.

One game typically lasts under an hour, depending on the level, and is divided into seven-minute periods called 'chukkas', with two teams of four players on horseback aiming to score the most goals. To first-time visitors it is as if football has been stirred in with Ascot in a thrilling cocktail mix. The fast pace of the game is addictive, as is watching the strength and agility of the horses, known as polo ponies and typically thoroughbred mares.

Horses are swapped regularly to keep them fresh in the speedy play and a polo team could have up to 20 of them ready and waiting. Be sure to wander down to the end of the field in the area known as the 'palenque' and watch how the quick change

of horses is made and how the helpers keep them warmed up ready to trot back into play.

Of course, while you're there for the skill and quality of the sport, there is also plenty of time for socialising and soaking up the atmosphere. The club is the place to see and be seen on the southern Spanish coast. At the summer international tournament, one of the polo world's main events, there is a 'tented village' with stores offering everything from Maseratis to mojitos, an outdoor food court, children's area and, as the afternoon games wind up and the sun goes down, a disco and evening events.

**Free access**

All this has free access which makes for an informal and relaxing environment, where European royalty mixes effortlessly with holidaymakers of all backgrounds and nationalities.

The tradition of open-for-all polo has a 50-year history on the southern Spanish coast. Polo here is closely tied to the growth of Sotogrande from the 1960s onwards. This refined, luxury resort, just inside Cadiz province at the western end of the Costa del Sol, is known as much for its yachting and prestige golf at Valderrama as it is for its equestrian sports.

As Spain's top socialites and



The 'tented village' at the polo club. :: SUR

sports people started to flock to the area to enjoy holidays, the first polo ground was laid out right on the sand of the beach in 1965, with sweeping views over the Strait of Gibraltar. The first spectators literally rolled up in flip flops and beachwear. Soon the club was one of the most important in Europe and a world centre for the sport.

This inclusiveness continued through to the present, although nowadays Santa María Polo Club has purpose-built lush-green facilities just alongside Sotogrande marina.

Polo has an incredibly long history, stretching back to Persia over 2000 years ago. The modern game originated in India during the 1800s when British soldiers adapted

the local variety to help train the cavalry. Today the international aces are the Argentinian players, who command huge fees for their skill on horseback and travel the world, including to the Santa María club.

In 2018 the club will again host its flagship international grand-slam polo tournament, the 47th edition, running from late July to late August, where the finest players gather for a true festival of equestrian excellence.

However, each year more than 20 tournaments are hosted by the club at Sotogrande, including some with a world-class status. Everybody is invited to go and enjoy the atmosphere throughout the year.



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Elías Bendodo. :: SALVADOR SALAS

#### :: PILAR MARTÍNEZ

✉ pmartinez@diariosur.es

**MALAGA.** Different segments of tourism, which are carefully adapted to suit all tastes and budgets and available all year round: those are the keys which will enable the Costa del Sol to report record tourism figures when it attends this year's World Travel Market in London. These are also factors which will guarantee the destination's success in the future. The president of Costa del Sol Tourism and Planning, Elías Bendodo, is convinced that "the idyll between the United Kingdom and the Costa del Sol will continue."

**-The Costa del Sol can report record tourism figures at this year's WTM. What do you believe have been the keys to this success?**

-Without a doubt there are three principal factors. The first is being in tune with others in terms of what is needed, by which I mean joint effort and public institutions working together with companies in the tourism sector. We are all rowing in the same direction and that brings with it a synergy of effort. Another factor is the model of segmenting our tourist facilities. Nowadays tourists are studying what is available in minute detail, and an increasing number of them are looking for a type of trip which is almost made-to-measure. The Costa del Sol has shown that it is able to respond to these new trends

PRESIDENT OF COSTA DEL SOL TOURISM AND PLANNING  
**ELÍAS BENDODO**

## "THE LOVE AFFAIR BETWEEN THE UK AND THE COSTA DEL SOL WILL LIVE ON"

Bendodo says forecasts for the growth of the destination in this key source market are "more than positive"

in tourism. Our versatility lies in a policy of diversification, in showing that ours is a destination to suit everybody and, what is most important, that is the case all through the year, not just in the summer. Finally, the

fact that the destination is at the forefront of the digital world. In a world which is transforming at a dizzying speed, we try to keep up to date with new trends and that gives us an advantage over competing destinations.

this nationality.

**-Are you optimistic about how this market will evolve next year?**

-I would say I am realistic, rather than optimistic. The growth figures for the British market (2.8 per cent more visitors and nearly 11 per cent more airport arrivals) indicate that the 'love affair' between the UK and the Costa del Sol will live on. It is true that some factors, such as some airlines going bankrupt, may have an effect, but not exclusively on the Costa del Sol; that will affect all markets. With regard to Brexit, so far there has been hardly any difference in the behaviour of the British market for our destination. In any case, we are talking about two factors which may or may not have an effect; they don't affect our management of tourism, we can't control them and we can't do much about them at this point. Our work is to continue attracting tourists and facilitating alternative models in accordance with new circumstances as they arise.

**-How are you promoting the Costa del Sol at the WTM this year?**

-We are going to invest a total of 120,000 euros in our presence at the World Travel Market. We will be very active at the fair, which we are attending with about 100 professionals from the tourism sector and we hope to make at least 300 contacts with local agents there. We will also be out on the

streets of London again this year. As well as the advertising on the city's taxis, we plan to carry out some very impressive street marketing to strengthen the Costa del Sol brand among the millions of people in this great city. We are positive that this will have a major impact.

**Have you done anything to offset the impact of the crisis in Catalonia or the Brexit negotiations?**

-Our destination has to present proposals which are self-sufficient and attractive in themselves, and not be dependent on the crisis in other competitive markets. That is the only way to ensure the success of our initiatives in promoting tourism.

**-Are you concerned about the repercussions that those factors could have on tourism?**

-Yes, of course. In fact the crisis in Catalonia affects us as a receiving market, because it is the Spain brand which is put into question and it could create a certain sense of insecurity or instability, socially and economically. Despite everything, though, I have to stress that although it is a problem that affects all Spanish people, in terms of image, social context or constitutional crisis, places such as the Costa del Sol are carrying on absolutely as normal and there have been no changes whatsoever. With regard to Brexit, that is also a matter of concern but it is also the case that a year after the referendum, so far we are not seeing anything unusual in the flow of British visitors.

**-What will the Costa del Sol be presenting that is new to British travel agents and travellers?**

-Within the whole sphere of our segmented tourist facilities, we will be highlighting the importance of experiential tourism. We believe it is essential to focus on this type, which is on the increase and becoming very fashionable in an increasingly demanding and more specialised sector of tourism. Travellers these days want more local experiences, they want to immerse themselves in the everyday life of the place they are visiting and experience the culture and the local lifestyle. The Costa del Sol, and the province of Malaga as a whole, has an enormous range of cultural facilities and an authentic way of life. These traditions and the local people make this an ideal destination for experiential tourism.

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# TAKING CARE OF ACCESSIBLE TOURISM

The tourism authorities, as well as the ONCE Foundation, are studying to what extent facilities can be fully enjoyed by visitors with disabilities



Amphibian wheelchairs are available on a number of Costa del Sol beaches. :: SUR

RACHEL HAYNES

Museums have also been assessed, not only according to the availability of ramps as an alternative to steps, but also aspects such information provided in Braille or large print or a hearing loop for visitors using hearing aids.

Tourism authorities around the world are becoming more and more aware of the need to ensure that the attractions they are promoting can be enjoyed by everyone.

Accessible tourism has become an important issue and is being taken very seriously by the industry in Spain, on a local, regional and national level.

In Andalucía, the regional Tourism authority offers online information about various attractions, with ratings on the accessibility of their facilities for people with disabilities.

Many seaside resorts, for example, have well-signposted beaches with wheelchair access and assisted bathing services using amphibian wheelchairs.

Hotels and tourist apartments have rooms and communal areas that are fully accessible for all, and even attractions such as walking routes through old towns are taking into account visitors with limited mobility.

In September the ONCE Foundation (the Spanish national organisation supporting people with disabilities) organised the International Congress on Technology and Tourism 2017 in Malaga. Under the heading "Accessibility for All 4.0", the three-day event looked at how new technology can improve facilities and the enjoyment of tourists by increasing accessibility.

Creating "smart" tourist



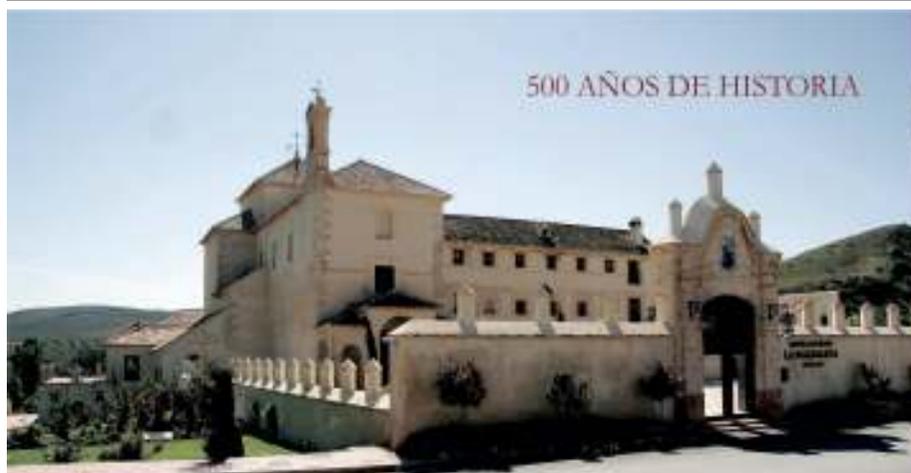
A tourist is hoisted into a boat in northern Spain. :: SUR

## The International Congress on Technology and Tourism was organised by the ONCE Foundation in Malaga in September

destinations with the help of robotics was one of the main themes of the congress.

Products introduced included a system called Beep-Con which involves devices placed around large buildings, such as museums or congress centres, guiding a blind person by communicating directly with an app on a mobile phone.

The ultimate aim is for the region's many tourist facilities, from beaches, museums and monuments to hotel accommodation, to be enjoyed fully and in equal conditions by all. New technology is doing its bit towards achieving that aim.



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DESTINATION  
MANILVA

# SURPRISES ROUND EVERY CORNER

Manilva is the best of both worlds: a small wine-producing town and the coast, where ancient ruins rub shoulders with the modern world

DEBBIE  
BARTLETT



**MANILVA.** Manilva likes to point out that it has been populated since prehistoric times, and the attractions of this municipality, which is divided into two separate ar-

reas, Manilva village and San Luis de Sabinillas, are such that it is still one of the most popular destinations for holidays and residential tourism in southern Spain.

It is certainly surprising, for those who stop in Sabinillas instead of passing through on the coast road as so many do, to discover Roman ruins and an 18th century castle almost beside the sea, and mediaeval watch-towers rubbing shoulders with an excellent golf course and a modern marina.

They will also be surprised to discover that the wine with which they are accompanying their lunch is produced locally; it is now also sold in the Basque Country and features on the wine list at the famous Martín Berasategui restaurant. In fact this town is known for its gastronomy, especially fish and local produce.

That is part of the charm of this municipality, which is the most westerly in Malaga province and on the boundary with Cadiz. It is full of surprises, and very pleasant ones at that.

While Sabinillas offers extensive beaches and all the facilities one would expect from a modern tourist des-



Manilva village sits upon a hill, surrounded by vines. :: SUR

tinuation, it still feels like the fishing village it used to be. The inland village, just a few kilometres away, appears to have changed little over time, and sits quietly upon its hill, surrounded by fields and vines, contemplating the azure Mediterranean just a few

minutes down the road.

Despite its traditions and long history, though, Manilva is a modern resort in terms of technology, with its own mobile app and strong presence on social media, and with its rural tourism, beaches, sports fa-

cilities, shops, markets, bars and restaurants, it offers something for everybody all year round. Its location and excellent roads also make it the ideal base for visiting other places of interest in the region, such as the cities of Cadiz and Malaga.

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DESTINATION  
TORREMOLINOSKEEPING UP  
WITH  
MODERN  
TIMES

Torremolinos is updating its facilities to become more competitive and offer a complete holiday experience

The plan is for tourists to find in Torremolinos a destination that offers them everything they could possibly want. New urban and tourism infrastructure is being created in the town to make the municipality more competitive in terms of quality, visitor experience and commercial interaction. The aim is to update the facilities for visitors, improve the potential of the brand and give it a new lease of life.

Torremolinos is making a name for itself as a venue for events, organising at least 200 different types every year. The future open-air activities planned are designed to generate a new atmosphere and attract more tourists.

There is already a thriving, open cultural scene in Torremolinos. Festivals include Pride, which attracts more than 40,000 people every year, motorcycle rallies, cookery demonstrations on food trucks and the Rocking Race Jamboree festival. There is also plenty of tradition and Andalusian folklore with the Romería pilgrimage, the procession of the Virgen del Carmen and the Carnival celebrations.

Among the town's latest tourist attractions are the Casa de los Navajas and the recently acquired Casa de María Barrabino, both of which are welcome new additions to the municipality's cultural heritage.

**A destination for foodies**

Torremolinos is also reinforcing its potential as a gastronomic destination, as this, together with events, seems a formula guaranteed to delight tourists, residents and visitors.

There are over 300 restau-

rants in Torremolinos and in forthcoming weeks work is due to begin on the municipality's first 'Sabor a Malaga' gourmet market showcasing local products.

**Warm and sunny winters**

The hotels in Torremolinos have 29,000 beds available during the tourist season, and the winters make it the perfect place for tourists from colder countries to spend longer periods of time.

It is hardly surprising that, when posting digital content about the municipality, the hashtags used are on the lines of #lifestyle #happiness and #sun.

Comprehensive information provided directly to tourists in the street, better signs, leaflets and maps will give Torremolinos a new image; if tourists are well-informed they can interact actively with the town just as residents do.

**Most tolerant in Europe**

Torremolinos is known as being one of the most tolerant towns in Europe and every June it celebrates Pride, a major festival which is attended by over 40,000 people. Activities promote tolerance and equality of rights for the LGBTI collective.

The festival includes a parade, exhibitions, a range of different activities and gastronomic events, and the concerts in the Plaza de La Nogalera are always packed out.

The town is considered the capital of southern Europe for visitors who form part of the LGBTI collective. Clubs, bars and many other options for leisure and entertainment make



The Torremolinos Pride festival is attended by more than 40,000 people. :: SUR



Paths for those wanting to get out of town. :: SUR



The town has some of the Costa's best beaches. :: SUR



Stress-free shopping in the town centre. :: SUR



Sardines, cooked over open fires at beach bars. :: SUR

this corner of the Mediterranean a place which just has to be visited.

Torremolinos has always been open and cosmopolitan, a place which respects freedom, and an example of tolerance. This has always been part of the town's DNA and it was empowered when the dictatorship ended and the tourism that had begun in the 1950s and 1960s really started to take off. For this reason, an increasing number of people from all over the world travel to Torremolinos every year, finding it



Torremolinos has a full agenda of events. :: SUR

an authentic oasis where they can express their sexuality without prejudice.

However, Torremolinos is of course also a place for Family Tourism, Health Tourism, Creative Tourism, Shopping Tourism and Intercultural Tourism.

This is a destination with an average temperature of 20°C and 300 days of sunshine a year, a pioneering destination in which to go walking, enjoy mountains, relax on the beach and soak up the sun all year round.

# Visita Torremolinos

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A couple relax in the spa at La Viñuela hotel in the Axarquía. :: SUR

COSTA DEL SOL  
HEALTH AND WELLNESS



In recent years Malaga's reputation for beach holidays and year-round sunshine hasn't just attracted people looking to get a tan and winter warmth; the idea of combining the traditional with, say, a spa holiday, or medical treatment, is bringing both people and investment to the Costa del Sol.

Wellness tourism is big business, with a huge variety of hotels and smaller centres across the province offering packages that meet needs that range from physical to spiritual and adapt themselves to changing die-

# SUN, SEA AND A ROOM WITH A RELAXING VIEW

Southern Spain makes you feel good, which is why it's the perfect destination for a relaxing spa break, medical treatment or a worry-free retirement

tary requirements, from gluten-free to low fat and vegan.

**Rest and relaxation**

Wellness centres on the Costa In and around Marbella, luxury resorts offer complete packages for busy professionals wanting a relaxing break with sunshine included. While on the other side of the province, the spa at La Viñuela hotel in the Axarquía looks over the area's reservoir and mountains, giving guests space to reflect and total tranquility further inland.

The Hammam in Malaga city centre is the only one of its kind in the province and the idea behind the design of this carefully restored Turkish bath is to capture the essence of the old Arab baths of Al Andalus, while allowing visitors to relax for a day in its cold and hot water baths.

Spa breaks are not new to the area and in fact residents of Malaga and the surrounding area have, for many years, understood the benefits of visiting the baths at both Tolox and Alhama de Granada and believe that their properties can help alleviate symptoms connected to allergies and asthma.

**Health tourism**

Private medical treatment

The Costa del Sol is one of the most popular destinations in Spain for patients who wish to combine medical treatment with a holiday. In fact the sector predicts a 40 per cent increase in demand for health professionals that speak two or more languages over the next few years as the market continues to grow.

In 2012 the Malaga Health Foundation was created to

**vive** soluciones inmobiliarias

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promote the medical skills of a large group of health professionals in the area and the sector generates over 330 million euros a year in Malaga province alone.

“All the private hospitals now have a department which works exclusively to attract patients from abroad,” says Dr Such, who was involved in creating the foundation. He goes on to say that “health tourists spend up to ten times more than holiday-makers”.

People may come for physiotherapy after a recent operation, or undergo minor surgery which does not entail a long stay in hospital. Health tourism has evolved from the traditional concept and now even oncology, traumatology or fertility treatments are available. It is a market which is experiencing unprecedented growth.

The private CHIP (Complejo Hospitalario Integral Privado) in Malaga is renowned for its diagnostic imaging and retina unit and its website is in Spanish and English. Similarly, the Xanit, which has



**Senior care.** A resident reads in her room at the SanySol. :: SUR



**Technology.** State-of-the-art equipment at Hospital Xanit. :: SUR

## Health tourism generates over 330 million euros a year in Malaga province alone

### Staff provide a full programme of activities and excursions for care home residents

hospitals in Malaga (Limonar), Benalmádena and Fuengirola, also has a website giving information in a number of languages and 15 are spoken by staff, who say that patients feel more at ease when spoken to in their own language.

Not only do these centres provide state-of-the-art equipment but also rooms with sea views and terraces. They also provide complete packages, including airport transfers and accommodation for family members.

### Residential homes Caring for the elderly

Spain has long been associated with northern Europeans choosing it as a place to retire. However, what happens when an elderly person requires extra care and assistance? Another area that the province is tapping into is providing excellent facilities in

terms of care homes for older people.

A proposal is currently being studied in Arenas, a small mountain town north of Vélez-Málaga, to build an ultra-modern care home. The people behind it are a Belgian investment group and if the project gets the go-ahead, will comprise 124 independent retirement apartments as well as 120 rooms with assistance for elderly people.

There are numerous private care homes already up and running in Malaga province that provide excellent, state-of-the-art care. The SanySol in Torre del Mar is one such home, which has been offering accommodation for 144 residents, along with a personalised programme of care and assistance, for seven years. Staff organise activities and excursions to make sure that their residents remain physically and mentally active.

The Costa del Sol is pushing the concept of sun, sea and sand beyond the traditional relaxing holiday and providing a complete wellness experience, regardless of age.

