

# Andalucía Costa del Golf



## Tourism in full swing

The sports sector, with major attractions such as international golf tournaments, has grown more than 40% in the last decade [P2&3]



### AMATEUR TOUR

## The Costa del Golf Tour grand final takes place

Guadalmina welcomed the last round of this increasingly popular tournament [P4]



### VETERAN

## Miguel Ángel Jiménez, out for a new record

The Malaga golfer is only the second to reach 700 tournaments after taking part in The Open [P7]

### Tourist destination: Torremolinos

The iconic town is aiming to attract year-round tourism through sport, conferences and gastronomy [P6]

# Andalucía has seen the biggest rise in sports tourism in the past decade

The sector has grown by more than 40 per cent since 2010, thanks to golf tourists, pre-season training and major competitions like the Valderrama Masters

**ALBERTO GÓMEZ**

**P**laying sport and attending major events such as football matches and golf tournaments have become two of the fastest-growing tourist attractions in Spain in recent years. Sports tourism is a chance to add even more value to a sector which in Spain as a whole generated 178 billion euros in 2018, equivalent to 14.6 per cent of gross GDP, according to a research group called Nuevas Perspectivas en Turismo y Ocio at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC).

The Canary Islands, Catalonia, Andalucía and Valencia are the regions with the most potential to consolidate this as a specialised form of tourism, one which generates quality employment, reduces the negative externalities of low-cost tourism and helps to create work all year round.

In 2017, the most recent year for which figures are available, this sector brought more than ten million tourists to Spain and generated income of 14 billion euros. That figure is 14.5 per cent higher than in 2010. There are numerous examples. Last year Andalucía received half a million tourists who came to play golf. The Costa Dorada under-18 football tournaments increased hotel occupancy to 85 per cent in that area, despite the bad weather at Easter. In Madrid,



The Andalucía Masters, which takes place at Valderrama, attracts thousands of visitors every year. :: SUR

the economic impact of the Champions League Final was over 60 million euros, showing that passive sports tourism can also be very successful.

“Sports tourism is synonymous with quality of life and motivation, as well as sustainable growth,” says Nicole Kalembe, a doctor and lecturer in Economics and Business Studies at UOC. This researcher from the Noutur group at the university says “the synergy between tourism and sport is a strategy which benefits the product”, given that “it improves the competitive advantages of the destination, promotes socio-economic development in the area and adds value to the tourism brand”.

Tourists who travel to play sport, depending on their degree of professionalism, want assistance with transport to their destination, good facilities, complementary activities and good weather, among other aspects. This means that a good tourist destination has to be well-connected with good facilities and professional service. “Many councils who are interested in sports tourism collaborate with the sector and with private initiatives, because this investment ends up having a positive impact on the municipality,” explains Kalembe.

She warns that, in this case, it is essential to “create an image of the destination and have strategies to promote the brand and tourism”. Sports tourism benefits not only the hotel and restaurant sector but also other professional sectors such as sports medicine, physical education and nutrition. About

## A “SPECTACULAR” SUMMER FOR ANDALUCÍA

Andalucía received 5.6 million foreign tourists in the first six months of this year, which was 6.3 per cent more than the same period in 2018, according to a survey called Movimientos Turísticos en Frontera, whose results have been published by the National Statistics Institute (INE).

This places Andalucía as the third principal destination in the country in terms of numbers of tourists, after Catalonia and the Canary Islands.

The UK was the main source market for Andalucía in June, with 23.3 per cent of the total of tourists, followed by Scandinavian countries with 10.8 per cent. In June alone, Andalucía received 1.2 million tourists, 6.4 per cent more than the same month last year.

More than two million visitors stayed in hotels in the region in June, which was 6.6 per cent more than

the same month in 2018, and there were 5.8 million overnight stays.

The vice-president of the Junta de Andalucía, Juan Marín, who is also the region’s Tourism minister, says the forecasts for growth in 2019 are still above three per cent, as previously announced.

The region of Andalucía began the summer with the best month of June ever for the hotel industry.

“This summer is going to be spectacular in all senses of the word for the Andalusian tourism sector,” says Marín.



