

February 2026

Issue 154

# Almeria Living

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# Almeria Living

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Welcome to the February 2026 issue of Almería Living.

What can possibly follow a wet, cold and windy January!!!! Maybe a Valentine heatwave!! Let's hope for a good amount of sunshine to warm the bones and make us smile.

I hope that no-one has suffered any damage due to the high winds. I can tolerate most weather conditions but not the wind, especially at night!! Everything rattles and bangs and you never know what you will get up to in the morning.

A few years ago, during a storm, our neighbour's chimney collapsed onto our roof right above where I was sleeping - now that really was a scary experience!!

Have you ever stopped to think about what it must be like being a bird in a tree when it is windy! Those skinny little legs can't be as fragile and weak as they appear.

In this issue...

Our frontpage this month is in celebration of the Chinese New Year that falls on February 17th in 2026 - the Year of the Fire Horse. Read more about their colourful festivities and symbols on pages 47 - 48.

My scribes have been very busy, and I am most grateful for all their contributions, which I know you, the readers, also enjoy.

Many thanks, as always, to our many 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 Almería Living.

Take care and stay safe. Talk again in March.

Karen (Ed)

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WE SPEAK

# The Importance of a Spanish Will

**Making a Spanish Will is very important if you have any assets in Spain - property, vehicle, bank account etc.**

Dealing with all aspects of bereavement & inheritance can be very difficult at such a sad time but the process is so much easier if a Spanish Will has been made.

## How Spanish Inheritance Works

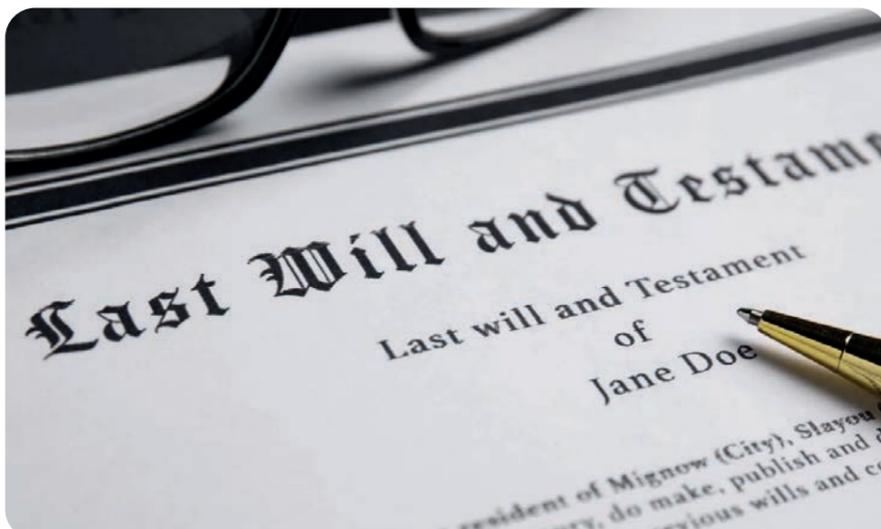
In the sad event of a death, if the person had any Spanish assets it is necessary to carry out several actions in order to complete the inheritance process.

Even if the survivors are sure that they have a copy of the last Spanish Will, it is first necessary to obtain a certificate of Last Wishes from the Ministry of Justice in Madrid. This certificate states if there is a Spanish Will and if so, where the last lodged one is held.

With this certificate the Notary can release the Will and the inheritance process gets well underway.

If there is no Spanish Will, the process becomes complex and a Grant of Probate will be required from the native country. A Will from the native country does make obtaining the Grant of Probate more straight-forward but the process is still more complex. This is why we strongly recommend taking time to make a Spanish Will.

Once the certificate and Will have been obtained, if there is property involved then the next step is to the Notary to sign the Inheritance



Deed (Escritura de Herencia). The inheritor(s) or representative (with power of attorney) presents all assets, such as property deeds, bank certificates, vehicle documents etc, and these are all recorded in the document.

After the Notary, it is the Tax Office (Hacienda), where any inheritance tax is calculated and must be paid before the Notary releases the Inheritance Deed. This is then presented to Land Registry so the property is put into the inheritor(s) name(s).

If there is no property involved, generally the Notary does not get involved and the process moves straight on to the Tax Office. The certificate issued by the Tax Office is required by the bank, along with all other documentation gathered along the way, including the Will and death certificate.

Please bear in mind that every office dealt with requires payment for the process and their services so it does become quite a costly business.

## Spanish Inheritance Tax

If you are the spouse, natural born child or adopted child, then as direct relatives there is usually no inheritance tax to pay, unless the inheritance is more than one million euros.

If you are siblings or parents, then you move into the 2nd band and there is a low inheritance tax to pay.

Nieces, nephews, and other such indirect relatives move into band 3, where the tax is higher.

If there is no blood line, including step-children, then the inheritance tax is much higher.

We can discuss this with you further and even obtain an approximate cost based on current assets value.

If you would like to discuss making a Will, or other inheritance issues or would like help with the processes involved, please do get in touch with us at C.A.T. Services.

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# Spanish Provinces

There are 50 provinces in Spain, each with its own capital city which usually, but not always, carries the same name as the province. In January we journeyed to A Coruña and now our next of Spain's provincial Capitals takes us south of Madrid .....



Spanish population.

The highest point in the province of Cuenca is Pico de la Mogorrita in the Serranía de Cuenca. Its peak reaches 1864 m above sea level.

Cuenca is a territory of water, being crisscrossed by rivers and dotted with freshwater lagoons. The countryside is stunning with lots of interesting limestone formations that have been eroded and shaped by wind and water of the millenniums. Notably La Ciudad Encantada (the Enchanted City) and El Ventano del Diablo (the Devil's Window).

La Ciudad Encantada is situated not far from the city of Cuenca. It is a geological site consisting of unusual limestone rock formations which have been shaped by erosion by waters from the nearby Júcar river, wind and frost over thousands of years.

It is a very advanced karst where much of the rock has been dissolved, and most of the galleries collapsed when the roof of the caves fell and only the blocks of the most resistant stone areas remain standing, resulting in the fantastical shapes that attract visitors from near and far.

According to legend, the Devil's Window was actually the devil's skull and you look from the inside out through the eye sockets. The views from there were so stunning that people would swoon and fall to their death on the rocks 200m below.

Another wonder of nature well worth mentioning is the source of the river Cuervo which is a National Monument and a breathtaking sight all year round.

It was declared a natural monument in 1999 and covers an area of 1,709 hectares. Here, the water (when it flows) emerges from a travertine spring and trickles down enormous stalactites of moss-covered limestone (tufa) and forms long cascades that freeze in winter.

At the source, caves can be seen behind the waterfalls, and sinkholes

can be found in the surrounding area. Natural collapses of the tufa barriers are relatively frequent.

The capital of the province is also called Cuenca and it lies a little to the north of the centre of the province at a height of around 1,000 MASL. It is home to 53,761 souls.

There is no evidence of any settlements on the actual site of Cuenca capital until the Moors established a fort and a city called Kūnka. The year of its foundation is not clear, but it is known that it existed by 784.

After the reconquest the three main groups of the population, Muslims, Jews and Catholics, each had their own area of the city and lived in peaceful co-existence.

Cuenca was granted city status by Alfonso X in 1257 and over the next three centuries the city's economy started growing. The two big main areas of the economic growth were textile and livestock farming, and the cloth trade and the production of rugs brought along the need for wool processing. By the 16th century the population counted 15,000.

Sadly, the city experienced a gradual decline which lasted two hundred years and was caused by an outbreak of the plague followed by several bouts of drought and plagues of locusts, and the population was literally decimated and dropped down to 1,500 in the whole city.

But Cuenca recuperated and by 1900 the population rounded 10,000 and since then the city has grown steadily.

Today, Cuenca's main income comes from tourism due to its dramatic setting and amazing old town which is one of UNESCO's World Heritage Sites. The city spreads out from atop a promontory overlooking the ruins of the Moorish castle, Kūnka, and below, the modern city grows on the Júcar plain.

