Welcome to our July issue of Almeria Living.
Sometimes mistakes go unnoticed but we always try our hardest to bring you accurate information and so do our regular scribes and other contributors. Unfortunately there were a couple of hiccups last month but for those of you reading this online you won’t have noticed!
As I write, my mum is celebrating a special 80th birthday and has taken the challenge to reach the summit of Snowdonia - she even sent me a whatsapp photo to prove it - well done mum, you are a credit to us all!
Time flies and I realised that the Harmony Community Fair is only 3 months away - 5th October should be in all your diaries - whatever the weather we will be there this year and hope you will all join us to raise lots of money!
Our cookery photographer, Debbie Lee Rossiter, is taking a summer break so Nina is flying solo for a couple of months (just like the early days!) Next time she has tagine on the menu I hope she saves me some!!
After his exhausting Spanish history series, Michael is also taking a short break to give fingers and quill a well earned rest.
The rest of the crew have rallied to bring you some great articles and information, including our Cora, who is feeling beautiful - find out more on pages 21-23.
Our first short story comes to a conclusion on pages 36-37 and I must thank all those who submitted their stories - keep them coming and I will share them with everyone else.
We hope you enjoy your read - once again, there is so much of it - and please don’t forget to continue telling our advertisers that they are a credit to us all!
Talk again in August
Karen (Ed)

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The New Mortgage Law

Those of us who lived in Spain during the property boom 15 years ago, will remember the so-called ‘Cláusula Suelo’, which was a clause written in small letters on mortgage contracts that established a minimum interest level to be applied to the capital, even if the Banco de España’s official interest rate fell below this level.
A new mortgage law which came into force on June 17th has made it illegal to use this clause as well as small letters. In other words, the law aims for clarity of conditions so that there are no doubts whatsoever about rights and obligations.
The law only applies to new mortgages, so if the mortgage taker accepted the conditions and signed the contract prior to the law coming into force, the contract that he signed is binding.
The new law also obliges the mortgage provider to thoroughly examine the client’s previous credit history to reduce the risks of default. This must be done by consulting the Banco de España’s central risk information register.
Another new feature is the obligation of the mortgage provider to send the contract to the mortgage taker for his perusal at least ten days before the signing date, and to give individualised advice on and information about the clauses of the contract.
When the parties go to the Notary to sign the contract, it is the Notary’s duty to make absolutely sure that the mortgage taker has had possession of the contract for the stated minimum of ten days and that he understands all the clauses and their implications.
This should be done through a test whose purpose is to spell out what documentation has been handed over and what information the mortgage taker has been given.
Furthermore, the mortgage provider can no longer oblige the client to take out an insurance through them in connection with the loan, although they are allowed to offer good mortgage rates to those that do.
The financial institutions have been ordered to reduce the penalty payment for early repayment; for floating rate mortgages the maximum penalty is 0.25% of the capital for the first three years, then it falls to 0.15%. For fixed rate mortgages the penalty may be 2% for the first ten years, going down to 1.5% after that.
These are all big changes and good news to the consumer, but the most dramatic shift of all is the fact that all the costs of the mortgage now fall upon the mortgage provider, including notary, registry and administration fees. And the client only has to pay the costs of valuation of the property.

If you need help with understanding your new mortgage contract, please contact C.A.T. Services in La Alfoquia.

Adrian Foster
New - Tech Guru

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A Warm Welcome to Summer Visitors
A Warm Hello to Residents

Summer’s here and like every year we’d like to share a few words of advice with you whether you are a resident or a visitor. And remember to pass it on to everyone you know!

Earth
Spain was native to lots of little creatures that lived here way before any of us arrived, and usually they keep out of our way and we don’t even know they’re there. However, they may not always notice us and get away in time, and many of them take exception to being stepped on and may bite back. Therefore, never walk barefoot outdoors. Should you get bitten or stung and get a strong reaction, go straight to the pharmacy and show them the affected area, or in extreme cases to A&E.

Air
The air isn’t what it used to be, and when you are here in summer you really do notice that the ozone layer does not protect us from the sunlight like it used to. Avoid at all costs getting sunburned! Apart from being darned unpleasant, sunburn is accumulative, and every one you have in a lifetime increases the risk of skin cancer. 20 minutes before going out, put sun protection factor 50 on every skin area that is not covered by clothes, and repeat every two hours while you are out and about. Make sure you get a water resistant sun cream, otherwise you’ll burn while in the water. And remember, sitting in the shade doesn’t prevent a sunburn, the reflection of the glare of the sun will come and find you even in the shade!

Water
The experts reckon that the only truly healthy exercise in the heat of a summer’s day is swimming, the only one that you can do without being in danger of overheating. However, like all other things swimming has its dangers, and a worryingly high number of people have drowned in water parks already this year. Whether you bathe in the sea, your pool or play in a water park, make sure you follow the usual common sense advice for swimmers: Don’t swim when you are alone. Don’t swim for at least 30 minutes after eating. Don’t swim while under the influence of alcohol – and DON’T LET CHILDREN ANYWHERE NEAR THE WATER UNSUPERVISED!

Fire
Last, but not least, fire is everybody’s number one enemy in summer. There have already been several large forest and brush fires in Spain this year, to not mention Portugal. Although we had a nice wet winter, the high temperatures we have already had to put up with combined with the extra weeds from spring which have now dried, make every spot into a fire risk. It is strictly prohibited to have barbecues or open fires in the countryside, and even if you have them at home, make sure sparks and burning ashes don’t escape and set fire to the surrounding area. You may not have thought so, but just chucking a fag end out the car window can start a fire (It is also a criminal offence!). A bit of glass left in the sun can do the same. Still glowing ashes unintentionally thrown in the rubbish, too. So please take the utmost care of when you dispose of your rubbish and never leave anything behind in the countryside. Truth is, it can cost you 15 years in prison! Apart from the fact that our countryside is battered and scarred enough as it is from previous years’ fires. But if you follow these simple rules, there should be nothing to prevent your summer from being just as magical and wonderful as you had imagined!

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**Spanish Provinces & their Capitals**

There are 50 provinces in Spain, each with its own capital city which usually, but not always, carries the same name as the province. Our next of Spain’s provincial Capitals takes us to …

The province of Huesca is one of the three provinces of Aragón in northern Spain. It covers a surface of 15,626 km² and has with a population of 219,677 (2017) inhabitants. It shares borders with France and the provinces of Lérida, Zaragoza and Navarra. A large part of the province is in the Pyrenees, and it is home to the highest peak in this mountain range, Pico Aneto, which reaches 3,404m into the sky.

The capital of Huesca is Huesca. The city is set at 483 m above sea level; it covers an area of 161.03 km² and is home to only 52,064 inhabitants, which makes it one of the least populated provincial capitals of Spain. The river Jussiau runs through the city. The average annual temperature is 13°C; in summer the temperatures can be high and reach up to 35ºC – or even more nowadays. It snows frequently in winter and the temperatures often go down to 3-7ºC below zero. On average, the city has 2,732 hours of sun, 23 days of rain and 35 days of frost.

Huesca in Huesca

The city was once known as Bolskai, in the ancient Iberian language that was used before the Romans arrived, and it was the capital of the Vescetani civilization. During Roman times its name became Osca, and it remained an important city, being the base of Quintus Sertorius, the Roman governor.

The city minted its own coinage and was the site of a prestigious school founded by Sertorius to educate young Iberians in Latin and Roman customs. Over the 1st to 3rd century, Christianity gradually took hold of Huesca, and in 258 A.D. a Christian native of the city was burned on a grill in Rome and became a martyr and Huesca’s patron saint: San Lorenzo (Saint Lawrence). When the Roman Empire collapsed in the 5th century, the Visigoths came to town and they in their turn were forced out by the Moors in 719. These changed the name to Wasqa and the city was one of the northernmost cities of the Al-Ándalus kingdom. A mosque was constructed in the 8th to 11th century on the site of the present Huesca Cathedral, the Holy Cathedral of the Transfiguration of the Lord. Today there are very few remains of it, though. As the Christian attacks on the city became more and more frequent during the reconquest, a wall was built around the city, forming a two kilometre long oval. The wall was interspersed by 90 towers.

The Christians on their part constructed a large castle, the Castle of Montearagón, a couple of miles from Wasqa, from where they eventually conquered the city in 1096. The ruin of the castle still stands, but the city walls are long gone. Once under Christian rule, the city prospered and reached a peak of 8,000 inhabitants in the 13th century. However, the plague of 1348 halved the population, and it was not until the beginning of the 20th century that it grew beyond 10,000.

Modern Huesca now counts more than 200,000 souls, and its economy is mainly based on the service sector and tourism. Industry comes a close second, whereas agriculture only contributes with approximately 10% of the city’s income.

Tourists visiting Huesca mainly come for the city’s sights such as the cathedral and the Museo de Huesca, situated in the building of the old Universidad de Huesca, which no longer exists. The city also has many visitors who go hiking in the Pyrenees in summer, and skiing in winter.

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CELEBRATING

With our Friends from Belgium
Vieren met onze vrienden uit België

Over the years there have been many Belgian families and businesses who have chosen to make Spain their home. In our corner of Almeria, we enjoy the company of a growing community from this Western European country. With the help of our advertisers we have been able to explain the reason behind the Belgium Revolution and the National Day. We have included just a few advertisers within the pages, you will see that they cover many services and all are located nearby.

Some of the advertisers will be celebrating the National Day and are holding special events – Bar El Mirador, which faces the Rambla in Albox, and Bar Limaria, set in the countryside on the main road to Limaria, are both celebrating the day with traditional food and entertainment (see their adverts for details).

In Arboleas, Kyra has just opened her new spacious and well equipped Beauty Salon where she is offering top to toe hair and beauty treatments, and right next to her beauty salon you will find Arboleas Solutions offering all types of legal help.

Albox sees the opening of the new Belgian Restaurant Freidura Frituur El Muro which offers a wide range of traditional Belgium foods to Eat in or Take Away. The owner, Carlos, will be no stranger to many of you.

Heading to the coast you will find in Mojacar the new Belgian Restaurant – Tortuga. Situated alongside the paseo, this restaurant offers fabulous food with fabulous views, where you can sit back, enjoy the ambience and just watch the world go by. They even have a pet Parrot in the garden area that you might hear talking in French!!

If it’s a house you are looking for then why not pop in and see Ann at API, she is situated in the Buganvillas shopping area, where she will be able to show you properties throughout the local areas.

Just a short distance from API heading towards the Vera Aqua Park you will find Isabella, an amazing little shop that stocks all sorts of items from crystals and jewellery to individual items that are designed to dress anyone’s home, a real Aladdin’s cave.

For all your pool and property services in the Albox and surrounding areas contact Yvan from Blue Pool Services and Immospanje who is always willing to offer support and advice.

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Plaza Nueva ALBOX
The Belgian Revolution

Belgium has a tumultuous history and over the centuries it has been in the hands of Spain, Austria, France and Holland, and it was not until 1830 it finally gained independence.

The following are the facts according to the Spanish journalist and history aficionado, Víctor Muñoz Fernández.

The French July revolution in 1830 led to the lesser known Belgian revolution. The United Kingdom of the Netherlands had been created during the Vienna Congress to stop France from expanding north. The kingdom consisted of Holland and Belgium and was ruled by the Prince of Orange.

However, the differences between the two nations ran deep. While the Dutch were Calvinists, lived off agriculture and trade, the Belgians were Catholic and industrialised. The differences also spread to the languages spoken in the kingdom, with Netherlands confronting Flemish and French.

Both parties wanted the capital to be in their part of the country, so it was decided to distribute the official organisations between both nations, which made the power centre of the kingdom unstable.

In 1828 the liberal Belgians and the Catholics united in an exclusively nationalistic movement to obtain independence, but it was decided to distribute the official organisations between both nations, which made the power centre of the kingdom unstable.

One of the two suitable candidates refused the title, so on 4th June 1831, German prince Leopold became the first king of Belgium, and on July 21st he signed the constitution, turning the country definitely into an independent state.

The Assembly endowed Belgium with a constitution in February 1831, establishing that the country be a constitutional monarchy; however, they had to find a king. The only certainty was that nobody wanted one from the House of Orange, Holland’s royal family.

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Spanish Tax Returns 2018

Once again another very busy year completing Spanish Tax Returns. We had a lot of new clients this year, especially after the Agencia Tributaria have been sending letters to those persons who did not file a 2014 tax return, which has resulted in those persons having to pay the tax owed, plus interest plus a fine.

The Agencia Tributaria can look back over the past four years and, as they are now receiving all of the information from HMRC, it is making this process a lot easier and they will soon write to persons regarding 2015 and the following years for 2016, 2017 & 2018.

If you have lived in Spain for 183 days a year or more and you have not completed a tax return, I would recommend that you contact us as soon as possible.

A lot of the responses that we have received is “We pay our taxes in UK and did not know we had to pay in Spain”. But as we have stated before, the law states that ALL income has to be declared and tax paid in the country that you are living in. The caveat to this law is that, Crown Pensions, UK Property Rental and Royalties income must be declared and tax liability paid in the UK but they must still be declared in Spain and any tax paid in the UK will be taken into consideration.

Again, if you are in doubt, please contact us, our initial consultation is free.

