

The magazine for the holiday season in southern Spain / July 2020

Summer's here

**Stay safe in
Andalucía**

SUR
in English

Andalucía



LOS JARDINES DE la térmica

JULY 2020

Fridays and Saturdays at 9.30 pm

| | | | | |
|----------|-------|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| FRIDAY | 3rd* | CINEMA | Begin Again / Rocketman |  |
| SATURDAY | 4th* | THEATRE | Mínima , by Lula Amir & María Luisa Tomás |  |
| FRIDAY | 10th* | CINEMA | Yesterday / Sing Street | |
| SATURDAY | 11th* | THEATRE | Tiempos viejos (Old days) , by Tantontería Teatro | |
| FRIDAY | 17th | CONCERT |  Málaga Philharmonic Orchestra | |
| SATURDAY | 18th | CONCERT |  Málaga Philharmonic Orchestra | |
| FRIDAY | 24th* | CINEMA | Mamma mia! / La La Land |  |
| SATURDAY | 25th* | THEATRE | El rey y la música (The King and the Music) , by Mojiganga Sociedad Limitada | |

* Tickets in benefit of non-profit medical association
"Bisturí Solidario" from mientrada.net

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Family ticket (4 people) 10 euros

Ticket for two 8 euros

Individual ticket 4 euros



Cover photo: Frigiliana, one of the Costa del Sol's prettiest white villages, part of the Axarquía area east of Malaga.



SUR

SUR IN ENGLISH SUMMER SPECIAL

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A different summer

RACHEL HAYNES

In any normal year on the Costa del Sol, by now, mid-July, the hotels would be full, the beaches packed and business booming for bars, restaurants and the many other services that thrive on the tourism industry.

This year, 2020, however, will be remembered as the year of coronavirus and this season is perhaps already being referred to as Covid summer.

While the situation could change as the season progresses, so far this year the absence of tourists from overseas has left huge gaps, especially in areas with larger concentrations of hotels and holiday apartments.

So who does that leave? With foreign holiday plans cancelled or postponed, residents in Spain are finding themselves looking more closely at their own country for their summer holiday destinations.

Tourists from the rest of Spain have always made up a significant proportion of visitors to the Costa del Sol and this year their business is vital for the industry.

But this Covid summer has also caused people who already live in southern Spain, many of us originally from other countries, to take a fresh look at our immediate surroundings.

We are forever telling others about how wonderful the region of Andalucía is, with kilometre on kilometre of beautiful beaches, breathtaking mountain scenery and towns and cities oozing with culture. But how much have we actually explored ourselves?

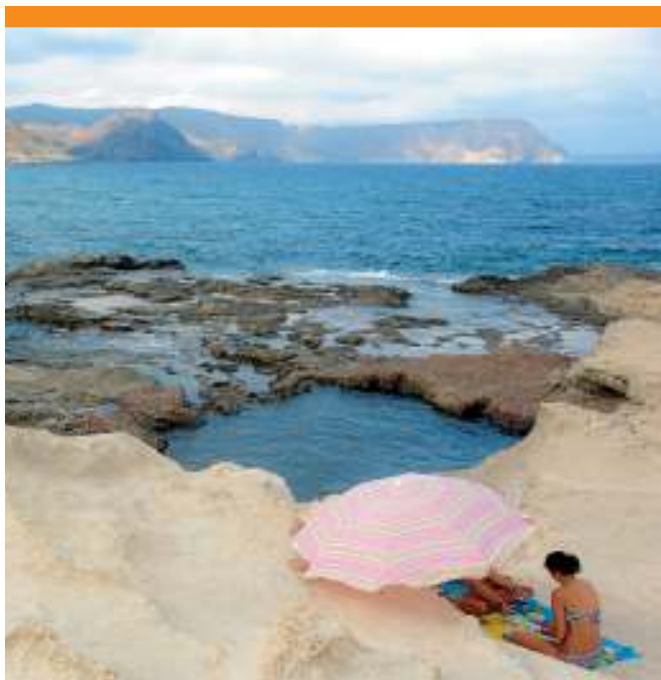
How often do we move from our own local beaches to find others in different provinces from our own?

Even though we've made the Costa del Sol our home, how about visiting Andalucía's Atlantic coastline for a change? Or the beautiful beaches of Almería backed up by Europe's only desert?

This magazine aims to provide plenty of ideas to encourage residents to go out and discover more of the region they have made their home, or perhaps their second home.

There's no better time for a reminder of not just the wide variety of beaches, but also the inland beauty and the cultural offer of our towns and cities in the form of exhibitions and concerts.

Of course this Covid year will be different; we'll have to remember to wear masks wherever necessary and keep our distance from others, but that doesn't have to stop us from going out and enjoying this summer in Andalucía.



A region with everything

With coronavirus messing with summer plans, there's no better time than now to rediscover the region of Andalucía. Over the initial four pages of this magazine we sum up the delights of all eight provinces that make up the region. Later - pages 18 and 54 - we take a look at how horses and gastronomy are just two of the many aspects that merge to create the essence of the region.



Back in time

Go back to medieval times to learn the story of Bobastro, the city whose little-known remains stand not far from the world famous Caminito del Rey.

What to do

While coronavirus has led to the cancellation of numerous large events, southern Spain still has a cultural agenda this summer. Festivals have scaled down to allow space and meet capacity regulations, but there are still plenty of chances to enjoy live music.

A view of the Rock

Gibraltar has a range of attractions for people looking for day-out ideas. Hiking around the nature reserve for spectacular views, or disappearing down tunnels are among them.

Adapting to new times

Accommodation in southern Spain has had to move fast to be able to offer visitors the peace of mind they need in case of Covid-19 concerns. As well as adhering to health and safety requirements, hotels are adapting to the 'new normal', offering services and activities that guarantee guests' ability to enjoy themselves while keeping a safe social distance.



Exploring by train

Not having your own transport might limit visits to some of the more remote parts of Andalucía, however doing without the stress of driving and parking is a great advantage. We discover how a large number of destinations can be visited from the comfort of a train, exploring the stops on both the C2 local line from Malaga to Álora and the line from Malaga to Seville, which passes through stunning scenery to reach fascinating towns.

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An Andalusian summer



A paraglider over Matalascañas beach in Huelva province. :: SUR

If you're in Andalucía, you know others elsewhere in the world are envying you

This is a year like no other, due to the coronavirus crisis, and many people's holiday plans have had to be abandoned. But southern Spain can beat most other places hands-down

DEBBIE BARTLETT

The question has to be asked: what's not to like about Andalucía in the summer? This region in the south of the country is the largest in Spain and is full of contrasts, so whether you live here or are on holiday, it has everything you could possibly wish for. Anyone who has put their travel

plans on hold because of the coronavirus pandemic need not worry: they have everything for a fantastic summer right here at home.

It is no surprise that Andalucía has become one of the most complete destinations in the world. Its facilities, climate, excellent communications, range of hotels and friendly and hospitable people have made it a firm favourite for holidays among visitors from abroad as well as those in other parts of Spain. So, what is it that makes Andalucía so special?

Sun, sand and plenty of both

For a start, as summer is here, let us not forget that Andalucía has over 800 kilometres of coastline, ranging from vast expanses of unspoiled deep white sand to tiny, rocky coves and urban beaches with every facility, especially for those with children.

This year, with the pandemic at the forefront of everyone's mind, the Andalusian government has put strict measures in place to ensure that beach-lovers can enjoy themselves safely, with apps which can be downloaded to show how many people are on the beaches in real time, maintaining social distancing, strict cleaning and disinfecting, and extra monitors to patrol and offer advice if necessary.

No matter where you are in this region, you will be within travelling distance of a beach. Andalucía is home to the Costa Almería in the east, the Costa Tropical in Granada province, the world-famous Costa del Sol in Málaga, the quieter Costa de la Luz in Cadiz and the continuation of the Costa de la Luz in Huelva province. All very different, and all very lovely.

For those who get bored after soaking up the sun on the beach for a few hours, however, then from Huelva in the far west to Almería in the east, the coastal area of the region also has numerous marinas, water sports, seafront promenades, golf courses, out-

door sports facilities, and restaurants to suit all tastes and budgets.

Catch up on some culture

Most of us in Andalucía have visited some of its many historical attractions, but there are probably still quite a few on our 'I'd love to go there one day' list and this is an ideal time to do it. After all, the history of this region goes back an extremely long way and there are many remains from the different cultures and civilisations that settled in the south of Spain over thousands of years.

This summer there are unlikely to be crowds of visitors, so why not consider a visit to the Alhambra in Granada, the Mosque-Cathedral in Cordoba or the Giralda bell tower in Seville? And if those are already ticked off on your list, how about the incredible towns of Úbeda and Baeza in Jaén, which together are a World Heritage Site, or Arcos de la Frontera in Cádiz province, the Roman town of Baelo Claudia on the beach at Bolonia, also in Cádiz province, Ronda with its famous gorge, in Malaga, or Moguer, in Huelva?

Andalucía offers the chance to see amazing prehistoric and Roman sites, Islamic, Renaissance and Baroque architecture, castles, fortresses and monasteries, in just about every one of its eight provinces. For those who prefer their culture more modern, what about the vast range of museums and art galleries, with exhibitions which change regularly to ensure that there is always something new to marvel at and enjoy?

Or perhaps after so many weeks of strict lockdown, you now have the urge to get out into the countryside, breathe some fresh air and get moving again?

Nature and rural tourism

The contrasts in Andalucía are no better demonstrated than in its countryside. This region has some of the highest mountains on the Iberian Peninsula, in the Sierra Nevada in Granada, extensive wetlands such as the Marismas del Guadalquivir,

dense Mediterranean woodlands, for example the Natural Park of Cazorla, Segura and Las Villas in Jaén province, and even volcanic deserts and stretches of coast which are completely uninhabited, like the Cabo de Gata area in Almería.

Andalucía is blessed because more than 18 per cent of its territory is environmentally protected. There are over 20 Natural Parks, which have facilities for visitors such as information centres, recreation areas, campsites, hiking routes, lookout points and refuges. Outdoor activities and adventure sports are becoming increasingly popular here too, and for those who prefer to explore by car there are numerous cultural and historic routes passing through tiny villages and glorious countryside.

If the idea of outdoor activities appeals, there are many opportunities for a rural holiday with a difference and plenty of self-catering accommodation

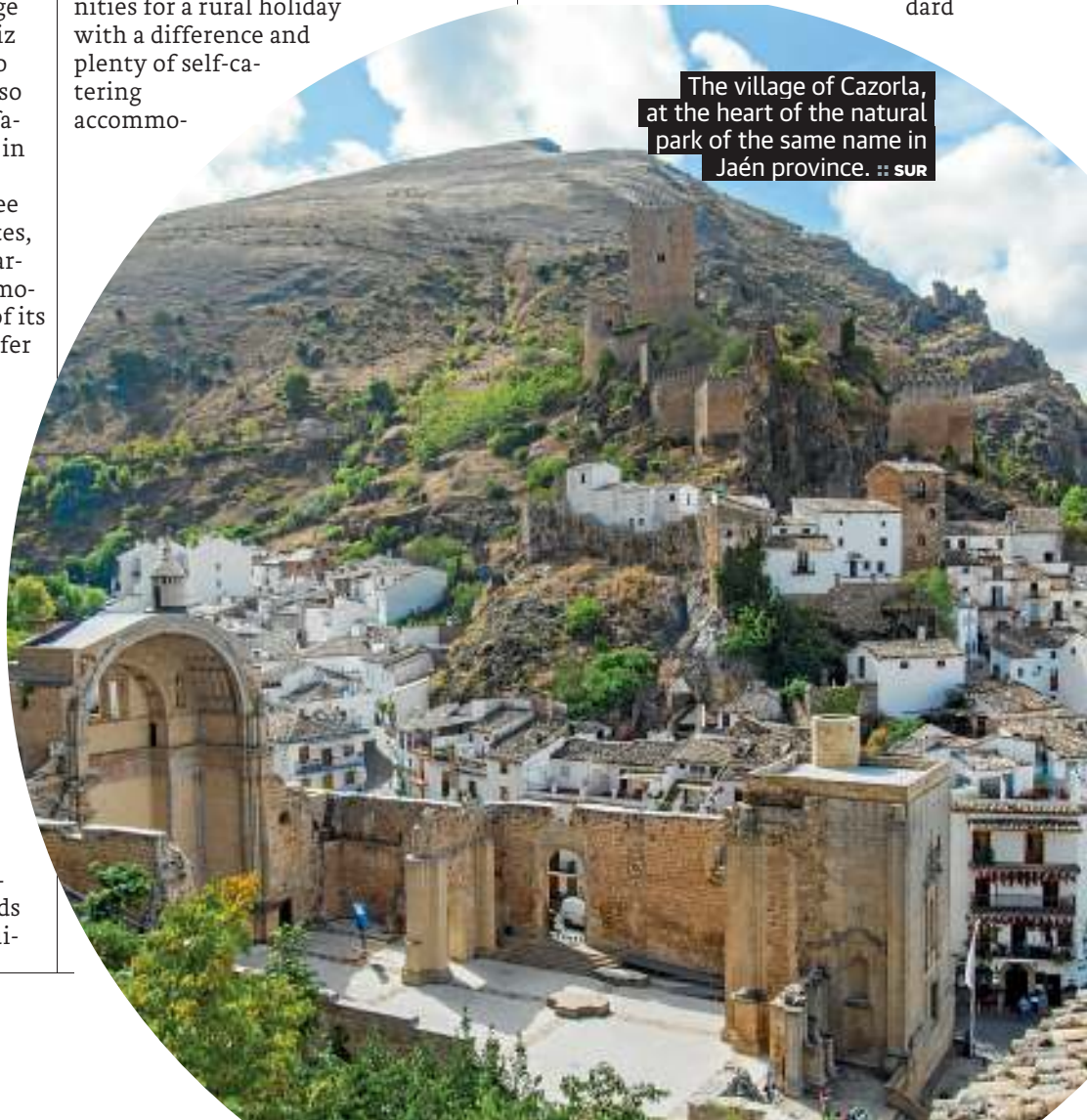
and small hotels for those who want to immerse themselves in nature. There are even companies specialising in activities for the youngest members of the family.

Not forgetting golf

It would be almost unthinkable to consider spending any time in Andalucía without golf coming into the conversation, because it is the region with the most golf courses in Spain and the Costa del Sol has also been nicknamed the Costa del Golf. Its unbeatable climate means that golf lovers can play their favourite sport at any time of year, on fantastic courses set amid beautiful countryside or close to stunning beaches and sea views.

There are about 100 courses in this region, and you can play golf in any of the provinces. It doesn't matter what your standard

The village of Cazorla, at the heart of the natural park of the same name in Jaén province. :: SUR



of play, there are practise courses, pitch and putt, courses with nine and 18 holes, and a huge variety of terrain.

Other sports

It doesn't matter whether you prefer indoor or outdoor sports, there are excellent facilities in Andalucía, which also hosts national and international competitions for enthusiasts who like to spectate rather than participate or compete. Just check out what's on offer near you, or upcoming events, and plan accordingly.

Also, it may not seem relevant in the heat of an Andalusian summer, but nor should it be forgotten that this region is home to the most southerly ski resort in Europe, the Sierra Nevada in Granada province, so anyone thinking of a winter holiday might like to bear in mind that it is often possible to sunbathe on the beach in Nerja or Motril, for example, in the morning, and ski or take part in other snow sports in the afternoon. The evenings, of course, are perfect for the after-ski, a few drinks and a meal by a roaring log fire before tucking up in a comfortable bed to rest before the following day's fun and exploits.

The resort is fully equipped for families, too, with activities and classes just for children and their own supervised play area while Mum and Dad are on the slopes.

Depending on the snow, the Sierra Nevada is normally open from November or December - and is a fabulous place to spend Christmas, with Santa Claus descending from the mountain on skis, and New Year - until April or May.

Health and beauty

It would be perfectly understandable, after the stresses of the lockdown and problems associated with the pandemic, to feel that you don't want to be active and that all you want this summer is a bit of pampering and wellbeing. Again, Andalucía has a vast array of options which are beneficial for body and soul and wouldn't mean travelling far from home.

The lovely climate, the pure mountain air or refreshing sea breeze mean that taking care of oneself is never a



The Guadalquivir, Seville. :: SUR



The mosque-cathedral, Cordoba. :: SUR



Los Infiernos, Loja, Granada. :: SUR

chore here. There are thermal waters, mud treatments, massages, therapeutic baths, high-pressure water therapies and treatments with algae in most of the natural spas and spa centres in the region.

The baths usually offer medicinal mineral waters, personalised treatments and specialist medical teams, while the spas have relaxation therapies based on the qualities and properties of the water.

A thousand ways to have fun

It is often said that there are a thousand ways to have fun and enjoy yourself in Andalucía, and that is perhaps the main reason for its success as a holiday destination. Whatever you feel like doing, you can do it here. It makes it a great place to visit, and a wonderful place to live. The eight provinces in Andalucía and they are all very different.

Almeria, in the east, is the driest area in the region and its desert-like scenery made it the location for some memorable 'paella western' films over the years. There is now a Mini Hollywood, giving visitors the chance to go back in time and experience life in this Spanish version of the 'wild west'. This province is known for its wild beauty, sublime beaches, 300 hours of sunshine a year and also, surprisingly enough, its mountains because one side of the Alpujarras (the foothills and valleys south of the Sierra Nevada in Granada) lies in Almeria province.

The capital, Almeria city, is a bustling port city crowned by a spectacular Moorish fortress, with numerous palm trees in the centre and some fantastic tapas bars.

Moving on in alphabetical order, Cadiz is in the south-west of Andalucía, and its capital is generally considered to be the oldest continually inhabited city in Europe, founded as 'Gadir' by the Phoenicians in 1100 BC. It oozes history, and ancient remains are continually being uncovered during building works, shedding more light on its past.