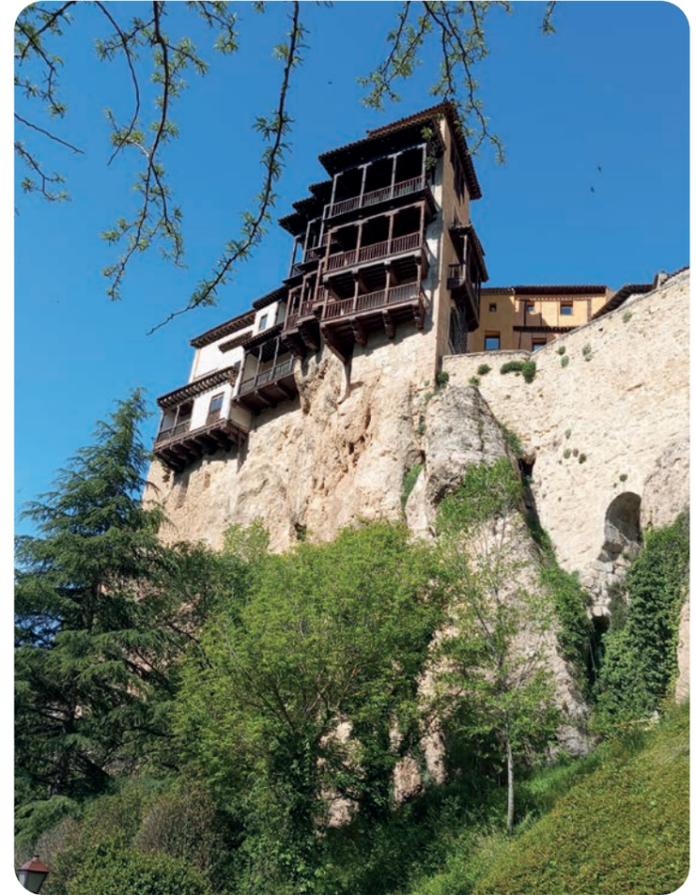
Its main claim to fame are the Casas Colgadas (Hanging Houses) which are draped over the tall cliff overlooking the gorge deep down below. These houses with their typical wooden balconies are the symbol of the city although there are only three left. They were saved in the 1920s by the city architect.

You get the best view of the hanging houses from the San Pablo bridge, which spans the deep gorge on whose edge the old town balances.

The bridge is 40 meters tall and 110 meters long. It was constructed in 1902 after the original stone bridge, which had been constructed in the 16th century, started crumbling and was demolished.

The climate in Cuenca is warm in summer and cold in winter with frequent frosts and occasional snow.

Cuenca's gastronomy is also worth mentioning. Many unique, local treats are available in the area: "Zarajos" (roast lamb tripe), "morteruelo" (a kind of pâté served hot) or ajoarriero (cod stew) to which can be added vegetable stews, roasts and freshwater fish. Almonds, honey and figs are included in all kinds of imaginative cookery and make up the dessert known as "alajú" (a cake made of honey, figs and almonds). And as far as drinks are concerned, wines



with the La Mancha Denomination of Origin and "resolf", a liqueur made with coffee, sugar and orange peel, are outstanding.



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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 troops 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.

## Zarajos from Cuenca



Like so many Spanish dishes, zarajos stem from the age-long tradition of using all parts of an animal and not wasting anything.

Zarajos are not something we would normally consider edible – they are made from lambs' intestines - but they look very appetizing indeed when they are fried. Less so (much less so!) in a stew. But let us concentrate on the fried variety in this article; maybe we can get back to the stew another time.

It is said that zarajos is an acquired taste, due to the intense lamb flavour.

They are a very popular tapa in Castilla-La Mancha, especially in Cuenca, where they originated. However, due to their unique flavour and the traditional preparation method, they are gaining ground all over Spain, not least in Madrid.

To make zarajos, you need lambs' intestines, salt, pepper, garlic, lemon, olive oil and some vine twigs or thin branches. If you cannot find vine twigs, you can use ordinary wooden skewers.

First of all, you have to clean the intestines thoroughly. You do this by rinsing them under the cold tap to eliminate any residue. You

## ¡Buen Provecho!



then leave them to soak in a mixture of water and lemon juice which helps eliminate bad smells and disinfect the intestine.

Place the clean, pat dried intestines in a bowl and mix well with salt and pepper, and chopped garlic if you wish, but this is optional. Leave them to soak for at least an hour.

Clean the vine twigs thoroughly to make them suitable for cooking purposes.

Now pick a small segment of intestine and wind it around a vine twig. Repeat until the zarajo is almost round, leaving the twig ends to stick out. The pros use two twigs, and that is also the way zarajo is presented when sold ready to fry.

Before you get too excited, it is very unusual to find ready preprepared zarajos in the supermarkets around here, but should you ever find yourself in Cuenca, or indeed in the markets of Madrid, you might strike it lucky.

When you have finished winding your zarajos, you can cook them on the barbecue, over an open fire or fry them in olive oil. Whichever method you choose, cook them for a long time until they are completely cooked, golden and crisp before serving them with lemon slices and crusty bread, and a glass of good full-bodied red wine.

¡Buen Provecho!

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# Cooking with Nina



## Winter Warmers

I do apologise if the weather has become unseasonably warm by the time you read this, as it seems to be with increasing frequency, but at the moment of writing, we are going through that desperately cold, wet and windy patch you may remember from the beginning of January this year, and hot, warming food is all that appeals.

So that's what I'm sharing with you, and hopefully you'll be tempted to try the recipes. All I can say is that if you don't, you'll really miss out!!

Read, cook and enjoy!

### Lamb Stew

This recipe was one of those things that just happen because of what ingredients you had knocking about at that moment.

I knew I wanted lamb, and I needed to use my white cabbage. And, I wondered, what else can I put in?

I found some bits and pieces and it turned out truly tasty and rich!

I endeavoured to make a portion just for one but, as almost always, I failed, and it did me two meals.

But I'm not complaining, it was just as lovely second time around!

Ingredients for 1-2:

- 200g lamb, cubed
- 200g white cabbage, shredded
- ½ onion, cut into wedges
- ½ green pepper, cut into strips
- 10 cherry tomatoes
- 4 cloves garlic, peeled
- 2-300ml lamb (or chicken) stock, hot
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 sprig rosemary
- Olive oil, salt and pepper

Heat the oil in a stew pot and brown the lamb on all sides over a fierce heat.

Turn the heat down a little, add a drop more oil if needed and gently fry the onion, pepper, tomatoes and garlic. When the vegetables soften, turn in the cabbage and mix well.

Pour over the hot stock, tuck in the bay leaf and rosemary twig, bring it back to the boil and let it bubble gently for about an hour until the meat is completely tender.

Add more stock as you go, if necessary.

Serve with rice, mash or couscous. I chose the latter, and it was delicious!

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**Oxtail Soup**

This is one of the most warming and delicious soups I have ever tasted.

It takes its time, but warms up your kitchen in the process, and it's worth every minute you spend on it.

Having said that, it's not too time consuming, seeing as most of the time the soup looks after itself, leaving you free for other activities.

I've given you the recipe for four. If there's only two of you, freeze the rest for another cold day!

Ingredients for four:

- 1 kg oxtail, divided in the joints
- 2 leeks, halved
- 3 carrots, chopped
- 3 sticks celery, halved
- 1 onion, cut into wedges
- 3 cloves garlic, halved
- 25g tomato purée
- 1 tsp paprika
- 4 twigs fresh oregano
- 2 bay leaves
- 200ml red wine
- Water, enough to cover
- 1 tbsp apple vinegar
- 1 tsp sugar
- Olive oil, salt and pepper

Also:

- 2 carrots, finely chopped
- 1 leek, finely sliced

Cut any excess fat off the meat.

Heat the olive oil in a large heavy based pot and brown the meat on all sides. Add the six next ingredients and sauté for a couple of minutes.

Now put in the paprika, oregano and bay leaf, stir, then pour in the red wine. Bring it to the boil and let it bubble fiercely until the alcohol has evaporated.

Pour over enough cold water to cover and bring it to the boil slowly. Remove any foam, cover and let it simmer for three to four hours.

Remove more foam as necessary.

When the meat is fall-off-the-bone tender, remove it and set aside to cool a little.

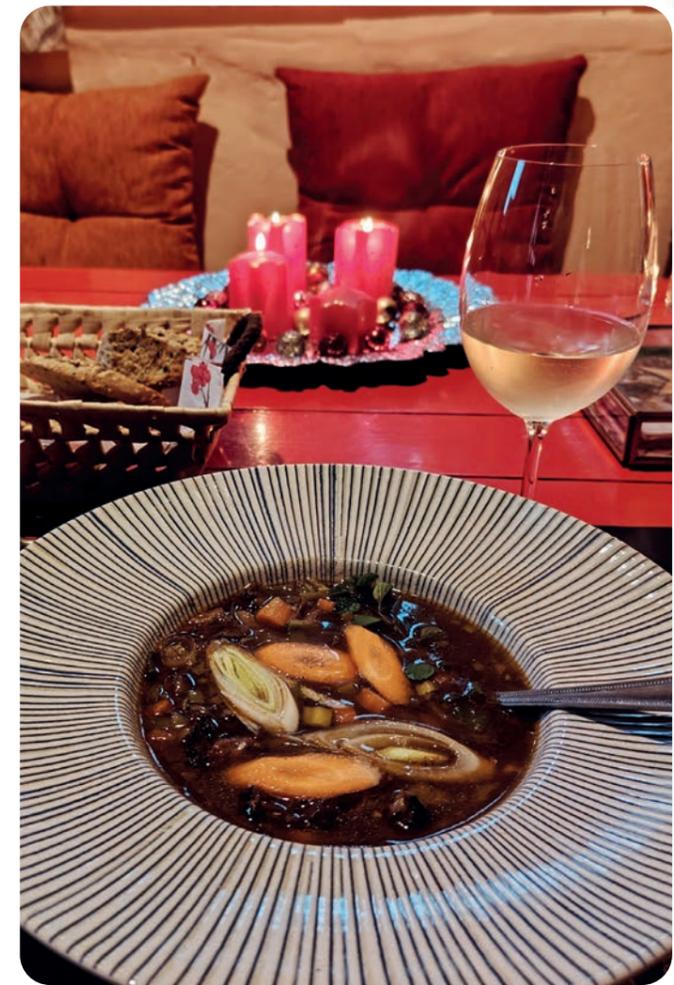
Pass the soup twice through a fine sieve and discard the vegetables. (Actually, Dakota thought they were delicious, so mine weren't wasted).

