

February 2024

Issue 130

Almería Living

A Great Read - Original, Inspiring, Local

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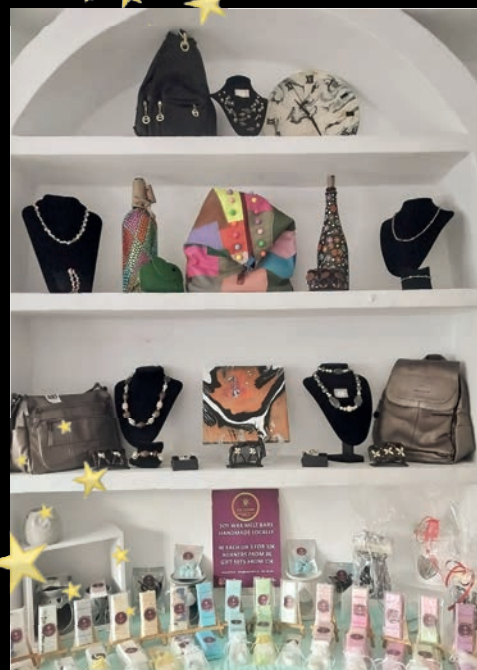
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CAHOOTS opened its doors just over 2 years ago selling handmade jewellery. I invited other local artisans around the area to sell their items in the shop and it has now gone from strength to strength. It is also a popular venue for artisan workshops making various items whilst having a beautiful mediterranean view.

We have in our shop:

Handmade jewellery by **Sharon's Jewellery**
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We also have a whole new range of workshops and new exciting plans in the next few months.

We now offer the following workshops:

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 Ceramics
 Soap making
 Diamond painting
 Acrylic pour
 Dream catchers

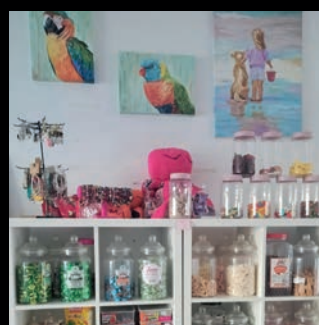
Sun catchers
 Mosaic windchimes
 Mandala Art
 Decoupage
 Macrame
 Knitting
 Crocheting
 Wet felting
 Glass making
 Crystal workshop

Oracle card workshop
 Spanish Classes for beginners (2 classes one for young people and one for older students)

Every month we add a list of upcoming craft courses. If you are interested in any of them, please message us on **Whatsapp 711 006 027** to find out more information or if you have a skill you want to share come and talk to us!



In December we had a major refurbishment and Victoria Jones from **Studio Morera** bought her business into the shop. We have been collaborating ideas and we now have a whole new range of goods in the shop including leather handbags, scarves, socks, men's section and much more!!!!!!



Come and show your support by buying local from all the local artisans in our area.

We are located between the Irish Rover and Mojacar Insurance along the playa.

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Almeria Living

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Welcome to the February 2024 issue of Almeria Living. It is hard to believe we are already into the second month of the year.

I know how much we all enjoyed the lovely weather that January provided but it really isn't good for nature or the environment! We really need rain - I know I said it last month but it is vital before our taps run dry. Let's try another month of rain dancing.

Despite the lack of rain, the citrus trees are laden with fruit this year and they are so colourful too. We have been gifted many bags of oranges and lemons and shared them with our clients too.

For all those romantics out there, C.A.T. Services have a lovely range of Valentine's Cards. We have also introduced a new range of blank cards for all occasions or to just say hello.

In this issue...

As always, I offer my grateful thanks to my scribes, who help keep our magazine a great read. If you would like to be considered for a future publication do send me an email.

Many thanks, as always, to our advertisers, who continue to support our magazine and reap the benefits of doing so. Local businesses rely on our trade so please try to use them whenever you can.

We hope you enjoy your read this month. Please don't forget to tell our advertisers that you saw them in the Almeria Living.

Take care and stay safe. Talk again in March.

Karen (Ed)

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Obtaining a Fishing License in Spain

In Andalucia and most other autonomous regions of Spain it is necessary to obtain a licence in order to take part in the sport. There are actually several different types of licence depending on where and how you will be fishing. In this article we will look at the three main types Saltwater Shore or Boat & Freshwater.

Sea Shore

The name of the license is 'Licencia de Pesca Marítima de Recreo, clase 1'. (Desde orilla: From land). The license only applies to the person named on it, and it gives the holder the right to leisure sea fishing from the shore. You are allowed a maximum of two fishing rods.

The fishing license is renewable every three years and it is only valid on the Andalucían coast.

You can obtain the license from the office of the Delegación Territorial de la Consejería de Agricultura, Pesca y Desarrollo Rural. The nearest office in our part of the woods is in Huércal Overa.

In order to obtain it you need to present original and copy of your passport, N.I.E./Residencia, an application form and proof of having paid the corresponding government tax.

Sea Offshore

If you want to do your fishing offshore, you need 'Licencia de Pesca Marítima de Recreo, clase 2. (Desde embarcación: From a boat).

This license covers both moving and stationary boats, fishing with a rod or other leisure fishing gear. This license must also be renewed every three years, and the documentation needed is the same as above as well as the corresponding tax.



The license gives you permission to fish in interior Andalucían waters, 'interior' meaning from a line between two protruding points of the coast to the coastline in between these two points.

Salt water river estuaries are also included in the category up until the river becomes fresh water.

The license is only valid when the captain of the boat has the correct nautical qualification to steer it.

For both class 1 and class 2 fishing licenses it is important that you know which fish it is legal to catch, and that they are not below the minimum measure/weight permitted.

Freshwater

To obtain a freshwater fishing licence in Andalucia it is necessary to sit an environmental exam, which unfortunately is only available in Spanish. Upon passing you receive an NIR (registration number) which together with insurance and personal ID you can apply for the licence. This is renewable every 3 years.

If you are over 65 the good news is that you are exempt from the tax and the licence issued is permanent.

If you would like more information or help with obtaining a licence contact C.A.T. Services in La Alfoquía.



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National Parks in Spain

Spain boasts 15 national parks distributed on the peninsula and the two archipelagos. In March, Nina started our journey to visit them all and so our travels continue



The Picos de Europa national park is a massif situated in northern Spain, in the central part of the Cantabrian Mountains. Although it does not cover a very large area, it is a very interesting and unusual geological phenomenon, not least due to its closeness to the sea. It is Spain's second most visited national park, the number of visitors exceeded only by the Teide National Park in Tenerife.

These limestone mountains reach into Asturias, León, and Cantabria; the park is famous for its high mountain peaks, many of which are more than 2,500 MASL and nonetheless are only 15 km from the Cantabrian Sea.

In 1918, the Montaña de Covadonga was declared National Park, the first protected space in Spain, and one of the oldest in Europe. It covered the western massif of the Picos de Europa. In 1995 the protected area was extended to cover the central and eastern massifs, and the headwaters of the Sella, Cares, and Deva rivers to give it a total surface of 64,660 hectares.

This landscape boasts amazing height differences formed by high mountains and sharp dips into passes; the Torrecerredo peak reaching 2,646 MASL is the highest peak in the park, although the most well-known is probably the Naranjo de Bulnes, also known as Picu Urriellu, a slim limestone mass with a vertical surface more

than 500 m high. In Picos de Europa you find mountain ecosystems combined with Atlantic forest; there is a great variety of environments very much influenced by the closeness of the sea, the topography, and the steep slopes, which all combine to produce an amazing biological affluence.

The origin of these Alpine limestone mountains is sea deposits with a high content of calcium carbonate. The effects of the creation of Hercynian folds affected these rocks; the layers broke up, piled on top of one another and started folding.

Later, the Alpine folds raised the mountains permanently to heights greater than their present level. The erosive power of water and ice created the intricate labyrinth of peaks and passes that constitute the Picos de Europa today.

Today, they are the steepest mountains in Spain with sharp height changes and an accused verticality where mountains change from a height of 2,500 MASL to sea level over a distance of a few kilometres.

The successive ice ages that affected Europe during the quaternary left their imprint on these mountains. When the snow disappeared, it left a landscape clearly marked by its glacial character.

However, due to the dominance of limestone in the park one of the most characteristic features of the glacial periods, the lakes, is almost absent in the park. A few have survived, such as the Covadonga lakes (Enol and Ercina), and some small lagunes.

In the heights of Picos de Europa you can find plants that survive under the harsh conditions in an Alpine climate. In amongst the stones, rocks, and cracks there is a wealth of flowers – rockfoils, globe daisies, clove pink, sea thrift, great yellow gentian, forget-me-nots, and others.

Also, the survivors of the ice ages that through evolution have developed the necessary biological resistance to keep going strong and thrive there blossom in the heights. These include endemic species to the Cantabrian Mountains such as hedgemustard, echinospartum, or Asturian daffodil, as well as many others, more

widely spread species, which can also be found in the Pyrenees and the Alps.

On the fauna side of things, the Cantabrian brown bear can still be found in these mountains in spite of being the preferred kill amongst hunters across the board, from kings to poachers, for centuries. The species survived them all, and specimens often wander into the park from the surrounding mountains, especially on the southern slopes.

Salmon is the largest fish species in the park. They breed in fast flowing rivers with very cold, well oxygenated water, which they find in the smaller branches of the Cares, Deva, and Sella rivers. These rivers are Spain's principal salmon habitats.

Thanks to several protection programmes for different bird species in Picos de Europa it is not unusual to see golden eagles, bearded vultures, buzzards, and Egyptian vultures. There are also specimens of capercaillies, but they hide in the undergrowth in the forested areas and are more difficult to spot.

If we were to mention one single animal that is emblematic to the park, it would have to be the chamois, which is well represented all over the park. Apart from the brown bear, there are also wolves, wild boar, roe deer, mountain cats, martens, weasels, otters, and more.

The first human inhabitants of Picos de Europa settled in the neolithic period.

Much later, in the 2nd and 1st century B.C. populations of Asturians and Cantabrians cropped up in the area. Neither the romans nor the Visigoths managed to dominate the mountains, although they did occupy some of the surrounding valleys.

At the beginning of the 8th century, the Moors arrived in Spain and managed to conquer almost all of the Peninsula. At the same time, in Picos de Europa, The Asturians elected Pelayo as their king in order to organise resistance. The Moor's attempt to conquer this area was finally thwarted in the Battle of Covadonga. Thus was the Kingdom of Asturias founded, and the long process of the reconquest started.

Livestock has always been the traditional way of living with plenty of feed in the green, lush valleys of the park. Picos de Europa were virtually isolated due to the complicated terrain and difficult access. However, in the middle of the 18th century, mining was initiated in the area, and this led to relatively extensive infrastructures.

This was when scientist and mountaineers started to divulge the



aesthetic and natural riches of the park. Amongst them were the French mountaineers Paul Labrousse and Conde de Saint-Said. They executed several climbs at the end of the 19th century. Other pioneers to visit include the German geologist, Guillermo Schultz, who in 1855 drew a very accurate map of Picos de Europa. Another German, Hugo Opermaier carried out an extensive study on glaciers and ice age phenomena.

Today, the park is a popular destination for rural tourism.



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February 28th: Día de Andalucía



Each of Spain's 17 regions has its own holiday to commemorate the day it was officially established as an autonomous region under the Spanish constitution, which was established in 1978. Andalucía became an autonomous region on February 28th 1981.

The symbol for this day is Blas Infante, who is considered the father of Andalucía. He was born in Casares (north of Estepona) in 1885. He spent most of his working life in Córdoba and Seville.

In his opinion, Andalucía was crucial to Spain because of its large geographical size, population and extensive industry. He said that if Andalucía did not function, neither would the rest of Spain.

Politically he fought for the rights of the Andalusian workers and against hunger, an extensive problem in society then.

He was fiercely proud of his Andalusian roots and Andalucía's uniqueness. This inspired him to design the Andalusian flag, green and white with the emblem of Hercules in the middle.

However, he was only appreciated in Andalucía. He was politically active in several parties, but was never elected to central government. At the last democratic election in 1936 he was active in the Partido Republicano party, which wanted a federally governed Spanish republic. The election was no success for the party, but Blas Infante was elected honorary president of the future Andalusian region on July 5th that year.

However, on July 17th Francisco Franco and a group of other military leaders initiated a military coup which led to three years of civil war. His troupes executed Blas Infante in Seville on August 11th of that year for 'being active in a political party that promotes revolutionary tendencies and a Spain divided into regions.'

He was sentenced to death retroactively in 1940, after the end of the civil war, with Franco as the new leader of Spain – a Spain with one flag, one language and one central government in Madrid.



Trades & Services

How to avoid costly damp repairs

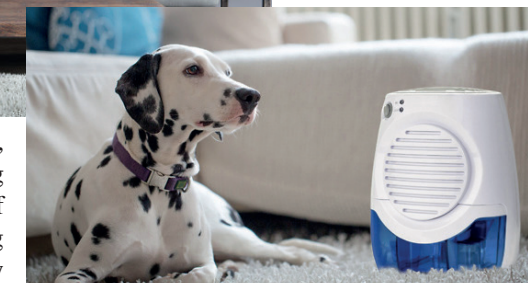


Keep your heating on at a constant but slightly lower temperature. Turning the heating up when the house is freezing can contribute to damp problems.

Consider buying a dehumidifier as an alternative to draw moisture out of the air.

Penetrating damp problems

Penetrating damp appears where walls and joinery are subject to concentrated, prolonged wetting. Externally, this can come from poorly maintained rainwater fittings, leaks in your roof, or hairline fractures in pointing or render. Internally, it might be caused by overflowing baths, sinks or



shower trays, cracked or damaged tiles or burst pipes. The result is unsightly patches of damp on walls and ceilings, as well as peeling wallpaper and paint. These patches often darken when it rains, and they usually spread horizontally instead of vertically.

While you may find that your home needs extensive work, some basic maintenance can go a long way to curing or managing a penetrating damp problem.

Rising damp problems

Rising damp problems are one of the hardest types of damp to fix. It tends to be caused by moisture below the ground that creeps up through your floors and can rise up your walls. It can cause crumbling skirting boards, tide marks on walls and mineral deposits that leave a white, powdery substance on walls and floors. The most important thing is to make sure your building can breathe. While it may be tempting to completely waterproof your floor to seal it off, this can exacerbate a damp problem as, with nowhere to go, the moisture will soak up the walls instead. To treat really bad cases of rising damp, you may have to call in the professionals.

Paying for damp proofing

Damp can be a complex issue, and it may be that your home is being affected by more than one type. Plus, trying to solve one problem can sometimes create another. If the solutions above don't seem to help, it may be time to call in a professional who should help you choose what the best course of action is for your home.

Before needing to splash out on costly damp repairs, make sure you follow our top tips for identifying and solving damp yourself. From droplets of condensation on your window panes to crumbling skirting boards, peeling wallpaper and unsightly patches, damp problems have many different symptoms.

There are three main types of damp - condensation, rising damp and penetrating damp. But damp isn't always clear cut, you may have two types that are intermingling, or different types in different areas.