The province is very varied, with spectacular beaches and the rugged Sierra de Cadiz mountainous area to the north, with tiny tucked-away vi-

llages amid terrain which was once frequented by bandits. Some of Spain's greatest wines are made here, and it is also famous for its seafood.

It feels as if Cordoba - the city, at least - needs no introduction. The capital of the caliphate and centre of learning in Moorish times, its past glories are still there to appreciate in the form of the Mosque-Cathedral and the ruins of Medina Azahara, not far away.

The province, which is inland, prides itself on its wine production, which it insists is equal to that of the more famous Jerez wines, and its olive oil. It is also known for colourful ceramics, and its landscapes range from flat plains to beautiful mountains scattered with little white villages.

Granada, with which Cordoba shares a boundary, is stunning. The city is home to the Alhambra palace and Generalife gardens, the atmospheric gypsy quarters of Albaicín and Sacromonte, and it is a treasure house of historical buildings and monuments.

This is a province of high mountains, the Sierra Nevada national and natural parks, deep valleys, small villages and lovely coastal resorts. A feast for the eyes and the senses, in fact.

Huelva could probably claim to be the least-known province of Andalucía. North of Cadiz and bordering Seville and Portugal, it has absolutely spectacular Atlantic beaches and close connections with Christopher Columbus, of which it is very proud. The capital, Huelva city, has a bustling but unpretentious port and is interesting to visit, and is also very traditional as few international tourists go there.

The province is known for its seafood but also for the world-famous acorn-fed jabugo ham, from the pigs which roam freely in the meadows and mountains of the Sierra Alacena. On the coast is the Doñana National Park, which is home to many protected species of wildlife.

The province of Jaén couldn't be more of a contrast. It boasts a sea of olive groves, the World Heritage Site of Úbeda and Baeza, the stunning Cañorla natural park and is a magical combination of history, nature and ex-



El Playazo beach in Almería province. :: SUR



Golf on the Costa del Sol, Málaga. :: EFE

cellent traditional food. The capital is hilly, historic and atmospheric, crowned by a castle and with a magnificent cathedral. Ideal for exploring on foot.

Málaga province is synonymous with tourism. Everyone has heard of it, and its facilities, its beaches, its nightlife, its golf, its sport. Few are aware that it also has beautiful countryside only a short drive from the

coast. The city was until quite recently less well-known, but in the past few years it has become particularly popular for city breaks, mainly because of its culture. It has over 30 museums, including the Picasso Museum, the only branch of the Pompidou Centre outside France and the Russian State Museum of St Petersburg, among many others.

Last, but definitely not least, we have Seville, the seat of the Andalusian government, famous for its cathedral, its Holy Week processions, the Guadalquivir river, traditional gypsy districts and flamenco. The towns in the province tend to be forgotten, but some, such as Carmona, are real treasures. Seville's beauty lies in its places and its people; the landscape is flat, and the province becomes extremely hot in summer.

A place that others envy

Some people have decided to get to know a different part of Andalucía this year, while others prefer to stay at home but there is still no lack of things to do and enjoy. Apart from the attractions mentioned here, which are only a few of many, most councils organise events to entertain their residents, such as open air film screenings, theatre shows and concerts. Wherever you are, whatever you do, if you're in Andalucía you know that others all over the world are envious.

Holidaying without reservations



Rural peace and quiet at Almohalla 51. :: SUR

Southern Spain's hospitality pros have been working hard so guests can enjoy summer in confidence

International borders in Europe are finally opening, and the south of Spain is unshuttering hotels and resorts and welcoming valued guests

ANDREW FORBES

Visitors to Southern Spain will discover something new this summer; an evolved approach to hospitality that reflects the new normality of health and safety measures designed to reduce the risk of Covid-19 contagion. Hotels and guesthouses, in their desire to create high levels of consumer confidence,

have created new systems to maximise hygiene, food security and safety.

Keeping the magic

Yet there lies the challenge for hoteliers - the means to effectively implement new hygiene and social distancing protocols, while also maintaining the essence of their properties, the unique appeal and allure of their hotels. After all, that's why guests have made their reservations. As holidaymakers, we all want to feel pampered and relaxed in our hotel, not nervous in a clinical environment.

So unsurprisingly, hospitality professionals are taking inspiration from the changes demanded by these comprehensive protocols to redesign and re-imagine the overall hotel experience, for the better.

Although the emphasis will remain on the fundamental foundation of hospitality (a warm, welcoming environment and personalised guest experiences), many familiar aspects of a hotel stay may well feel like a whole new experience this year.

SUR in English talks to four different properties - from inland, rural Malaga province to the glamour of Marbella - to see how they are creating healthy, happy hotels.

Hotel innovations

For example, check-in and room access are set to be more streamlined, guest-friendly, and increasingly 'contactless' thanks to pre-arrival online check-in and digital smartphone room keys. Use of technology is also extending to dining, with the use of digital menus, which when creatively executed, can offer the potential for compelling guest experiences that complement and enhance classic hospitality. Hotel restaurants are changing too, with more spacious alfresco dining; and more personalised in-room meals, like in-room

Take
note

Adapting to new circumstances. Hospitality professionals are taking inspiration from the changes demanded by these comprehensive protocols to redesign and reimagine the overall hotel experience, for the better.

ANDREW FORBES

breakfasts and picnics, private dining on the terrace or balcony, and enhanced room service menus that will typically be priced as the same as the restaurant, with free delivery.

Luxury and wellness

Marbella Club

Leading hotelier, Julián Cabanillas, General Manager at the iconic Marbella Club, explains, “Hotels have been adapting to new health and safety protocols continuously in the last decades. It will be more challenging to be able to provide the warm and familiar service we are famous for while adapting to new social norms. It will be a change of pace for the Marbella Club, but we feel that creating safe havens, full of small yet significantly thoughtful details, we’ll ensure our guests continue to feel at home with us.”

Marbella Club is undoubtedly one of the flagships of Andalucía’s upscale hospitality. It’s the kind of destination that evokes an almost magical ambiance. It is where the beauty and charm of a timeless seaside Andalusian village blends with the latest trends in wellness, gastronomy and hospitality.

So, it is here that one can see many of the innovations that are driving the future of Spanish luxury hospitality. An approach that combines rigorous health and safety procedures (from employee and guest health screening, extensive cleaning and sanitising protocols, to contactless experiences), with new ways to offer the signature Marbella Club style that guests have come to love over the property’s illustrious 65-year history.

Marbella Club has taken advantage of the fact that it is on a spacious beach and surrounded by acres of private gardens to make social distancing a positive element in the guest experience. Rather than decrease capacity, it has imaginatively created more areas for dining, enjoying a drink and relaxing - from the stylish MC Beach restaurant to garden terraces. In addition, room service has been reimaged, making it a compelling alternative to the restaurants. A comprehensive selection of dishes from across the resort’s restaurants can be delivered directly to guest’s private villas,



Luxury at the Marbella Club
Beach Club. **sur**

or suites, with no tray fee. So, guests can indulge in signature cuisine when and where they want it, with all the expected style and finesse of Marbella Club.

Wellness has always been an integral element of the Marbella Club, and it’s always being enhanced as guests desire and demand to boost their wellbeing and immune system while on holiday. Marbella Club provides its wellness menus in-room and is also bringing its award-winning spa to the guest room, with treatments, and therapies offered in the private villas and suites.

Julián Cabanillas concludes, “We are doing everything possible to come back stronger than before.”

Stylish and shipshape Sunborn Gibraltar

Just across the frontier, in Gibraltar, one finds another unique, luxury hotel - the sparkling yacht, Sunborn Gibraltar. Combining the glamour of an ocean liner, the style of a super-yacht and the energy of an upscale casino with the gastronomy and luxury accommodation of a fine hotel, Sunborn has created a

whole new category of 5-star hotel. Moored adjacent to Gibraltar’s stylish Ocean Village, Sunborn Gibraltar is keeping its focus well and truly on personal service for guests, together with new innovations in dining and wellness.

Marc Skvorc, the yacht hotel’s Chief Operating Officer explains, “As a part of our ‘restart the magic’ movement, I am excited to say that we will be offering several new options for those returning to the hotel such as pre-check-in online, special ‘picnic’ baskets and enhanced room service. Among my favourite innovations is our new Food and Beverage offering, now all on the top (7th-floor) deck. Our chef has created a new menu combining the best sellers from both our restaurants that can be enjoyed in a completely open air setting with sweeping views of the Bay and Rock of Gibraltar. We know this is uncharted territory for us all, but let’s take some time to relax with loved ones, friends and family and together create a luxury experience on the Sunborn Yacht Hotel along the way.”

Sunborn is making the most of its privileged location on the water, and



Privacy aboard the Sunborn Gibraltar. :: SUR

welcoming guests back with promotions including, as Marc explains, “special Sunset Happy Hour vouchers, where, upon redemption, guests will receive double the value during the sun-setting hours”.

Behind the scenes the team will be working hard to maintain high levels of health security. Marc continues, “At Sunborn, we recognise that people want to be reassured that the highest safety measures are in place. It is with this in mind that Sunborn has rigorously enhanced its already high level of cleanliness and hygiene in all areas of the hotel following guidelines in accordance with the World Health Organisation.”

Family fun Palladium Hotel

Of course, southern Spain is also all about family holidays, and the Palladium Hotel Costa del Sol, the first Palladium property on the Spanish mainland, is at the forefront of the contemporary interpretation of the 21st century family all-inclusive holiday.

Set on a bay, on the Benalmádena coast, the Palladium Hotel Costa del Sol is opening for its second season, welcoming couples and families who are attracted by the contemporary aesthetic of the guest rooms, seven bars and restaurants, a spectacular rooftop, as well as a spa and pools.

Palladium Hotels is an international business, with decades of experience in tourism. So, despite 2020 being a challenging year for the hotel sector, they confirm, “Palladium Hotels has been quick to adapt. We have already launched a range of new initiatives and safety protocols to ensure the wellbeing of our staff and guests and make sure that visitors can leave their worries at home.”



Palladium Hotel, Benalmádena. :: SUR

Hygiene and food safety have always been priorities in Palladium Hotels and now the company has partnered with SGS, a leading entity for the certification and implementation of safety and welfare protocols, to develop further measures that are externally audited.

“We are a company that is wholeheartedly dedicated to customer enjoyment without ever compromising on safety. In 2020, we feel that customers will be even more in need of a holiday after a particularly challenging period and many personal sacrifices. We look forward to welcoming our guests with the same warm hospitality which our brand is known for.”

Rural getaway Almohalla 51

If lockdown has given you a renewed enthusiasm for the quiet life, then you are probably not alone. This year rural Andalucía will undoubtedly be more popular than ever, offering social distancing by default, thanks to the abundance of un-

spoilt countryside, national parks, and protected nature reserves in Southern Spain.

Almohalla 51 is a boutique guest house in the centre of the traditional white hill-top town of Archidona, north of Malaga. It has been created by Myles and David, who left London careers in travel and marketing, to move to Spain and create a guest house which reflected their love of good service and beautiful places to stay.

Taking two derelict townhouses they established a stylish retreat that epitomises the charm of a traditional Andalusian town.

Myles and David hope that their approach to rural hospitality will be particularly sought-after in this new era of social-distanced travel, where rural isolation can be balanced with the attractions of a small market town. David says, “Escaping to the relative calm of Archidona, away from the crowds, means an escape to cleaner air, more space, but still experiencing a warm and authentic Andalusian welcome.”

Of course, changes have had to be made at the guesthouse to comply with new norms in social distancing and hygiene, yet the focus remains on showcasing inland Andalucía: hiking routes in the wild countryside; the regional cuisine of the local bars and restaurants, which are well prepared for distanced dining on open terraces; and the heritage of the area.

So, when holidaying in Andalucía, you can forget any reservations you might have, and instead enjoy a safe and welcoming summer season.

INFORMATION

► **Marbella Club:** <https://www.marbellaclub.com/en/>

► **Sunborn Yacht Hotel:** <https://www.sunborngibraltar.com/>

► **Palladium Hotel Costa del Sol:** <https://www.palladiumhotel-group.com/en/hotels/espana/malaga/palladium-hotel-costa-del-sol>

► **Almohalla 51:** <https://www.almohalla51.com/>

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The beach at Cabopino, alongside the Artola dunes. :: SUR

Quiet beaches and coves to escape to

Even today, it is possible to find small Mediterranean paradises along the otherwise busy Costa del Sol

Dunes and cliffs hide more sheltered beaches far from the crowded seafront promenades

JAVIER ALMELLONES

From steep cliffs to soft dunes, with large and comfortable beaches in-between. The coastline in Malaga province is varied; it shows many different faces along its more than 160 kilometre length between Nerja and Manilva. Every summer the Costa del Sol, with its two very different parts, east and west, with Malaga city in the middle, is one of the most popular destinations for tourists. This is especially so for those who want beaches and coves which are unusual and different, but above all quiet, even though this may mean they are less easy to access.

Lovers of quiet beaches will know that the ones they like the best are the hardest to get to. The part of the coastline farthest east of Malaga city is protected as a natural beauty spot, the Acantilados de Maro (Maro cliffs). This protected area includes, for example, the Cala de la Doncella, which is idyllic and very well preserved, although to reach it you will need to go on foot or even by kayak from the adjacent beaches. It is only small, and is situated between what is known as the Peñón del Fraile and Punta Caleta.

Also in Nerja, but more accessible and better-known, is the Playa del Cañuelo, another jewel of the Acantilados de Maro area. Mind you, in peak season you cannot use your own vehicle to get there. You either have to walk or use a shuttle bus which runs continually between the car park and the beach. This is a way of preserving the beaches in this beauty spot. The Playa del Cañuelo is relatively large and is similar to many others in this area, in that the sea water is crystal-clear and the beach is of sand and stones.

Further west, but still within the same area, is the Playa del Carabeillo Chico, which is very close to the famous and busy Burriana beach. It is a haven of peace for anyone who wants to enjoy a



Carabeillo Chico beach
near Nerja. :: E. C.

quiet day on the sand. The access is quite difficult and is from the Burriana beach itself. It is a very small cove, surrounded by large rocks which provide a certain privacy.

In neighbouring Torrox, the Playa de Mazagarrobo, otherwise known as Tajo de la Virgen, is also popular. The latter name comes from a rock which, according to legend, is where the Virgen de las Nieves (the patron saint of Torrox) once appeared, to save some fishermen from the village during a storm.

The beach is just over one kilometre long and about 20 metres wide. Another attraction of this cove is that its clear waters are ideal for activities such as snorkelling and diving.

On the coast at Vélez-Málaga there are also several beaches to choose from. One of the coast's few naturist beaches can be found in Almayate, just one kilometre from Torre del Mar. It also has a

naturist campsite, just a short distance away from the beach. It should be noted, however, that not all the beach at Almayate is nudist. People are only allowed to strip off in the stretch in the Bajamar area, which is signposted as such.

Meanwhile, Rincón de la Victoria has a particularly comfortable beach for people who are looking for something different, at Torre de Benagalbón. For many, its charm is that there is no sea-front promenade so it is quieter than other beaches in the same municipality.

In Málaga city, but on the eastern side, is the Playa de Peñón del Cuervo, which is well-known to people in the province and elsewhere. Lying between El Palo and La Araña, this cove has a large rock right on the shore. It isn't always a haven of tranquility, but it's worth going on a weekday or outside peak season to enjoy its ecosystem. In fact, in its waters you can see a plant which is in danger of extinction, the 'siempre viva malagueña'.

On the western side of the Costa del Sol, despite being better-known, there are some quieter beaches such as La Butibamba. This is in La Cala de Mijas, with its historical watchtower, the Torreón, which has now been converted into an interesting museum. Butibamba is a quiet cove with fine sand and some more rugged areas. As well as spending a day on the beach, a walk along part of

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the new Coastal Path is also enjoyable.

Further to the west is Cabopino beach, in Marbella. There, you can visit one of the geological treasures of the Mediterranean coast of Andalucía. This strip of coast is beside the natural monument of the Dunas de Artola, a dune system which can be explored along wooden walkways. This beach, which also has a nudist area, is beside Cabopino marina, where there is a good selection of restaurants.

Another interesting option in Marbella is Realejo, a small cove close to Los Monteros beach, which is one of those surprisingly peaceful corners of the western Costa del Sol. The fact that it is between two beaches which are very busy in high season, and its natural surroundings, make this one of the most interesting coves for those looking for peace and quiet in the summer.