Pour the sieved soup into a clean pan, add the carrot and leek and let the soup simmer for ten minutes.

Separate the meat from the bones and pull it apart with two forks. Heat everything through.

Adjust the flavour with salt, pepper, apple vinegar and sugar, and serve the piping hot soup with crusty bread.

Out of this world!



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## Minced Beef Steaks in the Oven

I did share this recipe with you many, many years ago, but I don't imagine many will still have the recipe – and it is divine!

The potatoes that go with it are also amazing, so all in all, you're in for a real treat!

Ingredients for four:

### Meat dish

- 500g minced beef
- Butter and or oil for frying
- 250g mushrooms, wiped and quartered
- 2 bell peppers (red and green look nice), in strips
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 tin tomatoes
- 8 slices bacon
- Salt, pepper and paprika

### Potato dish

- 800g potatoes, peeled and cut into thin-ish slices
- Approx. 400ml whipping or cooking cream
- ½ leek, rinsed and finely sliced
- Salt and pepper

Shape the meat into 8 equally large 'steaks', and season them with salt, pepper and paprika. Heat your butter/oil in a frying pan and quickly brown the meat on both sides. Set the steaks aside in a greased oven proof dish.

Cut the bacon slices in half and arrange them in a cross on top of each steak.

In the same grease as you used for the meat, fry the onion, mushrooms and pepper strips. Add the tomato and a little extra water. Bring to the boil and let it all bubble for about 10 minutes.

Pour the vegetable mix over the meat and shake the dish to distribute the vegetables between the steaks.

Stick the dish in the oven and cook it for 30–45 minutes at 200°C, according to how you like your meat cooked.

For the potatoes, put them in an oven proof dish and distribute the leek slices between the slices. Season with salt and pepper.

Pour over enough cream for you to just see it on the rim of the dish, but do not flood the potatoes.

Cook the potatoes in the oven at 200°C for about 45 minutes. The cream does tend to bubble and rise during cooking, so pat everything down with a spatula from time to time.

I'd forgotten how delicious it is, but I'll keep it in the front of my recipe file from now on!



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## Puzzle Time

Puzzle solutions on page 74

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

Easy

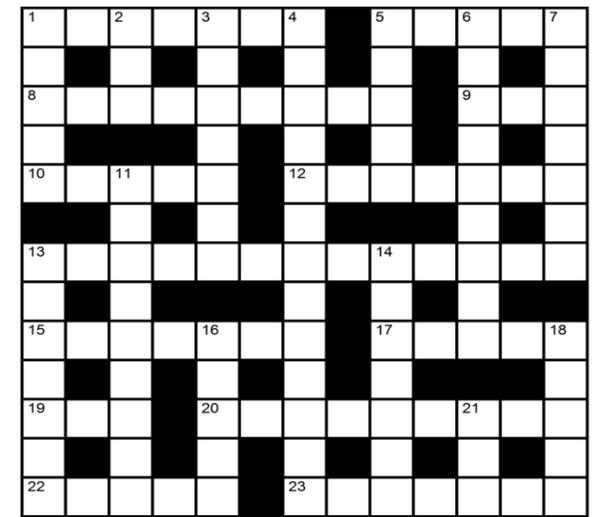
### Regular Sudoku

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

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

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

Medium



### Across

- 1 Definitive
- 5 Sped
- 8 Medleys
- 9 Martini ingredient
- 10 Give or take
- 12 Stockpile
- 13 Salutes
- 15 I, for one
- 17 Dead tired
- 19 Holiday \_\_\_\_
- 20 Principal church
- 22 Ivory
- 23 Decorates

### Down

- 1 Hot beverage
- 2 Upper limb
- 3 More deficient
- 4 Complimented
- 5 Ascends
- 6 Camel, e.g.
- 7 Fancy meals
- 11 Skin medication
- 13 Composed
- 14 Takes heed
- 16 Contests
- 18 Utters
- 21 Tease



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## Chickpea and Kale Casserole

We're going meatless now – you can get away with it in these heartwarming Spanish stews because they are so full of goodness and flavour that you don't really notice.

Ingredients for four:

- 400g cooked chickpeas, washed and drained
- 200g kale, washed, ribbed and chopped, preboiled for ten minutes
- 1 medium courgette, cut into chunks
- 1 carrot, scrubbed and sliced
- 1 tin chopped tomatoes
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 400ml hot vegetable stock
- 1 heaped tsp paprika
- 2 sprigs of thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tbsp flour
- Oil
- Salt

Gently fry the garlic, onion and carrot in a little oil for five minutes. Add the paprika, stir and leave to cook very gently for five minutes more.

Add the chickpeas, flour, bay leaf and thyme, mix, then add the tomato followed by the courgette and the drained, squeezed kale.



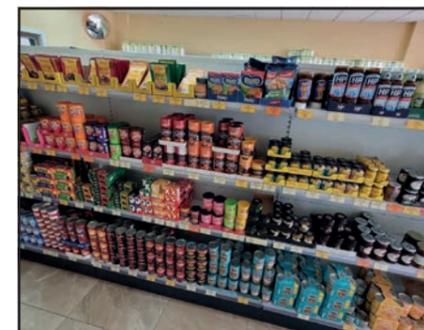
Pour over the stock, bring it to the boil, cover and let it bubble for 10 minutes. Adjust the salt and keep bubbling for another five minutes.

Pour the stew into a lightly greased oven proof casserole dish, and let it cook in the preheated oven at 180°C for 15 minutes.

Serve in bowls with spoons and bread. A wonderful winter warmer!



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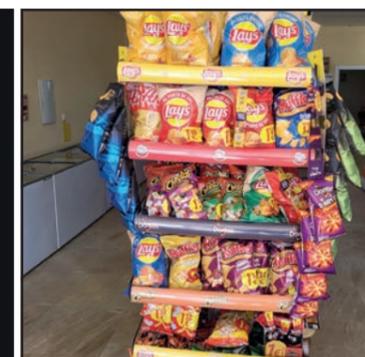


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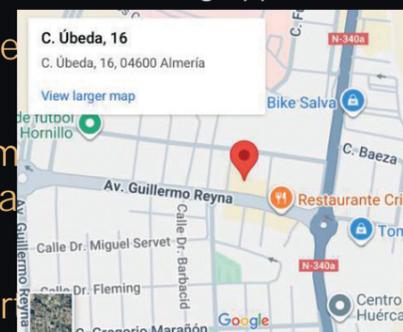
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## Jason's Meat Free Recipe: Simple spicy carrot fritters

This is originally adapted from a Riverford recipe and one that I've made a lot when I've got a few carrots knocking about. It's quick, easy and all of the ingredients are readily and easily available in local shops and supermarkets.

The recipe is Middle Eastern in character, but there's scope to be creative with the herbs and spices you use - I've tried all sorts of combos including a very spicy chilli version that had a bit of a Mexican feel.

This lot I had with pitta, salad, and some homemade red cabbage sauerkraut for a salty crunch, and a dollop of natural yoghurt. They're equally tasty in wraps or a barra.

The fritters can also be baked in a hot oven - around 15 mins but checked they're cooked through, or with an air fryer. In both cases a spray or sprinkle of oil will help them crisp up. Personally, I prefer to fry them.

Fritters - makes about 6

- 200g scrubbed or peeled and then grated carrot
- 1 small red onion
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- ½ tsp cumin seeds
- 2 tsp smoked paprika
- 1 tsp turmeric
- small bunch of coriander, roughly chopped
- 1 lemon (squeezed - or 2 tbsp of lemon juice)
- 3 tablespoons chickpea flour
- Olive oil for frying.

Scrub or peel and coarsely grate the carrots into a mixing bowl. Repeat with the peeled onion.