Condensation problems

A very common form of damp, condensation occurs when warm, moist air inside your home comes into contact with colder surfaces, often windows and exterior walls, and releases water in the form of droplets. If the moisture isn't removed, mould can quickly grow. Problems with condensation tend to occur when a building has a high moisture content, often due to a lack of adequate ventilation. There are five simple, cheap condensation solutions:

Wipe away condensation as often as you can to keep surfaces dry.

Control humidity levels. Cooking, showering and drying laundry all release lots of moisture. It would help to install extractor fans in these rooms.

Ventilate your home. Open windows as often as you can and consider adding air vents.

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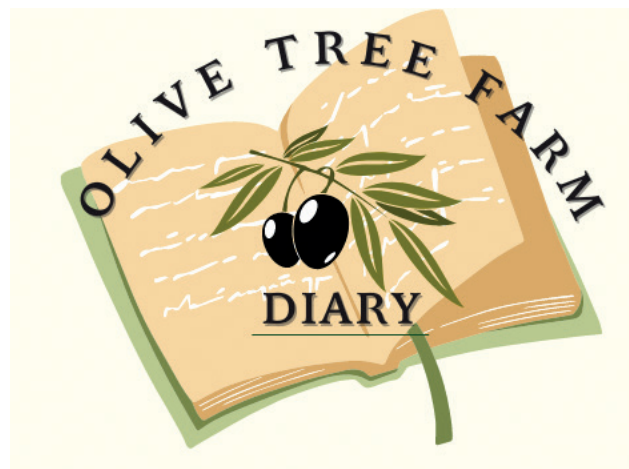
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The year started off fresh and cold here at Olive Tree Farm, but late January gifted us with a few days of beautiful spring weather, perfect for getting an early start on some farm and garden jobs before the raining season kicks off.

Our aim to clear up the farm is in steady progress, and we hope to be done and starting the preparation work to get this pond on the go, because we have some exciting (albeit earlier than planned) news!

A neighbour came knocking and asking us if we would take his ducks off his hands. He had bought them for his grandchildren, but now as they are growing, there just isn't much room for them on their small cortijo. We didn't hesitate!

So, we are delighted to introduce you to our two new girls and drake, the Khaki Campbells.

The geese are enamoured, particularly the female. They have taken them under their wings and now parade them around the farm, showing them how it all works, and telling them when to run for cover (guys, we aren't going to hurt them!).

This is fantastic, and it certainly puts pressure on to get the pond sorted for them, but we like a good push to get us into gear.

It is also a fantastic parenting sign, which means we'll have some goose eggs soon as their breeding season fast approaches.

Ben enlisted the help of 8-year-old Logan to help him with a drill and saw to get the old goose house nice and comfy and warm once again... as you can imagine, we didn't need to press him hard for help, in fact, he even offered to test it out! Logan has many ideas in mind for the farm too, his favourite so far is to build a chicken hotel next! ... I think I'll leave Dad with that fun little project!

With the holidays done and moving far behind us, that puts Ben back to work in pools throughout the week, leaving myself and Melody to man the ship. We can't really work on the farm together without extra hands about, but that doesn't leave us short for things to do! Melody's favourite job is being carried into the aviaries to feed the budgies and finches, and her face lights up to see all the fabulous colours blurring by. I do wonder what she makes of it all!

The rest of my days at the moment are spent clearing paths ahead of Ben around the house, so when he is home over the weekend he has the space to bring in and use his weapons of mass restoration. The house is still coming along, everything at its own pace. We have a lot to do, a lot of ideas to see into reality, and we know it's going to be quite a bit of a journey, but I am so proud of what we have managed to do so far.

Somewhere in the midst of all this work, Ben and I are also teaming up to fill up the freezer, and making those supermarket visits happen a little less often. Then once the true warmer weather kicks in, it'll be time for us to dig out the incubator. The boys are so excited to see

some chicks back up on the farm, and Ben and I are, too! Every step we take and job we complete is a path to another of our goals, it's super exciting to see it all come about.

We've also begun enjoying the fruits of our labours in fattening up the chicks from October, and it's been all hands on deck for plucking, and then I processed the bird as Ben got the veggies ready. I don't know if it's because we know we raised them ourselves, but nothing beats the taste and comfort from doing all the work to get that meat on the table. And, most importantly, all the kids said it was delicious — a job well done!

We'll be sorting the rest out over the next week and get that freezer brimming, and I guess Ben ought to catch us some fish on his next beach trip so we can switch up our diet a little, but no complaints from me!

It is by no means smooth sailing and easy work, but Ben and I both agree that we have been better in ourselves, and it's so nice going to bed tired because you've been working to put something this big together. We are looking ahead, and we can't wait to see what the next few weeks will bring (weather depending!)

Thank you for reading, and I hope you join us next month to see what else we manage to get done, or what Logan thinks up next!

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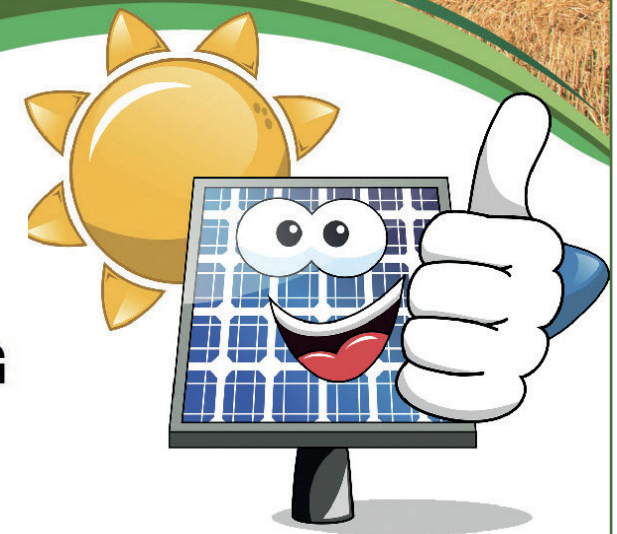
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TECH, TV, GADGETS & GIZMOS

Hi folks! This month we will not be discussing bowel movements or bathroom ‘mishaps’. Shame really, I do enjoy a little innuendo and sniggering but there you go...

I suppose I should write about something vaguely technical (it is kind of in the job description) so off we go. If the UK government is to be believed (a stretch, I know) then sales of petrol and diesel cars will end in 2030. There has been an almighty push on the sale of electric cars. Those of you with an interest in the subject will know that electric vehicles are nothing new and have been around for quite a while. The first commercially available vehicles were produced in around 1880 in Paris and we are all familiar with the electrification on the London Underground and of trams in many major cities & towns. The invention of the lead/acid battery allowed for truly autonomous vehicles and for many applications they make perfect sense. There are not many vehicles that you would describe as being iconic, especially if they were that slow, but the milk float is definitely one. First introduced not long after WW2, the legendary milk float wove itself into the fabric of society and won a place in our hearts. Sure, you didn’t want to get stuck behind one but other than that, there are not many vehicles you would be glad to see every day.



The sound of milk bottles gently “chinking” against each other as the float rolled serenely along the street certainly invokes memories of a simpler time. Electricity was the ideal power source for them. They were simple to make and repair, quiet (perfect for not waking everybody up) and their range (such as it was) could be managed by a carefully chosen route. There are groups of campaigners who are banging on about electric being the saviour of transport but it’s already been done. Society was sadly enticed into buying milk from Tesco’s etc, killing it off. I think it much more appropriate to look at our own habits first before waving our hands accusingly at those we deem ‘polluting’. Right on!

The overlords at the Ministry of Truth are currently fixated on the battery-driven electric car being the planet’s saviour but I am somewhat sceptical. It is much more likely that the motor manufacturers have invested heavily in electric cars and are milking it for all they can before someone pulls the plug (boom-boom). Although the basic principles behind electric cars are sound (quiet, relatively efficient and non-polluting whilst in motion) there are some issues. Firstly, they are not as “green” as they make themselves to be. The manufacture of Tesla batteries for one car consumes hundreds of tons of raw materials and uses some pretty unpleasant

and toxic ingredients. Some of these (Cobalt for one) is sometimes mined under not-so-ethical circumstances. It has been calculated that the average Tesla owner will take 7 years, using renewably-sourced electricity only to become ecologically neutral. Bearing in mind that the batteries have an expected life span of ten years then it’s not the deal it purports to be. Just in case you are wondering, I am not saying that electric cars are a bad thing, far from it. My current day job brings me into contact with quite a few, from all the major manufacturers.

I have found them to be as comfortable as a petrol/diesel car, often easier to drive and on many occasions, significantly faster too (the electric Vauxhall Corsa/Peugeot 208 chucks out an equivalent to 130bhp and can keep the traction control very busy in the wet!). The one thing they all have in common and their Achilles heel: range! A fully-charged Corsa will have a range of about 150 miles. If you know your weekly mileage and will not be doing any long-distance journeys then it seems to makes complete sense. But does it?

The other issue is charging. Beyond the scarcity of public charging points, Spanish mains supplies are not, shall we say, necessarily designed to cope with anything more exciting than a Hoover, let alone a 7-22 kilowatt domestic fast charger. The consumer unit would trip faster than a Hippy at Glastonbury. Overnight charging at 3 kilowatts is usable but still borderline (equivalent to running 2 kettles). The cars are getting there but the infrastructure is still lagging behind somewhat so what’s the alternative? Well...

Hydrogen Fuel Cells have been in existence since 1838 when judge-turned-scientist Sir William Grove postulated the theory. His initial gave underwhelming results and it took English engineer Francis Bacon to refine the idea and create the first usable Hydrogen/ Oxygen fuel cell in 1932. Bacon’s version was subsequently widely used and even powered the Apollo 11 moon mission. They work on a similar principle to batteries, generating electricity by combining Hydrogen with Oxygen in a controlled chemical reaction that does not involve combustion. They are 99.99% clean and unlike batteries, can continue to generate power as long as there is Hydrogen. They are used as backup power generators for hospitals and are in development in the airline industry. There are various ways of extracting pure hydrogen, mostly from differing forms of fossil fuels but they all create pollutants. It is possible to extract pure hydrogen (and Oxygen) from water using electrolysis, known as green hydrogen. Currently this is 70-80% efficient, roughly the same as fossil fuel-derived Hydrogen but completely clean. If these plants were located on the coast in a sunny place like, say, Southern Spain then the electricity could be solar-generated and the whole thing would be as near to 100% green as makes no odds. With me so far?

What if the Hydrogen extracted from this purified sea water was



instead used to power existing non-diesel cars that were adapted to run on Hydrogen instead of petrol? The only thing to come out of the exhaust pipe would be water and fairy dust. Hydrogen burnt in Oxygen creates water (H2O) and a small amount of other impurities, much less than fossil fuels. There would be no need to mine millions of tonnes of toxic minerals for batteries and millions of existing cars would be repurposed and reborn. We would more importantly not be beholden to the oil-producing countries. In my humble opinion, the current (geddit?) wave of electric cars are part of the biggest scam in modern times. The technology has been there for over 100 years that would allow us all to not only keep our personal transport but to improve it and reduce emissions to virtually nothing. It makes more sense to convert an older car than pollute the planet by making a new one. And...

Global warming is having a rapidly accelerating effect on our lives. The excess water dumped into our oceans by melting polar ice caps also finds its way into the weather systems. Storms are stronger and more frequent. There are about 1.5 billion cars on the planet. The extraction of water from the ecosystem necessary to make the hydrogen fuel would take some of the excess out of the equation, even if only a percentage were converted.

Mine’s a DeLorean if you don’t mind...





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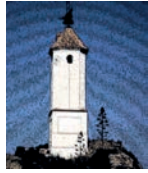


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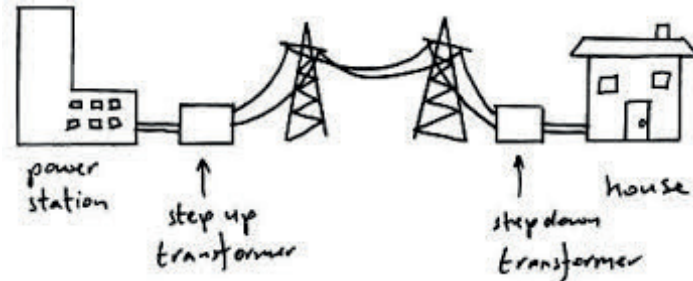
A simple thing as plugging the telly into the mains socket is a given to most of us. But, what goes on behind getting the 230V AC power to the socket? I hear you all shout. Quite a lot as it happens and it was not so simple years ago.

In the late 1800's, U.S. based Nikola Tesla had designed a system to generate and distribute 3 phase Alternating Current (AC). Even by that time, the demand for electric light, motor driven equipment was increasing rapidly. Edison also had put plans forward for a power distribution system, but using Direct Current (DC, like out of a battery). Big battle, but a long story short, Tesla's AC system was by far the best and most logical. Here's why;

DC is OK, but hard to manage and once you generate it as you are limited to how far you can send it. It has to be sent by cables and only at the voltage you generate it at. Cables possess a thing called resistance. If you send, let's say 200 volts DC over 2 miles. What you get at the end may be 170 volts depending on the current (Amps) you draw. Overall power is equal to Volts x Amps. What a waste. So, you had to have small individual generating stations near all conurbations, a real nightmare.

With AC (Alternating Current), you can now use things called transformers. This makes sending power over great distances much easier. The wasted power that is suffered over the power cables is a function of the current being pulled through them. The overall power we want at the distant end is equal to Volts x Amps as mentioned earlier. So, if we whack up the volts and use less current, the loss in the cables is far less of a worry for the same amount of power. Much more efficient.

Britain in the early 1900s, saw lots of small generating companies, all independent, with all sorts of power ranging from 100 – 200 Volts, both DC and AC. A real problem when buying lamps, motor driven equipment and so on. Those of us of a certain age will remember seeing settings on the back of the TV / Wireless sets saying 200, 220, 240 V, AC-DC (nothing to do with the set's sexual leaning). In mid 1920s, the government commissioned a Scotsman, Lord Wier, to solve the problem. Bagpipes put in the cupboard, he put forward a network, based on Tesla's system. The UK would be supplied with 50Hz AC power, distributed by overhead cables with a voltage of 132,000 Volts. He called it the Gridiron. The "CEB" Central Electricity Board was



born. By 1933, over 4000 miles of overhead cable had been deployed, linking the best power stations, about 120, together.

As said, the beauty of AC (the power swings negative and positive 50 times a second and is why your guitar lead buzzes when you plug it in), is it can be fed into transformers. From the power station to a major town, the

overhead pylons carried 132,000 Volts. When this got close to a small town, it would be transformed to 11,000 V. Nearer to houses, it would be again transformed to 230V and fed to underground cables to the home.

This Grid crisscrossing the country allows any power station to hook onto it and feed in energy, a bit like modern day solar systems do. This gives a resilience should a power station fail. It was proved a great help during WW2 when various stations and networks were damaged. Now, the AC voltage is swinging back and forth 50 times a second (frequency, called Hertz) and before the power station connects, the generators (Alternators) have to be fully synchronised to the voltage on the grid. This frequency is linked to the speed of rotation of the generators. Get this wrong... run and hide. Generators could rip themselves to bits, with lots of paper work to complete before going home.