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DESTINATION  
ISTÁN

# WATER AND HISTORY, FLOWING IN HARMONY

This Moorish village tucked away in the mountains behind Marbella is ideal for those who love nature, tranquility and a traditional way of life

DEBBIE  
BARTLETT

**ISTÁN.** In the not-so-distant past the tiny village of Istán was well off the beaten track, 16 kilometres up a road into the mountains from Marbella. Now, with improved commu-

nications, it is easily reached in a very short time and a visit to this picturesque Moorish village is always worthwhile.

Istán's history accompanies visitors as they walk through the narrow streets and into the pretty main square with its 16th century church. It is a peaceful place, with a feeling of life going on as it has for centuries.

There is an abundance of water, flowing through fountains and in the trough where in the past local women would wash the family's clothes. In fact, the water from Istán has been of such historical importance to the region that there



One of the village's numerous water fountains. :: J-L



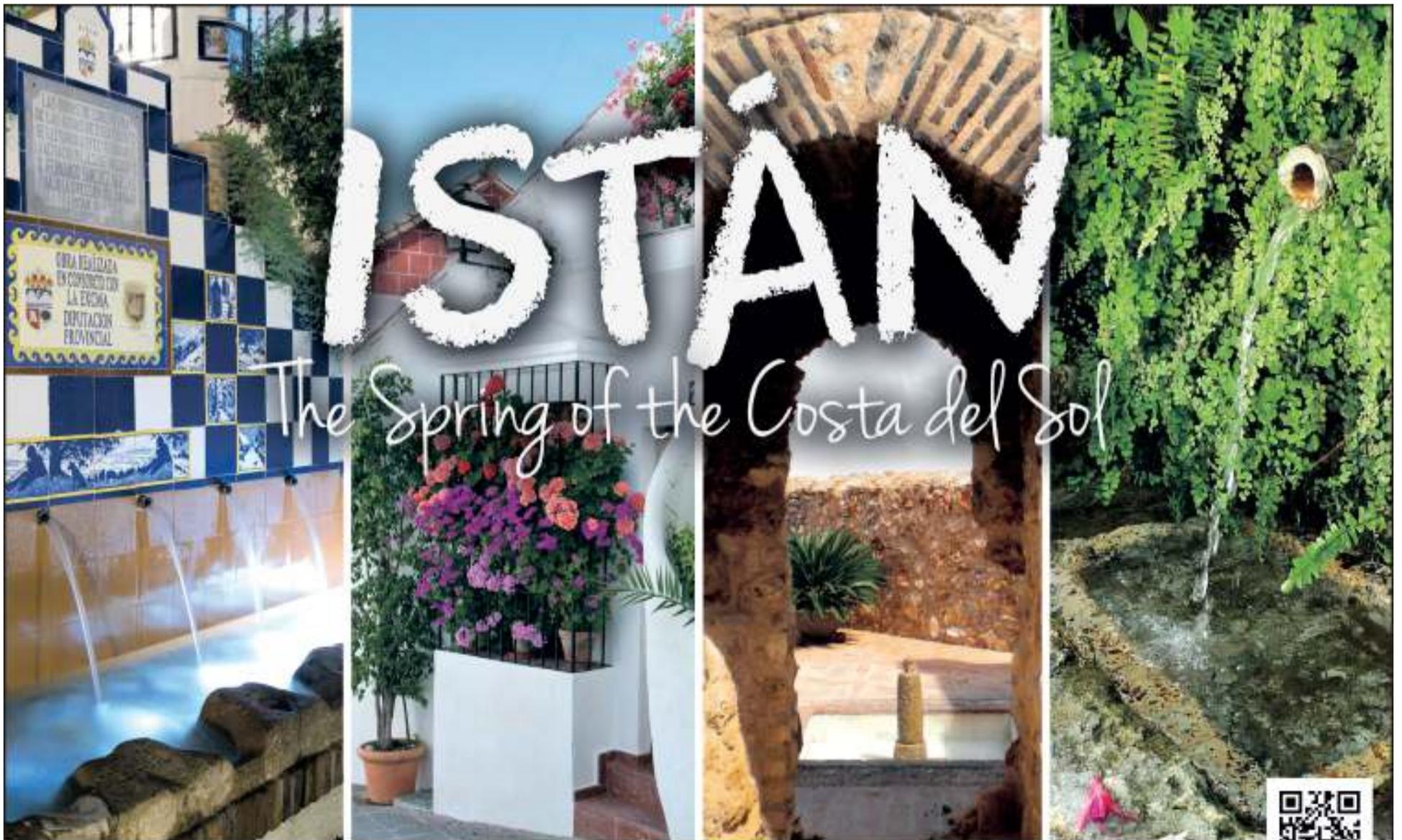
The village has attractive hidden corners. :: J-L

is now a museum and information centre dedicated to it.

Istán is so small (its population is less than 1500) that it takes little time to explore the village - although it is so delightful that there is always a temptation to linger - but that is not the case with the stunning mountainous countryside around it, where there are numerous walking and cycling routes. The Rio Verde valley, the Charco de Canalón pool the mountains of the Sierra Blanca and Sierra Real are all close by, and on many of the walks you pass water channels which were constructed back in Moorish times hundreds of years ago.

Traditionally, the people of Istán have always headed into the countryside to celebrate local festivals, such as All Saints Day (1 November) when they hold a 'tostoná', roasting chestnuts and drinking aguardiente, and during the fair dedicated to the patron saint of the village in September.

Istán is also home, although it is 37 kilometres away, to the Holy Chestnut Tree, which is over 800 years old and has a diameter of 13 metres. Its name comes from the fact that Ferdinand the Catholic held Mass under its branches in 1501.



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DESTINATION  
ESTEPONA



The historic town centre retains its traditional atmosphere. :: SUR

# THE GARDEN OF THE COSTA

Estepona's tourist attractions are proving so popular that several new hotels are to be built

**FERNANDO MORGADO**

Estepona is looking particularly pretty these days, thanks to its 'Garden of the

Costa del Sol' project which began five years ago and has revitalised the historic town centre and given its streets a facelift in traditional Andalusian style.

In 2015 the council also inaugurated a botanical garden and orchid house, making Estepona one of the

'greenest' towns in the area. The 'orchidarium' contains over 4,000 different species of orchid and is the biggest in Europe, while the garden has fountains, waterfalls and plants from all over the world.

Of course, this town already had many tourist at-

tractions including over 21 kilometres of beaches, but like other resorts it is keen to attract visitors all year round and not just those looking for sunshine in the summer months.

One plan towards this aim is a new athletics stadium which is to be built to the standards which will enable it to host official competitions.

### New hotels

The council's tourism initiatives are already attracting interest among investors. There are plans for several new hotels in the historic town centre, which will provide a further 300 beds.

These will undoubtedly be needed: last year Estepona had the highest tourism figures for a decade, with over 1.2 million overnight stays and 248,000 visitors and the figures for this year are expected to be even better.

Estepona also hosts numerous interesting events every year, including the World Ham Championship in August, which brought together the best ham and cured meat producers in Spain. The event took place on the seafront promenade and attracted thousands of people.

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Natalie and Luke

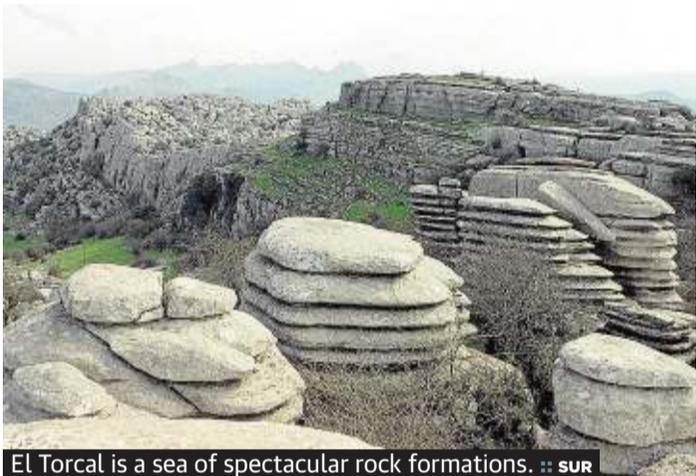
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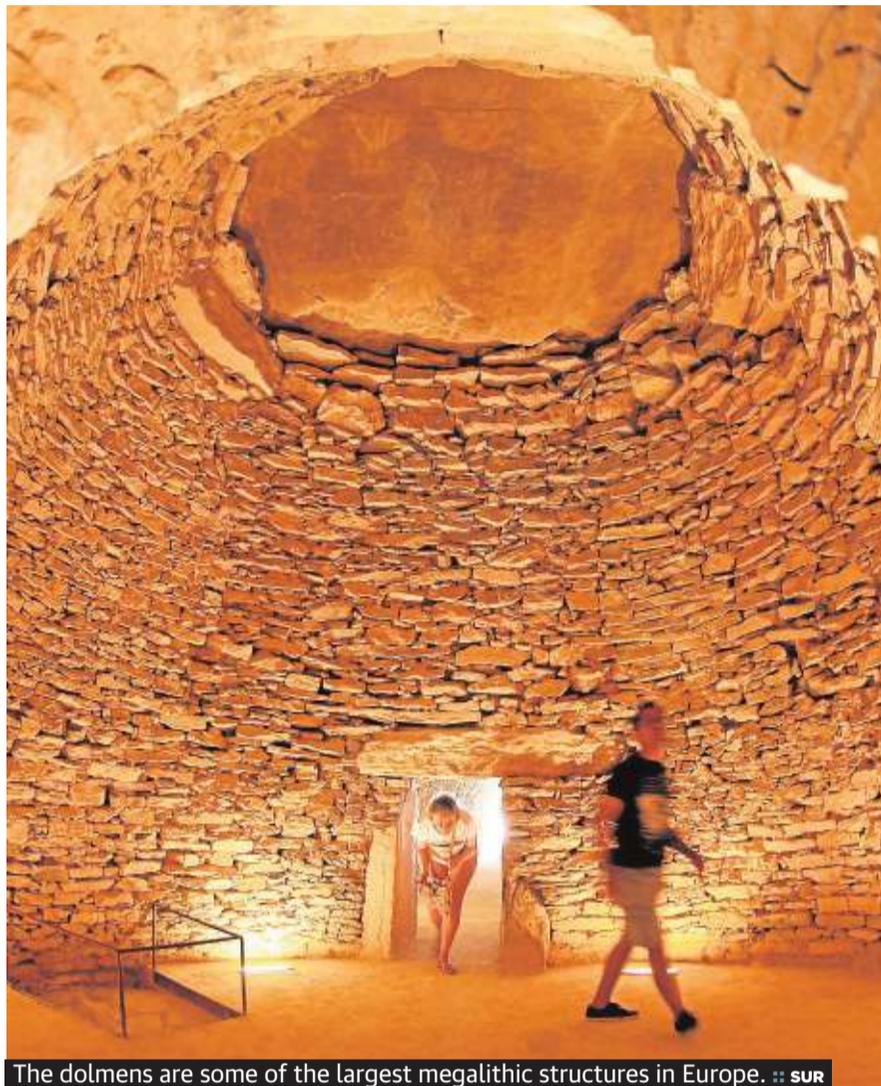
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Iglesia de Santa María is one Antequera's many churches. :: SUR



El Torcal is a sea of spectacular rock formations. :: SUR



The dolmens are some of the largest megalithic structures in Europe. :: SUR

searchers with vital clues as to how the early people buried their dead and also how their construction methods and materials evolved.

When it was opened and examined in the 19th century, archaeologists found several hundred human skeletons.

The largest of the three is the Menga dolmen, measuring four metres high and 27 metres long. After the chamber and the path leading to the structure had been finished, the dolmen was covered with earth that was built up into a hill, which still exists today.

The Menga dolmen was built to line up with the mountain known as the Peña de los Enamorados (the lovers' rock), which gets its name from the legend of a young Christian man and a Moorish woman whose impossible love led them to jump off the top of the rock together.

#### Mystical significance

Cave paintings discovered in the area provided clues that this rock, which looks like the profile of a man lying on his back, had a mystical significance in prehistoric times.

El Romeral, a tholos structure known as the beehive, is thought to have been built to face the El Torcal nature reserve and its spectacular rock formations. El Torcal is considered one of the most impressive karst landscapes in Europe. The area was designated a Natural Site of National Interest in 1929 and a nature reserve was created in 1978.

Antequera has attracted considerable attention since the dolmens received World Heritage status, which also encompasses El Torcal and the Peña.

The presence of so many elaborate religious buildings can be put down to the town's era of splendour from the reconquest to the 18th century. This wealth also led to the construction of numerous palaces, mansions, plazas and gardens.

Antequera is a must on the itinerary for tourists on a cultural tour of Andalucía.

#### DESTINATION ANTEQUERA

## A LAND OF SPIRITUAL STRUCTURES

The three prehistoric burial chambers received UNESCO World Heritage status in 2016, becoming the seventh recognised site in Andalucía

**A** visit to the typical medieval town of Antequera, renowned for its rich architectural heritage and the megalithic dolmen burial sites, is a trip that will take one back to the Bronze Age.

It is known as the heart of Andalucía because of its central location among Malaga, Granada, Cordoba and Seville.

Antequera contains some thirty churches, their spires visible on the skyline as one approaches the town, which also boasts Roman baths, a Moorish fortress, gothic and baroque bell towers and renaissance fountains.

The Antequera district is a leading producer of asparagus, cereals and olives and, spread out in the valley below, lie rich farmlands irrigated by the Guadalhorce river. During the summer months its fields turn brilliant yellow with sunflowers.

However, one of An-

#### TONY BRYANT



tequera's greatest attractions is its dolmen burial sites. These three prehistoric burial chambers are among the largest and most complete megalithic structures in Europe. In 2016, the dolmen complex, comprising of the Menga, Viera and El Romeral, was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, becoming the seventh place to carry this title in Andalucía.

The earliest recorded mention of the Menga dolmen was in the sixteenth century, but it was not until the beginning of the twentieth century that the Viera and Romeral structures were discovered. All three chambers were built approximately 700 years apart and they provide historians and re-



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DESTINATION  
INLAND

# PICTURESQUE BEAUTY, STEEPED IN HISTORY



The Guadalteba reservoir. :: SUR

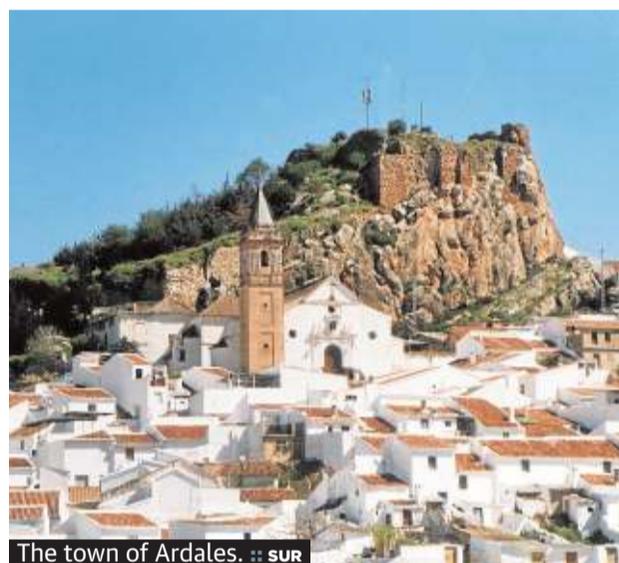
Prehistoric remains and Arabic ruins as well as being in the 'Lake District' of Malaga, the small town of Ardales is ideally situated for walkers and hikers

Castillo de la Peña which was built by the Moors at the end of the ninth century.

Historical records of the area date back to prehistoric times and a cave was discovered in 1918 which has some of the oldest cave paintings in Malaga province and human remains from paleolithic times.

On the outskirts of the town at Bobastro, are the remains of a Mozarabic Basilica, believed to be the only one of Mozarab origin built in what was Al-Andalus.

The picturesque reservoir, the Embalse del Conde del Guadalhorce, is approximately



The town of Ardales. :: SUR

six kilometres from the town and forms part of the Ardales nature park; it is an area popular with walkers and bird-watchers.

The other lakes, fed by the Turón river, are the Embalse del Guadalteba and the Embalse del Guadalhorce.

The Embalse de Gaitanejo is a short distance from the others and is fed by the Turón, Guadalteba and Guadalhorce rivers. The reservoir was created by the dam that was built across the Turón at the end of La Garganta del Chorro, the southern access to the famous 'Caminito del Rey' walkway.

DENISE  
BUSH

**ARDALES.** Ardales is a small town situated next to the large limestone crag 'Peña de Ardales' and surrounded by a series of lakes and reservoirs. On top of the outcrop are the ruins of the



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The beaches are ideal for relaxing or watersports. :: SUR



A traditional street in the Pueblo. :: SUR

DESTINATION  
MIJASA UNIQUE  
COMBINATION  
OF ATTRACTIONS

Whether you want to play golf, relax on a beach, climb a mountain, visit museums, enjoy fine gastronomy or all of these, Mijas is the place to go

Few places are in such an idyllic setting as Mijas, nor are they able to attract such a diversity of visitors. Do you want to experience the charms of a traditional Andalusian 'pueblo blanco', a white village in the mountains? Then head for Mijas. Maybe you prefer to spend your precious holiday time relaxing on a sandy beach and swimming in the Mediterranean? Try Mijas. Looking for fine food, excellent shopping facilities and good communications with other towns and cities? Well then.... Mijas.

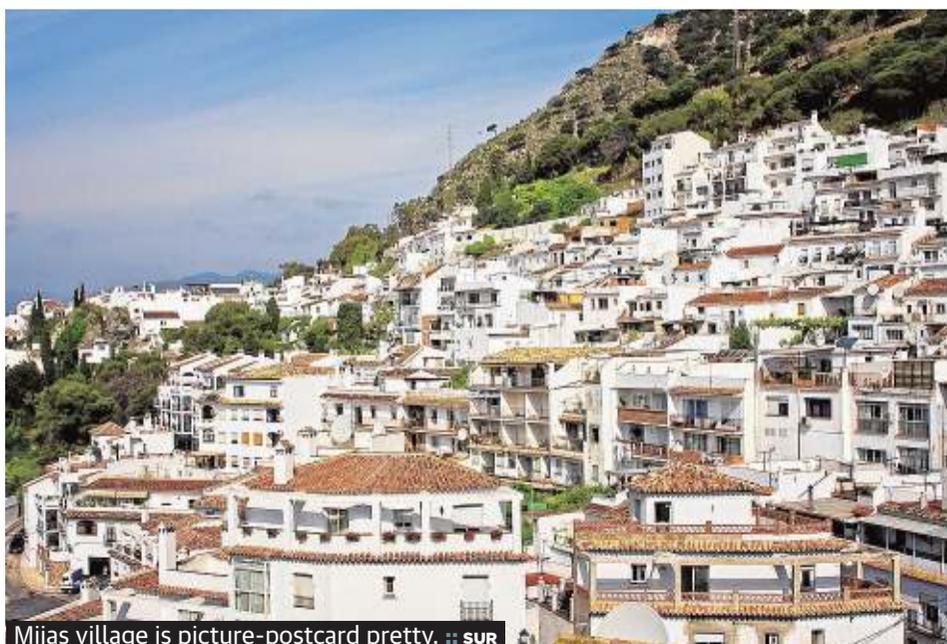
It is because of this unique combination that the municipality, which is divided into several different areas, has become so popular with visitors of different nationalities, either as their permanent residence or as a holiday home.

This year, as in 2016, Mijas will be at the World Travel Market to showcase its beauty and the quality of its services.

**The white village**

One of the best-known parts of the municipality is Mijas Pueblo, the picture-postcard village perched on the side of a mountain with spectacular views down to the coast. It is truly lovely, with its whitewashed houses and narrow streets adorned with thousands of blue flowerpots.