Contact us if:
- If you live in Spain for 183 days or more
- If you have UK Pensions, UK property Rental or Royalties income and have not completed a Spanish Tax Return
- If you have lived in Spain since 2015
- If you are unsure of your tax status

Research suggests that a number of herbs and spices may help improve your brain health, and some of them may be already sitting in your fridge. Several of these herbs and spices have been studied for their effects on Alzheimer's disease, while others have been tested for their overall effects on cognition.

Sage

A spice known for its pungent scent, sage may possess memory-enhancing properties, according to a small study published in Pharmacology, Biochemistry, and Behavior in 2003. A research review published in Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine identified sage as one of the several herbs that may be beneficial to Alzheimer’s patients.

Try adding sage to butternut squash, roasted chicken, turkey, tomato sauce, or in a white bean soup. Sage can also be consumed in tea form.

Turmeric

Turmeric contains a compound called curcumin, which has antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects (two factors that may benefit brain health and overall health). Preliminary research suggests that turmeric may boost brain health and stave off Alzheimer’s disease by clearing the brain of beta-amyloid (a protein fragment). The build up of beta-amyloid is known to form Alzheimer’s-related brain plaques.

In addition, turmeric may shield brain health by inhibiting the breakdown of nerve cells in the brain. Turmeric is a key ingredient in curry powder, which typically also includes such spices as coriander and cumin. To increase your intake of turmeric, try adding curry powder or turmeric to stir-fries, soups, and vegetable dishes. Include a couple dashes of black pepper to enhance the absorption of turmeric.

Lemon Balm

A herb often taken in tea form and frequently used to ease anxiety and insomnia, lemon balm may help improve cognitive function. For a study published in the Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery, and Psychiatry in 2003, 42 patients with mild to moderate Alzheimer’s disease took either a placebo or lemon balm extract for four months. At the end of the study, those given lemon balm showed a significantly greater improvement in cognitive function (compared to those given the placebo).

Ginseng

One the most popular plants in herbal medicine, ginseng contains anti-inflammatory chemicals called ginsenosides. In preliminary studies, scientists have observed that ginsenosides may help reduce brain levels of beta amyloid. It’s also sometimes taken to fight Alzheimer’s disease.
**10 Kitchen Beauty Ideas!**

It is surprising what can be achieved in the kitchen and it’s not just about creating delicious food. Most cooks will have some, if not all, of the ingredients required to create homemade beauty products. Whether you need a face mask, a lotion or a cleanser and are on a budget, you can still treat yourself to a pamper session.

1. **Coconut oil can remove your make-up**
   Remove stubborn eye make-up with coconut oil by warming a small amount of it in your fingers and massaging into lashes and around the eyes to gently cleanse it out.

2. **Almonds can be used as face scrub**
   Grind a handful of almonds into a paste with a tiny bit of coconut oil. Apply on damp skin, scrubbing in circular motions and rinse with warm water. Lemon works as a natural disinfectant and the scrub will open up and cleanse clogged pores.

3. **Olive oil and avocado can be used to make a hydrating mask**
   Massage your face with olive oil. Leave the olive oil on while you mash up some avocado and mix in a few drops of pomegranate juice to use as a face pack. Finish off with wet white tea bags on eyes and relax for 15 minutes. Gently remove with wet face cloth for a moisturised glow.

4. **Lemon, sugar and salt can be used as body scrub**
   Mix 1 cup of brown sugar with 1/2 cup of sea salt, 2 tbsp of lemon juice and 2 tbsp of coconut oil into a paste. Apply on damp skin, rubbing in circular motions and rinse with warm water. Lemon works as a natural disinfectant and the scrub will open up and cleanse clogged pores.

5. **Eggs can be used to whisk up hair mask**
   Beat 2-3 eggs and add 3 tbsp olive oil. Apply to hair from root to tip as a mask and wrap hair in a towel for 30 minutes. Wash off with regular shampoo for instant shine. This is great for particularly dry hair, especially if you’re spending a lot of time in chlorinated pools.

6. **Milk can soften your feet**
   Mix 4 cups of warmed whole milk with 2 tbsp of epsom salts. Add 2 drops of essential oil for fragrance and blend the mixture in a bowl of warm water. Soak your feet for 20 minutes. This will help to soften hard skin on the feet with the acids from the milk and effervescing salts relieving puffiness in the feet and legs.

7. **Yoghurt can soothe a dry face**
   Take a handful of oats and whizz them up in a blender until they are finely ground. Add a bit of yoghurt and honey until you have a paste. Apply to face with a soft cotton ball for quick results.

8. **Porridge oats can exfoliate your skin**
   Crush 1 strawberry and mix with a pinch of baking soda. Apply to lips to get exfoliation and moisture. Leaves lips soft and smooth.

9. **Strawberries can whiten teeth and reduce sunburn**
   Crush 1 strawberry and mix with a pinch of baking soda. Apply to the teeth with a tooth brush and leave for 5 minutes. Remove by brushing your teeth with usual toothpaste.

   To treat sunburn, mash a few ripened strawberries and slather on the affected area for instant, natural relief. Rinse off after a few minutes.

10. **Vodka can clean your face**
    Vodka (which is distilled from potatoes, wheat, rye or corn) is a natural astringent which cleanses, removes toxins and stimulates cell regeneration. Dab a bit on your face with a soft cotton ball for quick results.
Et Tu Gluteus

Gluteus Maximus sounds like a classic name for a Roman Emperor

In fact it is the major extensor muscle of the hip, and performs a number of essential functions as it aids in:

• Obtaining and maintaining an upright posture
• Facilitating movement of the thighs
• Providing secondary support for the knees
• Stabilisation of the hip joints

It is also responsible for many a despairing backward look in the mirror.

History Repeats Itself

I found myself wondering whether this imperially named muscle might in any way reflect those ancient Roman rulers, and a whimsical browse through history presented the following parallels.

1. Sharing the Load

Emperors would sometimes rule with co-emperors, and divide administration of the empire between them. The gluteus maximus works in conjunction with its immediate cohorts, the smaller gluteus medius and gluteus minimus muscles. Together these are commonly known as the glutes. As with all the major muscle groups, the glutes then work in harmony with the core.

2. Support

A good emperor was expected to provide infrastructure to the city and entertainment to the masses. A planned exercise program for the glutes can certainly provide a supportive infrastructure for the relevant part of the anatomy.

3. Confidence

A good emperor was unafraid of popular opinion, pursuing the course he felt was right or necessary. Your body preferences, goals, and management are your choice. You are not subject to trends or unrealistic body-shape models.

4. Campaigns

More than one Roman emperor was first a successful military commander, proving himself on the battlefields with carefully planned campaigns. Tightening and strengthening of the glutes can be achieved, and an exercise program works best when there is planning and structure. The correct battle plan, a consistent approach, and day-to-day decisions all work together to make success possible.

A good trainer here is an asset, rather like a general on the battlefield, being there to explain, to encourage, and - when necessary - to urge on.

Exercises

As part of our program to work on those glutes, Amanda has me repeating the Squats and Leg Raises that were detailed last month (Almeria Living, June edition).

From that we move onto the Lunges, and then take them a step further - literally.

Step Lunges

• Perform the lunge as previously described
• After each lunge take a step forward, using alternate legs
• Concentrate on keeping upright and stable
• Keep the movements fluid

More to follow next month.

Comments and queries welcome. josnovas@gmail.com

Jacey Canovas is a journalist on a discovery journey about diet and fitness. Amanda Cantle is a qualified trainer, nutritionist and fitness professional. Comments and queries welcome. josnovas@gmail.com

Hair today, Gone tomorrow....

Back in the UK recently for a visit, I happened to tune it to ‘daytime TV’. Yes, I know, but it was chucking it down outside for the fifth day running and my audiobook had suddenly developed laryngitis and refused to talk to me. Anyway, flicking through the channels I came across “Come Dine with me – Couples”.

For the uninitiated this is where ordinary people are thrown together and have to host a dinner party in their homes, on successive evenings and then vote for each other on the results, with the winner getting £1000 at the end of it. In this programme it was three couples who had to entertain each other. All very innocent you would imagine. However, one couple stood out from the other two. They were really odd. Their dress sense defied all logic and description while their hairstyles resembled something from a comic book about aliens, but it was the guy’s hairstyle which was strange to say the least. Oddly, although they had some rather ‘off the wall’ ideas, they were a really nice couple and actually went on to win the £1000, so there you go – appearances being deceptive!

Anyway, this got me thinking, about hair styles in particular. Not something I have had much cause to concern myself with for some time now, being somewhat tosorially impecunious and the owner of what I call ‘wide parting’. However, many times when I have been caught people watching I have remarked, “Whoever told him/her that their hairstyle looks good on them”.... I started to wonder when it was that people began to think about hair styling as part of their appearance. I could imagine our prehistoric ancestors being more concerned with survival than coiffing their hair to make themselves look more attractive. Beside which, combs and scissors hadn't been invented yet. But having said that, the oldest known hair braiding may have started some 30,000 years ago.

Continued on page 18.....
In the 1660’s Samuel Pepys had his head shaved and tried a ‘periwig’. This was a small headress of the style still used today by Barristers in the Law Courts. However, he was a little uneasy to wear it, especially while in the year of the Plague he believed the hair from which it was made was cut off the heads of people who had died from it! Yes, I would think twice…..

During and after the First World War most women adopted a shorter, ‘bob’ style as it was easily managed. Permanent Wave also became popular but it was expensive, time consuming and uncomfortable. I can attest to this as in the 1970’s I had an ‘Afo’ hairstyle which was my thatch, permed, using a foul smelling concoction containing ammonia, which stank the house out. Those were the days and, no, I have no photos….. at least, none that I care to share!!

These days hair styling is a major global industry worth billions of dollars from Hair Salons to hair products. Remember Vidal Sassoon, Nicky Clarke and Mr Teasy Weasy, Salons to hair products. Remember Vidal Sassoon, Nicky Clarke and Mr Teasy Weasy, became as famous as their celebrity customers.

It was cut off the heads of people who had died! However, he was a little uneasy to wear it, and would grow it as long as it was possible to grow, while the men had theirs quite short. (Incidentally, a Chinese lady back in 2004 had hair which measured almost 18 ½ feet in length! That is a lot of ‘Head and Shoulders’ to get through!

As far as European men went, their hair during the 15th and 16th century, grew no longer than shoulder length but, come the 17th century, men’s hair was considered attractive the longer the style. (The longest hair on a man was believed to be some 6.8 metres and weighing in at several pounds. I believe he was precluded from riding a motorcycle since he couldn’t get his hair under a helmet!)

Charles II after the Restoration started the fashion for wearing a wig, a rather long one as from riding a motorcycle since he couldn’t get his hair under a helmet!

Working together to find the best solution for your health problems. Then selecting one, or a mix of therapies, to help you regain your health and vitality.

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**Puzzle Time**

**Easy**

**Regular Sudoku**

Every Sudoku has a unique solution that can be reached logically.

Enter numbers into the blank spaces so that each row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9.

![Sudoku puzzle](image)

**Medium**

**Quick Crossword**

Holaaaa, it’s meee-heee: Beautiful Cora!

Although I say so myself. You’ll soon know why, read on!

You won’t be surprised for a minute to hear that mum went and did one of her usual disappearing acts last month. She went off to that Berlin she’s always going on about. And left me and dad and Brutus and Zulu the Cat and the six chickens (I won’t mention all their names) completely alone!

But we were brave and managed very well, thank you very much! Apart from Brutus, of course, who had to go and get himself ill just before mum returned.

He did say on the Thursday that one of his eyes felt a bit funny, but I just ignored him; it’s no good always paying him too much attention. But on the Friday I could see that there was that lovely white milky layer on his eye. I didn’t say anything, though, couldn’t bear to listen to the laments that would follow.

Dad noticed it as well, but it really didn’t look bad, so he told me he’d wait and see. Wait and see what? asked Brutus. Nothing, I said.

Saturday morning dad drove off to pick up mum (he told us he’d be bringing her home, but I pretended I didn’t care) at the airport. A few hours later Brutus came up behind me and said, Cora? What? I asked.

Uncle Javier went a bit too far with his examinations he Put him in the laments that would follow.

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To cut a long story short, by the time mum and dad got back, there was no two ways about it: there was something wrong with his eye. But he said it didn’t hurt or itch or bother him, just that he couldn’t see too well with the worst one. He was surprisingly brave about it.

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Last year we had to cancel due to the awful weather - nothing will stop us this year so please come along and help us raise lots of money!

CORA’S DIARY

A First for Me - And Hopefully Not a Last!

Mum got an emergency appointment with Uncle Javier (MY Personal Physician) - she obviously only managed to get one because Brutus is my brother. Of sorts. I must admit that I was a bit miffed when mum went off with Brutus and left me at home. I love going to see Uncle Javier, and like I said, he’s MY doctor. I should have been invited along.

But we were brave and managed very well, thank you very much! Apart from Brutus, of course, who had to go and get himself ill just before mum returned.

He did say on the Thursday that one of his eyes felt a bit funny, but I just ignored him; it’s no good always paying him too much attention. But on the Friday I could see that there was that lovely white milky layer on his eye. I didn’t say anything, though, couldn’t bear to listen to the laments that would follow.

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Continued on page 22 ....
Well, I still hadn’t forgiven mum for going without me, so when we realised they were going back for a follow-up three days later, I promptly developed a Serious Limp.

So on the Thursday we all piled into My Car and drove off to see Uncle Javier. As we were getting out of the car, Bru tried to do a runner to avoid having to go! I thought you weren’t scared, I said. It’s because you’re here, he promptly replied. I’m ok when I’m on my own, but when you come along I get nervous. Yeah, right!

