

# Southern Spain



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Andalucía



# ANDALUCÍA, THE COMPLETE PACKAGE

Andalucía is Spain's largest and most diverse region, and the climate, hotels, facilities, connections and hospitable people make it one of the highest-rated holiday destinations

In recent years Andalucía has become one of the world's most complete holiday destinations. Its tourism facilities and features are diverse and at the same time complement one other perfectly. The climate, good communications and huge range of tourist accommodation combine with the hospitality of the local people to make the region one of the most highly-rated holiday destinations among Spanish and international visitors.

## Sunshine and beaches

In Andalucía, with more than 800 kilometres of coastline, we can find remarkable and varied beaches, from wide expanses of fine sand in the provinces of Cadiz and Huelva, to hidden coves below steep cliffs in Granada, the Costa del Sol in Malaga to the Costa de la Luz in Cadiz and Huelva, are idyllic, with excellent quality sea water and omnipresent sunshine.

The beaches of Andalucía are also well equipped in terms of facilities. Marinas, golf

courses, seafront promenades, water sports and an excellent choice of restaurants have made Andalucía an ideal destination for those who want to soak up the sun on the beach or practise watersports.

Andalucía's beaches are the result of a natural heritage which has a personality of its very own. The coasts, from the Costa de Almería, the Costa Tropical in Granada, the Costa del Sol in Malaga to the Costa de la Luz in Cadiz and Huelva, are idyllic, with excellent quality sea water and omnipresent sunshine.

## Monumental culture

The wealth of culture in Andalucía will transport you back to the earliest times in history, thanks to important archaeological sites and the legacy of different cultures and civilisations which settled in this lovely and fertile land in the south of Spain.

## The region has mountains, wetlands, Mediterranean woodlands, volcanic deserts and uninhabited stretches of coastline

The Alhambra in Granada, the Mosque-Cathedral in Cordoba and the Giralda belltower in Seville are all World Heritage Sites, and form part of an immense artistic legacy inherited from a history dating back thousands of years.

Others which should not be missed are Úbeda and Baeza in Jaén, both of which form part of a World Heritage Site, Arcos de la Frontera in Cadiz, Ronda in Malaga and Moguer

in Huelva. The fabulous Islamic, Renaissance and Baroque architecture of the most important buildings, the castles, fortresses and monasteries scattered all over the region, all form part of a cultural heritage admired around the world.

## Natural beauty

The diverse landscapes and environmental wealth of Andalucía are also impressive. The region is home to the highest peaks on the Iberian Peninsula in the Sierra Nevada, extensive wetlands such as the Guadalquivir marshes, dense Mediterranean woodlands like the Sierra de Cazorla, Segura and Las Villas natural park and volcanic deserts and practically uninhabited stretches of coast such as the Cabo de Gata in Almería.

More than 18 per cent of the territory of Andalucía is protected. There are more than

20 areas protected as "natural parks", with facilities for visitors including information centres, picnic areas, viewing points and shelters. Tourists also have the chance to get the most out of the Andalusian countryside and heritage with outdoor activities and cultural routes.

Also, if you like to enjoy the outdoors with added adrenaline, Andalucía has plenty of adventure sports amid fantastic countryside, to make your holiday really different.

You can practise active sports on water, on land, in the air or in the snow, and even if you are travelling with children you will find companies that are happy to organise suitable activities for the youngest members of the family.

## Health and wellness

Andalucía has all the ingredients necessary to be the ideal place to choose to enjoy per-

Playa de Mónsul,  
Almería province. :: SUR





sonal health and beauty treatments. The facilities and services are exceptional for those seeking holidays that are beneficial for body and soul.

The mild Andalusian climate, the pure mountain air and contact with the refreshing sea breeze will help you to enjoy yourself as you look after yourself.

Thermal waters, mud treatments, massages, therapeutic baths, high-pressure baths and therapies with algae are just some of the principal components of the baths and spas in the region.

In fact, in the thermal baths of Andalucía visitors will find mineral-medicinal waters, facilities for personalised treatments and specialist medical teams. On the other hand, the spas offer general treatments, therapies and relaxation systems based principally on the properties of the water.

#### Snow

At the heart of the Penibaetic system is the Sierra Nevada, a unique area with the highest ski station in Spain, situated in the most southerly part of Europe.

The highest peaks on the Iberian Peninsula are found here: Veleta (3,394m) and Mulhacén (3,478m), just 100 kilometres from the Mediterranean Sea and the Costa Tropical. In the Sierra Nevada, which is only 30 kilometres from Granada city, there are over 100 skiable kilometres with 115 pistes and an impeccable infrastructure of ski-lifts and services, making this ski resort an incomparable destination for winter sports.

The ski resort Pradollano, which at 2,100 metres above sea level is the highest-altitude population in Spain, has all types of complementary facilities for those who want to enjoy the snow.

#### Golf and sport

If golf is your passion, then Andalucía is the best region of



Plaza de España, Seville :: SUR



The castle of Almodóvar del Río, Cordoba province. :: SUR



The pretty white village of Grazalema, Cadiz province. :: SUR

Spain for this sport as well. The unbeatable climate means you can play golf at any time of year. The courses are located in privileged areas, either in beautiful countryside or close to fantastic beaches.

Andalucía has around 100 golf courses in all, with some in every province. It doesn't matter what standard you are, because there are plenty of practice courses, pitch and putt, courses with nine or 18 holes and a wide variety of surfaces adapted to the most diverse geographical terrain.

Whether outdoors or indoors, Andalucía offers a wide



Golf Islantilla, Isla Cristina, Huelva. :: SUR



Skiing in the Sierra Nevada, Granada. :: SUR

choice of sports and hosts numerous national and international competitions. The facilities and infrastructure make this region ideal for anyone who wants to participate in any type of sporting activity, whether to compete or as a spectator.

#### Leisure and fun

There must be a thousand different ways of having fun and enjoying yourself in Andalucía. Amid all the region's tourism facilities, you can find theme parks, zoos, aquariums and botanical gardens, among many, many more.



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# ANDALUCÍA AT THE WTM, YOUR FIRST-CHOICE DESTINATION

**FRANCISCO JAVIER FERNÁNDEZ**

Minister for Tourism and Sport, Junta de Andalucía



**Loyalty to Andalucía as a destination is nothing accidental; our product continues to thrive in spite of increased competition elsewhere because we can guarantee quality, safety and sustainability**

**W**e are coming up to a new edition of the World Travel Market in London, the biggest annual event held in the heart of our principal source market, and we do so with the knowledge that these are tourists who are loyal to Andalucía as a destination and for whom our region has consolidated itself over the years as one of their top holiday choices.

But there is nothing accidental about this loyalty. We have a tourism product which adapts perfectly to British travellers, with an excellent climate, 800 kilometres of coastline on which to enjoy the sunshine and beaches, the largest area of protected natural space in Europe, an unrivalled cultural and historical heritage, major cities for urban tourism and a multitude of facilities for leisure and family and sports tourism; not forgetting the excellent gastronomy in every corner of our region, among many other attractions. Andalucía is, to put it graphically, like an extensive menu of tourism opportunities, where diversity and uniqueness are the most highly recommended specialities, even by the travellers themselves.

Also, according to the principal operators in this market, Andalucía continues to be a leading destination for the British despite the intense competition from other countries which is being noted generally on the Spanish coasts. The figures we have seen so far indicate that reservations for next year have begun at a good rate, and these show us visitors keen to discover new experiences, seeking attractions which complement the traditional product of sunshine and beaches, and in this sense Andalucía has a great deal, and of high quality, to offer. We have, therefore, more than sufficient reasons to interest



Cordoba's Mosque-Cathedral is a Unesco World Heritage Site. :: SUR

any traveller, especially those who come as tourists, and as I mentioned earlier, the wide variety of attractions in our region provides them with plenty of choice.

Quality, safety and sustainability are aspects which differentiate Andalucía, rather than competition over prices. For that reason our goals are to attract tourists who appreciate quality and spend more; to work on obtaining their loyalty and help them to realise that we are a modern, open and complete destination, so that people who have been here before come back because there is still so much of Andalucía for them to see; to invite them to create their own experience; to say to young people that we have plenty to offer them, all impregnated with our history and

our culture, which will enable them to have fun, learn and enjoy themselves in every way.

To reinforce this position, between the months of September and November we carry out an intense promotional campaign on British TV and in the print and digital media, so that our presence at the WTM has been preceded by an Andalucía which people have already heard of, all over the country. And during the fair we will expand the impact with a special promotional campaign, with the aim of increasing the return we expect to achieve, in terms of visits, more contacts and new business.

In addition to all this there are the roadshows for professionals which we organise in collaboration with airlines between October and Decem-

ber, in places which have direct flights to Andalucía, such as Edinburgh, Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, Bristol and Belfast; a Social Media Plan in these same cities, which gives us a constant presence on British social media sites; professional conferences for intermediaries in the luxury and cultural segments; specific activities to boost the incentives market; participation in fairs in the nautical sector; and a new action aimed directly at consumers in Manchester and London between the months of October and November, prior to this major fair.

This combination of activities will reinforce what we are going to do in London during the WTM, where we have organised a series of events to highlight all aspects of what the region has to offer, for professionals and the final consumer. Our stand will showcase all the attractions of the region, so we can assist the British tour operators and travel agents who want to expand their business with Andalucía and also the public in general, the many British citizens who want to find out more and discover what's new before making a decision about their next holiday. With this in mind, the eight provinces will have stands of their own to show what they have to offer, and there will be a spacious working area where business owners from the region will be able to operate directly with intermediaries and boost the marketing of the Andalusian tourism product.

To sum up, we will have an ample presence at the WTM, with the aim of attracting travellers from the United Kingdom and showing them that Andalucía is their best option: its facilities are perfectly adapted to their demands, the quality-price ratio is magnificent, and this is a destination where they are wanted and will always, always be made welcome.



# COMMITTED TO OUR VALUES

**We are economically and socially committed .** That is why, as well as being transparent, responsible, and efficient, we develop activities and projects in the people's interest that support job creation, financial education and the environment.

Our commitment  
goes further



# BEACH-HOPPING ON THE COSTA DEL SOL

While the region boasts its diversity, the majority of tourists come first and foremost for the sun, sea and sand; now the coastal path makes it easier to enjoy more beaches

JAVIER ALMELLONES

The Costa del Sol is famous for the beaches that tourists flock to every year. When hotels have a stretch of sand and sea with all the amenities holiday makers need on their doorsteps, or within walking distance, its easy to stay in one spot for the entire holiday. But visitors who like to gaze at the horizon over a calm Mediterranean Sea from different vantage points, have plenty to choose from.

A car or public transport can take you from a wide sunshade-covered strip lined with bars to a quieter bay in no time, however anyone fancying a walk can now find a change of seascape more easily thanks to the Senda Litoral.

This coastal pathway is a project launched by the provincial government to link up all 180 kilometres of coastline in the province of Malaga from Nerja in the east to Manilva in the west crossing 14 municipalities.

The scheme has involved filling the gaps between the promenades of built-up areas with attractive wooden walkways crossing rocks and

river beds that form a natural barrier between one beach and another.

There are still numerous stretches to complete but significant progress has been made in the last few years, providing residents and visitors with new access to some of the area's diverse beaches.

At present all of the coastal resorts have stretches of the path, either in the form of their existing paved promenades or new wooden walkways.

These are just some of the most attractive walks to take in the diversity of the Costa del Sol.

## Manilva and Casares

The two westernmost towns in the province of Malaga have a stretch of six kilometres of the Senda Litoral that are already walkable. From west to east, the walk starts from the Playa Paraíso development in Manilva and ends at Playa Ancha in Casares (just a few metres from the tower known as the Torre de la Sal).

This is one of the lesser-known parts of the path, which includes stretches of promenade but also attractive walkways and wooden bridges connecting them, including the bridge that crosses the municipal border between the two towns. As well as passing through the district of Sabinillas, the path passes important landmarks such as La Duquesa castle and the marina of the same name.

## Estepona

Estepona boasts more continuity in its share of the Senda Litoral. As well as the existing promenade, here there is also a pleasant walkway that follows the beach from Andalucía Beach almost as far as the mouth of the Guadalmanza river. In total there are more than three kilometres to stroll along taking in some spectacular

views as well as passing landmarks of both scenic and historic value such as the Guadalmanza tower.

## Marbella

Thanks to a well-maintained seafront promenade, Marbella can offer walkers and cyclists a stretch of more than nine kilometres, between the Guadalpín Banús hotel (El Rodeo) and the fishing harbour. Much of this route is urban, but ideal for anyone looking for a longer walk rather than just hopping from one beach to the next. The easternmost stretch of the coast within the Marbella municipal boundary, however, is a different story. The Cabopino beach area provides a walk of around one kilometre through the Artola Dunes nature reserve along wooden walkways.

## Mijas Costa

The Mijas coastline already has more than seven continuous kilometres of Senda Litoral. Between the municipal boundary with Marbella and Chaparral beach runs the most complete section of the path in the province. As well as stretches of already existing promenade there are also comfortable and attractive walkways that cross rocky areas. The walk includes vantage points where information panels offer details of the coastal biodiversity.

Landmarks along the way include the Torreón watchtower in La Cala de Mijas, which houses a small museum with local information as well as telling the story of the landing of General Torrijos on his failed mission to launch a revolution against King Fernando VII in 1831.

## Fuengirola

Stretching from Mijas to Benalmádena, practically the entire coastline of Fuen-



A finished stretch of coastal path in Estepona. :: SUR



A Fuengirola beach from the promenade. :: SUR

girola is walkable along the promenade. While the stretch is predominantly urban, these more than seven kilometres include a particularly attractive stretch which takes in the marina and fishing ports and Sohail castle. Alongside the castle the path crosses the bridge over the River Fuengirola whose banks has been turned into a riverside park with paths for walkers and cyclists. Anyone willing to drag themselves away from the Mediterranean for a short incursion inland will be rewarded with this green riverside walk, which includes leisure facilities such as kayak hire and a zip wire.

## Benalmádena and Torremolinos

Between them Benalmádena and Torremolinos boast 14 kilometres of coastal path, mainly thanks to the existing promenades, the only gap being a small stretch of Carvajal beach in Benalmádena. This may be another urban walk but there are still attractions along the way such as Bil-Bil castle, the iconic marina or the rocky division between the beaches of La Carihuella and El Bajondillo in Torremolinos.

## Malaga and Rincón de la Victoria

While the planned bridge over the Guadalhorce estuary nature reserve, eventually linking Guadalmar with the rest of the city, is still on the drawing board, there are at present more than 20 kilometres of walk from the river as far as Torre de Benagalbón





El Chaparral beach, Mijas Costa. :: SUR

past Rincón de la Victoria. The path is continuous except for a 100-metre stretch in the area of El Candado harbour and another 700 metres on La Araña beach.

Rincón de la Victoria it-

self is only missing its easternmost section, some 150 metres near Los Rubios beach, that will take the path up to the municipal boundary with Vélez-Málaga. As in other busy resorts much of

the coastal path through Malaga and Rincón consists of existing promenades, there are quieter sections such as near Peñón del Cuervo beach and Torre de Benagalbón.



The bridge linking Manilva and Casares.:: SUR



Benalmádena Costa.:: SUR



El Morche beach in Torrox.:: SUR

## Vélez to Torrox

Between the mouths of River Vélez and River Torrox in the Axarquía district east of Malaga, there is a long strip of Senda Litoral already in place, comprising the sea-front promenades of Torre del Mar, Algarrobo and Torrox. Still missing is a 366-metre section in Lagos (part of Vélez-Málaga).

That leaves, therefore, a continuous seaside walk of 15 kilometres. Of special interest along this section is La Caleta harbour and Mezquitilla and El Morche beaches. The path passes three old watchtowers: Ladeá in Algarrobo, Lagos (Vélez-Málaga) and El Morche (Torrox) as well as the important archaeological sites such as El Faro in Torrox, among other attractions.

## Nerja

The easternmost part of the Senda Litoral, in the municipality of Nerja, is probably the most complex due to the Maro cliffs and the rugged terrain. Eventually the town will have five kilometres of coastal path, although at present only 1.6 kilometres are passable. In August this year the project to build the stretch of walkway across the Seco and Chillar rivers was approved with a budget of 270,000 euros.





# A NEW, MORE COSMOPOLITAN AND SUSTAINABLE COSTA DEL SOL

**ELÍAS BENDODO**

President of the Costa del Sol Tourist Board



**Visitors these days are continually seeking new experiences and are more demanding with regard to their surroundings; in this regard, few destinations can match the Costa del Sol**

**A**n unknown author once said that travelling is the only thing you pay for which makes you richer. This saying perfectly describes the Costa del Sol. It is a pioneering destination whose protagonists, administrations, business owners and workers have used intelligence and innovation over the years to create what it is today: a modern and cosmopolitan destination which attracts more than 12 million tourists a year.

The Costa del Sol of today is one of the most innovative, sustainable and cosmopolitan destinations in Europe. Some time ago it realised that there was a need to move forward in order to meet the demands of the new profile of tourist: visitors these days are more segmented, continually seeking new experiences, more demanding with regard to their surroundings and connected 24 hours a day. Although there is still work to do, the results confirm that we are going in the right direction.

It is no accident that the Costa del Sol brand is one of the most highly-valued and has the best reputation among tourists, who appreciate attractions such as its lifestyle, which is Mediterranean, friendly, safe, authentic, sustainable, hospitable, warm, innovating and modern, with an excellent quality of life. It has evolved from being a destination exclusively for sunshine and beaches to a renewed and cosmopolitan place for a holiday, with rural tourism which is already becoming famous in its own right, and a worldwide reputation for culture thanks to the extensive range of museums in Malaga city, including the Picasso Museum, the Pompidou, the Russian Museum and the Thyssen Museum.

The Costa del Sol has the ability



The Malaga fair attracts visitors from far and wide. :: DANIEL PÉREZ

to offer travellers a wide range of resources and tourism experiences which, added together, few destinations can match. In addition to the modern facilities for sunshine and beach tourism along its 165 kms of coast, where there are now numerous first class beach clubs and water sports, the province of Malaga has created new tourism resources inland to complement the cultural and historical attractions which were already offered by towns like Ronda and Antequera.

These new resources include the

Caminito del Rey, or King's Path, which in the two years since it opened has received over one million visitors. The BBC describes it as one of the most "terrifying walkways in the world" because it is so spectacular: three kilometres in length, suspended at a height of over 100 metres above the Guadalhorce river. It starts in the municipality of Ardales, crosses that of Antequera and ends at El Chorro (Álora).

However, there are also others such as the Gran Senda, or Great Trail, a pioneering route in Anda-

lucía which incorporates the varied terrain and environmental features of a whole province, integrating it into a unique route which is interesting because of the countryside and the sports which can be enjoyed along its 660 kilometres, which can be done on foot, bicycle or even horseback.

This new option of rural tourism complements the Costa del Sol's golfing facilities. With over 70 courses to choose from, it has been chosen as Best Golf Destination in Europe by more than 170 tour operators. Malaga is also one of the European destinations with the greatest number of air connections, making it easily accessible.

We know that for British people holidays are a top priority and in many cases they take them in the summer, especially families with school-age children, but their requirements are also changing and that is why the Costa del Sol adapts its tourism resources to their needs, to meet the demand for weekend breaks or city breaks, for example. Visitors these days are also increasingly keen to try new foods and experiences, and in many cases they don't just want to relax on the beach.

Faced with these challenges, the Costa del Sol has come up with answers. And we know that the Costa del Sol is one of the favourite destinations for British travellers, because two out of every three British visitors who stay in hotels in Andalucía choose the Costa del Sol for their holidays. Apart from being loyal to the destination, today's visitors have evolved in recent years into people who still like sunshine and beaches, but also love to go walking, mountain hiking, cycling, gastronomic activities (tapas, restaurants), enjoy the nightlife, take cultural excursions and visit monuments and museums.





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## Always Warm

Due to its extraordinary climate, the kindness of its people, its rich variety of things to see and do and the magnificent service provided by its professionals. A destination where you can experience extraordinary experiences all year round.

**#CostadelSol**



**COSTA DEL SOL**  
MÁLAGA





# BEHIND THE SEASIDE

The old part of  
Estepona. :: SUR

Gastronomy, countryside and ancient traditions are some of the other attractions of the western side of the Costa del Sol, as well as the sun, sea and sand

## JAVIER ALMELLONES

Many people might be surprised to hear this, but the western Costa del Sol, which stretches from Torremolinos to Manilva, has a huge variety of different attractions for tourists.

This part of the Malaga coastline is not just about sunshine and sand. Gastronomy, environmentally valuable countryside and local traditions are just some of the reasons why travellers love to explore this area of Malaga province.

Back in history, it was highly coveted by the principal Mediterranean civilisations, who left their mark in the form of important archaeological remains and monuments which can still be seen today.

The western Costa del Sol comprises the municipalities of Benalmádena, Torremolinos, Fuengirola, Mijas, Marbella, Benahavís, Estepona, Manilva and Casares. Nowadays, many of these

are becoming better-known for their rich cultural, historical and natural heritage.

### Marbella

One of the benchmarks for tourism in this eminently coastal region is, of course, Marbella. Its tourism brand has strongly consolidated over the years, mainly due to its beaches and nautical sports, but it would be a mistake to forget the wealth of interesting buildings and monuments in this municipality, which are mainly located in the historic town centre or on the coast.

There is a real history lesson to be discovered in this Mediterranean town, ranging from Roman times to the present day. Visitors to Marbella will find Roman buildings, remains from the time of the Visigoths and defensive structures dating back to Al-Ándalus, as well as Renaissance and Baroque constructions.

In addition, obviously, there is the legacy of the tourism of the 20th century,

including a great deal of luxury and glamour.

### Estepona

Not far away, the town of Estepona is known for its beautiful beaches and lovely climate, but there is much more to it than that. Backed by the colourful Sierra Bermeja mountains, the town contains an important collection of historical and architectural treasures, as can be seen from its Prehistory museums.

There are also interesting remains in the very heart of the town, such as the walls of the San Luis castle and buildings which date back to Andalusian times, including several watchtowers, silent witnesses to history on the coast.

In addition to all this Estepona is environmentally important because of the aforementioned Sierra Bermeja mountains, the highest area of which is protected as a natural beauty spot, thanks to a large variety of natural flora, including the wonder-



The Buddhist stupa near Benalmádena Pueblo. :: SUR

ful pinsapo fir trees.

The town of Estepona itself has become known as the garden of the Costa del Sol due to the plants and flowers in the streets and one of the town's main attractions, the orchid house.

### Benahavís

The municipality of Benahavís is also to be found on the western Costa del Sol - its terrain stretches down to within half a kilometre of the sea. However, the village is located in a very rural setting, with landscapes more often found in mountainous regions.

The natural surroundings of Benahavís make it different from other residential and leisure destinations. For example, part of its territory is in the foothills of the Serranía de Ronda and the Sierra Bermeja, and two-thirds of the municipality is officially classified as a 'Mountain Setting of Environmental Interest'.

It is also home to some unique enclaves in the province of Malaga such as the 'Angosturas', or Narrows of the Guadalmina river, a gorge which is very popular with lovers of adventure sports.

### Torremolinos

For decades the image of Torremolinos has been associated with its beaches and its 'pescaito frito', or fried fish,



but in recent years this town, which was a pioneer in tourism on the Costa del Sol, has updated its principal attributes.

For example, visitors can now enjoy not only the excellent range of leisure facilities, but also the nearby countryside, spectacular green parks and gardens and interesting history. It is delightful to explore the town, stroll along the seafront promenade and go walking in the part of its territory which goes up to the mountains.