In 1969 the oldest part of the village was classified as a historic-artistic site, only the second in Malaga province after Ronda. In fact, the local council is keen that



Mijas village is picture-postcard pretty. :: SUR

**The Sierra de Mijas is an exciting option for adventure sports or hiking**

people who visit Ronda should also come to Mijas, which is equally as beautiful and historic but very different.

Mijas is now focusing on ways to attract visitors who are looking for other activities to complement the traditional sunshine-and-sand type of holiday. It can already boast major attractions in terms of sport, gastronomy, culture and countryside.

The Sierra de Mijas, the mountain range into which the village nestles, is an exciting option for adventure sports or hiking, but anyone who prefers to walk on flatter ground can also head down to the coast and the Senda Litoral, a path which will eventually run along the whole coast of Malaga province from Nerja to Manilva.

Also in the coastal part of the municipality, there are plans to build a park which will be over 350,000 square metres in size at El Ahogadero, in Las Lagunas de Mijas Costa; this will be the biggest park in Malaga province and will have running tracks, a cycle and skating lane and an open-air auditorium.

Mijas is keen to attract visitors from more distant international markets, such as China, Japan and South Korea, for whom Andalucía is already pro-

ving popular, and is also focusing its marketing on the Scandinavian and German markets by promoting its excellent hotels and golf courses. In fact, this municipality has more golf courses than any other in the region.

**Culture**

Mijas should also be a magnet for lovers of culture. It has its own Contemporary Art Centre, which houses the second most important collection of ceramics by Picasso in the world, and works by Dalí, Muñoz Degrain, Moreno Carbonero and Denis Belgrano. There is also a Historic-Folk Museum which recreates the way of life in the village in the past.

The other areas of Mijas have their own charms and attractions. La Cala, for example, started life as a small fishing village on a beautiful beach and has now grown into a larger resort with plenty of facilities for tourists while still retaining its traditional atmosphere.

The whole stretch of coast within the municipality, on both sides of La Cala, are also excellent for swimming and watersports, and the range of restaurants will please every taste and every budget, from simple bars to top class international cuisine.

Another major attraction of Mijas is that every part of it is easily accessible, with excellent roads and bus services ensuring that visitors can travel from one area to another or to other towns and Malaga city, which is less than 40 kilometres away.

# Mijas

AYUNTAMIENTO

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## Mijas, sensations all year round



### 🌊 Mijas, experience the mediterranean

#### 14 kilometres of beaches

Mijas has an ample, well cared for coast, where the combination of beaches, nature and sunshine offers a very pleasant and special experience, complemented by marine gastronomy and the hospitality of its people.

The beaches in Mijas have eight 'Q' for Quality Tourism Flags, while the rest of the coast has been awarded the ISO 14001 Environmental Certification that guarantees the conservation of the values of our coast.

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In each of the courses, players will be able to choose the handicap that best suits their conditions.

What all our golf courses have in common is the light that floods the Greens and the temperatures that allow players to enjoy them all year round.

### 🏡 Mijas, experience the tradition

It offers visitors the contrast between the traditional image of this part of Spain, adapted to the times we are living, all without losing its essence. It is a pleasure to stroll through its streets with whitewashed houses, patios, gardens, hermitages ... the village retains the leisurely pace and charm of the past, sheltered by the mountains behind and overlooking the countryside and the sea.

Mijas village is an example of typical architecture, with its white houses in sharp contrast with the green pine trees on the mountain and the blue Mediterranean sea below.



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Tel.: 952 58 90 34 - Fax: 952 58 90 35



Torrox Pueblo, a pretty white village with colourful summer shade.  
:: J. RHODES

DESTINATION  
**AXARQUÍA**

# MALAGA PROVINCE'S OTHER HALF

The Axarquía is growing rapidly in popularity as visitors to Spain seek more than just sun, sea and sand

**F**rom the highest peak in the province to a town voted one of Spain's most beautiful. Mangoes and avocados are the products of the moment, but olive and almond trees as well as muscatel grapes still reign supreme on the hilltops around the dozens of white inland villages. The coastline boasts the province's most important fishing port and Nerja, home of one of Spain's most well-loved television series and firm favourite for British holidaymakers.

The Axarquía, Malaga's easternmost area, is fast becoming a destination not only for tourists from all over the world, but a place to call home for many northern Europeans. They are drawn by the tranquility that the area offers, especially in and around the whitewashed towns and villages both inland and along the coast. For oth-

**JENNIE RHODES**

ers it's the enormous variety that the Axarquía boasts, in terms of outdoor activities, such as hiking, mountain biking, kayaking and paddle-surfing, to name just a few.

Nerja has drawn in tourists for many years. It offers the charm of a white Andalusian town along with modern beach bars and incredible views from the famous Balcón de Europa. Nerja's caves, which were discovered in 1959 by five boys playing in the area, are one of Andalucía's most fascinating attractions. The caves offer an annual international music and dance festival, which has been running for over 30 years.

Neighbouring Torrox Costa

**INFORMATION**

► **Visitors to the Axarquía can follow different routes (raisin, avocado, wine etc).** [www.costadelsol-axarquia.com](http://www.costadelsol-axarquia.com)

► **The Axarquía.** [www.andalucia.org/en/destinaciones/turisticzones/axarquiacosta-del-sol-oriental](http://www.andalucia.org/en/destinaciones/turisticzones/axarquiacosta-del-sol-oriental)

► **Vélez-Málaga.** [www.turismo.velezmalaga.es](http://www.turismo.velezmalaga.es)

► **Nerja.** [www.nerja-turismo.com/en](http://www.nerja-turismo.com/en)

► **Frigiliana.** [www.turismofrigiliana.es](http://www.turismofrigiliana.es)

► **Torrox.** [www.turismotorrox.es](http://www.turismotorrox.es)

**It's the mango and avocado plantations that give way to olive and almond trees that really tell the story of the Axarquía**

has some of the best beaches in the area, as well as the opportunity to find out about the Axarquía's past at the lighthouse where an archaeological dig revealed a Roman settlement. Torrox Pueblo's emblematic umbrellas provide shade from the heat and attract visitors and photographers throughout summer.

Torre del Mar, until recently, had always been a popular holiday destination among Spanish families. However, as more and more foreign visitors discover the area, it is becoming the norm to hear a host of European languages spoken throughout the year. The town has changed enormously in recent years and events such as the Weekend Beach music festival, held every July since 2014, which attracts international acts, as well as the International Air Show, have really put this small resort on the map.

The coastal road from Torre del Mar along to the Axarquía's most westerly town, Rincón



**Mountains.** The ghost village of Acebuchal. :: J. RHODES

de la Victoria, combines continuous beaches, traditional and modern chiringuitos (beach bars), offering some of the freshest, locally caught fish straight from Caleta de Vélez port and the opportunity to delve into the area's history. There are still signs of the old railway which ran from Malaga to Zafaraya, from 1908 to 1968. The old train stations still line the promenades in Benajárfate and Rincón de la Victoria and are now used as tourist information centres

and lifeguard stations.

The road is also a reminder of the importance of agriculture in the Axarquía, with fields full of tomatoes, peppers, beans and aubergines that stretch along the coast as far as the eye can see. Yet it's the mango and avocado plantations along the A356 road, which slowly winds its way up towards the mountains and past the La Viñuela reservoir, giving way to the age-old crops of olives, almonds and Muscat grapes as the warm coastal

climate changes to cooler mountain air, which really tell the story of the Axarquía.

The Mancomunidad de Municipios, which oversees the area's 33 towns, is working to promote routes that allow visitors to learn more about the area's most important products and sample the olive oil from Periana, or Muscat grapes on the 'sun and wine route' which takes in Cómputa, Frigiliana, Algarrobo and others.

The tiny town of



**Seaside.** Burriana Beach, Nerja. :: SUR

Macharaviaya is home to the Museo de Los Gálvez, which explains the town's close links with Pensacola, Florida. Bernardo de Gálvez, who was born in the village, went on to lead the Battle of Pensacola during the American War of Independence against Britain during the 18th century and his family's legacy is still apparent today.

Vélez-Málaga, the area's main administrative centre, joins Comares, Árchez and Frigiliana in having perfectly

well preserved examples of the Axarquía's importance during Arabic times with Mudejar architecture, including towers and fortresses. While Acebuchal, which is known as "the ghost town", rose from the ashes of Spain's bloody Civil War and is now a quaint hamlet full of holiday lets, tucked away in the Alhama, Tejada y Almirajara mountains.

These, and La Maroma, Malaga province's highest peak, provide the backdrop to the Axarquía.

**NERJA, 365 DAYS, 365 EXPERIENCES**

**NERJA 365 DÍAS 365 EXPERIENCIAS**

The calendar grid displays the following scenes for each month:

- JANUARY:** Religious processions with figures in traditional costumes.
- FEBRUARY:** Religious processions and a large bonfire.
- MARCH:** A religious procession with a large, ornate float.
- APRIL:** A religious procession with a large, ornate float.
- MAY:** A religious procession with a large, ornate float.
- JUNE:** A scenic view of a rocky coastline and turquoise water.
- JULY:** A religious procession with a large, ornate float.
- AUGUST:** A scenic view of a rocky coastline and turquoise water.
- SEPTEMBER:** A religious procession with a large, ornate float.
- OCTOBER:** A religious procession with a large, ornate float.
- NOVEMBER:** A scenic view of a rocky coastline and turquoise water.
- DECEMBER:** A religious procession with a large, ornate float.

LEISURE  
SPORT

# A YEAR-ROUND MILD CLIMATE, PERFECT FOR ALL TYPES OF SPORT

Whether it's watersports, skiing or marathon running, southern Spain has a diverse offering for almost all tastes

**DARYL FINCH**

When it comes down to sport, southern Spain may be best known for its golf courses. However, the region is much more versatile than that. With hundreds of miles of beautiful coastline, it comes as no surprise that the area has a plethora of aquatic sports for all levels.

The Cadiz coastline, where the Mediterranean meets the Atlantic, has the perfect conditions for windsurfers and kitesurfers due to the strong winds which pass through the Gibraltar Strait. Tarifa, especially, attracts thousands of sports tourists all year round due to its vast numbers of watersports schools and international competitions.

At the beginning it was just for windsurfers, but in the last 20 years kitesurfing has become popular too. As one of the most adrenaline-fuelled sports around, kitesurfing has boomed, transforming this former fishing village into the spiritual home of the sport. You'll often get 40 knots of

wind and that's enough to fill the cloudless skies with hundreds of kites up and down the length of Tarifa's breathtaking beaches.

Further east down the coast where the waters are much calmer, sports such as paddle surfing have become very popular in towns such as Nerja which come to life in the summer months thanks to the white beaches and multicultural surroundings. A gentle, more relaxed sport, paddleboarding can be enjoyed at any age.

Paddle surfing, as well as kayaking, can also be practised on the province's various inland reservoirs, known locally as the 'lakes'. The main one is in El Chorro, close to the Caminito del Rey, where you can do abseiling along with various other adventure sports including paragliding.

**Not just sun and sand**

However, if you want the thrill of plunging several hundred feet, but would rather keep your feet closer to the ground, the snow-capped mountains of the Sierra Nevada, 32 kilometres away from the historic city of Granada, and just a two-and-a-half-hour drive away from the coast,



The Malaga marathon. :: FRANCIS SILVA



Paddle surfing in Nerja. :: SUR

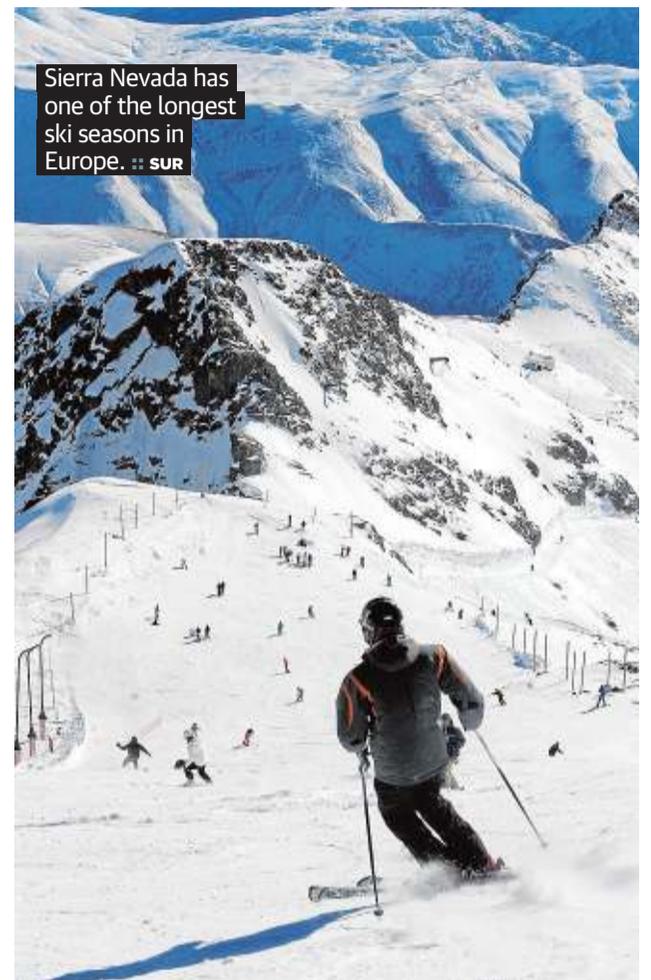
could be the place for you.

It has quickly become one of Europe's leading destinations for winter sports thanks to a combination of its quality, affordability and accessibility. Its location as the most southerly resort in Europe, with stunning views of the Mediterranean, mean it is uniquely placed.

Snow is in abundance here and a typical season runs from the end of November until

May - giving it one of the longest ski seasons in the world.

Snowboarders and skiers can look forward to more than 104 kilometres of pistes split between beginners (49 per cent), intermediates (40 per cent) and advanced (11 per cent). What's more, Sierra Nevada always has a trick up its sleeve, whether it is international competitions, cultural events, or hotel deals suiting everyone's needs. It can offer some-



Sierra Nevada has one of the longest ski seasons in Europe. :: SUR

than to spend hours running around it?

In southern Spain you are spoiled for choice with a number of number of world-class marathons, half marathons and 10 kilometre runs.

One of the more popular among foreigners is the Seville Marathon which occurs every February. The event is one of the flattest in Europe and much of its course is on the south bank of the river around the historic centre of the city.

Another popular marathon is held in Malaga at the beginning of December, and this too takes runners through the city's most emblematic spots, including the seaside promenade, Picasso's birth place, the Roman theatre and the old city centre.

If a full marathon is too much why not aim for a half marathon? The south of Spain is full of them. From Marbella (September) and Torremolinos (February), to Gibraltar (February) and Algeciras (November), you'll find plenty of opportunities to soak up the sunshine.

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COSTA DEL SOL  
MARINAS

# MARINAS, MORE THAN JUST SOMEWHERE TO PARK YOUR BOAT

There are eleven ports on the Costa del Sol where owners can rent berths and visitors can book boat trips or even charter their own yacht

**T**he Costa del Sol has a total of eleven marinas available for visitors many of which are of international renown.

The port of Puerto Banús in Marbella is the most famous in Europe. It attracts not only the incredibly rich but also the tourists who flock there to admire the luxurious super yachts and gaze at the Ferraris, Aston Martins and other top of the range cars that are often parked along the port while their owners do some shopping. It has over 900 berths in total.

Marbella port is close to Puerto Banús but only has 377 berths. It is also a haven for expensive yachts and their wealthy owners while just up the coast from Marbella is the marina at Estepona. This harbour has 447 berths and can take boats up to 35 metres long.

Alcaidesa Marina, in La Línea de la Concepción, is located in the Bay of Gibraltar and has 624 berths and boatyard facilities for repairs and maintenance. It is very popu-

lar as Gibraltar airport is just ten minutes away while the main airports of Jerez and Malaga are about an hours drive.

Sotogrande has a huge marina, divided into two areas. In total there are 1,382 berths some of which can take boats up to 70 metres in length. The port area has shops, bars and restaurants with terraces overlooking the marina. It is ideally placed as it is just 25km from Gibraltar airport.

At the entrance to the Axarquía is the Caleta de Vélez marina. The marina has 274 berths for visitors and also operates as a fishing port.

Fuengirola has extensive port facilities which it shares with the Oceanographic Institute and the local fishing fleet. The port area provides restaurants and terraces, plenty of parking and children's play areas. There are excursions for dolphin watching and boat trips along the coast. All the facilities necessary including WiFi, electricity, showers etc. are provided for 226 berths in the marina.

Twice recognised as the



La Caleta de Vélez. :: SUR



Fuengirola port. :: SUR



Marbella port. :: SUR

best marina in the world, Puerto Marina in Benalmádena has over 1,000 berths and a lively complex of shops, bars and

restaurants.

In Malaga city there are two marinas El Candado and Muelle Uno. El Candado to the east of the city has 280

berths and can admit boats up to 15 metres long.

Muelle Uno is at the far end of Malaga port and has recently been completely re-

designed with restaurants, bars and upmarket shops. The Centro Pompidou museum is instantly recognisable by its coloured, glass cube and there is an Arab market held on the port the first three Sundays of every month.

Every year thousands of tourist disembark from cruise ships that dock at Muelle Uno and occasionally multi-million-euro megayachts also moor there.

Last year Radiant, the sixth most expensive yacht in the world and belonging to United Arab Emirates businessman Abdullah Al Futtaim, attracted crowds of admirers when it docked at Malaga port.

Many marinas along the coast have yachts and motorboats that can be chartered. These can be hired by the hour or the day, depending on the plans and the budget of the visitors. Trips to go dolphin watching or sea fishing are also organised and hiring a boat for events such as hen and stag parties or birthday celebrations is becoming more and more popular

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DESTINATION  
**BENALMÁDENA PORT**

# BOATS AND BEAUTIFUL BUILDINGS ON THE WATER

Benalmádena's port, with more than 1,100 berths, has received the European Union Blue Flag for the quality of its services and water every year since 1987

Visitors to Benalmádena rarely go home without a stroll through the local Puerto Deportivo.

It is one of the most important marinas on the southern coast of Spain and has been

awarded the title of Best Marina in the World on two occasions, in 1995 and in 1997, by international maritime magazines. Every year since 1987 it has received the Blue Flag, the European standard



Benalmádena Port has unique architecture. :: SUR

for the quality of the water and services.

The awards pay tribute to the unique architecture of the marina, its extensive facilities for both boat owner and visitor, and also for its beauty and location at the heart of the Costa del Sol.

Benalmádena enjoys around 320 days of sunshine a year and with an average temperature of 22°C activities of all types can be carried out all year.

The marina is made up of artificial islands connected by bridges lending itself to being described as a modern Venice and is not only for boating ac-

tivities, it also holds sporting and musical events.

The large residential area is built in a unique architectural style which combines Arabic and Indian influences, and the port has over 1,100 berths for yachts between six and 30 metres in length. As well as the many bars, restaurants, casinos and shops on the marina there is also one of Europe's Sea Life Centres.

The Sea Life Aquarium offers a great day out for all the family with close-up encounters with sharks, rays and exotic fish as well as octopus, sea turtles and jellyfish.

MANAGER BENALMÁDENA PORT  
**MANUEL J. JIMÉNEZ**

## "THE PORT HAS NEVER LOST ITS GOOD REPUTATION"

The manager of Puerto Deportivo de Benalmádena, Manuel J. Jiménez, emphasised the importance of the World Travel Market in London as "drawing potential clients' attention" to the marina as well as discovering new trends in the sector.

**How is the port doing at the moment?**

Like the rest of the sector we are experiencing a regeneration at all levels. This summer the berths have had around 90% occupancy, the best since 2015.