Bru’s eyes were pronounced ‘improving’ (keep on with the drops) and I was prescribed something called anti-something-or-other which cured my limp and I thought it served her right and might make her think twice about going without me in future. And both of us come back in ten days’ time for a follow-up.

My anti-thingsies are served daily with butter, just like it should be. And I reckon that by the time I talk to you next, I’ll have been off the lead for a bit frustrating and I shall be glad to be able to run again.

And we’ve still got another visit to Uncle Javier pending, to check Bru’s eyes and to see when I’ll be let off the lead again. I really am glad that I quite enjoy playing at home. Mum (the skin flint) wanted to make sure that the medicine worked so she wouldn’t have to fork out for more. That was only until mum came back to get me that I realised she had gone! She praised me and told me what a Good Girl I was (am), how beautiful too, and she couldn’t stop stroking me. She said I was soooo soft. On the outside as well!

When we got home, Bru said I stank. But I didn’t mind, I felt so good being free of all the surplus hair and so proud of how brave I’d been. I did stink, to tell you the truth, but I soon got back to my own nice smell, so that was a minor price to pay.

And we’ve still got another visit to Uncle Javier pending, to check Bru’s eyes and to see when I’ll be let off the lead again. I really am glad that I quite enjoy these long, leisurely walks attached to mum, but at the same time I do miss a good run and the rush of chasing rabbits. The other evening I saw one just in front of us, and Bru, who could have chased it, didn’t even notice! That was a bit frustrating and I shall be glad to be able to run again.

And in fact, I think I’ll go and do my secret exercises to try to make sure that Uncle Javier will pronounce me Cured. And I reckon that by the time I talk to you next, I’ll have been off the lead for a long time! Until then, WOOF WOOF!
Nestled in the heart of the Almanzora valley, Olula del Rio boasts a few extraordinary places you wouldn’t expect from a village with less than 7,000 inhabitants.

With the marble quarries of Macael just minutes away, Olula has built its modern economy on working with this beautiful stone. Just a few years ago, the factories lined the main streets and family life here was lived on the outskirts making use of the land surrounding it. As the village developed, the marble factories moved out and the village within the heart of it, grew.

Back in in the mid 60’s, there was a petrol station featuring just one pump. Donkeys were probably higher in numbers than cars, and many of the streets were still dusty tracks. But time moved on and quickly.

Easily accessible from the A334, Olula is definitely worth seeking out. With a bustling market held every Thursday, a fabulous Art gallery and numerous restaurants featuring an array of menus, you will not be in a hurry to leave.

The history of Olula goes back many years, in fact, evidence of life here has been found as far back as the Neolithic period. In the 1500’s Luis de la Cerda, Duke of Medina del Nijar was in power but the area (including Purchena and Urracal) was handed back to the Crown in 1560, later being sold to a Miguel Serrano, a man who distinguished himself by pacification in the revolt of the Moors. On the event of his death it was passed to his son. Moving forward in time to the 18th Century, Olula contributed most to the area. Vines, olives and citrus, just to name a few, were grown in vast orchards, as were (at the time), cereals.

There are 2 churches in Olula and both very different in style. The oldest, the church of ‘San Sebastián’ was built in the 18th Century, in a neoclassical style and features a curious Greek style cross. Tucked away in the centre of the village, you have to meander through a few small streets heading towards the Town Hall to find it.

It’s much more modern sister, is the church of ‘Our Lady of the Assumption’. Built in the 1900’s entirely of marble, this is far easier to find and is situated on the high street. Its blessing was celebrated on July 14th 1968 by the Bishop of Almeria, accompanied by numerous priests. It was a historical date for the church of Almeria.

Continued on page 26 .....
If you enter Olula, you fancy relaxing from the hustle and bustle of the village, take a look at the art gallery, Casa Ibáñez Museum, is a joy to see. Entry is free and should you wish to pay for a guided tour in English, the service is available. As well as the fabulous pieces of art painted by the Olula artist Andrés García Ibáñez born 1971, there are some incredible statues to wonder at, and gorgeous seating areas, both inside and outside the museum. Officially opened on November 12th 2004, the Museo Casa Ibanez is one of the largest collections of contemporary art in Andalucia. It is managed by the Ibanez Consentino Art Foundation which was created in 2005. Ibáñez it seems has gone through various emotional stages in his young life; as you work your way through the various rooms featuring his work, it is quite evident to see his state of mind at the time of painting. Some of his work is classical in fact Roman in style, some religious, others feature his friends from his youth in an almost magical setting. Whichever style you prefer, you will still be in awe of this young painter’s talents.

A recent addition to the grounds surrounding the museum, is the building housing the work of renowned photographer Pérez Siquier. Without going into too much detail (as you need to see it for yourself), and on a totally different subject to the paintings of Ibáñez, Siquier’s eye for photography is quite astounding. There are various themed collections to admire, one of which details the life during the Franco era and is breath taking. The expressions on the faces on his subjects despite living in poverty is a wonder to see. Again, admission is free. Please check the websites for opening times as they change throughout the year. www.museoibanez.com  www.centroperezsiquier.org

Shopping in Olula

Everything is available for your every day needs in Olula. Centro Comercial Almanzora as you enter from the A334, hosts almost anything you need for your home and garden. This massive superstore is set on 2 floors of over 2000m2. As well as electrical goods, there is a houseware section, gardening section, clothes section and massive supermarket selling everything food and drinkwise, that you can think of. Locally produced meat is offered from the butcher and fresh fish is stocked daily. They also have an excellent selection of wines and spirits. Parking is easy whether you wish to park upstairs or downstairs, with an elevator connecting the 2 floors inside the store, should you be disabled and more importantly everything is competitively priced. This family owned business offers you friendly service and one which they take pride in.

If you are an animal lover and like to offer your pets the best quality you can buy, then family owned El Molino is the place for you. Their range of pets foods and accessories is the largest around. As well as an excellently stocked hardware section, they mill their own animal feeds, usually always have hens for sale, and take delivery every Tuesday afternoon of a large range of plants and trees, along with all the other things you might need for your garden. They also have a fantastic aquatic section selling fish, food, tanks and accessories, and aviary birds. You will find El Molino at the top end of Olula, by going straight up the main high street (with the chemist on your left), and heading back out towards the A334 in the Baza direction, it is on the your right hand side, before you reach the turn off to get back on the A334.

Continued on page 28 ......
All parts of the plant are edible. The fruits are rich in vitamin C. The pads or leaves of O. Ficus indica are also reputed to be rich in health benefits from reducing cholesterol to easing constipation. They are rich in fibre so good for the digestion and help make you feel full quickly. In many countries they are grown as a crop.

Another Cactus that is good nutritionally is the Hylocereus or Dragon Fruit. The fruits come in 3 different colours, yellow, white and red. I have one that is growing up an old dead tree and it’s at the top now so it must be at least 15 metres tall. It produces stunning, huge, white flowers followed by the Dragon Fruits. Cactus flowers are also used commercially, mainly being used in the making of skin and face lotions and creams. Like all plants, Cactus can fall victim to pests and disease. They can be plagued by whitefly, thrips, scale insect, cochinnea, mealy bug and also rot. Rot can be caused when the plants suffers some sort of physical damage, such as a cut or insect bite. Bacteria or fungus can enter and start off the process. If the infection has reached the roots, then there is not much you can do so the trick is to stop any infection before it starts.

There are scores of treatments available for every insect, fungal or bacterial attack and it’s up to the individual to purchase whatever fits in with their way of thinking. One thing you may see on your Cactus is the appearance of a brown colouring at the base of the plant but above the soil. This is known as corking and is a natural part of the aging process. It’s the result of the plant forming stronger corclike material to support the weight of the larger plant. If there is brown at the top of the plant, then this is a sign of something wrong such as sunburn or worse. Many Cactus enthusiasts use grafting as a way to encourage faster growth. This involves taking a fast-growing type of Cactus, removing a slice from the top and attaching the slower growing Cactus to the wound having sliced a piece from the base. The faster growing Cactus will then encourage the slow grower to race away! We use a Myrtillocactus as the base, using a piece a few inches high then attach the graft which is usually a small slow growing round type of Cactus. You can make all sorts of weird plants if you use an actual plant for grafting instead of a 15-centimetre cutting!

Some Cacti flower when very young but some, especially the tall growing variety, can take several years to kick into flower production but once they start, the displays are wonderful and well worth the wait. Unfortunately, some of the most spectacular flowers come from night bloomers so you have to either go out with a torch to catch them open or be an early riser! There are many specialist growers of Cactus. One way to find them is to join a local Cactus club or use one of the online sites such as ‘Infojardin’ which covers every kind of plant and tree, not only Cactus. Garden Centres tend to have the usual suspects although I think many are now upping their game a bit and introducing some more interesting specimens. There are also various groups on Facebook where people offer plants for sale or exchange......they’re out there, waiting for you to find them!

Thank you to Valerie Fuller for this informative article!
While researching for the article about Huesca elsewhere in this publication, I repeatedly stumbled over a rather gruesome painting by the 19th century Spanish painter José Casado del Alisal (1832-1886). Casado del Alisal was a portrait and history painter.

The title of the painting is La Campana de Huesca – The Bell of Huesca, and it tickled my curiosity. It turned out that the subject of the painting stems from an old Aragonese legend which goes as follows:

When the king of Aragón, Alfonso I the Battler, died in 1134 without leaving an heir to the throne, the nobles offered the crown to Alonso’s brother Ramiro, who lived as a recluse in the French monastery of Saint Pons de Thomières.

The Aragonese nobles reckoned that by choosing a man who seemed to be a push-over, they could mould him into a puppet to suit their whims.

Ramiro II, the Monk, ascended to the throne at the end of that year after promising that within two years he would return to his ecclesiastical chores, once he had secured the line of succession. However, soon the disrespect and defiance of the nobles towards the Crown put Ramiro in an untenable position, and being a novice in matters of government and court, he asked for the advice of his mentor, the abbot of Saint Pons.

Ramiro’s emissary told the abbot about the problem, and when he had listened, without uttering a word, he walked out into the monastery’s vegetable garden.

There he proceeded to cut the most prominent leaves off the heads of cabbage, while he told the emissary to go back to King Ramiro and tell him what he had seen.

This he did and after listening, the king summoned all the Aragonese nobles to his palace under the pretext of wanting to show them an enormous bell whose ringing would be heard all over his kingdom.

Part amused, part sceptic and part curious, the most rebellious of the nobles were led, one by one, to the bell tower to see this famous bell. The moment they entered, an executioner chopped their heads off. Once the heads had been placed in a large circle, with one of them hanging from a rope from the ceiling, like a bell clapper, Ramiro invited the rest of the nobles to come into the bell tower to see the Bell of Huesca, which would indeed be heard all over Aragón.

The painting is currently hanging in the Huesca town hall.
Cerro de los Ángeles

In the municipality of Getafe, 10 km south of Madrid, there is a so-called inselberg (an isolated ridge that rises abruptly from a virtually level surrounding plain) called Cerro de los Ángeles. Its first claim to fame is having traditionally been considered the geographic centre of the Iberian Peninsula. According to the National Geographic Institute it is very difficult to determine the exact centre of anywhere, because it depends a lot on the method used. Thus, some modern studies have placed the centre further west in an unpopulated area south of a small town called Calaherche in the Toledo province.

The maximum height of the Cerro de los Ángeles is 666.24 m above sea level, and the base of the ridge is at 610 m. At the highest point there is a triangulation station and a pylon to mark the spot. From up there you have excellent views over Madrid and Getafe, as well as the surrounding countryside.

But geographical centre or not, the inselberg is a much visited spot, and for many different reasons.

On the large plaza on top of the ridge we find the ‘Ermita de Nuestra Señora de los Ángeles’, a shrine from the 19th century, dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Also the ‘Monumento al Sagrado Corazón’, constructed in 1919 and inaugurated by King Alfonso XIII. There is also a Diocesan Seminar, Seminario Diocesano Nuestra Señora de los Apóstoles, an education facility where Getafe’s priests carry out their apostolic work, and a Barfoot Carmelite convent.

Getafe’s Patron Saint, Nuestra Señora de los Ángeles, is kept in the shrine which carries her name. The place bore witness to several battles during the Spanish Civil War.

The Hermita de Nuestra Señora de los Ángeles is thought to have been first constructed in the 11th century, after King Alfonso VI had been first constructed in the 11th century, after King Alfonso VI had conquered the area; it was constructed on the spot of an old Moorish watch tower. This primitive shrine was destroyed in the 14th century.

In 1919 the ridge was also chosen for the siting of an enormous monument dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The monument was funded by money donations from thousands of Spaniards, and the actual image of Jesus (9 metres tall) was funded by the Count of Guapi.

The monument was inaugurated on 30th May 1919 by King Alfonso XIII. It was made from limestone in subtle tones of yellow. There were two groups of sculptures on the sides, representing ‘Hallowed Humanity’ and ‘Humanity Reaching Out to Be Hallowed’. The full height of the monument was 28 metres, including the figure which rose 9 metres above the plinth. It was 31.5 metres wide and 650 600 032 / 950 430 115 noreenmiller@hotmail.co.uk

The sides of the ridge have been planted with fir trees, and dotted around there are various picnic areas, springs and fountains and playgrounds. There is also a bar and a football ground, so apart from being an important religious centre, the place is a very popular destination for those who wish to spend a day off surrounded by nature.