The frequency accuracy, 50Hz, is important, although not so much these days. In the past, many items used electric induction motors. The speed of these is determined by the frequency of the voltage. A clock for example, would run slow if the frequency went down to 48 Hz. An accepted tolerance is 0.1% and that's varied, + and - over 24 hours making an average.

The monitoring and forecasting of the power demand of the grid is crucial. Power companies study the TV schedules, weather conditions and social events, in readiness to produce extra power when needed. A high audience TV show for example may end at 21.00 hours. Kettles, microwaves are put on and demand can go up by 15%. Therefore power stations have to ready the boilers, open the gas and oil taps, pull out reactor rods and chuck some more pallets on to keep the steam turbines rolling quickly.

The Grids birthday! Big cake, cooked in an electric oven, of course.

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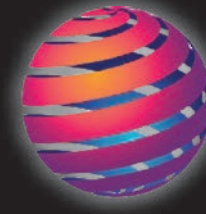
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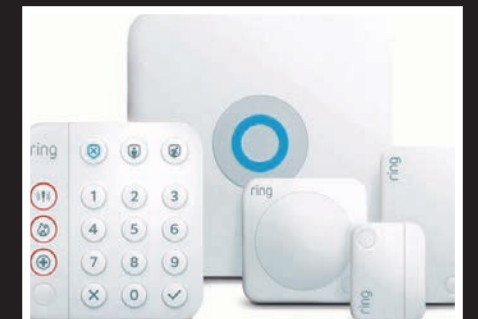
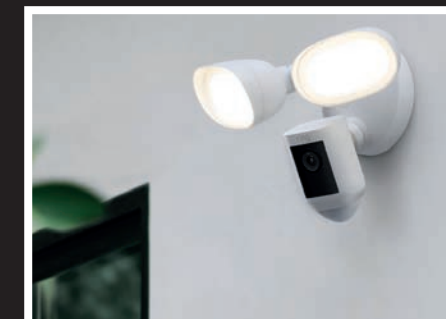
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**Any questions or queries,
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The strawberry season starts much earlier here in Spain than in northern Europe, and goes on for much longer.

Huelva is the largest strawberry producing province in Spain with 65% of the national production, and also Valencia, Extremadura and Catalonia are large producers.

The strawberries we get in this area are mainly the so-called 'fresones': large, brilliantly red and tasty. And wonderfully affordable. You may be one of those that claim that strawberries are no longer as sweet and tasty as when you were a kid, and you may be right.

Fresones have a different origin from our strawberries; fresones were brought to our continent from the Americas. And in the nature of their size and high water content, the flavour is less concentrated. The strawberries we get in northern Europe – fresas in Spanish – stem from the humble (but incredibly tasty) wild strawberry. They are also available here, but not as extensively as the fresón.

Investigators claim that 'Nordic' strawberries contain up to 30% more goodness than berries cultivated in other countries, but don't let that stop you from getting the local ones! They still have lots of health benefits: They are full of vitamin C, which strengthens your immune system. They are high in anti-oxidants, which have a positive effect on life-style diseases such as high cholesterol.

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¡Buen Provecho!



Strawberries have a low content of natural sugars so diabetics can enjoy them freely without being naughty. They are also low calorie, so if you start having strawberries as snacks instead of sweets and biscuits it'll soon show on your waistline.

Strawberries keep for 4-5 days in the fridge. Make sure they are firm and not bruised when you buy them, and do not wash or nip them until just before you eat them.

Strawberries are usually used in sweet and pudding recipes, and of course just as they come with sugar and cream.

Obviously, if we smother them in sugar and cream or have them in cakes and puddings, the naughtiness of the other ingredients will quickly overwhelm our little red berry and wipe away all the benefits.

So try them on their own, just a bowl of strawberries, or indeed with freshly squeezed orange juice and a bit of cinnamon sprinkled over them. Use them as one of the ingredients in a fruit salad, or mix them with little balls of melon.

And indeed, in later years it has also become fashionable to use them in savoury recipes, not least as a refreshing ingredient in salads.

You just can't go wrong with strawberries!

Buen Provecho!

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Cooking with Nina



Variety Is the Spice of Life!

Which is why I've (yet again) collected four quite different recipes for you this month.

We're revisiting my Beef Stroganoff, I've done stuffed peppers for the first time in many years, and there's a lovely warming German Eintopf to enjoy.

I also enlisted my sister's help in order to get a chicken fricassee that is worth having, so all in all there's something for everybody. So, everybody...

Read, Cook, and Enjoy!

Beef Stroganoff

I did beef stroganoff many, many years ago, and because I'm always keep on trying new things, I never did it again.

But the other day I just so fancied it, so I made another batch.

It truly is the King of Casseroles!

Ingredients for four:

600g stewing beef, cut into thin strips	6 thick slices smoked, streaky bacon
3 tbsp sweet paprika	3 bay leaves
2 tbsp plain flour	2 tbsp tomato purée
4 onions, chopped	500ml beef stock
2 tbsp butter	250ml double cream
2 tbsp olive oil	Salt and freshly ground pepper
250g mushrooms, wiped and quartered	

Place the paprika, flour and salt & pepper in a large plastic bag and shake to mix well.

Dry the meat with some kitchen roll, add it to the bag and shake again until it is evenly coated all over.

Fry the bacon slices over moderate heat in a heavy based casserole pan until they are crisp. Take out, cut into cubes, and set aside.

Turn up the heat a little and throw in the mushrooms and onions. Fry them, stirring, until the mushrooms take colour. Reserve.

Time to brown the meat now. Heat the butter till golden, add the olive oil and fry the meat in batches to brown it on all sides.

Add the tomato purée, the reserved mushrooms, onion and bacon. Mix well and pour over about two thirds of the beef stock. Stick in the bay leaves.

Bring to the boil and let it simmer for at least an hour, checking from time to time whether you need to add more stock.

When the meat is tender, add the cream and adjust the seasoning.

Serve with mash, rice or pasta – I had mine with mash and Waldorf salad.

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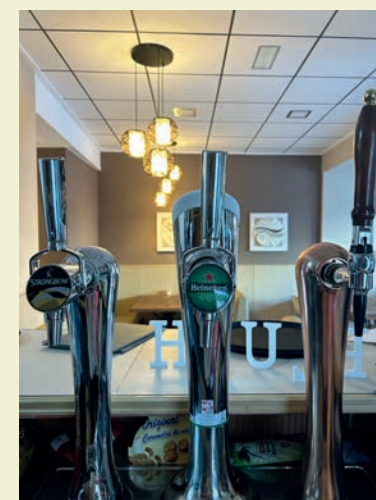
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Spandauer Rosenkohltopf

AKA Brussel's Sprout Pot from Spandau



The Germans are just sooo good at one-pot cooking, and this recipe is a true gem within the genre!

A nice winter warmer without being too heavy.

Ingredients for two:

- 200g spicy sausage, cubed
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 250g Brussel's sprouts
- 2 potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 1 tbsp butter
- 500ml vegetable stock
- Salt & Pepper
- 1 tsp paprika
- Pinch of freshly grated nutmeg
- Pinch of sugar
- 1 tbsp corn starch (optional)
- 50g crème fraiche

Melt the butter in a saucepan and throw in the sausage pieces. When they take colour, add the vegetables including the potatoes, and let them bubble along for five minutes. Stir from time to time. Pour over the vegetable stock, bring to the boil and let it cook over a low heat for half an hour.

Add salt, pepper, paprika, and nutmeg to taste.

Dissolve the corn starch in a little water if using and use it to slightly thicken the liquid.

Spoon into individual bowls and plop a spoonful of crème fraiche on top of each.

Guten Appetit!

Chicken Fricassee

I love chicken fricassee, and one of the wonderful things about it is that you can have it any time of year using vegetables that are in season.

Sadly, when it comes to cooking it, I'm not a patch on my sister, who effortlessly whisks up a light and creamy sauce, where mine always seems to be heavy and sticky. So, both the photos and the recipe are on her.

As you will see, she has used her own combination of veggies, but I'll give you the original recipe, then you can vary it to suit whatever you've got at hand.

Tak Pia!

Ingredients for two:

- 2 small, or 1 large, chicken breast(s)
- 500ml chicken stock
- 1 shallot
- 1 clove garlic
- 5 peppercorns
- 1 clove
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 carrots, sliced
- 1 leek, sliced
- 1 parsnip, sliced
- 100g peas
- 15g butter
- 2 tbsp flour
- 50-100ml cream
- Salt and pepper

Sprinkle 1 tsp salt and a pinch of sugar over the breasts and set aside while you prepare the vegetables.

Bring a small pan of salted water to the boil and blanch the vegetables (not the peas). Drain and keep warm.

Place the breasts in a pan with the stock, shallot, garlic, and spices. Cover and bring it to the boil.

Let it bubble for a couple of minutes – or more, depending on the size - then turn it off, leaving the meat in the stock.

Melt the butter in a saucepan, add the flour and let it toast for a minute.

Ladle some of the stock into the saucepan and stir well to combine everything. Repeat until the thickness of the sauce is to your satisfaction and let it bubble gently for at least five minutes.

Add the cream, stir, and season to taste.

Put the vegetables (don't forget the peas if using) and chicken breasts (whole or torn into bite sized pieces) into the sauce and heat everything through.

Serve with plain, boiled potatoes.

Having written this, I think I'll give it another whirl and see if I can make it like me sis!!



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Stuffed Peppers

I went through a period of always doing stuffed peppers and, more often than not, share the recipes with you.

Then I decided that you must be sick and tired of stuffed peppers, so I stopped.

But that was years ago, and as I had a lot of suitable ingredients at the weekend, I decided that time has come to do you another one.

And it's well worth doing!

Ingredients for two:

250g minced meat (I used beef)

200g cooked rice

1 onion, chopped

2 cloves garlic, chopped

6 sundried tomatoes, chopped

1 tbsp tomato purée

1 tin whole tomatoes

1 Maggi cube

1-2 tbsp smoked paprika

Salt and pepper

Olive oil

1 large red pepper, halved lengthwise, seeds and walls removed

4 slices Havarti cheese

Heat a slug of olive oil in a pan and throw in the onion and garlic. Cook at medium heat until they are transparent and start taking colour. Push them to the side of the pan and put the meat in the middle. Turn up the heat a little and cook the meat until it is brown and resembles large crumbs. Throw in the sundried tomatoes, mix everything together and add the paprika. Cook for a minute, then add the tomato purée. Stir well.

After a couple of minutes, pour in the tomatoes and their juice and crumble the Maggi cube over the top.

Stir well and mash the tomatoes so they release their juices. Add the rice, and let everything bubble, covered, gently for about a quarter of an hour.

Put the halved peppers snugly in a greased, oven proof dish. Season the sauce to taste with salt and pepper, and spoon it into the peppers. If the peppers cannot accommodate all the sauce, distribute the rest around them, it caramelises beautifully.

Cover with alu foil and cook in the oven at 200°C for 40 minutes.

Retrieve, turn the oven up to 225°C and put the slices of Havarti over the top. Return the dish to the oven, this time without covering, and cook for another 20 minutes, until the cheese has melted and started bubbling.

Put onto two plates and serve just like that - maybe with a bit of crusty bread to go with it if you fancy.



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Jason's Meat Free Recipe: Cauliflower 'Wings'

Cauliflower is a definite veggie workhorse. A blank canvas that features in all manner of cuisines and works with anything from Indian spicing to deeply comforting cauli-cheese. Fun fact, I've never eaten a chicken wing...especially not one from a 'Buffalo'... and have no intention of doing so. They seem to have become another US cultural import to Europe, although they sometimes turn up as 'alitas de pollo' on tapas menus in Spain. This version of uses cauliflower florets in place of wings. They're fantastic, and although I can't tell anyone whether they're like the 'real' thing or not, I defer to my late father-in law's absolute seal of approval, which coming from a committed carnivore, I'll take all day long. You can make these vegan by using non-dairy margarine in place of the butter, and you can make them as spicy or mild as your palate can take. Some recipes use chickpea flour. I have found it makes them more like pakora, no bad thing obviously, but this one doesn't. You can leave the breadcrumb stage out, although I prefer the texture.

The cashew cream dipping sauce is a bit of a vegan secret. Blending some raw cashews with some plant milk, squeeze of lemon and a bit of garlic is a go to alternative to dairy cream for pasta sauces, dips or even sandwich spreads. It's really easy to make, can easily be customised as here, and it freezes really well, so there's no waste if you don't get through it all at the time (just blitz it again after its defrosted). A quick non-vegan version of the just uses equal amounts of Greek yoghurt and mayonnaise mixed together with some seasoning, and whatever herbs or species you like.

Serves 2 as a main (or 4-6 as a small tapas/side)

- Large cauliflower, outer leaves removed and broken into bite-size florets
- 150g plain flour



- 300ml plant milk (can use buttermilk or kefir instead)
- 2 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp smoked paprika (can use either hot or sweet)
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp ground black pepper
- 100g panko breadcrumbs
- 100g butter (or non-dairy alternative)
- 150g (or to taste) hot pepper sauce
- Spicy cashew cream dipping sauce
- 150g cashews
- 300ml plant milk (my preference is almond)
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 2 garlic cloves (or 2 tsp garlic powder)
- 1 tsp smoked paprika (sweet works best)
- ½ tsp salt
- 10g flat-leaf parsley finely chopped

Method

First, either soak the cashews in plenty of water for about 4 hours, or boil them for 15 minutes, drain and rinse under cold water. Then heat the oven to 180C and line a baking tray with parchment. Meanwhile, break up the cauliflower – you can also chop and use the stem as well. Put the dry ingredients, except the breadcrumbs, in a large bowl, putting the breadcrumbs into a separate bowl. Whisk the liquid into the flour mixture until you have a smooth batter. Add the cauli to the batter and, this is the messy bit, mix it around until fully coated. Then, a few pieces at a time, coat them in the breadcrumbs. Arrange the 'wings' on the baking tray and bake for 20 minutes.

While the wings are in the oven melt the butter and hot sauce together. Also, blitz the cashews and the rest of the ingredients for the spicy cream together in a blender until it is smooth and creamy, an then scrape into a bowl. Stir in most of the parsley.

At 20 mins take the cauli out of the oven and gently spoon the butter mixture over the wings. Put back in the oven for another 20 mins or so. Check them. The coating should be crisp and the cauli should yield to a knife point. If not give them another 5 mins. Take out of the oven and turn it off.

Arrange on a plate with the dip, scatter over the rest of the parsley and...buen provecho!

Clams are a common sight in Spanish supermarkets and fishmongers; they are a popular shellfish here and encountered both as the main ingredient of a dish and as part of a greater whole.

Clams have neither brains nor eyes, but they do have a heart, mouth and rectum, and their open circulatory system allows water and blood to surround their organs and provide them with nutrition and oxygen. Just like octopus and squid, the clam does not make any sound at all.

The clam has a fine shell which is convex in the centre and has very fine grooves which are visible to the naked eye. Its colour varies between light and dark grey, and it can have brown lines from the umbo to the edge of the shell.

The shell consists of two equal valves bound together by a filament which enables them to open and close.