Marín, in a photo taken in July. :: FRANCIS SILVA

49 per cent of the 18,000 people who took part in the Zurich Marathon in Barcelona were foreigners. Each athlete travelled with an average of two companions and spent 123 euros per person per day. Some destinations have become the base for training camps and pre-seasons of international football teams in lower leagues from the Netherlands and Germany, thanks to the top quality sports centres in the area.

Golf is a case apart. Spain is the second country in the world in terms of foreign tourists who come to play this sport. According to the Golf Business Partners report, the practice of golf contributes 564 million euros to the Spanish economy and generates 11,000 direct jobs, mainly in the Canary Islands, Balearics, Catalonia and the Costa del Sol.

The 41,494 spectators who attended the Andalucía Valderrama Masters last year are a clear and direct example of the impact of these events, not forgetting the indirect repercussion through the media. The tournament reached 400 million homes and showcased Andalucía's exceptional climate, golf courses and complementary facilities.

Nor should it be forgotten that, more than two decades after hosting



Azahara Muñoz, during a tournament. :: SUR



Golf tournaments attract many people to Andalucía. :: SUR

### The practice of golf generates 11,000 direct jobs, mainly in Catalonia, on the Costa del Sol, the Balearics and the Canaries

the Ryder Cup, the Costa del Sol could once again host a team golf competition with worldwide coverage.

The Junta de Andalucía, the Diputación de Málaga and the Mancomunidad de Municipios de la Costa del Sol Occidental have set their sights on the Solheim Cup, which like the Ryder Cup is held every two years and pits the best American and European players against each other. These three institutions are aiming to host the tournament in 2023. It would be the first time the Solheim Cup had

taken place in Spain since it began in 1990, and the fourth time it was played outside Britain.

The Junta de Andalucía is committed to promoting the region's golf infrastructure through major tournaments, aware that those such as the Masters at Valderrama have a potential audience of millions in source markets such as the UK, France, Germany and the USA.

There are 102 golf courses in Andalucía, of which about half are in Málaga province and just over 20 per cent are in Cadiz. The Diputación and Mancomunidad are also keen to attract these tournaments to the region, and their sponsorship was indispensable for the latest two editions of the women's Spanish Open. The strategy places Andalucía at the head of sports tourism in Spain, and it is becoming more and more popular.

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The final was played on the incomparable fairways at Guadalmina. :: A. PAZ



There was great camaraderie among the women golfers. :: A. PAZ



Esther Ruiz from Joyería Marcos gave the prize to winner Daniel Palma. :: A. PAZ

# A great end to the Costa del Golf Tour with 200 players in the grand final

Real Club de Guadalmina hosted the fifth final of this amateur tour, organised by SUR and its specialist golf publication

**ALEJANDRO DÍAZ**

**T**he grand final of the Costa del Golf Tour at the Real Club de Guadalmina proved to be a truly intensive day of golf. Now in its fifth year, this tournament has already become a benchmark in the world of amateur golf, and an unmissable event every summer. The Costa del Golf Tour, organised by SUR and its specialist publication Costa del Golf, brought together more than 200 players for this year's grand final at the end of July. The day began early and was

marked by a strong westerly wind. The course was in impeccable condition, and everyone was looking forward to a day of amateur golf which has all the lure of a professional event. As well as those who had classified in the previous rounds, there was also a special category with the name of 'Amigos de SUR', for those who had registered through Oferplan and members of the club itself. Francisco Gómez, the technical director of the Costa del Golf Tour, said afterwards that there had been a great atmosphere between the different participants and that the grass and the course in general were in perfect condition. He also congratulated the players for their performance, especially in the strong wind. In the first category, Daniel

Palma Quintana was the winner on the day, while José Antonio Benítez Domínguez and Antonio Arjona Marín completed the podium with second and third place, respectively. In the second category, Antonio Grau Gómez led the ranking, with Damián Serrano and Francisco J. Muñoz Blázquez coming second and third. The women's category was hard-fought right to the end. Finally,