Throw in all the spices, the chopped coriander leaves and 2 tablespoons of lemon juice. Season generously with salt and ground



black pepper and leave to rest for 5-10 mins or so. This draws some of the moisture out of the veg, and it gives you a bit of time to sort out a quick salad. Spoon in the chickpea flour and mix well.

Add some oil to a frying pan and get it to a medium, medium-high heat then using a dessertspoon, carefully dollop the mixture into the oil, no more than 4 in one go, and flatten them down with the back of a spoon.

Fry the fritters for about 2-3 minutes on each side until golden, check that you're not overdoing them.

Use a fish slice/spatula to remove them from the frying pan, put on a warmed plate with some kitchen paper on to absorb any excess oil while you do the next lot.

Serve straight away - although they're still good cold, especially in a sandwich!

## Celebrating their first year at the Rambla Cafe, Albox

Debbie & Gary Richardson, originally from the North East of England, managed pubs before settling down to have a family. Gary continued in the food industry, working in various food and coffee outlets in managerial positions.

They took over the Rambla Cafe on 5th February 2025 and have continued the success of the cafe over the last year, adapting the menu to incorporate various new items, many of which have been requested by loyal customers.

They have also expanded into offering 'themed' day and evening events to enhance the customer experience. Keep on eye on their Facebook page for future events.

On the 1st Thursday of every month there will be a special breakfast/lunch especially for veterans - the event will start at 10.30am



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## Why One Water Filter Doesn't Fit All — Test Before You Invest

*In Almería, water quality can vary from street to street. Here's why a proper test matters - and how to choose a filter that truly fits your needs.*

**The problem:** There's no universal "one-size-fits-all" water filter. Neighbouring properties can have different supplies, different contaminants, and very different needs. Guesswork leads to poor filter performance, wasted money, and lingering water quality issues.

**The solution:** Start with data. Our **FREE 24-point water test** assesses what's actually in your supply using official Spanish Government criteria, then matches the right filtration solution to your results.

### Why test first?

- **Water varies widely:** Source, treatment and local pipework can change quality house by house.
- **Safety & taste:** Some water is potable but tastes unpleasant; others can be highly contaminated.
- **Right tool for the job:** Only a detailed analysis can tell you which filter system, if any, you need for your water supply.

### Comprehensive testing matters

- Many companies selling water filtration systems are happy to sell machines either **without testing your water at all**, or only performing a simple conductivity test.

- **A conductivity test:** sends a current through your water and measures how easily it flows; that is converted into a Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) Parts Per Million (ppm) reading. Helpful, but limited - it shows how much is dissolved, not what.

- **Our FREE 24-point test** checks multiple parameters, including many non-conductive contaminants, against **official Spanish Government criteria** to give the full picture.

### Not all filters are equal

- **Budget units** often have limited specs. The most popular online Reverse Osmosis systems are rated only to **750 ppm TDS**.
- In areas where water reaches **1,000+ ppm TDS**, that's inadequate.
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# Sniffers

## AVICER PET FOOD NEW OPENING IN ALBOX

Since the beginning of the year, Albox has a new pet food and supply store worth checking out: Avicer Pet Food.

Located in the industrial facilities of Francisco Sáez, S.L., one of the town's most established companies, Avicer Pet Food represents a unique model within the pet food industry, committed to high-quality products, natural and nutritionally balanced foods, and excellent customer service.

Avicer Pet Food boasts ample parking and modern, attractive spaces where you'll find a wide range of high-quality dog and cat food from leading brands like Purina Pro Plan and Gosbi. You'll also find everything you need for your aquarium, songbirds, or rodents.

In addition to its extensive product range, Avicer Pet Food offers exclusive services to its customers, such as veterinary advice and personalized nutrition and health plans for your pet (by appointment), as well as access to exclusive promotions. Go and visit them; it's worth it. Visit them at Camino de las Casicas, s/n in Albox.

Dogs' sense of smell is so amazingly well developed that humans have difficulty appreciating exactly how much a dog can do with his nose. For humans, the most important sense is our sight; the sense of smell is to a dog what sight is to us.

The average dog has about 200 million smell sensors; humans have about 5 or 6 million. Furthermore, the dog's nose leads the smells directly to his brain, whereas with humans, the smells have to travel far before getting to the part of the brain where we identify them.

The part of the dog's brain that identifies smells is about 40 times larger than ours, and it is estimated that a dog's sense of smell is up to 3 million times better than a human's.

This does not mean that a smell seems 3 million times stronger to a dog than to a human being; it means that a dog can perceive a substance in a concentration 3 million times weaker than we can.

A dog's nose is always working. He does not, like humans, inhale through the nose in order to smell something. Just moving round, he automatically receives thousands of smells. When he exhales, a vacuum is created in the nose which automatically draws in the smells which move to the back and top of his nose, which is where the smell sensors are.

When a dog is actively sniffing to 'look' for something, he sniffs rapidly, about 6 sniffs per second; after 20-35 of these rapid sniffs he takes a normal breath before continuing. This is very hard work, and the reason why a sniffer dog can only work for about 30 minutes before he needs a break.

But dogs are not only good at finding things with their noses. They can differentiate up to 2,000 smells at a time. As an example, when humans walk past a pizza restaurant, we can smell pizza. Yum!

*Continued on page 22 .....*



The love we feel for our pets can be so unconditional that when they get sick, we do everything possible to make them well again. However, sometimes even the best treatments of conventional medicine are not enough. Therefore, it is worth knowing other options, such as homeopathy for animals.

It is a complementary discipline to conventional medicine, neither better nor worse, but different. Whereas conventional medicine opposes the symptom, for example: antibiotics (against bacteria), anti-diarrheal (against diarrhoea) or anti-inflammatory (against inflammation), homeopathy follows the principle of similarity: "Whatever makes you sick can cure you".

To explain this principle, it can be compared with the mechanism of vaccines: all have in their composition the same virus or bacteria that can produce the disease. The same is true of homeopathy.

The fundamental procedures in any homeopathic product are dilution -to remove toxicity- and dynamization -to generate energy. Homeopathic medicines can be made from plants, animals or minerals. The consultation is a detailed study of the patient-his character, his forms, his habits-to determine what medication he needs.

Homeopathy in animals can address a variety of conditions such as allergies, skin problems, behavioural problems, etc. By focusing on the animal as a whole and not just individual symptoms. Homeopathy in animals aims to address the underlying causes of disease.

In conclusion, homeopathy in animals can be a useful tool that can help improve the health and well-being of our animals. By integrating homeopathy and conventional medicine into animal health care, we can have the best of both worlds to provide the best possible care for our animals.

If you are looking for a natural alternative to take care of your partner's health, we invite you to try a veterinary homeopathic consultation!

Come and discover how homeopathy can make a difference in the life of your furry. Your pet deserves the best!

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..... Continued from page 20

But your dog can smell flour, yeast, oil, tomato, cheese, pepperoni, oregano... Need I continue? The dog's nose allows him to distinguish each and every ingredient that go into all the pizzas on offer.

He can also differentiate the falling number of molecules in a scent and that way decide which way a person or animal has gone. This ability saves his wild cousin, the wolf, from running around looking for the prey whose scent he just picked up – he can follow the direction the animal has taken.

Dogs and wolves can also smell whether an animal or a person is unwell, which again helps the wolf chasing the weaker specimens thus helping to keep the population of prey animals healthy. The same ability has helped humans train dogs to sniff out certain illnesses, an ability that researchers and dog trainers are working actively to maximise.

As you may have noticed, dogs and humans do not agree on the criteria for an attractive smell! When your dog has had a good roll in something that he absolutely adores, you are most likely to wrinkle your nose (to put it mildly) and give him a good bath to get rid of the smell.

And as soon as you let him out of the bathroom, he runs outside and rubs himself on the ground to try to get some decent smell back into his fur. You may think he smells nice after a bath with a perfumed shampoo, but you have robbed the poor guy of his identity.

It is thought that humans like the smell of flowers because that smell led the cave man to fruit – in other words, food. The same goes for a dog – to him, a nice, rotten carcass smells like something that could lead him to a nice meal.



Everything around us has a smell which wafts through the air in the shape of molecules – much in the same way as we can see cigarette smoke moving through the air. And just like you can't stop smoke from making its way out through the most microscopic gap, smell molecules will come out eventually.

This, combined with the dog's ability to differentiate smells, enables sniffer dogs to find, for example, drugs hidden in the middle of containers otherwise filled with onions, or humans buried under mountains of rubble.

The dog's sense of smell has helped humans since time immemorial and will continue to do so while we find ever new ways for Man's Best Friend to assist us in a field where he is far superior to us.