There are several types of clam, which are also known as 'carpet shells'. The grooved carpet shell, 'Almeja Fina' in Spanish, is the most appreciated for cooking; it has a thin shell and grey flesh. It lives much longer than any other clam out of the water. However, this is a very expensive variety, and there are other, far more common and affordable types available, such as the pullet carpet shell, 'Almeja Babosa', Japanese carpet shell, 'Almeja Japónica' and banded carpet shell 'Almeja Rubia'.

Especially the Japanese carpet shell is readily available here as it grows very quickly and thus is widely cultivated along the British, French and Spanish coast lines.



Clams Delicious, Delicate and Desirable

of the total weight of the beast.

From a nutritional point of view, clams are a very healthy and nourishing whole food with a host of benefits.

Continued on page 28

The clam lives off plankton. It ingests it by filtrating sea water through its siphon; this allows it to live buried in the sand down to a depth of 15 to 30 cm, surviving the low tide without any problems.

The lifespan of a normal clam (who doesn't get dug up and eaten) is 20 years; however, in 2006 off the coast of Iceland, a clam was found which was estimated to be 400 years old; its age was calculated by counting the growth lines on the valve.

One of the world's largest edible clams is the geoduck which is found off Canada's and the USA's east coast. Geoduck clams usually weigh about 1.5 kilos although some can reach as much as 7.5 kilos. This subspecies is one of the oldest animals on earth and it can live more than 140 years.

Another, even bigger, clam is the giant clam which is the world's largest bivalve (clam, oyster or mussel). The giant is in fact a beautiful being. It has an undulated shell opening and is very colourful. It lives on coral reefs.

The largest known specimen of giant clam was over 1.3 m wide and weighed approximately 250 kg. The giant clam is a delicacy in the Japanese cuisine. In the majority of specimens the shell is the largest mass, with the soft, edible parts accounting only for approximately 10%


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..... Continued from page 27

They are a lean source of protein; are rich in minerals, vitamins, and Omega-3 fatty acids; they promote sexual health; and have been found to possess cancer-preventing properties.

Before cooking clams, always leave them to soak in cold water for fifteen minutes twice to get rid of the sand inside them. Lift them out carefully with a slotted spoon and rinse under the tap.

Like when cooking mussels, clams should be alive in the moment we start cooking them; discard any open clams that don't close rapidly when handled or tapped lightly.

Here are two of the simplest and most traditional Spanish recipes for clams. Both recipes really let you appreciate the lovely flavour of these little molluscs; serve them with bread for mopping up the delicious sauces.

Almejas a la marinera

250g clams	3 cloves garlic, chopped
3 tbsp flour	Chopped parsley
500ml water	Oil
White wine	

Heat the oil in a frying pan and throw in the chopped garlic. Cook until it starts going golden.

Pour in a little white wine and then the flour. Stir until everything is well mixed, then add the water, the parsley and the clams.

Bring to the boil and keep boiling until the clams have opened, and then another minute or two more.

Serve the clams hot.

Clams are also present in many traditional Spanish stews, rice dishes and soups.



Almejas a la sartén

250g clams
2 cloves garlic, finely sliced
3 chillies, seeds removed, cut into rings
200ml white wine
50ml extra virgin olive oil
Fresh parsley, chopped

Heat the oil in a frying pan with the chillies and garlic; when the garlic starts to take colour throw in the clams.

Stir to mix everything then pour over the wine.

Once the wine bubbles, cover and wait for the clams to get done. This takes 5 to 10 minutes; they are done once they are open.

Lift them out and reserve. Turn up the heat, add the parsley and reduce the sauce a little.

When the sauce is to your liking, pour it over the clams and serve them immediately.

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Malaga Christmas Lights

Date option 1

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*tba€
per person

9th - 11th December

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4* Hotel Soho Boutique Equitativa
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Malaga Christmas Lights

Date option 2

2 Nights
*tba€
per person

16th - 18th December

Staying at:
4* Hotel Soho Boutique Equitativa
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Benidorm Christmas

4 Nights
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Viajes Parra Travel

Benidorm New Year

4 Nights
*tba€
per person

29th - 2nd Dec Jan

+ Gala Evening
31st

Staying at:
4* Hotel Helios or similar

Price Includes:
Coach travel
Four nights in 4* hotel
Breakfast - days 2, 3, 4, 5
Dinner - days 1, 2, 3, 4
includes wine and water

* Price based on 2 people sharing a room
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HOMES & GARDENS

Pablo Picasso

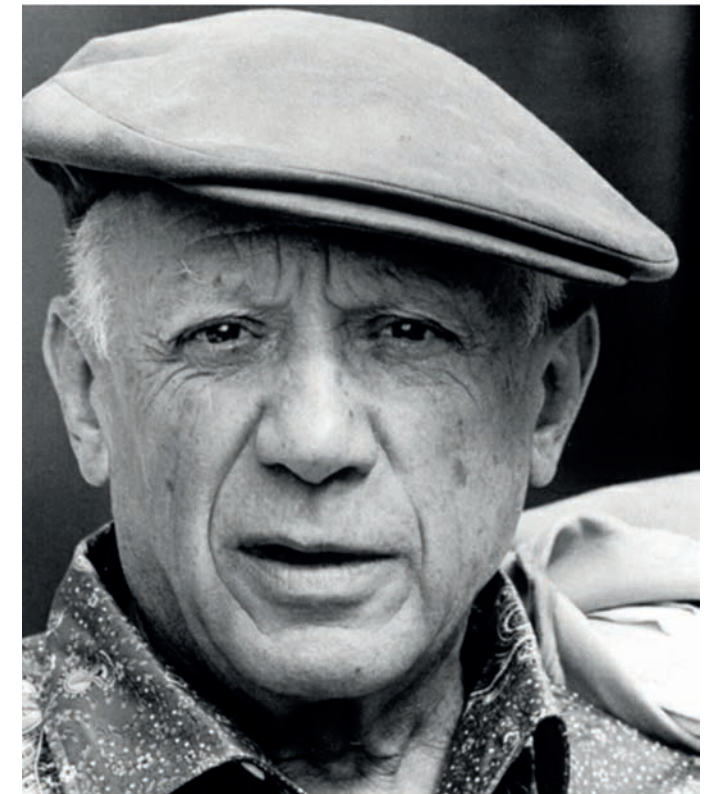
An extraordinary artist and man, Picasso was the leading figure and creator of the different trends that revolutionised the visual arts in the 20th century, from cubism to neo-figurative sculpture, from engravings and etchings to ceramic craft and even the stage design for ballets.

Pablo Diego José Ruiz Picasso, better known by just his second surname, was born on 25th October 1881 in 36 Plaza de la Merced, Málaga. He was the first born son of the Basque painter, José Ruiz Blasco and Andalusian María Picasso López.

His father was a drawing teacher at the Escuela San Telmo. The early years of Picasso's life were marked by the family's financial difficulties, but also by his very close relationship with his father, which they both treasured. As a student, the young Pablo left a lot to be desired; he was lazy and easily distracted, but he early showed an innate talent for drawing, and his father encouraged this.

In 1891 the family moved to La Coruña where Picasso's father had been offered a better job. Picasso started experimenting with his drawing and painting, and his father gave up his own art in order to help and encourage his son whose talent he greatly admired.

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In 1995 Ruiz Blasco was offered a job in Llotja in Barcelona as a lecturer at the Official School of Arts. The 14-year-old Picasso did the entry exam to the school and solved the entire exam, which he was given a month to complete, in one day. He was admitted.

The year after, at the tender age of 15, he opened his first studio in the city of Barcelona.

Two years later he obtained an honorary mention in the great exhibition in Madrid for his painting 'Science and Charity', while he still painted in the academic realism style; his father had modelled

for the doctor in the painting. Soon he also received awards in other exhibitions in Madrid and Málaga for his works which had been influenced by El Greco and Toulouse-Lautrec.

He had his first individual exhibition in Els Quatre Gats in Barcelona in 1898, and in 1900 he travelled to Paris for the World Fair. There he sold three drawings to the tradesman Petrus Manach who offered him 150 francs a month for all his output for one year. This turned him into a professional artist, and he chose to start signing himself using only his second surname.

He spent the next four year dividing his time between Spain and Paris; it was in this interval that he started his 'blue period'. He had his first Parisian exhibition and in 1904 he decided to move to Paris for good.

In his first years in the French capital he painted and drew incessantly, his works of this period influenced by Cézanne. He fell in love with Fernanda Olivier, and he developed a warm friendship with fellow visual artist Georges Braque, together with whom he elaborated the initial strokes of analytical cubism. In 1907 Picasso produced the great experimental painting 'Les Femmes d'Alger'.

The painting caused great stir and scandal with the misshapen bodies which broke with everything that was established and accepted in the Arts. However, the new style soon had lots of followers both amongst artists and art lovers, and Picasso exhibited this new style in Munich in 1909 and in New York in 1911.

By now he had found a new love, Marcelle Humbert; still in close contact with Georges Braque who followed his example when creating art, he developed the synthetic cubism, which put them on the borderline to the abstract. However, in all his years of production Picasso never completely abandoned the figurative.

In 1914, at the outbreak of World War I, Picasso's friends Braque and Apollinaire were conscripted and the following year his love, Marcelle, died from TB.

Picasso abandoned cubism almost completely and started looking for other ways of artistic expression. He found them in 1917 when he was introduced to Sergei Diaghilev, the founder of the Russian Ballet. He put Picasso in charge of the stage design for the ballet Parade by the French composer Erik Satie.

This introduced him to a new love: the ballerina Olga Khokhlova whom he married in 1918. He carried on working on ballet stage designs until 1925, which boosted his artistic development.

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..... Continued from page 34

Picasso had painted a portrait of his mother in 1918, and in 1930 the painting won him the Carnegie Prize; the prize provided him with enough money to buy a luxurious country house in Boisgeloup, and spend more than a year travelling around Spain.

Around this time Picasso went back to making sculptures, and he started an affair with the French model Marie Thérèse Walter, who would be the mother of Picasso's first daughter, Maya. Olga initiated court proceedings, but failed to get a divorce. Picasso then fell in love with Dora Maar, a great artist in her own right.

When the Spanish Civil War broke out, Picasso planted himself firmly in the Republican camp; he accepted a symbolic post as the director of the Prado museum in Madrid, and in 1937 he painted the famous 'Guernica' in Paris.

The Republicans were defeated in the Spanish Civil War in 1939, and Germany occupied France in 1940; these events greatly depressed Picasso and he spent the larger part of World War II at his refuge in Ruyan.

He re-emerged with an exhibition in 1944 where he showed 77 new works. He acquired two new passions: lithography and the young, beautiful painter Françoise Guillot, with whom he lived until 1946. This was the start of his Vallauris period in which he elaborated his stunning ceramics. He had two children with Françoise: Claude,



who was born in 1947, and Paloma, born in 1949.

In 1954 the now 74-year-old artist became fascinated by a mysterious youth with a delicate profile and long, blond hair by the name of Sylvette David, who agreed to pose for him in exchange for some portraits of her choosing. The deal was closed and led to some of the most famous and copied works of Picasso.

If his fascination for the ethereal Sylvette had been platonic, not so his attraction to the extremely beautiful 26-year-old Jacqueline Roque.

He had met her in 1953 in his ceramics studio and he fell in love with her. He conquered her by drawing a chalk dove on her house and bringing her a red rose every day for 6 months until she agreed to go out with him.

Olga, his first wife, died in 1955, and he married Jacqueline in 1961. She became his muse and inspiration, and she posed for 400 portraits, more than any other model in his long career.

Picasso painted a giant mural for the UNESCO in 1958 and he continued creating, loving, working and living intensely until his death in 1973.

He left behind the largest and most varied personal works of any artist of the 20th century, and the valuable inheritance was bitterly disputed until it was bestowed on a being with a name that depicts peace: Paloma.

Year Round Valentines

By Evelyn McCrorie

John sits by the window, his dark good looks marred only by his furrowed brow.

He tries to immerse himself in his music, to obliterate bleak thoughts. But as the angry clouds and strong winds roll in from the north, he is engulfed by a rage which emanates from deep inside his soul.

The flashing lightning and rumbling thunder only serve to underscore his profound sorrow and resentment.

As yet another peal pierces the air, John recalls that horrendous day at sea.

Two years ago to the day, the 14th February, their cruise captain had sailed into the storm. Janice and he had feared they were going to die when those 40 ft. waves hit the ship.

A holiday of a lifetime had turned into a nightmare which would never end for him.

For Janice had died - died of the wounds she had sustained as her slim body had been tossed around like a rag doll in what they had thought was the comparative safety of their cabin.

John hesitates for only a second, then with a resigned sigh, presses the button.

On the other side of town, Mary, a fine looking woman with only a trace of grey in her hair, is also surveying the clouds as they mix together, creating a hoary overhead dome, scattering large splashes of rain on to her newly washed windows.

Even from the vantage point of her bright fourth storey flat, she can feel their heaviness sapping her energy away.

Was it only two years since that acrimonious divorce, the decree absolute arriving with cruel irony, on the 14th February? Time to move on, her friends kept insisting.

Time to take up the reins again, to step out into the unknown, even to trip the light fantastic.

Mary is not so sure. She is drowning, drowning in her own insecurities and loneliness.

Brushing aside a tear, she presses the button.

Thousands of miles away, Miss Sita Chaudhry, her specs balancing precariously on her pert little nose, perches on her stool in the



airless, untidy little office. She is quite oblivious to the searing heat bouncing off the window panes.

Heart flutter, she waits for her ancient computer to come to life before scrolling down the list of names. Not bad for one week's advertising!

Calling the business "Year Round Valentines" was a stroke of genius.

Her beady eyes scrutinise the neatly typed applications. This is something she is good at. This is her calling.

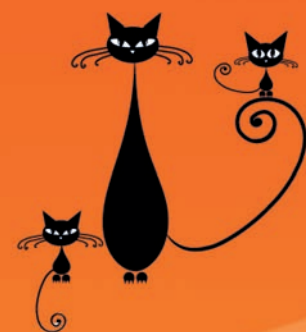
John and Mary are an obvious match. John would look good with Mary on his arm. They are in Miss Chaudhry's opinion, the perfect couple. The others can wait ...

John receives his email with the distinctive little red heart pierced by an arrow, that very afternoon.

Mary is out in the storm but finds hers waiting for her when she gets home.

John and Mary don't know it yet. But they will soon be the world's first "Year Round Valentines."