Patricia V. Thiele Rico took first place, while Rosa Quintana González and Francine Giussepone joined her on the podium in second and third place. The 'Amigos de SUR' category also provided a stunning day's golf, with a fantastic performance by the players who took the top three places, Javier Mezquita Zurutuza, Fernando Guitérrez Torres and Álvaro Fernández Molina, respectively. Los Arqueros, El Paraíso, Al-

caidesa Links and Cabopino Golf had hosted the classifying rounds prior to the grand final at Guadalmina, which was inaugurated in 1959 and is the second oldest course on the Costa del Sol. The final day was an excellent end to a very special edition of this tournament, which broke all records for participation in all categories, included one more leg than usual and was celebrating its fifth anniversary. Thanks to this initiative by SUR, this tournament is now a benchmark for fans of amateur golf and it takes place every summer on some of the best courses in Andalucía. As usual, the day of the grand final ended quite late due to the number of players taking part. The prizegiving began at approximately 9.30pm, and was attended by representatives of SUR, including sales director Jorge Artero and Pilar Perea, who is the head of the external relations department. The Costa del Golf Tour will return next summer, and will undoubtedly bring new surprises.

## FIRST CATEGORY

1. Daniel Palma
2. José Antonio Benítez Domínguez
3. Antonio Arjona Marín
4. Helmut Burne
5. Carlos Gutiérrez

## WOMEN'S CATEGORY

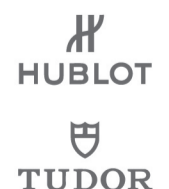
1. Patricia V. Thiele
2. Rosa Quintana
3. Francine Giussepone
4. Dominique Delvaux
5. Monserrat San Francisco



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MARCOS



# Torremolinos, an ideal holiday choice which includes golf facilities

The town is aiming to attract year-round tourism through sectors such as sport, conferences and gastronomy



The Miguel Ángel Jiménez Academy in Torremolinos. :: SUR



The Plaza Costa del Sol in the town centre. :: SUR



Swimmers off La Carihuela beach. :: SUR

Several decades ago Torremolinos was, together with Marbella, an oasis of freedom in a Spain still bleak and tinged with grey. Celebrities such as Frank Sinatra and Grace Kelly could be seen in the cocktail bars of hotels like the Pez Espada, and those days of wine and roses forged a destination which nowadays is a benchmark for visitors from elsewhere in Spain and abroad. Every year, hundreds of thousands of tourists come to this iconic town on the Costa del Sol for their holidays and in recent years it has offered them another attraction: golf, thanks to the course at the Miguel Ángel Jiménez golf school.

The 'pitch and putt' course is in La Colina area, close to Los Álamos and easily accessed from Malaga as it is only a few minutes from the airport. This type of short course is necessary to improve your skill, as short play constitutes around 70 per

**ALEJANDRO  
DÍAZ**

cent of golf. The academy, according to the Spanish Golf Federation website, is the main one in Spain.

Designed by Miguel Ángel Jiménez himself, the course imitates some of the best par threes in the world, on which he has played, and as you would expect, the 6th hole is similar to the legendary 12th at the Augusta National, which has caused so many headaches for the best players in the history of this sport. There is also a practice pitch, a clubhouse and private parking for up to 100 cars.

Of course, that is not all that Torremolinos has to offer. It is extremely popular with people from the UK and Germany who feel it is "even better than home". The won-

derful gastronomy, crowned by the famous 'pescaito frito' fried fish, is internationally famous, and in recent years the council has pedestrianised some of the town's busiest squares and avenues to make it even more accessible, and there are garden areas and parks in which to enjoy its average annual temperature of 20°C.

Torremolinos has many faces. The most famous aspect, without a doubt, is its sunshine and sea, with attractive modern hotels, the best restaurants and beach bars where you can enjoy traditional dishes and a glass of local wine. Other attractions include water parks and sports facilities, beachside bars and clubs and impressive seafront promenades.

For businesses, there is the Palacio de Congresos conference centre, and for tourists in general Torremolinos has a bullring, a municipal auditorium and friendly staff at the town hall who can provide complementary information to that of-

fered by the numerous tourist offices in the town. All this makes it an unrivalled destination in southern Spain.

Torremolinos, which has a rare combination of the charm of an Andalusian fishing village and the cosmopolitanism of a modernised city, can boast a great many emblematic enclaves. The Torre de Pimentel tower is particularly famous. Built in the 14th century, it is also known as the Torre de los Molinos, which is how the name of the town originated. Calle San Miguel, the nerve centre of the town, is the main shopping street and one of the busiest in Europe.