### Mijas Pueblo

Situated between the walls of the old castle and the Virgen de la Peña chapel, is the historic centre of Mijas Pueblo, which like neighbouring Benalmádena, predated its coastal areas.

Although Mijas has become a village with numerous foreign residents, it still maintains its principal signs of identity in its streets. On a walk through the centre of the village, you can appreciate the traditional charm of the Andalusian villages, with white houses and pots of col-

ourful flowers.

There are also some very interesting places which are worth a visit, like the aforementioned chapel of the Virgen de la Peña, which was excavated from the rock by Mercedarian friars in the 16th century. The chapel, beside a viewing point, is very close to the iconic donkey-taxi rank, which made Mijas famous in the 1960s.

### Benalmádena

Benalmádena, a municipality which became a bench-



Colomares Castle, Benalmádena. :: SUR



Cycling paths in mountains behind Torremolinos. :: SUR

mark for tourism many decades ago because of its beaches, doesn't renounce its origins either, and the village was the original location. Nowadays, the municipality also includes the town of Arroyo de la Miel and the coastal resort of Benalmádena Costa.

A gentle stroll through the heart of the historic village will reveal the remains of a wall which was once part of a castle with great strategic value. Next to it is the square called Plaza de Santo Do-

mingo de Guzmán, which is home to the main church. The Plaza de España should also be on any sightseeing list, as a sculpture of the emblem of the municipality, the Niña de Benalmádena can be seen there. It is the work of artist Jaime Pimentel.

Around the village there are other attractions for tourists, such as the Mariposario, the butterfly park, which has a large number of examples of this extremely beautiful species.

Opposite is the Buddhist stupa, the Estupa de la Iluminación, which is believed to be the biggest in the western world. Standing more than 33 metres high, it is crowned by a golden cone which is visible from the coast between Benalmádena and Fuengirola. Its base is 25 metres long by 25 metres wide.

On the other side of the historic part of the village is the Colomares Castle, whose construction was completed in 1994. It is now a museum dedicated to Christopher Columbus and the discovery of the New World.



Ayuntamiento de  
**Benalmádena**

[www.benalmadena.es](http://www.benalmadena.es)

# Benalmádena Discover it!



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The tranquil La Concepción botanical gardens. :: DARYL FINCH



# MALAGA: A VIBRANT ALL-ROUND CITY

The city of Picasso has transformed in recent years into one of Europe's most popular and dynamic destinations

## DARYL FINCH

With the Museo Picasso Málaga celebrating its 20th anniversary this year and international galleries continuing their presence in the city, Malaga has quite rightfully earned itself the nickname 'the museum city'.

The Centre Pompidou contemporary art gallery has renewed its arrangement to use the Cube, designed by Daniel Buren, for its only collection outside France, while the Russian Museum of St Petersburg has this year renewed its collection in the Tabacalera. In conjunction with the offering of the Centre for

Contemporary Art (CAC), the Carmen Thyssen Museum and many more, Malaga's cultural offering can give any city in Europe a run for its money.

However, a trip to Malaga is not just about galleries. Visitors can expect an all-round experience whether they explore the city's history, gas-

tronomy and vibrant nightlife, or take it easy with some retail therapy or relaxing walks along the seafront.

## Lively streets

First impressions of Malaga are always characterised by the amount of life emanating from the city's streets and bars at any hour of the

day. The iconic Calle Larios is almost always the centre of all the action; unlike in some northern European countries, Spain, and especially the south, is a place of great participation. Malaga is a lively, vibrant provincial capital whose well over half a million inhabitants share a full calendar of festivals

and events with their many visitors.

As with the rest of the general Andalusian way of life, much can be explained by the climate. More events are organised outside, and people turn out in their droves to enjoy them - all generations, all together.

The two greatest events



La Caleta beach is a stone's throw from the city centre. :: KATRIN GOETHALS





A Semana Santa procession passes the Alcazaba fortress. :: DARYL FINCH

that practically bring the city to a standstill are the 'Feria', the summer fair, which fills the streets with singing and dancing during a week in August, and Semana Santa, six-days of religious processions that take over the city at Easter.

However, the rest of the year is not without its traditional events as well as a growing number of new activities. Light shows have become a feature in recent years with a tunnel of light currently installed ahead of Christmas. The festive atmosphere, with carol singing and street music, and the lights remain in place right through the holiday season until the Three Kings visit in a grand cavalcade on the night of 5 January.

Carnival time then follows hot on its heels in early February, when there are two weeks of street parades, flower battles, drag queen competitions and fancy dress.

### Roll out the red carpet

In spring, visitors might find themselves walking on a red carpet along the length of Calle Larios, as well as other parts of the city centre. This means it's film festival time,

as Malaga hosts the Festival de Cine Español, an event that is now in its 22nd year, and gaining prestige.

While the festival focuses on Spanish film, visitors who don't speak the language can enjoy the festival atmosphere, from the screaming crowds as heartthrob actors make their way into the city's Cervantes theatre to the busy pavement terraces packed with directors, producers and journalists.

Calle Larios is covered in a carpet once again in September, this time a blue one, to form the longest catwalk in Europe. The Pasarela Larios, Malaga's Fashion Week, fills the street with people and fashion as hundreds of models show off the latest collections by local and national designers.

### Full of surprises

Visitors to Malaga on a rare weekend when none of these special events is happening, still have plenty of other ways to keep themselves occupied: a stroll through the city can bring all sorts of surprises for the unsuspecting visitor. The great advantage of a city the size of Malaga is that everything can be

reached on foot, following the pedestrianised network of streets through the historic centre.

After renting a bicycle and going for a dip in the sea at one of the city's beaches or going for a spot of shopping on Calle Larios, you can find yourself giving your feet a rest or sipping a refreshing cocktail in the ultra-modern Muelle Uno in a matter of minutes. However, don't be surprised if you encounter craft markets, exhibitions and classic car displays which are all among the activities organised regularly in this lively marina area.

However, if the tranquil surroundings of the cathedral sound more appealing for a stop, that too is just minutes away. Whether inside the chapel or in the gardens outside, finding such an oasis of tranquility is a rarity in a city centre. In fact, the only place as close is the Concepción botanical gardens, a short bus ride away.

The cathedral, or the 'one-armed lady' as it is known because of its incomplete tower, is famously visible from practically any part of the city and is well worth a visit.

Likewise, the Roman thea-



The Cube in Malaga Port is home to the Centre Pompidou. :: SUR



The Cervantes theatre hosts events all year round. :: SUR

tre, again just around the corner, is another example of Malaga's rich history forming an integral part of this vibrant forward-thinking city. It has been partially reconstructed by the council and has returned to its original purpose, creating a very atmospheric setting for performances of the classics.

The Roman theatre is overlooked by Malaga's ancient fortresses, the Alcazaba and Gibralfaro, creating the perfect postcard image. These fortresses can be visited and give both an insight into the city's dynamic history, but also unparalleled vistas from the top of the city's mountain.

### Nightlife

The square on which Malaga's most famous son, Pablo Picasso, was born has become the city's most popular meet-

ing the point. The various bars and restaurants on Plaza de la Merced are the starting point for many evenings out on the town, whether to the busy clubs off Plaza Mitjana or a show at the theatre.

The Cervantes theatre offers a full programme of music - it is home to the Malaga Philharmonic Orchestra - as well as drama, opera and dance. Meanwhile a number of smaller venues provide a range of performances that add to the buzzing cultural ambience of the city.

Among the trees of the city's park is another open air live music venue, the Eduardo Ocón auditorium, and it's not unusual to see a stage set up in the city's Plaza de la Constitución for larger open air concerts.

The buzzing bar and restaurant scene, coupled with the Spanish habit of taking

to the streets for no reason, makes this a city where every day is a fiesta.

### Perfect for business

All of the above is not only attracting an increasing number of tourists to Malaga and putting it firmly on the map of popular destinations, but a growing number of businesses are choosing the city either to establish their bases or to host their conferences.

The Malaga congress centre has become a popular venue for international firms to hold their conferences because of the city's good connections by air, rail and road, as well as the huge variety of hotel accommodation, catering facilities and leisure activities.

Now with 140 different national and international connections, it comes as little surprise that visitors are flooding in - for business or for pleasure.



# A NATURAL CHOICE FOR BRITISH HOLIDAYMAKERS

**FRANCISCO DE LA TORRE**  
Mayor of Malaga



**We come to WTM 2018 convinced that Malaga is the ideal destination for British people as the number of visitors continues to grow and links between the city and the UK strengthen**



Cyclists enjoy a ride along the seafront in Malaga's vibrant Muelle Uno marina. :: SUR

Our city is coming to the World Travel Market 2018 convinced that we are the ideal destination for British visitors: a destination which is complete, hospitable, cultural and a benchmark in terms of museums. This year we are celebrating the 15th anniversary of the one dedicated to our own genius, Picasso, but we also have other famous examples such as the Pompidou Centre Malaga, the Carmen Thyssen Museum, the Russian Museum, the Contemporary Art Centre and the house in which Picasso was born, which is also an exhibition centre.

Ours is a destination which invites you to enjoy a whole new experience, one where the quality of our gastronomy wins over not only the palates but also the hearts of our British friends, because our food brings local people and visitors together and enables them to discover and enjoy the essence of our city and our lifestyle.

At the WTM we will be showcasing Malaga as a quality city destination which offers much more than just its lovely climate, something for which the 125,554 British visitors who came to Malaga in 2017 can vouch; in fact, this figure was 18.56 per cent higher than in 2016. Unsurprisingly, the British market is the top international market for our city, representing over 15 per cent of all our foreign visitors.

This year, the number continues to grow. According to the National Institute of Statistics, between January and September 101,502 British travellers stayed in our hotels, which is 9.88 per cent more than in the same period last year, and there were 210,650 overnight stays (an increase of 2.4 per cent).

We already have close links with the United Kingdom; for example, the Cruise Lines International Association recently organized the 'Luxury Showcase' event in Malaga. For this reason, at the WTM we will be reinforcing our contacts with British agents in the 'premium' seg-

ment. Our accommodation is mainly four star and five star, and in addition to the Gran Hotel Miramar another grand luxury five star hotel is to be built on the Dique de Levante.

Shopping is one of the main activities enjoyed by British tourists in Malaga (59 per cent of them, according to Turespaña), and in this sense one of our great attractions is our extraordinary pedestrian Historic City Centre, the biggest commercial area in the city, where there are around 1,000 shops.

British tourists see their holidays as a necessity (Turespaña) and we are sure that the easy connections between Malaga and the UK make this city an ideal destination for a short break or a weekend away. The Malaga-Costa del Sol airport has direct flights to and from the UK all year round. Malaga has connections to 17 cities and 22 airports in different parts of the UK, and British passengers represent 32 per cent of the total at the airport (AENA figures for 2017), no fewer than 5.9 million.

In fact, city breaks are a type of visit which we will be promoting at the WTM, because not only do they attract the type of cultural tourist of the quality we want, but they help to bring visitors all year round, not just in peak seasons.

In order to showcase everything we have to offer British tourists, we will have a busy agenda at the WTM. We have arranged about 30 meetings with specialist and medium-sized tour operators, airlines, travel agents, specialist journalists and shipping lines, and we will be reminding them that in 2020 Malaga will be hosting the 'Seatrade Med', the second most important fair in the sector at world level and the most important in Europe.

With us at the WTM this year will be a delegation of 17 businesses associated with the tourism sector in Malaga, the highest number so far. We will work together on presenting the potential of our city as the diverse and global destination that it is, and which has made it one of the most brilliant and dynamic capitals in Europe.



# C cultural agenda Málaga



COLECCIÓN  
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RUSO

**Kazimir Malévich**  
Until February 3rd 2019

Kazimir Malévich. Spolmenet.  
1930-1931. In Russian State Museum



Museo  
Carmen Thyssen  
Málaga

**The fury of colour. Francisco Iturrino (1864-1924)**  
Until March 3rd 2019



Centre  
Pompidou  
Málaga

**Modern utopias. A journey through the collections of the Pompidou Centre**  
Until March 3rd 2020

Robert Rauschenberg. Hyaline. 1990. Donated by Anna Obolensky and Charles Debraun, 1990



museoPICASSOMálaga

**Picasso's South. Andalusian references.**  
With Goya, Munko, Velázquez and Zurbarán among others.  
Until February 3rd 2019

Juan de Zurbarán (1629-1684). Desk of  
gloves. 1633. Oil on copper. 28 x 36 cm.  
Private collection of private collection.



caa Málaga  
Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Málaga

**Hernan Bas. A Brief Intermission**  
Until December 9th 2018



FUNDACIÓN  
PICASSO  
MUSEO CASA NATAL  
BARRIO DE SAN FELIX

**Picasso: the traces on paper**  
Until November 18th 2018



museo del  
patrimonio  
municipal

**Pianos of Málaga. Craft and industry.**  
Until January 13th 2019



Museo  
Jorge Rando

**Nature by Rando**  
Until January 30th 2019



MUSEO  
REVELLO  
DE TORO

**Permanent collection**  
104 pieces by Málaga artist Félix Revello de Toro. Pedro Mena's house-workshop



MUSEO  
AUTOMÁTICO  
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**The goldmine**  
Until December 2018





The village of Benahavís. :: SUR

# BENAHAVÍS, SMALL BUT STUNNING

It doesn't feature on many 'What To Do' lists, but this white village has a great deal to offer

## DEBBIE BARTLETT

Andalucía is famous for its 'pueblos blancos', the small and very traditional white villages which nestle in beautiful countryside, but one which is rarely mentioned is Benahavís, a charming village in Malaga province, seven kilometres inland and situated between the Costa del Sol resorts of Marbella and Estepona.

This is not to say that Benahavís is not well-known; on the contrary its accessibility has made it a very popular location among foreigners wanting a second home and it is also ideal for a day trip from the coast, an idyllic weekend break or as a peaceful and beautiful base for a holiday.

Although the village itself is small, Benahavís can boast of being one of the largest municipalities in Malaga province, with land covering around 150 square kilometres.

It is also one of the wealthiest, with a number of exclusive residential developments such as La Zagaleta, and golf resorts including La Quinta,

Los Arqueros and the five-star Villa Padierna hotel and golf resort which was the choice of American First Lady Michelle Obama when she spent a holiday in the area some years ago.

In fact, Benahavís is heaven on earth for golf lovers, with several courses of its own including Montemayor, one of the most spectacular courses in the area, and many more within easy reach.

The village is also nicknamed The Dining Room of the Costa del Sol, because of the large number of restaurants in a place of this size, and the quality of the food.

## In the mountains

Because of its mountain location and large extension of territory, Benahavís also holds numerous attractions for country pursuits and adventure sports.

The 'Angosturas' or 'Narrows' of the Guadalmina river are in Benahavís, a remarkable area with impressive gorges and spectacular pools, ideal for canyoning.



The Monte Mayor golf course. :: SUR



The countryside is ideal for adventure sports. :: SUR

Ornithologists will also be in their element here, as the mountains are home to different birds of prey and the river is an ideal spot to see a wide variety of species, some of them quite rare.

There are many good walks and hikes in the stunning countryside around Benahavís, including to the remains of the 11th century

Montemayor Castle, on the top of the highest mountain in the vicinity. This is a strenuous walk, but worth it for the fantastic views and, of course, there will be another reward for the effort once you're back in the village, where there is a choice of bars with pretty terraces on which to relax and enjoy well-deserved refreshments.



# Benahavis



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Costa del Sol [Málaga]





There are 4,400 berths in the marinas of Malaga province. In the photo, yachts in Puerto Banús. :: JOSELE-LANZA

# HOLIDAYS ONBOARD; COSTA MARINAS ARE AS BUSY AS EVER

A turnover of seven million euros and an average occupancy rate of 88 per cent are opening the door to the recovery of the leisure port sector and the introduction of new activities

## FERNANDO TORRES

The ports in Malaga province have ended the summer with very positive figures which bode well for the future and are giving hope to the sector once more.

According to information from Marinas de Andalucía, the agency which encompasses most of the ports in the region (seven of the nine privately-owned marinas in Malaga), the summer season generated seven million euros of business thanks to an average occupancy rate of 88 per cent.

These figures on their own are an indication that the sector is doing well, but when compared with recent years they indicate that stability has finally returned to the leisure port sector in Malaga.

The summer of 2017 ended with similar figures, so 2018 has been an exercise in consolidation. During the most difficult years of the economic crisis, occupancy levels stayed below 50 per cent and the volume of business was far below that of the past two years.

The only noticeable difference between 2017 and 2018, say sources at Marinas de Andalucía, is that last year the average occupancy was about 90 per cent, two points higher than this summer. However, this year larger boats berthed in the marinas, with the result that income increased.

The report by the association of marinas, which was produced on behalf of the Confederation of Business Owners of Andalucía (CEA), shows that the number of jobs created in

this sector during the summer season rose to nearly 200. In addition, there are permanent staff who look after the 4,400 berths in the leisure ports of Malaga province.

According to figures for 2015, Andalucía occupies second place in the national ranking in terms of berths in marinas, representing 16.7 per cent of the 134,725 in Spain.

Top of the list is Catalonia, with 22.7 per cent, and below Malaga comes the Balearic Islands, with 16.6 per cent of the total. Of the 64 ports, 56 are leisure marinas and they contain a total of 22,516 berths. In this respect the province of Cadiz is in the lead with 30 per cent of these ports, followed by Huelva and Malaga with 25 per cent and 19.6 per cent respectively.

Together, these three provinces are home to 78 per cent of all the berths in the marinas of Andalucía. The report shows that the Costa del Sol and Cadiz are the two most highly developed areas in terms of marinas and the tourism associated with them: "Malaga province has more facilities on land and at sea than anywhere else, as well as a strong focus on nightlife and entertainment. In that sense Cadiz is a more balanced destination," says the report.

The president of the organisation, José Carlos Martín, says

that generally the activity this summer has been positive and he also stresses that there has been an increase in the number of larger yachts in the ports in Malaga, which indicates a change to a more profitable model. He also considers that the figures demonstrate "a rising popularity" in marinas, and this has great financial potential. "Undoubtedly, the impact which these marinas generates is significant and important, and it contributes to the development and wealth of their respective areas of influence," he says.

## Future challenges

One of the principal problems which the sector needs to overcome is its relationship with the institutions. "The high taxes demanded by the regional authorities and the lack of modernisation of port infrastructures are two problems which are making the marinas in Andalucía less competitive," says the report. Despite this, the return of stability to the sector is now enabling the nautical world to focus more and more on additional activities associated with leisure ports, and these have great productive potential. In Malaga at present there are companies which hire boats, organise dives, provide training (sailing schools and also official qualifications), and more.





# Marinas large and small on the Costa del Sol

Yacht owners have eleven leisure ports to choose from

by FERNANDO TORRES

**MALAGA.** The Costa del Sol is one of the most popular places in the world among yacht owners. There are 11 marinas to choose from, all offering something different and a wide range of amenities in the nearby towns.

Perhaps the most famous of all is Puerto Banús, a favourite with jetsetters for decades and a byword for luxury. It has over 1,000 berths, numerous restaurants and designer boutiques and is definitely the place to see and be seen. Anyone who berths their yacht here should prepare for a constant stream of passers-by, taking a stroll and the opportunity to get up close to the boats.

Those who prefer a less ostentatious option often head for nearby Marbella, which is much smaller with 377 berths, but also popular with wealthy yacht owners. It offers sailing



La Caleta de Vélez. :: SUR

classes for children and competitions and races often take place here.

Continuing up the coast towards Malaga we come to the small and beautiful Puerto de Cabopino, on the east side of Marbella. It has 169 berths and can accommodate yachts up to 15 metres in length. It has an exclusive feel, and a selection of waterside restaurants.

Fuengirola's marina is quite small but bustling; it is also home to the local fishing fleet and offers berths for 226

yachts. As befits a busy tourist resort, there is always plenty going on in Fuengirola port, including excursions and activities.

Puerto Marina in Benalmádena Costa is probably the second most famous after Puerto Banús. Its award-winning architecture and artificial islands have twice given it the prestigious title of Best Marina in the World. With over 1,000 berths, a large commercial centre and vibrant nightlife, this is a favourite

among those who like to shop until they drop during the day and then dance the night away.

Malaga has two marinas, one in the heart of the city at Muelle Uno, where cruise ships and megayachts are frequent visitors, and the small 280-berth El Candado on the eastern side. Further east is the marina at Caleta de Vélez, which is a fishing port and has 274 berths for visitors.

Heading back in the direction of Cadiz, beyond Puerto Banús is Estepona Port, which has 447 berths and then La Duquesa in Manilva, which has the added advantage of its 328 berths being very close to the golf course.

Not far away, but in Cadiz province rather than Malaga, is the large and prestigious Sotogrande Marina, in the municipality of San Roque, with 1,382 berths and the ability to accommodate yachts up to 70 metres long. It has been beautifully designed as a nautical and residential complex, and is a major tourist attraction.

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Feted as a cure for skin complaints, the sulphurous waters are said to have been visited by Caesar

#### ASH BOLTON

He came, he saw, he bathed.

Yes, legend has it that ancient Rome's most famous ruler Julius Caesar, once dipped his toes in these strong-smelling baths on the Costa del Sol.

According to local historians, the sulphur rich hot water attracted the attention of the Romans over 2,000 years ago.

And it's said that between 63-60BC while governor of southern Spain, Caesar actually cured himself of a skin infection by bathing there.

As a result of Caesar's miracle cure, Roman soldiers ended up building a bathing complex before naming it Hedionda, with four of the original chambers still existing today.

There is evidence of other water channels close by and a nearby Roman Aqueduct, which lend further credence to this legend.

Located in the valley below Manilva and about 4 kilometres up the road from Sabinillas, they are extremely popular during the summer months.