What was left of the original monument was preserved, and the rubble was moved to the place where it can still be seen today. Entrance to Cerro de los Ángeles is free.

In 1965.

What was left of the original monument was preserved, and the rubble was moved to the place where it can still be seen today.

The whole precinct is open for visitors every day during daylight hours, and it is possible to enter the shrine.

Cerro de los Ángeles is 16 metres deep, and it was made from 882 tonnes of material.

At the beginning of the Civil War, on 23rd July 1936, five young men were shot for defending the monument against possible attacks. Five days later, Republican soldiers celebrated a ‘ceremony’, firing shots at the image of Jesus; they then proceeded to destroy the sculptures and the rest of the monument, first by hand, but eventually they had to use dynamite to reduce it to rubble. They labelled it the ‘disappearance of a nuisance’.

The Getafe council, with the permission of the Republican government, changed the name from Cerro de los Ángeles to Cerro Rojo (Red Ridge), by which name it was known until the end of the Civil War.

After the Civil War Franco’s regime rekindled the original name and ordered the construction of a new monument identical to the first one and in exactly the same place. Construction was started in 1944 and the new monument inaugurated in 1965.
Meetings on the ESPADEVIDA APARTMENT GALLERY

1-2 bedroom apartments with large communal spaces from €77,000

Collectively cultivating a healthy living environment that adapts to your individual needs.

Discover how you could benefit from these modern & alternative co-housing lifestyle apartments, & join our monthly non-committal Round Table meetings.

Our next Round Table meeting is at Bar Solare, Turre from 17.00 on the 18th of July


Espadevida Apartment Gallery
Lifestyle Homes with a Community Spirit

Marina de la Torre, Mojácar

REF: ME 2001 PRICE: €119,950
Bright and airy ground floor apartment with 2 beds / 2 bath and a large covered terrace that overlooks the communal pool. Located at the bottom end of the golf resort, only 100m from the sea. Includes underground parking space and store room. Good rental potential for holiday lets. Built area: 78 m2.

Marina de la Torre, Mojácar

REF: ME 1565 PRICE: €495,000
Charming contigop set in the peaceful valley with stunning views to the Sierra Cabrera mountains. 3 beds / 4 bath with 2 living rooms, one with a fireplace, the other with an open-plan kitchen. Large south facing terrace with private pool. This house is surrounded with terraces and gardens plus a BBQ area. Would make a lovely holiday home. Built area: 236 m2. Land: 2426 m2.

Chamberí, Mojácar Playa

REF: ME 2041 PRICE: €200,000
Lovely townhouse on an immaculate urbanisation with 3 bed / 1 bath / 1 cloakroom and an incorporated independent garage downstairs. Lounge – diner with access to the terrace and large communal pool and gardens. Separate fitted kitchen. Front garden too. Within easy walking distance of the beach. Built area: 119 m2.

El Saltador, Carboneras

REF: ME 1538 PRICE: €109,500
Beautifully renovated semi-detached village house located in a tranquil only 10 minutes drive from Carboneras. Quiet and peaceful location. The house has been renovated keeping all original features typical of the old country houses in the area. 3 beds / 1 bath / 1 cloakroom and large lounge kitchen. Front garden too. Within easy walking distance of the beach. Built area: 154 m2. Land: 279 m2.

Villa Castilla, Cabo Pinos

REF: ME 1909 PRICE: €279,000
An immaculate property with 3 bed / 4 bath set in landscaped gardens with a private pool and beautiful views of the mountains. There is a spacious lounge and independent diningroom with access to the pool area plus a separate fully fitted kitchen. There are 2 bedrooms on the ground floor and the master bedroom is on the first floor with stunning views. AGH. Garden. Built area: 200 m2. Plot: 800 m2.

Cortijo Grande, Turre

REF: ME 1790 PRICE: €449,500
Elegant villa on a quiet residential street 2 minutes walk from the beach with 3 bed / 2 bath all on one level. The villa is on the first floor with 2 all-contained flats on the ground floor as well as an enormous garage for 5 cars and storage area. Independent fully fitted kitchen, large lounge/diner, separate bedrooms with access to terraces. Jacuzzi, ACH. Built area: 332 m2. Plot: 900 m2.

Casa Los Tradores, Mojácar Playa

REF: ME 1764 PRICE: €599,000
Lavish villa with various terraces on different levels and unforgettable sea views. 6 beds / 4 bath with spacious lounge and dining area as well as a fully fitted kitchen. Wonderful south facing terrace for outside dining. Second lounge area upstairs plus another living / dining / kitchen area. Basement with games room / gym / lounge area and an independent garage. Built area: 446 m2. Plot: 980 m2.

Villa Juventud, Mojácar Playa

REF: ME 1984 PRICE: €599,000
Luxurious villa with various terraces on different levels and unforgettable sea views. 6 beds / 4 bath with spacious lounge and dining area as well as a fully fitted kitchen. Wonderful south facing terrace for outside dining. Second lounge area upstairs plus another living / dining / kitchen area. Basement with games room / gym / lounge area and an independent garage. Built area: 446 m2. Plot: 980 m2.

Cortijo El Cura, Turre

REF: ME 1741 PRICE: €595,000
A spectacular, newly built villa with amazing views of the mountains, sea and Mojácar village. 9 bed / 4 bath with spacious lounge, separate dining – kitchen area with several terraces. 3 bedrooms in the self-contained apartment. Set in landscaped gardens with play area for children, 2 private pools. Jacuzzi, ACH & oil central heating. Built area: 338 m2. Land: 4450 m2.

Mojácar Estates S.L.
Avda. Mediterráneo, 8
Mojácar Playa
Tel: +34 950 478 935
espadevida@mojacarestates.com

Visit our website www.espadevida.com/news for more info
it for a minute or two – taking the crisp night
to myself and continued to push the sacks to
the corner where I had slept. The hedgehog
made me feel sleepy, I curled up on a pile
of sacking, behind a watering can, and slept
deepl.

A scratching noise, behind my head, woke
me with a start. Total blackness greeted me,
and I stretched and flexed my eyes, to make
sure that they were open. The noise stopped
and my eyes began to adjust to the dark. I
peered to see if the sound had been from the
door that was slightly ajar and had somehow
made itself feel sleepy, I curled up on a pile
of sacking, behind a watering can, and slept
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Many clients hoping to secure a rental property ask “Why is there such a shortage of rentals when there are many empty properties?”……..

Home Owners considering renting their properties, often decide not to because …
- They have heard horror stories of properties being rented out and it goes wrong …
- They are worried as they are not here to manage the rental themselves…
- They are concerned that renting is just too complicated …

Renting your property doesn’t have to be any of these … Choose an established & professional rental agent with a good local reputation. Your agent will prepare a detailed rental contract, you as the landlord will approve the contract and can add any additional clauses you think necessary. You can even ask your solicitor to check the contract on your behalf.

The answer is to visit the office of the rental agent and …
1. Prepare a list of questions to ask.
2. Go through a few “what if” scenarios to satisfy any concerns you have.
3. Clarify what your responsibilities are as a landlord, their responsibilities as your agent and the responsibilities of the tenants.
4. Establish what type of tenants do they rent to and what checks are carried out.
5. Ask about deposit bonds, monthly rental payment arrangements and bill payment arrangements.
6. Check how often the property is inspected.
7. Confirm what documentation is required in order to rent your property.
8. Understand the management package options they can offer you and clarify any additional costs they may charge.

**BENEFITS OF RENTING:**
Your property is occupied rather than left empty and your tenants will be required to maintain the house and gardens to the same condition as at the start of the tenancy.

If you opt for a managed rental package, your rental agent should visit the property on a regular basis. Good practice is for the agent to provide you with photos of its condition, giving you peace of mind that your property is being looked after.

They should send you copies of paid bills so you know all expenses are up to date. And of course, it provides you with a monthly rental income for the duration of the tenancy.
Hello and welcome back.

In my last article, I covered the basics of ‘what is the Internet?’. This time I will be covering something that is closer to a lot of your hearts; Live TV.

Some of you will still be using satellite dishes, but for everyone else, live streaming is the only option. Either you use a service provider such as eze TV or have an android box loaded with the likes of Terrarium and Mobdro. Unlike back in good old Blighty, Internet connections can be problematic.

I regularly see Facebook posts about buffering and dropped connections and it can be frustrating. There are many possible causes for these issues; a ‘slow’ internet connection is one, but before you go berating your poor internet provider, please consider that other factors can come into play...

Is your ‘box’ connected to the internet via WiFi and how far away from the router is it? A weak internet via WiFi and how far away from the router is it? A weak connection can slow things down.

Whenever possible, always connect your box directly to the router with an Ethernet cable.

Are you watching a popular event? Streaming resources are not infinite (imagine a British motorway at 5am, then 5pm. The difference in traffic volume makes for a much different journey). It may be possible to watch the same event on another channel (even a foreign one).

What other internet resources are being used at the same time? Smartphones, tablets etc. all use up your Bandwidth (available data channels) and can affect streaming on marginal connections.

Is your equipment getting on a bit? Although this may sound a little ‘personal’, it is relevant. The exponential rate of technological advancement requires everything to be updated at regular intervals. Sooner or later, your Android box will not be able to run the software required, as it will have been deemed obsolete.

Regardless, the best place for watching UK TV is in the UK, but there is a solution.

Some of the more Tech-Savvy amongst you may be aware of something called a VPN (or Virtual Private Network). A VPN is an added security layer that gives your internet connection a UK location. In brief, your internet traffic is effectively invisible between your device and the VPN server, hiding your physical whereabouts. VPNs have been around for some time and are widely used alongside Tor Web browsers to nefariously surf the Dark Web. Some even use military grade encryption.

They are becoming more popular for streaming and for those of us that don’t want Big Brother peering into our soul. They are at their most useful when using unsecured Public WiFi Networks (such as airports). Our preferences and browsing habits are traded between tech companies and not just for advertising purposes. For some, this is tantamount to social engineering and an invasion of personal privacy. Most of us, however, are not that bothered, are we? After all, if you’ve done nothing wrong.....?

One of the benefits of using a VPN is that it does not keep your streaming history as a matter of policy. VPNs are also used by news reporters in countries where restrictions are in place.

Those who use Mobdro etc should consider using a VPN to avoid or mitigate against geographical “throttling” [the practice supposedly used by Internet Service Providers (ISP) to punish users]. Did anyone ever see a real TV license detector van or was it just a bloke with a clipboard and a list of all unlicensed houses? Contrary to how it is perceived, Bandwidth throttling is a common practice, used to manage internet traffic on a large or local scale, hence why your connection speed can vary so much. It works on the same principle as dropping the speed limits on motorways during peak periods, stopping bottlenecks. It is not specifically used to personally identify and punish transgressors but can be used to hinder streaming abroad.

Before I go any further, I must point out that if you are using a subscription-based android box, this should already use a VPN at some point in the supply chain.

VPN service providers have computer servers (access points) located across the globe. All you need to do is choose which country (the UK in this case) you wish to ‘visit’, your VPN connects itself and off you go...

There are a multitude of VPN providers, some ‘free’ and some not. For this article I chose a paid VPN with good reviews (Express VPN), based on connection reliability, security and speed.

After loading the app onto my Android box, with a 7 day free trial, I was able to use all UK TV services (ITV hub, BBC iPlayer etc...) without hindrance and the picture quality was good. This means that those of you with busy lives would be able to watch catch-up and on-demand TV at your leisure. ExpressVPN includes 5 active devices per subscription (you can load onto 100+ devices and interchange which ones are in use). There is a certain amount of fiddling-about to be done as these apps & websites now require you to register an account with them individually but once done, you are straight in every time. Those of you with existing UK accounts such as Netflix will be able to log in as normal.

Digging a little deeper, there is a slight drop in data transfer speed due to the added encryption (loss of roughly 10%) which may be crucial for those of you with a slower connection. Depending on the image quality (360p, 480p, HQ, HD etc...) an available internet connection speed of between 2MB/s and 5MB/s is required for a stable stream (remember Bandwidth).

Express VPN have various package deals. They are currently pushing 15 months for the price of 12 at $99.95 plus local tax. Compare this with the newest competitor, NordVPN who offer a similar service on a 3 year deal at $94.54(heftily discounted) and it looks a quite expensive. After running a comparison, providers came out at an average cost of $7 per month without discount. Most of them also seem to trade in US dollars for added anonymity – you can even pay in Bitcoin. There are free VPN providers, but you get what you pay for... the free VPNs usually contain ads and some contain malware and viruses, kind of defeating the point of the exercise.

Interested in a VPN? I can set up your Android Box/ Smartphone / Computer / Router etc. with a VPN of your choosing.

Follow me on Facebook: @techgurualmeria or give me a call on 642 017 183. I look forward to hearing from you.

Adrian.
Cadaqués – the Pearl of the Costa Brava

Should you ever have time to spare on your drive back to the UK, and if you are taking the route going up the east coast of Spain, do yourself a favour and stop off for a day or two in the coastal town of Cadaqués.

It is the most easterly town on the Iberian Peninsula, tucked in on the coast in the district of Alto Ampurdán in the province of Gerona, Catalonia. It is cut off from the rest of Ampurdán by the Puig de la Roca and Puig de Butadors mountains, and up to the end of the 19th century it was a fishing village virtually isolated from the rest of the mainland.

The name Cadaqués comes from ‘Cap de Quers’ or ‘Cap d’Aques’ which translates into ‘Cape of Rocks’.