The Casa de los Navajas was built in the third quarter of the last century in El Bajondillo. It is Neomudejar in style and classified as a Building of Historic Interest. During their stay, visitors can also see the statue of Picasso and the churches of San Miguel and the Virgen del Carmen, the aforementioned Hotel Pez Es-

pada and the old Railway Workers Orphans School, now a cultural centre named after Malaga's most famous artist, Picasso.

The district of El Calvario is very typically Andalusian in style, while La Carihuela is a paradise for 'pescaito frito'. A stroll through this picturesque fishing district is simply delicious, and a promenade links it to El Bajondillo and Playamar.

Tourists will see that Torremolinos' reputation for beaches and food is well-deserved. However, there will also be time to explore some of the parks and gardens. The botanical garden of Los Manantiales-Molino de Inca is particularly delightful. It is situated among the sources of the local springs, and the garden extends around a beautifully restored 15th century flour mill. There are hundreds of different types of plants and trees, and also four viewing points.

The Parque de la Batería is in Montemar. There are several walking routes through the park as well as a children's play area, fountains, a lake and a tower-viewing point. The park is named after the old coastal defences, which consisted of three artillery placements with cannons, underground bunkers and a command post.

As mentioned earlier, Torremolinos also has its conference and exhibition centre, with space for up to 2,000 people, which makes it ideal for professional gatherings. There are 22 rooms divided into three auditoria, 13 committee rooms, six meeting rooms and 80 offices for delegates.

Torremolinos is also home to the biggest water park on the Costa del Sol, which has 14 fun attractions and a mini-golf. Next door is the 'Cocodrilos Park', where more than 260 crocodiles can be seen.

With regard to nightlife, there are lounge-style beach bars in Los Álamos and Playamar as well as the bars and clubs in La Nogalera, one of the liveliest places in the municipality. Concerts by famous pop and rock bands and food tastings are just some of the activities organised during the year in this legendary part of town.

The nearly seven kilometres of coastline can be walked and the beaches, equipped with all facilities, are ideal for enjoying the Mediterranean Sea and outdoor activities. The sports centre, which has several Olympic-sized pools, is often used in winter by teams from all over Europe who come here to train.

Torremolinos is indeed the tourism capital of Andalucía. What for decades was a small fishing village is now one of the busiest resorts on the Costa del Sol, forward-looking while never turning its back on its past. It is a place like no other.

# Miguel Ángel Jiménez, the second to reach 700 European Tour tournaments

The player from Malaga, who didn't make the cut in his 25th British Open, is hoping to smash the record held by his friend Sam Torrance

ALBERTO GÓMEZ

**M**iguel Ángel Jiménez is used to smashing records and he is on his way to doing it once more. In July the golfer from Malaga played his 25th British Open, after travelling all over the world for the past 30 years.

He started at Royal Birkdale when he was 26 years old. That was in 1991 and at that time he often used to train with Seve Ballesteros and José María Olazabal. He was close to winning a decade later, in 2001, but was narrowly beaten by David Duval: "I got myself in a bunker at the 15th hole and that was that, but here I am still hitting the ball," he says. "I have had some very good times and I have also had some really bad rounds, because that's something that happens to everybody sometimes."

There are only another seven tournaments to go for Jiménez to beat Sam Torrance's record of 707 championships. Now aged 55, he came to the Open after two consecutive absences thanks to him winning the British Senior Open at St Andrews: "The people there are very special. They know a lot about golf they love it and you can feel that in the atmosphere," he says.

Jiménez, who holds 21 European Tour titles, was the oldest winner on the circuit when he won the Spanish Open in 2014 at the age of 50 years and 133 days. He also broke the hole-in-one record on the European Tour when he achieved the tenth in the BMW PGA Championship in 2015.

The Spanish player is also getting closer to another historic record, as



Jiménez is still among the golfing elite although he also plays on the seniors tour. :: SUR

mentioned above, the 706 tournaments played by Sam Torrance on the European Tour, which is the current record. "I only need six tournaments to match my great friend Sam; and seven to beat his record. I don't know whether it will happen, but I'm working on it!" he says.