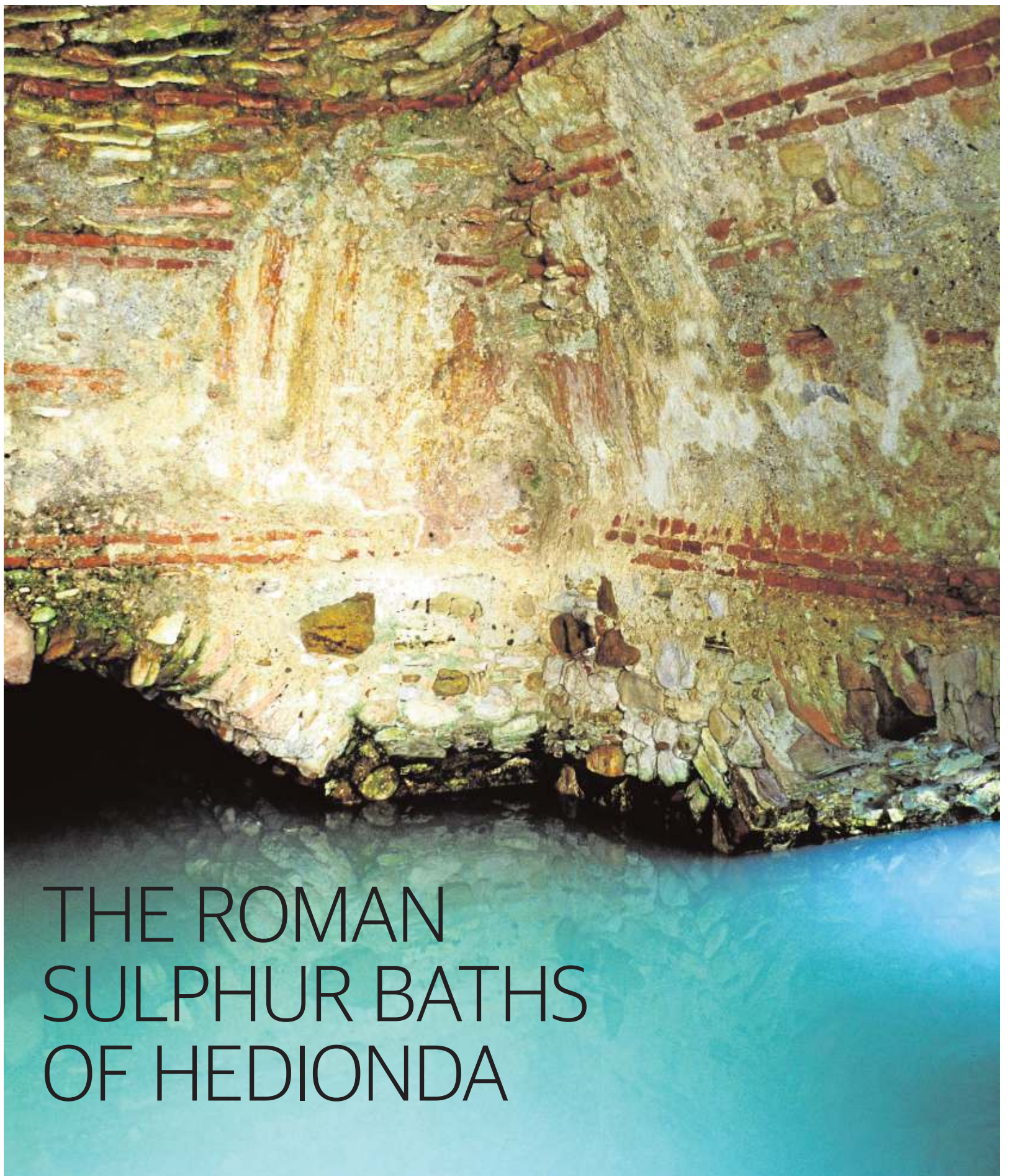
In fact, some 4,300 bathing fans followed in Caesar's footsteps to the sulphur baths in July this summer.

You'll see many locals taking picnics down to the baths, especially on Sundays.

And although they are free to enter, a new ticketing system has been introduced to help manage the numbers in order to help preserve the baths.

However, on a recent visit despite being told they were fully booked for the day, I was still allowed into the baths as many who book via the website weeks in advance fail to turn up.

As for the baths them-



# THE ROMAN SULPHUR BATHS OF HEDIONDA

## The Romans built a bathing complex for the pools from the sulphur spring

selves, the water comes from a sulphur spring that flows from a limestone outcrop above the valley.

Thanks to the high sulphur content, you may not be surprised to discover that the water smells of rotten eggs.

But it's worth holding your nose as bathing in sulphur

springs helps improve the health of the skin and is said to cure epidermal complaints.

You'll see plenty of people covering themselves in the mud that surrounds the baths before heading into them afterwards to wash it off.

And best of all, on a sweltering day it makes for a refreshing way to cool off as the baths are sheltered from the sun.

So when in Sabinillas, why not do as the Romans do?

For tickets visit the onsite information kiosk, the tourist office in Casares or online at [www.ticketea.com](http://www.ticketea.com)

## How to get there

Although the baths are managed by Casares Town Hall, they are much closer to Sabinillas. From the A-7 motor way in Sabinillas, take the exit at the roundabout by Lidl supermarket and head north for approximately 4 kms. Continue until you pass the Roman Oasis restaurant. You will know you're there when you pass under the motor way viaduct. There is plenty of free parking but you'll have to walk around 500 metres from the car park to the baths.



The outside view of the dome of the baths. :: SUR





MARBELLA

★★★★★ Destino 5 estrellas

# MARBELLA IS **YOUR** DESTINATION

#marbellaisyourdestination





# MARBELLA, THE SMART DESTINATION

Beaches, parties, boats, golf, tradition, history, mountains, weddings, congresses, technology; whatever your reason for coming, Marbella is certainly the intelligent choice

Marbella is not short of evidence to support its claims of being a leading tourist destination, not just in Spain but in the entire Mediterranean and even worldwide.

The town's name is often associated with words such as excellence and luxury. The mayor, Ángeles Muñoz, said recently that the reason for the town's excellence in tourism lies in its "strategic conditions", namely 27 kilometres of beaches and easy connections with the rest of the world, and the presence of a "great tourism industry that is focusing on innovation".

Muñoz highlighted the prestigious hotel accommodation and the fact that Marbella has more Michelin stars (five) than any other town

or city in Andalucía. Golf courses, leisure facilities, shopping, health, culture and sport are all on the list of attractions for tourists and residents that make Marbella worthy of its association with "excellence".

"It can be said very clearly that we have a town with a great quality of life that attracts visitors, residents and also investors," said the mayor at an event earlier this year.

Now the resort can add another word to the list: not only is it associated with excellence and luxury, but now also with "intelligence".

This October Marbella officially became a member of Spain's group of "smart tourist destinations" (Destinos

**Marbella is now a member of a select club of "smart tourist destinations", thanks to its innovation and state-of-the-art technology**

Turísticos Inteligentes), belonging to a network drawn up by the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism.

Marbella and the city of Malaga are the only destinations in the province included in this select group of no more than 70 areas of Spain.

The network describes a "smart" destination as an innovative tourist town or city, built on an infrastructure of state-of-the-art technology guaranteeing the sustainable development of the tourist sector. Furthermore members of the group of 70 have to be accessible to everyone, which facilitates the visitors' interaction with and integration into their surroundings and increases the quality of the experience at the destination,

while also improving the quality of life of its residents.

"This initiative increases the value of our town as a tourist destination," said the mayor. Belonging to Spain's tourism smart club means that the town will receive support to develop and roll out new communication and information technology, enabling the creation of distinguishing and competitive services to improve tourists' experiences.

## **Climate and beauty**

While new technology and intelligence on one hand, and high-end hotels, restaurants and boutiques on the other, help set Marbella apart from other destinations, the town and entire municipality

Nagüeles beach, Marbella, with La Concha mountain in the background. :: SUR





would not be anywhere in the tourism ranking without starting with quality “raw materials” to build on.

As the town says in its introduction on the World Travel Market exhibitor list: it has become a benchmark for worldwide tourism thanks to its privileged location.

“Sea and mountain, tradition and modernity merge in this Mediterranean town to offer the visitor a multicultural, cosmopolitan atmosphere,” says the introduction.

The aforementioned 27 kilometres of coastline with a spectacular mountain backdrop combined with a mild year-round climate are the basics that started Marbella on its road to excellence.

### Extravagance

Then came the aristocrats, the beach clubs, the jet set, Puerto Banús, the luxury yachts, the Golden Mile, the stylish hotels, the celebrities, the extravagance and the international royalty.

Still today Marbella’s tourists include the rich and famous, or at least visitors who want to spend a few days pretending they are.

The scene is set: wide sandy beaches with trendy bars, a marina packed with luxury yachts and fancy cars, designer boutiques and night-life famous around Europe, attract visitors wanting to live the Marbella experience.

However, as the WTM information goes on to say, Marbella has become a benchmark for worldwide tourism without losing any of its typical Andalusian flavour or its historical essence.

### Tradition

The fancy extravagance on one side finds its contrast in the authenticity of the old town (Casco Antiguo) of Marbella. The flowerpot-lined narrow streets around the Plaza de los Naranjos with its orange trees form the heart of Marbella, offering the traditional images of an Andalusian town.

The remains of the old castle take us back to the times of Arab rule, and the chapel of Santiago, the town’s oldest religious building, dates back to the 15th century.

Standing in the Plaza de los Naranjos is the 16th century Renaissance town hall building and the Casa del Corregidor which combine Mudéjar, Gothic and Renaissance styles.

Here, wandering through the Casco Antiguo, visitors can find that essence of Andalucía which has perhaps been lost from the coastal tourist hubs.

While the town’s heart



Golf on the Guadalmina course, where the greens slope down towards the Mediterranean. :: JOSELE-LANZA



The town’s Puerto Deportivo, living up to international standards. :: JOSELE-LANZA

beats in its old town, its energy is focused on its tourist attractions along the coastline. Ever working to improve facilities, Marbella town’s marina, known as the Puerto Deportivo Virgen del Carmen, has become the first in Spain to be awarded the Q for Quality according to international criteria.

### Quality

Until now the flag has been awarded by the ICTE (the Spanish Institute for Tourism Quality) following this country’s criteria and 23 ports in Spain have the distinction. However now the institute has started to follow global guidelines and Marbella’s marina has passed the test.

Mayor Ángeles Muñoz stressed in October that the Q flag was not a “prize”, but the recognition of a job well done. Projects to bring this port up to standard included the creation of a wide range of services such as nautical activities and environmental initiatives as well as improvements to the refuse recycling point, the drawing up of a plan to fight marine pollution and emergency



Plaza de los Naranjos in Marbella’s old town. :: SUR



The Artola dunes, a protected strip of coastline. :: SUR

**The prestigious holiday haven was built on the best foundations: 27 kilometres of coastline, spectacular scenery and year-round sunshine**

friendly models, welcoming some 6,000 delegates from around the world.

### Fiction and romance

Scenes from Marbella are also appearing on international screens as more and more television and film producers are choosing to use the area as a filming location. In just the first four months of this year, 25 film crews had been at work in the town on different projects. They included the team from the British series *Living The Dream*, who turned Marbella into their Florida.

And from fiction to reality, Marbella is also becoming a popular destination for wedding tourism. Earlier this year a group of British wedding planners visited the town to see the facilities available for couples who want to tie the knot on the shores of the Mediterranean.

The scenery, the weather and the choice of hotel accommodation and exclusive wedding venues, combined with help from the local council with paperwork, are convincing couples to put Marbella on their wedding invitations.

measures.

As well as the port, six beaches in Marbella were awarded the Q for Quality flag in the summer: La Venus, El Faro, Nueva Andalucía, Puerto Banús, Cabopino and San Pedro Alcántara. The Artola dunes also received recognition as a natural monument.

Marbella’s importance as a tourism destination and its facilities and services attract visitors coming to do more than sit on the beach and go shopping.

Early next year the town will be hosting the global launch of the new Audi eco-



# THE DIVERSITY OF THE EASTERN COSTA DEL SOL

The Axarquía is home to 31 towns and villages and a varied terrain which runs from the coast to the limestone mountains

**JAVIER ALMELLONES**

The Axarquía is the most easterly region of Malaga province and it is also the most varied, because its countryside and landscapes are almost as diverse as its towns and villages. In fact, there are 31 different municipalities in this area, and an unusual terrain which runs from the coast to the limestone mountain ranges, passing through agricultural areas, vineyards of Muscat grapes and the 'verdial' variety of olives.

The municipalities in this region are also very diverse. Within the Axarquía you can find everything from towns which are popular tourist resorts such as Rincón de la Victoria and Nerja, to small villages with no more than 500 inhabitants, like Árchez, Cútar and Salares.

One of the best ways to discover all this diversity is through the different tourist routes. These are based on different themes and they take you, in one way or another, through all 31 municipalities of the Axarquía.

One of the best-known is the Raisin Route, which runs from Totalán and from Benagalbón, in the municipality of Rincón, to Cútar, passing through Moclinejo, Almachar and El Borge. en route. In addition it visits the town of Comares, which is known as 'the Balcony of the Axarquía'.

On this trip visitors will see landscapes featuring the muscat grapes, used to make the sweet moscatel wine, raisin drying beds and wine-ries scattered among the

rugged hills.

The Mudejar Route begins in Arenas and passes through different places which have important buildings dating back to the time of Al-Ándalus. These include the hamlets of Daimalos and Corumbela as well as the villages of Árchez, Canillas de Aceituno, Sedella and Salares. Each of them is home to remains from the Moorish period such as minarets, water channels, mosques and castles, and the layouts of the narrow streets are also clearly inherited from that era.

In the inland region of La Axarquía you can also do the Sun and Wine Route, which includes places like Cómpe-  
ta, Alga-

robo, Sayalonga, Canillas de Albaida, Torrox, Nerja and Frigiliana. All of these maintain the tradition of producing wines from muscat grapes, as they have been doing for centuries. This has become one of the main signals of the identity of this part of the province of Malaga.

La Axarquía also has an exotic side, with a route based on its subtropical agricultural products. Known as the Route of Sun and Avocado, it passes through Benamargosa, Benamocarra, Iznate, Vélez-Málaga and Macharaviaya. As well as avocados, there are

**The Axarquía offers countryside and landscapes almost as diverse as its towns and villages**

mangos, custard apples and lychees, among others, and they have been grown in this area for decades, resulting in a very unusual landscape.

In the Alta-Axarquía, which is the upper Axarquía region, the Sun and Olive Oil route has also been organised. It includes villages with a long tradition of making olive oil, such as Colmenar, Riogordo, Alfarnate, Alfarnatejo, Periana, Alcaucín and La Viñuela. In nearly all of them the verdial variety of olive is predominant, and is famous for its intense but fruity flavour.

In addition to these official routes, there are others to help you discover the Axarquía in an interesting and entertaining way. For example, the Watchtower Route along the eastern coast, the Route of Canyons and Gorges, which includes Alfarnatejo, Comares and Colmenar, and the Bandits Route which passes through Alcaucín, La Viñuela and Alfarnate in Malaga province and also part of the neighbouring province of Granada.

Also it is

worth, bearing in mind that many of the towns and villages in La Axarquía have their own attractions and resources for tourists.

Nerja is particularly outstanding: it includes the natural beauty spot of the Maro cliffs, and the world-famous Nerja Cave.

The nearby village of Frigiliana is also popular, especially its most historic district, known locally as 'Barribarto', which is one of the finest examples of Andalusian architecture.

Vélez-Málaga deserves a special mention of its own, as it is the biggest town in the area. In the centre you can visit the Moorish fortress and civil and religious buildings with great historical value. Its municipality also includes the smaller tourist areas of Torre del Mar, Chilches, Benajárfate and Almayate.

Because of its history, the village of Macharaviaya is



Part of the town of

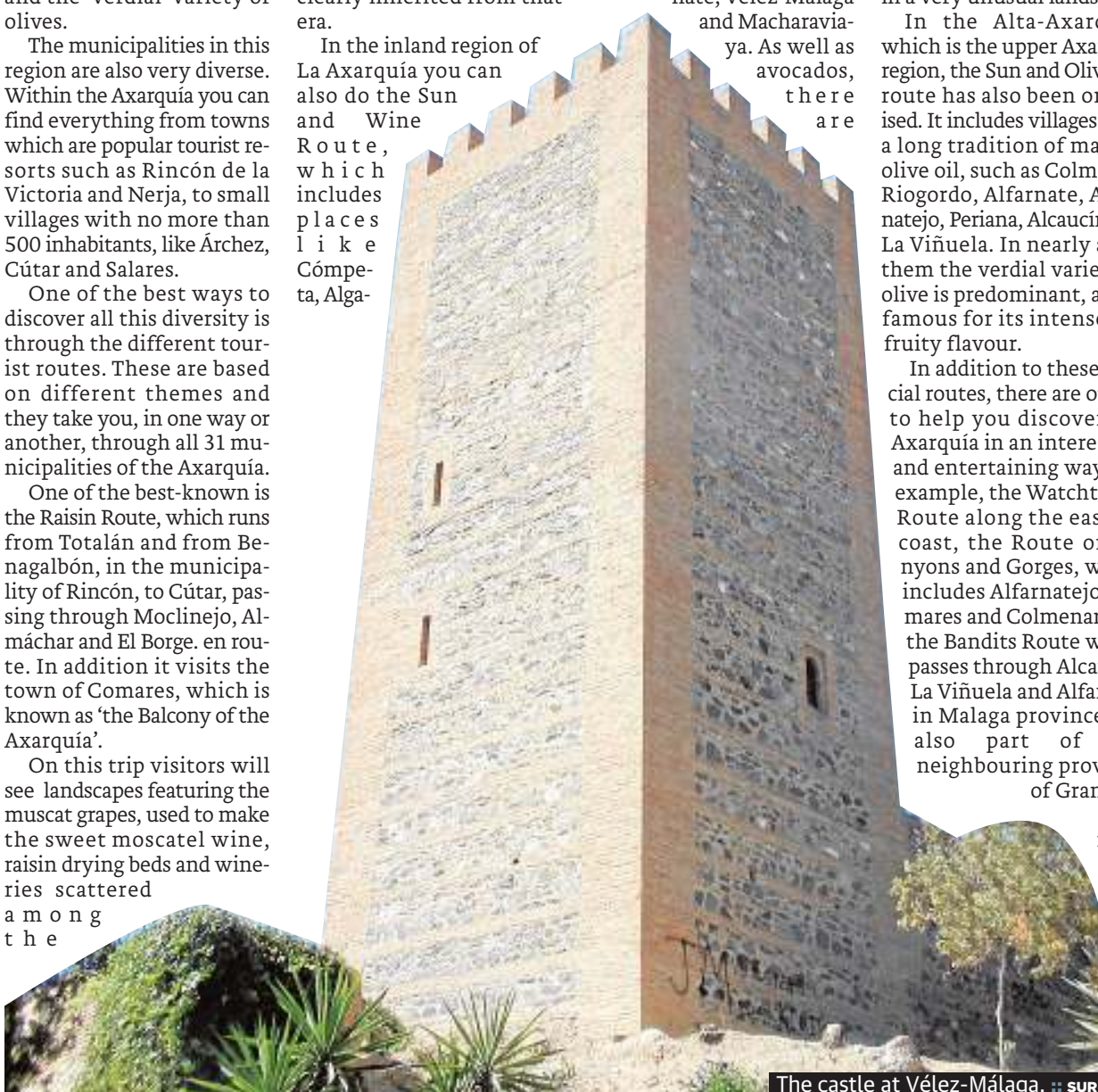


Torre del Mar beach. :: SUR

**There are various routes through the Axarquía region including the Raisin, Mudejar and Sun and Wine Routes**

also well worth a visit. It is known as the 'homeland' of Bernardo de Gálvez and his family. It reached its maximum splendour in the 18th century, even being given the nickname of 'Little Madrid'. These days the legacy of the De Gálvez clan is in the process of being restored and updated.

In the upper Axarquía area, some municipalities are undergoing an important development in terms of their economy and tourism. One is Colmenar, which is known nowadays more for its production of cured meats than its original speciality of



The castle at Vélez-Málaga. :: SUR



# BETWEEN MOUNTAIN AND SEA

The town of Torrox has a long history - the remains of a Roman necropolis and thermal baths can still be seen

J. A.

In the foothills of the Sierra de Tejeda sits Torrox, a white town that has managed to develop tourism without losing its rural charm. It is easy to separate the two main populated areas of the enclave: the coast and the small town inland.

Situated just a short way from the coast is the main urban centre of the town, better known as Torrox Pueblo. There the homes of the 'Torroxeños' adapt themselves to the irregularities of the terrain and are arranged in a staggered manner which allows visitors to enjoy the rural outlook with a unique backdrop, the blue sea.

On the coast there are still traces of Roman occupation with the ruins of Cavicum, a strategically placed village



Torrox Pueblo. :: SUR

which was important in distributing agricultural and fishing products.

The village was inhabited during the 1st and 4th centuries and includes a salting factory and pottery kilns as

well as a necropolis and thermal baths. It was mentioned in the itinerary of Antoninus as he travelled between Sexi (Almuñécar) and Menoba (mouth of the River Vélez).



The lighthouse at Torrox. :: SUR



Vélez-Málaga with the castle. :: SUR

honey.

Despite this, a museum dedicated to bee-keeping and honey has recently been opened in the town.

For those who love the countryside and the environment, there are also tours and excursions into the Natural Park of the Sierras de Tejeda, Almijara and Alhama, and the area around the reservoir of La Viñuela.

[www.costadelsol-axarquia.com](http://www.costadelsol-axarquia.com)







You could be here!

Come to Axarquia Costal del Sol





# STREETS STEEPED IN HISTORY

The town of Frigiliana is characterised by narrow, cobbled streets, white washed façades and numerous traces of its Mudejar past

**FERNANDO MORGADO**

Frigiliana boasts one of the best preserved urban centres of Moorish-Mudejar origin in the country.

The so-called Barribarto is characterised by its radiating streets, whitewashed

façades and steep climbs that transport the visitor back to another era.

The streets and alleyways contain the history of Frigiliana in the form of monuments such as the Ingenio, home of the only molasses factory left in Europe; the Fuente Vieja, the Ecce Homo shrine, the Reales Pósitos and El Torreón.

On a cultural level, Frigiliana is proud of its Museo Arqueológico which was inaugurated in December, 2009, and the Jardín Botánico Santa Fiora which contains samples of plants that the inhabitants of Frigiliana



A street in Frigiliana. **SUR**

na have used for hundreds of years.

Tourists who visit Frigiliana will also love its gastronomy which reflects the traditional cuisine of the Axarquía region.

Natural products such as olive oil, moscatel wine and fresh vegetables are used to prepare the main dishes of Frigiliana, among which the recipes based on the locally farmed young goat kid are especially recommended.



El Ingenio factory. **SUR**

# NERJA, A NATURAL PARADISE

The jewel in the tourist crown of the Axarquía, Nerja aims to be the leader of the sector all year round

**F. M.**

Nerja, considered to be the jewel in the tourist crown of the Axarquía, aims to be a destination that attracts tourism even in the low season.

To achieve this, it is focusing its strategy on family tourism and data from the previous low season confirm that they are headed in the right direction.

Nerja has also received accreditation of its tourist pull from Trip Advisor who awarded it fourth place in its

Travellers' Choice 'Emerging Destination'.

Its privileged location makes the town a true natural paradise, with dozens of small coves along its coastline sheltered by the mountains. The famous cave that bears the name of the town, is one of the main attractions of the area.

Nerja has been promoting the beauty of its environment with special routes negotiable by foot or bicycle, as a way of seducing visitors throughout the year.



The famous Nerja caves and Burriana beach. **SUR**

## Visit Frigiliana

You'll return

[www.turismofrigiliana.es](http://www.turismofrigiliana.es)
[@turismofrigiliana](#)
05 253 42 81



# Mijas

AYUNTAMIENTO  
TURISMO

## 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.

### 🏌️ *Mijas, experience the green*

#### **12 Golf Courses**

Mijas offers golf enthusiasts one of the best options in all of Andalusia.

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.



Avda. Virgen de la Peña, 2A 29650 Mijas (Málaga)  
Web: [turismo.mijas.es](http://turismo.mijas.es) - E-mail: [turismo@mijas.es](mailto:turismo@mijas.es)  
Tel.: 952 58 90 34 - Fax: 952 58 90 35





### Coast

Mijas has 14 kilometres of coastline which currently boast three blue flags and nine 'Q for Quality' distinctions, making the municipality a benchmark destination where quality is concerned.

### Golf

Mijas has 12 golf courses available to amateurs and professional players of this sport. Top level complexes that make the municipality one of the main centres for golf in southern Europe all year round.

# MIJAS, A UNIQUE DESTINATION

Home to sandy beaches, village traditions, golf courses, shopping and outdoor adventure, Mijas offers tourists a full programme of events, from flamenco and blues to food festivals and sports activities

Beaches, hiking paths, mountains, view points, fauna and flora are just a few examples of the natural resources Mijas offers its visitors. In this unique enclave the tourist can discover its historical heritage through archaeological sites or museums. Culture occupies a vital place while gastronomy and crafts are also unique attractions.