Traditionally a fishing village, there are fishing regulations especially for Cadaqués that date back to the 16th century.

Anchovies from Cadaqués are famous for their flavour and quality.

Many wealthy families from Barcelona, Figueras and Gerona started acquiring summer homes there at the beginning of the 1900s. One of them was the Dalí family from Figueras, and their son, the surrealist painter Salvador Dalí, made the summer home into his fixed abode in the late 1940s.

Today Cadaqués has preserved its fishing village charms at the same time as being a popular tourist destination.
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MOJÁCAR PLAYA - ALMERÍA

A functional and modern residential development on the shore of Mojacar Playa. The mediterranean at your feet. The best views of the Costa de Almería...
Wild Boar – Sus Scrofa

We know they’re around. We don’t often see them, but we know they’re there. They are very shy and elusive and they prefer not to meet us, but sometimes they do cross our paths and we feel a thrill of excitement mixed with fear.

The wild boar is prolific from the Far East to the Far West; and the Asian wild boar, Sus scrofa, is the beast we find here on the Iberian Peninsula. Sus scrofa varies greatly in size, even within Europe, thus the largest specimens are to be found in the Carpathian Mountains in Central and Eastern Europe, and the smallest wild boar are the ones we have right here in the south of the Iberian Peninsula. The Iberian wild boar measures between 0.9 and 1.6 m and weighs up to 90 kg (male) or 65 kg (female).

The wild boar is very similar to its domestic cousin. Its head is oblong and almost conical, its eyes are very small and intensely black. It has a robust and solid body with quite short, but very strong legs, the back legs being a bit shorter than the front legs, which makes the shoulders the highest part of the animal.

The fur consists of long, stiff hairs on the outside and thick inner wool. The wild boar is usually dark grey or dark brown, sometimes black. The piglets have 4-5 yellowy stripes along both sides of the body.

The wild boar’s lower canine teeth are well developed and are used as defense weapons; the upper ones are curved upwards. The female’s canine teeth are less developed than the male’s and are often not visible; however, they are there, and she uses them without hesitation if she feels her young ones are threatened.

When a boar family moves from place to place it is always in the same order: Mum leads, the kids follow in a line and dad makes up the rear.

The wild boar is not a threatened species – on the contrary. The females start reproducing in the first or second year of their lives; the gestation period is short (120 days) and they have 3-4 piglets at a time, so the population grows easily.

In some parts of Spain the wild boar has become a problem to the human population. The species is so successful that they have started going into towns and cities to forage. They are a common sight at night in certain parks and residential areas in central and northern Spain.

They have also taken to crossing roads and motorways causing serious accidents, in spite of the fencing we see along all major highways. It is very difficult to change their established paths and they prefer to break through the fence and cross the road rather than find another way.

If a wild boar (or another large animal) crosses the road and causes damage to a car, the driver will only get compensation from the government if there is a hole in the fence near the place where the accident happened.

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Ernest Hemingway and Spain

One of the most important and influential writers of the 20th century, Ernest Hemingway, had a life-long love affair with Spain. He visited the country on several occasions, and some of his most important novels are set here, e.g. ‘The Sun Also Rises’ (also known as ‘Fiesta’), ‘For Whom the Bell Tolls’ and the work of non-fiction, ‘Death in the Afternoon’ about the ceremony and traditions of Spanish bullfighting.

The first time Hemingway set foot on Spanish soil was in 1919. He had worked as an ambulance driver in Italy during the First World War and was travelling back to the states when his ship stopped over in Gibraltar. This gave him the opportunity to pop over the border into Algeciras. At the beginning of the 1920s Hemingway was posted in Paris as a foreign correspondent for an American newspaper, and there he made friends with Pablo Picasso and Joan Miró amongst others. But it was the American novelist Gertrude Stein who encouraged him to go to Spain to see the bullfighter Joselito.

In 1923 Hemingway took his first trip to Spain. He wanted to watch and learn about bullfighting. He stayed at a small pension in Madrid which was frequented by people from the bullfighting world. He instantly became an aficionado. He called a bullfight ‘a great tragedy. It’s like being at the first line of fire in a war without having to suffer the consequences’.

On that same visit he also travelled to Seville, Ronda and Granada. When he returned to Paris, he no longer walked the boulevards shadow boxing like before (he was also a dedicated boxing fan), instead he practiced all the bullfighting stances and movements, and even fought some of the cars and trams he encountered. Hemingway’s last visit to Spain was in 1960, under the pretext that his friend, bullfighter Ordóñez needed him; he was by then so much abused, and he suffered a serious depression the following autumn.

Hemingway’s last trip to Spain as a correspondent lasted from August to December in 1938. This was a very sad visit for him as he had to watch the fall of the Spanish Republic which he had so warmly defended and supported. He was not to come back for over a decade.

Hemingway returned to Spain in 1953 with an idea of writing an extension to his book ‘Death in the Afternoon’ about the changes and decline of bullfighting. However, when he got here and watched Antonio Ordoñez and Luis Miguel Dominguín, two of Spain’s leading bullfighters, in action, he realized that there was indeed no such decline. He got to know Ordoñez in Pamplona, and the two of them hit it off immediately. However, Pamplona had lost its charms as far as Hemingway was concerned, the Sanfermines fiesta had become too popular and touristic in his opinion. Ironically, it was his novel ‘The Sun Also Rises’ that had created this phenomenon.

When Hemingway returned to Spain next, in 1956, he was enormously popular here; he was treated like royalty in the hotels where he stayed, and people stopped him in the street to ask for his autograph. Due to a contract with Life Magazine, Hemingway returned to Spain again in 1959 to write about the rivalry between Ordoñez and Dominguin, and he crisscrossed the country on the tail of Ordoñez’s convoy; he visited Pamplona once again, and enjoyed picnics on the banks of the river Irati as he had in the 1920s.

He enjoyed his trip so much that he pronounced, ‘Never in my life have I been so happy’. However, his mental problems had by then started as a product of many of his wars and accidents from decades of alcohol abuse, and he suffered a serious depression the following autumn back in the States.

His last visit to Spain was in 1960, under the pretext that his friend, the bullfighter Ordoñez needed him; he was by then so much plagued by loneliness, insomnia, nightmares and paranoia that he only stayed for two months.

When he left, he made it understood that he would never return to Spain. He took his own life 8 months later.

Imagine you are driving through the mountainous and desert-like terrain of Cabo de Gata Natural Park in Almeria, southern Spain. All around you the colours of the landscape are rusty brown, dull yellow or faded green. Suddenly you come across a riot of colour in a pueblito blanco. Have you been transported to another place entirely without warning? Is it a mirage? Exactly what is going on here?

“Here” is a shimmering whitewashed village, Rodalquilar, displaying vivid splashes of colour on the walls of the houses. This is something very unusual. You get closer to investigate and discover it’s a village with a fantastic art exhibition in progress. Outsize posters of contrasting pieces of art hang from almost every wall – almost a kaleidoscope of “Banksies”!

You park the car and start to walk around. It is then that you realise the village has been transformed by this special exhibition of the work of a variety of artists, whose names and artistic endeavours are summarised on a colourful plaque near the entrance to the village.

The contents of this amazing exhibition range widely. They include abstract and representational work, landscapes, human and animal images – all competing for your attention in the relentless Mediterranean heat. Not only are they a riot of colour and ingenuity, many feature texture as well. Some of the exhibits are very tactile; some appear three dimensional.

You will quickly appreciate how immaculate the houses and gardens are, showing the pieces off to maximum advantage. Exterior walls have obviously been recently painted, shops, bars and restaurants are extremely well presented and there are special features in the square near the entrance to Rodalquilar and in other areas round and about. The senses are stunned; the imagination is unleashed. If this is what can be achieved in this small community, what scope is there for other locations to do something similar?

If this wasn’t enough, you also find on your walk around the village a museum devoted to the history of the geological features of the village and its surroundings (which include a disused gold mine and the volcanically formed mountain scenery) and botanic gardens – home to a range of plants from around the world and information about the ecosystems in which they are found.

You could spend hours in this place and still not see everything there is to see. If this is the “real” Almeria, how many people know of its existence or have visited? There is so much to learn (local school parties are welcome and are well catered for).

Take another drive through the desert soon: you may be surprised at how much it has to offer.
Inspired Garden Furniture

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INSPIRED
The Adventures of Neila - 6. FAITH

‘Neila, this is Cyril.’ Mrs Worsley said.

‘Hello Neila,’ Cyril began, but Mrs Worsley broke in quickly. ‘Neila comes from Notreally, but she got lost on the… she got lost.’

‘On the Inter-Galactic Space Works.’ I explained.

Cyril narrowed his eyes. ‘I don’t expect you are the only one.’ He commented quietly. I had a feeling that he knew something, but before I could worry about it he put his hand out towards my spaceship.

‘No, don’t touch it!’ I cried, but I was too late. His hand touched its side, and it let out a piercing shriek and began to vibrate all over.

‘Umm.’ Cyril was still at a safe distance. ‘Can’t see a towing point anywhere – how are we going to get it on the trailer.’ He switched it off.

‘Pleep.’ It said, so I knew it understood.

‘No, it says it won’t fall off.’ I rushed over, put my hands on it. ‘Please get on the trailer.’

‘Promise?’

‘Oh, it won’t fall off.’

‘Neech.’ It calmed immediately. ‘Wow, that’s awesome!’

‘On the Inter-Galactic Space Works.’

‘The same I put my hand on it. ‘Please get on the trailer.’

He looked at me in silence for a long time. ‘I think you’d better ask it. I don’t think it likes me.’

‘Oh, it likes you now it knows who you are.’ I explained, but all the same I put my hand on it. ‘Please get on the trailer.’

‘Neech.’

‘This thing here.’ I pointed to the trailer. ‘It doesn’t know what a trailer is.’ I told Cyril.

It hummed. ‘Nmmmhm.’

‘It can’t manage. I told you, it’s broken, we’ll have to help it.’

Cyril stepped in. ‘Perhaps if we all help lift it together?’

‘It’ll be alright, I promise. We’ll have to lift it a bit.’

‘It can’t manage. I told you, it’s broken, we’ll have to help it.’

Mrs Worsley stepped in. ‘Perhaps if we all help lift it together?’

Cyril still didn’t look too sure, but ‘OK,’ he said. ‘All together, one two three lift.’

We clustered round it, our hands on its sides, all three of us lifting for all we were worth.

‘Nnn ash hoo, uf.’ It said, and landed gently in the trailer.

‘Well I never!’ exclaimed Cyril. ‘Right, now we’ve got it there, how are we going to secure it?’

‘Oh, it won’t fall off.’

‘Promise?’

You won’t fall off, will you?’ Iby.

‘No, it says it won’t fall off.’

Cyril gave me an uncertain look, climbed back into his transporter (it’s called a truck, I believe) started it up –what a smell, what a smoke, and drove away.

A tear ran down my face. Will I ever see my dear little inter-planetary 4 Warp Drive again?
Rosemary (Rosmarinus officinalis) is a plant of the Lamiaceae family. It is a Mediterranean bush and it is very well known both for its medicinal and its culinary uses. It grows in its leaves which contain essential oils which give it its fragrant, fresh and strong aroma, especially when the leaves are crushed. It is a traditional condiment in the Mediterranean cuisine. It is an aromatic perennial and aromatic bush which normally grows to a height of one meter although there are specimens that have reached two meters. It has small, dry fruits that appear at the bottom of the calyx. The calyx is divided into four parts, each of which contains a seed. Rosemary is a native of southern Europe, western Asia and northern Africa. It grows on any kind of rock, and can be found from sea level up to 3,500 meters’ height; it is very common in areas where almonds grow. As it is a thermophile (it thrives at relatively high temperatures) it does not tolerate the cold very well. It is abundant in both dry and humid mountain climates. Rosemary oil has been much used and studied since ancient times for its medicinal and its culinary uses. It has glands in its leaves which contain essential oils which give it its fragrant, fresh and strong aroma as a condiment for a great variety of foods. However, it is very aromatic and should be used in moderation to keep it from cooking as a condiment for meat and poultry. It is especially popular with lamb. It is also suitable in soups, vegetable dishes and pasta sauces. A sprig of fresh rosemary aromatises oils and vinegars, giving them a different flavour which goes well with most dishes and salads. Due to its antioxidant qualities, rosemary is also widely used in traditional Mediterranean cooking as a condiment. It is very aromatic and should be used in moderation to keep it from dominating the dish. Both fresh and dried leaves of rosemary are used for adding flavour to meat and poultry. It is especially popular with lamb. It is also suitable in soups, vegetable dishes and pasta sauces. A sprig of fresh rosemary aromatises oils and vinegars, giving them a different flavour which goes well with most dishes and salads. Due to its antioxidant qualities, rosemary is also widely used in the carafe industry.
Reverse Word Search

Each of these circled letters is the first letter of one or more of the words on the given word list. Your task is to fill in the grid completely using only the given words. No word will repeat itself. Words can be positioned the same as in a regular word search—horizontally, vertically or diagonally, reading frontwards or backwards. Remember, any starting letter may be used by more than one word at the same time!

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Blacks Greet Spear
Career Haven Steeled
Coach Hisses Stood
Colts Inconveniently Taste
Conservatives Lends Tenet
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Summer is upon us and, as opposed to the situation in cooler climates, July and August are not bulging with in-season fruits and vegetables; it’s too hot here for many plants to have their peak production time.