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Single supplement upon request

**Pick-Ups Possible From:**  
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Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand

# Salamanca

3 Nights \*358€ per person

**NEW**

**04<sup>th</sup> ~ 07<sup>th</sup> May 2026**  
Staying at: 4\* Hotel Abba Fonseca - central location

**Price Includes:**  
Coach travel  
Three nights in 4\* hotel  
Breakfast - days 2, 3 + 4  
Visit Ciudad Rodrigo  
Visit Alberca

\* Price based on 2 people sharing a room  
Single supplement upon request

**Pick-Ups Possible From:**  
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Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand

# Cádiz / Jerez

3 Nights \*355€ per person

**FULLY BOOKED**

**18<sup>th</sup> ~ 21<sup>st</sup> May 2026**  
Staying at: 4\* Hotel Soho Boutique Puerto in Puerto de Santa Maria

**Price Includes:**  
Coach travel  
Three nights in 4\* hotel  
Breakfast - days 2, 3 + 4  
Visit to Jerez - day 2

\* Price based on 2 people sharing a room  
Single supplement upon request

**Pick-Ups Possible From:**  
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Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand

# Running of the Wine Horses

**Caravaca**

**2<sup>nd</sup> May**  
\*FROM **16.50€** per person

**Price Includes:**  
On this day, locals recreate the legend in which the Knights Templar braved the Moorish armies besieging the castle to bring wine to the thirsty inhabitants, barricaded within. Horses dressed in spectacular embroidered mantles parade during the morning and then run up the hill to the Sanctuary in a race against the clock. There is also a splendid Moors & Christians Parade. Comfortable flat shoes and a packed lunch are highly recommended.

**Pick-Ups Possible From:**  
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Return leaves at 1730

# Granada

**Shopping Trip**  
**Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May**

Visit the Nevada Shopping Centre one of the largest in the area or take a stroll into the city.

**Pick Ups:**  
Vera Consum, Mojácar, Turre, Hotel Overa, La Alfoquia, Arboleas, Albox  
Leaves Granada 17.00

**20€** per person

# Valencia

3 Nights \*477€ per person

**NEW**

**01<sup>th</sup> ~ 04<sup>th</sup> June 2026**  
Staying at: 4\* Hotel Ininside Valencia Oceanic

**Price Includes:**  
Coach travel  
Three nights in 4\* hotel  
Breakfast - days 2, 3 + 4

\* Price based on 2 people sharing a room  
Single supplement upon request

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# Córdoba

3 Nights \*348€ per person

**15<sup>th</sup> ~ 18<sup>th</sup> June 2026**  
Staying at: 4\* Hotel Hesperia central location

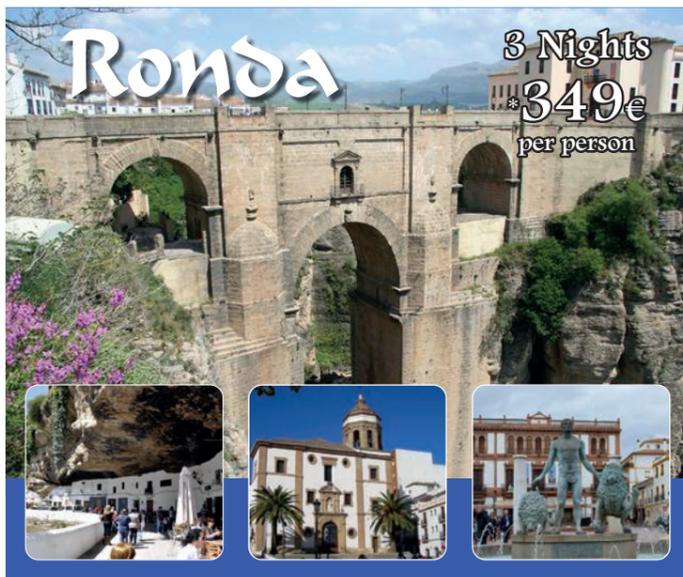
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# Ronda

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per person



# Sevilla

3 Nights  
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per person

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**14<sup>th</sup> ~ 17<sup>th</sup> September 2026**  
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**12<sup>th</sup> ~ 15<sup>th</sup> October 2026**  
Staying at:  
**4\* Hotel Doña Maria**  
Central Sevilla (near Cathedral)

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Breakfast - days 2, 3 + 4

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

## A Brief History of Spain....part 6 By Mike Woolnough

Following on from last month's article, Isabella and Ferdinand had reclaimed Spain for the Christians. However, up to now, we have rather considered this from the Moorish side of things, but, in the tradition of the "Moors and Christians" we need to look at the Christian perspective.

To do so we need to backtrack to 718AD when after a brief 7 years of fighting Spain was virtually all under Muslim rule, almost, but not all!

In the north-west of Spain, there was one small pocket of Christian resistance. In the Cantabrian mountains, a local chieftain by the name of Pelayo decided to make a stand. In footballing terms, this was a bit like Real Madrid coming to La Alfoquia and then going home having lost 7-0!! In military terms, it is akin to the Battle of Rorke's Drift where about 150 (mainly) British soldiers encouraged by the fine baritone voice of Ivor Emmanuel routed some 4,000 Zulu warriors!

This unexpected defeat did not stop the Muslim advance north and they were not finally halted until a Frenchman, Charles Martel stopped them at Poitiers 14 years later.

*Continued on page 28 .....*



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..... Continued from page 27

Pelayo's victory took place at Covadonga in Asturias. This is, understandably, now a place of pilgrimage and because of the significance of the victory the eldest son of the Spanish monarch is given the title, Prince of Asturias. Out of this victory, the Reconquista began. The kingdom of Asturias became a sanctuary for Christians fleeing the Muslim armies in the south. By the mid 800's its population had grown considerably causing it to overflow into Galicia to the west and to León in the south. These then became separate kingdoms. León then expanded further south and eastwards into Castile. The Basque Kingdom of Navarre also came into existence and over on

the west coast Charlemagne established what we now know as Catalonia.

In 914 León and Galicia joined forces whilst Castile remained a province of León making this grouping the most powerful of the Christian kingdoms. About the same time, Navarre spread westwards into what we now know as Aragon but by 1035 León, Castile, Navarre and Aragon had all become independent kingdoms, although by 1072 Castile and León had reunited. In 1139 part of this kingdom separated and became part of what we now know as Portugal, although it would be a few years before it established itself in its present form. Over the following years, there were unifications and separations but by 1230 there were two major Christian kingdoms - Castile/ León and Aragon/Catalonia.

This state of affairs was maintained for a number of years so let's take a break and look at a couple of other bits of Spanish history.

In 813 a Galician hermit saw a star shining over a lone oak tree on a hill whilst at the same time hearing heavenly music. This continued for several nights. He brought these strange events to the attention of the local Bishop who decided to investigate further. Beneath the tree, he discovered an altar and three bodies in a single grave, one of the bodies had been decapitated. The Bishop consulted with King Alfonso II of Asturias and other wise men and they decided that the decapitated one was St James. Tradition had it that his body had been brought to Spain after Herod had executed him in 43AD. The site became a shrine and later a great cathedral was built there and the place became known as Santiago de Compostela - St James of the Field of the Star. The shrine became a site of pilgrimage, not just locally - pilgrims came, and still come, from across Europe.



The cult of St James became a rallying point for the cause of the Reconquista and inspired people to fight for the cause. One of these became something of a folk hero, the Castilian knight Rodrigo Diaz de Vivar. He is better known as El Cid. He had a stormy relationship with King Alfonso VI which resulted in him spending many years in exile spending as much of his time fighting for the Muslims as he did against them. His greatest achievement was the recapture of Valencia, and although Alfonso should have most of the credit it is El Cid that is remembered. El Cid is the subject of an epic poem "Cantar de mio Cid". Written in 1140 it is the oldest epic poem in the Spanish language and glamorises him somewhat in much the same way as the English see Robin Hood!

My inspiration for these articles comes from "SPAIN, an amazingly short history" by Bob Fowke. Published by Travelbrief Publications. ISBN 0-9548351-0-7



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# I REMEMBER

By Evelyn McCrorie

"Memories are made of this." So sang Dean Martin. A recipe for living, complete with blessings from above.

My first memory is of clicking knitting needles. Clicking well into the night. My father was very ill and my mother knitted continuously to earn some money. In later years she went on to win a knitting competition judged by the prestigious Hampton School of Needlework. Her winning entry was a suit in a delightful shade of blue, knitted for me, of course. I hated it.

Close on its heels comes "The Wizard of Oz". My parents took me to see this marvellous film, aged two. I spoiled everyone's enjoyment by roaring my head off and had to be taken home. Didn't like the Wicked Witch of the West! Does anyone?

A few years later, for Christmas, my parents sought far and wide to find me a doll. Not easy during war years. This doll (which turned out to be a hybrid - yellow face, white body) was beautifully dressed in hand knitted clothes, complete with bonnet. When I removed the bonnet, I exclaimed loudly "I didn't want a doll with hair." Oh, the shame!

I sang my first solo, aged four, at a friend's birthday party "Mairzy Doats and Dozy Doats" It was twenty years later before I dared sing solo again. And that occasion was for the Governor General of New Zealand who rewarded me with a sweetie!