**Is it difficult to sell berths in the marina?**

I would say that it hasn't been any more or less difficult than in any other tourist destination. In spite of the years of economic crisis, Puerto Deportivo de Benalmádena never lost its good reputation.



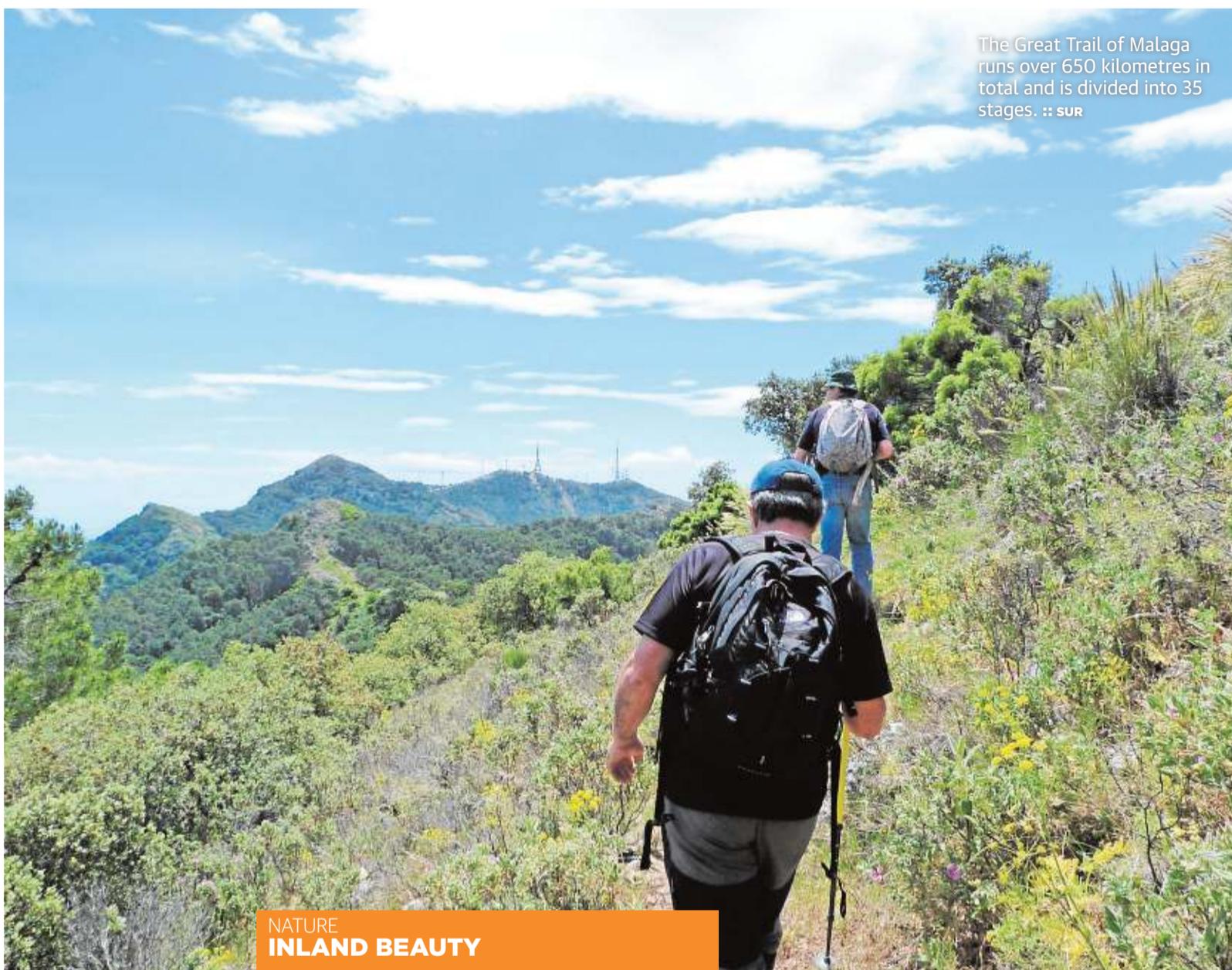
Manuel J. Jiménez. :: SUR

**How do you see the sector progressing in Andalucía?**

I think that at the moment we are seeing a consolidation of the recuperation that we worked so hard to achieve. Our presence here at the WTM and at the Scottish Boat Show and the opening of new markets such as in the Baltic, offers great possibilities we have not fully addressed yet.

**Puerto Deportivo de Benalmádena,  
Discover it!  
www.puertobenalmadena.es**

*During the day or at night, a stroll through the marina is like a stroll through the world. The berths full of yachts of all types return to us the sound of ropes and sails. And, at the same time, a variety of different languages demonstrate the happiness of the tourists who come from all over the world.*



The Great Trail of Malaga runs over 650 kilometres in total and is divided into 35 stages. :: SUR

NATURE  
INLAND BEAUTY

JAVIER  
ALMELLONES

# A PROVINCE TO BE EXPLORED ON FOOT

## The Great Trail of Malaga and the King's Path are two new attractions in the inland region of Malaga

In the past three years there has been a real revolution in rural tourism in Malaga province, thanks to two major new projects by the provincial authority, the Diputación de Malaga: the restoration of the 'Caminito del Rey' (King's Path) and the inauguration of the 'Gran Senda' or Great Trail of Malaga.

As a result of these important attractions, the province of Malaga has become a benchmark for active and nature tourism in Spain. The projects form a spectacular binomial for those who enjoy walking, and a third project is due to be completed soon, the 'Senda Litoral', or Coastal Path, which is gradually being created in stages along the coast.

**Caminito del Rey**  
The daredevil walkway

The Caminito del Rey, which opened in the spring of 2015, is a vertiginous walk and, at the same time, a trip through nature and history in the heart of the province of Malaga.

Because of its location, visitors also have the perfect opportunity to see some other nearby attractions on the same excursion, such as the group of three reservoirs and traditional villages like Ardales, Álora and Valle de Abdalajís.

The 'Caminito' crosses an impressive karst gorge and was restored as a tourist attraction after being closed for many years because it

was in such bad condition. It was originally built in the early 20th century as a pedestrian path for workers building the Conde del Guadalhorce reservoir, although it was given its name - King's Path - when it was inaugurated by Alfonso XIII in 1921.

Its reopening was a milestone for tourism in Malaga province, because it offers amazing views down into the limestone gorge. It has

been receiving worldwide press coverage since before the inauguration. One of the stages of the 'Vuelta de España' cycle race even finished nearby, as a means of giving the attraction even more publicity.

It took over a year to rehabilitate and restore the four-kilometre-long pathway, and the 1.2-kilometre-long stretch which is 100 metres above the Guadal-

horce river was particularly difficult.

The old pathway was extremely dilapidated and dangerous so the new one, which has wooden panels, has been built above the original, and is fixed to the rock with metal anchorings; one part of it has a glass floor so that people crossing can look down into the gorge and see the original pathway below. Now that the restoration is complete, the walkway is completely safe and easy to use.

The works were carried out using a technique similar to that used by workers of the Hydroelectrical Company of El Chorro: the workers were suspended from the wall of the gorge so they could install the panels of wood and fix them to the rock.

The dimensions of this narrow gorge, which is more than three kilometres long, are striking. In the area around it you can often see typical Mediterranean wildlife, and it is also perfect for outdoor sports and activities such as kayaking, hiking, pot-holing and climbing. The latter has become increasingly popular in recent years, and hundreds of enthusiasts from all over the world visit this area every year.

But in addition to its indisputable geological value, it is also important from an ecological point of view with numerous interesting species such as griffon vultures.

This whole area has also been important throughout history: numerous archaeological remains have been discovered here, some of them prehistoric, and what used to be the town of Bobastro, where the Muladi leader Omar Ibn Hafsun organised a major rebellion against the power of the Omayyads.

In the same area you can also visit a valuable prehistoric site: the necropolis of Las Aguilillas. This enclave, situated near the road which links the reservoirs with Campillos, has seven mortuary structures carved out of the rock. The chambers have been preserved, and numerous niches. The funerary items and human remains which have been found there are of great historical value.

**The Great Trail**  
Hiking round the province

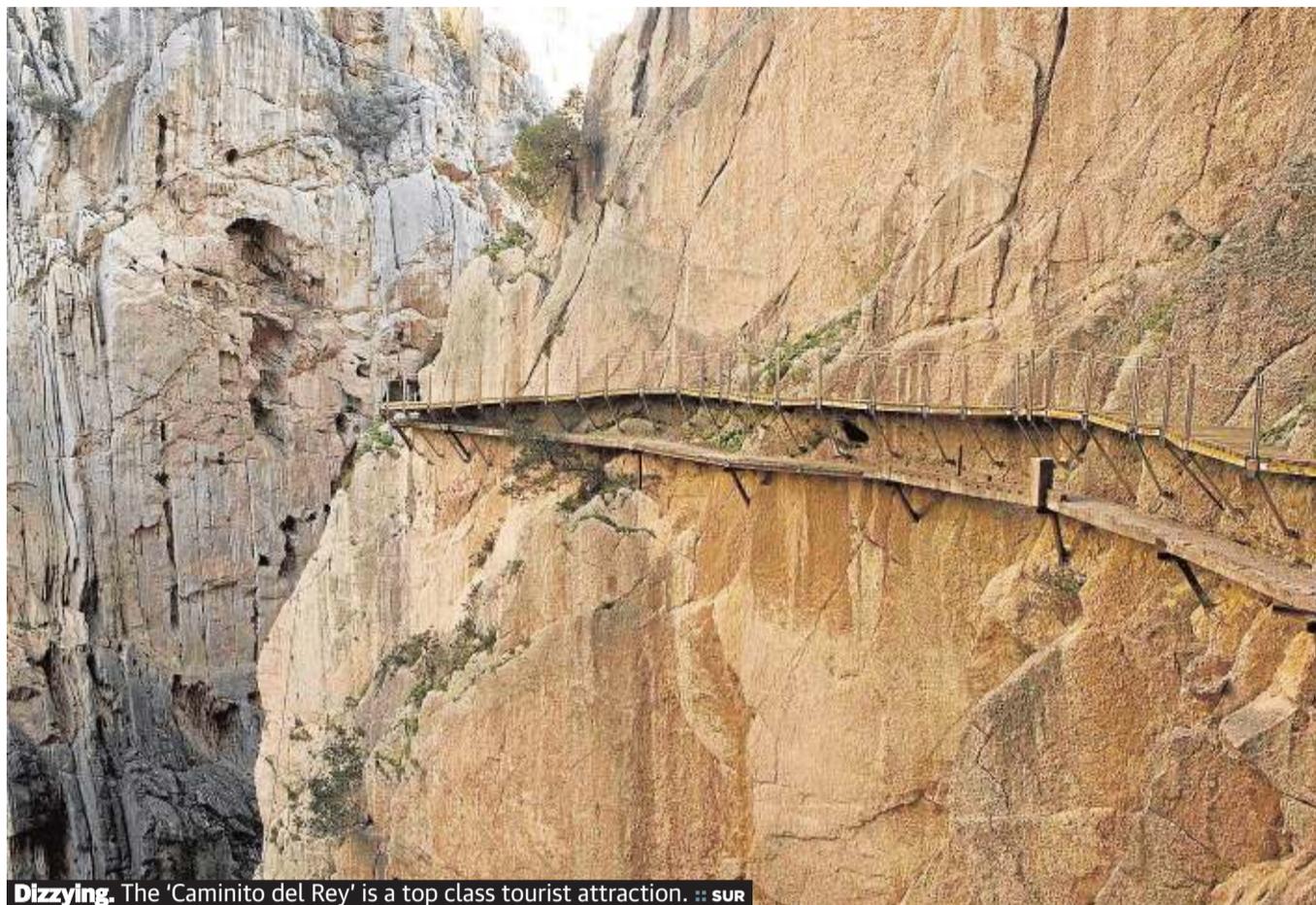
The other new attraction, the 'Gran Senda' or Great Trail of Malaga, is an active tourism route which connects the whole of the Costa del Sol in 35 stages, covering over 650 kilometres in total.

This route enables walkers to experience the contrasts of the Costa del Sol in person, not only by walking but also through alternative activities such as cycling, rafting and climbing, all of which are available along a route which can be adapted according to people's demands and difficulties.

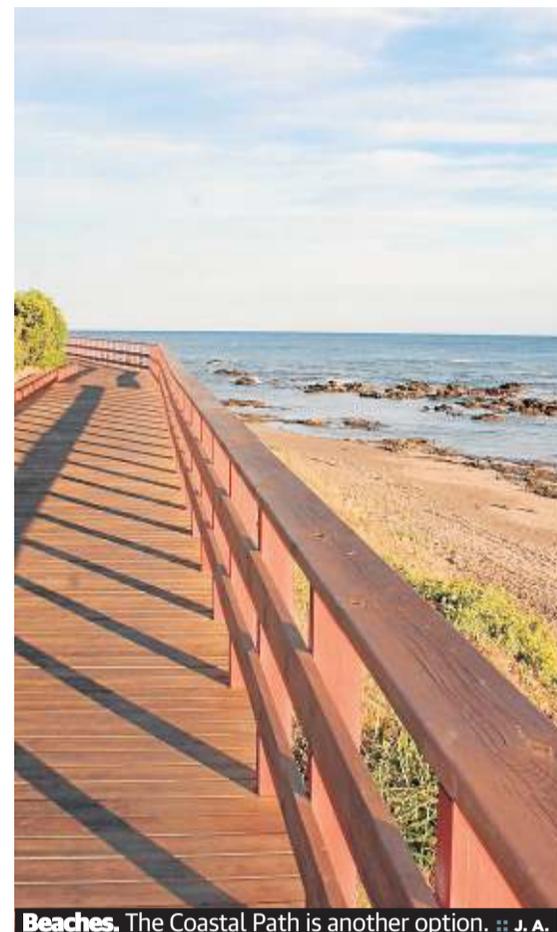
However, tourists who are thinking of trying the world of hiking for the first time should ensure that they have some basic knowledge first, such as how to recognise the different signs and markers.

In Malaga province there are three types of walking route: a 'gran recorrido' (GR) which is over 50 kilometres long and has signs in green and red; the shorter 'pequeño recorrido' (PR) routes which are between ten and 50 kilometres, which are marked in white and yellow, and finally local routes which are less than ten kilometres in length and are marked in white and green.

The long route numbered 249 is the one that runs around practically the whole of the boundaries of the province of Malaga.



**Dizzying.** The 'Caminito del Rey' is a top class tourist attraction. :: SUR



**Beaches.** The Coastal Path is another option. :: J. A.

It officially starts in Malaga city, beside the Diputación building in Calle Pacífico, on the shores of the Mediterranean, and heads towards the east of the province. The first stage ends on the seafront in Rincón de la Victoria.

The access to the inland part of the province starts when you leave Nerja, and the fifth stage of the trail takes you up to the village of Frigiliana, in La Axarquía. After that the route continues north, reaching its uppermost point at Cuevas Bajas, in the north-east of Malaga.

The route through the northern part of the Costa del Sol has some particularly lovely stages, especially in the area of El Chorro and the aforementioned Caminito del Rey.

The descent back towards sea level begins from the 26th stage of the trail when, after passing Ronda and arriving at Jimera de Libar, it winds its way gradually down to Estepona.

From then onwards, the

route runs parallel to the coast back to Malaga city, although it passes beforehand through Ojén, Mijas and Alhaurín de la Torre.

The third project, which complements the Great Trail, is the Senda Litoral, or Coastal Path. Around two-thirds of this are already in use. The whole project will be another active tourism attraction for visitors to the Costa del Sol, as it will link Manilva and Nerja, a distance of over 162 kilometres, along the Malaga coast.

With the Coastal Path, the Great Trail and local routes in the province, the Costa del Sol can offer its visitors the chance of environmentally friendly and active tourism as well as all the different cultural, artistic, gastronomic and experiential attractions which are already on offer.

#### The Coastal Path

The long seaside walk

Among the latest stretches of the Coastal Path to be inaugurated is the one which opened at the end of Decem-

ber last year. It is a wooden walkway over the Manilva river, about 60 metres long, which has united the coastal area of Casares and Manilva. This part of the project cost around 200,000 euros and was financed by the 'Plan Qualifica'.

This bridge makes it possible to walk or cycle uninterruptedly along a stretch which is about three kilometres long, from La Duquesa port to La Parrilla stream.

In Casares, stretches totalling 1.6 kilometres are now in use and three more stretches have yet to be completed. They are still awaiting authorisation from the Junta de Andalucía, the regional government. Two of them are to be financed by the Malaga provincial authority at an expected cost of 370,000 euros.

This part of the project refers to a stretch between La Jordana stream and the boundary with Estepona (470 metres), which is expected to cost 241,806.63 euros.

The project, which is to be carried out by the Turismo y

### THE KING'S PATH

**Length:** The total length of the 'Caminito del Rey' is 7.7 kilometres, of which 4.8 are accesses and 2.9 are walkways. **Duration:** The estimated time to do the complete walk from the entrance of one walkway to the other, plus forest paths to reach/leave the area, is about three hours.

**Nature:** The path crosses the Desfiladero de los Gaitanes gorge. **History:** The original walkway was built in the early 20th century for workers who were building the Conde del Guadalhorce reservoir. It was given its name after being inaugurated by King Alfonso XIII.

Planificación Costa del Sol company, will create a pedestrian path which is three metres wide, with protective barriers and a line of native trees and bushes. It will also mean that a large area of beach, which is currently occupied by the existing path and a breakwater, can be recovered. In addition, the area will be replanted with species in keeping with the surroundings.

Work is also due to be carried out on another stretch of the

### Between them, the Great Trail and Coastal Path will create 800 kilometres of walking routes, all in Malaga province

project, which runs between the Torre de la Sal watchtower and La Parrilla stream (150 metres in length), at a cost of 128,644 euros.

Another project is currently awaiting finance from the Plan Qualifica: it consists of a wooden walkway over La Jordana stream, 32 metres in length, which is expected to cost 250,000 euros.

With regard to Manilva, at the end of last year the provincial authority transferred 412,000 euros to the local council so the contract for three new wooden walkways over streams could be put to tender.

These will be three me-

tres wide and will enable walkers to cross the streams of El Indiano (20 metres long), Martagina (15 metres) and Alcorrín (18 metres).

The surrounding area will also be regenerated to make it more attractive, with small stretches of pathway, accesses and viewing points. The land will be cleaned and cleared, and repopulated with vegetation where necessary.

At present the Diputación is drawing up plans for four further parts of this project in Manilva: from the boundary with Cadiz province to the Playa Paraíso residential development, from there to the Jardín Tropical complex, and two walkways over the Estanquillo and Peñuela streams.

These will cost about 760,000 euros and when they are completed it means that the whole coastline of Manilva will have been joined together.

The provincial authority's budget for this year included two million euros for the new parts of the Coastal Path project.

# B {tasty and} bou

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Flamingos greet visitors at the entrance to the park.  
:: DARYL FINCH

## FUENGIROLA BIOPARC

# A TROPICAL PARADISE IN THE MIDDLE OF FUENGIROLA

The diverse habitats of Bioparc Fuengirola aim to recreate settings found in the wild

Considered one of the best in Europe, the most visited in Andalucía, and rated “Traveller’s Choice” by TripAdvisor, Bioparc Fuengirola belongs to an elite group of nature parks which aims to house animals in enclosures which closely match those experienced in the wild. As one of the first parks to be created based on the ‘zoo-immersion’ concept, every day thousands of visitors come, enjoy and take photos of their favourite species, some exotic and hard to find in other zoos, like the Sumatran tiger, the pygmy hippopotamus, the Philippine mouse-deer, the leopard, the gharial or fish-eating crocodile (Bioparc is the only zoo in Europe to successfully breed them, in 2005 and 2011), the Komodo dragon or the golden-cheeked gibbon. In total there are more than 200 different species.