Not too hot for the avocado, though. The avocado thrives in hot and tropical climates, so summer is a great time for the alligator pear, as it is also known.

The avocado is often maligned for being ‘fattening’, and truth be told it does contain more calories than most other fruits and vegetables – but not nearly as many as lots of other things we allow ourselves.

The calories come from fat – healthy fat, that is, the so-called monounsaturated fatty acids, which help protect against cardiovascular diseases.

Furthermore, more than 90% of the carbohydrates in avocado are dietary fibre; of this, 70% is insoluble which is very important for good digestion. The insoluble fibre helps clear the intestines of waste products which could otherwise keep toxins locked in the body and lead to the release of free radicals. In a worst case scenario, these free radicals can cause colon cancer.

The soluble dietary fibre, on the other hand, helps regulate the sugar levels and cholesterol in the blood. Researchers think that soluble dietary fibre lowers both sugar and cholesterol by absorbing them from digested food. This means that avocados with benefit can be enjoyed with foods with cholesterol such as meat, and foods with a high GI (Glycemic Index).

Avocados are also rich on vitamins C and E, both of them with great antioxidant capacity; they are beneficial for the skin, and the type of phytochemicals found in avocados can help slow down the ageing process.

Avocados keep well in the fridge; when you buy them, keep in mind how soon you need to use them and then gently press next to the stem to feel how hard they are. If they give a little they are ready to eat, if they feel hard, they will keep for several days. To speed up the ripening process, keep them at room temperature.

If you only want to use half an avocado, store the other half skin side down on top of some onion slices in a plastic bag or container to keep it from turning brown. The onion will not affect the flavour as it only touches the skin.

So, do yourself a favour and start having half an avocado a day; they are great just with a drop of lemon juice and a twist of black pepper, or indeed in salads or served with a vinaigrette dressing.
Red Coleslaw
Homemade coleslaw makes a wonderful accompaniment for any BBQ or sandwich.
This one happened to me once when I really fancied some coleslaw but only had red cabbage in the fridge. It came out wonderful!

Ingredients:
- 4 carrots, grated
- 200ml Greek yoghurt
- ½ red cabbage, finely shredded
- 1 tbsp honey
- 50 walnuts, chopped
- 1-2 tsp wholegrain mustard
- 50 dried cranberries
- Salt and pepper

Mix together the first four ingredients.
Mix together the last four ingredients.
Mix together everything.
Hard work, this!!!

Outdoor cooking…
If you are as lucky as me and have an outdoor kitchen, it goes without saying that cooking outdoors is the order of the day in summer.
But even if you only have a cooker indoors, you can do a lot of the prepping outside. Get yourself a bowl of water, a clean bowl for the finished stuff, a chopping board and a knife, and off you go to sit in the shade while you prepare your vegetables.
A lot of stuff can be done on the barbecue, especially if you have a gas one with a lid – they double as ovens and save you having to heat up your kitchen.

But even if you only have a cooker indoors, you can do a lot of the prepping outside. Get yourself a flat iron ‘plancha’ at the hardware store and use even high oven temperatures for pizzas.

Just make sure you don’t put your food right on top of the oven. If you have a gas one with a lid – they double as ovens and save you having to heat up your kitchen.

Eintopf literally means ‘one pot’, and in Germany Eintopf cooking is an art in itself.
One my recent (wonderful) trip to Berlin, I had travelled all day and eaten junk in the airport and on the plane, and was starving for some proper food.
My sister and I found a little tavern just off Alexanderplatz and they had Eintopf on the menu – for 6 euro. And it was just what the doctor ordered!

This isn’t that recipe, but another which I love making. We are supposed to use Nürnberger sausages, and sometimes they do have them in Lidl, but ordinary Spanish pork sausages will do.

Ingredients for 4-6 eaters:
- 500g sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks
- 1 packet stock vegetables, washed, peeled and cut into equal size pieces/slices
- 1 onion, chopped
- Handful fresh parsley, washed and chopped
- 5 tbsp olive oil
- Salt and pepper
- 1.5 vegetable or chicken stock
- 1-2 bay leaves
- 1 tsp dried marjoram
- 250g red lentils
- 300g sausages (Nürnberger Rostbratwürstchen if you can get them)
- 1 lemon, thoroughly scrubbed and finely sliced
- 100g crème fraîche
- 2 tbsp lemon juice

Nürnberger Linsen-Eintopf
Heat 3 tbsp oil in a large pan. Throw in the vegetables and let them cook for 5 minutes while you stir regularly. Season then add the stock, bay leaves, parsley (hold a bit back) and marjoram. Cover and cook for about 15 minutes; after 8-10 minutes add the lentils and let them cook along until done.

In the meantime, cook the sausages in the remaining oil until they are golden brown. Cut them in half and add them to the pot. Adjust the seasoning and add lemon juice to taste.

Serve the Eintopf with the lemon slices, crème fraiche and the reserved parsley.

Amazingly yummy and satisfying!
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Pie of the Day
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Lasagne - Beef or Vegetable
Ham & Mushroom Tagliatelle
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Fish
Fish & Chips
Fish Pie
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Saturday 6th July
8.30pm SUE MORETTA
Saturday 13th July
8.30pm MICHELLE MILES
Saturday 20th July
8.30pm DENIS MORETTA
Saturday 27th July
8.30pm CHRISTOPHER HALFORD
Saturday 3rd August
8.30pm MICHELLE MILES

You can’t beat a lovely, spicy tagine dish!

This recipe is Moroccan and thus has its share of fruit and nuts to give that lovely combination of spicy and sweet that is common in the Arabic cuisine.

Ingredients for four:

- 600g stewing beef, cubed
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 carrot, sliced
- 1 green pepper, deseeded and cubed
- 20g tomato purée
- 2 apples, cut into wedges
- 12 dates, stoned
- Handful pistachios without their shell
- Handful almonds, peeled and toasted in a dry frying pan
- Olive oil, salt, *ras el hanout, cumin, **harissa sauce, sesame seeds, fresh chopped coriander

*Ras el Hanout is a mixed spice, the Arabic cuisine’s Garam Masala, as it were. It is available in most well stocked supermarkets these days, but also easy to look up on the internet and mix yourself.

**Harissa sauce is a quite hot sauce that you can obtain in well stocked supermarkets; you can use sambal oelek instead.

Heat the oil in your tagine and brown the meat on all sides, in batches if need be. Add the onion and garlic and cook along for 3 minutes. Next, add the carrot and pepper and cook for another 3 minutes. Stir in the tomato purée and let it bubble for a mo before adding a pinch of ras el hanout, a drop of harissa sauce and some ground cumin.

Season with salt, mix and pour over water to cover. Cover with the lid and let it bubble gently for 45 minutes, stirring from time to time.

In the meantime, fry the apple wedges in oil until golden, season and sprinkle with the sesame seeds.

Serve the tagine with the apples and the chopped coriander. Deelish!!
Walnut Baguettes
Like I said at the beginning, if you have a gas barbecue you can make bread without heating up your kitchen!! These baguettes are sooo tasty, both as accompaniment to a BBQ and for a sandwich. They are slow rising, though, so start early the day before!

Ingredients for three baguettes:
- 10g fresh yeast
- 400ml water
- 1x125g pot Greek yoghurt
- ½ tbsp sugar
- 650g strong white flour
- 150g wholemeal flour
- 1 tsp salt
- 200g walnuts, roughly chopped

Day 1:
Dissolve the yeast in the water. Add the yoghurt, sugar and salt and stir well. Add the wholemeal flour and mix it in well, then add the strong white flour, holding back some. Knead well for about 10-15 minutes adding some or all of the withheld flour as and when needed. Carry on till the mix is elastic and pliable and doesn’t stick to your hands.

Now add the walnuts – it takes quite a bit of kneading to get them thoroughly incorporated in the mix; make sure they don’t lie in clusters or have air bubbles around them. When you’ve got a uniform mix with the walnuts well distributed, stick it in an oiled bowl, cover with cling film and leave to rise in the fridge for 24 hours.

Day 2:
Gently turn the mix out of the bowl onto a floured surface, divide it into three parts and shape each one to form a baguette. Stick the baguettes onto a lined baking sheet, cover them and leave them to rise in a warm place for an hour and a half. Brush them with a drop of water, score them and put them in the middle of the oven at 200°C for 25-30 minutes until they are crusty and golden. Leave them to cool on a wire rack.

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Saturday 6th July – MARILYN SHIPLEY – 7pm onwards
Sunday 7th July – ARTOMUNDO - 5pm onwards
Wednesday 10th July - SOULBOTS - 7pm onwards
Saturday 13th July – SHARON ELIZABETH REGAN – 7pm onwards
Sunday 14th July – CAROL GEORGE - 5pm onwards
Wednesday 17th July – ALTOONAS - 7pm onwards
Saturday 20th July – MAD ON BLONDE - 7pm onwards
Sunday 21st July – BRIAN DEE - 7pm onwards
Wednesday 24th July – SOULBOTS – 7pm onwards
Saturday 27th July – See Facebook for more details
Sunday 28th July – J ACK LAW - 6pm onwards
Wednesday 31st July – STEVE FISHER (aka Rod Stewart) - 7pm onwards
Sunday 4th August – MARTIN THE CROONER – 6pm onwards
Tuesday 6th August – MAD ON BLONDE - 7pm onwards
Saturday 10th August – SOULBOTS - 7pm onwards
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MINI MARKET in aid of Maz’s Canine rescue
Restaurant will be open for breakfast

English and European Cuisine now being served
Every Monday Quiz Night with Maureen 7.30pm
Special Menu 4.95

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Most restaurants in Spain offer a Menú del Día, a three course meal with drink and bread included, at a fixed price, in our part of the world usually between 8 and 12 euro.

The Menú del Día owes its existence to the Franco regime, and it is the descendent of the old Menú Turístico, which, as the name implied, was directed at the many tourists that started flocking to Spain in the early 1960’s; the amount of foreign visitors rose from 2.9 million in 1959 to 11.1 in 1965.

The Franco government wanted to attract foreigners by offering cheap tourism, and they created a law for the ordinance and supervision of tourist activities. One of the directives of the law was the creation of the Tourist Menu in 1964.

From August that year every establishment that served food and drink was obliged to offer a menu consisting of the following:

- Cold meats, soup or cream soup as the first course.
- Fish, meat or eggs with garnish as the second.
- A dessert consisting of fruit, a sweet or cheese.

With bread, a quarter litre of local wine, beer, sangria or another drink included.

Furthermore, the menu had to be exhibited in a prominent place and should be served “with the utmost preference and speed”.

The government also fixed the price that the establishments were allowed to charge; however, the price was unrealistically low and this led to most restaurants skimping on both quality and quantity, and even though the menu was hung up in the entrance to the establishment, it was not actually handed out together with the a la carte menu.

One journalist wrote: ‘In Fuengirola – or anywhere – existing for two weeks on a tourist menu at 110 pesetas a go would lead to death by starvation.’

In 1970 a new regulation permitted other set menus to be offered apart from the tourist menu, and although the Menú del Día was fairly strictly regulated at the beginning, this was the first step towards the good quality, reasonably priced menu we find in many Spanish restaurants today.

**Menú del Día**

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As someone was saying…..

By Bill Riley

Graham Greene wrote, “Champagne, if you are seeking the truth, is better than a lie detector; it encourages a man to be expansive, even reckless, while lie detectors are only a challenge to tell lies successfully”.

Not all wine quotations are complimentary. D.H. Lawrence reckoned that, “Spanish wine – my God it is foul, catpiss is Champagne compared, this is sulphurous urination of some aged horse”!

Many of the best known quotations emanate from America – and in particular, Hollywood. Dorothy Parker, she of the acid tongue, wrote, “wine, it’s in my veins and I can’t get it out”. Bette Davis was of the opinion that, “never, never trust anyone who asks for white wine. It means they are phonies”. Clifton Fadiman, the broadcaster and author, was of the opinion, “a bottle of wine begs to be drunk”.

The most sensible quotation is unattributable: “life is too short to drink bad wine”. Hear! Hear!

Wine can also induce an almost religious appreciation. Martin Luther, in the sixteenth century, pointed out that, “beer is made by men; wine by God”. Then in the eighteenth century, Benjamin Franklin opined, “wine is constant proof that God loves us and loves to see us happy”. Around the same time, Napoleon Bonaparte said, “nothing makes the future as rosy as a substantial supply of Burgundy Chambertin”. He must have needed it to contemplate it through a glass of “nothing makes the future as rosy as a substantial supply of Burgundy Chambertin”. He must have needed it to contemplate it through a glass of

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Graham Greene wrote, “Champagne, if you are seeking the truth, is better than a lie detector; it encourages a man to be expansive, even reckless, while lie detectors are only a challenge to tell lies successfully”.

Not all wine quotations are complimentary. D.H. Lawrence reckoned that, “Spanish wine – my God it is foul, catpiss is Champagne compared, this is sulphurous urination of some aged horse”!

Many of the best known quotations emanate from America – and in particular, Hollywood. Dorothy Parker, she of the acid tongue, wrote, “wine, it’s in my veins and I can’t get it out”. Bette Davis was of the opinion that, “never, never trust anyone who asks for white wine. It means they are phonies”. Clifton Fadiman, the broadcaster and author, was of the opinion, “a bottle of wine begs to be drunk”. From Jessica Altieri, “wine is love to see us happy”. Around the same time, Napoleon Bonaparte said, “nothing makes the future as rosy as a substantial supply of Burgundy Chambertin”. He must have needed it to contemplate it through a glass of “nothing makes the future as rosy as a substantial supply of Burgundy Chambertin”. He must have needed it to contemplate it through a glass of
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Homemade cleaning products that work!