School in 1941 was cold. Very little heating, horrible teachers - mostly bad-tempered old men or frustrated old maids, all very handy with the tawse, a Scottish instrument of torture, fortunately outlawed in 1987. However, I came top of the class in year 1. Never did it again though.

My first trip to the seaside without supervision ended in disaster.



Cousin Olive, aged 8 and I a year younger, trotted down to the sea, complete with swimsuits and towels. On emerging from the waves, we were horrified to discover our neatly bundled clothes and sandals had disappeared, never to be seen again.

What I remember most is my mother's reaction. She said, "Perhaps some poor soul needed those clothes more than you did."

Variety provided the fun time during the days after the war. I laughed till tears rolled down my cheeks every Thursday evening at the first house of the famous Ayr Gaiety Theatre. Dave Willis was my favourite. His slightly bemused style of comedy was deemed suitable for someone my age. And the best part of the evening was during the interval when the drummer (who happened to be my best friend's father) gave me a go on the xylophone.

My first boyfriend came on the scene when I was 13. The best dancer in the school.

My second boyfriend appeared four years later. Not such a slick mover, even though he had studied Victor Sylvester's "slow, slow, quick, quick, slow" handbook. He was the one though.

In fact, he was so much the one that I followed him to New Zealand.

Watching family members fade into the distance at Tilbury docks is the most poignant memory of all.

# What Did the Romans Ever Do for Us?

By Tom Fynes

The final space shuttle mission, STS-135, the last flight of the orbiter Atlantis, lifted off from Launch Pad 39A at NASA's Kennedy Space Centre, Cape Canaveral. Cape Canaveral comes from the Spanish "Cabo Cañaveral," meaning "Cape of Reeds."

From 1963 to 1973 it was officially renamed Cape Kennedy in honour of President John F. Kennedy before reverting to Cape Canaveral. But I digress, would you believe it, if I told you, there was an urban myth that made a direct connection between the NASA Shuttle and the Roman Empire?

The two solid rocket boosters that punched a hole in the sky, that allowed the Shuttle to blast off into space, had to be transported to Cape Canaveral by rail. Which entailed travelling through various tunnels from the factory in Utah. So, the width of the boosters depended on the width of the rail tracks and the width of the tunnels that they were transported through.

The United States standard railroad gauge of 4 feet, 8.5 inches is derived from the original specifications for an Imperial Roman war chariot. But how has this come about? That a measurement for a Roman war chariot contributed to the launch of the Shuttle.

Well, who designed the American railroads? The British. British engineers designed the American railroad system. They just copied the system that was in place in the United Kingdom.

The railroad system was an advancement on the older Tram system that was in place. They just used the same machinery that had produced the Trams. So, they just copied the gauge that was used and as they had all the jigs ready to go, it was a simple matter to just duplicate the same measurements for the railway gauge.

Continued on page 32 .....



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..... Continued from page 31

But you will ask, where had the Tramways jigs and measurements come from? Well, the Engineers building the Tramways just used the same jigs and measurements from the horse drawn wagons that were being built, which used the same wheel spacing.

But again, you may ask, why do the wagon wheels have that exact spacing? Because that was the spacing on the road of the well-worn wheel ruts. If they had tried any other spacing, the wheels would have quickly broken. Wheel Ruts in the road? You may well ask. Where had they come from?

This brings us all the way back to the Romans. Imperial Roman Chariots ran up and down the Roman roads of Ye Olde England and after a while the constant use of the chariots formed ruts in the road. It would have been a foolish man to go against the Imperial Roman Empire. So, all wagon wheels were spaced to run in these well-worn roman road ruts.

Imperial Roman army chariots were made just wide enough to accommodate the rear ends of two war horses, which, may or may not be the original source of the saying, designed by a horse's ass.

The truth may indeed be a lot blander than the urban myth. Roman roads often did not preserve their original paved surfaces into the modern era, so 19th century engineers were not literally constrained by Roman wheel ruts.

Early industrial railways in northern England (coal and mine tramways) already used a gauge around 4 ft 8 in, set largely by wagon building practice and existing jigs and tools. George Stephenson adopted this gauge (and then widened it slightly to 4 ft 8½ inches for better running clearance) on lines such as the Stockton & Darlington (1825) and Liverpool & Manchester (1830), which then became highly influential as other British railways copied his "Stephenson gauge."

But the rail gauge and the Romans, as an urban myth still persists, as it ticks all the boxes. Because in a twisted type of logic, we want it to be true, as it does makes some sort of sense.

The Shuttle has long been retired to a Space Museum. But now, when you are at one of those boring office parties, and the subject of, "The Romans," comes up, you have an answer to one of those perennial questions, "What Did the Romans Ever do for Us."

Tom Fynes is a member of, The Almanzora Written Word Group

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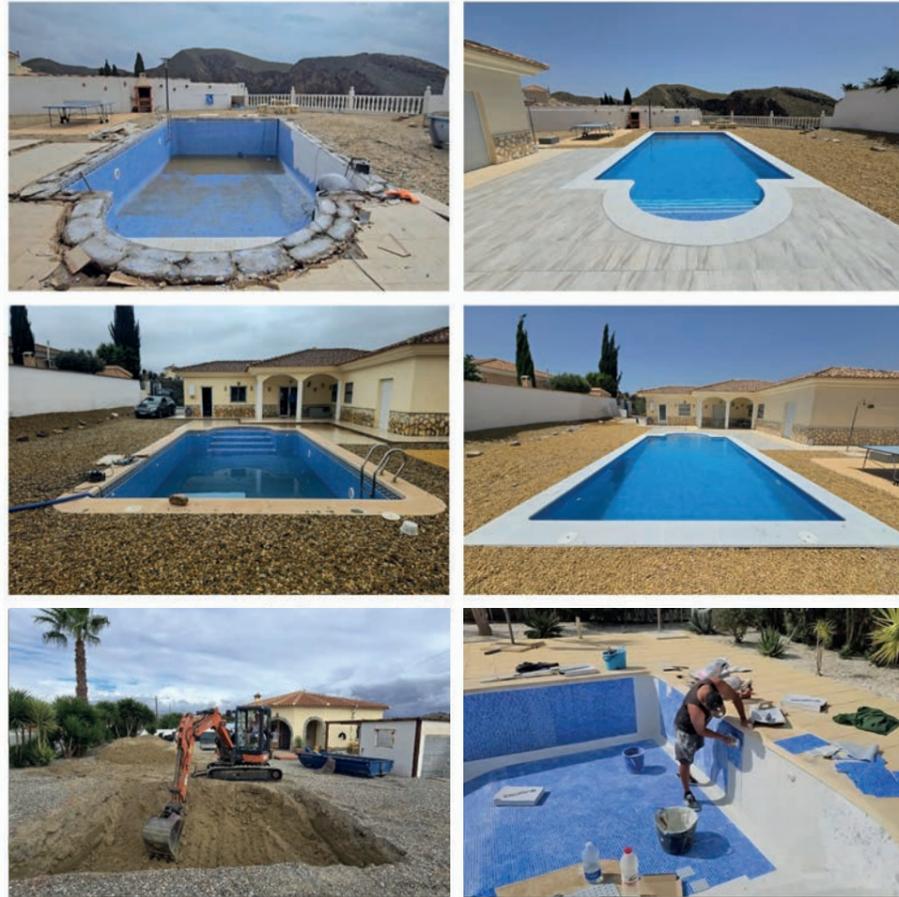
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# GOING GREEN

By Jason Lowther

## Aquaculture fish farms and ... octopus?

Often framed as an environmentally friendly and efficient way to produce food, aquaculture – the farming of fish and other aquatic species – has a documented history going back to 500 years BCE in China. In fact, archaeological evidence from China, and Egypt indicate that the practice was going on up to 4,000 years ago. Both countries farmed freshwater fish (carp and tilapia respectively) and the Romans are credited with moving the practice offshore, developing marine ponds to serve the wealthy with constant supplies of species like bream and mullet.



twentieth century leading to particular species being exploited and harvested. For example, Norway, Scotland and Chile, led the way in Atlantic Salmon, and in Asia and Latin America intensive prawn/shrimp farming was established.

The development of cages that float in the sea and means to filter and recirculate water led to aquaculture becoming a truly transnational industry, which supplies over 50% of the global fish that is consumed by humans. Other than just what we would call finfish, shellfish, seaweed and crustaceans make up the remainder of the industry.

The practices carried on through Medieval Europe, where monasteries would often farm carp to be eaten during periods of fasting, where no 'meat' could be eaten. Some orthodox versions of Christianity still practice this on the run up to Easter, whereas other main strands dropped this in favour of a broader concept of Lent.