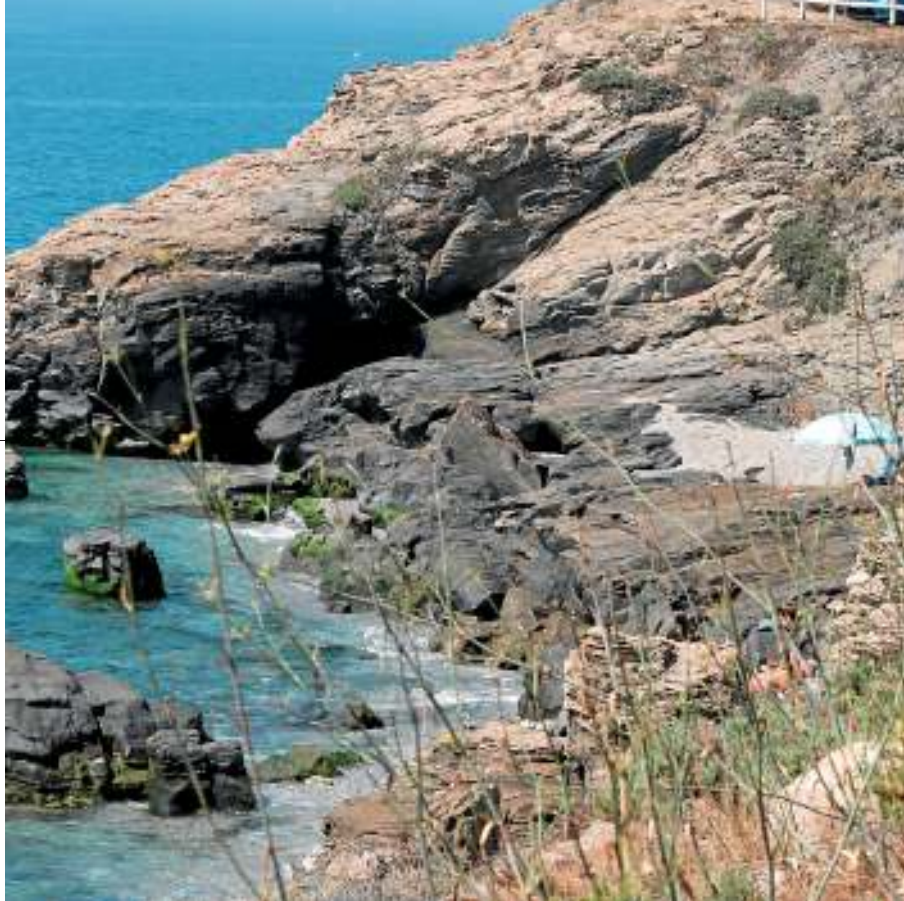
In neighbouring Estepona there is also plenty of choice, and one of the best is the beach at Bahía Dorada. The sea is crystal clear here, so it is a good place to take your goggles and snorkel and enjoy the marine fauna and flora. This beach is very close to the one called La Galera, in other words about eight kilometres west of Estepona town centre.

The municipality of Casares has two kilometres of coastline, and its most famous beach is Playa Ancha, which is actually in three different parts.

One is the stretch beside the Torre de la Sal, also known as Salto de la Mora, a lovely watchtower which was part of a castle at one time. Next to this is Playa Chica, which goes as far as the Arroyo de la Parrilla stream. The third part, which is actually called Playa Ancha, is on the boundary with Manilva.

This area has clear sea water, fine sand and some rugged areas, with rocks stretching out into the Mediterranean. It is a very unusual combination.

Apart from the built-up areas, Manilva's coastline is one of the most popular for those looking for something a bit different. As well as the beach called Chullera, there is also the environmentally valuable Playas de Manilva reserve, a small coastal paradise at the point at which the territory of Malaga comes to an end and that of the Campo de Gibraltar begins.



The Mazagarrobo beach, in Torrox. :: J. A.



The Peñón del Cuervo beach near Malaga city. :: NITO SALAS



A large part of the coast at Manilva is still very natural. :: J. A.



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A show at the Royal Andalusian Equestrian School in Jerez.

The horses of Andalucía

You only have to mention the name of this region, and the pulses of horse lovers will start to beat faster

From spectacular equestrian schools to wild ponies, Andalucía's love affair with its 'caballos' goes back a long way.

DEBBIE BARTLETT

The name Andalucía conjures up many images, and one is that of beautiful Andalusian horses, an important part of local culture and history. Horse-lovers in And-

lucía can both admire the animals at special events or even enjoy the experience of riding along spectacular beaches or through glorious countryside.

Equestrian art

The Royal Andalusian School of Equestrian Art is somewhere that will definitely set the pulses of horse-lovers racing. It is in Jerez de la Frontera, in Cadiz province, the town which is famous for its sherry and its flamenco, and the

Equestrian School is now known all over the world.

As a Foundation, it represents the identity of equestrian art in Andalucía, especially through the show 'Como bailan los caballos andaluces' ('How the Andalusian horses dance') which is a type of choreographed equestrian ballet with dressage and carriage driving, quintessential Spanish music and 18th century costumes.

In the 'doma vaquera' section, the horseman rides his horse around the arena holding the reins in just one hand, trotting at first and then galloping, changing the rhythm and performing pirouettes. Doma vaquera is similar to the style used by American cowboys herding cattle in wide open spaces, and although it is based on classical dressage it is much faster and dramatic.

To demonstrate classical dressage techniques, the horses carry out exercises to pieces of classical music, with choreography titled The Colts, Airs on Horseback, Pas de Deux, Passage and Piaffe, Domino on Horseback, Airs above the ground and Fantasy, among others.

The show also includes examples of Work In Hand, where the horse obeys its rider even when he or she is not in the saddle, carrying out classical Haute École dressage exercises such as levades, caprioles, courbettes, piaffe, Spanish walk and long reins.

It is also possible to visit other parts of the school, and sometimes to watch some of the students training.

For anyone wanting to understand the equestrian culture of Andalucía, a visit to the School should not be missed. Combine it with Jerez's flamenco offering for the unique essence of Andalucía.

Reales Caballerizas de Córdoba

Anyone in the ancient and spectacular city of Cordoba can also experience the unrivalled beauty of Andalusian horses and learn about the connection between local history and its equestrian traditions at the 'Reales Caballerizas de Cordoba'.

These Royal Stables, which were built in the 16th century, are in the centre of Cordoba, beside the Alcazaba, the palace-fortress of the Christian Monarchs.

The shows performed here never fail to impress. They are a perfect combination of classical and Andalusian horsemanship,



The unique beach horseracing in Sanlúcar de Barrameda (Cadiz) will go ahead on three days this August.

including the 'doma vaquera' or western-style dressage, mentioned above.

International polo in Sotogrande

Horses can also be seen in action in the polo tournaments that are becoming traditional in the luxury resort of Sotogrande, in San Roque, Cadiz province. Every August thousands flock to the international competitions at the Santa María Polo Club. Most of the best players in the world have competed here at some time. While competitions planned earlier this year were cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic, action returns to the Sotogrande club this summer.

Horse races on the beach

For a very different experience, head to the pretty town of Sanlúcar de Barrameda, in Cádiz province, in August. There, you can sit in a swimsuit on the golden sand in the evening sun, amid a festive atmosphere, sipping the local 'manzanilla' dry sherry and watching horses go thundering past at top speed.

These races are world famous, and have been taking place since 1845. For this 175th anniversary, despite the coronavirus pandemic, the races will go ahead but just on three days, 18, 21 and 28 August.

La Saca de Yeguas, Almonte

Unfortunately, the Saca de Yeguas which normally takes place on 26 June had to be cancelled this year because of the coronavirus pandemic, so next year's event will be awaited with eager anticipation. It takes place in Almonte, in Huelva province, in the emblematic countryside of the Doñana marshes, where the horses live wild all year round.

This is considered the most impressive equine event in Spain, and is also one of



Riding near Grazalema, above, and grazing on the Doñana marshes.



the oldest, having taken place for around 500 years. The horses are brought first to the village of El Rocío, where the famous pilgrimage takes place every spring, and then on to Almonte, where they are cleaned, re-shod and blessed by a priest. Some are then sold, and the rest are returned to their idyllic life in the wild.

Circuito del Sol

This 'Sunshine Tour' is another very popular event, this time in the beautiful small town of Vejer de la Frontera in Cadiz province. It is an international show jumping competition which takes place over a six-week period in February and March each year. The venue at Dehesa de Montenmedio is huge, covering more than 500 hectares with space for 2,000 horses, and the facilities are the most spectacular in Europe. It is close to the stunning beaches of Zahara de los Atunes, Barbate, Caños de Meca and Conil de la Frontera, which are practically deserted at that time of year, and close to protected countryside.

Andalucía on horseback

Anyone who loves riding can enjoy some magical experiences on horseback anywhere in Andalucía, and there are numerous official 'Andalucía a Caballo' equestrian routes. From day excursions to full holidays, along unspoiled beaches, through the mountains or deep in protected countryside, there is something for everybody and numerous companies are licensed to act as organisers and guides.

And let us not forget that horses are an important part of life for many Andalusians. Even without the chance to enjoy any of the above, lovers of these fine animals will always find them - and their proud riders - at fairs, in parades, and at shows.

Travel secrets of the Costa de la Luz

Enjoy wild nature, gourmet cuisine and broad beaches on Andalucía's Atlantic Coast of Light

ANDREW FORBES

It's no mystery that I'm passionate about Andalucía. I sometimes I feel like an unofficial ambassador to be honest, such is my enthusiasm for southern Spain, its nature, cuisine, history, and people. So, when I was invited to contribute to the SUR in English Summer's Here magazine, I knew I wanted to write about one of my favourite parts of the south - the Costa de la Luz.

This sparkling Atlantic coast of light, that runs all the way from Huelva's Río Guadiana down to the evocative port town of Tarifa on Cadiz's spectacular coast is home to many of Spain's best beaches. That's why the Costa de la Luz is my go-to place to chill and unwind. A place of wild nature, virgin beaches and a laid-back surfer vibe that makes me feel younger and freer.

So here I want to share a few secrets of this Atlantic shoreline that runs along Cadiz province, so you too can create unforgettable holiday memories.

Road trip

If you don't have a car you'll need to rent one to explore this windswept yet magical coast. The seaside roads meander through laidback villages and small tuna fishing ports. Water sport aficionados love the area, as the wind is channelled by the proximity of the African and European continents, making it perfect for kite surfing. Look out across the water from Tarifa towards Morocco and the horizon is often cluttered with colourful kites of surfers who leap up into the air. Unsurprisingly it's been christened



El Cuartel del Mar. :: FORBES

'Cadizfornia', a hip, cool yet open and friendly place for lovers of the outdoors. Maybe choose a vintage campervan or rugged 4x4 for your Coast of Light road trip. After all, you'll be immersed in splendid isolation among remote nature, from dense Atlantic and Mediterranean pine forests, to sweeping beaches of massive slow-moving dunes and crashing waves.

My first piece of advice is to take your time, allow for diversions, stops and unexpected discoveries. This is the wild west

of Andalucía. Don't expect the typical Spanish coastal sprawl; no, this is a special place where you can change the pace of your holiday. So, take it easy. Browse the surf shacks near Tarifa; enjoy a cold beer on the weatherworn deck of a beach bar; climb the sweeping sand dunes and be intoxicated by the freshness of the pine and sea-scented air.

Authentic lodging

I'm going to let you into a secret - Los Caños de Meca. This small beach community is a favourite with Spaniards. Once you pass the Strait of Gibraltar and reach the Atlantic coast of Andalucía, you will not want to leave.

So, if you're looking for an authentic place to stay, then Hotel Madreselva is it. In summer, the village of Los Caños de Meca pulsates with life, a vibrant community of locals and visitors who are drawn to the ocean and beaches. Madreselva will be your calming oasis.

The hotel is an intimate place. Built in a hacienda style, the comfortable rooms are found around a central, scented courtyard patio filled with Mediterranean and sub-tropical plants. Each guest room has a small private furnished terrace, and a simple en suite bathroom with shower and tub, and amenities made with organic citrus essential oils.

Although you'll probably head straight to the beaches just across the street, there is also a private pool in a walled patio if you want to find a more private place to sunbathe.

When it comes to beaches you can take your pick; family, nudist, gay - it's an open and inclusive culture in Los Caños



The Costa de la Luz, where the Atlantic reaches Andalucía. :: **FORBES**

de Meca - capturing the timeless appeal of an Andalusian summer.

Hotel Madreselva is managed by the friendly people who created La Casa de la Califa, on the central plaza of the charming, nearby hilltop town of Vejer de la Frontera. You'll be made to feel welcome and at home.

If you're enjoying a road trip along the coast, you'll appreciate the free, off-road hotel parking too; and if you love the sundowners at the local beach terrace bars, don't worry if you get back late, as there's 24-hour reception.

Gastronomy

Cádiz province has emerged as a culinary destination, thanks to the exceptional quality of local produce from the sea and land. Although far from being the richest part of Andalucía, this region has a wealth of fish, seafood, beef, and produce - and wines of course, including Vinos de Jerez, or sherry, as they are better known. Enjoy a chilled Manzanilla sherry wine with a tapa of fresh Atlantic prawns and believe me, your notion of sherry will be changed for ever.

Little wonder the Costa de la Luz has been the secret of success for chefs here. Aponiente, in El Puerto de Santa María, is



Carabineros prawns at El Cuartel. :: **FORBES**

Ángel León's remarkable three-Michelin-star restaurant which showcases his unique Cuisine of the Sea.

Also, in nearby Jerez de la Frontera, Juan Luis Fernández, or JuanLu, has created his Lú, Cocina y Alma restaurant which has been recognised with a Michelin star, for his creative fusion of French and Andalusian cuisine.

More than any ingredient, it is probably the wild red tuna of the Costa de la Luz that defines the gastronomy here. Caught during the almadraba season, using sustainable techniques that date back to the Phoenicians, these magnificent animals inspire remarkably creative dishes. The port town of Barbate is where most of the tuna are landed and it is here

one finds El Campero restaurant. Depending on your mood, and your budget, you can choose to dine on an exquisite tasting menu in the formal dining room, or head to the bar and try some of the creative tapas of the day.

Beachside bliss

This is where I shall share another secret with you. For something completely new, then head to Chiclana



Hotel Madreselva. :: **FORBES**

de la Frontera. This unpretentious, historic seaside town overlooks magnificent beaches. It's home to one of the coast's newest restaurants, El Cuartel del Mar, boasting a spectacular setting beside an ancient lookout tower, on the vast Playa de la Barrosa.

Here hip urban style converges with the simplicity and authenticity of the Costa del Luz. It's the most unforgettable place to eat. Design, art, music, and cuisine collide to create a modern interpretation of the Cadiz beach lifestyle. A once-abandoned Civil Guard HQ has been reimagined as a super-stylish ocean view restaurant where Chef Manuel Berganza and his

colleague Chef Mikel Badiola bring renowned international expertise and creativity to Andalucía's Atlantic shores.

To make the most of the setting, I recommend starting your meal with a cocktail in the patio. Mixologist Luca Anastasio creates original and beautiful drinks - many of which can be prepared as low alcohol drinks if you want something light and refreshing.

At El Cuartel del Mar, the ocean is of course the inspiration, and the local produce the protagonists in the restaurant's menu. Expect exquisite fish and seafood, including the local wild red tuna, wonderful rice dishes with local white shrimps

and also the scarlet Atlantic carabineros prawns. Cadiz also has excellent fruit and vegetables like plump tomatoes and artichokes which feature in many dishes. Try the tasty 'tortillitas de camarones' (shrimp fritters) for a quick snack as you read the menu, or a place of gourmet cured ham. If you are not tempted by the fish, then there are the finest beef steaks from Scotland and Spain, prepared on the wood-burning grill.

The curated wine list inevitably includes vinos de Jerez. Let the wine waiter guide you to discover some superb, dry white sherries that perfectly complement the dishes. If you love discovering new things, then try one of the local Chiclana wines.



La Breña Natural Park on the Costa de la Luz. :: FORBES



Los Caños de Meca. :: FORBES

Naturally inspiring

It's not just the beaches and the food that will make you fall in love with this corner of Spain. Here are protected natural parks of pine forest and mountains too. It's a joy to explore. For a real insider perspective, my secret is to hike with a local guide. Carlos Miburn has established Explore La Tierra, a private tour and hiking company. A speciality is nature hikes; Carlos shares insights into the rich biodiversity of the region. As you walk trails that hug the coast and explore the woodlands, you learn the secrets of the Mediterranean and Atlantic pine forests, including the edible and medicinal plants that can be found and their traditional uses. What's more, you'll enjoy an unforgettable time out in the great outdoors.

So, here's to you discovering some of your very own secrets of the Costa de la Luz - a place of authenticity; fab beaches; genuine hospitality; splendid cuisine; and calming nature.

INFORMATION

► Hotel Madreselva:

<https://www.califavejer.com/hotels/hotel-madreselva>

► El Cuartel del Mar: <https://elcuarteldelmar.com/>

► Explore La Tierra: <https://explore-latierra.com/en/>

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Culture, history and fun on the Costa Tropical

Granada's coastal towns and villages have plenty to offer tourists this year

With the annual Jazz on the Costa festival confirmed, as well as other cultural events and watersports on offer, there is every reason to visit Almuñécar, La Herradura and Salobreña

JENNIE RHODES

It's largely business as usual this year on the beautiful Costa Tropical, with the annual Jazz on the Costa festival, nights at the castle festival in La Herradura and Salobreña's Tendencias festival all going ahead throughout July and August.

Other attractions such as the castle and museums are also open to visitors and of course the beaches of La Herradura and Cantarriján are the ideal locations to cool down, or get active with watersports such as snorkelling or paddle surf, while enjoying Granada province's stunning coastline.

Culture, history and fun

With the majority of its museums and historical sites open, including the San Miguel castle, Cueva de Siete Palacios archaeological museum and Claves de Almuñécar museum, the seaside

town has lots to offer visitors looking to learn more about the area.

All three places are open from Monday to Saturday from 10am to 1pm and then from 5 to 7.30pm. This year the town hall has introduced QR codes to access information about all three sites via smartphones.

La Herradura and Cantarriján

La Herradura beach and the protected cliffs of Punta de la Mona and Cerro Gordo are great options for watersports such as diving, snorkelling, paddle surfing and kayaking as well as just cooling off with a dip in the sea.

Tourist information offices in Almuñécar and La Herradura are providing beach kits to establish the four-metre squared social distancing areas.

The Cantarriján naturist beach

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- ▶ www.granadajazz.es
- ▶ www.ticketmaster.es
- ▶ www.granadaescultura.com



A view of La Herradura's bay looking west

minibus service is in operation seven days a week until 10 September and a return ticket costs two euros. There is ample parking at the top of the cliff, from where the minibus service runs approximately every 15 to 20 minutes.

This picturesque beach is nestled in between the cliffs of Cerro Gordo, which sits between La Herradura in Granada province and the tiny coastal hamlet of Maro in Malaga.

Salobreña

The pretty town of Salobreña, a traditional whitewashed Andalusian village, is perched high up on a hill and offers views of both the Sierra Nevada to the north and Mediterranean sea to the south. With its narrow winding streets and sea breezes it's a great place to explore in the heat of the summer.