### Giving something back

"The thousands of tourists who visit Mijas every year, drawn by its pretty streets, its cuisine or its traditional crafts, make this a unique place." These were the words of the mayor, Juan Carlos Maldonado, speaking at the re-

cent Día del Turista, a day of festivities organised by the local council as a way of giving something back to the visitors who make Mijas the place it is today.

The reasons why so many tourists choose Mijas as their destination year after year are clear. Mijas has something for everyone: its Pueblo, the famous white village nestled in the mountainside; its Costa, the coastal strip with kilometres of sandy beaches and resorts; its golf, with more than ten courses; and Las Lagunas, its bustling urban area bordering Fuengirola with excellent shopping facilities and theatre.

All year round, tourists en-

joy experiences that range from sports (golf, climbing, cycling tourism, watersports, diving, etc), nature (hiking, birdwatching, whale watching, etc), culture (museums, crafts, gastronomy, etc) and leisure (events and shopping).

Mijas' tourism possibilities have great potential. The archaeological sites spread across different areas, including some from Phoenician, early and late Roman and medieval times; the ethnographical heritage associated to farming estates and mining such as aqueducts, quarries, mines, windmills or ranches, are all a part of the resources placed at the disposal of locals and visitors.

Fine dining and good communications all contribute to the municipality's attractions, not just for tourists but also for the thousands of people of different nationalities, many of them British, who have made Mijas their home.

"In Mijas we want to be the leading tourist destination in our province and to achieve that, we know that we have to look after our visitors," added the mayor at the annual event that included live entertainment and a giant paella, enjoyed by 500 people.

In fact, just a few months previously, in June, the town celebrated the arrival of its tourist number two million (according to visitor figures

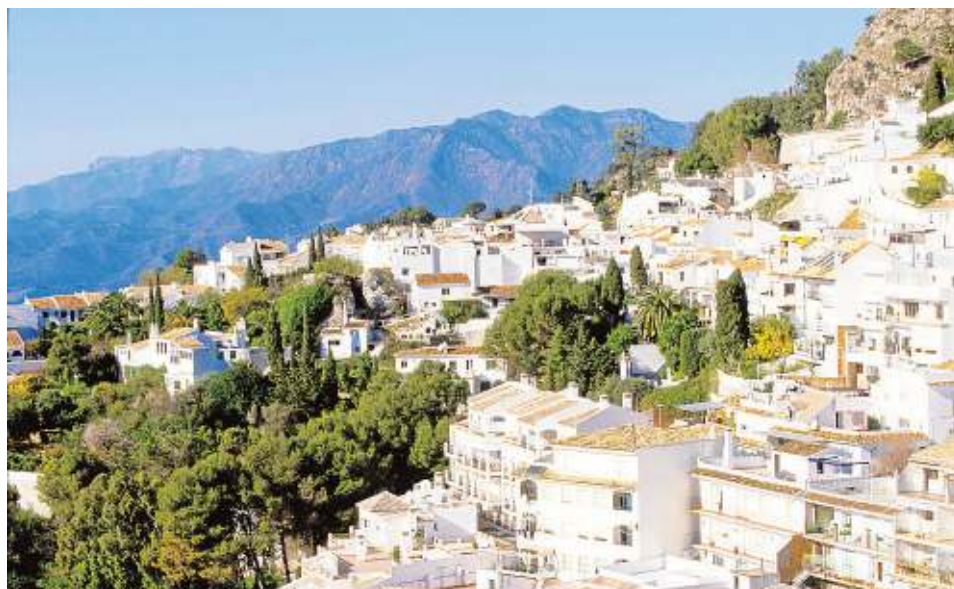






### Watchtowers

The towers in Mijas: Calahonda; Torre Nueva in La Cala (currently the headquarters of the Centre of Interpretation of the Watchtowers of the Mijas Historical-Ethnological Museum); Calaburras and Torre Blanca (the latter is no longer standing and would now be within the municipal boundaries of Fuengirola) were erected between the 16th and 19th centuries and have all now been declared buildings of Cultural Interest in the Monuments category.



### White village

The village offers the traveller the contrast between the traditional image of these lands and the adaptation to the times, all without losing its essence. A wander through whitewashed corners, patios, gardens, chapels, allows the visitor to enjoy the slow pace and the charm of the old days. The typical Andalusian white village spreads across the hillside, a landscape of white houses contrasting against backdrop of the green of the pine trees, providing one of the most beautiful views on the coast.



from the tourist information offices), a Swedish first-time visitor who said that he definitely would be back.

This visit coincided with the start of a new tourism strategic plan, based on a comprehensive study carried out in collaboration with the University of Malaga. This confirmed that the combination of beach and mountain village, the traditional crafts, the golf facilities and local cuisine are the features that bring tourists back to Mijas year after year.

### Music

The council's attention to its tourists and residents continues all year round with a packed programme of events. Flamenco festivals, the annual Mijas Blues Festival in the main square in the Pueblo and a variety of concerts in the Las Lagunas theatre pro-

vide the soundtrack to this popular destination.

Crafts fairs, markets and foodie festivals are among the regular events throughout the year, while sports fans flock to the Pueblo for the World Padel Tour.

The large area covered by the municipality of Mijas includes, not just the coastal strip but also open countryside and mountainous areas that offer a variety of options for tourists wanting active outdoor holiday experiences.

### Sierra de Mijas

The Sierra de Mijas, the mountain range into which the village nestles, is an exciting option for adventure sports or hiking.

This green lung is a fine example of the Mediterranean ecosystem. In clearings in the woods it is possible to find one of the most evolved families of the plant world, orchids, which along with plant species that develop due to this mountain's particular geographical and climatic conditions, form the area's main botanical wealth.

The network of hiking paths offers visitors the chance to discover the natural surroundings of Mijas, following a series of marked routes that crisscross the southern face of the mountain and set off from the El Mirador (view point) in Mijas.

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.

### Art

Mijas is also a magnet for art lovers. 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 Degraín, Moreno Carbonero and Denis Belgrano. There is also a 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.

"We have to show our thanks to the tourists who visit us day after day and for everything they give us throughout the year," said the mayor at the Día del Turista.

Those tourists will certainly return those thanks for everything Mijas is able to offer them during their stay.



# A FRIENDLY TOWN AT THE HEART OF THE COAST

Fuengirola is still a firm favourite for families and couples with a well-known blend of seaside fun and traditional Spanish life in a compact urban area

## NEIL HESKETH

Fuengirola continues to be a firm favourite for families and couples alike at the heart of the Costa del Sol. A bustling resort with good transport links to the rest of the coast, it combines the holiday fun of a lively beach promenade and tourist area with the friendly feel of a working Spanish town where you can join the locals enjoying the Andalusian sun as much as you are!

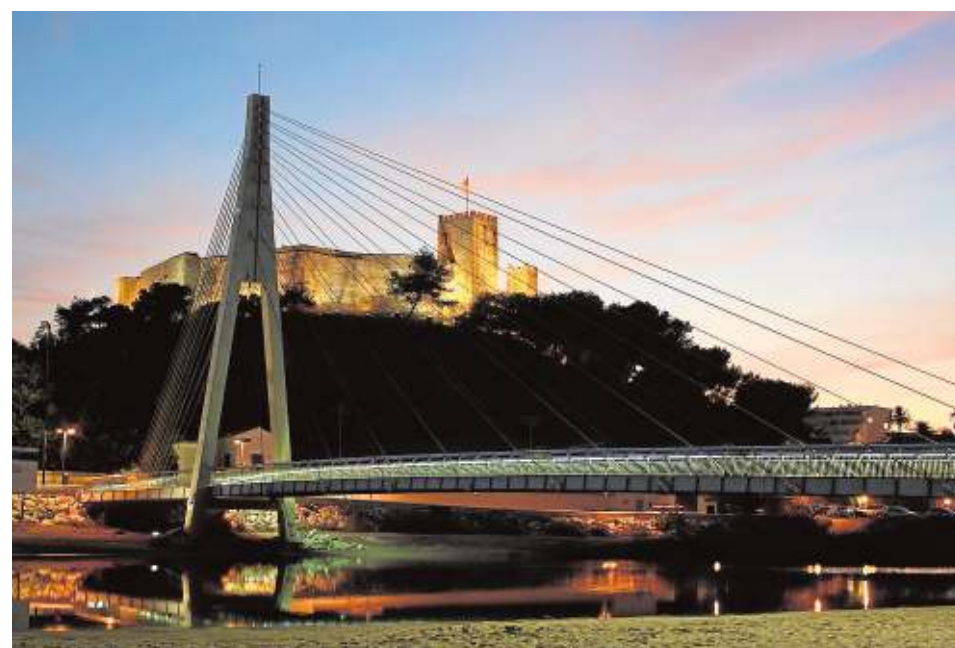
There's plenty to do within the compact town itself, from the historic Sohail castle, impressively standing next to the sea at its western end, through to the

entertaining Bioparc close to the town centre where you can stroll around the animal kingdom in conscientiously laid out surroundings.

On the eastern end of town is the quieter, residential area of Los Boliches which also has a great beach.

Fuengirola is known for good shopping, from its thriving town streets, full of traditional stores selling everything from foodie treats to fashion, to the large Miramar centre, an easy walk or drive on the outskirts of town, with many national and international brands as well as a cinema and restaurants.

And as the sun sets, a lively but easygoing family atmosphere prevails in the



Sohail castle is at the heart of much of the town's activities. :: FOTOLIA

streets as the tapas bars and varied international restaurants fill up.

Fuengirola is a place that has moved with the times, keeping up with the latest trends, improving its hotels and other facilities while staying loyal to the tradition of fun and hospitality that it has always been known for.

There is a vibrant, international community, best seen at the eye-catching Feria de los Pueblos in April each year, or the colourful main festivities in early October.



There is a vibrant international community. :: FOTOLIA

**Manilva,**  
a world of sensations

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Ayuntamiento de Manilva



# A TASTE OF THE TROPICAL IN GRANADA

Almuñécar and La Herradura offer everything from fascinating history to some of the best year-round diving in Andalucía as well as funky bars and 26 beaches

## :: JENNIE RHODES

The town of Almuñécar - La Herradura, which is situated on the Costa Tropical, Granada province's coastline, has captivated tourists and locals alike for centuries.

There are still reminders of the presence of the Romans as well as the Islamic era and the reign of the Nasrid dynasty in the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries.

Modern day Almuñécar - La Herradura offers 19 kilometres of coastline with a total of 26 beaches from popular town centre spots, complete with promenades and cool chiringuitos (beach bars), to hidden coves and bays.

Water parks offer excitement for the kids and young at heart, while history buffs can follow in the footsteps of British writer, Laurie Lee, who fell in love with the town when he ended his first trip to Spain there as Civil War broke out in the 1930s.

For water-sports fa-

natics there are year-round diving opportunities for all, regardless of experience, as well as paddle surfing, snorkelling and a wide range of other outdoor activities.

## Sun, sand and sea

Year on year beaches in Almuñécar - La Herradura are awarded the European Blue Flag and Spanish 'Q' for Quality standards. San Cristóbal, La Herradura, Puerta del Mar and Playa Vellilla, are regularly awarded the coveted prizes for their accessibility, health and safety and the presence of lifeguards throughout the summer months.

La Herradura means 'the horseshoe' in English and it is clear to see why, given the shape of its beautifully curved bay. There are a number of cool chiringuitos along the beach as well as several water sports centres.

La Herradura offers stunning views from its lighthouse at Punta de la Mona as well as the Cerro Gordo viewpoint to the west, which it shares with neighbouring Maro in Malaga province.

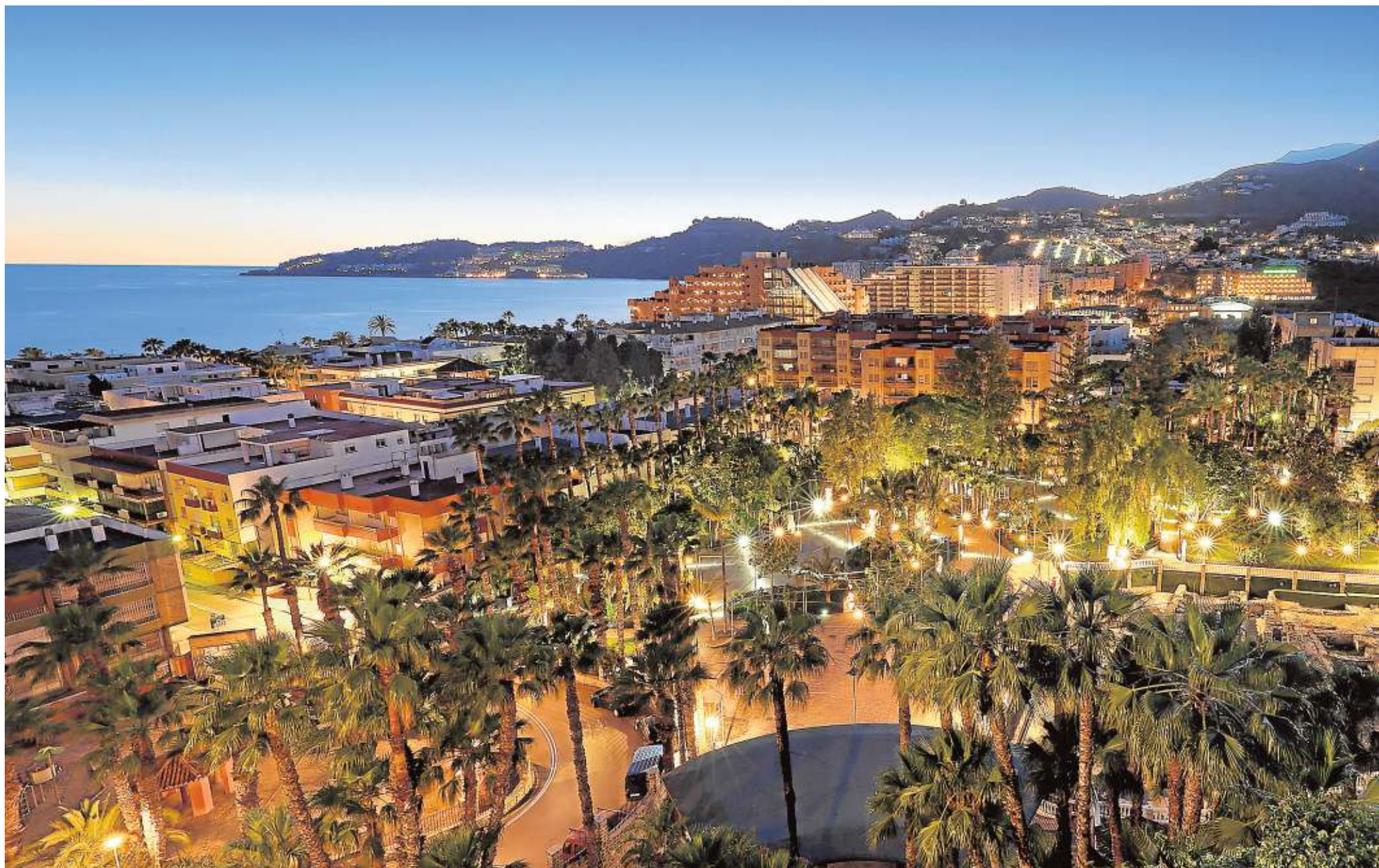
The small, attractive harbour at Marina del Este divides Almuñécar from its smaller neighbour, La Herradura, and is home to a number of stylish and relaxed bars and restaurants offering fine dining and fabulous cocktails as well as cool hangouts for divers.

Many diving and other water sports excursions depart from the marina and a number of diving schools are based there.

In Almuñécar, as well as the numerous wonderful beaches to choose from, another great place to cool off is Aqua Tropic, one of Andalusia's best







View of Almuñécar looking towards La Herradura with Majuelo park in the foreground. :: SUR

➤ lucía's biggest water parks which celebrated its 30th anniversary this year. It is located right on the beach and is open from mid-June until mid-September.

The park boasts water slides with names including 'Kamikaze' and 'Whirlwind', and for those looking for something a little more relaxed there is even a jacuzzi.

The town's indoor aquarium is open all year round and is a great place to learn about local sea life.

### Andrés Segovia

La Herradura's Paseo Marítimo, or promenade, is named after one of Spain's most famous classical guitarists, the late Andrés Segovia (born 1893, Linares). In recognition of his contributions to music and the arts.

He spent much of his retirement in his summer house in La Herradura and his legacy is still very much alive today in the town, in the form of the annual Andrés Segovia International Classical Guitar Competition. In 2019 the competition will be in its 34th year and be marking the 32nd anniversary of its founder's death.

### Heritage and history

Today, La Herradura is a quiet town but in the eighteenth century the area was the scene of pirates and frequent raids. In 1764 King Carlos III ordered the construction of a defensive fortress whose towers communicated with the lookout points of Cerro Gordo and Punta de la Mona. The result was La Herradura castle and the two martello towers, high up on the cliffs at either end of La Herradura, which are still standing today. The castle is now sometimes used for exhibitions and festivals.

Neighbouring Almuñécar boasts a fascinating cultural offer spanning the centuries.

To start with, it is hard to miss the stunning 'Puerta de Almuñécar' near the entrance to the town. Its arches represent the three cultures that have been important to the development of the town: Roman, Muslim and Christian.

Once in the town, find beautiful frescoes at the neo-Arabic La Najarra mansion and sections of the seven kilometres of Roman aqueducts which stretch from the town centre up towards Granada. Split into five separate parts, the aqueducts are



The Aqua Tropic waterpark is right next to the beach in Almuñécar. :: SUR

known as Torrecuevas and Roman Aqueducts one, two, three and four. If that's not enough history, the Romans also constructed baths and a fish salting factory, remains of all of which can be seen in the town today.

Almuñécar is the ideal place to get a real insight into the importance of the south coast of Spain to our ancestors. In fact history is constantly being unearthed in Almuñécar and more arti-

facts can be found in the archaeological museum, known as the cave of the seven palaces. As the name suggests, the museum is actually set inside a Roman cave and contains some important artifacts, such as Egyptian glass dating from the time of the Pharaoh Apophis the first.

### Culture

The British writer, Laurie Lee first wrote about Al-

muñécar in his book, *As I walked Out One Midsummer's Morning*, but referred to the town as 'Castillo' in the book, in order to protect the identities of the characters he wrote about. Lee returned to the town he had grown fond of in 1951 and paid later visits before his death in 1997. A commemorative plaque was erected in 1988, near to the hotel he stayed in on his second visit, on the town's coastal road.

The 'castillo', or castle he refers to is the Castillo de San Miguel, which is located to the west of Almuñécar and can be visited along with the archaeological museum.

It is also near to the Majuelo botanical gardens and park and the bird sanctuary, which is known locally as the 'Parque Loro Sexi'. Over 100 species of birds live at the sanctuary, including parrots, toucans, cockatoos and macaws.





The Majuelo park is open throughout summer and not only is it the venue for numerous concerts and festivals through the season, its botanical gardens offer a cool respite from the heat.

There is also a series of authentic artisan workshops where visitors can watch artists at work and purchase goods. The park arguably holds the best views of the fish-salting factory and castle.

Almuñécar's Casa de la Cultura offers a year-round cultural programme, from traditional flamenco to a range of international stars and the annual Jazz on the Costa festival, which takes place in the Majuelo Park in July, attracts some of the biggest names in modern and trad jazz as well as funky jazz fusion.

Almuñécar's Church of the Incarnation (Iglesia de la Encarnación) is Granada province's first example of a Baroque place of worship and was built around 1600.

### Tropical fruit paradise

Thanks to its unique climate, Almuñécar - La Herradura produces millions of kilos of subtropical fruit including avocados, mangoes, custard apples (chirimoyas) and pa-



Cantarriján beach is popular with divers and one of the area's many hidden coves. :: SUR



Avocados, mangoes and custard apples are grown in Almuñécar - La Herradura. :: SUR

**The annual Jazz on the Costa festival in the Majuelo Park attracts some of the biggest international names in jazz and has been going for over thirty years**



Jazz on the Costa takes place every July. :: SUR



A diver with a sun fish near Almuñécar. :: SUR

**La Herradura means horseshoe in English and it is easy to see why this beautiful bay attracts so many people to its calm, transparent waters**

payá, to name but a few, every year.

The subtropical produce cultivated in the area is used abundantly in Mediterranean cooking and in particular local dishes, such as avocados in the local guacamole, mango sorbets, sauces and even mango liqueurs.

A number of growers in Almuñécar - La Herradura offer guided tours with free tastings of the local produce and products.

### Diving and sea life

Declared a nature reserve by the regional government, the Junta de Andalucía, in 1989 thanks to the diversity of its maritime ecosystem, Cerro Gordo, to the west of La Herradura, is also well-known and arguably the most popular dive site in the area and the Peñón del Santo, to the east of Almuñécar provides stunning views and another wonderful spot for diving.

Diving centres and schools located in La Herradura - Almuñécar offer options for beginners to the most experienced divers and thanks to the Mediterranean climate and mild sea temperatures,

diving is possible 365 days a year.

From the caves around the breathtaking Cantarriján beach below Cerro Gordo, to Punta de la Mona, Marina del Este and the Peñón del Santo, there are no end of opportunities to see species of marine life including the famous but endangered 'orange coral', which is native to the area, as well as seahorses, colourful sun fish, hermit crabs and much more.

Diving at Calaíza offers shallow waters and good visibility for those less experienced in the sport and Cueva Jarro, only accessible by boat, gives more experienced divers the chance to explore the caves and areas which reach up to 35 metres in depth.

The diving centres all have their own websites and more information can also be found both on the tourism Almuñécar website ([www.turismoalmunecar.es](http://www.turismoalmunecar.es)), available in English, and at the well-stocked tourist information centres in both Almuñécar and La Herradura.

For those who enjoy the great outdoors, but not water sports, there are plenty of hiking routes in and around Almuñécar - La Herradura, from coastal walks to trekking in the nearby mountains.

Another activity which has really taken off, quite literally, in recent years, is paragliding and paragliders floating above the beaches has become a regular sight. There are centres that offer those with a head for heights a chance to try the activity, with breathtaking views guaranteed.

Combine the plethora of activities that the Mediterranean offers in Almuñécar - La Herradura with a fascinating history dating from Roman times, through the Islamic period to the offer of modern hotels, beach bars and activities found in the towns today, and the Costa Tropical really does have something to offer everyone.

No wonder Laurie Lee wrote about Almuñécar and kept returning to the town he called 'Castillo' and why many more have followed in his footsteps, either to settle there permanently or to visit time and again.