Jiménez, who has won six times on the US senior tour, was the oldest of the seven Spanish players in this latest edition of the Open; the others were Sergio García, Rafa Cabrera Bello, Jorge Campillo, Adrián Otaegui, Jon Rahm and Adri Arnaus. Once again, he had nothing but praise for

the course on which he celebrated his 25th British Open. "This course is fantastic, it is truly spectacular. You know where everything is, there are no surprises in store. You have to play it and hope you're lucky with the weather."

Although he didn't make the cut, 'El Pisha' hopes to return and is aware that this depends on whether he wins the British Senior again as he did in 2018. In a recent newspaper interview, he revealed his secret to remaining among the elite in golf even though he now also plays on the senior tour: "The key is a little olive oil,

good tempranillo wine and to enjoy life. No, seriously, you have to prepare well. I have spent more hours in the gym in the past few years than I have in the rest of my life put together. I look after myself, I'm flexible, strong and still hit the ball a good distance. But what is most important is that I still want to play golf. If I didn't, it would be impossible."

He still hasn't retired definitively from the European Tour and part of this is his dream of beating the world record of 707 tournaments.

"At the moment I play 90 per cent of the [PGA Tour] Champions tour-

naments in the US, and then six or seven on the European Tour. The challenge ahead of me is to beat the record of matches played on the European. I have played 700 so far. When I get to 707 I'll decide what to do next," he says.

Jiménez is also the proud father of Miguel and Víctor, who are following in his footsteps. "I tell them the most important things are to concentrate, work, practise and enjoy what they are doing. I say they have to focus on their objectives, concentrate fully on how they are playing and forget everything around them."



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## THE MONTH IN PICTURES



▲ **British Open.** There was an Irish winner as The Open returned to Northern Ireland for the first time in 68 years. Shane Lowry had a four-stroke lead heading into Sunday's final round and increased it to win the British Open by six strokes, finishing at 15 under par. :: AP



▲ **Tourism.** The Costa del Sol tourism body has this summer attended several international meetings for industry professionals to promote the destination: the Golf Woche in Germany, Roadshow Spagna in Italy and other meetings in India and Saudi Arabia. :: SUR



◀ **Irish Open.** Jon Rahm returned to the world top 10 at the start of July after clinching the Irish Open for the second time in his career. He did so after an impressive final day 62 (eight under) at Lahinch Golf helped him climb to the top of the leaderboard. This spectacular round, his personal best on the course, put him two ahead of Andy Sullivan (UK) and Bernd Wiesberger (Austria) and three ahead of compatriot Rafa Cabrera Bello who let his challenge slip with four bogies. ::

REUTERS



▲ **Winston Open.** Spanish veteran José María Olazábal came an impressive second in the Winston Golf Senior Open last month. Despite leading the board on the Sunday, he was pipped to the prize by a formidable Clark Dennis who registered a final-day nine under par. :: RFEG

# Costa del Golf

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### 2019/20 SCHEDULE

**17 August**

**Aloha**  
Torneo padre e hijos  
Open tournament

**22 August**

**Bil Bil Golf**  
Campeonato de España Sub 16 y  
Benjamín de Pitch & Putt 2019  
Open tournament

**29 August**

**Lauro**  
Campeonato de España  
Interclubes Infantil 2019  
Open tournament

**5 September**

**Sherry**  
Sub 18 Stroke Play Masculino  
Open tournament

**28 September**

**Torrequebrada golf**  
Campeonato de España Dobles  
Senior Femenino 2019  
Open tournament

**5 October**

**Aloha**  
Trofeo Benéfico ASPANDEM  
Open tournament

**5 October**

**Aloha**  
Trofeo Benéfico ASPANDEM  
Open tournament

**8 November**

**Montecastillo**  
Sub 18 Stroke Play Femenino  
Open tournament

**28 November**

**Aloha**  
Open de España Femenino  
Open tournament

**14 February**

**Costa Ballena**  
Cuadrangular femenino  
Open tournament

**15 April**

**Sotogrande**  
Copa RCG Sotogrande 2020  
Open tournament

**20 June**

**Montecastillo**  
Campeonato de España  
Femenino de primera, segunda,  
tercera y cuarta categoría  
Open tournament