With extra lifeguards on hand this year to province beach-goers with health and safety information and plenty of cultural, historic and fun options to choose from, a trip to the Costa Tropical this summer is a must for anyone in the area.

A lively cultural scene

As well as being a great outdoor alternative to the town's beaches, Almuñécar's Majuelo park will, as it does



towards the protected Cerro Gordo cliffs. :: SUR

every year, play host to a number of cultural events during the summer.

Perhaps the town's most popular summer festival is Jazz on the Costa, which now in its thirty-third year, will take place from 22 to 25 July and feature some of Spain's most talented jazz musicians.

Opening the festival on Wednesday 22 July will be the Costa Jazz Quartet, along with the composer and winner of Spanish Goya entertainment award, Chicuelo, who will be accompanied by pianist Marco Mezquida.

Lucía Rey, Chano Domínguez and Javier Colina will also be performing on different nights and closing the

festival on Saturday 25 will be Malaga singer-songwriter Pepa Niebla, who'll be presenting her new album Renaissance, and Andrea Motis, another great star of Spanish jazz music.

The park will also be hosting a series of other concerts from Cuban to Flamenco and orchestral music throughout the summer.

The Cultureando festival, which runs on Friday and Saturday evenings throughout July, is a series of free concerts and other events that will take place on the streets and squares of Almuñécar.

La Herradura's Noches en el Castillo (nights in the castle) festival will run



San Miguel castle. :: SUR

from 6 to 9 August in the castle gardens. Confirmations include flamenco singer-songwriter Miguel Poveda on 8 August.

Salobreña's Festival de Tendencias, now in its twenty ninth year, will take place from 5 to 7 August in the Auditorio Villa de Salobreña.

For a break from the culture and history, the ideal way to cool down and have fun on the Costa Tropical is a day at Almuñécar's Aqua-Tropic water park. Located virtually on the beach and overlooking the Mediterranean, it opened for the summer season at the end of June. The salt water attractions include the Zig Zag and Kamikaze slides as well as the Black Hole.

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Bobastro, the other king's pathway

Recent research sheds more light on the medieval remains

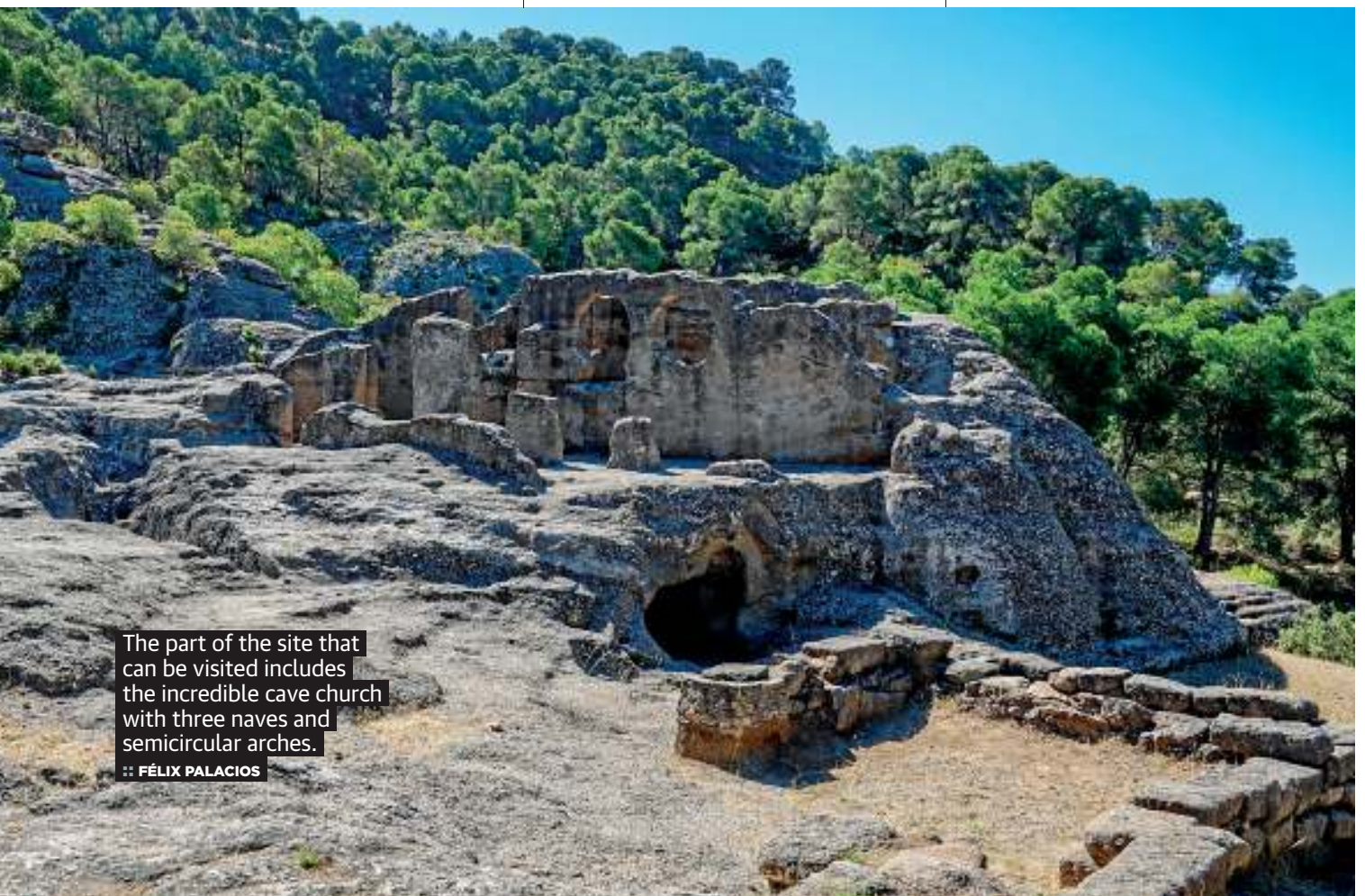
Rather than a Christian stronghold against the Umayyad emir of Cordoba, recent research shows that the ruins near El Chorro were the headquarters for a civil war that Ibn Hafsun started in a bid to create his own dynasty

FRANCISCO GRIÑÁN

It is the same road that leads to the famous Caminito del Rey gorge-side walkway near El Chorro. However just before a sharp bend on the MA-5403, there is another, smaller road leading off, with a purple sign inviting you to visit Bobastro and take a camera with you. This is exactly what we intend to do, so we head down a steep slope and then uphill for about five kilometres in search of this thousand-year-old destination. This is in reality another Caminito del Rey, or King's Path, because it leads to the empire

of Umar Ibn Hafsun, a Christian who threatened the Umayyad splendour in Al-Andalus in the 9th and 10th centuries to the point of shaking it to its foundations.

As the track continues up the mountain you can understand exactly why this medieval city was impregnable, and was the source of a civil war in a territory that stretched from Algeciras to the gates of Cordoba itself. When you get there, however, the history interpretation that this was a Christian stronghold against the emirate becomes blurred, because it was



The part of the site that can be visited includes the incredible cave church with three naves and semicircular arches.

• FÉLIX PALACIOS



Expert Francisco Marmolejo points to a wall built in a style that preceded Medina Azahara. :: F. P.

actually more than that: it was Umar Ibn Hafsun's intention to create his own state and his own dynasty, but not for religious or patriotic reasons as historians have often claimed in their writings. Different aspects of Ibn Hafsun, an apprentice tailor, and his political ambitions have begun to emerge. Many of his secrets are still buried on this mountain in the municipality of Ardales and are yet to be unearthed. A city is waiting to be discovered. A city which is as unknown as its creator, the man who wanted to reign.

"Bobastro is an exception, because it is the only place where construction carried out by a few rebels reached the size of a 'madina', or city," explains historian and researcher Virgilio Martínez Enamorado, who has been studying the site since the mid-1990s and was the director of the last excavation there in 2001. On that occasion, the works revealed a church dating

back to the end of the 9th century; it was the 'cathedral' which legitimised the conversion of Umar Ibn Hafsun to Christianity, and also his power. And although the word 'cathedral' seems exaggerated if you look at this abandoned mountainous area with today's eyes, Martínez Enamorado tells us that just over 1,000 years ago that church was the "episcopal headquarters" of this new community that stretched through the Hafsuní dominions in Al-Andalus, and it was situated beside the palace of the aspiring emir in a city that covered an area of nearly 60 hectares.

To get an idea of the dimensions of that great city at the end of the 9th century, you only have to go further down from the fortress and palace to the basilica which has been excavated from the rock and become the principal icon of Bobastro. It is best to do this by car because it is about two kilometres, and gives an idea of the great 'madina' built by Ibn Hafsun.

Historical tradition has described him as a Christian hero, feudal lord or descendent of the Visigoth aristocracy, and has given a very idealised view of him in terms of religion and Hispanic patriotism, but this is rejected completely by Arabist Martínez Enamorado, whose research has shed new light on Ibn Hafsun's conflict with Cordoba.

"What he really wanted to create was a 'dawla', an alternative dynasty to the Umayyads, but he had a problem of legitimacy because he wasn't descended from

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Remains of the walls of buildings beside the fortress at Bobastro. Inset, a sculpture of Ibn Hafsun, and right, fragments of ceramics found at the site. :: F. P. / SUR

the family of the prophet, so he sought this legitimacy by converting to Christianity and forging alliances with foreign powers,” says Martínez Enamorado. He says it is clear that the creator of the Hafsuní lineage was acting in accordance with Muslim parameters and that “everything he did mirrored the Umayyads, because in reality he wanted to be like them and to take their place”.

This ability to play on political as well as religious ground is what made the rebel Ibn Hafsun exceptional, and it is highlighted by Bobastro, the base from which he exercised his control in Al-Andalus. For this reason, Virgilio Martínez uses two terms which sound somewhat contradictory to define his character, describing him as “fascinating” and “an opportunist”.

“He is a polyhedral man who was born Muslim, became Christian and finally Shiite when he entered into an alliance with all the Arab powers who opposed the Umayyads of Cordoba,” says this historian, who is the author of a major work about Bobastro called ‘Umar ibn Hafsun: de la rebeldía a la Construcción de la Dawla’. It completely challenges the widespread 19th-century view of him as a Spanish proto-hero and Christian martyr.

Before Medina Azahara

Further information about this enclave in Malaga province has also been revealed in the latest research by Francisco Marmolejo, who has analysed the archi-



tecture and archaeology of what was Bobastro’s centre of power, the fortress and palaces inside the city walls. Nowadays these are covered by undergrowth and there are no signs - they are on private land - to indicate that this was once the heart of Hafsuní power.

Using data from excavations which were carried out in the 1920s by Cayetano de Mergelina - the only ones to have been done on the fortification despite its importance - this specialist in the history of medieval law and archaeology looked at the Muslim culture from which Ibn Hafsun originated because, he explains, “The architecture of the two palaces in the fortress - the one built by the rebels and then another that the Umayyad built over its ruins after it was demolished - are precursors to the buildings which would later be constructed at Medina Azahara [near Cordoba].”

This reinforces the view of Bobastro as a place which was Muslim in appearance, rather than a stronghold of Christianity. Marmolejo, who recently published a paper on Ibn Hafsun’s fortified palace which was included in the International Conference on Fortifications of the Mediterranean Coast, says, “Here, they used to carve ashlar, sculpt marble, tile floors, decorate walls and channel water,” and this was “the work of

Umayyad craftsmen from Cordoba”. So Ibn Hafsun not only competed politically with the caliphate, but also challenged its constructive splendour to legitimise his power.

Examples of the architectural style can be seen at the site and Marmolejo points them out to us. He says the technique used to extract the ashlar from the quarries at Bobastro would later also be seen at the fortified palace-city at Medina Azahara. He shows us the layout of the walls and says glazed ceramics have been found there and are now in display at the National Archaeological Museum and the Museum of Malaga.

All these remains have a story to tell. They talk to us of an impressive city created by the man who aspired to be emir, Umar Ibn Hafsun, in a mountainous, almost inaccessible area and from where he planned a series of operations over half of Andalus which shook the foundations of the emirate of Cordoba.

In the end, Bobastro didn’t fall through the use of weapons, but through siege and isolation. Abd al-Rahman III finally entered the city in the year 928 and tore down the Hafsuní palace, a symbol of challenge by this alternative state which lasted for nearly half a century. It was then that he was able to pronounce himself caliph, after the siege of the madina of Malaga which he led from the Talyayra fortress in nearby Álora, where historian Virgilio Martínez Enamorado will soon be carrying out excavations to find out more about that episode.

Surveys he has carried out at the site show that much of Bobastro, where no works have taken place for nearly two decades, is still unknown. The construction of the Tajo de la Encantada reservoir in the 1970s destroyed about 30 per cent of this unique heritage. “But the rest is still there to be excavated, which is an immense challenge from the research point of view, but is promising for its future because of its possibilities for tourism,” he says.

He also stresses how important it is for Bobastro to be included as part of the Caminito del Rey’s application to be classified as a Unesco World Heritage Site. It would give it a new lease of life. And Ibn Hafsun would reign once again.



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A to Z of the Axarquía

From Acebuchal to Zafarraya, this part of Malaga is full of hidden treasures

Strolling through the streets of the Costa del Sol's eastern-most towns and villages is the perfect way to learn about Andalusian history and culture

JENNIE RHODES

Each one of the 31 towns and villages that make up the Axarquía has a story to tell. The rich cultural fabric of Malaga province's eastern area dates as far back as the Neanderthal era and takes the visitor on a journey through the ages, which includes Phoenician and then Roman settlers, the Islamic period and the Span-

ish Reconquista. In more recent times the Axarquía's mountain villages have been home to some of Spain's most notorious bandits and have witnessed one of the greatest atrocities of Spain's bloody Civil War. Nowadays the Axarquía is well-known for its gastronomy and great beaches, and is full of secrets that are waiting to be discovered.

A

Acebuchal

This tiny hamlet became known as 'the ghost village' between 1949 and 1998. During Spain's Civil War, it is said that

the residents of El Acebuchal helped Republican guerillas who were hiding from the Nationalists in the surrounding mountains. In 1949 General Franco embarked on a final bid to rid the country of remaining Republicans. His forces ordered the residents of El Acebuchal out and they fled the hamlet, leaving their houses and many of their belongings behind. The Guardia Civil - the then Francoist police force - used the village as a base to hunt down remaining guerillas. The police eventually left and El Acebuchal was forgotten about and the houses fell into ruin. In 1998, a couple from Frigiliana saw the tourist potential of the place, started to buy up property and opened a restaurant.

Alfarnate

Alfarnate is the highest village in the province and, standing at 925 metres above sea level, locals call the area the "Alps of Malaga". Alfarnate is also famous for its cherries and spring is the best time to see the trees (cerezos) in blossom. Día de la Cereza (cherry day) is normally celebrated in June.

Arenas

The first things that hit you as you drive into Arenas are the colourful murals depicting life in the town. Twelve cream and green plaques display quotes from traditional songs sung by the young people of the village, who in the past would gather at different locations to sing and dance circle dances and 'coplas', accompanied by the zambomba, a traditional Malaga instrument.

B

Benaque

Salvador Rueda is one of Andalucía's best loved writers and poets. He was born in the small hamlet of Benaque, which belongs to the Axarquía municipality of Macharaviaya, on 2 December 1857.

Rueda is quoted as saying that as "a



El Acebuchal. :: SUR



A view of the 'Alps of Malaga' from Alfarnate village. :: JENNIE RHODES

child in my poor house” he would “roam at all hours around the fields, trying to decipher the profound mysteries and great marvels” and that he “learned administration from ants”.

As well as its connections with Rueda, also of note in Benaque are the church walls, which are covered in seventeenth century frescoes discovered by accident in the early 2000s.

C

Caleta

Caleta de Vélez is home to Malaga province's biggest fishing harbour and accounts for 50 per cent of all trawler fishing.

Canillas de Aceituno

There is a small, family-run children's clothes company based in Canillas de Aceituno which has a link to the British royal family. Mi Lucero made a little blue cardigan which was worn by Prince George and photographed by Hello! magazine as he left St Mary's hospital with his dad, the Duke of Cambridge, after visiting his newborn sister, Princess Charlotte, in 2015. It was when a client in the London borough of Chelsea contacted the company to say that the cardigan had appeared in Hello! that they learned about the royal connections.

Cútar

In 2003, Cútar resident, Miguel Lozano Ruiz, along with his son, came across a



Caleta harbour. :: J. RHODES



Frigiliana. :: SUR

sixteenth-century copy of the Qur'an and another Arabic manuscript hidden in straw and mud inside the wall of a house they were reforming. The originals were sent to Malaga University to be analysed and translated.

D

Desbandá

Every February, Malaga province solemnly marks one of the bloodiest events of Spain's Civil War; the Desbandá. On 8 February 1937, as Franco's troops moved into Malaga, Spanish, Italian and German warships and planes opened fire on thousands of civilians, among them women, elderly people and children, who were trying to escape along the Malaga to Almeria coastal road (now known as the N-340). Almeria was still considered safe from Franco's Nationalists as it was still controlled by Republicans. Thousands were injured or killed in the massacre. It is estimated that up to 150,000 people tried to flee Malaga in early February 1937.

F

Frigiliana

Frigiliana is home to Spain's only working sugar cane molasses factory; the Nuestra Señora del Carmen 'ingenio', as it's known in Spanish. Although the area stopped growing sugar cane several years ago, Frigiliana's ingenio has outlived its

neighbours in Torre del Mar, Nerja and Maro, by importing the raw product from the Caribbean and in particular Cuba. The final product can be bought, not only in souvenir shops in Frigiliana, but in major supermarkets across Spain, and the dark, treacle-like syrup is highly revered locally for its health benefits. It is perhaps more widely known, however, as an accompaniment for deep fried aubergines (berenjenas fritas), a local delicacy. Frigiliana is also regularly voted one of Spain's prettiest villages.