**Further tourist information for Almuñécar & La Herradura :**  
[www.turismoalmunecar.es](http://www.turismoalmunecar.es)





Almuñécar  
La Herradura

## Mediterranean Paradise

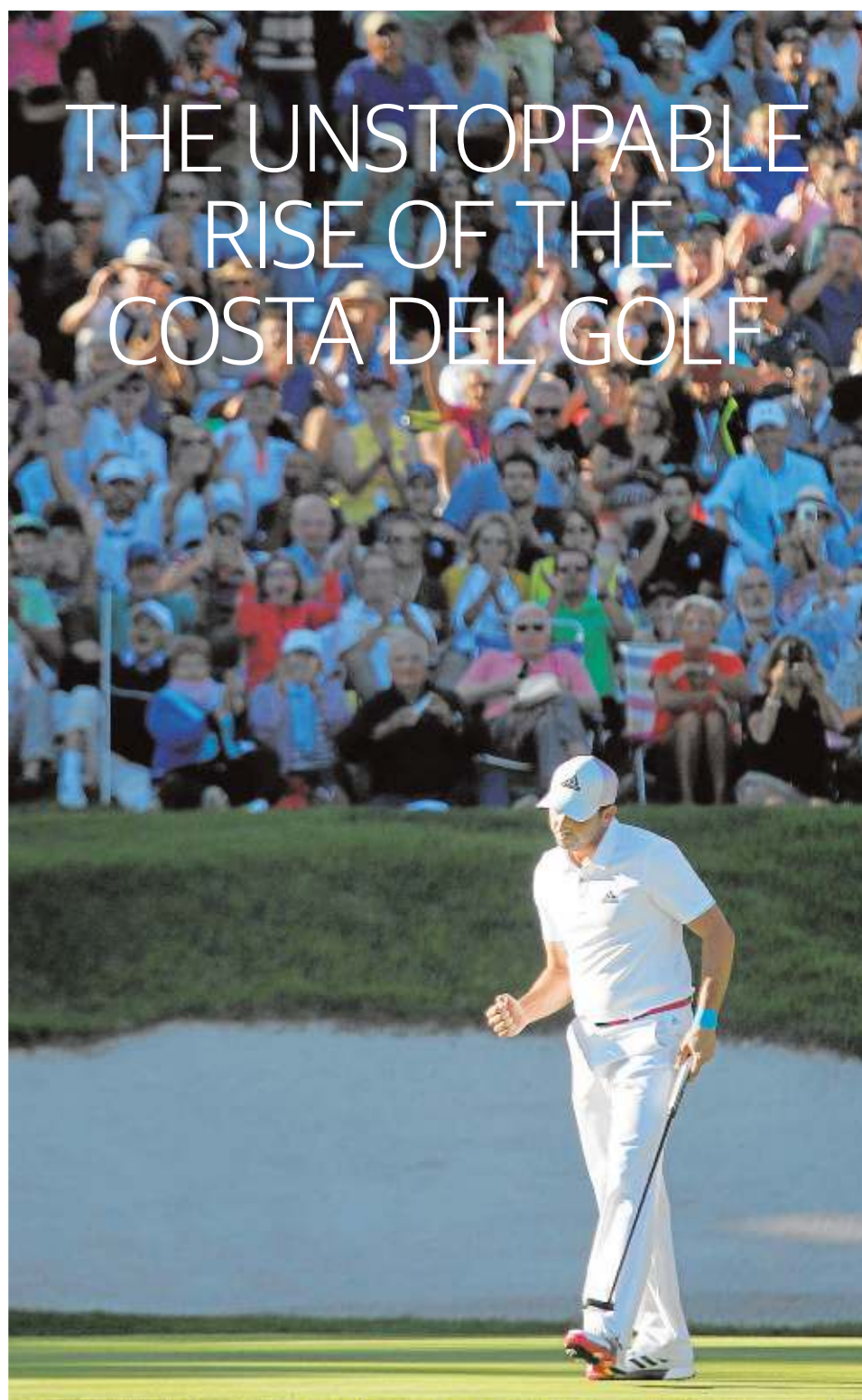


[www.turismoalmunecar.es](http://www.turismoalmunecar.es)

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# THE UNSTOPPABLE RISE OF THE COSTA DEL GOLF

Sergio García won the recent Andalucía Valderrama Masters. :: SUR

Unmatched infrastructure and the hosting of major tournaments has seen the destination named the best in Europe by IAGTO

## FERNANDO MORGADO

It's no accident that the Costa del Sol is also known as the Costa del Golf; it has weather conditions ideal for play all-year round, plus the highest concentration of courses anywhere on mainland Europe. It therefore comes as no surprise that the

Costa del Sol was last month named the Best European Destination for the practice and enjoyment of golf.

President of the Costa del Sol tourism authority, Elías Bendodo, collected the award from the International Association of Golf Tour Operators (IAGTO) at the main fair in this sector, the International Golf Travel Market (IGTM) at the end of October. Bendodo said that the award "reaffirms our leadership in the sector nationally and internationally, throughout the year, backed by an offer of more than 70 courses, almost 70 per cent of those in Andalucía".

"It is an honour for us to receive such an important award from the International Association of Golf Tour Operators," he said, recognising that it had "important weight" in the tourism landscape considering that the IAGTO brings together 2,716 golf tour operators, controls more than 87 per cent of the holiday packages in this sector sold worldwide (more than 2.1 billion euros a year), and reaches a total of 105 countries.

What's more, the attractiveness of the province of Malaga for golf lovers is growing; in addition to the magnificent infrastructure available to the clubs, there is a fabulous range of hotels and easy connectivity not only globally, but also to major Spanish destinations such as Malaga, Seville, Cordoba and Granada. In turn, this has attracted an increasing number of organisers of major international events.

## A historic date

The 1997 Ryder Cup at Valderrama was the genesis of the Costa del Golf. It was the first time that this tournament took place in continental Europe and in it Europe claimed victory captained by the legendary Severiano Ballesteros, putting southern Spain on the golfing map in the process. Two years later, the same course saw Tiger Woods win the AmEx World Golf Championship.

Other tournaments of great reputation such as the Volvo

**The 1997 Ryder Cup at Valderrama, the first on mainland Europe, was a turning point for the so-called Costa del Golf**

**The recent Andalucía Valderrama Masters had a potential global audience reach of more than 400 million homes**

Masters have chosen the Costa del Golf over the years to hold different editions. Champions such as Nick Faldo, Colin Montgomerie, Greg Norman or Peter Gustafsson have passed through the clubs of Malaga and Cadiz. In short, the Costa del Golf comes with the guarantee of being a benchmark venue for major international tournaments thanks to the quantity and quality of its sports infrastructure, added to its connectivity and the multitude of complementary services.

The hosting of major tournaments on the international golf scene, such as Andalucía Costa del Sol Match Play 9, the Women's Open de Es-

paña for the second consecutive year or the Andalucía Valderrama Masters, has been a major step forward for the sport which brings in around 900 million euros annually between direct and indirect incomes.

British golfer Liam Johnston won the first at Valle Romano in Estepona, but it was local golfer Azahara Muñoz who won the women's open at Guadalmina last year. The Marbella-born sportswoman will be looking to win the tournament for a third consecutive year on home turf when the tournament returns from 22 to 25 November at La Quinta. Muñoz heads a new generation of players who star in the emergence of women's golf on the Costa del Sol.

The biggest tournament to be hosted on the Costa del Golf this year, however, was the Andalucía Valderrama Masters, last month retained by Sergio García.

Cristóbal Fernández, managing director of Tourism and Sport in Andalucía, stressed the impact that have events such as these have. Through European Tour television rights, the Andalucía Valderrama Masters had a potential audience of more than 400 million homes on five continents, with 15 hours of live broadcast in important markets such as the United Kingdom, France or the United States.



Azahara Muñoz will be out to defend the women's Open de España in November. :: SUR



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# THE DESTINATION FOR WELLBEING

The Costa del Sol is aiming to specialise in health tourism, one of the segments which is gaining most strength with international visitors

## FERNANDO MORGADO

The importance of health tourism on the Costa del Sol has been undeniable for decades. This segment is one of those which are continually gaining strength in terms of international tourism, and the reason is clear: the average spending by health tourists is ten times higher than those who come to this region for holidays.

There is a well-defined profile for this type of tourist: most who come here for health reasons are over the age of 50, enjoy medium-high purchasing power and they want tailor-made holidays in destinations which offer the best conditions for them to look after their health and improve their wellbeing.

The province of Malaga has become a benchmark for health tourism, because of its first-class facilities. The prestigious reputa-

tion of its hospitals and clinics, and the highly-qualified professionals who work in them, are a guarantee of stability for this tourism segment.

## Tourist facilities

However, the Costa del Sol also has numerous spas, luxury hotels and modern thermal centres as well as historic alternatives such as those in Carratraca and Tolox.

Malaga province combines all the elements which are necessary to stand out in the field of health tourism, especially in Marbella, where the tourist facilities are generally focused on luxury, something which has favoured the boost in the health tourism sector. The number of private clinics offering exclusive services to foreigners is part of an overall commercial strategy which also helps to attract year-round tourism and patients from all over the world.



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Malaga province has important medical centres equipped with state-of-the-art technology and dedicated healthcare professionals. :: SUR



This sector moves 75 billion euros a year, according to the OCDE, and the lack of competition in the rest of Spain has made Marbella a favourite destination for foreign patients. Most of the hospitals in the area have departments which actively market their facilities to clients from abroad.

Malaga Health

On the Costa del Sol there is even a foundation dedicated to promoting the medical skills of a large group of professionals in the Malaga health sector. It is called ‘Malaga Health’ and was founded by Dr Miguel Such in 2012.

Among the health tourism facilities in Marbella and the area close to the town is the HC Marbella Hospital in Puerto Banús; it has just 12 rooms and offers exclusive attention to every type of patient.

The aim is for people to feel that they are in a hotel, rather than a medical facility. The HC Marbella also takes into account the requirements of patients’ family members, offering them the chance to stay in first class hotels.

Another outstanding hospital is the Quirón in Marbella, where the number of consultations rises by

The province of malaga is a benchmark for health tourism because of its first-class facilities and the prestigious reputation of its hospitals and clinics

On the Costa del Sol there is also a foundation that promotes the medical skills of a large group of health care professionals in Malaga



45 per cent in the summer months. Its facilities include a department specifically for specialist attention to foreign patients and a separate floor of the building for patients from abroad.

In-vitro fertilisation

One of the treatments which has made the Quirón especially popular with international patients is IVE, or in-vitro fertilisation. Spain is one of the countries where the highest number of assisted reproduction treatments is carried out, so it is often chosen by women who want to become pregnant and encounter legal difficulties in their own countries.

The Ceram Hospital is a special

list centre for this type of treatment. It opened over 20 years ago and was a pioneer in setting up this particular sector for the benefit of health tourists.

The principal countries from which patients come to the Costa del Sol are the UK, Italy, Germany and Arab countries. Above all, health tourists require a comfortable and personalised stay, and for that reason the hospitals try to adapt to their individual requirements as much as possible.

Demand continues to increase thanks to the effective treatments provided by hospitals on the Costa, which combine luxury facilities with first-class personal service.



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The iconic Plaza de España. :: FOTOLIA

The capital of Andalucía is unlike any other tourist destination. Apart from its wealth of history and culture it also has state-of-the-art conference facilities and hosts many major events

# SEVILLE, STUNNING AND SURPRISING

Seville has always been a very special city in many ways, and that is also the case in terms of tourism. Whereas many seaside destinations in southern Spain are working hard to attract year-round tourism rather than just in the summer months, as a city with so many historical and cultural attractions Seville has not really been affected by this problem.

In fact, spring always used to be peak tourist season in the capital city of Andalucía, as people flocked from other parts of Spain and abroad to

watch its stunning Easter processions and take part in its fabulous fair, but nowadays visitors come all year round and October is proving to be an especially popular month.

The tourism figures for 2018 are looking extremely positive. Seville has become easily accessible thanks to excellent road connections and more direct flights, and by the end of this year the number of visitors is expected to have risen by three per cent compared with 2017, and the number of overnight stays in hotels and

**Visitors come to Seville all year round, many of them for its myriad of cultural attractions which include exhibitions and events such as 2018's 'The Year of Murillo'**

apartments by six per cent.

## City of culture

It is no surprise that people come to Seville to discover its history and culture. Not only is it home to stunning buildings such as the Alcázar, the Cathedral, the Giralda minaret which is now a bell-tower, the Plaza de España and many other unique attractions, but it has a strong focus on culture all through the year, with numerous exhibitions and events.

For example, 2018 is the Year of Murillo, to commemorate the fourth cen-

tenary of this famous artist's birth, and unique exhibitions and celebrations have been organised throughout the year.

The fact that Seville has also been designated the best urban destination in the world by Lonely Planet is a tribute to the city's commitment to culture and to the wealth of attractions of this type which no visitor to Spain should miss.

## Congresses and fairs

Seville is a fantastic destination for conferences, congresses and fairs, especially



because of the size and state-of-the-art facilities at the 'Palacio de Congresos y Exposiciones de Sevilla', which is known as FIBES.

The city is keen to boost its reputation in what is known as the MICE (Congresses, Events, Business Meetings) segment.

This is another type of year-round tourism and it is an important contribution to the city's economy and employment, as it also benefits hotels, taxis, public services, agro-industry, shops etc.

The quality of Seville's conference tourism is demonstrated by the fact that its conference and exhibition centre has hosted numerous events in recent years and the numbers of those continue to increase.

For example, last year conference tourism here generated 162 million euros: 29.4 million from congresses, 140.3 million from trade and business fairs, and 12.8 million from cultural events. It is worth noting that this conference and exhibition centre in Seville is also a fixed venue for many musical events and concerts.

Last year, for the first time ever, the number of visitors to these events topped one million: 1,043,026, to be exact.

In 2017, Seville hosted 73 congresses, which was twice as many as originally anticipated, including an educational congress with 5,500 participants and 250 companies. There were also 25 fairs and 37 cultural activities including musicals such as *Dirty Dancing* and the premiere of the musical 'El Médico', concerts for children and performances by major names such as Raphael, Juan Luis Guerra and La Oreja de Van Gogh.

This year the figures show a growth of 22.17 per cent in income, which by the end of the year could reach over 200 million euros, and an increase of 7.9 per cent in the number of visitors, to more than 1.1 million.

The number of events held in Seville has also increased this year, and of course it is not over yet.

### Major events

Seville is also the ideal venue for major events, and its facilities make it the envy of many other destinations at home and abroad. This is reflected in the importance of the events which are organised in the city. A significant number have already been planned for the rest of 2018

and through 2019.

In October alone, Seville hosted the European Tour Operators Association Seminar, the CAPA Low Cost Long Haul Global Summit and the Association of British Travel Agents Summit, and yet to come are the European Film Academy Awards and the World Federation of Tourist Cities Europe-China Summit in December.

Next year will see the Local Governments Forum and the VIII International Assembly of the Network of Megalanic Cities in January, and the Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly and the Goya Awards Ceremony in February. Already booked for September is the European Space Agency Ministerial Council, and Emotions Travel, the luxury tourism fair, will be taking place in December 2019.



The colourful gardens of the Alcázar royal palace. :: SUR



Metropol Parasol, also known as the 'setas'. :: SUR



Holy Week processions in front of the cathedral. :: SUR



The breathtaking Giralda tower. :: SUR



The Torre del Oro overlooks the Guadalquivir. :: EFE

### WTTC in Seville

Perhaps the greatest feather in this city's cap, though, is that in April 2019 it will be hosting the prestigious World Travel and Tourism Council, the summit par excellence for the international tourism industry.

It is a reflection of Seville's importance to tourism that this city has been selected to host the event, and it also demonstrates its ability to cater for prestigious summits of this type.

### Premium destination

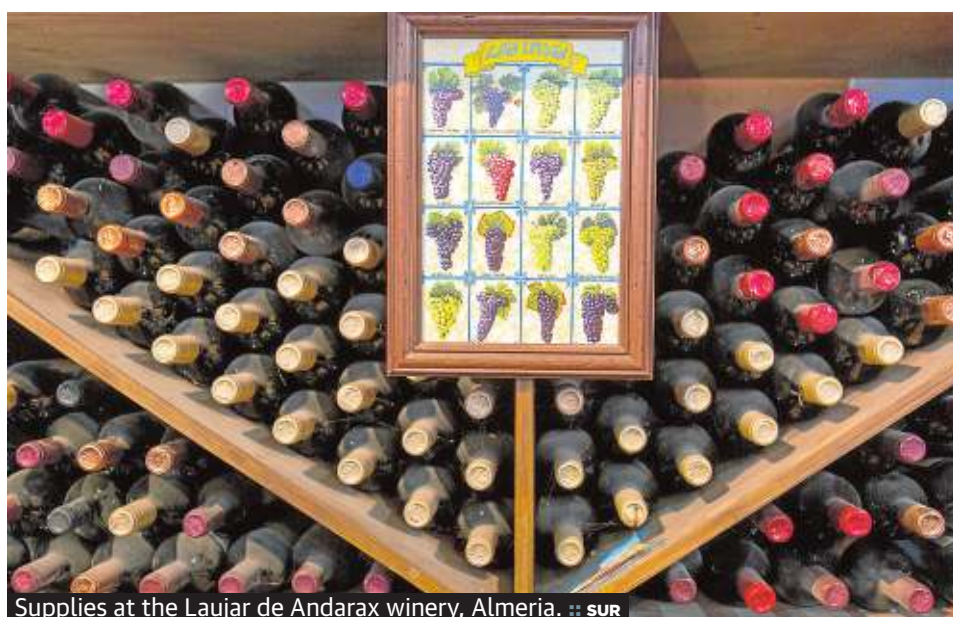
Seville is a top quality destination for all visitors, and is firmly committed to providing every tourist with a very special experience. Its attractions speak for themselves, but what Seville's tourism authorities want to ensure is that visitors feel well looked-after and that all their needs are met.

For example, it is now specialising in halal tourism due to the number of visitors from Arab countries, and has created more luxury tourism products. It is also looking to increase international flight destinations to connect this very special city directly with more of the world. Seville, the ideal destination for everybody.

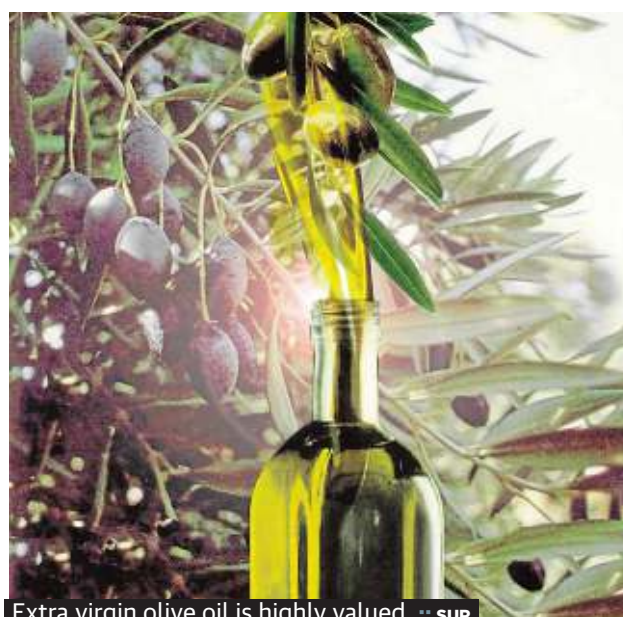




Rows of hams being cured. :: SUR



Supplies at the Laujar de Andarax winery, Almería. :: SUR



Extra virgin olive oil is highly valued. :: SUR

# ANDALUCÍAS GASTRONOMY, INHERITED FROM PREVIOUS CIVILISATIONS

Andalucía's history is reflected in its gastronomy, with flavours dating back to Moorish times and a wine-making tradition from the Phoenicians

The gastronomy of Andalucía is a very good reflection of one of the region's signs of identity: diversity. It consists of an infinity of flavours with origins dating back to the Moorish past, in the times of Al-Ándalus. The food in southern Spain is undoubtedly determined by the excellent climate, long hours of sunshine and proximity to the sea. The results of agriculture, cattle farming, fishing and, above all, olive oil production, make Andalucía's cuisine a delight for even the most demanding palates.

The Andalusian gastronomy is the result of a combination of Moorish cuisine and the traditional Mediterranean culture of olives and vines with products and condiments from America.

It is a combination of new and old recipes, influenced by the different civilisations who have inhabited these lands over time, from the Phoenicians and their salted fish, the Romans and Moors with their olive oil, vegetables, spices and nuts, Jewish

dishes including what is known today as 'puchero' and products which arrived from America.

Andalucía has 27 Denominations of Origin including some of the oldest in Spain: Málaga, Jerez-Xérès-Sherry and Manzanilla-Sanlúcar de Barrameda. There are also seven Specific Denominations (equivalent to Protected Geographical Indications) and 13 Wines of the Region.

Olive oil is the principal ingredient of Andalusian cuisine and the most important part of the Mediterranean diet. Andalucía is the world's biggest producer of olive oil, and Jaén is the olive oil province par excellence.

The extra virgin olive oil is the most highly valued and the only one which is not refined. It is an integral part of the traditional Andalusian breakfast of toast with olive oil, and is also used in confectionery and in the most universal dish because of its nutritional value and easy preparation: gazpacho.

With regard to wines, Andalucía has been closely linked to these from the beginning of history. There are currently four denominations: Jerez, Montilla-Moriles, Montes de Málaga and Condado de Huelva. Andalusian wines are known for their high alcohol and sugar content.

The original ones were the 'fino' and 'manzanilla' sherries, but the production around Jerez is not just limited to those because four varieties of grapes are cultivated here and used to produce 'amontillados', 'olorosos' and sweet varieties.

The wines from Montilla-Moriles (Córdoba), are different. This region's wine-making history dates back more than 200 years, and its principal variety is Pedro Ximénez, which accounts for 90% of production.

Málaga province, on the other hand, has always been famous for its sweet wines, but in recent years the reds from the Montes and Serranía de Ronda have acquired a greater presence on the market.

The wines from El Condado, Huelva province, are mainly young whites.

Due its long expanses of coastline the region of Andalucía is famous for its seafood, and its dishes are very lightly seasoned in order to preserve the flavour of the fish.

There are some legendary fish dishes from all over the region, including the stews of Almería, fried fish and sardines cooked on canes over an open fire in Málaga and the shellfish of Cadiz and Huelva, especially clams.

Also famous is the Iberian ham, or 'pata negra', which is mainly produced in Huelva province and has its own Denomination of Origin. It also comes from the Sierra Morena (Córdoba), Serranía de Ronda (Málaga), Sierra Norte of Seville and the mountains of Cadiz. Trevélez, the highest village in Spain, which is in the Sierra Nevada, is also famous for a top quality ham which is protected from imitations by its own Denomination of Origin.

The cheeses of Andalucía are also highly valued, especially those from villages in the Serranía de Ronda, the Cordoban Subbética, the mountains of Málaga and Almería and the Sierra de Grazalema in Cadiz.

The region's confectionery is among the most delicious in Spain, and is characterised by Moorish and Jewish influences.