The majority of these are either endangered or at high risk of extinction and this forms a key part of Bioparc Fuengirola’s efforts to help with and raise awareness of environmental conservation. Two of such species are the Sumatran tiger, of which there are only 300 specimens remaining in the wild, or the roloway monkey, the only couple of this species in Spain. For them, and many other animals, the Bioparc develops conservation and breeding programmes.

“Our workers are all highly-motivated and take special care over well-being, cleaning and presentation”, says Jesús Recuero, technical



There are only natural barriers between visitors and the animals. :: D. FINCH



Visitors are immersed in the surroundings. :: D. F.

director and vet.

Visiting the park is like stepping into a tropical rain forest. The whole design of the park is intended to wrap around the visitor, with little difference between public space and animal enclosure, to convey some of the magic of touring the forest and discovering the inhabitants. This is the key that makes the park different and the reason why people identify the park as one of the best.

Bioparc Fuengirola is made up of four distinct habitats. The first is the island of Madagascar, where the famous lemur live. Here, visitors have the chance to get to know about the baobab, the Bioparc’s mythical tree as well as being close to the lemurs during organised visits. Equatorial Africa is the second habitat where you can discover the only couple of Coast gorillas in Andalucía alongside other well-known species like chimpanzees or meerkats. In the South-east Asian habitat, the abandoned mine, the riverine forest and the forest canopy, are home to the false gharial, one

of the oldest types of crocodiles which is seriously endangered. The final habitat is the newest part of the park: the Indo-Pacific. Here, you’ll see the famous Komodo dragon and the Galapagos giant tortoise.

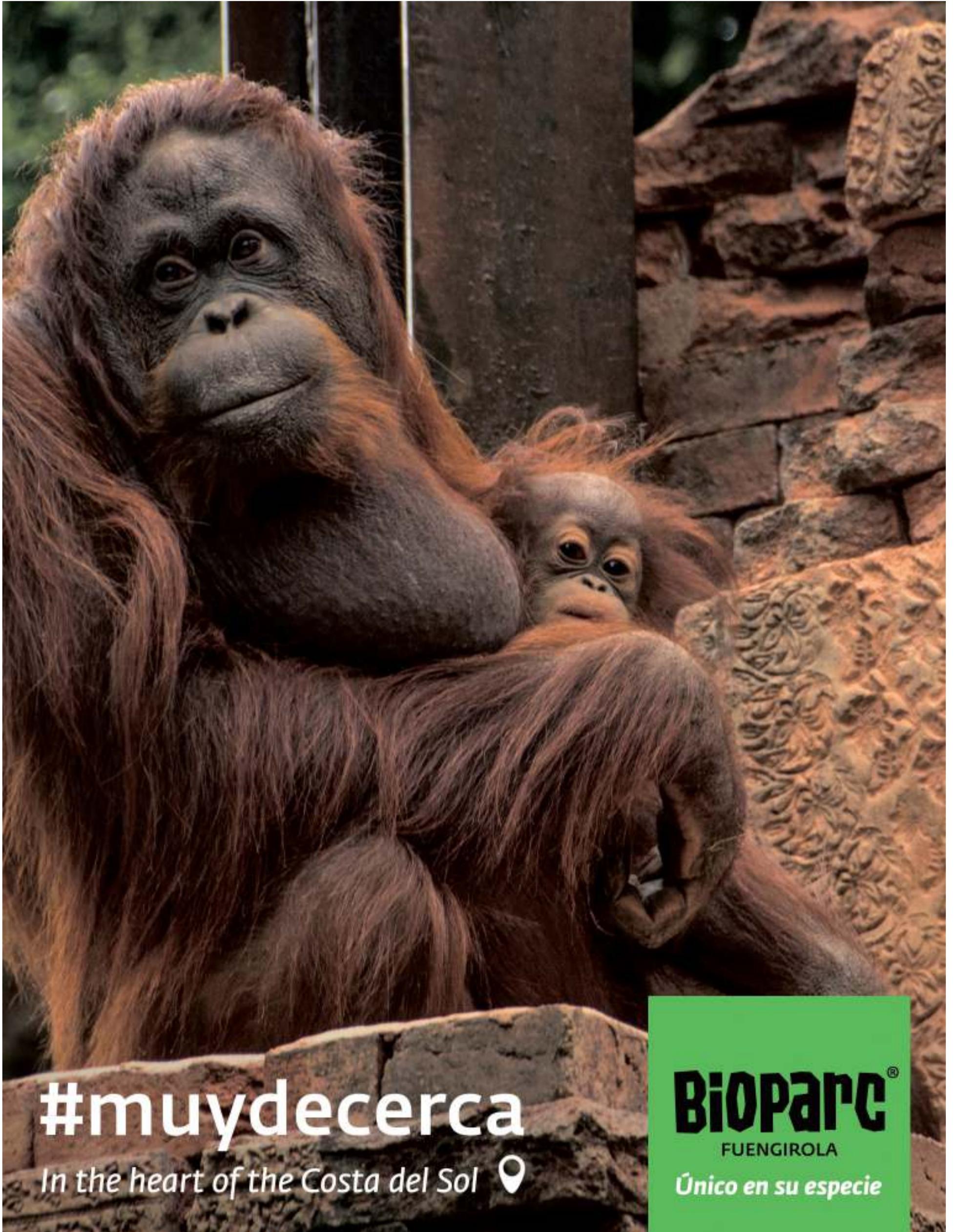
While you are there, you must keep a look out for the activities which take place during the day, from feeding sessions to informative and interactive talks focused on education. Bioparc Fuengirola offers more than any ordinary zoo: you get a full immersion into jungle life, right in the heart of Fuengirola.

### BIOPARC FUENGIROLA

**Address:** Avenida Camilo José Cela 8-10 (close to the bullring), Fuengirola.

**Opening hours:** Varied. Opens at 10am every day, closing at 6pm during the winter months.

**Entry:** Adults 19.90 euros, children aged three to nine 14.90 euros, over 65s 15.90 euros, people with disabilities 11.50 euros.



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FUENGIROLA

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WHAT TO DO  
GREEN SPACESGLORIOUS  
GARDENS  
OF THE  
SOUTH

The province of Malaga has many notable parks and gardens planted with species from all over the world

DENISE  
BUSH

Type in 'Malaga' to any search engine and the Costa del Sol with its beautiful beaches, numerous hotels and restaurants invariably comes up somewhere near the top. However there is a side of Malaga province that is not as well-known and appreciated as it should be, and that is the natural beauty of its parks and gardens.

**Jardín Botánico La Concepción**

The Jardín Botánico Histórico La Concepción is probably the most famous garden in the province, and one of the most important tropical and subtropical gardens in Europe. Created by Amalia Heredia Livermore and her husband Jorge Loring Oyarzábal in around 1850, the gardens cover three hectares of the 23 hectare estate. It contains a wide selection of plants from all over the world, around 23,000 species in total, which are divided into separate zones of the gardens. The estate is now owned by Malaga city hall which acquired it in 1990, opening it to the public in 1994.

**Finca San José**

Across the motorway from La Concepción gardens is another historical garden, once owned by the Heredia/Loring family. The Finca San José estate was purchased by the Hermanos de San Juan de Dios in 1923 and converted into a sanatorium for patients with mental illnesses. The gardens have been preserved and contain some rare and unique species

that were brought to Malaga on board the Loring family's fleet of ships. Of particular interest is a *Beaucarnea recurvata* (Pony tail Palm), a *Schottia latifolia* (Boer bean tree) and a magnificent example of *Araucaria columnaris* (Cook pine tree).

**Jardín Botánico Molino de Inca**

The botanical gardens Molino de la Inca are situated in the Las Manantiales area of Torremolinos. They are named after the fifteenth century flour mill which still exists today and is now a museum. The 15,000 square metres of gardens were restored in 2003 and contain a huge selection of plants including a centennial Norfolk Pine in the centre of a natural maze. Water is a big feature in these gardens, with ponds and fountains and a five metre waterfall. There are pink, Italian marble statues of the seasons and an impressive collection of Bonsai in the Japanese water garden.

**The English Cemetery**

The first protestant graveyard in Spain is located in Malaga in Avenida de Pries. It was created in the nineteenth century and arranged as a garden with benches placed to look out to sea. One of the first 'inhabitants' was the young Irish liberal Robert Boyd, who was shot alongside General Torrijos on the beaches of San Andrés in 1831. The gardens contain many exotic species of plants among the classical, gothic and modern tombs.

**Jardines de Pedro Luis Alonso**

Also in the city of Malaga are the Pedro Luis Alonso gardens. They can be found on the east-



The Molina de Inca gardens in Torremolinos. :: SUR



The roses in the Pedro Luis Alonso gardens. :: SUR

ern side of Malaga's city hall and were laid out in the formal Spanish style with some Arabic and French influences. In total the gardens cover ap-

proximately 6,500 square metres with several ponds to add a sensation of coolness and the sound of running water, and orange trees to add shade and



The English Cemetery. :: SUR

perfume the air. There is an exceptional rose garden, designed by architect Guerrero Strachan and containing 75 species of roses from across the world.

**The Puerta Oscura**

The Puerta Oscura gardens link the Jardines de Pedro Luis with the Monte de Gibralfaro and are named after an ancient Arabic Gateway that once was there. They have been restored to compliment the Alcazaba with narrow paths, terraces, water features and abundant vegetation.

**Parque de Malaga**

Stretching from the Plaza de general Torrijos to the Plaza de la Marina, the Parque de Malaga is one of the busiest parks in the city of Malaga and is one of the most important parks in Europe for its tropical and sub-tropical plants. Planting started in 1899 and has been re-modelled various times, the latest being in 2007

when the biodiversity of the planting was increased to over 300 species.

The 30,000 square metres of gardens run parallel to the port and its cool, shady benches and quiet corners with fountains and lakes is popular with tourists and locals alike.

**Parque de la Paloma**

This park is situated right in the heart of Benalmádena Costa. It was opened in 1995 and has become the 'green lung' of the town.

Covering over 200,000 square metres of land, it has a large artificial lake and pebble paths leading across the park through the trees and around the lake. Besides the many varieties of deciduous and evergreen trees, there is also a special cacti and succulents garden. Throughout the park roam peacocks, swans, rabbits, hens, tortoises and ducks and there are goats, donkeys and emus in an enclosure.



A typical street scene during an Andalusian 'feria'. :: NITO SALAS

CULTURE  
FAIRS AND FESTIVALS

# ANDALUCÍA, A LAND OF ENDEARING TRADITIONS AND FASCINATING FIESTAS

From colourful 'ferias' to more sombre Holy Week processions, the Andalusians love sharing their beloved celebrations with tourists



RACHEL HAYNES

The people of southern Spain are famous for enjoying a good party, with a calendar packed with fairs and festivals on a local and regional level. They also throw themselves wholeheartedly into their more solemn traditions, when young and old come together united by a collective passion that is hard to find in other countries. The best thing, though, is that they like nothing better than sharing their traditions with

visitors from abroad.

Tourists who have found by chance that the city, town or village they are staying in happens to be staging its annual 'feria' while they are there have an extra special memory to take home with them.

The chance to photograph locals in flamenco dresses and Spanish hats, even riding decorated horses, as part of a real life tradition rather than a show put on for tourists, is a real treat.

Most towns in southern Spain hold their annual fair or 'feria' some time between April and October. The ingredients are simple: music and dancing in the streets, traditional food



Semana Santa in Malaga. :: SUR

washed down with local wine, fairground attractions, concerts and, in larger towns and despite growing protests, bullfighting.

While the ferias of big cities such as Seville and Malaga are the best known and most impressive, the celebrations in smaller places are less overwhelming and easier to take in for a foreign tourist.

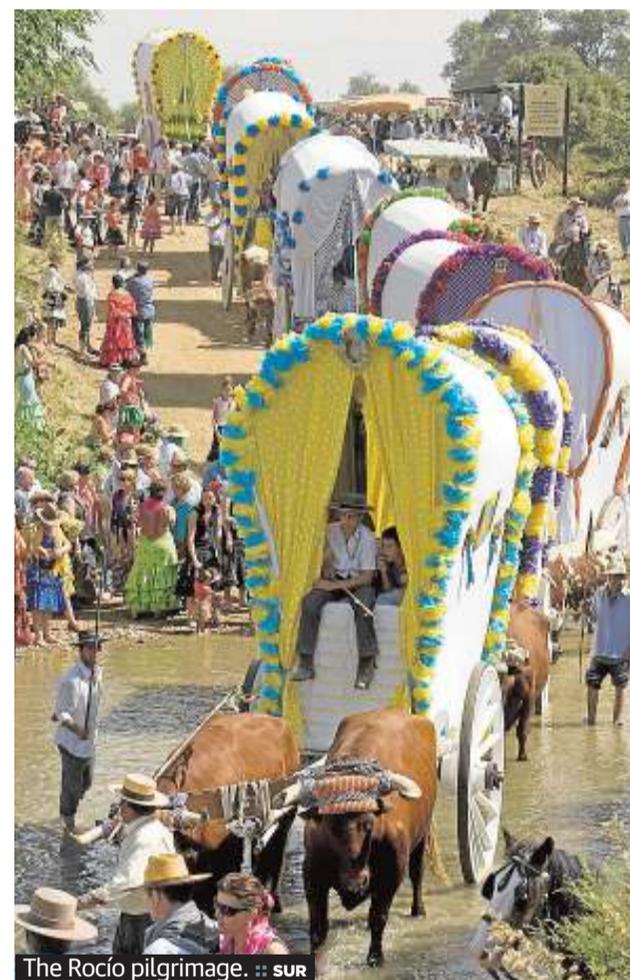
Other festivals take the form of a 'romería' which is a cross between a party and a pilgrimage, as people follow an image of their patron saint, either on foot or in decorated carriages, normally to a shrine on the outskirts of their town.

Andalucía's biggest 'romería'

is El Rocío, where more than a million pilgrims from all over the region converge on a small village on the edge of the Doñana national park in Huelva province for one long weekend. The reason is the presence of a surprisingly small statue of Virgin and Child, the Virgen del Rocío, whose shrine looks out over the marshes.

There is normally a religious motivation behind events that bring crowds of people out into the streets in their thousands in Spain and there's no better example than the Holy Week celebrations.

Semana Santa is one week in the year when the centres of towns and cities come to a



The Rocío pilgrimage. :: SUR

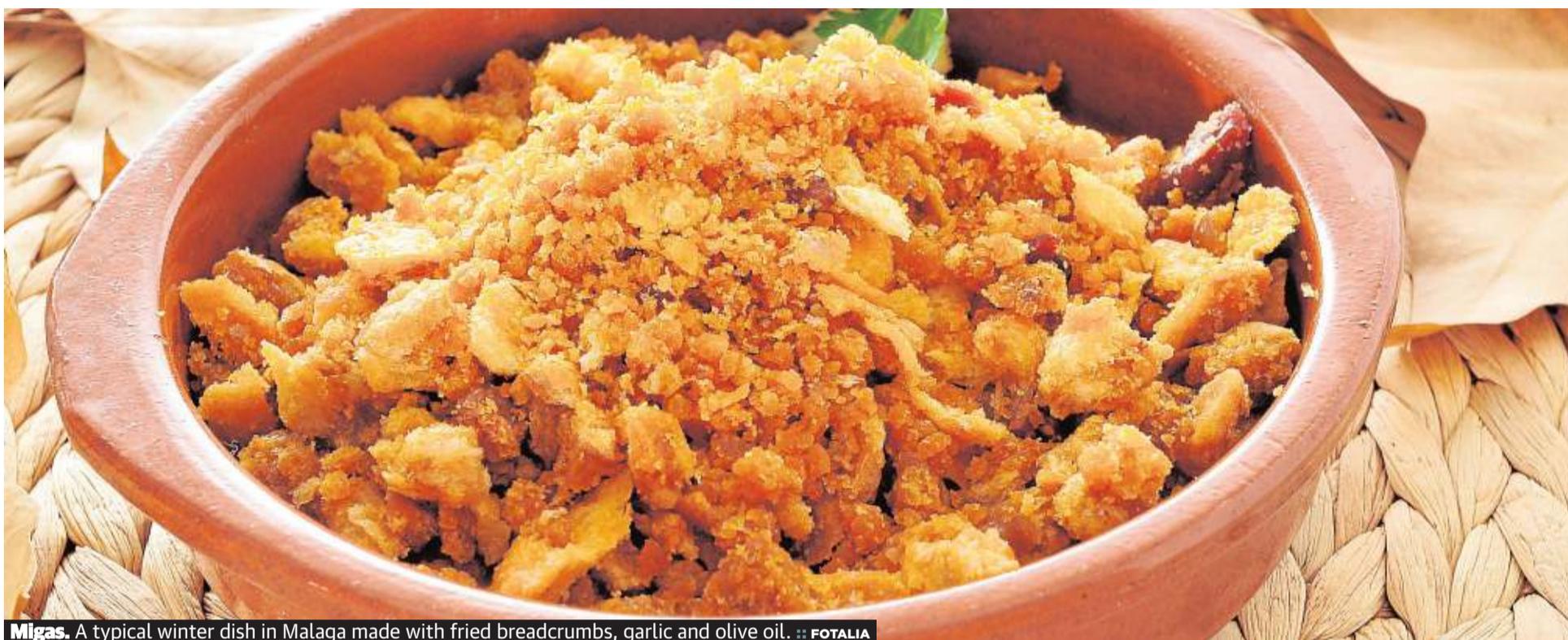
standstill nearly every evening. Tourists, especially in cities such as Malaga, Seville, Granada and Cordoba, are wise to get their sightseeing in during the morning, before the streets fill with thousands of people following images of Christ and the Virgin Mary. And that's not counting the spectators.

The seemingly endless lines of "penitents" in their pointed hoods can be quite disquieting at first, but the processions are well worth taking in and admired, either from a religious

point of view or simply as the remarkable spectacle it is.

One thing that all these traditional celebrations have in common is that they bring together several generations of the community.

Children and teenagers dance alongside their parents and grandparents at the ferias, while the youthful eyes looking out of many of the pointed hoods in Semana Santa prove that in Andalucía there is little danger of these traditions dying out.



**Migas.** A typical winter dish in Malaga made with fried breadcrumbs, garlic and olive oil. :: FOTALIA

## GASTRONOMY MALAGA CUISINE

# TAPAS AND TREATS TO TICKLE YOUR TASTE BUDS

**MALAGA.** The gastronomy of the province of Malaga has been influenced by many different cultures including the Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans and Arabs who have all left their own particular mark on the cuisine.

The Phoenicians and the Greeks brought the olive tree to Spain and the Romans extended its cultivation considerably. The Arabs brought dates, sugarcane and citrus fruits among many other foods and techniques for preserving and pickling. The daily diet was dictated by social class and location.

### Hearty stews

In the past, agricultural workers across the province made lunch from whatever was to hand and this was often stews consisting of scraps of meat supplemented with seasonal vegetables, local olives and bread and which could be prepared over an open fire.

From these simple origins came many of Malaga's most traditional dishes including 'migas' (fried breadcrumbs with garlic, salt and oil) and 'berzas' (thick stew made with cabbage or Swiss chard, chickpeas or broad beans, garlic, carrots or sometimes potatoes, with bits of pork or chicken).

Other variations on these simple dishes include 'sopa mondeña' (a soup typical of the town of Monda which has a festival in honour of it every spring), 'chanfaina', typical of Totalán (the festival for this is held on the last Sunday of November) and 'sopa perota' (Álora has a fiesta on the first Saturday in October to celebrate this local dish).