G

Granada province

The Axarquía borders Granada province: to the north the Boquete de Zafarraya mountain pass marks the boundary; and to the east, the small coastal hamlet of Maro shares the Cerro Gordo cliffs with La Herradura, the first coastal village in the west of Granada.

H

Hotel Posada del Bandolero

Located near El Borge and owned by the town hall, the Hotel Posada del Bandolero is the birthplace of El Bizco de El Borge, one of nineteenth century Andalucía's most notorious bandits. The hotel also has a fascinating museum of banditry (not to be confused with the Antigua Venta de Alfarnate, which also has a museum of banditry and is also well worth a visit to try the local food and learn more about the Axarquía's bandoleiros).

M

Macharaviaya

Bernardo de Gálvez, born in 1748, is a much celebrated historical hero in Macharaviaya and in Pensacola in Florida, USA, for leading the battle of Pensacola and liberating the city from the English during the American War of Independence in 1781. A stroll around the village will bring the visitor to a number of landmarks linked with the De Gálvez family, including the house where Bernardo's



The Cerro Gordo cliffs form the border between Malaga and Granada provinces. :: SUR

mother, María Josefa, lived. There is also a disused playing cards factory and the church, which is said to be haunted by the ghost of a poor young bride who died on her wedding day.

Maroma

La Maroma is the name of the mountain with the highest peak in Malaga province. At 2,069 metres above sea level, she watches over the Axarquía.

N

Nerja

The Nerja caves were discovered on 12 January 1959 by five local boys who had gone potholing in the area known as 'La Mina'. They are said to have removed some stalactites, only to discover an enormous cave littered with skeletons and ceramic pots. They ran home to tell their families and friends and a later visit by scientists really unearthed the enormity and importance of the boys' discovery. There is a sculpture commemorating the five at the entrance to the caves. The caves are open to visitors.

More recently, in the early 1980s, Nerja became famous in Spain and internationally thanks to the huge success of the television series Verano Azul, which was filmed there. There are a number of reminders of the programme, such as streets named after characters, a statue of 'Chanquete' the fisherman in the tourist office and the Verano Azul park which is home to his boat.

O

Olive oil

A number of Axarquía towns are well-known for their olive oil, in particular Ri-

ogordo, Periana and Puente Don Manuel, all of which have olive oil cooperatives where the 'liquid gold' is produced. During the olive-picking months (November to April), the cooperatives become hives of activity with olive growers queuing up to deposit their fruit, have it weighed and checked for its quality.

P

Periana

Legend has it that Periana got its name from two feuding families, both of whom wanted the village to be named after them: the Pereiro and Santana families. Eventually a deal was made to merge the two to give the town its name - 'perei' and 'ana.' The town's coat of arms bears the words 'ni Pereiro ni Santana', meaning neither Pereiro nor Santana. The village is also known for its peaches.

R

Rincón de la Victoria

More of the area's history is revealed in the Cueva del Tesoro (treasure cave). Discovered in 1951 by Manuel Laza, this is the only marine cave open to the public in Europe. Historical artefacts from Neolithic to Islamic ceramics were found in the cave and legend has it that Muslim emperor, Tasufin Ibn Ali, hid treasure in it. The cave is free to visit from Monday to Friday, 10.30am to 11.30am and visits cost 4.65 euros for adults at other times. Tickets can be bought online.

S

Sayalonga

Sayalonga claims to have the Axarquía's

narrowest street - Callejón de la Alcuza - which measures just 56 centimetres wide at its narrowest point and is off the central Calle Cristo.

The village's most famous fountain, Fuente del Cid is where, as legend has it, the legendary Castilian military leader, El Cid, drank from when he passed through the village.

Sedella

According to legend any young unmarried woman who drinks from the village's Fuente del Chorillo will marry soon after. On the other side of the road, visitors are greeted by the statue of an emigrant. He is carrying a suitcase and the statue was inaugurated in 2017 to pay tribute to the many men of Sedella who were forced to leave their families in search of work during the last century. The men typically found employment in Germany or Switzerland and sent money home to their families, returning only for Christmas or for the village's annual feria in August.

T

Totalán

According to a local legend, as the Catholic King and Queen, Ferdinand and Isabella, reached Totalán in 1483 during the Reconquista, a violinist played his instrument from the top of the village tower to warn its then Moorish inhabitants of the imminent attack. The tower still stands and a mosaic plaque showing a violin is displayed on a wall next to the tower, explaining the legend.

V

Vélez-Málaga

It is well documented that Miguel de Cervantes wrote about Vélez-Málaga in his famous novel, Don Quixote. In chapter 41 he writes; "Thanks be to God, sirs, for bringing us to such good quarters; for, if I do not deceive myself, the ground we stand on is that of Vélez Malaga."

The quote is written in calligraphy on Calle San Francisco, outside the Casa Cervantes, where the writer is believed to have stayed during his time as a tax col-



A rainbow over La Viñuela reservoir. :: J. RHODES



Cervantes statue in Vélez-Málaga. :: J. R.



A plaque outside the Nerja caves. :: J. R.

lector in Andalucía. Casa Cervantes is now home to the town's official language school (Escuela Oficial de Idiomas).

Viñuela

La Viñuela is not just the name of one of the Axarquía's most popular villages among foreign residents, but also the name of the large reservoir that supplies most of the area with drinking water and water for agriculture.

Y

Yacimientos Fenicios

The Axarquía area has numerous remains dating back to when the Phoenicians settled along the Malaga coastline. Yacimiento means settlement in Spanish. The Río Algarrobo is home to the Phoenician tombs of Trayamar, which were discovered in the mid 1960s. Many items were salvaged and can be seen in the Museo Arqueológico in Malaga. The remains of a Phoenician settlement at Los Toscanos can be seen on the Gran Senda de Malaga hiking route at the mouth of the Vélez river near the village of Almayate.

Z

Zafarraya

In 1983 a jaw and other bones belonging to a Neanderthal were discovered in caves near Zafarraya, which is famous for its 'boquete' or 'hole' in the mountains on the border of Malaga and Granada provinces. The discovery of Zafarraya Man, as he is known, has helped scientists and archaeologists to ascertain that Neanderthals living in Andalucía lived longer than their contemporaries in other parts of Europe. Zafarraya was also the last stop on the train from Malaga, known as La Cochinita, which was pulled from service in the 1960s.

The heritage that never sees natural light

Malaga province is home to over 20 caves of important geological or archaeological value

JAVIER ALMELLONES

There is a hidden heritage in Malaga province, one which never sees natural light: its caves. In some cases, these were the homes of the very first inhabitants, back in Prehistoric times, and are therefore of great historical importance, while others are considered true geological treasures.

This part of Spain can boast having numerous caves within its territory, including some which are the best-known in

the country, such as La Pileta, Ardales and Nerja. The others may be less well-known, but that doesn't mean they are any less important, even though, in some cases, they are in the form of natural overhanging rock and served as rudimentary protection for the first people to inhabit the province.

In Benaolán, we find the Cueva de la Pileta, whose interior contains extraordinary wall paintings dating back to the Upper Paleolithic period. The cave, which is currently privately owned, was discovered in 1905 by a local labourer, José

Bullón Lobato.

During excavation works, pieces of ceramics from the period were discovered, and a pendant representing the goddess Venus. The wall paintings include animals, and in some cases they appear to be superimposed on top of others in different colours.

As well as La Pileta, Benaolán is also home to the Cueva del Gato, which is both of archeological interest and also a great attraction for pot-holing enthusiasts. It is situated in the Sierra de Grazalema natural park.

The Cueva del Gato has been formed by an underground river, the Gaduares, which merges with the Guadiaro a few metres further down. The river runs for over four kilometres within the cave system.

The aforementioned river, which is also known as the Campobuches, connects with the Hundidero cave, which is in the municipality of Montejaque. This cave, which is surprising because of its high entrance (about 50 metres), is linked to the Cueva del Gato via a complex subterranean system.

Extraordinary cave paintings

In the Guadalteba area, the Ardales cave, situated in the village of the same name, contains wall paintings from the Solutrean era (20,000 years BC), important Neolithic remains (3,800 years BC) and several burial sites from the Chalcolithic period (2,700 years BC).

This is the only archaeological site in Malaga to have been included in the Prehistoric Rock Art Cultural Route of Council of Europe. There is plenty of justification for this, because here one can see hands painted with the aerographic technique and signs created with fingers, which are present in only a very few sites in the world.



The entrance to the Cueva de los Órganos, in the Sierra de la Camorra.

:: RICARDO PASTOR



La Cueva de la Victoria is little known as access is restricted. :: PEDRO CANTALEJO

The Cueva de Belda, in the Sierra Norte area of Malaga, was also inhabited during the Prehistoric period. It is in the municipality of Cuevas de San Marcos, in the area north of the Sierra del Camorro. In this mountain range, there is a fault which is classified as a Natural Monument of Andalucía because of its geographical value.

Among the most outstanding caves of

Malaga, the best-known of all is the one in Nerja, which is also the most-visited. It is situated close to the nearby village of Maro. It was discovered by accident by a group of youths in 1959 and since then it has been the scene of intensive research. Some parts of it are open to the public.

The route around the interior of the Nerja Cave is 4,823 metres in length, making it one of the biggest in the coun-

try. The chambers that are open to the public cover over 9,000 square metres, which is approximately one third of the total of the cave.

Apart from its spectacular geological formations - stalactites and stalagmites - it is playing an important role in discovering more about Prehistory, because organic remains which are associated with the paintings have been found and they

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RETAMAR - X-MEN: FÉNIX OSCURA - 25/07
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Nerja Cave is one of the biggest in the country; the long visitor route is still only a third of the cave's total size. :: SUR

date back 42,000 years. This means it could be one of humanity's first ever art galleries.

Also in the Axarquía region is the Cueva del Tesoro, in the municipality of Rincón de la Victoria. Located in the area known as El Cantal, this cave, which was inhabited by prehistoric man, is a geological jewel, because it is believed to be the only cave of marine origin in Europe. In fact, it has been the action of the Mediterranean and its erosive effect that has contributed through thousands of years - since the Jurassic period - to the formation not only of this cave but also others which are below El Cantal.

Excavations of the interior have revealed numerous human and animal remains as well as ceramics from the period known as Cave Neolithic. Among its most important chambers are those called La Virgen, El Volcán, Marco Craso and Noctilucia. The latter owes its name to the discovery of a shrine dedicated to the Phoenician goddess of the same name.

Also in El Cantal, where the Cueva del Tesoro is located, there are other important caves such as El Higuerón and La Victoria, where access is highly restricted to prevent it deteriorating. A replica of part of it can be seen, however, in the Parque Arqueológico del Mediterráneo, where visitors can see some of the valuable wall paintings from the Paleolithic era (Solutrean period) which were discovered in the cave.

Among the many grottos and caves in the Sierra de la Camorra, most of them in Mollina, the most outstanding is the



The Cueva del Gato in Benaolán is classified as a natural monument of Andalucía. :: J. A.

Cueva de los Órganos. With a depth of about 100 metres and a route covering one kilometre inside, this cave attracts numerous potholers, especially beginners, because it is one of the least difficult to access.

There are no prehistoric wall paintings in the interior, but there are indications that inhabitants of the area have known about the cave for centuries. In fact, there are some paintings which were done in the 18th century. According to local legend, this cave was used at one time by the bandit known as El Tempranillo, who died not far from there.

At El Torcal, in Antequera, the Cueva del Toro was inhabited 7,000 years ago and we know that because among discoveries made there is the 'Venus del

Torcal', a small carved stone which bears a very close resemblance to the emblem of this protected area, a rock known as El Tornillo which was one of the first natural monuments to be classified as such in Andalucía.

Apart from those mentioned here, Malaga province has other caves and shelters which are very important, either because of their geological value or archaeological value or both, such as Las Grajas (Archidona), El Boquete de Zafaraya (Alcaucín), Las Peñas de Cabrera (Casabermeja), the overhangs of the Complejo Humo (La Araña, Málaga), the chasm of Las Palomas (Teba), the caves of La Fuensanta and La Excéntrica (Igualaja) and that of El Gran Duque (Casares), among many others.



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A decorative welcome to Cártama.



Palace of the Counts of Puerto Hermoso, Pizarra. ::T.B.

Guadalhorce Valley by train

The C-2 local rail line connects Malaga with several interesting inland towns

For those who enjoy hiking, this is a beautiful, almost unspoilt area surrounded by sprawling countryside planted with olive, citrus, and almond groves, and all reachable by the local train

TONY BRYANT

Anyone wanting to escape the hubbub of the coast this summer will discover plenty of undisturbed white villages (pueblo blancos) nestled in the area of the Guadalhorce Valley. Some of these places are impossible to reach without transport, but there are many that can be accessed by train. The Cercanías C-2 suburban line makes travelling around Malaga province relatively easy and cost efficient. The line connects Malaga with several interesting inland towns. The 38-kilometre-route through the Guadalhorce River Valley begins at Malaga-Centro-Alameda, then passes through the Malaga-Maria Zambrano Station and Victoria Kent, the old San Andrés station. The train then heads north using the Malaga-Cordoba line, stopping at Los Prados, Campanillas, Cártama/Aljaima, Pizarra and terminates in Álora. For those who like to hike, this is a beautiful, almost unspoilt area, surrounded by sprawling countryside planted with olive, citrus and almond groves.

Situated in the Malaga city district of Cruz de Humilladero, Los Prados adheres to its own idiosyncrasies and has upheld certain traditions and social customs, especially the verdiales folk music, one of

Malaga's strongest cultural expressions.

While strictly speaking a district of Malaga city, Campanillas is an agricultural town in its own right. In the 19th century, 80 per cent of the population was made up of day labourers and farmers who cultivated the muscat grape variety for the production of raisins and wine. Campanillas wines became highly appreciated and supplied the town with much of its revenue. However, the phylloxera plague severely affected this business and it did not recover until well into the 20th century.

Sierra de Cártama

Famed for producing what some say is the best morcilla (black pudding) in Spain, the sprawling white town of Cártama stands alongside the Guadalhorce river. A spectacular iron bridge known as the Puente Verde, or Puente de Hierro (built between 1927 and 1931), spans the river and connects the main town with Estación de Cártama. The whole area is overlooked by the Espartaes and Llana Mountains, collectively known as the Sierra de Cártama.

Throughout the ages, Cártama, has been a border town which has seen the settlement of Celts, Romans and Arabs, all of which have left a lasting impression on the district. The Celts, who named the settlement Carth, favoured the area for its rich mines. The town later became Cartima under the Roman occupation, and, finally, during Muslim rule, took its current name of Cártama. Cártama is made up of many districts, including Cártama Pueblo, Estacion de Cártama (originally a railway station



Álora is one of the most beautiful 'pueblos blancos' in the Guadalhorce. :: T. B.



The C2 train at Pizarra station. Right, Aljaima station. :: SUR



Puente Verde, Cártama. :: SUR

built in 1865), Doña Ana and Estación de Aljaima, to name a few. The train station at Aljaima, which is the stop after Cártama, is considered the most attractive on this route.

There are two main religious temples in Cártama Pueblo. Situated in Plaza de la Constitución, the Iglesia de San Pedro Apóstol, which bears the date 1502, is built on the site of a former mosque. The other is the Ermita de Nuestra Señora de los Remedios (Our Lady of Good Remedies). This chapel is dedicated to the town's patron saint and it is still a focus

of reverent pilgrimage for devout locals. It is perched high above Cártama's twisting streets and can be reached by climbing the winding path from the main square near the 19th century white marble fountain known as La Fuente de Pilar Alto. In 2007, a small museum dedicated to the Virgin was opened next to the shrine.

Interesting monuments

A further climb up from the shrine leads to the crumbling 10th century Moorish castle, which offers spectacular views of

the unmistakable landscape of La Hoya Montes de Málaga.

Other monuments of interest in Cártama are the recently refurbished Roman arch in the area known as Santo Cristo; and La Cruz de Humilladero, a forged iron cross attached to the top of a second century marble column. The cross was installed in 1752 and has now been incorporated into the town's heraldic crest.

Traditional tapas bars and restaurants offer dishes typical of Cártama. Recommended are asparagus soup, gazpacho and the array of pork products, especially chorizo and blood sausage.

Pizarra

An inland farming community, Pizarra has managed to

retain much of its old charm by avoiding excessive development. The town dates to 1483, being largely neglected by the Romans and Moors. The reason behind the lack of interest in the area beforehand was the position of a huge, unstable rock known as the peñasco (which was more than 5,000 cubic metres in volume and weighed almost 3,000 tonnes) that forever threatened to come crashing down. The rock continued to threaten those brave enough to live beneath it until 1988, when, after showing signs of cracking, the authorities finally blew it up.

Home of Hollander

American painter Gino Hollander, who lived in Pizarra during the 1960s. Best known for his abstract representations of the human body, landscapes and bulls, Hollander amassed an array of archaeological artefacts while living in Pizarra, which included Iberian jewelry, Roman and Moorish pottery and contemporary rural furniture and farm implements. When he eventually left Spain to return to America, he donated the collection to the local authorities, who converted a disused farm complex into the Hollander Museum. Although the museum no longer bears Hollander's name, one of its two rooms includes numerous examples of his paintings. Attached to the museum is a small restau-

rant serving a variety of local cuisine.

Pizarra has numerous interesting temples and monuments that are worth visiting and these include the Church of San Pedro, the Palace of the Counts of Puerto Hermoso, and the convent of the Sisters of the Cross, all of which are located in the centre of the town.

However, much of the Pizarra's most impressive sights are located on the outskirts of the town, where irrigated lowlands abundant with citrus and other fruit trees offers a beautiful natural environment, perfect for lovers of the great outdoors. Traces of prehistoric settlements have been found in the municipality, along with an archaeological site containing tombs from the Mozarab period. Other findings of this nature include the Roman baths, commonly known as El Bañadero de la Reina (The Queen's Bath).