Some of the items in your kitchen cupboards (like bicarbonate of soda and vinegar) work as effective cleaners and, even better, are cheap. So the next time you run out of your favourite product, try mixing up one of these DIY standbys instead.

1. Scented All-Purpose Cleaner
   - 1 part white vinegar
   - 1 part water
   - Lemon rind
   - Rosemary sprigs

Combine the above ingredients together, pour into a spray bottle, shake, and then let infuse for a week before using. Once done, you can use the solution to remove hard water stains, clean trash cans, wipe away wall smudges, and much more. Plus, the fruit’s acid adds extra cleaning properties — perfect for stubborn stains.

2. Kitchen Cleaner and Deodorizer
   - 4 tablespoons baking soda
   - 850 ml warm water

To clean kitchen counters, appliances, and the inside of your refrigerator, all you need is baking soda. “It makes a great deodorizer and can be used to shine stainless steel sinks and appliances,” says Carolyn Forte, director of the Good Housekeeping Institute Cleaning Lab. Just pour the above solution on a clean sponge and wipe.

3. Glass Cleaner
   - 1 to 2 drops of orange essential oil for smell (optional)
   - 1/4 cup rubbing alcohol 70% concentration
   - 1/2 cup white vinegar
   - 1/2 cup distilled water

Mix the above ingredients together, pour into a spray bottle, shake, and then let infuse for a week before using. Once done, you can use the solution to remove hard water stains, clean glass, and tubs. It can also be used to clean glass doors or window panes. It can also be used to shine stainless steel sinks and appliances, helping to remove hard water (limescale) deposits. To clean grout, add a few drops of dish soap to the mixture. Use a microfiber cloth to apply, then wipe it away with a clean cloth.

Less toxic than most cleaners, this homemade mixture is safe enough for children and pets. Just pour into a spray bottle. Hint: Don’t clean windows on a hot, sunny day, because the solution will dry too quickly and leave lots of streaks. For mirrors, spray the solution on a paper towel or soft cloth first before wiping.

4. Heavy-Duty Scrub
   - 1/2 lemon
   - 1/2 cup borax powder

Rust stains on porcelain or enamel sinks and tubs are no match for this cleaner. Dip the lemon into the borax and scrub the surface, then rinse. (This is not safe for marble or granite.) Tip: You can find borax, a laundry booster, in the detergent aisle or order it on Amazon.

Important Safety Tip: Never combine household cleaners with chlorine bleach or products containing bleach, such as powdered dishwasher detergent. The fumes they’ll create are extremely dangerous. Before doing any mixing, read the product labels first. Always label any bottles of DIY cleaners with all the ingredients inside. In case a child or animal gets into it, it’s important to know what the mixture contains.
Now that Summer has arrived, we are back to maintaining what we have here at Olive Tree Farm, and as usual water and shade are the keys to success. The veg patches are doing well. The tomatoes are looking after it and harvesting. Maybe he will change his mind and invest in the new system? We hope so!

Although the new irrigation system, which is now on a meter, is more manual than when we used to flood irrigate, it looks as if our trees have recovered from the shock. So, all being well, this year Olive Tree Farm should have an abundance of olive oil. We are so glad we did it, we will keep you posted on events!

Olive Tree Farm’s diary continues.....

Another situation which always seems to arrive as the heat hits, is supplying the animals with shade, and supplying plenty of water, which we change at least three times a day. Then there is the salt.

It is a strange thing. We suddenly notice a difference in how the goats and sheep are behaving. They seem subdued. Then we realised their salt rocks have disappeared. It is amazing how animals know how to survive. A quick visit to our local farm store here in Olula de Rio, was all that was needed. For just a few euros the boot of the car was loaded up with natural salt rocks. The wheelbarrow was filled on arrival back home and taken up to the farm. Within minutes of placing the rocks into the pens, the animals were on them.

There was a session of frantic licking and drinking; it had got late so we left them to it. The next day, they were up and about as usual causing mayhem, they were definitely back on form. Breakfast was devoured at a rate of knots, and their usual morning ritual of head butting and jumping around began. After playtime, they all settled back down and rested under the shade of the netting we had put up. It seems such a small thing to have to supply salt, but it is quite evidently a very important part of their diet and something to consider should you keep goats, sheep or pigs.

That’s about it for this month, thank you for reading.

You can follow the progress of the family and farm on our Face Book page https://www.facebook.com/OliveTreeFarmSpain/

To contact us regarding restoration of your swimming pool, find Olive Tree Farm Pool Services on Face Book page https://www.facebook.com/OliveTreeFarm-Pool-Services-297410080711334/ or contact us by email... olivetreefarmalmeria@outlook.com
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The NHS RansomWare virus

I have seen some new variations of PC viruses of late and started thinking about the RansomWare virus that crippled the NHS and other businesses a couple of years ago. Well, what the hell was that all about? One small piece of computer code caused so much damage. There was more to this than meets the eye.

What was behind the attack? It goes back quite a few months before it showed itself. In previous articles I wrote about Internet Hacking. The U.S. Government had commissioned a series of viruses, worms One being EternalBlue back in around 2010, which were to be used to break into a system. This hit of software, when loaded into industrial control systems would attack the industry-standard off-the-shelf Web-Enabled motor controller units.

In the Iranian situation, this upset motor control systems that were used in centrifuges refining nuclear material. The motors ran out of control and damaged themselves. So, what did this have in common with the NHS RansomWare disaster?

It’s accepted that the NSA (National Security Agency, U.S.) designed virus, EternalBlue, took advantage of a weak spot in Microsoft operating systems, relating to how M.S. dealt with remote server access. Too complicated to go into now. Basically, if you had the where-with-all, you could access and walk around any PC on a network. A disgruntled ex-employee had collected these Trojans and viruses, including EternalBlue and placed them on the Internet, up for the highest bidder. For whatever reason (he probably had the hump, upset motor control systems were shut down, with an inability to see patient notes. AntiVirus companies, GCHQ etc., were looking at ways of stopping the spread. Strangely enough, it was a chap who worked at an AntiVirus company, monitoring what was happening, he was on holiday. He managed to load the virus onto a sacrificial machine, so he could see what it was doing. Inadvertently, he noticed that the virus was trying to make contact with a website that didn’t exist. This may have been an oversight on the Hacker’s behalf. He bought the domain name for a few bob. Long and short, this stalled the virus spread and allowed remedial work to be done.

One chap, on holiday! The government recognised his efforts and gave him 10,000 quid and some extra cheese on his pizza. He gave it to charity. The money that is, he ate the cheese. So what does it all mean? We are all vulnerable. We live and die by the Internet. Just imagine if you took that away? No Facebook, emails, TV and telephone calls. Very frightening?

Think of this I ask you. WiFi connected equipment is all common place. You can control your heating house, lighting systems from your tablet, phones, toys and devices from a laptop. There are many easily obtained programs that you can download which will enable you to “sniff” the WiFi air and hack away. Knowing the right things to do and assuming default passwords such as 1234 which will give him 10,000 quid and some extra cheese on his pizza. He gave it to charity. The money that is, he ate the cheese. So what does it all mean? We are all vulnerable. We live and die by the Internet. Just imagine if you took that away? No Facebook, emails, TV and telephone calls. Very frightening?

A group known as WannaCry took a variation of EternalBlue and added some nasty additional payloads and was now hiding it as an U.S. designed virus, (National Security Agency, opposite Mediterraneo supermarket). Inadvertently, he noticed that the virus was trying to make contact with a website that didn’t exist. This may have been an oversight on the Hacker’s behalf. He bought the domain name for a few bob. Long and short, this stalled the virus spread and allowed remedial work to be done.

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Within a few hours, AntiVirus companies were seeing reports of networks globally being damaged. The High profile NHS hit the news as 60% of their network was compromised. Many trusts had not updated their systems. Planned operations, to local Drs. Surgeries were shut down, with an inability to see patient notes. AntiVirus companies, GCHQ etc., were looking at ways of stopping the spread. Strangely enough, it was a chap who worked at an AntiVirus company, monitoring what was happening, he was on holiday. He managed to load the virus onto a sacrificial machine, so he could see what it was doing. Inadvertently, he noticed that the virus was trying to make contact with a website that didn’t exist. This may have been an oversight on the Hacker’s behalf. He bought the domain name for a few bob. Long and short, this stalled the virus spread and allowed remedial work to be done.

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Planning for a trip to the beaches of Mojácar!

A beach trip can be a ton of fun and very relaxing. A poorly planned trip, though, can turn into a pain—literally, if you forget to pack the right clothes.

Pack the right clothes. Pack the swimsuit you’ve picked out and an extra change of clothes. The extra change of clothes is for the ride home, so you won’t be all wet and sandy.

• Having a changes of clothes means you can head somewhere else after the beach.
• Don’t forget to include good footwear. Take sandals for the beach and water shoes for the ocean so you’re ready for anything.
• For beach toys, find a net bag so sand can be left on the beach.
• Another trick to protect your valuables is to clean out an old sunscreen bottle. Use it to hide valuables you don’t want anyone to steal, and as a bonus, it keeps them dry.
• You can also stash electronics in zip-top bags for protection.
• You’ll need a place to store your valuables away from the water and the sand. Pick a bag that’s fairly water resistant or waterproof so that you can stash your phone and wallet away. Leave anything irreplaceable behind that gets hurt. You can buy a first aid kit ready-made or make your own.

Take a first aid kit. Of course, you hope no one will get injured, but taking a basic first aid kit will offer you some relief if someone gets hurt. You can buy a first aid kit ready-made or make your own.

Bring a waterproof or water resistant bag. You’ll need a place to store your valuables away from the water and the sand. Pick a bag that’s fairly water resistant or waterproof so that you can stash your phone and wallet away. Leave anything irreplaceable behind that you can so you don’t lose or damage it on the beach.

• Another trick to protect your valuables is to clean out an old sunscreen bottle. Use it to hide valuables you don’t want anyone to steal, and as a bonus, it keeps them dry.

Take something to sit on. A beach chair or a towel is appropriate, but if you choose a towel, it should be separate from the one you’ll be using to dry off with.

Take protection from the sun. You don’t want to ruin your beach trip with a bad sunburn.

• Start with a sunscreen of at least 15 SPF. Check to make sure it protects against both UVA and UVB rays. Don’t forget to add a lip balm with sunscreen to protect your lips. Make sure to reapply it frequently, especially after sweating or jumping in the water.

• Use clothing for protection. Hats and sunglasses offer much needed protection for your face and eyes, as does a beach umbrella.

The government team of the Mojácar City Council has already raised the three blue flags that wave on the beaches of Ventanicas, Piedra Vilazur and Marina de la Torre. Although all the coast bordering the municipality of Mojácar is in optimal condition, these three particular beaches have obtained the highest rating given.

Mojácar has had blue flags since the 90s and each year increases the equipment and services of all bathing areas.

To obtain a blue flag, the beaches are reviewed by national and international inspectors. The criteria, takes into account the information and environmental education that each beach has. The quality of the water, environmental management and safety and services are also taken into account.

There should be panels with information about the beach and the coastal ecosystems. The quality of bathing water, during the previous bathing season, must be excellent in all sampling areas and comply with the urban wastewater treatment Directive. It is also required to comply with environmental legislation, especially the Coastal Law, with adequate waste management, especially with glass.

The beaches must have safe and easy access, especially for disabled people. Likewise, first aid equipment and adequate human equipment and life-saving equipment are required.

As well as obtaining a blue flag, other initiatives are included for all of the bathing areas of the beaches of Mojácar.

There are "Junior Lifeguard" courses organised, where the youngest children learn basic principles of first aid, CPR, how to call 112, among other things within reach of their age.

As for the cleanliness, both the sand and the seabed, workshops are arranged to help increase awareness.

One of the recurring tasks in summer and on the beaches of Mojácar, are the campaigns, both for children and adults, to raise awareness of the vital importance of correct and responsible action towards marine animals including whales and dolphins when seen on the sand or near the beach.

It is a year-round job that brings together the Councillors of Tourism and Beach of the City of Mojácar to ensure that, as always, holidays in this town meet the best expectations of tourists who visit.

Source and photos: http://www.mojacar.es/banderas-azules-mojacar/
Water Sports in Abundance

The town of Mojácar is characterised for its coastline, attracting year after year tourists who are seeking its climate, its golden sandy beaches, its rugged cliffs and small coves. Natural beauty spots where you can choose to relax, swim in crystal clear waters, sunbathe or practice one or more of the water sports on offer.

Water sports enthusiasts will love the Mojácar Playa, with its blue water seaside and blue-flag and the all year warm water beaches. Temperatures vary with colder months being January to February 8-10°C and warmest between July and August 21-30°C. Water temperature during summer is quite warm, about 20-22°C.

The wave size is small, usually less than a meter, tide independent, with swell direction south west. The winds are frontal thermal, south west direction, not the best for experienced kites, but try during lunch hour to catch stronger ones. With mountains blocking stronger winds, this is a great spot for a beginner to learn and practice. A lot of room to launch your kite and even larger space to kite.

Due to the height of the waves Mojácar Playa is also a good area for boarders especially if you fairly new at the sport, and if you are an absolute novice you can attend one of the local schools for instructions and lessons for beginners.