In Asia, fish were also farmed inside rice paddies offering a closed-circuit food system, which also kept down the mosquitoes, as the fish would eat the larvae, and provided some fertiliser for the crops from the fish' wastes. A highly sustainable approach to both food production and pest management all in one paddy!

The ever-increasing demand for aquaculture products inevitably led to its industrialisation. Advances in selective breeding, hatcheries, and the development of specialised feed all ensured that the processes were more productive and efficient in equal measure. The great period of expansion though took place in the latter part of the

Given that more than 35% of wild fish stocks are currently fished way beyond their maximum sustainable yield (MSY), meaning that the stock is being exhausted at a faster rate than it can replenish, farmed seafood may at first glance offer a viable and sensible solution. A clear 'win-win' for the food system and the wild species that would otherwise be caught. If only it were that simple.

Leaving aside the moral and ethical questions of eating something with a face, industrialised aquaculture is hugely impactful in the environments it is located, and even those it is not. It is a hugely wasteful and inefficient way of producing food with ancillary impacts including large scale chemical pollution, nutrient pollution, basically from the fish poo, disease and lice outbreaks and escapes leading to breeding with wild populations.

*Continued on page 36 .....*

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..... Continued from page 35

Taking these individually, the inefficiency is baked in. It takes a ratio of something like 2.5 kilos of feed fish to 'grow' 1 kilo of farmed fish fed on fishmeal. An unimaginable number of anchovies, sardines, horse mackerel and other small shoal forming fish are caught and just processed onto fishmeal. Often these fish would sustain coastal artisanal fishers, providing a living and a valuable protein source for those coastal communities. The distant (so called as they fish outside of the territorial waters of their home country) fishing fleets of China, Russia and the EU literally Hoover up thousands of tonnes of wild sea life, quite indiscriminately, with a considerable amount of the less valuable species then turned into processed fishmeal. Even leaving aside the illegal, unreported and unlicensed fishing (IUU), amounting to between 20%-30% of the annual total global reported catch depending on whose research you read, the take of biodiversity from the oceans is staggering. This equates to between 11 to 26 million tonnes of a resource that is often already being exploited beyond its limits.

At this point, then, aquaculture presents us with a problem. High value species, like salmon, bream and seabass, along with prawns, lobsters and even massive bluefin tuna fetch a premium price. The value of the fishmeal fed to them is low in monetary terms, and so it makes economic sense for the fish farms to operate in this way. What doesn't hit the balance sheet though is the incalculable environmental cost. These businesses do not pay for the pollution they cause, the disease that may be spread into the surrounding environment and the loss of genetic resilience in wild fish stocks. Many salmon fishing rivers in Canada and Scotland, are heavily depleted because of the combined effects of large-scale salmon farming, and while fly-fishing isn't the preserve of many, it has cultural and economic value in those areas, which is being slowly eroded.



What's this got to do with Spain, you're probably, rightly, asking at this point. As it happens Spain is one of the largest suppliers of aquaculture products, producing close to 250,000 tonnes per year, the largest in the EU, and with a value a little under €1 billion. It also equates to around a quarter of Spain's fisheries output, with wild-caught making up the remainder. Galicia is a major hub, particularly for shellfish production, although there are a number of finfish breeds also farmed. More locally, there is an established Mediterranean industry farming a number of different species. Locally, Murcia (the region not the city) produces significant stocks of sea bass, seabream, and bluefin tuna, with it being one of Spain's top producers of both seabass and tuna by volume. The bluefin industry grows juvenile fish in cages and is highly lucrative. The irony being as wild tuna stocks deplete further the value of the wild product increases, so farming doesn't actually deal with the overfishing problem very effectively. Andalucía also produces sea bass, seabream, and smaller quantities of tuna and corvina, and you can see some of the floating offshore pens from some of the more easterly beaches of our part of the region.

Spain's Mediterranean fish farming is not as blighted by the large-scale environmental havoc wreaked by the northern European salmon farms, although its environmental impacts share certain characteristics. So, there is localised degradation of the seabed through both the waste generated and the tethering of the cages. Linked to the waste, is the problem of nutrient enrichment, which can lead to algal blooms, which remove oxygen from the seawater and have impacts on other more sensitive habitats, and concerns remain around the sustainability of the fishmeal fed to the fish, as noted above. If you can find them on your streaming service, two films, the End of the Line and Seaspiracy give some shocking but informative insights into the broader impacts of both aquaculture and the wild fish industries. The latter is a little bit sensationalist but does showcase the challenges faced by our oceans, let alone some of the questionable welfare standards which characterise some sectors of the industry.

Continued on page 41 .....

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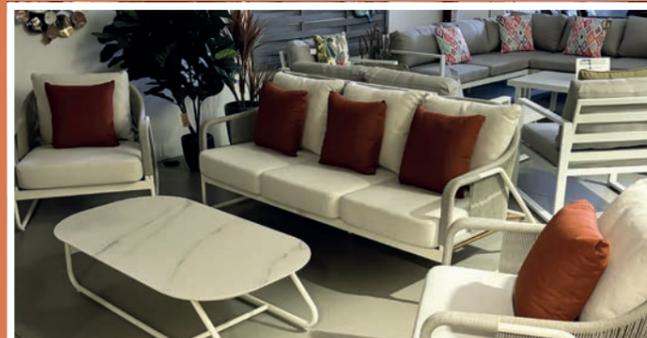
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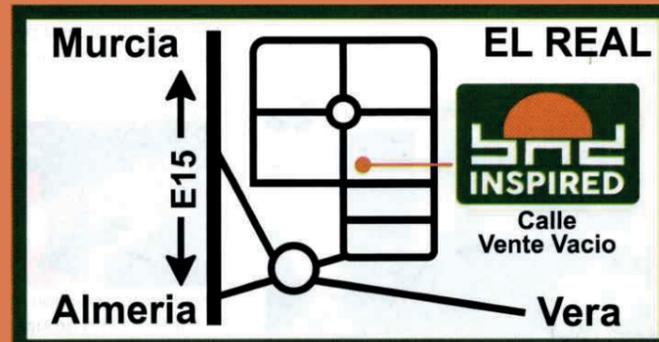




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**VH2676** €274,950  
**Villa de Los Sueños**

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..... Continued from page 36

The most recent controversy in Spanish aquaculture centres around proposed octopus farming. Spain is pioneering the idea, which at the moment is not something that is done at scale. Spanish seafood behemoth Nueva Pescanova has publicly announced it is planning to construct the world's first large-scale octopus farm in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, with a rough estimate of around 3,000 tonnes annually – representing around a million animals. Galicia hosts a research facility, licensed by the Spanish government, doing work on octopus' larval stages. The reasoning is the same as many other forms of live animal aquaculture. Overfishing (and by association, overconsumption) has depleted natural stocks and they are now an unreliable catch for fishers. In Galicia wild fisheries have been temporarily closed to allow recovery. Conversely, 2025 saw the southwest of England subject to what the media called an octopus 'bloom' or 'epidemic', which is variously being attributed to warming seas, movement of prey species or just an unexplained phenomenon.

There's an element of uncertainty around the practice as Spain's aquaculture law (Law 23/1984 on marine farming) does not explicitly regulate or prohibit octopus farming. This legal gap has prompted calls for reform. Similarly, animal welfare law also doesn't currently extend comprehensive protections to farmed octopus or other aquatic animals used in aquaculture. This has prompted a number of NGOs and scientists to argue that octopuses are unsuitable for industrial farming. The main reason for this is that octopuses are highly intelligent and are really quite solitary creatures. Actually, they're quite grumpy and territorial to each other, so confining them in tanks risks stressing them, leading to fights and ultimately cannibalism. There are no widely recognised humane slaughter methods for cephalopods, the class of species to which octopus belong, at this industrial scale. This has prompted critics to argue that large-scale farming is, as more is understood about the welfare needs of all animals, and that the practice should be banned before it even begins. This mirrors the ban in place in

California, which was brought in on welfare grounds and recognised that octopuses are sentient, a status also applied in UK law.

The Spanish legal NGO, INTERCIDS (<https://intercids.org>), put out a series of statements on the practice last year, citing welfare concerns and the risks of environmental impacts. It noted that, 'At this time, when the protection of marine ecosystems and biodiversity has become an increasingly necessary and urgent challenge, the foreseeable risk of negative impacts and damage to the ocean associated with the introduction of intensive farming of captive octopuses cannot be ignored'. As a result, INTERCIDS has proposed both a law change in Spain, and has recently lobbied the EU Parliament on the issue. The basis to these arguments is essentially the clear welfare and environmental concerns, which makes octopus farming potentially worse ecologically than wild harvest. Another short film, My Octopus Teacher, offers insight into the intelligence and complex lives of these 9-brained wonders of the seas. Anyone who's seen them either diving or snorkelling never forgets them. My best encounter was in Türkiye on a dive, but I have seen one snorkelling near Águilas, and it made me smile all day.