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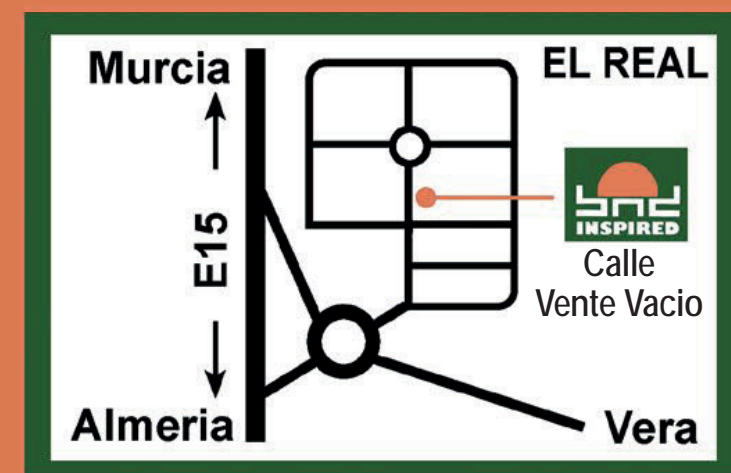


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The Pen is Mightier Than The Sword

By Vic Davey

Some issues ago I decried the poor state of my handwriting since pretty much everything I write these days is tapped out on a keyboard. I also mentioned the embarrassment of finding myself standing in the middle of Mercadona, scrap of paper in hand, trying to decipher my hastily scribbled shopping list.

I am sure it isn't really my handwriting at fault, it is the cheapo ball-point pen I use. (At least, that's my excuse). When I was contemplating this, for some reason, my thoughts drifted back to my childhood and the horrible pens we were expected to use at school. It was like something out of Dickens.

A hard wooden desk, the lid of which was scored and scarred by countless numbers of children who had left their mark on it. At the top was a groove for the pen and next to it, inset in the wood, was a small glass phial, containing this dark blue, gelatinous liquid which passed for ink.

The pen itself was wood too, as far as I can recall, a thin tapered shaft at the head of which was a metal nib which was dipped into the gel and wiped on the side of the inkwell. I swear, it was impossible to put pen to paper without ink splodges on the page. How overjoyed I was when I was bought a Fountain Pen and a bottle of proper ink, Quink it was called.....anyone remember? I even recall having a scented one at one time.



Mind you, that didn't prevent blotches entirely, but the ease of use was a revelation. The pen was filled with ink by means of a small lever on the side which, when you dipped the nib in the ink, pulled the lever which depressed a little rubber tube inside the body and when you released the lever, sucked in the ink. What a clever invention!

Apparently, the Egyptians used a pen-like implement made from reeds as far back as 300 BC. I guess everyone remembers seeing old movies of people using quill pens made from sharpened bird feathers, which had been in use for hundreds of years until the introduction of metal pens and nibs. A pen made from bronze was found in the ruins of Pompeii which gives you some idea of how long writing implements have been in use.

It wasn't until the 1820s when a Steel pen point was made to dip in ink and then replaced in the 1880s with the now familiar fountain pen. Surprisingly, at least to me, the first ball-point pens appeared in 1895. I thought it was much later and, in fact, the first really successful model was patented in 1938 by Lazlo Biro who was a Hungarian-Argentine inventor.

Interestingly, in 1945 a Marcel Bich bought the patent from Lazlo and so the BIC pen was born and the brand has gone on to sell more than 100 Billion world-wide. It is the World's top selling pen, around 60 sold every second.....

Normal, everyday use Parker Fountain Pens were relatively cheap in



my day, the actual body was made from plastic and the nib was steel and could be replaced if damaged, which mine were, frequently.

I also remember hearing the name Montblanc in relation to pens and this brand has become almost synonymous for expensive pens for the very wealthy over the last 100 years. One of their current models comes in at over 3,500 Euros.

However, the most expensive pen ever sold went for 8 million dollars at auction! So what do you get for your buck? The body and cap are encrusted with 123 Rubies and 945 Black Diamonds. It was made by a company called Tibaldi, an Italian company which has been around since 1916.

So there you go. Presumably if you own a Montblanc or a Tibaldi, you wouldn't use it just to write a humble shopping list but I just wonder whether it would improve my handwriting? So, if anyone has 8 million dollars lying around, I'll buy one and let you know.....



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Well I Never - Sir Walt!!

By Jos Biggs

Funny how it all turns out!

If Sir Walter Raleigh hadn't married Bess Throckmorton we would have a much healthier lifestyle!

Because:

Young Walter Raleigh was quite a live wire; he was here, there and everywhere where there were battles to be fought and loot to be looted, and ended up with estates in the southwest of England and in Ireland.

Queen Elizabeth the First took quite a shine to him, until in 1591 his trouser area got the better of him and he secretly married the already pregnant Elizabeth 'Bess' Throckmorton, one of the Queen's ladies-in-waiting.

Fearing the royal wrath, they managed to keep the whole thing secret until the following year. When the Queen found out she was not a little miffed, and locked them both in the Tower of London with the immortal words 'Now get out of that!'

But wily Walt did. He paid his way out of the Tower and set up a successful and very lucrative attack on the Spanish treasure ship Madre de Deus, which mollified the Queen sufficiently to allow poor Bess out of the Tower.

Even so, he was not welcomed back in Court, so he set off for North America, where he founded Virginia – he hoped that calling a state after the Virgin Queen would make things right, but she was too fly for him, and simply commented 'That's nice.'

Along the way he came across potatoes and tobacco, which he sent back to the British Isles. Tobacco caught on as soon as people discovered that the trick was to put it in a little bowl on the end of a



long hollow stick and then set light to it – up until that moment they weren't quite sure what to do with it.

Potatoes also had an inauspicious start. The first potatoes were presented to the Queen without cooking instructions, so her chefs not unnaturally assumed that those nice big green leaves were what you ate, and proceeded to cook the leaves and throw away the root.

Fortunately nobody died, probably because the leaves tasted so foul that nobody ate much, but there were some very poorly courtiers before the chef found a root that someone had accidentally dropped in the cooking pot. He took it out, threw it at the stable boy, (everybody threw things at the stable boy) who caught it and ate it for a dare, thus discovering boiled potatoes – only a short step away from fried potatoes, or chips!

So if our Walt hadn't married the 'wrong' girl, annoyed the Queen, got turfed out of Court and gone gallivanting off to foreign parts he wouldn't have introduced 2 major health risks to the British people – smoking and chips!

In which case we 21st century people wouldn't have to give up smoking or to lose weight!

Funny how it all turns out!



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Hernán Cortés

(Medellín, Badajoz, 1485 – Castilleja de la Cuesta, Seville, 1547)

In April 2019 the Mexican president made demands to the Spanish King Felipe XI that he apologised for atrocities committed in Mexico almost 500 years ago!

An bizarre modern event that leads us to look at the life of one of the most important leaders of the Spanish conquest of the Americas: Hernán Cortés de Monroy y Pizarro Altamirano.

Hernán Cortés was born in Extremadura in 1485, son of high born parents of meagre means.

His parents wanted him to have a legal career and earn good money, and he did study under a private tutor in Salamanca for a number of years. However, the stories of Christopher Columbus's conquests in the New World attracted him much more than the prospect of a stuffy career, and in 1504, at the age of 19, he set off to try his luck in the exciting new lands.

He spent his first years in the New World working as a notary and land owner in La Española (Santo Domingo). In 1511 he participated in an expedition to Cuba as secretary to the governor Diego Velázquez de Cuéllar who was so impressed with him that he appointed him mayor of the new city of Santiago. Cortés strengthened their ties by marrying Velázquez's sister-in-law, but his relationship with Velázquez became increasingly strained over the years, due to jealousy and greed on both sides.

In 1519 Cortés led an expedition to Yucatán, and he landed at the island of Cozumel with 11 ships, 16 horses and 600 armed men.

They defeated the Mayas, and Cortés received various gifts from the natives, amongst them a young native woman called Doña Marina, also called Malinche, who became his mistress, interpreter and servant during the whole campaign.

Against the express orders of Velázquez, Hernán Cortés founded the city of Vera Cruz, and it was while he was staying there that he first heard of the Aztec empire in the interior of the country, which was said to possess great treasure. Cortés decided to conquer the empire, but his men were vastly outnumbered by the Aztecs; thinking that his men might desert at the prospect of facing an enemy superior in numbers, Cortés proceeded to burn his ships to prevent them from returning.

He managed to make allies of some of the tribes suppressed by the Aztecs, and after sacking the city of Cholula, Cortés and his men marched on towards the Aztec capital, Tenochtitlán, where they were received without resistance by the emperor Moctezuma II.

The emperor declared himself a subject of the King of Castile, but in spite of this, the conquerors behaved like ambitious and violent invaders.



In the meantime, in order to punish Cortés for his disobedience and oblige him to return to Cuba, Velázquez sent an expedition led by Pánfilo de Narváez; Cortés had to leave Tenochtitlán under the command of Pedro de Alvarado to confront Narváez, whom he defeated in Cempoala in 1520. He even managed to persuade Narváez's men to join him when he returned to the Aztec capital.

When they got there, Cortés encountered much unrest amongst the natives due to the destruction of their religious symbols and beliefs, and a massacre which had been ordered by Alvarado to suppress a rumoured uprising.

Cortés proceeded to arrest Moctezuma II to try to make him act as a mediator;

however, the emperor died shortly after, and Cortés had to abandon the capital after a bloody revolt decimated his small army on June 30th 1520, and flee to Tlaxcala.

He soon regrouped, though, and carried on his ambitious quest; he defeated the new Aztec emperor, Cuauhtémoc, at the battle of Otumba, and he finally managed to take Tenochtitlán in 1521, and once the city was destroyed he founded on the same spot, on an island in the middle of a lake, the Spanish city of Mexico.

Once he had dominated the old Aztec empire, Cortés set his eyes on the territories further south and he arranged expeditions to annex Yucatán, Honduras and Guatemala. He kept the Spanish king, Carlos V, informed of his progress, and in 1522 he was appointed Governor and General Captain of Nueva España, as they called Mexico.

However, the Spanish crown wanted to keep a closer eye on matters in the New World, not least the treasure, and the powers of the conquerors were cut back. Spanish civil servants were sent



over to oversee the territories, and Cortés was eventually dismissed and returned to Spain in 1528.

When he arrived in Spain there were no recriminations, he was well received and was given the title Marquis of the Valley of Oaxaca and remained Captain General, albeit without any governing powers. In 1530 he returned to Mexico and yet again organised expeditions to conquer new lands, this time

in southern California.

He eventually returned to Spain and settled in a small town near Seville. He petitioned the Crown for recognition of services rendered, but his request was never fully granted.

He spent the last six years of his life in Castilleja de la Cuesta where he created a literary circle and became a well known citizen. He was embittered by the lack of recognition of his feats, and requested that he be buried in Mexico.

He died of pleurisy on 2nd December 1547.



Puzzle Time

Puzzle solutions on page 74

7						8
4		2	3		4	
9		8	7	4	6	
	1	3		9		6
			1			
					2	
		3	2		6	5
	4		7		8	9

Easy

Regular Sudoku

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

		9		2		
		8				9
	3			2		
2		1				
		6	3			
1	4				5	7
	6	8		7		
					1	
	4		3	7	5	

Medium

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

1		2		3		4		5		6		7
8												
9			10				11					
12							13					
						14						
15										16		17
18				19								
20						21						

Across

- 1 Fireworks, e.g.
- 5 Facades
- 8 Circle measurement
- 9 Former French coin
- 10 Dispossession
- 12 Merry
- 13 Epistle
- 15 Flat
- 16 Part of a play
- 18 Factual books
- 20 Assumption
- 21 Lengthens

Down

- 1 Loose scrums
- 2 Situations
- 3 Lavish
- 4 Feel pain
- 5 Coniferous tree
- 6 Full attention
- 7 Jersey
- 11 Handling
- 12 Sudden outburst
- 14 Previously
- 17 Lab work
- 19 Bunk

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GOING GREEN

By Jason Lowther

CoP28: Reasons to be Cheerful, Pt. 3?

Before going on to outline what resulted from the Climate Change Conference of the Parties in December (CoP28), it is worth noting some very good news. That is, a deal has been secured by the Spanish Government to secure the future of the Doñana national park, a wetland of international importance, which I wrote about in issue 123 (June) last year.

You may recall that the area was under significant threat from illegal water abstraction by strawberry farmers, which meant that the area was drying out, with catastrophic effects on the wildlife dependent upon it. An agreement in November between Andalusia's regional President and Spain's environment minister, Teresa Ribera, worth €1.4bn, looks to have secured its future.

In the end pressure from within the region, from both public pressure and environmental campaigning, as well as international concerns from the International Union for the Conservation of Nature amongst others, and, bizarrely, a consortium of UK supermarkets was enough to get the deal over the line. Ms Ribera noted that "It's very important that we learn to combine strictly environmental measures with measures to reduce economic and social pressures in the area when it comes to green infrastructure and recovering natural spaces": basically, working on the premise that the environment is us and that we are inextricably co-dependent.

In partial contrast then, is the outcome of CoP28, which wrapped-up in the UAE just in time for Christmas. For some reason, the take-aways from CoP reminded me of lyrics from a classic *Ian Dury and the Blockheads* single, viz: 'A bit of grin and bear it, a bit of come and share it, You're welcome we can spare it'.

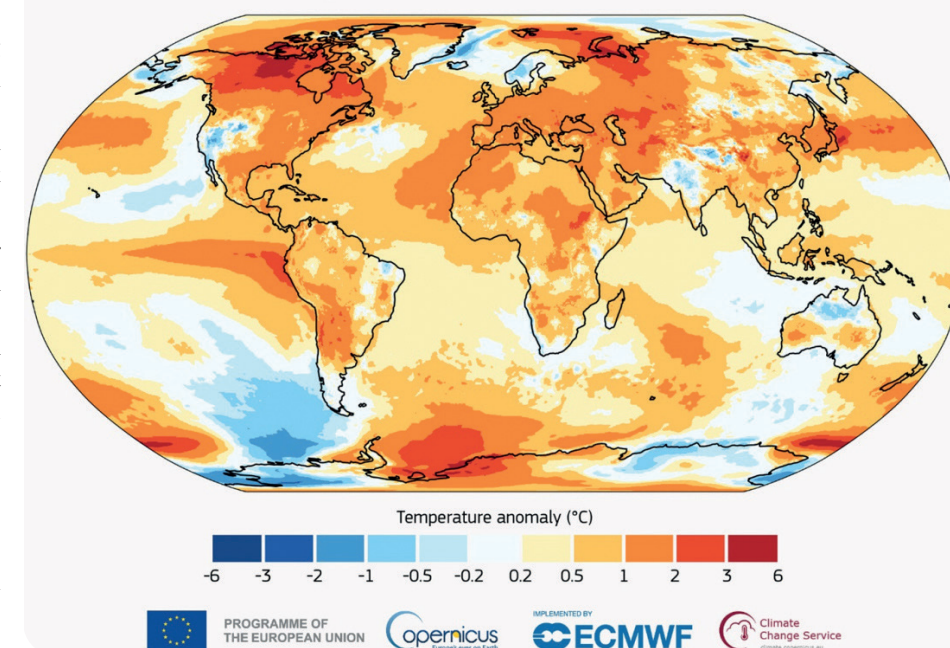
At the time of writing there has just been a confirmation that 2023 was the warmest global calendar year on record – with records going back to 1850! It is accepted science that this is due to human induced climate change, which was further turbocharged by the current El Niño weather state. In Europe, it was the second highest ever.