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The Caminito del Rey is no longer the most dangerous path in the world, but it is the most exciting. "If anyone wants an adrenalin hit, they'll get one here without risking their necks"

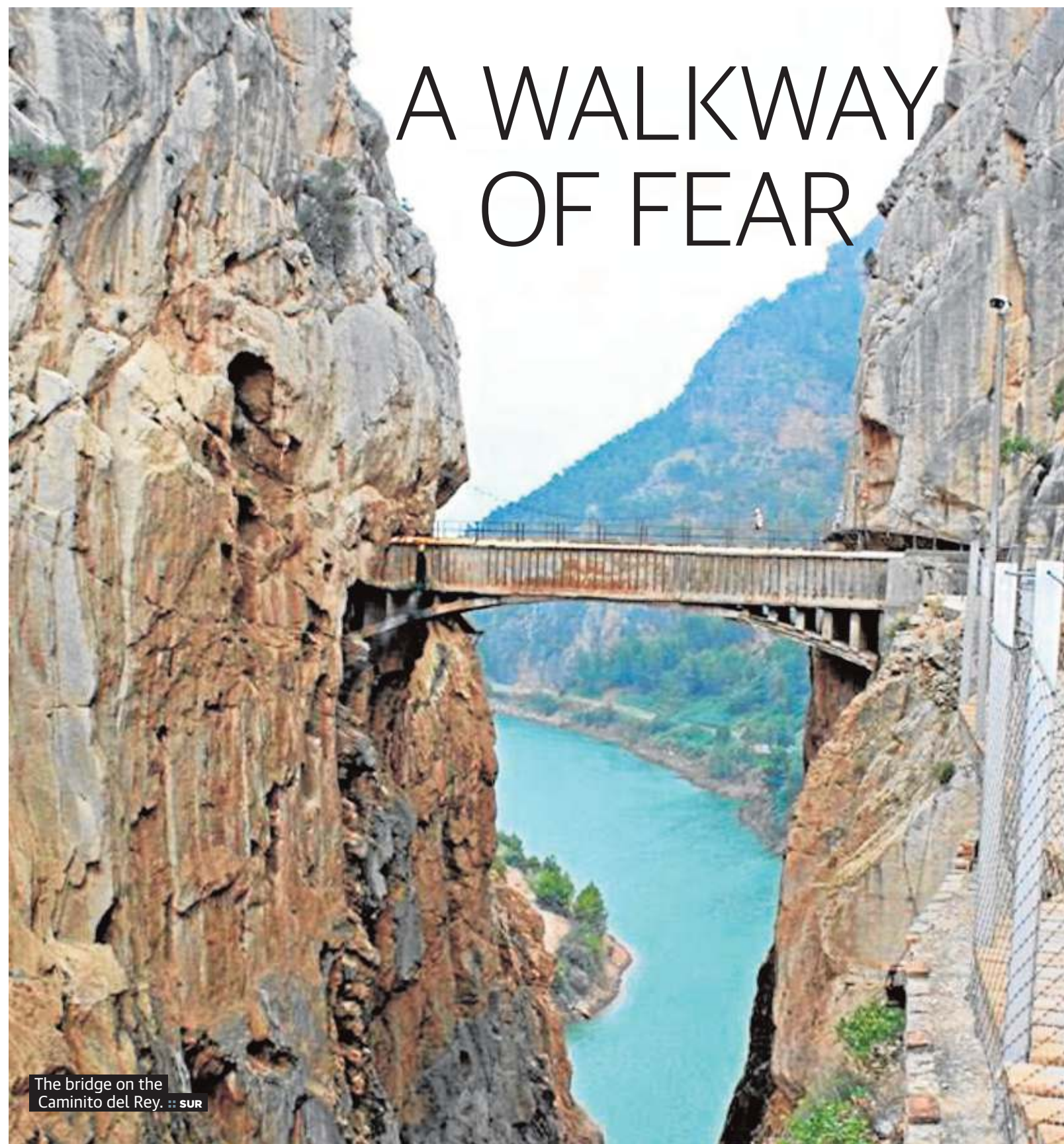
SUSANA ZAMORA

He knows what it is like to me emotionally strong and overcome fear. He had to do it as the Euronews correspondent in areas of conflict in the Middle East, and now he has returned to do the same for the BBC.

However, Luis Carballo isn't facing a war here: it is an abyss, more than 100 metres deep. The 'conflict' now is within himself, and his 'enemies', as he films a report about the reopening of the Caminito del Rey (Malaga) are vertigo, butterflies in the stomach, the wind whistling about his ears, the deafening rush of the Guadalhorce river in the background and the sensation of falling into space.

"This isn't scary like the battered old walkway was, because it was so dangerous, but it is really impressive because of the way it has been designed," says this reporter who was born in Bilbao but has lived in the French city of Lyon for 20 years.

Walking three kilometres along a walkway which is barely one metre wide, suspended against the vertical rock walls of the Desfiladero de los Gaitanes gorge isn't a risky thing to do these days. In fact, daring to cross this renovated wooden cantilever, with its steel cables, is simply fascinating. It is not, however, for the faint-hearted. The 'King's Path', as it is known in English, is suitable for all visitors although not everyone is brave enough to try it. For a start, once you have set off, you cannot turn back.



The bridge on the Caminito del Rey. :: SUR

"There are no shocks like there were before, when even though it was prohibited, some people would dare to cross it although the beams were crumbling and there were holes in the floor, but if you want an adrenaline hit without having to risk your life, you will definitely get that here," explains Carballo.

In another report by British journalist Andy Jones for 'The Independent' newspaper, he described his sensations as he crossed the dizzying walkway:

"The suspension bridge on Malaga's Walkway of Death, some 100 metres above the El Chorro gorge, quakes with every step (...) my fingers grip white-knuckled to the rail and my guts churn over themselves

in waves. The enthusiastic tour guide is beckoning me to admire the incredible rock formations in the belly of the crevasse some few thousand feet below, but I'm not looking anywhere but an inch in front of my toes," he wrote.

Since it reopened to the public on 28 March 2015, after being closed for over a decade for safety reasons, one million people have dared to walk the Caminito del Rey. One million personal stories which, on occasions, are of more than mere anecdotal interest. For some it has been a therapy, a way of breaking the fear barrier.

"One visitor was determined to overcome her fear of heights, and she chose to come here to prove to her-

self that she could do it, as a type of personal challenge. She was so proud of herself that when she was halfway across she asked someone to film her walking over the hanging bridge. She wanted to be able to remind herself in the future that there is no fear that cannot be overcome," says a female employee of the Caminito del Rey.

She also recalls a visit by a group of blind people who, without sticks or guide dogs (they are not permitted for safety reasons) and with the help of companions, did the almost eight kilometres (including the accesses and the walkway) of what was once considered the most dangerous path in the world.

How can anyone enjoy the beauty of this area if they can't see it? Those who have

done it have the answer.

"You may not be able to see, but you can feel the space, the strong wind, the water, the echo, the freshness of the air. I remember when I crossed the hanging bridge, I felt as if I were flying. You put your feet down very carefully, with your stomach churning, and you sense the emptiness all around you. If someone were to close their eyes they would feel the same as I did, but people who can see don't pay as much attention to their other senses," explains Francisco Javier Fernández, who lost his sight completely when he was 18 as the result of a congenital glaucoma.

"The hardest thing isn't losing your sight, it's not accepting it, and forgetting to

live. I would be lying if I said I didn't miss being able to see the walkway from start to finish; it's like tasting a cake and not being able to eat the cherry on the top," says Francisco, who used to work for the ONCE association for the blind but is now retired.

Someone else who did this excursion last year was Alicia Gallego, a young woman from Seville who has just 20 per cent vision. She loves risky sports and, having experienced bungee jumping and parachuting, she decided to give the Caminito del Rey a go.

"I thought it was incredible, but it was comfortable to do," she says now. Although she doesn't suffer from vertigo, she says blind people can be affected by it



just like anyone else. “The difference is that it affects us because of what we hear, not what we see,” she explains.

### A path with history

The origin of the Caminito del Rey dates back to 1901, when a walkway (called the ‘Camino de los Balconcillos’) was created to make things easier for the workers of the El Chorro Hydroelectric Society. It was given its present name after the visit by King Alfonso XIII to the area in 1921 to inaugurate the Conde de Guadalhorce dam.

That impressive walkway, whose danger only increased its fame and obliged the Junta de Andalucía to close it in the 1990s after several fatal accidents, was used for decades by people on both sides of the gorge to come and go following the flow of the river.

For some, the experience has been engraved in their mind and they are determined to try this new version before they die: “One woman brought her sick husband here to fulfil his last wish. He wanted to do the



new walkway and relive the happy times he remembered here from his youth,” says the Caminito employee.

The Malaga provincial government even received a request to film a Bollywood movie on the Caminito del Rey, but had to turn it down for safety reasons.

The old walkway did feature in a film, however: ‘Von Ryan’s Express’ (1965), star-

ring Frank Sinatra. It wasn’t an altogether happy experience for the singer, because he was arrested and fined after getting into a fight with journalists at the hotel in Torremolinos in which he was staying. “I am never coming back to this damn country,” he declared.

For some people, the Caminito del Rey can be a romantic experience. In fact,

for María López it was rather like a scene from a film.

She and her boyfriend had been wanting to visit the Caminito del Rey for months, and last May they finally managed to arrange some time off together and travelled to Malaga from Murcia. María had absolutely no idea that her boyfriend was planning to use that opportunity to ask her to marry

him. He waited until they reached the emblematic hanging bridge.

“I asked him several times if he was OK, because he was very quiet all the way along. I thought he was scared, but he was actually nervous about proposing,” says María. “When he suddenly went down on one knee and produced a ring, I nearly had a heart attack! My legs were

shaking and the group who were coming along behind us (who had been warned beforehand) started applauding. They were shouting “Say yes, say yes!” says the bride-to-be. Her engagement ring has a diamond linking the two sides, as a symbol of a couple whose paths used to be separate but which converged on the bridge of the Caminito del Rey.

## WORLD HERITAGE SITE CAMPAIGN

A campaign is under way to have the Caminito del Rey included as a Unesco World Heritage Site. It was announced in September that the Malaga provincial government had given unanimous approval to the idea and its president, Elías Bendodo, said it is important because the Caminito would benefit from maximum protection. It would also attract more visitors from abroad, which would greatly benefit the economy of the area.

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# SIERRA DE LAS NIEVES PREPARES TO BECOME ANDALUCÍA'S THIRD NATIONAL PARK

This beautiful area is currently protected as a Natural Park and Biosphere Reserve

**JAVIER ALMELLONES**

The year 2018 will go down in history as a vitally important one for the Sierra de las Nieves, because this year the Spanish government agreed that the area should be classified as a National Park. The new classification will come into force once the application has been officially approved by both the Council of Ministers and the Junta de Andalucía.

This is important because it means that the pinsapo fir trees, mountain oaks, ibex, areas of peridotites, the karst system, the aquifers for sustainable farming etc will be afforded the maximum protection possible under Spanish legislation for natural spaces.

This qualitative leap is also a landmark for the province of Malaga, because until now only Doñana and the Sierra Nevada have enjoyed the status of national parks.

The Sierra de las Nieves is considered one of the areas of Andalucía with the greatest ecological value. Unsurprisingly, its main feature is the mountain range of the same name, which is already protected as a Natural Park and a Biosphere Reserve.

There are several villages within the park, namely Tolox, Yunquera, Alozaina, Casarabonela, Monda, Guaro, Istán, El Burgo and Ojén, although part of the protected area is included in the municipalities of Ronda and Parauta.

In terms of ecological interest, the territories of Yunquera, El Burgo and Tolox, in the foothills of the Sierra de las Nieves, stand out above the rest. Together they contain one of the largest forested areas, with numerous oak and pinsapo trees. The pinsapo is the botanical emblem of the Natural Park, because the spe-



View of Yunquera from its pinsapo forest. :: SUR

cies is unique in the world.

There are different walking routes between these three villages, which make it possible to get close to the pinsapo trees. It is, however, harder to spot the ibex, which is the most common type of fauna in this environmentally important area. Even so, when walking quietly along some of the routes through the Sierra de las Nieves it is sometimes possible to see them.

The mountain range of the Sierra de las Nieves is where some of the most important rivers in Malaga province begin, such as the Grande, the Verde and the Turón. Its valleys and some of the mountain peaks, such as La Torre-

cilla, (the highest in Malaga province at 1,919 metres above sea level), can be explored along hiking routes.

In Tolox there are also some important caves for potholing, such as the GESM gorge, which is one of the deepest in Europe.

Meanwhile, the villages of Alozaina, Casarabonela, Guaro and Monda also have interesting natural spaces within their territories, such as the Sierras Prieta, Alcaparaín, Cabrilla and Alpujata. Despite this, they are also the most agricultural, with vast areas of dry farming crops such as almonds and olives. In fact, Alozaina and Casarabonela are especially well-known for

their olives of the manzanilla variety, the only one at present with its own denomination of origin.

On the south side of the Sierra de las Nieves, which borders the western Costa del Sol, are the villages of Istán and Ojén, which contain their own remarkable natural beauty spots such as El Juanar, the peak of La Concha, the Rio Verde river valley and the famous Castaño Santo (Holy Chestnut tree).

The nine villages in the community of the Sierra de las Nieves do not only have their interesting natural heritage in common, as they all also retain many traditions and customs of old.

As an example, there are some very unusual festivals, such as the 'Noche de los Rondeles' in Casarabonela and the celebration of Corpus Christi in Yunquera.

The first of these takes place on 12 December each year and is interesting because it involves a religious procession which includes the pagan element of fire.

The second preserves the custom of designating Thursday as the day to celebrate this religious event, and the streets of the village centre are decorated accordingly.

In villages like Alozaina and Tolox, there are also some unique events such as the Day of the Powders and

the Flour Festival. Both of these take place during the Carnival celebrations and they are a way of continuing historic customs of the area.

Tolox also celebrates its Day of the Maids, which commemorates one of the chapters of history which took place here during the uprising by the 'moriscos' in the 16th century.

As well as these historical celebrations there are festivals based on gastronomy, such as the Olive Fair in Alozaina, the Day of the Siete Ramales Soup in El Burgo, the Wine and Chestnut Festival in Yunquera and the Mondeña Soup Festival in Monda.

The village of Guaro also holds its Moorish Moon Festival in September, when the streets are lit by candles, to highlight understanding between cultures, as occurred during the Al-Ándalus period.

With regard to the architectural heritage of this region, the Sierra de las Nieves retains traces of its Andalusian past not just in the layouts of the villages but also buildings such as fortresses and watchtowers in Monda, Monda, Istán, Alozaina, El Burgo, Yunquera and Casarabonela.

There are also interesting religious constructions, including the church of Nuestra Señora de la Encarnación in Yunquera. Because of its size, it is known as the 'cathedral of the Sierra de las Nieves'.

The church of Santiago Apóstol in Casarabonela and the Porticate chapel in Yunquera are also of architectural interest.

Others which are worth a visit are the old Convento de las Nieves, between Yunquera and El Burgo, which dates back to the 17th century, and the cave church at the Hoyo de los Peñones, in Alozaina.



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# LEARNING THE LANGUAGE IN THE SUN

For tourists looking to get more out of a holiday than a tan, a Spanish course can provide new friends, new experiences and language skills

## JENNIE RHODES

A holiday in Spain often leaves you wishing you'd taken a crash course in the language before you set off. Malaga has long been a

popular destination for students wanting to learn Spanish. From children coming as part of an organised school excursion, to adults who are either brushing up on their language skills or who have simply always wanted to

learn, the city's numerous language schools offer a wide variety of courses at all levels.

In recent years and with the growth of opportunities that the European Union ERASMUS programme offers, Malaga has also become a popular destination for secondary school and university students through the grants that the scheme offers. Not only do a lot of university-age students come to the city but more and more schools across the province are also taking part, allowing secondary school pupils to participate in exchanges with other schools across the EU, from the UK to Italy, Poland and more.

### Plenty of choice

A quick Google search will bring up pages of possibilities in the city and around 10 language schools are identified on a Google map, in particular around the Pedregalejo and El Palo areas, to the east of the city centre.

Summer is a popular time of year for university students in particular. They might be studying Spanish as a degree, or a part of a degree, and the long university holidays pro-

vide the ideal opportunity to put into practice what they have learned in their own countries, or sign up for an intensive course to improve their level ready for the following academic year.

Three such schools are the CIE-UMA (Centro de Idiomas Extranjeros - Universidad de Málaga), the foreign language faculty of Malaga university, based in El Palo, Cervantes International School in Pedregalejo and Enforex, which has recently moved from Pedregalejo to new premises in the heart of Malaga.

The east side of Malaga has in fact long been home to a number of such schools, offering cheaper accommodation than the city centre, proximity to the beach and ease of access to the centre of Malaga.

In the case of CIE-UMA, the facility has been in existence since 1947. It has around 26 teaching staff as well as an office that works with Malaga City Hall to promote it at international travel market events.

Enforex, which was known as Malaga Si! before it was taken over by the former in 2015, moved to new premises



Students at the  
Cervantes International  
School learn how to  
make paella. :: EIC

in Malaga city centre because the company says is partly due to the growth of Malaga as a popular cultural and tourist destination.

Cervantes International School first opened its doors in 1986 in a traditional villa along the main road, Juan Sebastian Elcano, which runs through the eastern most districts of Malaga and now offers a wide range of courses from preparation for the official DELE (Diploma de Español como Lengua Extranjera) exams at all levels from A1 to C2, to courses specifically designed for lawyers and teachers and people working

in tourism.

### Not just Spanish lessons

Students don't just come to Malaga for the intensive Spanish courses; they are generally interested in learning about the culture, gastronomy and people in Andalusia and courses at the language centres combine 'gramática' with gazpacho and 'frases hechas' (expressions) with flamenco.

Meilin, who studied recently at the CIE-UMA, is from Hong Kong and said that



the heat of summer in Malaga isn't as bad as the humidity of her native country. "There is usually a breeze here, even in summer, which we don't get much in Hong Kong." She studied to obtain her B1 (intermediate) level in Spanish.

Peter, who is originally from Manchester, but who moved to Australia 25 years ago, went on a four-week intensive course at CIE-UMA.

He explained that he regularly visits Malaga and has a house in the Axarquía area to the east of Malaga province. "I have been coming here more and more frequently recently and I was so frustrated at not being able to speak the language," he said, as his reason for signing up to do a course in the El Palo school.

Peter compared the heat of Malaga to that of his hometown, Perth, in Western Australia, and says that it's "perfect" for him. He is eventually hoping to spend six months of the year in Australia and six months in his house in the Axarquía.

### Cultural immersion

Hamiyet, from Ankara in Turkey, said that she chose Malaga for the weather and the school for its accommodation, which was nearby and very close to the beach.

When she started, she said, she had "no Spanish" but in two months of being at Enforex, she "really learned a lot" and became "confident" to speak to Spanish people. In total Hamiyet came to Malaga on a five-month stay. She highlighted the siestas, fiestas and the social life as the positives as well as the laid-back attitude of the locals; "I will definitely be back in Malaga in the future," she said.



Students of Spanish at Centro Internacional de Idiomas at the University of Malaga. :: SUR



A class at the Cervantes International School. :: EIC



CIE-UMA students during a prizegiving. :: SUR

As for the heat, she said that it is definitely hotter in Malaga than in her native Ankara, although the Mediterranean side of Turkey enjoys similar temperatures throughout summer.

Katharina from Germany came to Malaga for seven weeks in total. It was her first time in Malaga, although she had been to Madrid and some of the Spanish islands to study before coming here. Katharina chose Malaga on the recommendation of a friend as she was determined to meet Spanish people so she could put her language learning into practice.

When she first arrived she was put into a B1 intermediate class but was then moved into a B2 upper-intermediate group.

Teachers at the language schools also say that they enjoy the opportunity to learn about others' countries and their traditions and make sure that sharing that information is an important part of the experience.

Many language schools have long-standing relationships with universities and schools in places like the USA, China and a number of European countries, and students return or often come from the same institutions.

Malaga seems to offer everything learners of Spanish are looking for, from sun and sea to culture and the opportunity to meet local people. The steady increase of students over the years, from secondary to university as well as adults with a keen interest in learning the language and people moving to the Costa del Sol to live, suggests that the trend shows no signs of stopping.

## SPANISH INTENSIVE COURSES IN MALAGA - SPAIN






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# AN EDEN IN SOUTHERN EUROPE

Doñana is the largest national park in Spain and one of the most remarkable in the world

## JAVIER ALMELLONES

Andalucía is one of the regions of Europe with the largest amount of protected countryside. At present it has two big national parks, the Sierra Nevada and Doñana, but the Sierra de las Nieves, in Malaga province, is just waiting for the final administrative processes to be completed and then it will become the third (at the moment it is classified as a natural park and Biosphere Reserve).

Nearly every province of Andalucía is home to a protected area. As well as the two national parks and Sierra de las Nieves mentioned above, there are the natural parks of the Sierra de Grazalema, Los Alcornocales, Sierra de Aracena, Sierra Morena, and Cazorla, Segura and Las Villas, among others.

The national park of Doñana is one of the largest and most important of Andalucía's protected spaces. Marshes, Mediterranean woodland, and environmentally important fauna, such as the Iberian lynx

and imperial eagle, are just some of this beautiful area's natural attractions.

Despite the concern caused by a major fire which broke out in Moguer in the summer, this ecological enclave, through which the final stretch of the Guadalquivir river passes before reaching the Atlantic, is still one of the most popular tourist destinations in Andalucía. This is hardly surprising, because it is also one of the most important biological areas in Europe. As well as being classified as a national park, it is also a Biosphere Reserve and World Heritage Site.

Nowadays, Doñana is Spain's biggest national park and one of the most remarkable in the world. Because of its unusual ecosystems, including the marshes, thousands of migratory birds pass through each year as they fly between Africa and Europe. Species in danger of extinction breed here, such as the Iberian lynx, and others with huge biological value like the Griffon vulture, imperial eagle, red deer, wild boar, fallow deer, otter,

pink flamingo and spur-thighed tortoise, among others.

As well as the Guadalquivir marshes, there are other unusual landscapes in Doñana, such as the dunes and, as mentioned earlier, Mediterranean woodland. However, apart from the park's own natural heritage, there are some quite remarkable places close by, in the provinces of Huelva, Cadiz and Seville.

On the perimeter of the national park you can visit towns with an important history, such as Almonte and its famous hamlet of El Rocío, Niebla, Moguer, Isla Cristina and Cartaya (all in Huelva province).

On the eastern side are places in Cadiz province which historically have always been associated with the park, such as Trebujena and Sanlúcar de Barrameda, which is one of the most interesting towns to visit as part of an organised excursion around Doñana. Lebrija and Villamanrique de la Condesa, which are in Seville province, are also worth

a visit.

Among the most important monuments around the park which can be visited are the castle at Niebla; the monasteries of San Francisco and Santa Clara, in Moguer, the Medina Sidonia ducal palace in Sanlúcar; the Virgen de la Oliva church in Lebrija; and the shrine of El Rocío.

## In the mountains

Situated amid much more rugged terrain in Cadiz province are the natural parks of Grazalema and Los Alcornocales. In addition to the verdant countryside and natural beauty spots in this area, there is the Ruta de los Pueblos Blancos, or White Village Route, a fabulous trip to admire the most traditional forms of architecture.

Between the natural parks of Los Alcornocales and Sierra de Grazalema, in other words to the north-east of the province, are numerous delightful villages whose streets and mountainous countryside enchant everyone who visits them.

It would be hard to do this

itinerary in a few days. In fact, it is advisable to do it, if possible, at different times of year, such as autumn and spring. One of the places which should definitely not be missed is Arcos de la Frontera: the picturesque town centre is classified as a site of historic and artistic interest.

Two of the largest rivers in the area, the Guadalete and the Majaceite, run through Arcos. In fact, two reservoirs have been created in the Guadalete, the Bornos and Arcos reservoirs, so the town's surroundings are quite spectacular.

Apart from being very attractive - especially the Cola de Bornos at one end of that reservoir, these areas are environmentally very important and are classified as natural beauty spots. Nor is this the only protected part of Arcos de la Frontera, because part of its territory lies within the natural park of Los Alcornocales, which is often described as the biggest 'green lung' of Andalucía.

In the town itself it is a good idea to go to the top of La Peña, the rock upon which

Arcos was built. From there, you have not only a fantastic view over the mountains, fields and reservoirs, but also the chance to visit some historically important buildings such as the castle and the churches of La Asunción and San Pedro.