Andalucía's cuisine has been influenced by the Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans and Arabs over the centuries

### Chilled gazpacho

'Gazpacho' (a chilled soup made mainly from tomatoes, garlic, cucumber, olive oil, stale bread and peppers) is a great thirst quencher in the summer and had the added benefit that it didn't need cooking.

This popular, cold soup was apparently derived from the Cordoba 'salmorejo' and has in turn been tweaked to produce 'porra fría'. A thick version of gazpacho, porra fría is traditionally garnished with cured ham and hard-boiled eggs. Its origins are disputed; some say it was first made in Antequera and others say it originated from the town of Villanueva del Trabuco, just over 20 kilometres away.

The original recipe for gazpacho is still being re-invented by some of the top chefs in Malaga and versions of it can be found on the menus of many of the most prestigious restaurants on the coast.

### Ajo blanco

Another cold soup, one which



**Torrijas.** A sticky Easter treat :: SUR

has its origins in the Axarquía region of Malaga, is 'ajoblanco'. Surprisingly simple but very tasty, this soup is made with breadcrumbs, almonds, garlic, olive oil, salt and vinegar.

### Fish and seafood

On the coast, fish and seafood was, and still is, the mainstay of the diet. With some variations, the traditional 'pescaito frito' (fried fish) appears on nearly every restaurant's menu on the Costa.

Equally as famous in Malaga are the 'espetos' or sardines on skewers that are cooked over hot coals outside the 'chiringuitos' (beach bars).

'Gazpachuelo' is a delicious fish soup that is very popular

in Malaga. White in appearance, it is made with fish stock, mayonnaise, garlic, potatoes and whatever fish is available.

Few bars don't include 'ensalada malagueña' on their tapas menus in the summer. It is made with chunks of salt cod, potatoes, oranges, olive oil and salt and is a typical Malaga dish.

### Molletes

Like the baguette is to the French, the 'mollete' is to Spain. It is a soft, flat, bread roll originating from the town of Antequera and is a favourite for breakfast, cut open and toasted, sprinkled with olive oil and then topped with crushed tomatoes with a little salt.



**Gazpacho.** A chilled summer soup. :: SUR



**Espetos.** Grilled sardines on the beach. :: SUR

Less healthy but delicious options for toppings include spreading the toasted mollete thickly with either 'zurrapa' (a thick pâté of pork and dripping) or 'sobrasada' (pork pâté mixed with paprika and other seasonings).

**Miel de Caña**

The Moors were very fond of sweet things and were responsible for bringing sugar cane to the Iberian peninsula.

'Miel de caña', or molasses, is used in sweet and savoury dishes and a very popular tapa in Malaga is 'berenjenas con miel de caña' which consists of the thick black molasses trickled over fried aubergines. The creaminess of the aubergines contrasts perfectly with the sweetness of the molasses.

Frigiliana, a pretty town to the east of Malaga, has the only factory in Europe that makes 'miel de caña' in the tra-

ditional way with no artificial additives. The town holds a special miel de caña festival every March.

**Sweets and desserts**

In Malaga, like the rest of Spain, sweet cakes are eaten for breakfast as well as for the traditional 'merienda' (mid-afternoon snack).

'Leche frita', or fried milk, sounds improbable but is actually a thick batter which is

fried and then coated with sugar and cinnamon. Another popular cake with a name that doesn't translate well is the 'borrachuelo', a 'drunken' cake, that contains wine or brandy and is deep fried. They are most common around Easter and Christmas while the rest of the year a very similar cake called a 'pestiño' (eyelid) is available.

Other traditional Easter treats are 'torrijas'. They are made with thick slices of stale

bread that have been soaked in Malaga sweet wine, sugar, milk, cinnamon and grated lemon rind. The soaked bread is then dipped in beaten egg and deep fried and sprinkled with more sugar and cinnamon.

'Bienmasabe' ('tastes good to me'), popular in Antequera, is more of a dessert than a cake and contains honey, egg yolks and ground almonds with lemon, cinnamon or sherry.

Ronda is famous for a

unique little cake called a 'Yema del Tajo'. Sales are highest in the autumn and it is made from a recipe that has been a closely guarded secret for over a hundred years.

At Christmas, supermarkets fill their shelves with 'polvorones' and 'mantecados', small, crumbly cakes wrapped in paper. The majority of these are made in Estepa (Seville) and are flavoured with chocolate, wine, cinnamon and lemon.

SPAIN



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COSTA DEL SOL  
HERE TO STAY

# THE COSTA DEL SOL, YOUR NEW HOME FROM HOME

With international schools, clubs and organisations on your doorstep, southern Spain is the perfect place to relocate

**DARYL FINCH**



On Spain's most southerly coast, home never feels far away. Not only are there regular connections to much of Europe, Malaga province is a great big melting pot of different nationalities. Britons come in large numbers, but they are joined by expanding communities of Dutch, Swedes, Germans, French, Russians, Finns and Arabs, to name just a few. Far from being just a place in the sun to retire, the Costa del Sol is a magnet for a broad spectrum of people, from businesses attracted by the lower costs, to skilled bilingual workers.

Malaga is an area ripe for enterprise with the various organisations for business and networking a testament to that. With bodies such as the British Chamber of Commerce in Spain, CIT Marbella (the largest Spanish one), the Marbella Business Institute, Costa Women or Malaga Business Minds, there is not only a constant exchange of ideas, but also an invaluable link between the foreign and Spanish business communities.

Given Malaga's ever-increasing multicultural identity, there are many institutions that cater to each individual community, including schools, churches, healthcare and legal advisors, with a plethora of languages spoken. For this reason, southern Spain is not simply an area to use as a

base for an enterprise, it is a place to embrace an entire lifestyle.

### Quality of life

Though the subtropical-Mediterranean climate and around 300 days of sunshine a year are an undoubted draw, the exceptional quality of life extends beyond the weather.

In Malaga province alone, there are at least ten British schools, teaching a British curriculum with a majority of staff from the UK. On a broader scale, there are 17 NABSS-affiliated schools in the region. Many of these schools are concentrated on the western Costa del Sol, with several, including Aloha College, English International College, Sotogrande International School, Swans



The climate means you can go to the beach after work or school during any season. :: FERNANDO GONZÁLEZ



La Rosaleda, home to Málaga CF, in Spain's top flight for the past ten seasons. :: SUR

School, International School of Estepona and Laude San Pedro International College close to Marbella, among others.

Further east are British College Benalmádena and Sunny View School in Torremolinos, while Malaga city boasts St George's International School.

What's more, the area has a number of top-quality private hospitals and clinics, many leading the way in their field, offering good value for money, compared with other parts of the EU, staff who speak your language and peace of mind.

While a top-class education and healthcare will be high on the list of priorities, an all-round quality of life for everyone is one of the major deciding factors for people coming to live in Malaga. With the cost of living much lower than in many other parts of Europe, there are many benefits to living here. Leisure pursuits, for

instance, couldn't be more abundant. With superb shopping centres including La Cañada (Marbella), Plaza Mayor and Larios Center (Malaga) and El Ingenio (Vélez-Málaga), added to the luxury boutiques that can be found in areas such as Puerto Banús, retail therapy is certainly well catered for.

Equally, for the more active, the region boasts a number of high-quality sporting facilities, including more than a hundred golf courses, many of which were designed by former players. What's more, there are several world-class marinas, including Puerto Marina in Benalmádena and Puerto Banús in Marbella, but also fully-equipped state-of-the-art sports centres and gymnasiums.

This is all without mentioning the province's beaches. Not only does the area have busy seaside resorts, but there are also quieter bays and dunes, as well as schools for watersports.

The Caminito del Rey, gorge-side pathway in the El Chorro area, offers thrill seekers not only an adrenaline-filled hike,

**The Costa del Sol is a magnet for a broad spectrum of people, from businesses attracted by the lower costs, to skilled bilingual workers**

but also phenomenal views. In the same area, paragliding, canyoning and kayaking are all common on the reservoirs.

Winter sports enthusiasts are also just a few hours away from Sierra Nevada, one of Europe's top ski resorts, with one of the longest seasons in the world.

For those who prefer to be spectators, Malaga has two top-flight sports teams in the shape of Málaga CF (football) and Unicaja Baloncesto (basketball).

With an all-round lifestyle offering and enormous business potential, moving to the province of Malaga is an absolute "no-brainer".



The area's beauty is not confined to the coast. :: D. FINCH

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BUSINESS  
INVESTMENTMALAGA, A  
CITY READY  
FOR NEW  
INVESTORS

With excellent infrastructure, low prices and a fantastic quality of life, many international businesses are heading to Malaga

DARYL  
FINCH

The city of Malaga is an attractive destination for many reasons. Its airport, with 140 different national and international connections, continues to break records with millions coming to visit the city each year. However, for the past twenty years, the city, as both a 'Smartcity' and 'Living Lab', has been striving to show that it can offer much more than just sun and sand and that foreign nationals should invest in the city and bring their businesses to southern Spain.

With a strategic modernisation plan, Malaga city hall has consolidated the city's substantial assets to make the city attractive throughout the world in the field of business, technology, science, academics and culture. There are several reasons why businesspeople look for investment opportunities in Malaga: its high-level production infrastructures, its skilled labour force and a development strategy as a 'smart city' make it a unique platform to establish national and international companies.

**Post-Brexit opportunities**

Mario García, CEO of Sequel Business Solutions, which has offices in Malaga, believes that the city is "perfectly placed" for businesses seeking to relocate post Brexit. He echoes the sentiments of the city's mayor, Francisco de la Torre, who believes that "if the UK wants to keep a foot

in the EU, then what better place than Malaga". Garcia argues that the British already have a soft spot for the Costa del Sol so it makes sense take advantage of the area's low costs, but also the "extraordinary" quality of life and climate that the city can offer. What's more, with such impressive transport links, it is now possible, for example, to attend a meeting at noon in London and be back in Malaga in time for dinner.

**The PTA, a hub of activity**

Many international businesses are now choosing the Parque Tecnológico de Andalucía (PTA), on the outskirts of Malaga, as a hub. The PTA has grown to be of the main places in Spain attracting foreign technology companies and is "the leading destination for international research and development investment in Andalucía", according to José Luis Ruiz Espejo, president of the technology park.

The high-tech complex has 61 foreign companies, making up around 10 per cent of the total. However in terms of numbers of people employed, the international contingent makes up around a third of the park's total, with 5,600 staff on their books. These overseas companies generate some 700 million euros in sales, which is 40 per cent of the park's total. Firms include Oracle, Ericsson, Accenture, IBM, Vodafone and TDK.

Neueda, a firm based in Belfast and which specialises in software delivery, training and consultancy, will invest 560,000 euros in order to move to the PTA.



The high-tech PTA complex current houses 61 foreign companies. :: SUR



The number of connections from the airport is a big draw. :: D. FINCH

Paddy O'Hagan, Chief Operating Officer said: "Malaga provides us with another rich location to attract technical talent across Europe. We have a fantastic track record of recruiting from the region which has strong cultural alignment and excellent transport links with Northern Ireland which will ensure that it will quickly integrate with our teams in Belfast and London."

Over recent years, the likes of Google, Agilent Technologies, Alstom, Bombardier, Computer Science Corporation (CSC), Coritel, Huawei, Siemens and Thales have all brought some part of their business empires to the provincial capital.

They are all attracted to Malaga by several factors. Firstly, and perhaps most attractive of all, the city's excellent university can provide

an educated workforce at a lower cost than most European countries. Secondly, the city's airport means that all other major business centres in Europe can be reached within hours, with services running several times a day to London, Paris, Berlin, Frankfurt, Dublin, Brussels and, of course, Barcelona and Madrid. The high-speed rail network also serves Andalucía's biggest cities, includ-

ing Seville, Cordoba, and soon Granada.

With several ferries and flights a day, the close proximity of Morocco presents numerous business possibilities. With already well-established links with north Africa, arriving businesses can take advantage of Malaga's expertise to get a foothold in the continent. Expansion into South America is also an option. With no language barriers, Malaga has access to markets in the Dominican Republic, Peru, Uruguay, Colombia and Argentina.

The city boasts fantastic entrepreneurial support centres with the Municipal Network of Incubators one of the largest and most important in Spain. It includes almost 20 centres, and with the support of the city hall, has created and will continue to create hundreds of jobs in the city. The progress of the Malaga Valley initiative, centred around the Parque Tecnológico and which now boasts more than 300 members based in information and communications technology, demonstrates that Malaga is committed to becoming an important centre for the technology industry.

What's more, the city's university, UMA, is making substantial efforts to be recognised as a centre that excels in research (Andalucía Tech). Research and development, along with innovation, are paramount to stimulating productivity and competitiveness in an economy, and since 2000, the University of Malaga has signed more than five thousand research contracts with both public and private entities, filing in excess of 300 patents in that period.



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## SPAIN IS PART OF YOU

The Spanish Tourist Office in London will be at the WTM to showcase the country and its attractions to markets in which it is not yet very well-known

Spain is the most popular destination for British people when they travel abroad. In 2016 Spain's share of this important source market was 20.7 per cent, which was well ahead of France or Italy.

So far, the UK's decision to withdraw from the EU has not had a negative impact on tourism to Spain. The figures for 2016 regarding British tourists were excellent, and the UK continues to be our primary source market in terms of visitor numbers and spending.

More British people came to Spain last year and they spent more while they were here: a total of 17.84 million visitors arrived from the UK and they spent 16.24 billion euros, increases of 12.4 and 12.8 per cent respectively in comparison with the previous year, although the length of stay dropped slightly, by 3.14 per cent.

The most popular destinations in Spain for British tourists in 2016 were the Canary Islands (28 per cent), the Balearics (21 per cent) and Andalucía (17 per cent).

According to the latest figures from the AENA airports authority, issued in September, in 2016 a total of 20,811,244 passengers arrived by air in 2016, which was an increase of 15.8 per cent, compared with the 17,975,348 in 2015.

So far this year, Spain has continued to attract British tourists as usual. The statistics show that up till August there had been 7.8 per cent more visitors and a 10.9 per cent increase in spending. Altogether, 15,950,786 of the passengers who flew in to Spanish airports came from the UK, which was an increase of 11.5 per cent compared with the same period last year.

British tourists are a priority for Spain and they help to maintain year-round tourism by visiting in the winter months as well as in the summer season. This market has huge potential and it has been ascertained that the UK is home to 6.5 million 'cosmopolitan' tourists, looking for a quality travel experience and with an existing interest in Spain as a destination.

Another strength is the number of air connections with the UK, with flights between 27 British and 30 Spanish airports and a very strong loyalty from British tourists (82 per cent have visited Spain at least once before and 40 per cent have done so at least seven times).

Looking ahead to the winter season 2017/2018, the numbers



Spain is still the most popular destination for British travellers. :: SUR

of flights are much the same as last year (+0.7 per cent), according to the figures from AENA. This confirms that in general the airlines and tour operators with an airline are still as committed to Spain as ever.

These positive figures reflect not only a favourable international situation in general but also the strength of Spain as a tourist destination. Yes, everyone knows it has a good climate, but that is not all. It is accompanied by good air and road infrastructure, attractive monuments, excellent beaches, beautiful countryside, delicious gas-

tronomy, tranquility, and it is a safe country.

Nor can we forget the professionalism of those who work in the tourism sector, whether in marketing and promotion, hotels and restaurants, or looking after the visitors and ensuring that their experience is satisfactory.

However, our policy regarding tourism is not just to sit back and collate the figures regarding visitor numbers, which would be unsustainable in the long term. At Turespaña we have increased our efforts to attract high level tourists, and that means developing our tourism facilities on a

social, economic and environmentally sustainable basis.

Through a demographic study we have been able to identify an experiential segment, that of the 'cosmopolitan tourist' mentioned above, whose spending in their chosen destination is higher than average (by more than 20 per cent), who has a preference for consuming local products, travels at least three times a year and has a multiplying effect because of recommendations to others. These are the tourists to whom we are directing our efforts at present.

We understand there are more than 25 million tourists worldwide who fit this profile, of whom 6.2 million are in the UK; they (the 25 million) make 75 million journeys in Europe a year and 15 long-distance, such as the USA, and generate nearly 80 billion euros a year in total income from tourism in the destinations they visit. At present, Spain only has a ten per cent share of this market.

In order to reach these clients we have introduced a series of activities in which we have the support and assistance of the principal operators in the markets. One of them is 'España Reloaded', which involves day-long conferences with training and familiarisation visits, guided by European and American operators, to inform the operators about the potential of Spain in this segment and the existence of top quality tourist products designed to satisfy the demand of these 'cosmopolitans'.

We have just held the first España Reloaded event in Galicia, in which 131 tour operators from 15 markets took part, including the UK.

Also, Turespaña is at the forefront of innovation and digital technology in all its marketing activities.

For example, our new international online publicity campaign is based on selective micro-segmentation depending on motivations and experiences, and at the same time this generates a database of people who are interested in Spain.

In October a new magazine was launched, called Unique-spain.travel, which features alternative content and subjects dealing with values such as exclusivity, discovering new ways and sustainability.

We are strengthening our



One of Spain's strengths is its air links with UK airports.

presence on social media with content including culture, cities, gastronomy, art and shopping. At this year's WTM we are

also launching an auto-mised tourist information assistant for Spain, which has been developed jointly with Twitter.

We still, of course, maintain our classic information portal spain.info, which now has more interactive content that can be shared on social media and on occasion 360 degrees.

All these actions and projects are what lie behind the positive figures mentioned at the beginning of this article. Our success is not due to favourable international influences but to the strength of Spain as a tourist destination.

A focal point of this promotional work is the Spanish Tourist Office in London, whose work on market analysis is enabling us to approach the British public, knowing their tastes and preferences and offering them whatever they are looking for outside their own country. This office is also the backbone of promotion we carry out in the market. One of the main features is precisely the WTM, which the Spanish Tourist Office attends, accompanied by Spanish companies and institutions which consider this to be one of the most important tourism fairs in the world.

This office has discreetly and effectively managed one of the biggest crises in the sector in recent years, i.e. the fraudulent claims of food poisoning, by working with the Spanish hotel sector and British operators to bring the false claimants to justice and thereby protect the interests of Spanish businesses.

Proof of its excellent work is that it has also won numerous awards, the two most recent being 'Best Tourist Board 2017' from the prestigious tourism and travel magazine Northern Ireland Travel News and that of Spain as the best destination 2007 from Food & Travel magazine.

This year the Spanish Tourist Office is taking part in the WTM with its new slogan "España es parte de ti," (Spain is part of you), segmenting the messages to the interests of potential tourists to this country, satisfying their various motivations and showcasing a Spain which is not yet as well-known in some of the other potential markets round the world.



NO8DO  
AYUNTAMIENTO  
DE SEVILLA



Sevilla  
SIMPLY AMAZING

DESTINATION  
SEVILLE

The Giralda tower. :: SUR



La Maestranza bullring. :: SUR



Plaza de España. :: SUR

# SEVILLE, THE BEST CITY IN THE WORLD TO VISIT IN 2018

Andalucía's capital city has been awarded the 'Best in Travel 2018' prize by Lonely Planet to coincide with celebrations for the fourth centenary of Murillo's birth

Seville will be the chosen destination for travellers from all over the world next year, when the city celebrates its 'Year of Murillo', especially as the Lonely Planet guide has just given it its 'Best in Travel' award. This is the first time a city in Spain has been chosen for this prestigious title.

**Murillo and much more**  
Seville has never lacked the attractions to be one of the favourite destinations for travellers from all over the world. It is an enchanting city with an exceptional historic and artis-

tic heritage. However, in the past ten years it has also transformed itself into a city of bicycles and trams, wanting tourists to visit much more than its famous historic centre. This metamorphosis has not gone unnoticed, and that is why Lonely Planet has placed it as the Number One city to be visited in 2018.