A pleasant walk that takes about 45 minutes from the town centre along a steep, winding rocky path will lead to the shrine of Nuestra Señora de Fuensanta. Partly excavated into the rock, the temple was built on the foundations of a 10th century Mozarab church. The present shrine, which boasts impressive baroque plasterwork, was built in the 16th century, although it was restored in the 20th century. The temple houses the image of Our Lady de Fuensanta, the patron of Pizarra.

Last stop

On arrival in Álora, the final stop of the journey, those with mobility problems might prefer to take the local bus (1.55 euros) from the train station to the village centre to avoid the three-kilometre uphill walk. The train station is quite picturesque and the Bougainvillea-covered station masters' house gives the impression of post-card Andalucía.

Álora is situated just 12 kilometres south of El Chorro, so the surrounding landscape is ideal for hiking. From a distance, Álora is a typical 'pueblo blanco' nestled between three rocky spurs topped by the ruins of a magnificent castle. The castle was first built by the Phoenicians and later expanded by the Romans. The fortress was destroyed by the Visigoths in the fifth century, and then rebuilt by the Moors one century later.

The climb up to the village consists of a



Looking down on Cártama. :: SUR



Álora's Moorish fortress . :: T. BRYANT

series of steep slopes and attractive cobbled streets that converge on the main square (Plaza Baja). The main feature of the square is the huge seventeenth century Church of La Encarnación, built by the Catholics when they retook the town in the 15th century.

Álora has plenty of cultural importance: as well as its association with the verdiales and flamenco, it was home to the Miguel de Cervantes between 1587 and 1593, as the plaque on the house at the northern end of the square reveals. Leading away from the church, another abrupt ascent will lead to the Plaza Arriba and the castle: here one will enjoy panoramic views of the Guadalhorce river basin.



Iglesia de San Pedro is located in the centre of Pizarra. :: SUR

The scenic route to Seville

The Malaga-Seville railway line offers a multitude of spectacular destinations

Situated in the province of Seville, Osuna and Marchena boast some of the most stunning civil architecture in Andalucía

TONY BRYANT

The Renfe Malaga-Seville line offers the adventurous traveller a chance to discover some delightful destinations. The train runs approximately every three hours from the María Zambrano Station.

The Caminito by train

The first interesting stop on the Malaga section of the route is El

Chorro.

This is a popular destination for rock climbers and hikers seeing as it is located close to the Los Gaitanes Gorge.

This is the stop to get off for the Caminito del Rey (King's pathway), a breathtaking cliff-side walkway hanging 100m above the Guadalhorce River.

Known as 'the scariest path in Spain', it is extremely popular with tourists, although it is most definitely not for the faint-hearted or those who suffer with vertigo.

Hikers will enjoy the many trails that wind around the spectacular gorge, while those who like to swim should head to the crystal-clear waters of the reservoirs.

Here visitors can rent paddle boats and kayaks, fish for carp and bass, or

simply chill out and enjoy lunch at one of the lakeside restaurants.

Osuna and architecture

Another spectacular destination on this route is Osuna, a town that offers some of the most beautiful civil architecture in Andalucía.

Expect to become seduced by this picturesque town, as a wander around the old barrio is like stepping back in time.

Declared by Unesco as one of Spain's most beautiful streets, the steeply descending Calle San Pedro boasts some of the most luxurious palaces in Osuna, the most spectacular of which is the former collegiate chapter house at number 16.

Andalusian patios

Take the opportunity to admire the beautiful secluded patios, abundant with flowers, hanging plants and cooling water features, because Andalusians are proud of their patios and are generally welcoming to visitors.



The geographical centre of Osuna is Plaza Mayor, and from here, all the town's most important attractions can be accessed.

Most visitors make a beeline for the collegiate church, which sits at the highest point of the town. The bas-relief above the west portal is badly damaged: if we are to believe English travel writer Richard Ford, the damage was caused by French soldiers who used it for target practice during the Peninsular War.

The interior houses a magnificent collection of religious art, and of interest is the sixteenth century organ, one of the surviving few of its kind in Andalucía.

However, the highlight of the visit is the descent to the spectacular pantheon and chapel of the Dukes of Osuna. The crypt takes the form of a tiny church and is decorated with spectacular Renaissance art.

Behind the church is one of Osuna's most spectacular buildings, the University of the Immaculate Conception, a rectangular, turreted building organised around an arcaded courtyard.

Another popular attraction is El Coto Las Canteras, a 2,000-year-old rock quarry that has been converted into a concert hall and auditorium.



Visitors on the Caminito del Rey. :: REUTERS

Marchena

Surrounded by olive groves and fields of cereal crop, Marchena, the stop after Osuna, is a town of historic, architectural and cultural importance.

The town's art museum, located in the Iglesia de San Juan Bautista, is named after Spanish artist Zurbarán, who received patronage from the lords of Marchena in 1634.

The 15th century Gothic-Mudéjar church displays a collection of Zurbarán's paintings (the most notable is the Immaculate Conception), as well as a set of 15th century liturgical



Osuna's spectacular university. :: T. B.

Plaza Mayor in the town of Osuna. :: SUR



miniature books and a splendid Epistle organ.

A popular tourist attraction is the Arco de Rosa, a 15th century door in Marchena's defensive wall.

The arch is associated with an old legend that claims the name relates to a Moorish princess who threw roses over the wall to her forbidden Christian lover.

Majestic attraction

One of the town's unusual attractions is the phalanx of storks that nest in the towers of Marchena's many old churches.

The train station is situated outside the town centre, so be prepared for a good walk into the centre, but remember to look up: the sight of one of these majestic creatures gliding overhead adds an extra charm to this dormant old town.



A view of the church of San Agustín in Marchena.



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Cool homes

Ideas to beat the heat indoors when the temperatures start to rise outside

Your choice of plants, fabrics and lighting can make a difference when it comes to keeping your home cool in the summer

SUR IN ENGLISH

In the summer months there are always days, or sometimes even weeks, when the weather is hotter than normal, and when that happens it is important to know how to keep your home as cool and comfortable as possible. Habitat Inmobiliaria has come up with some helpful ideas about how to do so.

Obviously, air conditioning is one of the main ways of keeping houses and apartments at the most comfortable temperature, but many homes don't have air con. If yours is one of them, try these ideas instead and see what a

difference they can make.

Adapt living space for summer

Firstly, everyone should adapt the decoration of their home for the summer. Just as we change our warm winter clothes for cool summer ones, homes also need to be able to breathe easily.

It is a good idea to swap soft furnishings at this time of year: for example, if you have thick rugs and curtains in the living room, change them for thinner, cooler ones in pale colours.

Blinds are a good idea for windows, because their height can be adjusted to keep out the sun.

With regard to bedding, swap a cover made from thick fabric for a finer one such as linen. Another tip is to avoid dark colours for bed linen, because they tend to concentrate more solar light.

Plants and gardening

Plants are very useful in absorbing heat in a home and they also fill the space

with colour and vitality, making it feel cooler. If you have a balcony or terrace, you can use climbing plants, which are essential to protect the outside wall from the sun's rays. Indoors, plants such as ferns, chamaedora and kentia palms will help to maintain a more uniform temperature and they also purify the air.

Lighting and temperature

Can lighting have an effect on the temperature in a home? Of course it can, and that is nothing new. But have you ever thought about changing your light bulbs along with the season? As you know, traditional light bulbs tend to give off more heat than LED ones, and LED bulbs are also much more energy-saving. They won't help to increase the temperature, which is already far too high for many people's liking in summer.

Windows and doors

Windows are another important element when trying to stop the heat coming into a home. Most of the heat comes through the windows, so they also need to be the way we protect ourselves from it, with shutters, blinds and curtains.

One very good option is to use cross-ventilation: open the doors, to let fresher air from shady areas come into sunnier ones.

Fans and other domestic appliances

No, we haven't forgotten one of the most effective solutions: fans and other domestic appliances that help to keep a home cool. Do remember to disconnect appliances which aren't in use; that is important. For example, TVs, computers, mobile phones etc help to raise the temperature as well as wasting energy. It might seem unimportant, but the environment will be grateful.

And finally, another very basic but effective recommendation is to wash your floors, patio or terrace down with cold water and you will notice how much cooler it feels afterwards.



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A meander along the Mediterranean Steps

A trail created on the Rock of Gibraltar in the 18th century is now a popular walking route with spectacular views

World War 2 bunkers, spooky military tunnels and breathtaking views of Africa are just some of the highlights of the Rock's most famous walk

SUR IN ENGLISH

For those who love combining a good hike with a history lesson, Gibraltar's Mediterranean Steps are a must-see if you're planning to visit the Rock.

The trail was created back in the 18th century by the British to allow soldiers to visit the various military defence posts on the Southern end of Gibraltar.

And since being refurbished and made safe in 2007, the Med Steps have become increasingly popular with both locals and tourists alike.

Located entirely within the Upper Rock Nature Reserve, the walk can take anything between an hour and three hours to complete, depending on how much you explore along the way.

It's important to point out that those with a fear of heights may not appreciate some parts of this giddy path, which clings to the eastern side of the Rock.

However, there are plenty of sturdy rope handrails and the walk is safe.

In addition, those who are not in good shape will struggle with the steeper parts of this hike.

Another important point to note is



Unrivalled views of the eastern side of the Rock and the Costa del Sol. :: A. B.



One of the oldest surviving structures. :: A.B.

that you may come across Gibraltar's most famous residents along the way, the Barbary macaques, so be aware that if you have food in your bag, they may try and grab it!

The walk starts at Jews Gate Cemetery, alongside one of the legendary Pillars of Hercules, which is 180 metres above sea level.

A glimpse of Africa

From here you walk through some dense trees and bushy vegetation, before the path opens out to reveal some spectacular views of the southern tip of the Rock, Ceuta and North Africa.

Continue along the eastern side of the Rock, following a well trodden path, with the Costa del Sol coming into view in the distance.

After about 15 minutes you start climbing a steep set of steps that lead to the Goat's Hair Twin Caves.

Originally sea caves, they are now 190 metres above sea level and got their name from the goatherd who lived there in the 19th century.

Interestingly, excavations during the 1970s revealed that prehistoric man had also once inhabited them.

Around about this point you may catch a glimpse of the very rare Barbary Partridge if you're lucky!

Stairs and batteries

Moving on from here you pass a World War 2 military building, before walking through a tunnel to arrive at a number of fortifications and bunkers.

And just a little further on, there is a viewing platform that offers some extraordinary photo opportunities of the eastern side of the Rock and the Costa del Sol as far as Marbella.

From this point the path gets steeper and as you look up you can see your final ascent zig-zagging up a flight of lime cut stairs.

You'll pass a few more World War 2 bunkers before arriving at the summit (421 metres), where you'll find the impressive Lord Airey's and O'Hara's Batteries, which are well-worth exploring.

The Med Steps officially end here, but you can add on a little bit more if you've still got some energy left.

One popular route is to head towards Douglas Path, which takes you to some more World War 2 bunkers and breathtaking views of the eastern side of the Rock.

Skywalk and refreshments

The path itself goes along a knife-edge ridge where you can see the Great Gibraltar Sand Dune, which covers a large part of the eastern slope, and an old circular stone building, which is one



Douglas Path is on a knife-edge ridge. :: A. B.



Lord Airey's Battery. :: A. B.



The end of Bellmen's cave. :: A. B.

of the oldest surviving structures at the top of the Rock.

This path ends at the Skywalk, where you can stand on a glass viewing platform 340 metres above sea level and enjoy 360-degree views of Spain and Africa.

You can then soldier on north up to the Top of the Rock Cafe for a well deserved refreshment break.

If by now you've had your daily dose of walking, you can opt to take the cable car back down to ground level.

However, for those who want to walk down, there is an interesting tunnel almost hidden from public

view underneath the restaurant called Bellman's Cave that is well-worth a quick look (note - you will need torches as this is huge inside and pitch black in places).

From here you can re-trace your steps back to the Charles V Wall to make your way down to the Windsor Suspension Bridge or the Apes'

Den: just follow the signs.



The King's Lines have now been cleared after years of neglect. :: A. B.

The Northern Defences

This overlooked part of Gibraltar is the "unpolished gem" of the Rock's historical tourist sites

SUR IN ENGLISH

It's an area of Gibraltar that many tourists have never heard of - let alone visited.

But hidden just above Casemates Square in the centre of Gibraltar is the entrance to what is arguably the Rock's most interesting historical attraction.

To put it simply, the Northern Defences are a collection of defensive walls, trenches, bastions, tunnels, magazines, galleries and gun batteries that date back

in some places over many centuries.

The Moors started the defences and over the years successive layers of fortifications were added by the Spanish.

However, the most notable development of the defences took place after the British and Dutch forces took Gibraltar in 1704.

By 1790 for example, over 1,200 metres of tunnels had been dug out by the Brits, the majority of which remains largely unchanged to this day.

Over the next few centuries the continued development of the defences made

Gibraltar arguably the most densely fortified place in Europe and helped protect the Rock from countless sieges.

So formidable were these defences that the Spanish called the approach to Gibraltar 'La Garganta del Fuego', or in English, 'The Throat of Fire'.

However, since the end of World War 2, the area had largely fallen into disrepair, with people using it to dump their rubbish.

But in 2015 the government started clearing and beautifying the area, removing over 5,000 tonnes of rubbish over the past five years.

Thanks to this colossal cleanup, large sections of the earlier fortifications, 18th century defences and World War 2 tunnels can now be safely visited by the public.

It's now hoped that these impressive defences will become Gibraltar's most eye-catching and impressive tourist attraction.

As well as historical tours, the Gibraltar Government is also considering the complete rejuvenation of this area.

Although it is possible to explore the area without a guide, it is easy to get lost in the labyrinth of tunnels, as many are pitch black inside.

One local resident who gives historical walks of the defences is Peter Jackson MBE.

Peter, 59, an ex-serviceman who is originally from Yorkshire and retired from the services in 2017, has been taking interested parties around the defences for the past 25 years.

He told SUR in English: "The Northern Defences are the unpolished gem in Gibraltar's historic tourist sites.

"To get a full interpretation of defensive structures there's no better place to see them than the Northern Defences.

"The tour is enjoyable at all levels from the layman to the military enthusiast."

The Lower Northern Defences essentially consist of the King's Lines, Queen's Lines and Prince's Lines - including the tunnels excavated from the Rock itself.

Probably the most impressive part of the defences for first time visitors are the tunnels, which have remained virtually unchanged for two centuries.

Here visitors must use torches to explore this dark, underground world,

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A tunnel from 1789 linking the King's and Queen's Lines. :: A. B.

which includes the Star Chamber, Commons Hall and St Patrick's Chamber.

The tunnels are a remarkable example of the ingenuity of the Royal Engineers and their predecessors.

Highlights in the Northern Defences include lookout positions that give eye-wateringly beautiful views over to Spain and painted maps of the Northern approaches to help those manning the machine guns in WW2

You'll also see World War 2 guns, anti-aircraft search lights and countless lookout posts and bunkers.

History of the tunnels

Gibraltar has around 55 km (34 miles) of tunnels that were built over the course of almost 200 years - mostly by the British. This is nearly twice the length of its road network!

The first tunnels were dug out in the latter part of the 18th century and were used as communication passages between artillery positions in the northern face of the Rock.

Then in the 19th century more tunnels were built to access remote parts of the Rock and distribute a water supply.

But it was World War 2 that saw Gibraltar turned into an enormous underground fortress that could house 16,000 soldiers with enough supplies and ammunition to last 16 months if under siege.

It's interesting to note that during this time most of the debris removed from the tunnels was used to extend the airport's runway into the Bay of Gibraltar.



World War 2 weaponry is still in position at the Northern Defences. :: A. B.

Tunnelling stopped in 1968 when the British Army disbanded the last specialist tunnelling unit.

Since then the tunnels have been handed over to the Gibraltar Government or retained by the MOD. However, countless tunnels have been sealed off from the public as they are now too dangerous to enter.

TOUR INFORMATION

► **Prices** depend on the size of the group

► **Tour** lasts around 2hrs 30 min. Take water, torches, comfortable shoes and a camera.

► **Visit** www.gibraltarheritage-trust.org.gi

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Sustainable camping with a difference

A glamping site in the Serranía de Ronda where you can stay in watermelons and cucumbers and shower in a mushroom

Las summer the Molino La Flor rural complex in Jimera de Líbar added a very unusual form of accommodation and it is proving immensely popular

JAVIER ALMELLONES

It's fun, it's sustainable and it's very unusual. It's called Villa Sandía (the name means 'watermelon' in English), and it is one of the most innovative places to stay in Andalucía, in the Molino La Flor rural complex in Jimera de Líbar. Since July 2019, children and adults have been enjoying this colourful site

where watermelons, cucumbers and gigantic wild mushrooms live side by side in the heart of nature, on the banks of the Guadiaro river.

Just as Don Quixote saw giants where there were only simple windmills, Candela Luque found old concrete 'tinajas' (large pots used for cooling water) as an ideal place to create small shelters deep in the countryside. Candela, who is now 28, runs this rural accommodation complex which was founded by her parents 30 years ago. Her youth and desire to innovate with sustainability led her to the so-called 'glamping', a new tourism concept which has arrived to stay, because it consists of rural accommodation which is respectful of the environment but without forfeiting comfort in any way whatsoever.

The company purchased about 20 of these old 'tinajas' and turned them into eight watermelons and 12 giant cucumbers. The watermelons sleep two people, and the cucumbers have an additional bed which is ideal for a child under the age of 12. "There is just enough space to sleep," says Candela.