There are smaller villages near Arcos de la Frontera; Espera, Bornos, Algar, and Ubrique, El Bosque and Prado del Rey are especially interesting. They are known not only for the beauty of their countryside but also their crafts. This area acts as a transition between Los Alcornocales and the Sierra de Grazalema.

Ubrique nestles at the foot of a steep mountain range and has numerous places of interest such as the Roman remains of Ocuri, the San Antonio church, the Capuchinos convent and the Cardela castle, among others. However, if there is anything for which this small town is especially famous it is its leather production. It is an ideal place to visit for those who want to buy leather clothing and goods.





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Those with a taste for history, nature, food and wine will just love Antequera

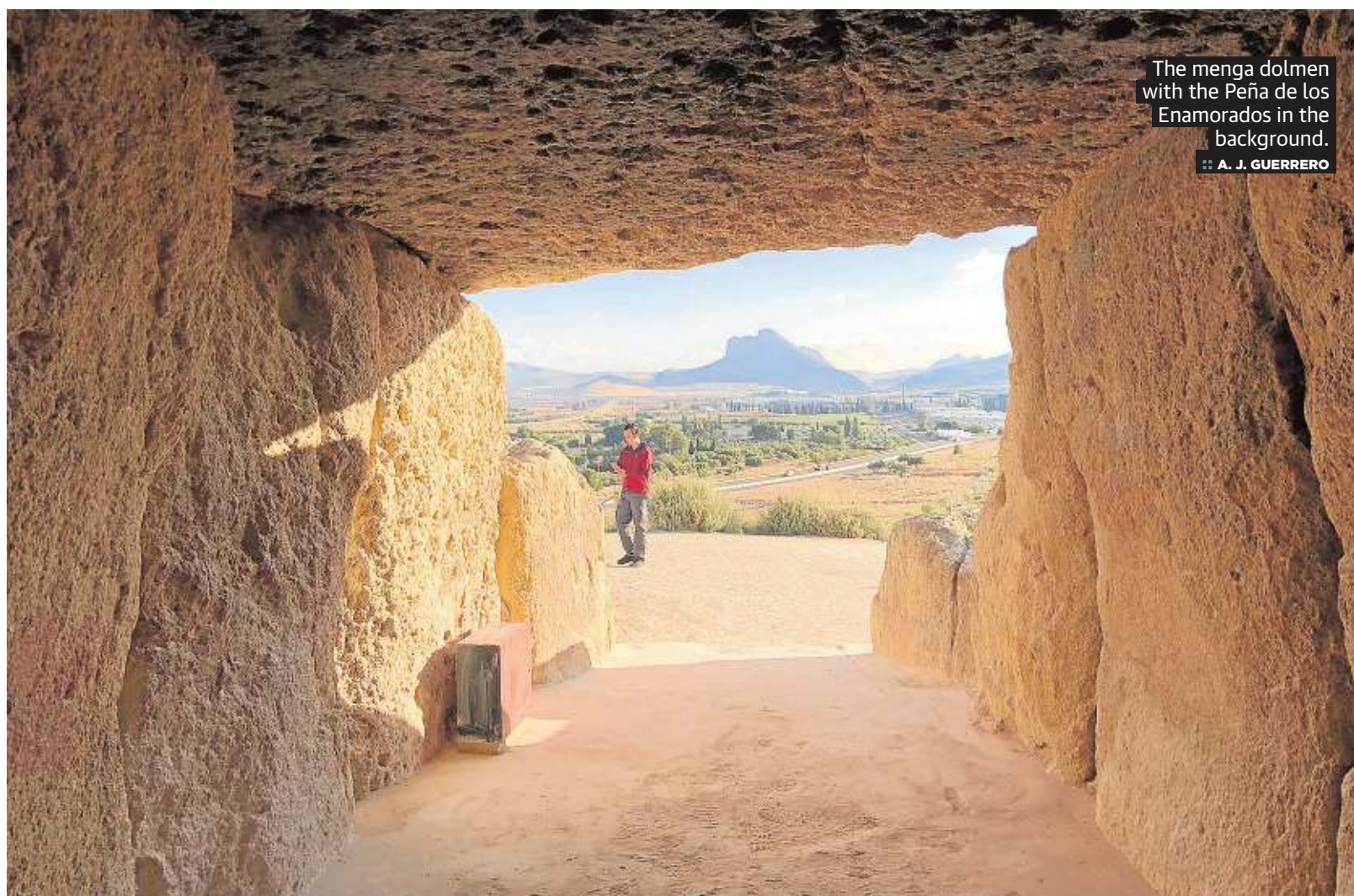
It is now two years since the Dolmens of Antequera became a Unesco World Heritage Site, and this claim to fame has attracted many more people to this historical town in Malaga province. This is mutually positive, because Antequera, in the geographical centre of Andalucía, is well worth a visit in its own right. For history lovers, in fact, it should not be missed.

The Antequera Dolmens Site consists of three megalithic monuments (the Menga and Viera dolmens and the Tholos of El Romeral), and two natural ones: La Peña de los Enamorados, known in English as Lovers' Rock, and El Torcal, an area of rock formations hewn by the elements over millions of years into incredible and whimsical shapes.

The combination of Menga, Viera and Romeral forms one of the best and most well-known examples of megalithic construction in Europe. Although their architectural styles differ, they were all built with large blocks of stone to form chambers and covered spaces with lintelled roofs or false cupolas, and were used for rituals and funerary purposes.

These megalithic monuments, which are about 6,500 years old, are a fascinating example of society among the first agricultural communities in western Europe. The mortuary chambers have given archaeologists and anthropologists a wealth of information about cultural and genealogical identity, and as temples and ritual spaces, they were also used for ceremonies associated with the fertility of nature and their ancestors.

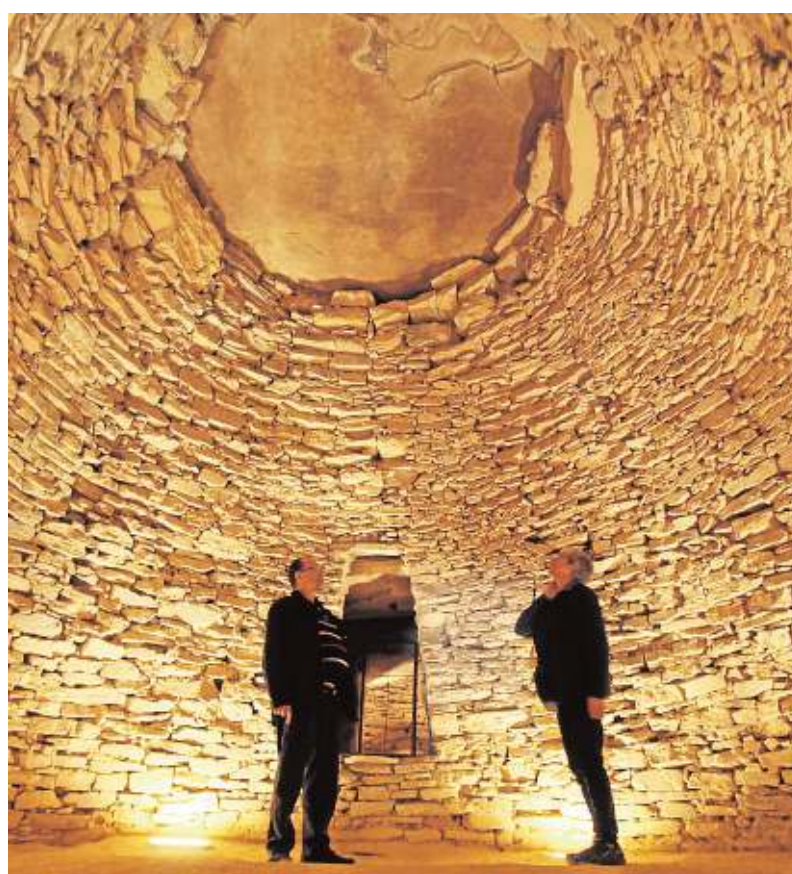
Once visitors feel able to tear themselves away from this incredible site, it is time to explore the many attractions of Antequera. As befits a town with an important history it has several museums, and a massive 62,000-square-metre fortress guards the town from above. Dating back to Moorish times, this 'Alcazaba' has spectacular views, and the ticket also includes the Collegiate Church of Santa María La



The menga dolmen with the Peña de los Enamorados in the background.

:: A. J. GUERRERO

## FASCINATING ANTEQUERA



The Romeral dolmen. :: SUR



El Torcal nature reserve above Antequera. :: SUR

Mayor. From this height, you can see that Antequera is a 'town of churches and convents', which are interesting to visit.

It is also famous for its gastronomy - do try the cakes made by the nuns - and has become an excellent centre for wine tourism.

The nature reserve of El Torcal, mentioned earlier, is a few kms outside Antequera. It is a large and truly impressive karst landscape, dating back to the

Jurassic period. There are designated walks among the incredibly shaped rocks, and a large variety of flora and fauna to be seen.

History, nature, art, culture, wine, gastronomy: Antequera has them all, and as it is just under 50 kms from Malaga city, it is very easy to reach.



# Antequera Dolmens Site *World Heritage*

Located at the heart of Andalusia, in southern Spain, the site comprises three megalithic monuments: the Menga and Viera dolmens and the Tholos of El Romeral, and two natural monuments: La Peña de los Enamorados and El Torcal, mountainous formations.

Fotografía: Javier Coca



Ayuntamiento  
de Antequera



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



Antequera Dolmens Site  
Inscribed on the World  
Heritage List in 2016





FYCMA boasts two pavilions linked to a large central courtyard, four conference areas and a large hall. :: SUR

# THE CONFERENCE SECTOR FLEXES ITS MUSCLES

The Costa del Sol is increasingly popular for conferences, fairs and exhibitions with state-of-the-art facilities, adaptable venues and connections to a growing number of destinations

## JAVIER ALMELLONES

The Costa del Sol continues to show growth, especially in the tourist sectors which help to counter the much-feared seasonal variation. Among them are the conference and events sectors which in the last years have started to emerge strongly thanks not only to the work of the main conference centres in the province in Malaga, Marbella and Torremolinos, but also to the different hotels which today have the necessary capacity and facilities.

'Business tourism' is gaining ground fast. The idea of choosing an attractive des-

tinuation, with air links to more than 100 destinations, for an annual congress is growing in popularity among large and small firms. Andalucía's economy has benefited enormously from this new trend with the region boasting congress halls and centres for conferences and trade fairs that offer an extensive range of possibilities and services. These venues can hold large numbers of people and their facilities have been adapted to incorporate the latest technology.

### Stand-out venues

Among the stand-out venues for holding conferences, the most recent construction, the Palacio de Ferias y Con-

gresos in Malaga (FYCMA), is the flagship of the province in this sector. With an area of 60,000 square metres that offers multiple possibilities, this is a multipurpose, modern and functional building - an ideal space for holding events. With two pavilions linked to a large central courtyard, four conference areas, a large hall, catering areas, car parks with capacity for 1,200 vehicles and all complementary services, FYCMA has all the necessary facilities to professionally attend to clients.

Meanwhile, the Palacio de Congresos in Torremolinos, which was one of the first to be built (in 1967) and whose design is unquestionably styl-

ish, is equipped with numerous rooms and innovative resources which enable it to successfully host any type of event. Likewise, due to its structure, experience and location, it is ideal for all types of celebrations and events.



A recent trade fair in Malaga. :: SUR

The conference centres in Marbella and Estepona are also in excellent locations, the first between the town centre and the exclusive Golden Mile and with capacity for 1,500 people.

For smaller events the Palacio de Congresos in Ronda is perfect; it is housed in the former Convent of Santo Domingo built in the 16th century and is at the heart of one of the most beautiful towns in the province.

In addition, recent years have shown the capacity of many four- and five-star ho-

tels to host large-scale events. The large hotel chains have made a strong commitment to this sector due to its importance in combating seasonality. The facilities and comfort provided by these establishments mean that many organisers prefer these types of locations over more traditional centres.

Thanks to this extensive range of conference facilities, the result of a commitment to diversify tourism in Andalucía and, specifically, the province of Malaga, conference tourism on the Costa



del Sol brings in around 400 million euros a year.

One of the advantages of this form of tourism is that it not only enhances the range of tourist facilities on offer in the sector but it also generates money in Andalucía; conference tourism has become a way of boosting other types of tourism as delegates take advantage of what the area has to offer. On average, a conference delegate spends 240 euros a day, including the cost of their accommodation, but they also experience at first hand everything else the region has to offer: its climate, its services, its wide range of activities, its culture, its sports facilities, and much more.

#### Continuing growth

The Malaga Convention Bureau, an entity belonging to Malaga city hall, regularly processes more than 200 applications at any one time for conferences and other events for professionals in the city - a figure which is "without precedent", according to its director, Francisco Queredo.

This figure is the result of a concerted effort in conjunction with the Costa del Sol tourist authority which regularly conducts campaigns to target the international tourist market and, in particular, attract an even larger number of congresses over the coming years.

"It is important to increase awareness about the Costa del Sol in strategic destinations such as the North American market," said general manager of Turismo Costa del Sol, Arturo Bernal, following the recent 'Andalucía returns to the USA' days held in New York, attended by various agencies specialising in Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) Tourism and organised by the regional tourism authority.

Bernal highlighted the potential of the province with respect to congresses, saying: "Thanks to the equipment we have, continuous renovation of the offer and our organisational capacities, Malaga is a highly attractive destination for this type of

visitor."

Proof of this is the fact that FYCMA will host little under fifty events between now and the end of the year. Some 170,000 people are expected to pass through its doors for fairs, exhibitions,



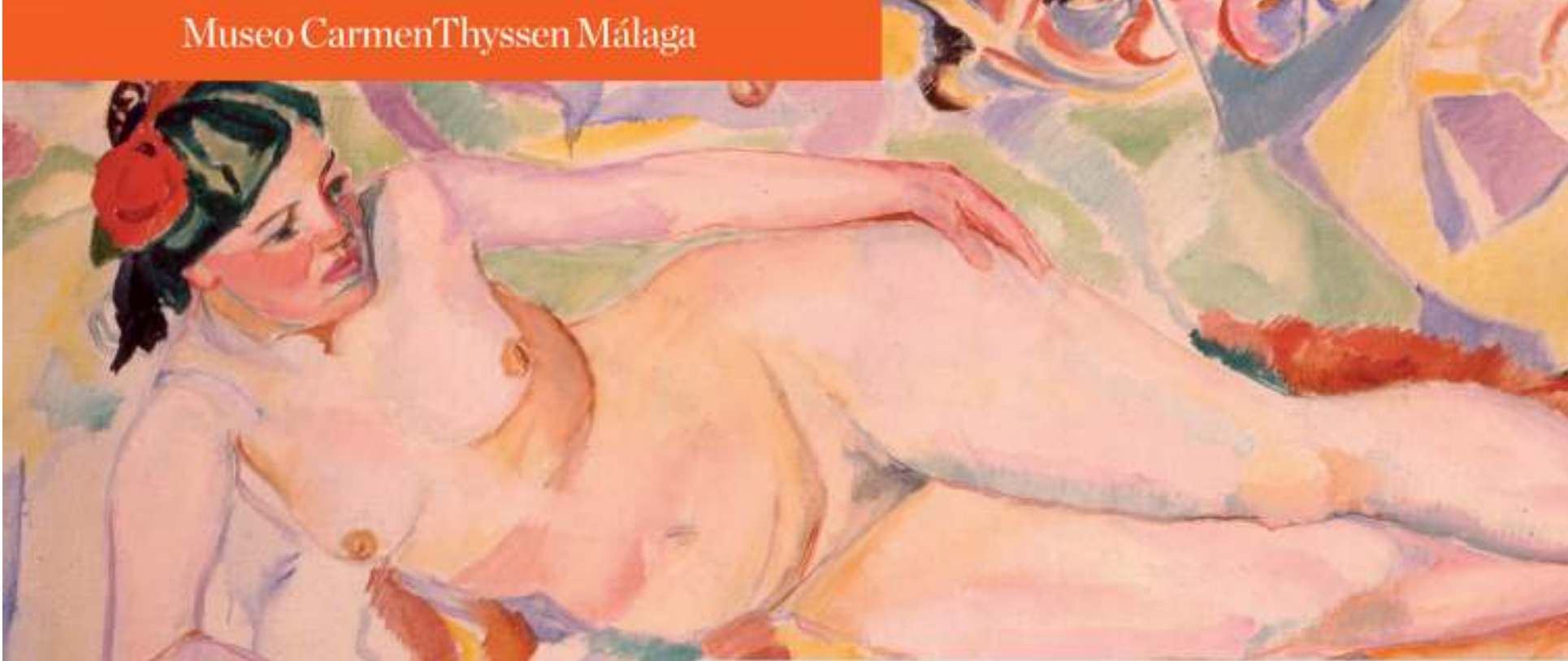
An odontology congress held at FYCMA. :: SUR

conferences and events, it was announced at the presentation of events for the final quarter.

"The main function of the Palacio de Ferias y Congresos is to improve the image of the city. The congresses that take place here are national and international and that improves the Malaga brand,"

said the councillor for Innovation and New Technologies, Mario Cortés. These activities alone will have an estimated economic impact of 40 million euros for the city, Cortés said, and this would "promote the city in times that are not so popular with tourists to ensure a stable market".

## Museo Carmen Thyssen Málaga



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# THE DESTINATION FOR LOVERS OF ART

Exhibitions in Malaga city cover a wide spectrum of art from the ancient to the most contemporary

## DENISE BUSH

The city of Malaga, with the aspiration of one day gaining the title of European City of Culture, is not short of high-profile museums.

The Picasso museum is probably the most famous while the Carmen Thyssen, Centre Pompidou, Museo de Málaga and the Russian Museum are more recent. Between them they house works by some of the greatest international artists from the sixteenth to twenty-first centuries with the Museo de Málaga also displaying the archeological remains of previous civilisations in this part of Spain alongside nineteenth century paintings by Spanish artists.

Malaga also embraces contemporary art with the Centro de Arte Contemporáneo (CAC) displaying works by artists from across the globe.

### Museo Picasso Málaga

The Picasso museum is devoted to the most influential artist of the 20th century, Pablo Ruiz Picasso, who was born in Malaga in 1881. It houses nearly 300 of his works donated by his family. The collection is displayed in the Palacio de Buenavista which opened as the Picasso museum in 2003.

The temporary exhibition, currently running until 3 February 2019, is El Sur de Picasso. Referencias Andalus. It includes archeological artefacts and paintings by grand masters such as Zurbarán, Velázquez, Murillo, Goya, María Blanchard and Juan Gris, among others. The exhibition catalogues the influence of the Mediterranean on art right through to the modern art of Picasso and his contemporaries. Besides the exhibitions the museum is the venue for monthly chamber music concerts.

La Casa Natal (Picasso's birthplace) also exhibits some

of Malaga's most famous artist's pottery, sculpture and graphic art.

### Museo Carmen Thyssen

The museum, once the Palacio de Villalón, houses part of the personal art collection of Baroness Carmen Thyssen.

There are currently two temporary exhibitions running; La Furia del Color (until 3 March) showcases the works of Francisco Turrino, an avant-garde artist who was a key figure in the introduction of modern art to Spain, and Henri Matisse. Jazz. The latter exhibition consists of 20 innovative and colourful cut-paper collages that Henri Matisse created for his book 'Jazz'.

### Centre Pompidou

The Cube, as the Centre Pompidou is more commonly called, has become one of the major landmarks in the city of Malaga. It is also the first branch of the Pompidou museum to be situated outside of France.

The innovative building houses some 80 pieces of art by artists such as Pablo Ruiz Picasso, Rineke Dijkstra, Tony Oursler, Frida Kahlo, Francis Bacon, Max Ernst, René Magritte, and Sophie Calle, among others.

The museum holds two or three temporary exhibitions every year; the current exhibition, ¡Materiales Retroproyectados!, will run until 11 January next year. It is an interactive event/workshop which allows the public to create their own designs using a piece of equipment that is practically obsolete in this day and age, the overhead projector.

On 8 November, an exhibition called Construir El Aire. Arquitectura y Diseño Hinchable opens and will remain on display until 10 February next year. The exhibition investigates the inflatable structures that became part of everyday life during the 60s and 70s in the form

of furniture, buildings and environments.

### Museo de Málaga

The museum opened in the iconic Palacio de la Aduana in December 2016. It houses the collections of both the Museo de Bellas Artes de Málaga and the Museo Arqueológico Provincial de Málaga. The archeological remains are mainly items discovered during digs carried out in the city and represent a cross section of the different cultures and civilisations that have occupied the area.

Although there are some sixteenth and seventeenth century religious depictions, the majority of the art in the collection is from the nineteenth century and includes works by Emilio Ocón, José Gartner, Antonio Reina Manescau, Bernardo Ferrandiz and Enrique Simonet.

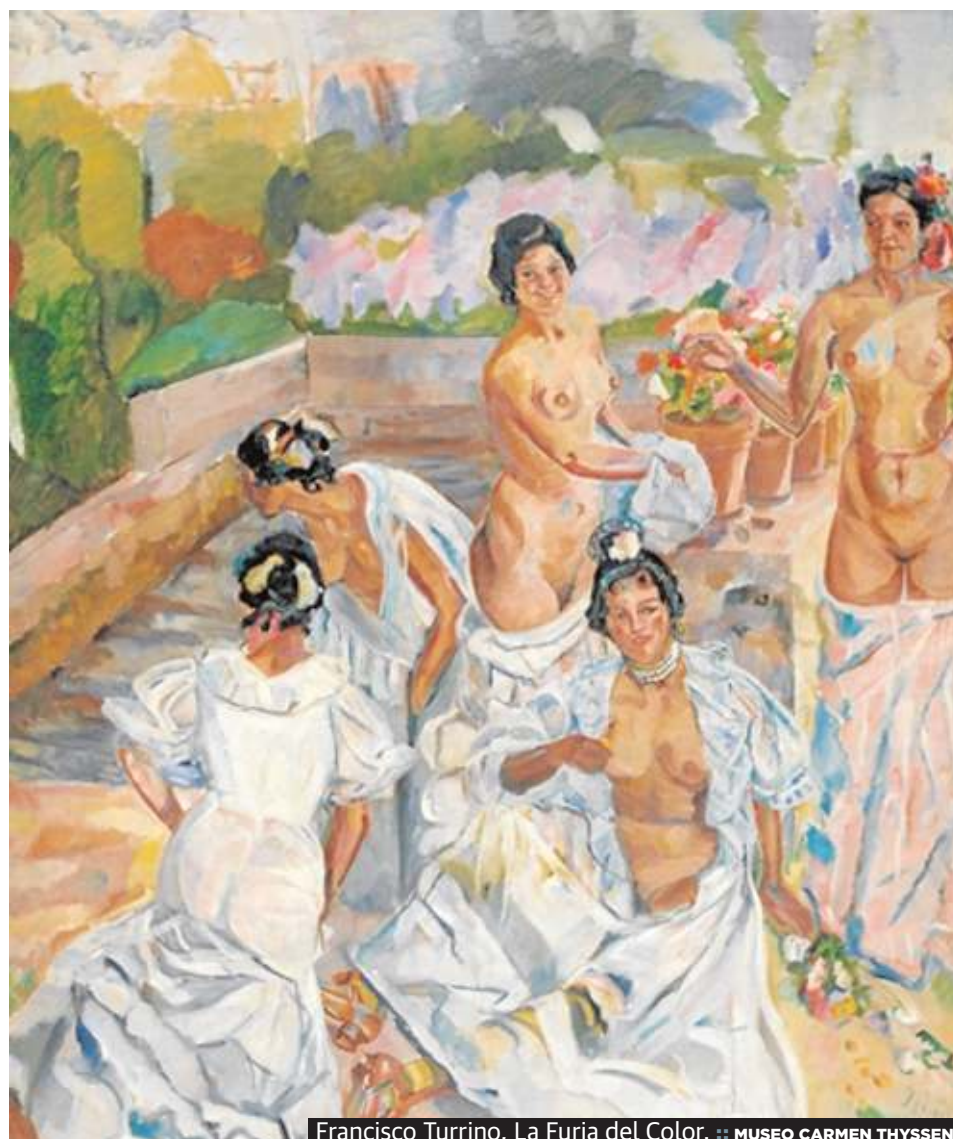
### Russian Museum

The Malaga branch of the Museo Ruso de San Petersburgo located inside the old Tobacco factory, holds a collection of art on loan from the Russian State Museum. The temporary exhibition which finishes at the beginning of February next year, is a series of paintings by Kazimir Malévich, the artist credited with starting the abstract form of art called Suprematism.