Lonely Planet especially valued Seville's fusion between tradition and innovation, which can be seen, for example, in the gastronomy: the city's bars and restaurants have incorporated the latest trends but have never lost sight of



Seville has been designated the Best City in the World to Visit in 2018. :: SUR

their traditions, such as their famous tapas. And for those who think they already know Seville, there are still plenty of things to discover because the city is continually proposing new ideas and initiatives.

The mayor, Juan Espadas, and deputy mayor for Tourism, Antonio Muñoz, are delighted by the award. "It is a result of the many hours of work and effort we have put into tourism. Seville now has the image it deserves," they say.

The award was presented at an event in Seville, with the participation of the delegate for Urban Habitat, Culture and Tourism, Antonio Muñoz, and the head of the Tourism Consortium of Seville. Lonely Planet's CEO for Spain Javier Zaldúa and Nuria Cabrero, the managing editor in this country, were also there, and the global director of marketing and communication in the UK, Laura Lindsey, was represented by video.

The ceremony, presented by María de León, also pro-



ART  
MURILLO

# A YEAR DEDICATED TO A GREAT BAROQUE ARTIST FROM SEVILLE

Numerous events have been organised as part of the Year of Murillo celebrations

vided details about the 'Year of Murillo' and was attended by Margot Molina, a journalist with 'El País' and author of the Lonely Planet Guide to Seville.

In the presence of numerous local residents and tourists, María de León explained the reason for the event, saying that the Murillo Year was an exceptional ally. "For Lonely Planet to have chosen Seville as the best city in the world to visit in 2018, and for that decision to have been made by tourists, experts and the editorial board, that is fundamental in positioning the city as an essential destination for travellers next year," she explained. Antonio Muñoz said this was a "major recognition for the whole of the city's tourism sector. This award is for everyone involved," he said.

Javier Zaldúa explained why Seville had been chosen. "It is the first time a Spanish city has been recognised in this way, so it is an impressive achievement. Seville has a long history and this recognition of its artistic wealth and the vitality with which it is facing the future, together with the Year of Murillo makes it an essential place to visit in 2018", he said.

The programme for the Murillo Year is now available on the Internet, as are tickets for the inaugural concert with Jordi Savalla, and for the 'Murillo and his legacy in Seville' exhibition.

This time next year few people will be able to claim that they never have heard of Bartolomé Murillo, thanks to the fact that the city of Seville has designated next year as 'The Year of Murillo' to mark the 400th anniversary of the birth of this great Baroque artist who was born in the city and never left it, despite offers to travel to Madrid and elsewhere. Some of his works can already be seen in the cathedral, the Fine Arts Museum and the Hospital de la Caridad.

"We want the world to know how a city like Seville impacted upon a painter such as Bartolomé Murillo, and at the same time the influence he had on the city," says the mayor of Seville, Juan Espadas, and this is being done through an unprecedented series of exhibitions and events which began a year ago with a display named 'Velázquez. Murillo. Sevilla' which took place at the Hospital de Los Venerables.

The forthcoming celebrations of Murillo's work begin at the Fine Arts Museum on 1 December with an exhibition of works created by the artist for the convent of Saints Justa and Rufina of Capuchin Franciscans in Seville. This important commission is considered one of his most significant works.

**"We want the world to know how Seville impacted on a painter such as Murillo," says the mayor**

**The IV centenary celebrations also include walking tours of the city, street festivals and more**

Next comes 'Murillo and his Legacy in Seville', also in December, at the Espacio Santa Clara, until April.

In April, art lovers can look forward to 'The Modernity of Murillo', exhibited at the Espacio Taurina, which will continue until September, and the Fine Arts Museum will then celebrate the 'Murillo: IV Centenary' exhibition from October 2018 until January 2019.

Two collaborating exhibitions at Seville university can also be seen as part of this Year of Murillo: 'Seville: The City and the Citizen', and the 'Murillo Library', the most relevant works from the end of the 17th century onwards, from the university and other libraries.

Visitors to Seville will also be able to follow tourist routes based on Murillo and his life in the city, which will include places of interest such as the Archbishop's Palace, Cathedral, Hospital de la Caridad, Hospital de los Venerables, Santa María la Blanca, the Capuchins (Fine Arts Museum), Convent of San Francisco, San Leandro and the Convent of San Clemente.

Another important feature of this anniversary year is the Murillo House, which is currently the head office of the Andalusian Institute of Flamenco. One of the council's aims for the Year of Murillo is to use it, either temporarily or as a permanent venue, for the interpretation of Murillo's work, from a modern and educational perspective.

There will also be street events during the year, such as Murillo and American Seville, Cuisine in Murillo's Seville, Murillo Live, Murillo and the Children, Medicine in Murillo's Time, Festivals, Music and Dance, and Painting and Ceramics as well as Theatre in Murillo's Time, plus festivals to recreate the Seville of the period.



Venue. Some of the events are held at Seville's Fine Arts Museum. :: SUR



DESTINATION  
SEVILLE

# THE CITY THAT CAN ONLY BE DESCRIBED AS AMAZING

This ancient city on the Guadalquivir river has everything a visitor could want, from history to gastronomy and the most modern facilities

If one had to find a single word to describe the city of Seville, the word would have to be 'amazing', and it fits that description in so many ways.

For a start, it has managed to maintain the important historical legacy which attracts so many tourists every year, whilst at the same time becoming a truly modern city which befits its position as the capital of the region of Andalucía.

## Connections

Seville's connections to the outside world are a good example. For the past 25 years this city on the Guadalquivir river has been connected by high-speed rail service to Madrid, the Spanish capital, on a journey which takes just over two hours, and it is now easily reached from other cities such as Barcelona, Zaragoza, Valencia and Malaga.

It is also well connected by rail to other provinces of Andalucía and regions of Spain, and there are suburban line services to nearby towns. The main railway station, Santa Justa, is very close to

the historic city centre and there are good road and bus connections.

Seville also has its own airport, which is considered one of the most profitable in Spain. It is only about 10 kms outside the city and is easily accessible.

There are flights to the principal cities in Spain, such as Madrid, Barcelona, Santiago de Compostela, Asturias, Alicante, Almeria, Valencia, Bilbao, Ibiza, La Coruña and Santander on the mainland, and the islands of Tenerife, Palma de Mallorca and Lanzarote, among others. Travellers can also reach major European cities including London, Paris, Brussels, Berlin, Lisbon, Amsterdam, Rome, Bordeaux, Dublin, Marrakech, Prague, Munich and Zurich.

Although it is more than 70 kilometres from the coast, thanks to its situation on the Guadalquivir river Seville boasts the only inland commercial port in Spain, which has recently been adapted for cruise ships.

But apart from being easily accessible from elsewhere, Seville is also an easy

city to travel around, thanks to an excellent bus and tram service and the Metro, which came into service in 2009 and extends to three other towns in the area.

Finally, the public car parks are also fundamental to moving around the city (there are about 30 in all), as are taxis and the public bicycle service, Sevici, with its 140 kilometres of cycle lanes and 250 rental stations.

## Gastronomy

The word 'amazing' is also often used to describe the gastronomy of Seville, which in many ways is like no other. Once again, the city has successfully retained its culinary heritage while keeping up to date with the latest trends. Because of its strategic location, it is an excellent place to enjoy seafood, including the famous 'pescaito frito', the varied fried fish from Andalucía's Atlantic coast, and other favourites are cod, fried or marinated, and grilled squid.

Meat eaters will also delight in the variety of dishes available, such as sirloin with whisky, oxtail, pork cheek, quail and different stews, but vegetarians should not lose heart: they are well catered for here as well, especially in the form of 'tapas', small helpings of different dishes for which Seville is famous.

## History and culture

The city's rich historical and artistic heritage is also noth-



Seville is an enchanting combination of the historic and the modern. :: SUR



The Torre de Oro. :: SUR



Reales Alcázares. :: SUR



ing short of amazing, the result of the passage of different cultures throughout thirty centuries. Three of Seville's monuments have been classified as World Heritage Sites by UNESCO - the Cathedral and Giralda tower, the Alcázar and the Archive of the Indies - and there are countless beautiful and unique civil and religious buildings, which contain numerous works of art by outstanding architects, sculptors and painters. With an intense cultural life throughout the year, Seville caters to all tastes: opera, flamenco, classical music, jazz, rock, hip-hop, pop, exhibitions, and much more.

In fact, this city was a birthplace of flamenco and from 6 to 30 September 2018 the Biennale will be taking place. This is an important flamenco festival, where famous stars of this art form perform in some very beautiful venues.

#### **Triana, a fascinating neighbourhood**

Seville, with its wonderful climate, is an amazing city for enjoying life outdoors and the district of Triana is

#### **The delightful Triana district has always been separated from the city by the river so it has its own very special history, traditions and atmosphere**

probably the most special of all. It is situated on the west bank of the Guadalquivir River, has a population of 48,554 inhabitants, and is famous for its history and charm. Because it has always been separated from the city by the river, it has its own very special atmosphere and it has been home to many famous flamenco singers, dancers and bullfighters.

Triana's history goes back a very long way. In Tartessian times there was a settlement on the right bank of the river, facing the city of Hispalis, which they called Baitis, where the Roman legions established a fortified camp. The first bridge was built by the Moors in the 12th century, made of wood and situated a little below the current Triana bridge, which was built in 1854. From 1481 until the

beginning of the 19th century, the Castle of San Jorge was the seat of the Spanish Inquisition, which greatly influenced the customs of the neighbourhood.

Triana was also a nautical district, where crews were recruited for voyages to the Americas, including for Magellan and Elcano, who in 1519 were the first to travel around the globe, returning to Triana (to the Puerto de las Mulas) in 1522.

Throughout its history, Triana has been very productive in the iron, fishing, agriculture and shipyard industries, and in the first half of the twentieth century, it produced planes with cutting-edge technology in the Hispano Aviación factory (which no longer exists). The name Triana has always also been linked to ceramics, being home to the largest number of potters in the city.

Triana is a wonderful place to enjoy the local food, from formal exquisite restaurants to traditional taverns serving tapas and local wines. When visiting the city, nobody should miss the chance to visit this district. It, like Seville, is simply amazing.

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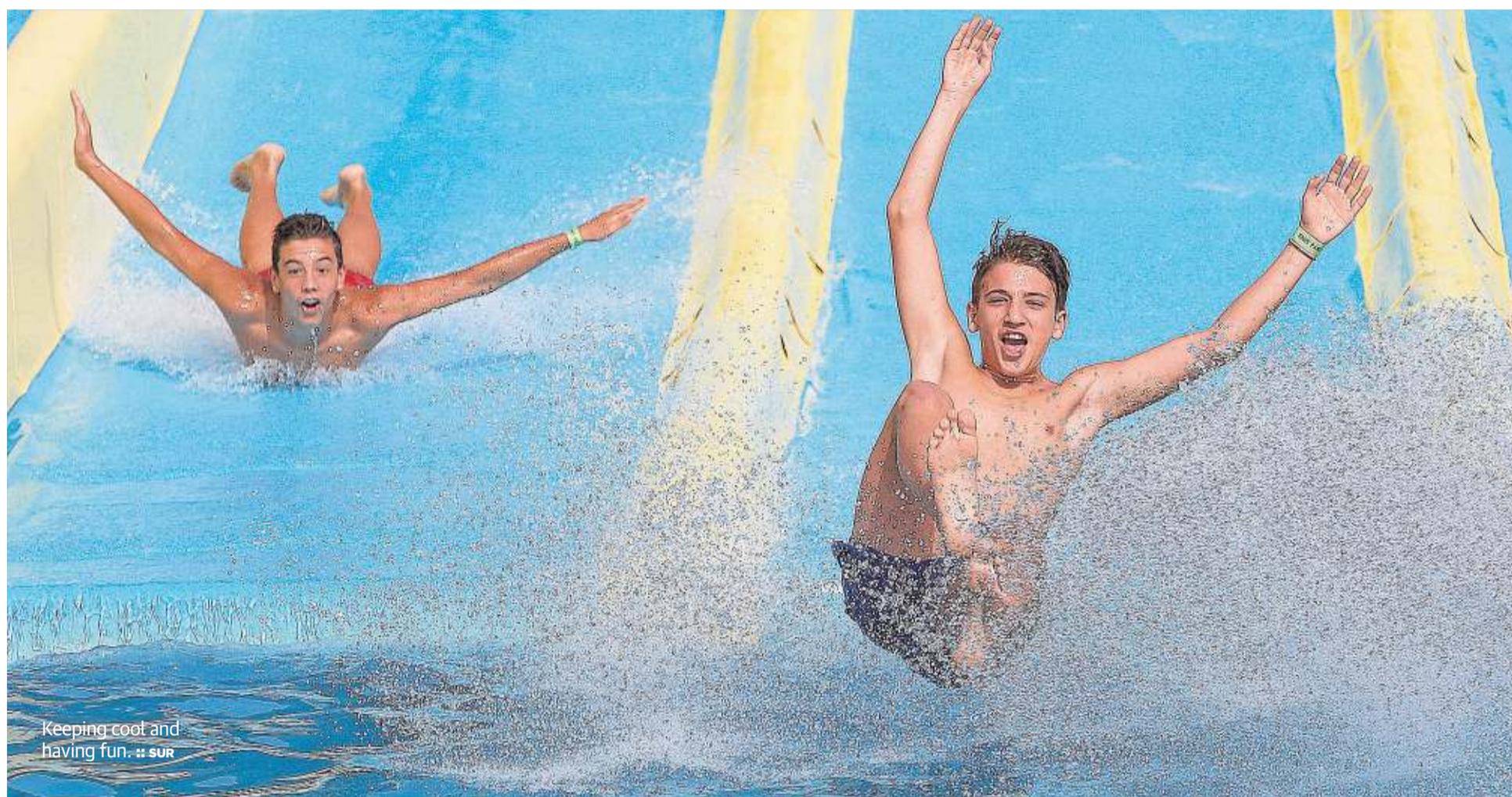
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Keeping cool and having fun. :: SUR

## COSTA DEL SOL WATERPARKS

ALBERTO  
GÓMEZ

After its inauguration in 1984, the advertising for the Aquapark offered a challenge which was difficult to resist: “Come down the kamikaze, the highest, fastest slide in Europe. Battle with the gigantic Waikiki Sur waves and descend the raging waters of the Waterfall Mountain,” it said.

More than three decades later the waterparks continue to be a major attraction in the hot summers on the Costa del Sol, where every season over half a million people go there to have fun and cool down. The formula, based on speed and vertiginous heights, has hardly varied since that time but technology has enabled attractions to be incorporated that would have been unthinkable a few years ago. Slides, wave pools, waterfalls, water tunnels and other installations with impossible turns and tracks coexist alongside leisure areas, sunbeds, restaurants and childrens’ play areas.

The opening of Aquapark, now Aqualand, revolutionised the concept of leisure parks in Malaga province, and similar ones began to open up, some more successful than others. The waterpark in Torremolinos, however, can boast of being the first complex whose attractions were made in Spain, and the second in Europe. A British company had chosen

# HAVE A WHALE OF A TIME IN THE WATER

The three waterparks in the province of Malaga attract more than half a million people every summer



Every park has dozens of attractions. :: SALVADOR SALAS

Malaga, the birthplace of tourism in Andalucía, to import the model which had begun in the USA several years earlier. In March 1984 the then mayor, Pedro Aparicio, laid the first stone of this park, which still retains the same essence although everything else, including its name, has changed.

### Loyal clientele

The corseted swimsuits and the 700 pesetas it cost to enter have given way to a heterogeneous but loyal clientele. “Tens of thousands of our visitors come every year,” say proud sources in the Marketing Department. The visit to Aqualand, whether the opulent “let’s do everything” version or the classic and cheaper tupperware and soft drink option, is part of the summer routine for many people from Malaga. Its approximately 70,000 square metres contain attractions such as the ‘boomerang’, the ‘crazy cones’ and the ‘anaconda’.

### Prices and offers

Tickets to enter the waterparks in Malaga normally cost about 20 euros for adults and 15 for children, although they all have season tickets and offers for groups and families. Most also give discounts for those who book online.

In recent years these complexes have added new facilities to maintain the flow of visitors and combat the increased attractions on beaches and at hotels on the Costa del Sol. One of them is Aquavelis in Torre del Mar,

which this season incorporated a room with virtual reality games. This means the water challenges are now accompanied by hordes of ‘zombies’ to fight, simulators to drive, castles to defend and space drones to combat, in the form of these games. “You have to reinvent yourself. Two years ago we expanded the children’s areas with new slides for under-10s,” says the commercial director of Aquavelis, Rafael Gálvez.

Those who use this waterpark in La Axarquía, around 70,000 every summer, like the way the attractions and communal areas are laid out, as they are designed to make it easy to keep an eye on children. “It’s not as busy as other parks and people like to have more space and not to have to queue for long,” he explains.

At AquaMijas the ambience is also family-friendly, as the director, María del Mar Asesio, explains: “Several generations come together, and the ‘slow river’ with baths and floats, is the most popular attraction. It’s lovely to see whole families having fun together,” she says.

## WATERPARKS

**Aqualand:** Torremolinos (Malaga).

**AquaMijas:** Fuengirola (Malaga).

**Aquavelis:** Torre del Mar (Malaga).

**Aqua Tropic:** Almuñécar (Granada).

DESTINATION  
MELILLA

# A LINK BETWEEN TWO CONTINENTS

Located on the north coast of Africa, Melilla brings together a mix of various different cultures

Few destinations have a historical, cultural and architectural make-up as varied as Melilla, often described as "the European city closest to the desert".

This Spanish autonomous city, located on the north coast of Africa, shares a border with Morocco and is a gateway to the continent,

**DARYL FINCH**

der with Morocco and is a gateway to the continent,



The port of Melilla. :: MIGUEL GONZÁLEZ NOVO

seeing four different cultures converge on its doorstep. Melilla is often praised as an example of multiculturalism with large Christian, Muslim, Hindu and Jewish communities coexisting.

One good way to get a feeling for this is following the Route of the Temples, which takes a tour of the holy places of each of these religions.

What you may find in common with these build-

ings is their architectural styling. One of the major attractions of Melilla is its Modernist architecture. In fact, Melilla only trails Barcelona in terms of art deco and Modernist buildings in Spain with a total of around 900.

In the first quarter of the 20th century, Melilla became a thriving port and, as the new architectural style of the time, Modernisme

(known as Catalan modernism) was predominant in much of the city's development. Barcelona-born architect Enrique Nieto was commissioned to design the main synagogue, the central mosque and various Catholic churches, as well as many other buildings, even long after the style went out of fashion elsewhere.

Another architectural highlight is the Ciudadela

## GETTING TO MELILLA

**Ferry:** Melilla is connected to mainland Spain by three companies running daily services from Malaga, Motril and Almeria.

**Plane:** Regular flights run between Melilla and Malaga, Granada, Almeria and Madrid airports.

**Car:** A motorway connects Melilla to a number of Moroccan cities such as Tangier, Al-Hoceima and Tétouan, as well as the Spanish autonomous city of Ceuta.

citadel. It is an outstanding example of the evolution of military architecture between the 15th and 18th centuries.

## A base for exploration

With great transport links to mainland Spain, Melilla makes for the perfect gateway into Morocco and beyond. Attractions in the surrounding area include a visit to Mount Gourougou with its resident colony of monkeys, but also the spectacular Rif mountain range.

What's more, Melilla is the perfect destination for sports enthusiasts and watersports lovers will be able to have fun with water bikes, as well as scuba-diving on the rocky sea bed with its abundance of marine life.