So, Villa Sandía is a campsite in the countryside where every watermelon and every cucumber has its own bathroom, which in this case has been designed in the form of a wild mushroom. As a result, this accommodation boasts facilities which are unthinkable on conventional campsites. Each of these giant fungi, equipped with washbasin, shower and toilet, is assigned to a particular watermelon or cucumber.

When she came up with the idea last year, Candela Luque could not have foreseen what was to come or imagined the way we would have to be living now, where hygiene is a priority. However, this young local woman explains that the only difference now is that guests are given a bottle of hand sanitising gel and masks together with their keys. "We were already doing what they are asking of us now, because we always did disinfect everything anyway," she says.

Anyone who sleeps at Villa Sandía will cover themselves at night with disposable, biodegradable sheets, which are not only sustainable but also extremely hygienic. Each of the properties also has other basic equipment such as electricity, fans, chairs and a small table.

Another attraction of this original concept of camping is the space that

Each of the converted mills has its own swimming pool. :: SUR





The cucumbers can accommodate two adults and a child. :: J. A.



exists between the watermelons and cucumbers and the communal areas for guests to use, including two swimming pools and the riverbank, where they can take part in leisure and sports activities, and the bar.

“Even when Villa Sandía is full, there are never crowds of people because there is no much space,” says Candela.

Despite having had to close during the lockdown, she is proud of how successful her idea of turning ‘tinajas’ into watermelons and cucumbers where people can stay has been. “We were even the first to be classified as a ‘singular campsite’ in Andalucía,” she says.

When she was asked to take over the management of this rural complex, Candela wanted to bring her personality into it and also her commitment to sustainability, while never losing sight of one very clear concept: “We don’t sell luxury; we sell nature”.

The price of this unusual accommodation is between 50 euros for a watermelon (sleeping two people) and 65 euros for the cucumbers (two adults and a child). Villa Sandía is part of an extensive rural complex on eight hectares of land on both sides of the Guadiaro, in the municipality of Jimera de Líbar. This unusual ‘glamping’ site is on one side of the river and two houses, Molino La Flor and Molino El Inglés, are on the other and sleep 15 and 20 people respectively. There is a walkway to cross the river. Molino La Flor costs 290 euros a night, and Molino El Inglés 360. Each of these houses has its own swimming pool and has access to other communal facilities, such as the ‘pitucabañas’, little cabins which are scattered in the woods and designed to entertain the youngsters.

These old mills, which have been converted into rural houses for tourism, were the first form of self-catering accommodation to exist in this village in the Serranía de Ronda. Jimera de Líbar is in a strategic location, next to the Guadiaro river, between Benaolán and Cortes de la Frontera. In other words, between the Grazalema and Los Alcornocales natural parks and very close to valuable enclaves such as La Pileta cave and Las Buitreras del Guadiaro.

Tasting tours of the traditions of Andalucía

From almadraba tuna in Cadiz to wines and sherries in Cordoba, with some surprises to be found on the way

The regional government has set up gastronomy routes for those who like to explore the local cuisine as well as the countryside

DEBBIE BARTLETT

If the thought of being in Andalucía doesn't make your mouth water, well, it should. In a region this size, stretching from the Mediterranean in the east to the Atlantic in the west, and with so many contrasts in-between, it is only to be expected that the cuisine would be very varied and interesting.

The Andalusian government has

cleverly used this fact to create a great way of exploring this region through its food and drink, with several Gastronomy Routes to follow in the provinces of Huelva, Seville, Cadiz, Malaga and Cordoba. Fish, meat, rice, red and white wines, brandies and liqueurs - could there be a more delicious way to discover local traditions than through the palate?

Let's start with some food

Some of these routes intertwine and are in the same part of the region so they can be combined or followed separately and in stages. So what takes your fancy first? A bit of ham, perhaps? Then let's head to the Jabugo Ham Route in Huelva province.

This famous acorn-fed ham from Iberian pigs which roam freely in the

meadows has been produced in this westerly region of Spain since ancient times, and it is now firmly embedded in local culture. The 'perniles en salazón' from the Sierra de Aracena and Picos de Aroche were very popular in Roman times and even played an important role in Columbus' voyage to America.

Every establishment in this region serves this ham, and the gastronomy route will take you to Jabugo itself, Valdezufre, La Nava, Cortegana, Corteconcepción, Santa Ana La Real, Alájar, Castaño del Robledo, Aracena and Linares de la Sierra.

The rice route of Seville province

Most of this route runs through the Marismas del Guadalquivir, the marshland which covers around 2,000



The almadraba tuna fishing.



Hams hang to cure in Aracena, Huelva.



Montilla-Moriles wine.



Tasting in Ronda. :: EFE



Seville province is the largest rice producer in Spain.

square kilometres in total. Seville province is the largest rice producer in Spain, and it grows on the right-hand side of the Guadalquivir river. This gastronomy route is centred on the lower Guadalquivir basin, before it arrives in Cadiz .

Between Seville city and the estuary lie other important natural enclaves as well: the Brazo del Este Nature Area, Utrera Nature Reserve, Lebrija-Las Cabezas Nature Reserve, the Green Corridor of the Guadiamar, the Nature Reserves of Dehesa de Abajo and Cañada de los Pájaros. Rice crops and water go together, and so do birds, especially migratory species. It is in general an essential habitat for spectacular bird life, who nest or spend the winters here.

Don't be fooled into thinking that rice must mean paella: the paellas of Andalucía are of course excellent, but there are other 'arroses' as well which are equally as delicious. It will be hard to resist trying a few tapas in different places along this route, which will take you to Lebrija, Los Palacios y Villafraña, La Puebla del Río, Isla Mayor, Aznalcázar, Las Cabezas de San Juan, Utrera, Dos Hermanas and Coria del Río.

The Almadraba Tuna Route, Cadiz

May is an important month on the coast of Cadiz province, and it has been so for 2,000 years. It is when the first tuna approach the coast on their way to the Mediterranean to spawn. The name 'almadraba' refers to this ancient form of fishing, which has been used since time immemorial. The Junta de Andalucía describes this as "a spectacular art of traditional fishing; the human being against the tuna. A fight in which the fastest and most agile will win".

This type of tuna is considered a real delicacy, and many people time their annual holidays to coincide with the first almadraba tuna dishes appearing in local bars and restaurants in towns close to Cadiz city. However, thanks to modern freezing techniques it is available all year round.

This route focuses on Conil de la

Frontera, Zahara de la Frontera, Tarifa and Barbate, all of which have gorgeous beaches and plenty of traditional bars and restaurants in which to sample the different ways in which al-madraba tuna is prepared.

And so to the wines.....

Andalucía has become so well-known for its wines and spirits that it is quite hard to know where to start with the gastronomy routes that are dedicated to these. However, as we have just been in Cadiz province for the tuna, let's start there with perhaps the best-known of all: the Route of the Wine and Brandy of Jerez.

The lovely city of Jerez is internationally famous for its wines and brandies, a culture which goes back a thousand years, and many of its wineries are open for tours and tastings.

This route runs through a geographical triangle between Sanlúcar de Barrameda, El Puerto de Santa María and Jerez de la Frontera. The story of the wines and brandies of Jerez leads from the chalky soil in which the vines grow to the mysterious darkness of the bodegas; from the narrow streets of whitewashed houses to the magnitude of the ocean.

These drinks are produced with techniques which have been passed down through generations. The wineries, or bodegas, are known as 'Cathedrals of Wine' because of their size, their tranquility, their cool darkness

and unique architectural structure. They feel like real sanctuaries in which to worship time.

The system of ageing the wines is exclusive to the Marco del Jerez area. Younger wines are used to liven up older ones, thereby prolonging the ageing process. The bodegas of Jerez hold some of the oldest wines in the world, between 20 and 30 years. They are real enological treasures, kept in dark tucked-away places, called 'Sacristías'.

This route does not only cover Jerez, but also Chipiona, Chiclana de la Frontera, Puerto Real, Rota, Trebujena, El Puerto de Santa María and Sanlúcar de Barrameda. As mentioned earlier, some of these routes intertwine and this one would be perfect for sampling the tuna of this area, accompanied by a fine wine or sherry.

Now, though, let's head to a completely different area, up into the mountains around Ronda, in Malaga province, where numerous wineries have opened in recent years and are producing some very interesting varieties indeed.

The Wines and Bodegas of the Serranía de Ronda

Ronda is a fabulous town, perched high in the mountains with wonderful views, and split by an impressive gorge.

Influenced by its relative proximity to the Mediterranean and Atlantic, the area known as the Serranía de Ronda has a diverse microclimate and this, combined with its varied geology, means the wines produced here are unique. The wine production along this route is classified under the 'Malaga. Sierras de Malaga' Denomination of Origin.

Ronda's red wines have been described as "monumental, patient, tranquil, generally fruity on the nose, with aromas which accentuate with age and gain in complexity. In the mouth they are wines with volume, good persistence, and more unctuous and concentrated in those subjected to ageing".

The white wines are straw yellow with greenish hues, and the crianza



The wine museum in Bollullos, Huelva province.



The landscape around Jerez reflects its world famous wine production.

versions are more golden. The reds range from violet red to ruby or tile-red, depending on how long they are aged, and the rosé wines have a wide range of colours, some of them almost reaching that of a red.

Sixteen bodegas in the Ronda area can be visited, and there is also an interesting Wine Museum in the town centre.

This route focuses solely on Ronda and the nearby village of Arriate.

The Montilla-Moriles Wine Route

Let's head further afield now, eastwards into Cordoba province, which is justifiably proud of its Montilla-Moriles wines. This route passes through different landscapes, and it is said that if you close your eyes, you find this is a region that smells of bread, olive oil... and wine. It boasts an impressive historical and cultural heritage, and its gastronomy is second to none.

Cordoba specialises in white and sweet wines and sherries, and this route leads through a long list of towns and villages. It is worth taking the opportunity to stay a few days, and discover the delights of La Rambla, Montemayor, Espejo, Cordoba city, Moriles, Baena, Castro del Río, Doña Mencía, Santaella, Montilla, Monturque, Fernán-Núñez, Puente

Genil, Aguilar de la Frontera, Lucena, Montalbán de Cordoba and Cabra.

The Condado de Huelva Route

If you like white wine but are in the west of Andalucía and Cordoba is a bit too far to travel, there is no problem. It may come as a surprise to many, but Huelva province, where we began by sampling the famous Jabugo ham, also has its own Denomination of Origin for its white wine, the Condado de Huelva, and once you have tried it you will probably wonder why you never encountered it before.

Most of the oldest wineries in this province are now run by the third generation of a family, who aim to find a happy balance between preserving the traditions which are their heritage and also taking advantage of new technologies.

The Condado de Huelva Denomination of Origin is a recognition of the quality of the grapes which are grown on over 6,000 hectares of land in the region, especially the native 'zalema' variety.

The provincial authorities are keen to attract more wine tourism, and have set up schemes such as the Wine Route Product Club whose members can enjoy benefits including tastings which are organised especially for them and are suitable for beginners as well as those with previous knowledge.

The Condado de Huelva wine route will take you to Rociana del Condado, Almonte, Niebla, La Palma del Condado, Bollullos, Par de Condado, Palos de la Frontera, El Rocío and Moguer.

The Wines and Liqueurs of Seville

Straight away, there is another surprise. Who knew that Seville province produced wine and spirits? In fact, it has been doing so for a very long time. The area through which this route passes has been making wine for centuries, and Spanish nobles were very partial to them in the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries. They were also exported to the New World.

A huge variety of grapes are grown here, and this is reflected in the types of wine available. This area is also famous for its sweet and dry 'anís'.

This route leads through Lebrija, Guadalcanal, Carmona, Pruna, Constantina, Villanueva del Ariscal, Fuentes de Andalucía, Utrera, Huévar del Aljarafe, Espartinas, Umbrete, Alánis, Benacazón, Los Palacios y Villafraña and Cazalla de la Sierra.

MORE INFORMATION

► www.andalucia.org

A city of surprises for the culture seeker

Head into the capital of the Costa del Sol this summer to experience the rapidly growing show of artistic attractions

Malaga city overflows with historic monuments, art galleries and cool museums that combine tradition and modernity

TONY BRYANT

Malaga is a vibrant city, crammed with historic monuments and religious temples, museums and art galleries, and a thriving and rapidly growing number of artistic attractions. It certainly deserves a place on a list of must-do trips this summer, ideal for those looking for cultural activity closer to the Costa del Sol.

The city has been inhabited by the Phoenicians, Romans and Arabs - all of whom have left their identity on the place - so culture enthusiasts will discover a variety of influences.

These include the Alcazaba fortress, which sits in the foothills of Mount Gibralfaro.

The Gibralfaro Castle sits on top the hill, which was named after a lighthouse that once sat at its peak (Jabal-Faruk, the light mountain). The castle was built in the 14th century to protect the Alcazaba. Today, it is one of the most visited monuments in Malaga and offers spectacular views of the city, especially at sunset.

Adjacent to the entrance of the Alcazaba is the 1st century BCE Roman theatre. The theatre is one of the remaining symbols of the Roman occu-



Malaga cathedral. :: SUR

pation of the city. The theatre, while still visible from the street, is one of the few local monuments that remains closed to visitors after the Covid-19 lockdown. Work to improve future visits will continue until next year when the site will reopen.

The area around the Roman theatre is a wonderful location to enjoy a summer night stroll, or enjoy the delights of local cuisine served at the numerous tapas bars and restaurants.

The Gibralfaro Castle is one of the venues used for many of the events that make up Malaga's extensive summer cultural programme.

Malaga, like the rest of Europe, is coming to terms with the 'new normal', and the cultural scene is slowly beginning to return to the city, although with a reduced audience capacity and new health and safety policies.

The capital of the Costa del Sol will host colourful festivals and live music concerts throughout the summer months, and this year's agenda offers a range of events from flamenco and jazz, to classical and traditional music, all of which, will evoke the cultural identity of Malaga.

Cultural presence

Malaga has established itself deeply within the cultural sphere over the past ten years and the city has harvested - at a cost of around 100 million euros - a range of museums of international renown.

One of the newest arrivals, and the biggest museum in Andalucía, is the Museo de Malaga, which is housed in the luxurious Palacio de la Aduana. Inaugurated in 2016, the Malaga museum is divided into two sections and exhibits over 2,000 pieces of fine art, and a collection of over 15,000 archaeological artefacts discovered during various digs that have occurred in the province.

Art lovers will find Spain's largest collection of Pablo Picasso's work in the Palacio de Buenavista, the 18th-century palace that houses more than 200 draw-

ings, paintings, sculptures and ceramics from the different periods of the life of the world-famous artist.

As well as its main collection, the Picasso Museum is currently showing (20 June-26 September) an exhibition of pictures that show Picasso at work and relaxing with acquaintances such as artist Joan Miró and poet Rafael Alberti. Picasso as Seen by Otero is the work of photographer Roberto Otero, who took a series of intimate pictures of the artist between 1961 and 1970.

A short walk from the museum will lead to Picasso's birthplace in Plaza de Merced, which has been an official heritage site since 1983.

Opened in 2011, the Carmen Thyssen Museum is located in the adapted Palacio de Villalón, also at the heart of the city centre. Its vast art collection pays special attention to 18th and 19th-century Andalusian artists.

One of the museum's temporary exhibitions is Toulouse-Lautrec and the Circus, which runs until 13 September. The collection consists of a series of circus-theme drawings that the bohemian portraitist produced while convalescing on the outskirts of Paris in the late 19th century.

Modern and contemporary

The Centro Pompidou Malaga - the first branch outside France - exhibits a semi-permanent collection of works by such artists as Picasso, Francis Bacon, Giacometti, Frida Kahlo, and Kandinsky, among others.

There are also many unusual museums that host smaller, unique collections, like the Malaga Centre for Contemporary Art (CAC), which is a benchmark for lovers of modern art.

The glass museum (Museo del Vidrio y Cristal) is located in a carefully restored 18th century house and offers a private collection of more than 3,000



A visitor at the Malaga Picasso Museum after its reopening. :: S. SALAS



Centre Pompidou Malaga. :: SUR

pieces of glass from different epochs. This is a museum of decorative art that has become a reference centre for artisan techniques of the past. Due to Covid-19 this museum remains closed until 1 September.

Other cool museums include the Museo de la Semana Santa, which offers an impressive display of Baroque ecclesiastical items; and El Museo Revelló de Toro, which is dedicated to the Malaga artist renowned for painting portraits of his wife.

Don't forget the Museo Automovilístico de Málaga, which displays an extensive collection of exclusive vintage vehicles; and the State Museum of Russian Art of St Petersburg (Russian Museum), both located in the old cigarette factory on the west side of the city.

The latter is currently exhibiting the collection, Realism, Past and Present. Art and Truth. It is also showing exhibitions about Andrei Tarkovsky

and Russian silent film.



The Russian Museum in Malaga. :: M. F.



Art at the Museo de Málaga. :: S. SALAS

Bizarre attraction

Probably one of the most bizarre and relatively unknown attractions in Malaga is the Panteón de los Condes de Buenavista, which is found in the Church of Nuestra Señora de la Victoria. The pantheon is one of the most unusual in Andalucía because it is an exhibition of the Baroque discourse of death. The eerie niches are separated by pilasters adorned with white plaster bones, skulls and skeletons set on a black background.



One of the graves covered in seashells. :: KARL SMALLMAN

The significance of seashells in a cemetery

The decoration on many of the graves in the old part of Malaga's English Cemetery came straight from the beach

The small shell-covered graves contain the remains of children who died in the epidemics of the mid-19th century

LIZ PARRY

The first thing that strikes visitors when they reach the walled inner precinct of the English Cemetery in Malaga is the mounds of seashells covering the ancient graves. Not slabs of granite or marble, just crumbling brick bases and row upon row of shells. Some have headstones, others, if you look carefully, are just marked with a number.