What that translates to is that global average temperature is a *smidgeon* under 15°C, meaning that the world is 1.48°C warmer than pre-industrial levels. That doesn't sound much, but it is a whisker from the 1.5°C target that was the preferred upper limit scenario for global heating included in the Paris Accords, agreed by 196 countries in 2015. The countries actually committed to hold increases in global temperatures to below 2°C by the end of the century, but they acknowledged that going above 1.5°C was very much taking global systems into uncharted territory.

Prior to that the Kyoto Protocol agreed in 1997 had set the template for imposing targets on states to reduce their emissions from whatever they were in 1990. The Kyoto Protocol was groundbreaking in that it reflected the idea of 'common but differentiated responsibilities' – basically meaning that the world has a common goal, but the responsibility for getting there depends on ability to

SURFACE AIR TEMPERATURE ANOMALY • 2023

Reference period: 1991–2020 • Data: ERA5 • Credit: C35/ECMWF



pay.

Those countries that had benefitted the most from large scale climate emissions, so-called developed nations, should be prepared to shoulder the greatest burden and help to ensure that developing countries did not start on the path to making the situation worse.

A bit of grin and bear it, could be seen in the rictus grin on the face of the CoP 28 President, Sultan al-Jaber, who doubles as the chief executive of the UAE's state oil company, when announcing that countries had agreed on the necessity to "transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems". The agreement text specifically states that this should be done "in a just, orderly and equitable manner".

The use of the terminology 'just and equitable' reflects the idea that more affluent nations should shoulder the burden and transition from coal, oil and gas more quickly. This was the position of the UK, the EU and even the United States, as well as the group of small island states with a lot to lose as sea levels rise more quickly.

Continued on page 50

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..... Continued from page 49

These states or blocs also wanted a stronger commitment, to 'phase out' fossil fuels. Getting agreement at international level is always fraught and terminology is key.

Unfortunately, *grinning and bearing it* cuts both ways. As it stands, the agreement reached does not force countries to take action, and no timescale is specified. Alongside the transition away from fossil fuels, countries agreed global targets to vastly increase (triple in fact) the available capacity of renewable sources of energy by 2030.

In both the EU and the UK there is some closing of the gap between what has been agreed and what needs to happen to keep temperature increases at or below 1.5°. Although significant progress is being made, there is no scope for complacency and self congratulation just yet.

A bit of come and share it, was really only on show in the idea that no-one is immune from the uncertainty and imbalance of a rapidly and artificially changed climate. Since the Paris Agreement in CoP21, there has been a noticeable shift in attitude in most countries, and an acceptance that collective action is required to mitigate impacts into the future.

What sometimes appears frustratingly lacking is the pace of change. Politicians will act when their electorates make them. However, being seen to be on the right side of history is also a motivating factor and there is genuine sincerity to move on climate.

You're welcome we can spare it, is possibly the trickiest of them all. I imagine the 'welcome' to be through gritted teeth. This is because



the loss damage fund, which was approved in principle last year after a 30 year wait, finally saw the light of day and was approved.

The fund is set up to attempt to offer some sort of compensation for the impacts that some countries, particularly those less affluent, suffer from climate-related shocks though extreme weather events. This is not the same as the funding that has been made available to assist certain countries in adapting or becoming more resilient to rising temperatures, or for those measures designed to help countries transition to lowering their emissions.

These measures, such as the transfer of technology to enable cleaner power generation from renewable sources for example, have long been a feature of climate change responses. What is significant here is that now, money is being made available to offset environmental damage.

The problem in getting this over the line was that for years, the more affluent nations had objected because of the potential risk that they would be seen to be paying 'compensation' or (to use a very loaded term) 'reparations' for their historic emissions made as they were growing their economies.

The EU, UK, US and others committed to contributions totalling around \$400m for less affluent countries suffering from various harsh impacts of climate change. While that might seem a large amount of money in one respect, consider that there is an annual displacement of up to 20 million people a year (according to the UN High Commission for Refugees) who have to move because of climate impacts.

So, reasons to be cheerful? Cautiously. There was some progress, there remains a lot of grey however, and so, mindful of another verse, we're presented with the illusion of change and choice: 'Yes, yes, dear, dear...Perhaps next year...Or maybe even now'.

My preference is for the now, because kicking the can to next year, to the next CoP, in Azerbaijan – another petro-state – and so basically to the next generation(s) is getting old now. Part 1 (Kyoto) got us the solution, Part 2 (Paris) got us the parameters, Part 3 (UAE) should have got us the impetus. With due regard to another 1977 single release - *something better change*.

Ferreteria



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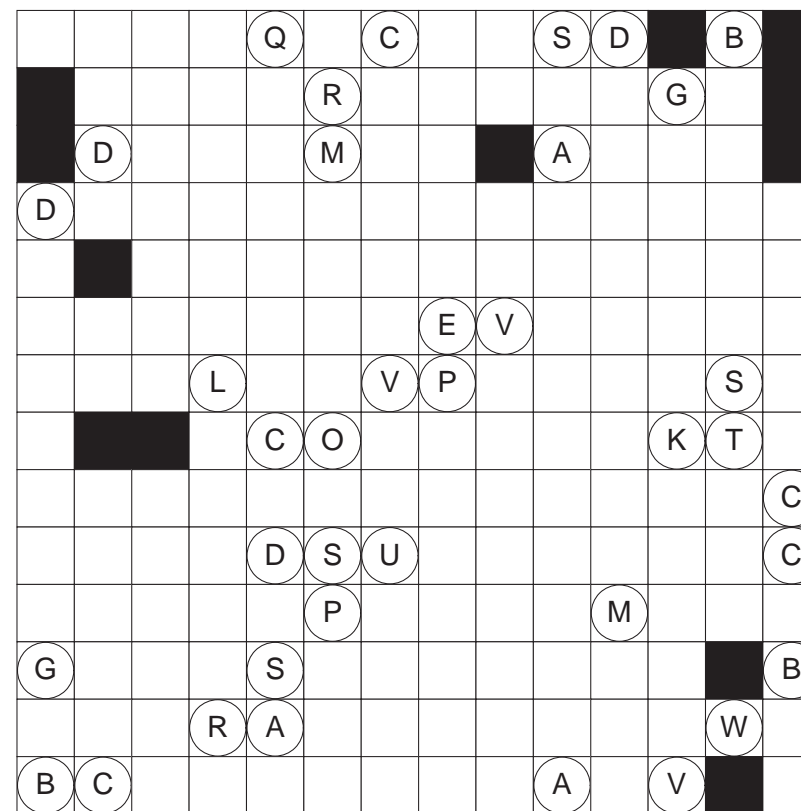
By the end of the 1970s, the Asturcón population had dropped dramatically to near-extinction, but the efforts of various ecological



Since then, it has been used both for combat, agriculture, and sports.

Puzzle Time

Reverse Word Search



Remember, any starting letter may be used by more than one word at the same time!

Arson	Dizzies	Quote
Askew	Dusting	Rares
Atoms	Dynamo	Rungs
Blanched	Ebony	Sardines
Board	Giddy	Shuck
Buckets	Glass	Spars
Could	Kidnap	Stool
Counterexample	Lamer	Ticking
Crass	Makeup	Unfit
Crated	Miles	Veals
Cubes	Ovens	Verified
Cynics	Period	Vista
Debts	Prying	Winch
Disenchantment	Quail	



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This is precisely how a group of us thought a year ago when, spearheaded by the wonderful enthusiasm of Bernie Albrighton and David Waters, we started The Written Word Group. Most of us, in our youth, had seemingly improbable dreams of doing something amazing, of being a singer, dancer, actor, model or writer. When real life occurs to us and living takes over, these dreams fade but never, never die. In all of us they are still lurking in a dusty part of our spirit, and the thing is, the wonderful thing

For those who missed our Open Mike session on 7th February, the Written Word Group meets once a month in The Hostal Meson, Arboleas, 10.30 on a Friday morning and usually in the middle of the month. No need to book, just turn up and enjoy, or as a precursor and in order to learn more of what we are about, you can access our blog at www.twwgroup.blogspot.com.

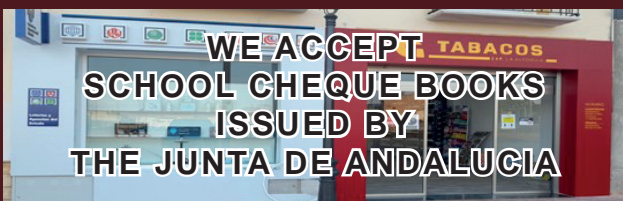
There was a click and the phone went dead.

“Come, I’ll show you”.

“She’s beautiful, only about 6 weeks old, and doesn’t deserve to die



The two women exchanged looks and nodded. Two previously rather empty and lonely lives were suddenly full of meaning.

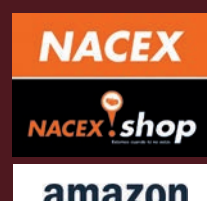


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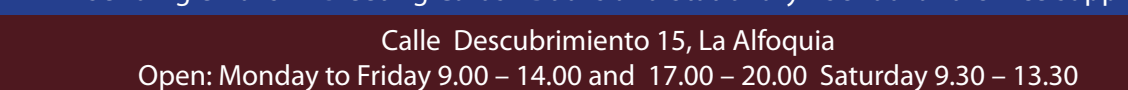
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Los Monteros de Espinosa – The King’s Men



With the advent of the second Republic in Spain in 1931 and the absence of a monarch, Los Monteros de Espinosa, one of Spain’s oldest military orders, was dissolved.

But who were they? And what was their objective? This is how the story goes...

The third Count of Castile, Don Sancho García, lived in the beginning of the 11th century, in Villa de San Esteban in the province of Burgos. In the neighbouring county the Arab king, Mahomad Almohadio, had his headquarters in Villa de Gormaz.

The noble Count invited the Arab king to several social events and festivities, which gave King Mahomad the opportunity to get to know the Count’s mother, Countess Doña Aba. He started courting her, and the two soon developed mutual sympathy and a friendship, which eventually turned into wild passion.

The daring and improper lovers saw the monarch of Castile, who disapproved wholeheartedly of the union, as the only obstacle to their love and happiness, and they worked out an abominable plan to get rid of him in the most atrocious manner.

They decided to concoct a vile poison which Doña Aba was to persuade the Count to drink. The plan was that she would then notify her Muslim lover of the successful completion of the assassination by throwing a large amount of straw in the Duero River and let it flow downstream. Once the Arab king saw it flowing past, he would know that the way was clear and he and his men would stage a surprise attack on the Christians, take Villa de San Esteban and the other castles of the county.

These evil preparations were observed by one of the countess’s ladies in waiting, and she told her husband, who was the Count’s esquire and mayordomo. His name was Sancho Espinosa Peláez, and he warned the Count of the impending treason.

Thus forewarned, Count Don Sancho was not surprised when he returned tired and sweaty from a day’s hunting to be offered a refreshment by his mother which was supposed to quench his thirst. She was the one who was at first surprised, then alarmed and horrified when he invited her to take the first sip of the drink.

When she refused, he insisted that she drink it. She kept refusing, and in the end, he forced her to drink it with the threat that he would run his sword through her if she did not. Confronted with that choice, Doña Aba ingested the mortal

brew she had prepared for her son, and she died on the spot as if hit by lightning.

Don Sancho now ordered a large amount of straw to be thrown in the river, and when King Mahomad saw the sign, he thought the Count was dead. He left for Villa de San Esteban quite sure that he would beat the Christians.

But the Count and his men took him by surprise by confronting him before he reached Villa de San Esteban and engaging him in battle. The Count’s esquire and mayordomo did not leave his side for an instant during the battle, and he tirelessly turned himself into a shield to protect his master and lord.

And at that moment Corps of the Monteros de Espinosa was created. Count Don Sancho was so grateful for his esquire and mayordomo’s noble actions, to which he owed not only his life but also the completeness of his county, that he turned over, from then on, the safekeeping of his persona to the loyal vassal and others of the same blood.

The mayordomo came from Villa de Espinosa, a town in ruins after recently being almost totally destroyed at the hands of Califf Abdherramán, and the Count instituted for Sancho and his family and descendants five jobs as Monteros de Espinosa. He called them Monteros because the battle had taken place in the mountains and de Espinosa because they all came from the town of that name.

And for the next 900 years, the Monteros de Espinosa jealously guarded their king and his safety.

The Speed of Time

I am convinced that in Spain we do not get a full length 60 second minute, 60 minute hour and 24 hour day.

Time is not a constant, it passes more quickly here. If you are late, time rushes by, its rate of acceleration proportionate to the importance of whatever it is for which you must be punctual.

Yet should you be in the dentist’s waiting room it drags its heels and scuffs its toes, allowing plenty of opportunity for you to fully savour the sound of the dentist’s drill.

In the mornings I get up, have my coffee, and already it is 9.30; I got out of bed at 8, and I’m still not dressed!

I leave the house to go to Mercadona supermarket before 10, yet I return at the best part of 2. By the time I’ve had lunch it is time to feed the Dog That Is Not Ours, and then start on supper!

Where have all the intervening bits of time gone? Have they gone swirling down some time plughole, to re-emerge in Australia? Because as sure as eggs is eggs, they were missing from my day!

However, thinking about it, I can account for quite a bit of the missing time. For instance, I spend a goodly part of each day wandering around looking for the Wotsit which I had a minute ago, but put down to do something else.

Then when I have found it, I have forgotten why I wanted it. So I have to go back to where I was before to remember what it was that I was doing before.

By this time another job has sprung up out of nowhere, but that’s OK, I can do that at the same time as.....Oh, no I can’t! I need the Dubrie for that, and it’s in the shed. So I fetch the shed key and open



the shed, then remember that the Dubrie is in the Everything drawer in the kitchen.

Now I’ve got the Wotsit and the Dubrie, and can complete both tasks and move on with my day – just as soon as I remember that I haven’t shut the shed!

I estimate that I could save at least an hour a day, possibly more, if only I could ever remember what it was that I was supposed to be remembering!

But even allowing for that, I still am convinced that time passes more quickly here!



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What is Happening in the Local Property Market. February 2024

By Voss Homes Estate Agents - Huércal Overa & La Alfoquia

January was a fantastic start to 2024 and as usual we met with buyers and tenants coming from all over especially the UK, Netherlands, Belgium, France, Germany, Spain, Ireland and the rest of world. Despite popular belief the British are still coming to buy in their droves.

I am sometimes told by people that if they were selling their property, they would go with the agent who charges them the lowest commission. They have not thought about which agent would actually be the one who most likely will get their property sold.

If an agent is offering low commission deals then you have to ask "Why do they need to do that?". There will be good reasons, but they are not to benefit the seller.

The main reason for the cheap deal is usually because not many sellers or buyers are using that agent and therefore are desperate for properties. The agent already doubts you will list with them, so they have to resort to offering you a "super cheap / too good to refuse" low commission deal to make you list with them.

Some agents sense that the seller has only invited them round to get a second opinion on the valuation of their preferred agent and that they are not actually going to list their property with them. Again, a super cheap commission deal is offered with the sole intention of messing things up with the sellers preferred agent and hopes the seller will go back to them to try to negotiate on their commission which the seller



There is always someone willing to do it cheaper

was previously thought was very reasonable.