[www.melillaturismo.com](http://www.melillaturismo.com)



DESTINATION  
SPAIN BY RAILGETTING  
AROUND  
SPAIN ON  
A FAST  
TRAIN

Sit back and enjoy a complete tour of the country's regions using Europe's largest high speed rail network to take you from one city to the next

Spain's high speed rail network reached an important milestone in 2017, the 25th anniversary of the first AVE train, that linked Madrid and Seville in 1992. The network has gradually grown since then, now becoming the biggest in Europe with more than 2,700 kilometres of high speed line, cutting journey times between the country's major cities and making travel more comfortable.

The name AVE stands for Alta Velocidad España (High Speed Spain), which also conveniently means bird in Spanish, creating the image of the trains "flying" through countryside.

As the number of cities connected by AVE grew, they decided to join forces to strengthen tourist promotion, inviting visitors to explore the country's regions by train.

**Avexperience**

Transport and accommodation Their association became known as Red Ciudades AVE (AVE Cities Network) and, through the product Avexperience, they provide rail transport, accommodation and other facilities all in one package.

The Avexperience allows visitors to see more of Spain's cultural and culinary diver-

**With the AVE you can fit more of Spain into one holiday using fast, comfortable, safe and sustainable transport**

sity, as well as its varied tourist attractions in a wide range of destinations. Rail travel is fast, comfortable, safe and sustainable; add to these advantages a flexible service and the journey becomes part of the travel experience.

**Renfe Spain Pass**

For international visitors

High speed rail travel is the most convenient way to take in Spain's most important cities during one holiday. The AVE Cities Network joined forces with Spain's rail operator, Renfe, and the tourist organisation Turespaña to create an exclusive product for international visitors. The Spain Pass takes the form of a flexible multi-journey rail ticket that comes with added extras to enable the foreign tourist to design their own holiday with numerous advantages.

## ANDALUCÍA



Traditional flamenco dresses in Malaga.

THE HOME OF  
FLAMENCO  
AND TAPAS

Get off the high speed train in Seville, Cordoba, Malaga or Antequera - and shortly Granada - to explore the region of Andalucía, whose history has left behind a wealth of artistic heritage. The Alhambra in Granada, the great mosque of Cordoba and the Giralda tower and old town of Seville are all World Heritage Sites, and the majority of the region's towns and villages also bear witness to the many eras of Andalucía's art, culture and architecture.

Stunning Moorish, Renaissance and, above all, Baroque architecture characterises the region's buildings, from castles, fortresses and monasteries to villages, churches and mansion houses. This is the native region of Velázquez,

Murillo and Picasso and is home to a wealth of artistic heritage, carefully guarded inside cathedrals, museums, churches, convents and palaces.

Visitors who prefer to experience living culture than historical monuments can enjoy a vast agenda of traditional shows with flamenco being top of the list.

A visit to Andalucía opens up a whole new angle on dining out, as in no other region can you experience the 'tapas' concept better than in Andalucía. A pleasant afternoon strolling from bar to bar, sampling small portions of whatever takes you fancy from the bar-top showcase or the tapas menu, is a must on a visit to any Andalusian town or city.



Cordoba from the Guadalquivir river.

## CASTILLA-LA MANCHA



The iconic Alcázar of Toledo.

THE LAND OF  
CHEESE, WINE  
AND WINDMILLS

The cultural landscape of Castilla-La Mancha is scattered with archaeological sites, Roman villas, mediaeval complexes and two World Heritage Cities, Cuenca and Toledo. Both of these cities are on the AVE network, as are Ciudad Real, Albacete and Puertollano.

Castilla-La Mancha is also a land of great creators, ranging from 16th century painter El Greco, who made Toledo his home as a young adult, to world-renowned film director Pedro Almodóvar.

It is perhaps best known, however, for the fictional character Don Quixote from the 17th century epic novel of the same name by Cervantes, who set his story on the region's Manchego plain dotted with windmills.

The adjective Manchego is familiar internationally thanks to the region's cheese, made normally from sheep's milk. The matured varieties are favourite among cheese lovers for their characteristic strong flavour.

The region is landlocked



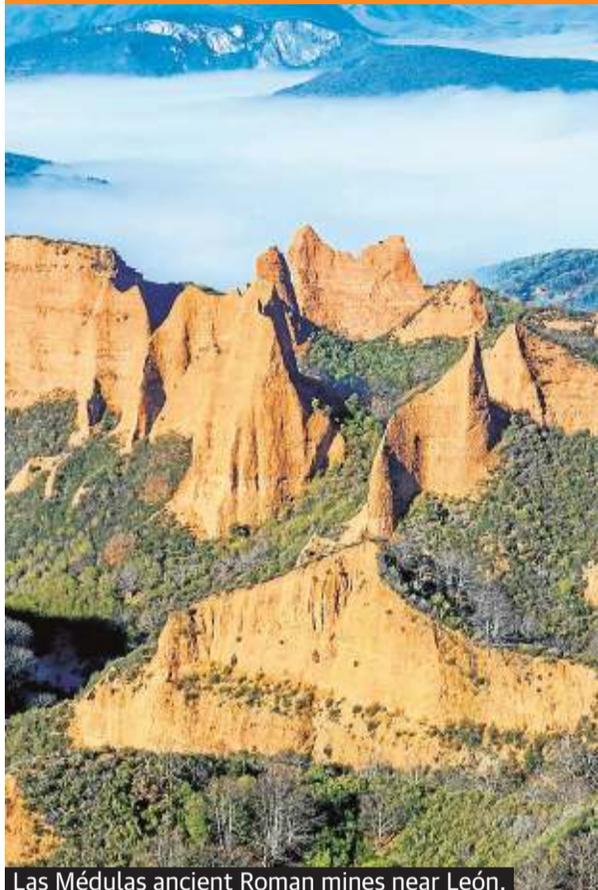
Pisto and Manchego cheese.

and so the most typical dishes found in local restaurants are meat-based, with an emphasis on lamb and goat, although pork also makes an appearance in Toledo's traditional 'carcamusas'. It's also common to find quail and rabbit on the menu.

A visit to the town of Almagro introduces tourists not only to the oldest theatre in Spain, but also to the pickled aubergine. The most typical vegetable dish is the 'pisto Manchego', made with peppers and tomato among other ingredients.

Castilla-La Mancha has also been described as the world's biggest vineyard, its most famous wine region being Valdepeñas.

## CASTILLA Y LEÓN



Las Médulas ancient Roman mines near León.

## HERITAGE AND HEARTY STEWS

Castilla y León is made up of nine provinces - Ávila, Burgos, León, Palencia, Salamanca, Segovia, Soria, Valladolid and Zamora - and is renowned for having a greater cultural heritage and natural wealth than practically any other region in Spain.

Castilla y León is home to 300 castles, nearly 400 museums housing collections that reflect the region's artistic, cultural and ethnographic wealth, as well as 23,000 archaeological sites. It also has around a hundred festivals declared to be of regional, national or international tourist interest.

The region boasts eight UNESCO World Heritage sites: the Pilgrims' Route to Santiago, Burgos Cathedral, the archaeological site in the

Atapuerca mountain range, Las Médulas natural monument in León, the cities of Ávila, Salamanca and Segovia, and the Siega Verde archaeological site in the province of Salamanca.

Gastronomically, the region is known for its roast meats, especially lamb and suckling pig, as well as its hearty stews made with the high quality locally grown lentils, chickpeas and beans.

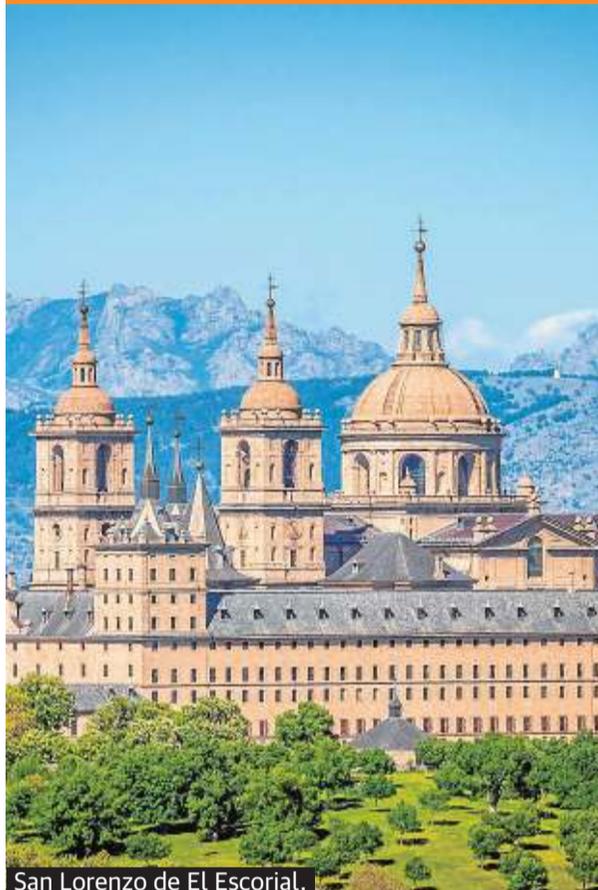
The city of León will be especially attractive for foodies next year as it has been selected as the Spanish Capital of Gastronomy for 2018.

Castilla y León is an important wine-producing region with several areas with Protected Designation of Origin status, among them Ribera de Duero and Rueda.



The fortress in Segovia.

## MADRID



San Lorenzo de El Escorial.

## A CAPITAL CITY FULL OF LIFE AND CULTURE



Plaza Mayor in Madrid.

The capital city of Spain, Madrid, has a wealth of cultural attractions. For art lovers a visit to the city must include renowned museums and galleries such as the Prado, Reina Sofía and Thyssen-Bornemisza.

The heart of the city also boasts the royal palace and the Almudena cathedral as well as the iconic Plaza Mayor.

To find older historical monuments and landmarks, however, it's necessary to take a short journey outside the city. Within an hour by local train there are three World Heritage Sites: Alcalá de Henares, the birthplace of Cervantes; San Lorenzo de El Escorial and its monastery, with the pantheon

of the kings and queens of Spain; and Aranjuez, famous for its gardens and the summer palace, which inspired the concert of the same name by the Spanish composer Joaquín Rodrigo.

The region is also proud of its gastronomy and most locals will tell you that the traditional dish is the cocido Madrileño. This chickpea-based stew is made with several different types of meat and vegetables, the rich flavour of the stock obtained from bone pieces.

The city's answer to fast food is the 'bocadillo de calamares', a bread roll packed with fried squid rings, while Spain's iconic 'tortilla de patatas', or potato omelette, can be found in every bar.

## CATALONIA



The beach resort Lloret de Mar.

## ART WITH A MEDITERRANEAN INFLUENCE

In addition to its history and its cultural heritage, Catalonia enjoys a geographical diversity of environments, holiday destinations and landscapes. This, together with the character of its people, gives rise to countless attractions that are worth discovering and learning about.

The region, together with its capital, Barcelona, is known for its traditional and inventive cuisine, with the evident influence of the Mediterranean diet. However one of the best known and simplest Catalan dishes is 'pa amb tomàquet', bread or toast with olive oil, salt and crushed or pureed tomato, often topped with Serrano ham.

It is also the ideal region for art lovers, with its wealth of museums and galleries packed with works by eminent artists.

Catalonia is the birthplace world-renowned artists such as Salvador Dalí, whose museum can be visited in his

home town of Figueras. Joan Miró and Antoni Tàpies were also from Catalonia as was architect Antoni Gaudí, whose work can be found around the city of Barcelona. The unfinished Sagrada Família cathedral is perhaps the most famous example.

Bordered by the Mediterranean Sea and the Pyrenees, the region is the perfect location for activity holidays, or more relaxed stays at one of the many beach resorts. Each province has a full calendar of year-round cultural events and happenings.



Gaudí architecture.

DESTINATION  
**WORLD HERITAGE CITIES**

# A NEW PRESIDENT FOR THE WORLD HERITAGE CITIES GROUP

Isabel Ambrosio, mayor of Cordoba, will be showcasing the Spain brand through the country's most special cities



Isabel Ambrosio collects the Medal for Cultural Merit in Toledo earlier this year. :: SUR

In July this year, the World Heritage Cities Group selected a new president, the mayor of Cordoba Isabel Ambrosio.

Cordoba is one of Spain's 15 towns and cities that have been granted World Heritage status by UNESCO over the

years. The others are Alcalá de Henares, Ávila, Baeza, Cáceres, Cuenca, Ibiza/Eivissa, Mérida, Salamanca, San Cristóbal de la Laguna, Santiago de Compostela, Segovia, Tarragona, Toledo and Úbeda.

Ambrosio is president of

the group for a year, and will hand the role over to another mayor in June 2018.

"This is one of the best showcases for the Spain brand and for tourism, culture and the opportunity for the transformation of cities with distinctive characters," said Ambrosio earlier this year.

The mayor's first task as

president was to collect the Medal for Cultural Merit granted to the group by the regional government of Castilla-La Mancha in Toledo. "It is a distinction for the excellent work that the group is doing," she said.

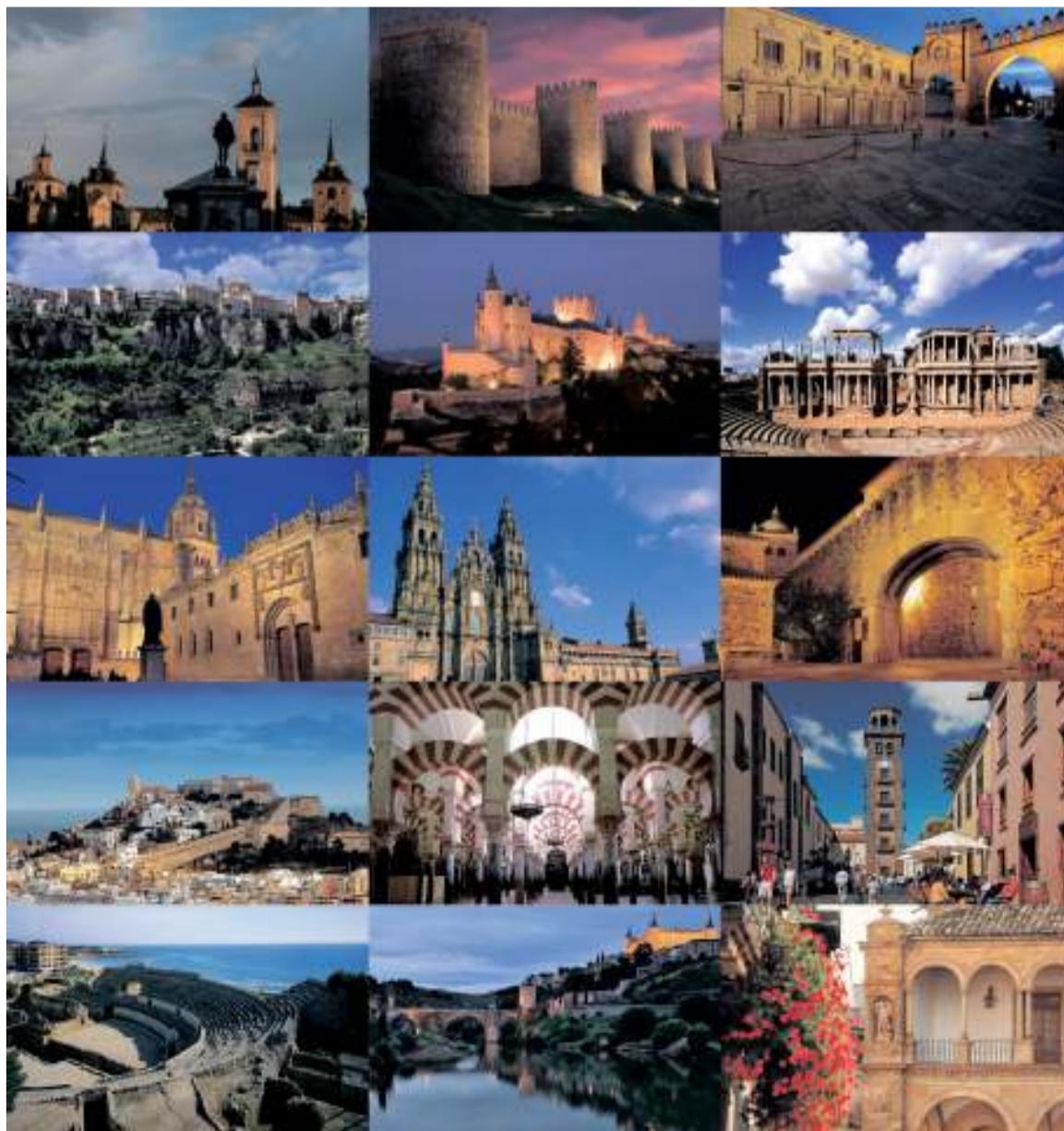
Spain's World Heritage Cities Group celebrates its 25th anniversary next year and a number of events are



Isabel Ambrosio. :: SUR

being organised throughout 2018.

The World Heritage Cities Group was formed in 1993 to join forces to tackle the great challenge of conserving the heritage valued by UNESCO. The aim of the group is to work together to protect and maintain the cities' cultural and historical assets.



**Ciudades Patrimonio de la Humanidad**  
ESPAÑA | UNESCO

## WORLD HERITAGE CITIES OF SPAIN

Alcalá de Henares  
Ávila  
Baeza  
Cáceres  
Córdoba  
Cuenca  
Ibiza/Eivissa  
Mérida

Salamanca  
San Cristóbal de La Laguna  
Santiago de Compostela  
Segovia  
Tarragona  
Toledo  
Úbeda



DESTINATION  
CORDOBA

# CORDOBA FOR CULTURE, HISTORY, FOOD AND FLOWERS

Fantastic communications including high-speed trains, motorways and two international airports less than an hour away make Cordoba easy to reach

Cordoba has become one of the most fashionable cities in southern Europe for those who love tourism based on culture and history, equestrianism and gastronomy. Now of

course flowers can be added to the list with the incorporation of the International Flora Festival, featuring the city's world-renowned patios, which this year commemorate the



The light and sound show at the Alcázar. :: SUR

fifth anniversary of their designation as an Intangible World Heritage by UNESCO.

Cordoba is now preparing the application for Medina Azahara to be declared a new World Heritage Site next June. If successful, the city would be able to boast four of these - the Mosque-Cathedral, the historic city centre, the patios and the palatine city - which would make it the Spanish city with the most World Heritage distinctions

and one of the most outstanding in the world.

In addition to its well-known attractions for visitors, autumn in Cordoba is now especially interesting for those who are looking for new experiences. They can immerse themselves in the country's biggest poetry festival, wander around the labyrinth of tiny streets which are decorated especially for the 'Callejas' festival or see the finest floral artists of the

world at the International Flora Festival, which is already known as the 'Oscars of Flowers', and attracted more than 300,000 visits last year.

Add to all that a wonderful gastronomy, where the choice ranges from two Michelin-starred restaurants to small ones offering traditional food; some of the best equestrian facilities in Europe, with Spanish thoroughbred horses and the 'Caballerizas Reales', the

royal stables built for Felipe II in the 16th century; and guitar music, heard in every corner of the city which is home to some of the finest luthiers in Spain, and in specialist clubs, where you can enjoy authentic flamenco. This is a perfect way to discover and enjoy a unique city which leaves nobody indifferent and to which you will surely return.

Cordoba is turning autumn into a second spring. This is confirmed by the number of tourists: by the end of 2017 over one million people will have come to visit us.

With fantastic communications thanks to motorways, the high-speed railway and two international airports less than an hour away, Cordoba is easy and comfortable to reach. In the city, visitors will find modern hotels with a great deal of charm, so their stay will be another experience of their trip.

If any one asks "Why go to Cordoba?" the reasons above will be a more than sufficient answer, although they would still have to discover our most precious treasure, the people of Cordoba, who will make their experience unforgettable. So the answer surely has to be: "Why would anyone not go to Cordoba?"



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