A second feature which stops people in their tracks when they climb to the upper level is the size of the graves. Most are very small, because they contain the remains of children who died in the epidemics of mid 19th century diseases. Cholera was particularly rife, with virulent outbreaks in both 1833 and 1855. One of the most poignant sights is a small fenced area where three children from the same family, who died in the space of six months, are buried together. Their grieving parents had a headstone put up with the epitaph: "They were lovely and pleasant in their lives and in their death they were not divided."

The back wall of this inner cemetery bears a poem by María Victoria Atencia, 'Epitafio para una muchacha': an epitaph for a young girl who is compared with an unopened bud, who will never grow to be a flower bursting into spring.

Two reasons are given for the use of seashells to decorate the graves. One is related to the original reason for the cemetery's very existence: before the British Consul William Mark obtained the land - well outside the city's boundaries, although coming up to 200 years later Malaga has grown to encompass it - non-Roman Catholics who died had to be buried, at night, on the beach.

In 1831, when the first burial took place in the English Cemetery, placing seashells on the graves may well have seemed a fitting way to honour the memory of those whose last and un-



The shell-covered graves are on the upper level of the cemetery. :: SUR

marked resting place had been on the shore.

The other reason given is one of convenience. In the early days of the burial ground created for Anglicans, local Spanish craftsmen who might have been employed to create sculptures or elaborate memorial stones in the Roman Catholic cemeteries would be reluctant to provide the same service for those of other faiths. Some families may have sent to their home countries for

statues or plaques, but seashells were to be found in abundance very close to the cemetery, and of course, they were free.

So the graves of the first Protestant cemetery in mainland Spain, many of them containing the remains of infants, were adorned with what could be found on the nearby beach. What could be a more fitting decoration for the graves of small children who, had they lived longer, would surely have played on the shore in Malaga, and gathered seashells?

ENGLISH CEMETERY FACTS

► The English Cemetery in Malaga is near the bullring: look for the lions above the gate at Avenida de Pries 1. Tel. 952 22 35 52. Buses: 3, 11, 32, 33, 34 and 35 stop outside the cemetery.

► The cemetery is open to visitors every day until 3pm.

► Guided tours and events also take place at other times: details in the local press and on the website. www.cementerioinglesmalaga.org

► Member of the Association of Significant Cemeteries in Europe (ASCE)

► St George's Anglican church stands in the cemetery: <https://www.stgeorgemalaga.org/>

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Festivals adapt to fill the summer with music

Spanish artists dominate the lineups in this unusual year

A concert held earlier this summer in the Picasso Museum courtyard. :: NITO SALAS

No summer is complete without music festivals and this year towns on the costas as well as Malaga city are going ahead with a limited number of events

JENNIE RHODES

Although coronavirus has meant that many summer festivals have been cancelled or reduced this year, music lovers will still be able to enjoy a number of events on the Costas, from the glamorous Starlite boutique festival at the stunning Nagüeles quarry in Marbella, to the popular Jazz on the Costa in Almuñécar's Majuelo park. While numerous international stars have fallen from the original lineups, this summer offers the perfect opportunity to discover some Spanish talent.

Marenostrum Limited Edition

Fuengirola's Marenostrum is going ahead with an 'Edición Limitada' version of its annual festival at the town's Castillo de Sohail with concerts throughout July, August and September.

Highlights include veteran Spanish rock band, Loquillo and M- Clan.

Starlite

The Starlite festival starts on 29 July and runs throughout August. The Nagüeles Quarry auditorium in Marbella will be hosting well-known Spanish artists including singer-songwriter, David Bisbal, who shot to fame on Spain's Operación Triunfo talent show nearly 20 years ago. Bisbal will be performing on 18 August





Social distancing and masks at the Limited Edition Marenostrum festival in Fuengirola this year.

:: MIGUE FERNÁNDEZ



A previous Jazz en la Costa festival in Almuñécar. :: AYTO. ALM.



The Marbella Starlite festival kicks off at the end of July. :: JOSELE

and fellow Spanish singer-songwriter, Melendi, will be performing on 26 August. Flamenco singers Diego el Cigala and Estrella Morente, will be performing on 6 August. Further information and tickets are available at: www.starlitemarbella.com.

Malaga city

The Factoría Fenix festival of dance and theatre started in June and will continue to 26 July in the city's Echegary theatre.

Cine Abierto is a festival of summer cinema running throughout July and August. A total of 108 free screenings will be happening at different locations including beaches and parks around the city.

The city's Terral festival will start on 8 September and run until 4 November. The two-month musical extravaganza includes 16 performances of blues, calypso, flamenco, jazz, mambo, pop, swing, urban and everything in between! Tickets are on sale now. For further information visit: www.teatrocervantes.com

Chanquete

The Chanquete World Music festival will be celebrating its fifth anniversary on

Nerja's Playazo beach on Saturday 22 August. So far confirmed artists include Fuel Fandango, Fernandocosta and Maka. For more information and tickets see: www.chanqueteworldmusic.com

Antequera Blues Festival

Antequera's blues festival will be happening on 31 July and 1 August. Details and line up are to be announced shortly. See the facebook page, Antequera Blues Festival or the website: www.cambaya.com for updates.

Jazz on the Costa Tropical

Almuñécar's Jazz en la Costa festival will be taking place from Wednesday 22 to Saturday 25 July in the town's Majuelo park.

Opening the festival will be the Costa Jazz Quartet along with Chicuelo and pianist Marco Mezquida. Other performances over the four-day event include Granada-based pianist Lucía Rey and Chano Domínguez, who is considered one of the pioneers of Spanish Jazz music. Javier Colina will be performing on Friday 24 July and Malaga singer-songwriter Pepa Niebla and Andrea Motis will be closing the festival on Saturday 25. Doors open at 9pm for

all concerts and further information can be found at: www.jazzgranada.es Tickets can be bought from: www.ticketmaster.es.

Salobreña Festival de Tendencias

Salobreña's Festival de Tendencias, now in its twenty-ninth year, will take place from 5 to 7 August in the town's Auditorio Municipal de la Villa Costera and will feature Kiko Veneno, Sole Giménez and a music documentary and conference about the legendary Manu Chao. For further information see: www.granadaescultura.com.

Noches en el Castillo de la Herradura

Celebrating its third anniversary this year, La Herradura's Noches en el Castillo festival will be taking place from 6 to 9 August in the castle gardens. Confirmations include flamenco singer-songwriter Miguel Poveda on 8 August. Tickets: on sale at: www.consiguiententrada.com.

CONCERT AGENDA

► See page 64 for more live music.

Summer music agenda

A concert guide for the Costa del Sol and Costa Tropical

JULY

17

Trío Mainake: Picasso Museum, Malaga, 8pm & 9.15pm.

Malaga Philharmonic Orchestra: La Térmica gardens, Malaga, 9.30pm.

Cine Abierto (outdoor cinema): Outdoor venues around Malaga city until 24 August.

18

Alba Molina: Picasso Museum Malaga, 8pm & 9.15pm.

Malaga Philharmonic Orchestra: La Térmica gardens, Malaga, 9.30pm.

La Shica: Carmen Thyssen Museum courtyard, 9.30pm.

22

Costa Jazz Quartet, Chicuelo & Marco Mezquida (Jazz en la Costa): Majuelo Park, Almuñécar, 10pm.

23

Lucía Rey, M.A.P. (Jazz en La Costa): Majuelo park, Almuñécar, 10pm.

24

Chano Dominguez, Javier Colina (Jazz en la Costa): Majuelo park, Almuñécar, 10pm
Nacho Loring Trio: Picasso museum Malaga, 8pm & 9.15pm

25

Pepa Niebla, Andrea Motis (Jazz en la Costa): Majuelo park, Almuñécar, 10pm.
Cuarteto Con Fuoco: Picasso museum Malaga, 8pm & 9.15pm.
Ara Malikian (Málaga Gira festival): Auditorio municipal Cortijo de Torres, Malaga.
Dry Martina: Carmen Thyssen Museum courtyard, 9.30pm

29

Ketama (Starlite): Nagüeles, Marbella

30

José Merlé (Starlite): Nagüeles, Marbella

Andrés Suárez (Marenostrum Edición Limitada): Sohail castle, Fuengirola

Julia Martín (Jueves de Verano): Pompidou Centre, Malaga

31

Marta Sánchez (Starlite): Nagüeles, Marbella. www.starlitemarbella.com

Carolina Durante (Málaga Gira festival): Auditorio municipal Cortijo de Torres, Malaga.

Antequera Blues Festival: Antequera

AUGUST

1

Dvicio (Starlite): Nagüeles Marbella

Antequera Blues Festival: Antequera

Carlos Sadness (Marenostrum Edición Li-

mitada): Sohail castle, Fuengirola

Jorge Pardo: Picasso museum, Malaga

Miguel Poveda: (Málaga Gira festival): Auditorio municipal Cortijo de Torres, Malaga.

2

Strad (Marenostrum Edición Limitada): Sohail castle, Fuengirola

3

84, Sinsinati, Manon (Starlite): Nagüeles quarry, Marbella.

4

Antonio José (Starlite): Nagüeles, Mabella

5

El Arrebato (Starlite): Nagüeles, Marbella

M-Clan (Marenostrum Edición Limitada): Sohail castle, Fuengirola.



David Bisbal,
Starlite, 18 August. :: P. N.

6

Estrella Morente & Diego el Cigala (Starlite): Nagüeles, Marbella

Proyecto Dasein (Jueves de Verano): Harp, flute, viola. Russian museum, Malaga

Solé Jiménez (Tendencias festival): Salobreña

7

Taburete (Starlite): Nagüeles, Marbella

Kiko Veneno (Tendencias festival): Salobreña

091 (Málaga Gira festival): Auditorio municipal Cortijo de Torres, Malaga.

8

Miguel Poveda (Noches en el Castillo de La Herradura): La Herradura castle, 10pm

María José, Pitingo (Starlite): Nagüeles, Marbella.

Mijas Celtic Festival: Mijas pueblo auditorium, 8pm

10

Lola Índigo (Starlite): Nagüeles, Marbella

11

Funambulista, Maldita Nerea (Starlite): Nagüeles, Marbella.

M-Clan (Málaga Gira festival): Auditorio municipal Cortijo de Torres, Malaga.

12

Ara Malikian, DJ Nano (Starlite): Nagüeles, Marbella

13

Beret (Starlite): Nagüeles, Marbella

Proyecto Dasein (Jueves de Verano): Harp, flute, viola. Pompidou Centre, Malaga

14 & 15

India Martínez (Starlite): Nagüeles, Marbella

17

Pica Pica (Starlite): Nagüeles, Marbella

18

David Bisbal (Starlite): Nagüeles, Marbella

19

Rozalén (Starlite): Nagüeles, Marbella

20

Siempre Así (Starlite): Nagüeles, Marbella



Dry Martina, Terral , 25 September. :: SUR

21

Miguel Poveda (Starlite): Nagüeles, Marbella

22

Luz Casal (Starlite): Nagüeles, Marbella

Chanquete World Music festival: El Playazo beach, Nerja

24

Loquillo (Marenostrum Edición Limitada): Sohail castle, Fuengirola

Pablo López (Starlite): Nagüeles, Marbella

26

Melendi (Starlite): Nagüeles, Marbella



Javier Colina, Almuñécar, 24 July.

27 & 28

Morat (Starlite): Nagüeles, Marbella

29

Aitana (Starlite): Nagüeles, Marbella

Viva Suecia (Marenostrum Edición Limitada): Sohail Castle, Fuengirola.

SEPTEMBER

4

Mala Rodríguez (Málaga Gira festival): Auditorio municipal Cortijo de Torres, Malaga.

5

El Kanka (Marenostrum Edición Limitada): Sohail Castle Fuengirola

8

Los Tres Tenores (Terral): Cervantes theatre, Malaga

9

Ana Cisneros (Terral): Cervantes theatre

13

Berna Perles (Terral): Cervantes theatre

14

Alicia Tamariz (Terral): Cervantes theatre

15

The Beatles Songbook (Terral): Cervantes theatre, Malaga

19

Julia Martín (Terral): Cervantes theatre, Malaga

25

Dry Martina (Terral): Cervantes theatre, Malaga.

Costa parks offer nature, water and thrills

THE ANIMAL WORLD

Selwo Marina

Dolphinarium Animal Park with five zones: Las Antillas, La Hondonada, Ice Island, Amazonia and Los Trópicos; shows with dolphins, exotic birds, penguin feeding. Parque de la Paloma. 29630 Benalmádena, Telephone 952 577 773, www.selwomarina.es. Opening times: 1 July - 31 October 10am - 6pm. Admission: 11-65 Years 21 euros, under 3 Years free, concessions 15.50 euros. Reductions, season tickets, combination and online tickets.

Sea Life

Interactive aquarium with marine animals to visit, touch and feed. Puerto Marina. 29630 Benalmádena. Minigolf remains closed. Telephone 952 560 150. www.visitsealife.com/Benalmadena. Opening times: 12 - 7.30pm. Admission: 12 euros, season tickets, online saver tickets.

Selwo Aventura

Selwo Aventura. Wildlife Adventure Park. Different routes for visitors to see animals and plants from around the world and in some cases to handle. 29680 Estepona, A-7, km 162.5. Telephone 952 577 773. Web: www.selwo.es. Opening times: 1 July - 31 October 10am - 6pm. Admission: 10-65 years 25.90 euros, Concessions 18 euros; Combined tickets and season tickets available. Online discounts available.

Bioparc Fuengirola

Animal park with exotic animals and trees such as the baobab tree. Avda. Camilo José Cela, 6. 29640 Fuengirola. Web: www.bioparcfuengirola.es. Opening times: July and August: 10am - 11pm. In September, 10am - 7/8pm (see dates), October 10am - 6/6.30pm (see dates). Admission: 21.10 euros, Concessions 17.10/16.10 euros; family tickets and season tickets available.

Butterfly house

Benalmádena: Largest Butterfly House in Europe. Av. de Retamar, 29639 Benalmádena. Opening times: daily from 10.30am - 8.30pm. Tel. 951 211 196 www.mariposariodebenalmadena.com. Admission: Adult 8.50 euros, Concessions 7.50 euros.

Lobo Park

Wolf Park with wolves in natural habitat, semi-

nars on wolves and dog training, guided tours. Carretera Antequera-Álora, km 16, Antequera. Telephone 952 301 107. www.lobopark.com. Opening times from 10 July: daily 10am - 6pm. Admission adult 11.50 euros, children 7.50 euros. Guided tours at 11am, 1pm, 3pm, 4.30pm.

Crocodile Park

Theme park with crocodiles, turtles and exotic birds. Tours and demonstrations. C/ Cuba, 14. 29620 Torremolinos. Telephone 952 051 782. www.cocodrilospark.com. Opening times: 10 July - 31 October: 11am - 5pm. July and August: 11am - 6pm. Admission: adult 16 euros, Concessions and online savings.

WATER PARKS

Aqua Tropic Almuñécar

Fun-packed water park with large slides and a wave pool. Paseo Reina Sofía, S/N, 18690 Almuñécar (Granada) www.aqua-tropic.com. Opening times: 26 June - 12 September: 11am-7pm. Admission: 23 euros, concessions 15/17 euros, children under 3 free. Discounts available online and for groups.

Aquamijas

Waterpark for the whole family with various slides and attractions. A-7, km 209, 29640 Mijas Costa, Tel. 952 460 404. www.aquamijas.com. Opening times: 29 June: 10.30am - 6pm, July and August: 10.30am - 7pm. 1-13 September: 10.30am - 6pm. Admission: adult 26.50 euros. Family discounts and multi-day tickets, discounts available online.

Aqualand Torremolinos

Waterpark for the whole family with different slides, wave pool, whirlpools. C/ Cuba, 10. 29620 Torremolinos www.aqualand.es/torremolinos

Opening times: July and August: 11am-7pm, September: 11am - 6pm. Admission: 30 euros, concessions 22 euros, discounts available online.

Aquavelis

Waterpark with various giant slides and wave pool. Ruta del Pomelo, Urb. El Tomillar, 29740 Torre del Mar. Telephone 952 542 758, www.aquavelis.es. Opening times: June and September: 11am - 6pm, July and August: 11am - 7pm. Admission: 25.50 euros, concessions: 19.50. Discounts for groups, season tickets, online tickets.

OTHER

Tivoli World

Theme park with a big wheel, roller coaster, ghost train, go-karts, drop tower. Shows for children and adults, various themed restaurants. Avda de Tivoli s/n, 29630 Arroyo de la Miel. Telephone 952 577 016. www.tivoli.es. Opening times: 3 July until 13 September 5.30pm - 1.30am. 19/20 and 26/27 September 12 - 8pm Admission: 7.95 euros, Children under 1 metre tall and over 65s free. 15.95 euros for unlimited rides (under 12s only). Online discounts available.

Aventura Amazonia Climbing Park

Treetop climbing and adventure park with rope bridges and zipwires. C/ Valeriano Rodríguez, Elviria. 29604 Marbella, 952 835 505. www.aventura-amazonia.com/parques-amazonia/marbella. Opening times: July and August: 9.30/10am - 9pm. Admission: 21/24 euros, Discount for children and groups.

Funny Hill

Karting Marbella, Go-karts for children and adults, amusement arcade, trampolines, bumper cars. Marbella, N-340, km 184. Tel. 952 823 359. Web: www.funny-hill.es. Opening times: Every day 4pm - midnight. Price according to Go-kart duration.

Cable Car Benalmádena

Takes visitors the top of Mount Calamorro, for spectacular views and hiking routes. Explanada Tivoli, s/n. 29630, Benalmádena. Tel. 951 560 324.

www.telefericobenalmadena.com. Opening times: 1 July - 31 October: 11am-6pm. 1 November, December: 11am -5pm. Admission: 16.90 euros, concessions 12.90 euros (return). One way tickets and discounts for groups and online ticket purchases.



Selwo Marina. :: SUR



Funny Hill. :: SUR



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