For the more adventurous who are looking for an unforgettable experience, there are Diving Centres that offer the opportunity to venture deep into the sea and take a stroll through the depths of the Natural Park of Cabo de Gata. Discover the beauty and colours of the seabed, as well as the multitude of species that live there (octopus, moray...).

Hoisting the sail is another ideal way to get to know the Coast of Mojácar and seeing among many others, the beaches of Marina de la Torre, Descargador or La Piedra Villazar. Best time to visit the spot is during the summer when there are a lot of water sport businesses and facilities open to help you enjoy the experiences Mojácar has to offer.

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Flamenco
From Jerez de la Frontera

By Francesca Girone “La Gitana Inglesa”

A look into how each region of Spain, in particular within Andaluca, offers its own individual style of flamenco with its own particular characteristics. This article focuses on the important region of Jerez de la Frontera.

As we have examined in previous articles, Flamenco consists of three main elements; the CANTE (song), BAILE (the dance), GUITARRA (guitar playing). Whilst the popular folkloric songs and dances of Andalucia and some other parts of Spain have influenced early flamenco considerably, one has to acknowledge the indisputable fact that the Spanish gypsy community are predominantly responsible for the creation of traditional flamenco as we know it. One should also acknowledge that influences such as the seven centuries of Muslim occupation in Spain have also played a significant role in the development of what we recognize today as the Flamenco Art Form.

Whilst many of the details of the development of Flamenco have been lost in history, it is obvious that the art form originated in Andalusia and that from the VIII to the XVII centuries, a time when Spain was under Arabic rule, the art form evolved from folkloric music of the Arabs, Christians and Jews to a new form created by the gypsies.

During the period 1765 and 1860, the first Flamenco schools were created in Cadiz, Jerez de la Frontera and the district of Triana in Seville. Early flamenco was all about the song, the CANTE and initially was only accompanied by the ‘toque de palmas’ (this is the inimitable rhythmical clapping of hands which gives more depth to the music). Later the playing of the guitar was introduced and finally the dance form evolved. It is important to note the fact that, as Flamenco Dancers, we must always give the most respect to the music. Indeed the church bells in the district of Santiago (one of the famous flamenco ‘barrios’ of Jerez) are often sung about in the flamenco palo known as Bulerias.

JEREZ DE LA FRONTERA AND IT’S OWN UNIQUE FLAMENCO

Whilst both experts and non-experts alike immediately think of cities such as Granada and Seville as being the leading parts of Andaluca in relation to Flamenco, the truth of the matter is that for Flamenco artists Jerez de la Frontera is possibly the MOST significant birthplace of the finest quality flamenco.

Jerez is mainly famous for its wines and sherries, and also for its equestrian culture. However, Jerez is literally the cradle of flamenco, with some of Flamenco’s leading creators and innovators being born there or spending immense amounts of time there in order to develop their art. It is a small but fascinating city, still extremely traditional, with many churches (and church attendees) and fascinating monuments. Indeed the church bells in the district of Santiago (one of the famous flamenco ‘barrios’ of Jerez) are often sung about in the flamenco palo known as Bulerias.

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Whilst many of the details of the development of Flamenco have been lost in history, it is obvious that the art form originated in Andalusia and that from the VIII to the XVII centuries, a time when Spain was under Arabic rule, the art form evolved from folkloric music of the Arabs, Christians and Jews to a new form created by the gypsies.

During the period 1765 and 1860, the first Flamenco schools were created in Cadiz, Jerez de la Frontera and the district of Triana in Seville. Early flamenco was all about the song, the CANTE and initially was only accompanied by the ‘toque de palmas’ (this is the inimitable rhythmical clapping of hands which gives more depth to the music). Later the playing of the guitar was introduced and finally the dance form evolved. It is important to note the fact that, as Flamenco Dancers, we must always give the most respect to the song, indeed it is our job to interpret what the singer is singing to us.

Other highly significant dates in the evolution of flamenco include the periods of 1869 to 1910 (known as the “Golden Age”); an era when the flamenco dance came to the fore as performed in the Cafe La Pergola. Other highly significant dates in the evolution of flamenco include the periods of 1869 to 1910 (known as the “Golden Age”); an era when the flamenco dance came to the fore as performed in the Cafe La Pergola. Other highly significant dates in the evolution of flamenco include the periods of 1869 to 1910 (known as the “Golden Age”); an era when the flamenco dance came to the fore as performed in the Cafe La Pergola. Other highly significant dates in the evolution of flamenco include the periods of 1869 to 1910 (known as the “Golden Age”); an era when the flamenco dance came to the fore as performed in the Cafe La Pergola. Other highly significant dates in the evolution of flamenco include the periods of 1869 to 1910 (known as the “Golden Age”); an era when the flamenco dance came to the fore as performed in the Cafe La Pergola.
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**Mojácar Reduced** € 69,000

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The top 5 Best Selling Cars in Spain in 2018 and what people paid

SEAT IBIZA

The Ibiza is a very practical car for its size and excellent quality for the price. 19,519 people bought the Ibiza in 2018. Starting from 11,500€ for the most basic version, rising to 21,250€ for the 1.6 TDI model. For lovers of sports cars, the Ibiza FR with 150 hp TSI 1.5 proved to be a hit with, an engine that lets you know it is there and actually quite ferocious for an Ibiza priced at 19,620€.

VOlkswagen POLO

The German Volkswagen Polo was the target of 17,183 buyers, who went for the effectiveness and quality that all Volkswagens promise. With a spec similar to that of the Ibiza, its price range rises from 12,800€ for the Polo in 1.0 of 65 hp, to 24,305€ for the radical Polo GTI with 2.0 TSI engine and 200 hp. For 17,680€ a gas and gasoline model of 90 HP of power was offered.

Dacia SANDERO

There are always representatives of Dacia among the best sellers. The Dacia range of cars is growing by the year and proving very popular. 16,728 people went in search of a Sandero during the first semester of 2018. The biggest pull seems to be it had a considerable level of equipment for only 9,74€. Its most expensive version starts at 12,836€. Not bad for quite a lot of car!

VOlkswagen GOLF

The most famous Volkswagen vehicle of recent years was purchased by 16,531 people. Its great reputation, quality, and finish make it an object of desire for many people. 18,635€ is what it would cost for its most affordable version, offering 110 hp with 1.0 TSI engine, but a huge leap up to 34,125€ for the GTI with a 2.0 TSI 230 hp, is what you would have paid if you wanted a fancier more equipped model.

The car market is in good health and with the Spanish market, the SUVs have played a huge part of the success, although the king is still the Lion (León), there are a number of other makes following closely behind, all offering an excellent basic starting point at affordable prices. So on that note, which were the top 5 best selling cars bought in 2018, and what did people pay?

SEAT LEON

The León is the favourite car of the Spaniards, chosen 21,204 times in 2018. Its attractive design, options of equipment to adapt to any customer needs, sports versions such as the FR and the Cupra, and low consumption, make it a popular choice. Starting from 18,270€ for the 1.2 TSI, 110 HP version, and going up to 35,970€ for the Leon Cupra version. For the more demanding there is the Cupra R, limited series, for 46,375€.

VOLKSWAGEN POLO

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The impression that immediately springs to mind at the thought of driving on the Spanish mainland is of reckless, testosterone-fuelled, suntanned Hispanic males recklessly forcing your rented Fiat Cinquecento careering off a remote mountain road, into a dry riverbed 600 feet below.

OK! so maybe that’s a little dramatic to say the least, but it is an impression shared by a lot of people, when in actual fact nothing could be further from the truth. After many years driving in Europe, I think I can accurately say it is one of the most fulfilling driving experiences, enjoying spectacular scenery and little, or no congestion.

It isn’t uncommon for Spanish drivers to pull out in front of you without indicating, but there is one big difference! NO ROAD RAGE. There will be no flashing lights six inches from the rear of your car, or angry motorists pulling alongside demonstrating their knowledge of English profanities, they will just pull back to a safe distance, (unless they too are tourists).

But seriously, if you are considering renting a car in Spain, or even taking your own, there are some things you should be aware of, some of the more important ones are listed below.

This sounds ridiculously obvious, but for those of us conditioned to driving on the left it causes more incidents than anything else… “Drive on the right.” “Well of course I will.” I hear you say, but it is all too easy to forget when pulling out from a petrol station or restaurant, one momentary lapse of concentration is all that is needed to ruin a perfectly good holiday.

When driving on a motorway (Autopista), don’t react angrily to cars flashing their headlights before overtaking you… It’s the law! They are warning you that they are about to overtake.

When moving onto a motorway, never cross a solid white line, wait for the broken line, and when overtaking, always indicate pulling out and back in. The Spanish authorities are strictly enforcing this law, so break it at your own peril!!

The current speed limit in towns is 50km/h; open roads 90 km/h to 100 km/h and motorways 120 km/h although these are variable, and can change at any time, so keep an eye on the signposts. If your car does not show km/h, which unless you are in possession of a vintage automobile is very unlikely, the calculation is divide by 5, multiply by 8. So, 50 miles per hour is 80 km per hour. Be aware that radar traps are frequent and infringements are dealt with, with on the spot fines.

Don’t even consider drinking, unless you are in the process of writing an account of incarceration in a Spanish prison, the blood alcohol level is 0.5 per mg, which equates to one small beer, dropping to 0.1 mg for new drivers (who have passed their test for less than two years).
Know your Policemen

Few things can confuse people moving to Spain more than the different Spanish police forces that exist throughout the country – each of which wears a different uniform and each of which has a different ambit of operation from the other force!

The Spanish police is essentially composed of three forces: the Guardia Civil, the Policía Nacional and the Policía Local.

1. Guardia Civil

To all intents and purposes, the Guardia Civil is a conventional police force who operate in exactly the same way as the police of any other modern European country. They have the resources, powers and facilities of a normal police force and are generally admired within Spain for their high level of discipline and professionalism. Whilst they are a military force (with military ranks) in peacetime they act under the civil authority and have no extraordinary powers.

Importantly, the remit of the Guardia Civil is to police rural areas and towns under around 20,000 people. So, they do not operate in urban areas with a population that exceeds this number. If you suffer a crime or you need police help in a rural area of Spain then it is to the Guardia Civil to whom you must turn – and who will attend to the investigation of any problem.

2. Policía Nacional

The Policía Nacional are normally dressed in black uniforms but they can be seen also wearing blue, military-style uniforms. Like the Guardia Civil, they are a conventional police force, albeit that they are a completely civil force with civil (rather than military) ranks. It is to them that you must go if you suffer a crime or need police help within an urban area – and it is only the Policía Nacional who will respond to (or investigate a crime) in a town of some 20,000 people or more.

3. Policía Local

Finally, there is the Policía Local. This is a force which is recruited, funded and controlled by local town halls and that is responsible to the elected Mayor. The Policía Local wear black uniforms with white shirts and respond to minor crimes.

Mostly the Policía Local deal with local authority enforcement matters, together with urban (city, town or village) traffic control and any associated violations. Crimes are not investigated and any serious matter is immediately handed over to either the Guardia Civil or Policía Nacional as appropriate to the demographic area. Almost all Spanish police are armed although occasionally this is not the case with village Policía Local.

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Driving a UK plated vehicle around Spain

What you need to know before setting off on your Spanish adventure!

Fancy some sun, sand, sea and sangria (when you’re not driving, of course)? A driving holiday in Spain is a great way to see all that the country has to offer beyond the usual package holiday.

Before you set off in your UK registered vehicle though, here are some tips on making sure you’re fully prepared for driving in Spain.

What are the requirements for driving in Spain?

Like other countries in the EU, you can drive in Spain using your full UK driving licence, but you must be at least 18 years old.

If you have an International Driving Permit, take it with you. While it’s not a requirement, IDPs are recognised in Spain.

Here’s a handy checklist of what you should have in the car with you:

• proof of insurance
• passport as proof of ID
• your V5C certificate
• warning triangle
• GB sticker or Europlates
• headlamp adjustment
• high-vis jacket
• spare pair of glasses (if you wear them, of course)

Just like in France, radar and speed camera detectors are illegal in Spain. But, if your sat nav includes speed camera information as standard, you should be okay.

In fact, the Spanish Transport Department are pretty good at making the public aware of the location of speed cameras. Most cameras are signposted and there’s even an app that shows you where they are.

Spanish rules of the road

Drink-driving

The Spanish drink-drive limit is 0.5 mg/ml of blood, down to 0.3 mg/ml for people with fewer than three years’ driving experience.

Fuel

It’s against the law to carry spare petrol in the car in Spain. But you can also be fined for running out of petrol on certain main roads.

Roundabouts

When you’re driving on a Spanish roundabout, remember that cars already on the roundabout have priority over cars that don’t.

Spanish motorways and tolls

The motorways in Spain – the autopistas – are usually quite light on traffic. This is because the motorways are littered with toll booths, meaning you could rack up quite a bill if you’re travelling a fair distance.

The amount you pay per toll depends on the length of the road and in which area you’re driving. For example, driving from Barcelona to Calella – a distance of 56km – would cost around 7€.

Rather than paying the tolls, many of the locals opt for the back roads, which can get quite busy. If you’re after a fast, smooth but potentially expensive drive, take the autopistas.

It’s worth remembering that you must use your indicators when coming on or off the autopistas. You should also use your indicators whenever you change lanes. If you’re caught not doing so, you could end up with a fine.

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