At the end of the day to run a successful estate agency that actually sells lots of properties is doing so because they invest lots of money in premises, advertising, staff wages and social security, cars, fuel and of course a lot of long hours and hard work. A lot of agents decide not to invest in the above which means they don't sell many properties.

Having a simple website and posting irrelevant posts on Facebook is not good enough. You need to get out there and find buyers and advertise everywhere including local newspapers, magazines, radio stations and of course all have an excellent, easy to use website and advertise all over the world wide web.

By all means go with the agents who offer the cheap deals, but you WILL find out the hard way that "You get what you pay for". The best option is to go with the agent with the best reputation and

is selling the most properties in your area and is actually passionate about getting your property sold.

On a last note. If you are selling your property and other agents knock on your door with fabulous made-up stories saying you MUST list your property with them as they have mystical clients who want to buy your property then tell them "No Thanks" and if they "really" have interested clients then they must contact your existing agent and bring the clients via them. We bet they won't.



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Pets Corner

Dakota – She Is - A Big Girl



My beautiful baby girl is now 10 months old. She doesn't much look like a baby anymore, she's growing into a beautiful young dog.

I stumbled over a photo of her on our first day together, and I sent it to my sister. She said 'Aww, don't you wish she was still as cute?' I thought about it and replied, 'The only thing I wish is that I were still able to pick her up and cuddle and hug her.'

Apart from that, as cute as puppies are, I am very much a dog person rather than a puppy person. I love it when you get that proper contact, see understanding in their eyes, get some sort of reply or reaction to your words and actions.

Dakota and I are very close now. I'm no longer just the provider of food, cuddles, toys, and walks. We're becoming a team – although very much with me being the alpha. There isn't – and must never be – any doubt about that.

Thankfully, she's past that 7-10 months 'terrible teens' period. I must say she wasn't much of a problem child (apart from the stubborn cow routine) and didn't challenge my authority much, but I can still feel the difference now she's grown out of it. She shows real joy now in learning and doing things right.

Don't get me wrong, she's as feisty as the best of them, and I've got to get it just right. Once she's learnt or understood something, if I don't do it the way she has learnt I should do it, she will not do her part either.

If I get impatient or angry, I lose her. She'll do anything for me, but if I'm not satisfied with how she does it and start correcting in a way she doesn't agree with, she can get very ornery. I love that in her, she's not a push-over, and often she has me turning my back, taking



a deep breath, and trying to find out what I'm doing wrong.

Continued on page 60

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..... Continued from page 59

When I turn back around, we are both ready to start from scratch and try to get it right. This is what I mean when I say we've become a team.

She's doing great at training, and it is getting to be an exception when she has a go at another dog. She's even learning to ignore the many cats we have to pass on the way from the car to the training court, which I'm extremely pleased about. (Of course, she still loves 'her own' cats, says they have nothing to do with the kind of provocative species that live in other places).

She's now allowed to work off the lead in the classes. That's been a great step up for us, and I'm so proud of her!

We both love our street training on Wednesdays. It is always different and challenging to work in an unpredictable environment,



and you never know what distractions may present themselves. But all the dogs do well, and it is a great help in training them to obey in all situations and environments, not only at the training ground.

My next project for her is recall when she's off the lead in the mountains. She'll come running the moment I call – as long as there's nothing more interesting going on in another direction. If she gets a scent, sees a rabbit, or generally gets interested in something, I've no chance. She ignores me completely, and I can call until the cows come home to no avail.

That's something for us to work on, and I have a plan. I'll let you know how we get on.

We've now got a date for her spaying. They keep telling me at the training club 'Don't do it! It's such a waste!'

They even managed to sow a seed of doubt about whether it's to soon to have it done at eleven months. I joked that they only said that to gain more time to plan how to get her off of me to use her for breeding. But nonetheless, I felt compelled to check with Javier.

He has assured me that according to the latest studies, anytime after the first heat is fine, though rather sooner than later as less muscle mass means an easier operation.

So we'll stick to our date, and the next time you hear from me, the operation will be behind us and hopefully without complications. To tell you the truth, I'm scared to death to have her go through it, there's always something that can go wrong, but

they will do it laparoscopically and with minimal invasion, so that diminishes the risk.

But please, everybody, keep your fingers crossed on 22nd February! I know I will!

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Look Good - Feel Great

Skin Superfoods

Our skin is what we eat. It's that simple. Is there anyone out there who doesn't want a gorgeous, radiant glowing complexion? Thought not. But because the skin is the last place in the body to receive the nutrients we ingest, many experts counsel that a two-way approach is what pays real dividends. Quite often, the nutrients that boost skin health when we eat or drink them also deliver amazing skin benefits when applied from the outside, too.

We're well known for taking lots of supplements, but we should also try to eat well, packing our diet with skin-friendly foods. So, here's a run-down of some of the best things to eat, drink – and to slather on – for your best-ever skin...

Pomegranate

The luscious red juice of pomegranate – and the seed-filled fruit itself – are bursting with the super-nutrient ellagic acid, a mega-antioxidant that's renowned for protecting and repairing skin. Pomegranate has actually been found to turbo-charge the effect of sun protection when added to sun lotions. Increasingly, pomegranate's turning up in products for face, body, even hair: its antioxidant powers can help repair the damage done by UV light, and help to keep hair colour bright, preventing fading. A glass of pure pomegranate juice is great – but for optimum benefits, eat the seeds, too: they have two vital compounds for skin, including a super-nutrient known as 'punicalagin' to preserve collagen – so helping to keep skin looking younger, smoother and soft.



Green tea

Ideally, drink at least two cups a day. Green tea is great for the metabolism. It also contains 'catechins', compounds that have been found to help fight the long-term after-effects of sun damage, such as 'sun spots' (also, unkindly, known as 'age spots', although they're almost always linked to past sun exposure). Brew yourself a pot of green tea each day and enjoy – but also look for body products and suncare, in particular that feature green tea.

Continued on page 62

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..... Continued from page 61

Hemp seeds

Oils and fats are essential for good skin. Plenty of foods are packed with omega fatty acids, but hemp is a ‘wonder seed’ that features a perfect balance of omega-3 and omega-6 essential fats, absolutely vital for keeping skin ‘watertight’, plump and smooth. You can buy pressed hemp seed oils and drizzle it on a salad or try this simple and delicious vinaigrette: 60 ml hemp seed oil, 30 ml balsamic vinegar, a teaspoon of fresh oregano and a teaspoon of crushed garlic. Plus, of course, there’s a wide choice of hemp-seed-based energy bars and even hemp seed nut butter to up the hemp level in your diet. Meanwhile, in cosmetics and skincare products, hemp, with its high levels of polyunsaturated essential fatty acids, so readily absorbed by the skin, has an anti-inflammatory effect that’s great for soothing touchy and sensitive complexions (including eczema and psoriasis), balancing dryness and helping to fight inflammation. Great for anti-ageing, too: GLAs (gamma linoleic acids) are essential skin lipids that promote regeneration at cellular level, which of course slows down as we age, and the lipids in hemp replenish them. Choose hemp-based products or just massage on the same stuff you’re drizzling on your salad.

Soya milk

Not everyone loves soya milk but because skin does, it’s definitely worth trying to get your tastebuds around it. You have to try a variety of brands in your quest to find your perfect soya milk, but it’s worth it. The super-nutrients known as isoflavones work by mimicking oestrogen, the hormone that’s needed to produce collagen and elastin (which gives skin its bounce-back factor), as well as lubricating oils. Soya doesn’t just come in milk form, there are soya yoghurts and tofu. Boost your isoflavone levels with other foods like lentils, chickpeas and flax seeds. What happens when you apply soya to the skin? Some studies point to a role in skincare improving overall skin tone, radiance and texture, reducing blotchiness by evening out the appearance of pigments, under the skin’s surface.

Oats

No wonder we’re always being told to eat our porridge: oats are rich in calcium, potassium, magnesium, vitamin E, B vitamins and protein, a brilliant source of slow-released energy. What’s more, they’re great for anyone suffering from stress or tiredness, helping you to sleep better. Oats are one of the few foods that can be eaten within an hour or two of bedtime, and still allow you to waft off to the land of Nod. (Late eating usually keeps the body awake, as digestion kicks in.) A grainy bonus: oats can have a fabulous effect on skin, applied topically; they’re fab for exfoliating. Add a few oats to a face mask and use as a gentle scrub or mix to a fairly stiff paste with yoghurt and apply that as a mask. The yoghurt itself offers other



skin-brightening benefits, as the lactic acid gently dissolves dead and dull skin cells, without irritation. Eczema sufferers also swear by oat-powered baths: take a square of muslin, pile a generous handful of oats in the middle, tie the corners and dangle under running water. You can then apply the oat ‘poultice’ to itchy or irritated areas of the body, or just use it for general all-over skin cleansing.

Egg whites

A great source of zinc, which is one of the building blocks of great skin. This isn’t necessarily an excuse to OD on meringues: an egg white omelette can be surprisingly tasty, especially if you throw in handfuls of fresh herbs from the garden or windowsill. The fact is, if you’re zinc-deficient, the most expensive skincare in the world won’t deliver healthy, youthful skin so keep your zinc levels topped up not just with egg whites, but pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, sweet potatoes, pine nuts, even oysters, if you have a taste for them. As for applying egg white to the skin? Try this: cucumber anti-blemish mask, with a 1-inch chunk of cucumber, 1 drop of rosemary essential oil and one egg white. Whizz the cucumber in a blender until it’s a liquid consistency and then add the drop of rosemary essential oil. (Rosemary is a super-effective antiseptic.) Whisk the egg white until stiff, then fold in the cucumber mixture and smooth over the face. The egg white will tighten on the face; remove after 15 minutes using a clean, damp cloth.

Water

Not a superfood, but the ultimate super drink. So don’t forget to drink at least eight glasses of still water a day between meals for brain, digestion, skin, in fact everything...!

What is Degenerative Disc Disease?

Degenerative disc disease (DDD) is one of the most common causes of low back and neck pain. DDD typically consists of a low-level long-term pain, with intermittent episodes of more severe pain.

Despite what the name suggests, DDD is not a disease, but a condition in which natural, age-related wear-and-tear to one or more intervertebral discs causes pain, and symptoms such as weakness, numbness, pins & needles, and/or pain in the arms or legs.

Although it cannot be reversed, most cases can be managed well using nonsurgical treatment methods such as Osteopathy.

DDD does not usually result in long-term disability.

The role of Osteopathy in DDD:

Osteopathy can help to reduce pain, increase movement, and improve posture.

By identifying underlying factors which may be maintaining or worsening your symptoms, the treatment goal is to restore normal function, addressing compensatory patterns which may have developed, decreasing pain, and stress and strain on the surrounding structures i.e. vertebrae, muscles, ligaments and tendons

Osteopathic treatment will involve:

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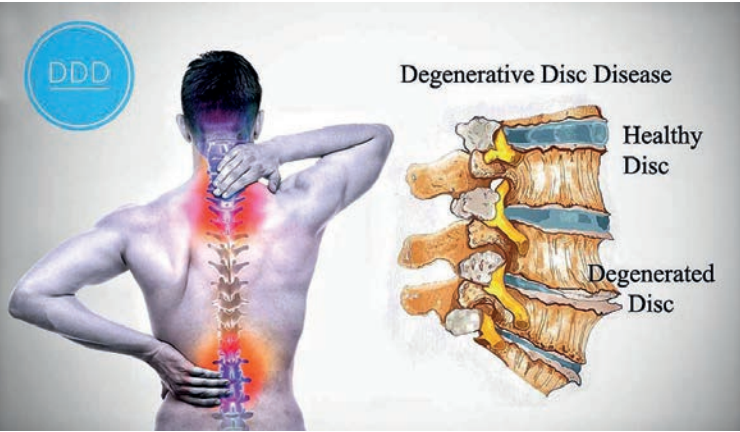
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I Can't do Yoga, I'm Not Flexible Enough!

By Maya Bamford



How many times have I heard this over the years as a Yoga Teacher! My answer is always the same, "that's why you practice Yoga, to become flexible"

My journey with Yoga started 20 years ago when I was 7 months pregnant with my 2nd child. A friend called up one day and said there were classes starting locally and she had spoken to the teacher who said it was OK for me to come along. 2 months later and 5 days after my last class, I pushed my beautiful daughter into this world after a short, nearly pain free labour; she was my first natural birth. A few months later I was back on the mat and have never looked back, my mat is my sanctuary.

Quite early on I realized that I didn't want to just be a student, I wanted to share my love of Yoga to everyone, inspire others to take care of themselves not only physically, but mentally, emotionally and spiritually. YES, Yoga does all that!

The benefits are a thousand-fold, there's just so many how can I name them all!

And literally anyone, any age, religion, culture, male, female, old, young, large, small, healthy and not so healthy, 'Yoga is for Everyone'

So, starting with some of the basic benefits and remember you don't have to be flexible to start a Yoga practice.

- Yoga makes you feel great, alert and energized.
- Yoga not only stretches your muscles, loosens your joints making you more supple and yes more flexible!
- Yoga works all 5 systems of the body, the nervous, respiratory, digestive, reproductive and endocrine systems, increasing your immunity, giving you overall health and well being
- Yoga helps to calm your mind and emotions leaving you feeling peaceful, happy, stress free and more in control of your life.
- Yoga increases our self-esteem, gives us inner strength and connects us to that most divine aspect of who we really are. Where better place to be?

There are many types of Yoga. Hatha is one of the most popular styles. It is a more physical type of Yoga rather than a still, meditative form. A Hatha Yoga class focuses on Asana (yoga postures), Yoga Nidra (deep relaxation), Pranayama (breath-control) and Meditation. The goal during a Yoga practice is to challenge yourself physically, but not to feel overwhelmed. At this "edge," the focus is on your breath while your mind is accepting and calm.

Maya Bamford (E-RYT 500)

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Puzzle Time

Puzzle solutions on page 74

Enter digits from 1 to 9 into the blank spaces. Every row of each 9x9 cube must contain one of each digit. So must every column, as must every 3x3 square.

	2				5	9			8		4			5	6	2
1			2		4	8	7						5		4	1
			6	3			2		5	9		4				8
	1		5	6	3	2			4			2	7			8
2	4		9	1	8	7	6			5	2	6		8	1	
6		5	7				3	8		6	8				7	2
			4	5			7		5	8	3	2		6	7	1
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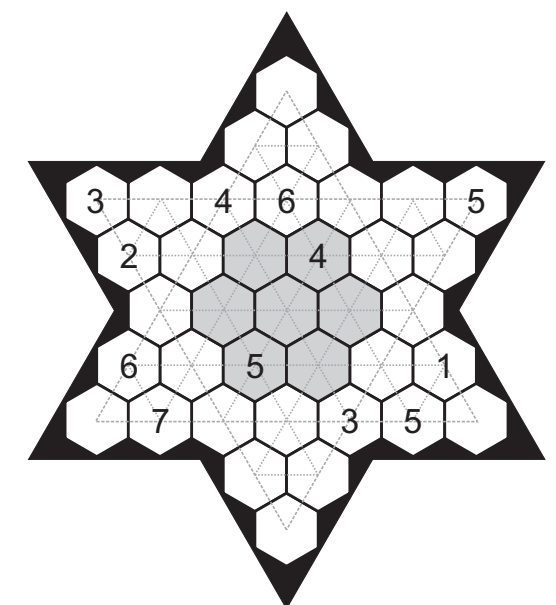
Samurai Sudoku

					6	9			1		3	8				
									9	2		1				
					2	7										
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1	2	9	6			8			6	1				4		8
4		5		8	2	7	9					4	1	2	5	
2			8			9	5					7	6			4
			3	6				4					3	4	9	1
7	4			2	5			3	8					5	6	
6		2		3	4							3				1
	5	4	2		1			7				6	4			9
			5		8	4						5		7		2

Star Puzzle

To complete the puzzle fill in each of the empty hexagon cells with numbers between 1 & 7 following the 3 rules below;

1. No numbers in a horizontal line can be repeated.
2. No numbers in a diagonal line can be repeated.
3. No numbers in the 7 gray hexagons can be repeated.