The annual exhibition, which finishes at the same time, is of works by prolific artist David Burliuk, the father of Russian Futurism.

### CAC

The Centro de Arte Contemporáneo Málaga has several exhibitions running concurrently including works by Hernan Bas, A brief Intermision (until 9 December); Gonzalo Torné and Quico Rivas, Socios a Cuatro Manos (until 6 January 2019) and Miguel Gómez Losada, Romanza (until 25 November).



Francisco Turrino, La Furia del Color. :: MUSEO CARMEN THYSSEN



Inflatable art. :: CENTRE POMPIDOU



'Socios a Cuatro Manos'. :: CACMALAGA



Kazimir Malévich. :: MUSEO RUSSO



Enrique Simonet's iconic painting in the Museo de Málaga collection. :: SUR



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# MEDINA AZAHARA BECOMES CORDOBA'S FOURTH WORLD HERITAGE SITE

The remains of this palatial city, which dates back to the year 936, were not identified until the 19th century

**JAVIER ALMELLONES**

Six years after the Patios Festival was declared an Intangible Heritage Site by Unesco, another emblem of Cordoba, the former caliphate city of Medina Azahara, has now achieved a similar status.

Its application to be accepted as a World Heritage Site, which was backed by the regional government (the Junta de Andalucía), was the only one from Spain this year and after visiting the site and reviewing all the information, the decision to accept it was an-

nounced at the 42nd session of the international organisation's committee in Bahrain in early July.

The Committee said it had based its decision on the fact that this is a unique example of the development of western Islamic civilisation.

The idea of Medina Azahara becoming a World Heritage Site had received a great deal of support, including from the World Heritage Cities of Spain association.

With this designation Cordoba has become the only place in the world to be able to boast four areas with

this prestigious status, as Medina Azahara

has now joined the aforementioned Patios Festival, the mosque-cathedral and the historic city centre.

This palatial Moorish city, which was built in 963, had 112 hectares of walled land and is the largest archaeological site in Spain. It is situated at the foot of the Monte de la Desposada hill, six kilometres outside Cordoba city centre.

The complex is a spectacular example of construction and lifestyle during the Umayyad dynasty, when Cordoba was the capital of an Islamic caliphate and a centre of Western civilisation.

According to ancient writings discovered

by archeologists, it was a gift from the monarch to his love, Azahara, who never settled there, despite the beauty of its gardens of almond trees. The splendour barely lasted a century, however, as it was ransacked and set on fire by the Berbers during a civil war in 1010 which dismantled the caliphate in the Taifa kingdoms. It wasn't until the 19th century that the ruins of Medina Azahara were identified.

Nowadays, some of its rooms can be visited, and they give a good idea of how sumptuous and luxurious the legendary city

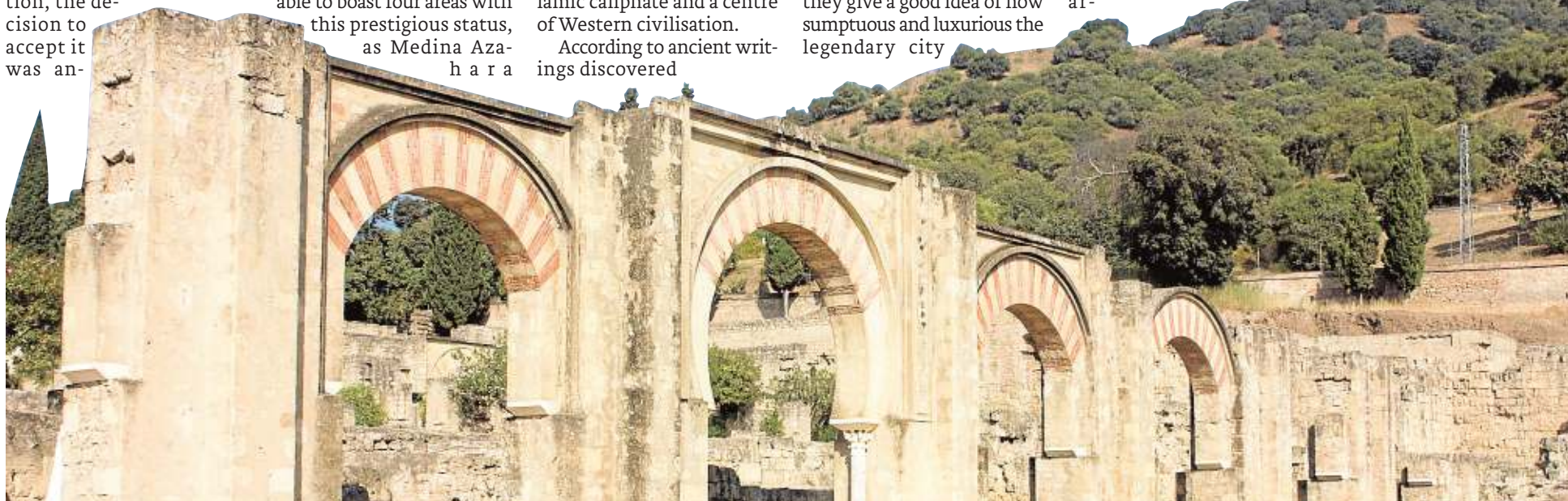
used to be. The Wall, the Viziers' House, the remains of the Aljama mosque and the gardens are open to visitors, a journey back in time to the days when this was the loveliest Islamic building in the time of Al-Ándalus.

A visit to this palatine city is the perfect complement to a trip to the centre of Cordoba, as it is not far away and is easily accessible.

Cordoba, on the banks of the majestic Guadalquivir river, was a prosperous capital during the Umayyad empire. It contains many ar-

chitectural treasures from the time of Al-Ándalus, including its mosque-cathedral, the palace-fortress of the Christian Monarchs, the synagogues, the Julio Romero de Torres museum, the Roman bridge and emblematic squares such as La Tendilla and La Corredera.

These are all fascinating monuments which should not be missed, by anyone who takes a trip to Cordoba.



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# ÚBEDA AND BAEZA, TREASURES IN THE HEART OF JAÉN

These beautiful towns are a World Heritage Site

They are often described as twins, but they are not identical. They are both, however, beautiful, historical and home to a wealth of art and architecture which has made them world famous.

They are Úbeda and Baeza, emblematic towns in Jaén province which are jointly classified as a World Heritage Site. They may share treasures, but their personalities are quite different.

Baeza is a fascinating old town of silent streets and golden stone, where art and history have left their most beautiful mark; Úbeda boasts a profusion of Renaissance buildings similar to Italy, which coexist in perfect harmony with other architectural styles.

Baeza, with its ancient and illustrious origins, is situated in the geographical centre of Jaén province, close to the Guadalquivir river amid fertile fields of vegetables, olive trees and cereal crops. Its terrain includes the Laguna Grande, an environmentally important beauty spot and the biggest lagoon in the province.

This is a serene and peaceful town, almost Castilian in appearance, of incomparable beauty and with a concentration of architecture in its streets which would be difficult to replicate.

As a town where the Renaissance is showcased in all its splendour, it inspired Antonio Machado and provides unforgettable views with every step as palaces and churches alternate with whitewashed houses, grand entrances, porticos, towers, squares and fountains.

Baeza deserves to be enjoyed slowly as there is so much to see, with its Plaza del Pópulo, the town hall, the Plaza de Santa María, the cathedral, the Jabalquinto Palace, the Úbeda Gate, the old university, the Palace of Los Majorada, the San Francisco monastery, the Santa María del Alcázar and San Andrés church, the church of Santa Cruz, the San Pablo church and the Convent of La Encarnación, among others.

Úbeda, for its part, is an important and more populated town situated upon the hills

of the same name. It is just nine kilometres from Baeza.

Úbeda is a real artistic treasure with interesting buildings everywhere, and is one of the most prestigious and glorious towns in Andalucía. Castilian and Renaissance on all sides, it has so many monuments, churches, palaces and mansions that the best way to explore is on foot, to get a feel for what it was like at the time of its greatest historical splendour.

No visitor should miss the chance to see the chapel of El Salvador, situated in the incomparable town hall square, the San Pablo church, the church of Santa María de los Reales Alcázares, the San Juan de la Cruz oratory, Monastery of Santa Clara, Vela de los Cobos palace, Cadenas palace, Casa de las Torres, Santiago hospital, hospital of Los Honrados Viejos del Salvador, the Clock Tower, Walls of La Cava, Ceramics museum and the Parador hotel, but this unique town also contains many other treasures.



The fountain of Santa María, in Baeza. :: SUR



The Arab baths, Úbeda. :: SUR



The old butchers' market, Úbeda. :: SUR



The hospital of Santiago, in Úbeda. :: SUR





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# THE COSTA'S KITCHENS SHINE BRIGHT AMONG THE STARS

With nine Michelin stars, the province of Malaga has become one of the most important destinations in Spain for holidaymakers in search of haute cuisine

## JAVIER ALMELLONES

Slowly but surely, the province of Malaga has made a name for itself as one of the most important in Spain in terms of haute cuisine. Malaga city, Ronda, Marbella and other towns on the western Costa del Sol are now part of the firmament of world gastronomy thanks to renowned chefs such as Dani García, Benito Gómez, Diego Gallegos, José Carlos García and Marcos Granda, among others.

In the past five years, the Costa del Sol has become one of the most important foodie destinations in the competitive Spanish market. The presence of restaurants in the province, especially Malaga and Marbella, in the most important good food guides is proof of the excel-

lent direction in which gastronomy has been heading in recent years. Its creative, avant-garde and signature cuisine are attracting the attention of food lovers all over Spain and elsewhere.

The new Michelin Guide to Spain and Portugal will be presented later this month, and there are hopes that Malaga will have a greater presence than ever before. That was certainly the case in the 2018 Guide, as the province gained another star, this time Benito Gómez and his Bardal restaurant in Ronda. This restaurant, in the building which used to be the famous town back the "brilliance" which it boasted for nearly a decade when Dani García and Sergio López were awarded Michelin stars for their food.

Bardal is a personal passion of Benito Gómez, who is committed to the use of local products, reinventing tradition and producing deep and recognisable flavours. Authenticity and freedom are the bywords of this chef, who was born in Barcelona but has adopted Malaga as his home. The Michelin inspectors found it "a complete surprise" because, in their opinion, "it perfectly combines creative gastronomy with the best interior design".

So this new star in the local Michelin firmament joined Dani García (who has two stars), Restaurante José Carlos García, El Lago, Skina, Messina, Sollo and Kabuki Raw. Gómez's joy was shared by all of them, especially for Dani García, who said he was delighted because "that's the place where I started, and they are people with whom

I have spent many hours cooking".

Despite his pride in the fact that Malaga province has so many Michelin stars already, García stresses, "We have to keep fighting to be awarded more. In this province there are other restaurants capable of doing that."

"Malaga is a launching pad," says José Carlos García, convinced that there are many excellent ideas and "extremely talented youngsters" in the province. He is convinced that being awarded Michelin stars "doesn't just give a destination a reputation, but also encourages new enterprise and generates business and employment".

Diego Gallegos (Sollo) feels the same: "The more stars we have, the better the image of the destination and the more gastronomy we create," he says. "It's all good for Andalucía," he adds, referring to the interest shown in the presentation of the guide and the fact that bookings always increase at that time of year.

That is why Marcos Granda (Skina), says, "We have to keep trying to improve every day; this takes constant work." He is de-

**The presence of restaurants in the province in the principal good food guides shows the excellent direction in which gastronomy has been heading in recent years**

lighted with the way Skina and his new project in Madrid, Clos, which opened last December, are going. He says the recognition of his second brand, Aderezzo, like Bib Gourmand, leaves him in no doubt that Andalucía "is experiencing a unique moment" and that is something which he finds stimulating.

The same can be said for his other Michelin-starred colleagues: Last November Francisco García (El Lago) couldn't hide his satisfaction at being awarded a star for another year for his work in Marbella, and said it was good news for the province: "We all think it is fantastic that Andalucía and Malaga

are growing," he commented.

Although Bardal is one of the few newly starred restaurants in Andalucía, the region was awarded a further two stars and they were both for Ángel León, one for Alevante (Chiclana de la Frontera, Cadiz) and the other for Aponiente (Puerto de Santa María, Cadiz), making him the only 'triple star' in Andalucía.

The others remained the same as the previous year: in Cordoba, Noor and Choco; La Costa and Alejandro in Almeria; Acánthum in Huelva and Abantal in Seville. In total, 19 stars, of which nine are in Malaga.

## Bib Gourmand

Nor was the new star for Bardal in Ronda the only cause of satisfaction in Malaga: the Michelin Guide 2018 brought other good news for the province, which is also growing in the Bib Gourmand category (good food for less than 35 euros). The two existing ones (BiBo Marbella and Figón de Juan) were joined by Aderezzo (the second brand of Skina in Marbella), El Palangre (Este-



Chef Mauricio Giovanini, in the kitchen at Messina. :: SUR



Marbella chef Dani García. :: SUR



pona) and Platero & Co (Gaucín). These were the newcomers with a Malaga accent among a total of 43 in a category which includes 289 establishments in all, 252 of them in Spain and 37 in Portugal.

There were also new additions to the list of recommendations. It is possible to be in the Michelin guide without an award: these are the restaurants included in the denomination The Michelin Plate, which features "quality cuisine".

This is where Malaga city has come into its own, with the debut of La Cosmopolita, Soca and KGB. Dani Carnero, who last year was awarded a sun in the Repsol Guide, continues to climb the ladder of success with his "good market cuisine", as the Michelin Guide describes La Cosmopolita, among its recommendations in Malaga city centre. Also recommended are the "unusual gastrobar" Soca, where Alejandro Salido and his team create a fusion of Mediterranean cuisine and sushi, and KGB (José Alberto Callejo), where the guide highlights the tapas, which meet the demands of modern international tastes, with the world of espionage as its leitmotiv. Also featured are Marisquería Godoy and El Cor-

**José Carlos García, chef at Restaurante JCG: "Winning stars doesn't just give a destination a reputation; it also encourages new enterprise and generates business and employment"**

bertizo, which retained their place from the previous year.

There were no new additions in the remainder of Malaga province. Marbella still features in the form of Santiago and La Taberna de Santiago, Serafin, Buenaventura, Ta-kumi, Vovem Asador and El Gran Gatsby; in San Pedro Alcántara, Albert & Simon and Víctor; in Fuen-girola, Los Marinos José, Vinotinto, Charolais and Charolais Tapas; in Ronda, Albacara and Tragatá; in Antequera, Plaza de Toros and Caserio de San Benito; in Torremolinos, El Botijo Carihu-ela; in Campillos, Yerbagüena; in Nerja, Sol-lum and Oliva; and in Torre del Mar, Asador El Yate. Special mention is deserved by BiBo Madrid, because al-

though it is located in the Spanish capital it belongs to the group owned by Dani García, the Marbella chef with two Michelin stars.

The province is therefore keeping its fingers crossed that its leading position in the Guide continues next year, and is looking forward to the presentation of the 2019 Guide, which will take place on 21 November at a gala in Lisbon, Portugal. It will be a particularly glittery affair, marking the tenth anniversary of the arrival of this legendary food guide to this part of the world

#### Foodie tourism

Gastronomic tourism is now one of the most important tourism segments in Malaga. According to the provincial capital's Tourism Observatory, more than 60 per cent of tourists say they took part in some form of foodie activity during their stay, and the same study shows that tourists gave the gastronomy of Malaga a score of 8 out of 10 for quality.

It is calculated that tourists who are interested in gastronomy spend more than 100 euros per person per day, and this segment includes millions of people all over Spain. In fact, figures for 2016 show that 9.5 million visitors came to Spain

for this purpose, and spent more than 7.4 billion euros.

More specifically, gastronomic tourism par excellence is expected to grow considerably in future years, as explained during the Marbella All Stars conference, an event which brings together around 300 experts in the sector.

Chef Diego del Río, the president of Marbella All Stars, warned that "tourists these days are seeking increasingly personalised and exclusive experiences; gastronomy is one they can really enjoy and it also transmits the personality of a destination".

Experts also agree that gastronomy has a major role to play in attracting year-round tourism, and haute cuisine is also beginning to find a place in the health tourism sector.

With regard to the Costa del Sol and Malaga province specifically, they say the greatest revolution in haute cuisine will take place in luxury hotels, something which is already occurring in major destinations such as London and New York.



Malaga also has enormous potential as a destination for wine tourism, as clients can visit the places where the wine they consumer is produced. Experts believe

the industry should make the most of this to stimulate the economy.



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# ONE OF SPAIN'S BEST-CONNECTED DESTINATIONS

The Costa del Sol boasts an extensive and modern transport with hundreds of links to national and international destinations whether travelling by land, sea or air

## DARYL FINCH

The past decade has seen communications come on leaps and bounds in Malaga and on the Costa del Sol, making it one of the best-connected destinations in both Spain and Europe.

The principal transport system comprises the airport, with two terminals and two runways; an extensive network of motorways and dual carriageways; high-speed rail connections (AVE) to the principal cities in Spain; and the port, which is one of the most popular with cruise companies and which has a direct connection to north Africa.

Travelling to the Costa del Sol is easier than ever, especially by air which continues to be the most popular for overseas visitors. In terms of passenger numbers, Malaga-Costa del Sol Airport overtook Palma de Mallorca to become the third busiest in Spain (after Madrid and Barcelona) earlier this year and this winter will see an increase of 15 per cent on the seats offered compared to the same period in 2017.

This means that you can travel directly to the Costa del Sol from 103 destinations, a figure that increases to in excess of 150 during the summer months, making it the logical entry point to Andalucía.

There are regular flights to 22 UK airports, including five in London, and three in the Republic of Ireland (Dublin, Shannon and Cork).

The airport is quickly and

easily reached by road (it is very close to Malaga city and Torremolinos) and by the suburban railway line which runs from Malaga to Fuengirola. There are also numerous car hire companies in the area which have increased their fleets considerably in the past year.

## High-speed train

Ever since the AVE high-speed train service was extended to Malaga in December 2007, the Costa del Sol can boast rail links which are among the best in Spain. The AVE means that Madrid can be reached in only two-and-a-half hours. In addition, about 20 Spanish cities are also served by fast trains from Malaga, either directly or indirectly.

There are direct connections from Malaga to about a dozen cities, including the Andalusian hot-spots of Seville and Cordoba. However, the Malaga-Madrid service is undoubtedly the busiest. The journey takes between two hours and 20 minutes and two hours and 50 minutes, depending on the number of stops. Renfe offers between ten and 13 services each way daily, and low-cost fares are available for those who book in advance.

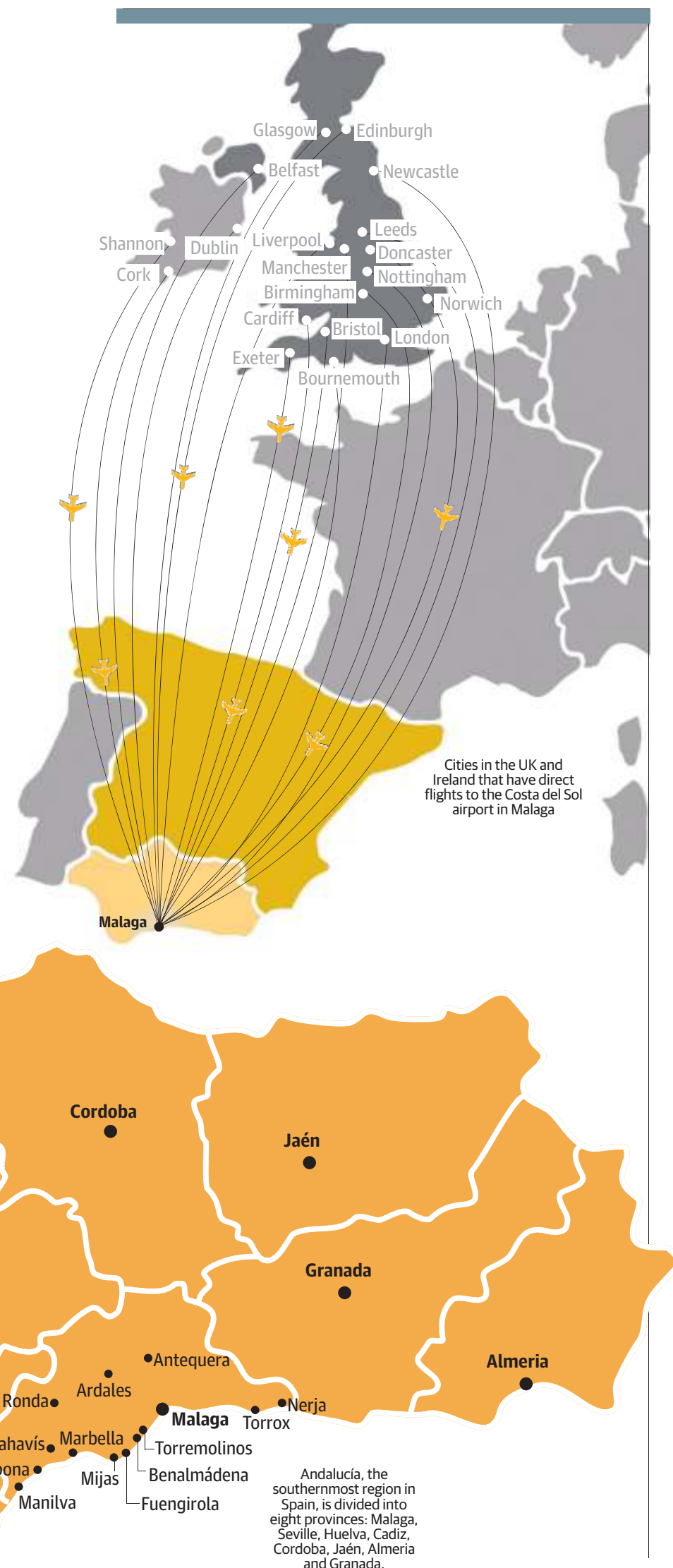
Other options which are extremely popular despite competition from aviation are the

rail services to Barcelona and Valencia.

## A port city

In terms of transport, Malaga port is outstanding for two reasons: firstly, it is one of the main departure points from Spain to Melilla, with daily connections. Secondly, Malaga is one of the Spanish cities which receives the largest number of cruise passengers: the port of Malaga was visited by 140 cruise ships carrying 220,000 people this summer.

With such mild winters in southern Spain, many more visitors are expected to arrive soon because, as we've seen, getting here is now easier, more comfortable and quicker than ever before.







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