* Note that each white hexagon belongs to a line of 7 that must contain each of the numbers between 1 and 7

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10 memory boosting foods

From brain-friendly oily fish to memory-enhancing rosemary, here are 10 foods that scientific studies show can help boost your powers of recall.

Our brains require a variety of nutrients to function well, so it comes as no surprise that what you eat can affect your cognitive skills and ability to recall information.

Research shows that following a Mediterranean or similar MIND diet can help prevent or delay age-related cognitive decline and reduce the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease, but specific foods can be helpful, too. Some of the foods we should consume as part of a healthy diet are rich in memory enhancers.

Your brain and what you need to know:

Oily fish

Study after study has demonstrated that a diet rich in DHA, an omega 3 fatty acid found in oily fish, may help prevent memory loss and protect against Alzheimer's disease.

A 2011 study conducted in New Zealand found that DHA can boost memory by 15% and researchers at the University of Pittsburgh in the US have shown that people who eat oily fish at least once a week have more grey matter in areas of the brain responsible for memory.

Seaweed

If you're vegetarian, vegan or simply not fond of fatty fish, you may want to stock up on seaweed of all things to help boost your brainpower.

Whether you opt for trendy dulse, kombu or kelp, seaweed is a stellar veggie source of DHA, plus it contains memory-strengthening



iodine as well as chemical compounds called lignans, which have been linked to improved cognitive performance in post-menopausal women.

Sources of omega-3 for people who hate salmon:

Eggs

A staggering 90% of people are thought to be deficient in choline, a micronutrient that helps the body produce the neurotransmitter acetylcholine. This powerful chemical is essential for optimum memory skills and low levels in the brain have been associated with an increased risk of Alzheimer's disease.

Continued on page 68



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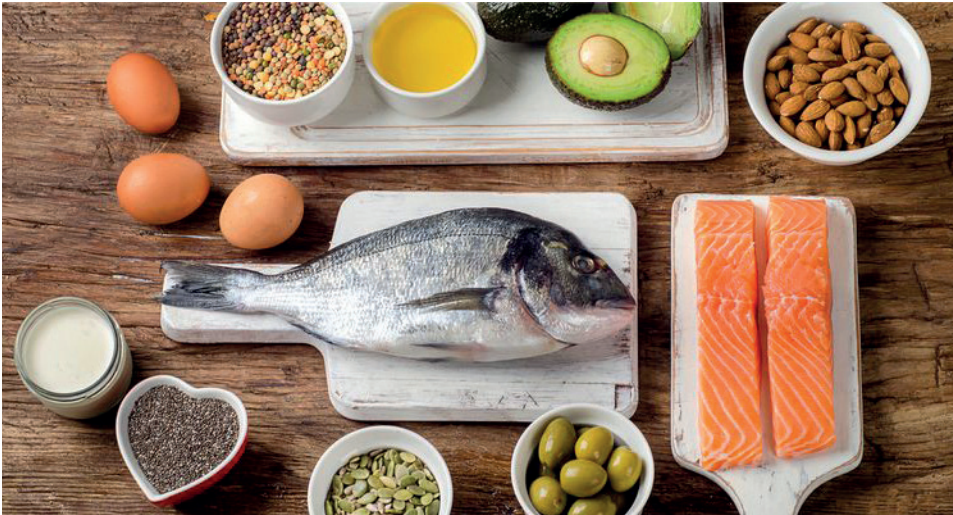


..... Continued from page 66

Eggs, which also contain memory-friendly DHA, are especially rich in choline, so it may be an idea to increase your intake to help support your brain health.

Avocado

A study by researchers in the US that was published in 2015 reported that avocado consumption increases levels of the antioxidant lutein in the brain and can help improve cognitive function. Bona fide brain food, avocados are an excellent source of monounsaturated fats, too. These healthy fats trigger the production and release of acetylcholine, helping to improve memory and learning skills.



Broccoli

Broccoli is jam-packed with glucosinolates, sulphur-containing compounds that prevent the breakdown of that all-important

neurotransmitter acetylcholine, not to mention vitamin K and vitamin C, which studies show protect the brain and boost cognitive function.

And if that isn't enough to get you reaching for the veggie, broccoli also contains chromium, a trace mineral that may increase brain function in older people experiencing early memory decline.

Olive oil

Several studies have shown that olive oil, which is bursting with virtuous monounsaturated fats, can support brain health and help prevent age-related memory loss, while research has linked diets that are excessively high in saturated fats with poorer cognitive function and impaired memory. If you can, try to limit your use of butter and lard in favour of olive oil, or similar monounsaturated oils such as rapeseed or peanut.

Dark chocolate

Rich in brain-boosting flavanols, nibbling a little dark chocolate once a week may work wonders on your memory. A recent study published in the journal Appetite found that participants who ate dark chocolate at least once a week had improved memory and abstract thinking skills, while research from 2014 indicates that a diet rich in cocoa may mitigate memory loss in older people. To reap the benefits, opt for chocolate with at least 70% cocoa solids and only the best quality cocoa, and try not to overindulge.

Blueberries

Blueberries are an excellent source of antioxidants called anthocyanins. Researchers have shown time and time again that anthocyanin-containing fruits can protect against the short-term memory loss associated with ageing.

Not a fan of blueberries? Red grapes, blackberries and cherries are also rich in these brain-protecting compounds, as are aubergines, asparagus and even bananas.

Rosemary

The heady scent of rosemary can enhance memory according to the latest research. Psychologists have found that the herb's aroma can improve memory skills by as much as 7% in teenagers and an even more impressive 15% in people over 65. Give it a go by popping branches of rosemary in pot pourri around the house or snapping up the essential oil and using it as a room fragrance.

Mint

Mint is another herb that is associated with improved memory function. A study from 2013 by researchers from a University in the US links the flavour of mint with sharper cognitive skills, while a number of studies have shown that the wonderfully fresh aroma of mint can stimulate the brain, enhancing alertness and the ability to recall information.

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A Short History of Seat Models

Over the decades Seat has produced and launched a huge number of models, and it is impossible to cover them all in a short history. For a full list of their models, check out www.seat.es.

When the Spanish Civil War had ended in 1939, one of the new Franco government's first priorities was to motorize the country to facilitate the transport of goods and people.

After discarding the original idea of using the Hispano-Suiza automotive-engineering company for fear that possible international isolation could complicate the supply of materials, Franco decided to rely on ideologically kindred countries, and a deal was made with Fiat to produce cars under license in Barcelona.

This led to the foundation of the 'Sociedad Española de Automóviles de Turismo' – SEAT* in 1950, and the production facilities were inaugurated in Zona Franca in Barcelona

on June 5th, 1953

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..... Continued from page 71

On 13th November the same year the first Seat rolled off the assembly line: A Seat 1400, which was meant to serve for official representation and for taxis, medical and technical assistance more than for the use of the general population.

In 1957, Seat started the production of the emblematic Seat 600, which was the start of the intensive motorisation of Spain, Franco's answer to Hitler's Volkswagen.

Although little thought had gone into aesthetics, and the 600 was inferior to the other Seat models and indeed to almost all other models of the competition, it stayed in production until August 1973. The total production of this little car, whose top speed was 95 kmph, had reached almost 800,000 by the time it was taken out of production.

The penultimate Seat 600 that was produced in Barcelona was never matriculated. It is still on display in the company's Historic Car Collection. What happened to the very last one, nobody knows.

In 1966, Seat launched its model 850, which was based on the same mechanics as the 600, but it was more comfortable and spacious. It was the first Seat vehicle which was available in different versions: Sport, sedan, and cabriolet. The sales of the 850 had reached a million by the end of the decade.

The Seat 1500 had replaced the 1400 model in 1963, and in 1973 it was itself replaced by the luxurious Seat 132.

In the 1970s Seat expanded its installation and opened a Technical Centre in Matorell, and in 1974 it acquired production facilities in Landaben in Pamplona.

In 1972 it started production of the Seat 127 which was to stay in production until 1985. The 127 was Seat's first front-wheel drive. It was produced in three different series, and as opposed to the Fiat 127 it was also made in a Spanish designed sedan version which was



widely exported.

Seat established a factory in Galicia, Indugasa, especially for the production of the shaft joints necessary for front-wheel drive.

The Seat Ritmo saw the light in 1979 and it astonished with its avant garde design. After only three years, in 1982, it was replaced by the Ronda. The Japanese company Honda sued Seat for the similarity of the name, but the case was settled amicably with an agreement that Seat would cease production of the Ronda in 1986 if Honda promised not to interfere with its marketing in the meantime.



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The Seat Panda had been launched in 1980, and in 1986 its name changed to Marbella. This model was a huge success and it stayed in production until 1997.

In 1984 the Ibiza appeared. It had several newly developed Porche produced engine units, and a diesel version. It was followed by the Seat Málaga which had several design similarities to the Ibiza in order to show a corporate image.

The Toledo was launched in 1991, Seat's first sedan liftback. It had been developed in cooperation with Volkswagen and shared several elements with some of Volkswagen's own models. This union led to a vast improvement of quality for Seat, and it served as a good platform for relaunching its name.

In 1993 a new production unit was inaugurated in Matorell, where the new Ibiza was produced. This was also where the first Seat Córdoba saw the light of day. Two years later, the Crown Prince drove vehicle number 10,000,000 off the assembly line, a Toledo.

In 1999 the company introduced its new corporate image, and the compact Seat León was launched in a bid to return Seat to the forefront of the European market. The new Córdoba is added to the family, offering a more family friendly version, and two years later it is joined by the Altea.

The Ibiza celebrated 20 years of production in 2004 with more than 3.3 million models sold. The following year a new generation of the León is introduced along with a new Ibiza.

Seat presented the prototype of the Altea Freetrack in Geneva in 2007, Seat's first ever all-terrain vehicle, and in Frankfurt the company surprised with the concept car Tribu, Seat's interpretation of a sports SUV.

In the decade from 2010 to 2020, Seat developed new and better versions of their classics such as Ibiza, Toledo, León and Altea at



the same time as introducing a wealth of new models.

The last decade also saw family additions such as the Alhambra 4WD which was introduced to great acclaim in Geneva, and in 2015 the company's first true SUV, the Seat Connect, was introduced followed in 2016 by another SUV, the Seat Ateca, thus following the market trends of the time.

Like all other automobile producers, Seat has suffered setbacks as a result of the world pandemic and the resulting economic stagnation and shortage of components for their production facilities, but the company keeps its eyes on the future and is planning to keep launching new and exciting models notwithstanding.

* Author's note: In Spanish, the word 'turismo' means, apart from the obvious tourism, a passenger car.

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F1 Grand Prix Circuit Dates 2024

The official Formula 1 calendar for 2024 has been unveiled. The calendar features a whopping 24 Grands Prix, a record number of races. There are no new races added to the calendar, but China makes a comeback. The race hasn't taken place since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

The season kicks off in March with two races on a Saturday, in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. Three test days are scheduled for February. The GP of Las Vegas is also on a Saturday. The season concludes relatively late on December 8th, and there's a noticeable large gap in the calendar in October.

Other notable changes include the GP of Japan being moved forward. In recent years, this race was consistently held in October, a period prone to less favourable weather due to the hurricane season. The GP of Azerbaijan takes the opposite route and is now combined later in the year with the GP of Singapore.

- 1 Bahrain GP
Bahrain International Circuit - 2 Mar
- 2 Saudi Arabian GP
Jeddah Street Circuit - 9 Mar
- 3 Australian GP
Albert Park - 24 Mar
- 4 Japanese GP
Suzuka Circuit - 7 Apr
- 5 Chinese GP
Shanghai International Circuit - 21 Apr
- 6 USA Miami GP
Miami International Autodrome - 5 May
- 7 Italy Emilia Romagna GP
Autodromo Enzo e Dino Ferrari - 19 May
- 8 Monaco GP
Circuit de Monaco - 26 May
- 9 Canadian GP
Circuit Gilles Villeneuve 9 Jun
- 10 Spanish GP
Circuit de Catalunya - 23 Jun
- 11 Austrian GP
Red Bull Ring - 30 Jun
- 12 British GP
Circuit Silverstone - 7 Jul
- 13 Hungarian GP
Hungaroring - 21 Jul
- 14 Belgian GP
Spa-Francorchamps - 28 Jul

- 15 Dutch GP
Circuit Zandvoort - 25 Aug
- 16 Italian GP
Autodromo Nazionale Monza - 1 Sep
- 17 Azerbaijan GP
Baku City Circuit - 15 Sep
- 18 Singapore GP
Marina Bay Street Circuit - 22 Sep
- 19 United States GP
Circuit of the Americas - 20 Oct
- 20 Mexican GP
Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez - 27 Oct
- 21 Brazilian GP
Autodromo Jose Carlos Pace Interlagos - 3 Nov
- 22 Las Vegas GP
Las Vegas Street Circuit - 23 Nov
- 23 Qatar GP
Losail International Circuit - 1 Dec
- 24 Abu Dhabi GP
Yas Marina Circuit - 8 Dec

Madrid to Join Calendar in 2026

Madrid will be back on the Formula One calendar from 2026 on a long-term agreement. The Spanish capital last hosted a Grand Prix in 1981. It has not been confirmed what the news means for Barcelona, which has hosted the Spanish GP since 1991. F1 say Madrid will provide “one of the calendar's most accessible races and “it is estimated that 90% of fans will be able to travel to the paddock via public transport”.

The race will take place on a 5.47km (3.39 mile) circuit around the IFEMA exhibition centre, which is close to Madrid’s main airport.

As they build towards the introduction of the FIA 2026 Formula One regulations, which have been framed with Net Zero carbon by 2030 in mind, it is pleasing to see that the local organisers have placed a sharp focus on environmental sustainability



in their plans for the event.

As is customary, the proposed circuit will be subject to FIA homologation and safety checks and calendar approval by the World Motor Sport Council.

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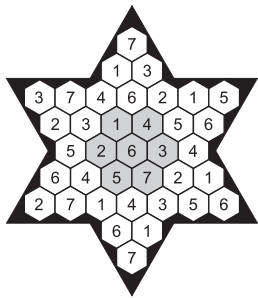
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