Large scale farming, whether on land or in the sea has the potential to bring great food security. It needs to be undertaken in a sustainable way though, and one that respects both the welfare of the species involved and, the wider environment. To date, farmed fish do not have a great track record, despite the illusory benefit to wild stocks, and applying the pattern to other species probably isn't the best idea. That said, other aspects of aquaculture, such as shellfish and seaweed farming, which use natural processes and cycles are effective in both measures. The former, shellfish farming, is an established and 'clean' industry with Galicia producing over 95% of Spain's mussels, and the latter, a growth industry in southern Spain and Galicia, restoring seaweed beds that provide environmental benefits such as taking carbon from the ocean and providing a great nursery habitat for multiple sea creatures.



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facing the rambla



# Thankless

As some readers may be aware, I'm a member of The Written Word Group of Almazora and each month we all decide on a word or phrase as the subject of a short piece to write and read out at the next meeting, the only rule being no more than 500 words. This month the word is Thankless. That's a difficult theme. I had to think very hard to bring anything to mind, and this is what eventually did.

It is a confession, a baring of the soul, a self-flagellation if you want; certainly a reckoning for being so arrogant as to imagine I could make an easy transition from short pieces of one or two thousand words to a novel of some seventy thousand or more. What was I thinking?

I started off with little more than hope and a misplaced belief that if I wanted to do it, I could and I would. I had no plan, no model, no sense of chronology, hugely important when writing a novel I was to learn; what year are we in now, is it summer or winter? I had only the characters and the setting. And to date, it has pretty much taken over my life. There are times when I can't wait to get back to my desk, to put to paper some particular thought. Yet other times I am completely overwhelmed at the amount I need to transcribe, at the decades I have to recount, at the emotions I have to convey. And galloping into view is always the question, does the world need another mediocre novel? Is this a thankless task? In my dreams many decades ago



By Aileen Cleave

I was never mediocre. Now I know I am never going to be a Sally Rooney or Elena Ferrante.

I have to continue now, now that I have reached 35K words, but the dark, oft present fear is that it might all be pants, total rubbish. No matter how often I tell myself that the act of writing should be enough, it simply isn't. Every writer since forever has needed the affirmation of his readers to confirm that his outpourings have been met with empathy from at least some quarters.

So, it's true, at times I feel down, totally miserable and convinced that what I write is indeed worthless. Then

the miracle happens; there's a meeting of my writing group, a circle of like minded, aspirational people. This is not the Bloomsbury set, nor Fitzgerald's Paris, nor Joyce's Dublin. This is a small corner of a foreign land where Brits meet up to do in their latter years what work and family have prevented until now or, at least, that's it in my case. It is wonderful what inspiration and encouragement is brought about by these monthly meetings.

Some people express themselves through song, dance or music, through painting, sport, gardening, home decor, home improvements, but there is no doubt that the urge to create in some form is strong. I'm pretty useless at most of the foregoing, so I had better make a success of this writing lark.

# Valentine's Card

Prince Osbert stamped his large flat foot. 'That Princess Bluebell, she thinks I'm ugly.'

'No Sir, I'm sure she....' his Equerry began to reply.

'And stupid. She says I don't talk proper.'

Valiantly the Equerry started again. 'Sir, I'm sure she...'

'Get my Painting Master. And me Elocution Master. I'm going to learn her that I'm not stupid.'

The Equerry departed at speed, gladly welcoming the chance to get out of the Prince's company. Princess Bluebell's assessment of his master was spot-on.

The Painting Master and the Elocution Master were tucked up cosily in the Butler's pantry, enjoying an absence of Prince, a good gossip and a chance to smoke; the Prince didn't allow smoking.

'What, right now?' they chorused when the Equerry imparted the Prince's request.

'Yes now. Something to do with Princess Bluebell thinking he's ugly and stupid.'

'Well he is.'

'Then you tell him!' the Equerry challenged.

They rose, reluctantly, and set off to find the Prince, who was probably in the Morning Room. The Butler poured the Equerry a glass of port and another one for himself.

With much bowing and scraping they entered the Morning Room.

'Ah, there you are!' The Prince exclaimed, and without pause carried on. 'I wants to show that Princess Bluebell she got it wrong.'

The Elocution Master opened his mouth, wondering which bit of the sentence to correct first and was very relieved when the Prince carried straight on.

'I wants you' he jabbed a finger at the Painting Master, 'to paint a picture of me looking really handsome, and you' He jabbed the same finger at the Elocution Master, 'to write a poem or something on the back saying how clever I am and I love her and I wants to marry her.' He turned to leave. 'Do it right now - I wants her to have it by tomorrow.'

The two Masters looked at each other blankly. Just then a horse trotted past the Morning Room window. It was a magnificent horse, muscled and fit, the colour of mahogany and shining in the morning sun.

But it was the rider that caught their eye. A young man, also muscled and fit, sitting relaxed, his cap tilted at a jaunty angle over his auburn curly hair and whistling a catchy tune.

Immediately the painter started painting, the poet started poeiting, and in a short time they had a depiction of the man on the horse and a tender loving poem beautifully scribed on the reverse.

Next morning the same lad on the same horse was entrusted to take the picture to the Princess in her castle.

She was looking out over the drive when she saw a horse cantering up the drive. It was a lovely horse, but then she saw the rider and her heart skipped a beat.

She rushed to the great main door and pushed it open before the butler could do it for her.

'Ma'am' the rider dismounted and bowed low. 'I have this for you.'

He handed her the picture, securely wrapped. She made a right mess of opening it, partly because her hands were shaking, but mainly because she couldn't take her eyes off the young man.

She looked from man to painting and back to man. She turned it over and read the poem. She leant on the door frame because she thought she was going to faint.

'It's not signed.' She murmured weakly. 'What is your name?'

'Valentine, Ma'am.'

'It says here that you love me and you want to marry me.'

'Er.'

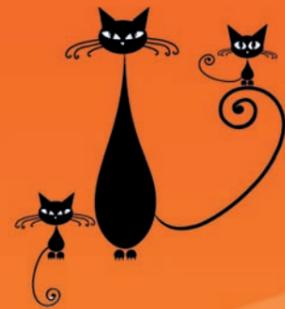
'So come on then, what are you waiting for? Turn that horse round, give me a bunk up, we can get married at the forge before lunchtime.'

Valentine was a sharp lad - he knew a good thing when he saw it. So he bunked her up behind him, and by lunchtime they were Mr Valentine Goodhew and Mrs Bluebell Goodhew, and they lived happily ever after.

And that is the origin of the Valentine card.



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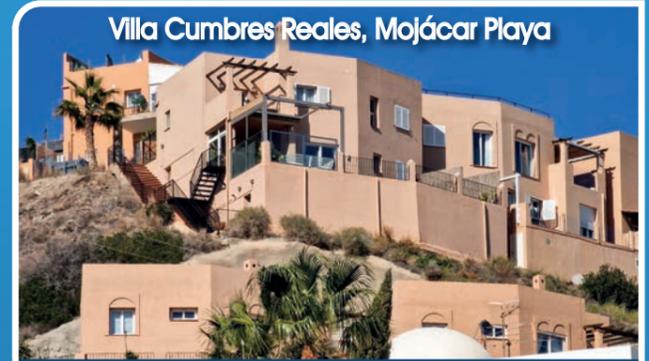
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## IN CELEBRATION OF CHINESE NEW YEAR

Chinese New Year symbols such as red lanterns, firecrackers, couplets, and the character Fu are central to the celebration of the Lunar New Year, representing luck, prosperity, and protection from evil spirits. These traditional emblems, deeply rooted in centuries of folklore and cultural practice, play a vital role in household decorations, family rituals, and public festivities during the Spring Festival. Understanding the Chinese New Year symbols reveals not only aesthetic traditions but also the philosophical values of harmony, renewal, and familial unity that define this important holiday across China and global Chinese communities.



### Origins and Cultural Significance of Chinese New Year Symbols

The symbolic elements of Chinese New Year trace back thousands of years, evolving from ancient agrarian customs, Taoist beliefs, and Confucian values. The festival, also known as the Spring Festival (Chūnjié), marks the end of winter and the beginning of spring according to the lunisolar calendar. Each symbol associated with the holiday carries layered meanings tied to mythology, language, and seasonal change.

One of the most enduring legends influencing these symbols is the story of Nian, a mythical beast said to emerge on New Year's Eve to devour crops, livestock, and even children. Villagers discovered that

loud noises, bright lights, and the colour red could scare Nian away. This led to the adoption of firecrackers, red clothing, and door hangings—elements now recognized globally as core Chinese New Year symbols.

### Key Chinese New Year Symbols and Their Meanings

Beyond warding off monsters, each symbol reflects aspirations for health, wealth, and happiness in the coming year. Below is a detailed breakdown of the most prominent emblems used during the festival.

**Red Envelopes (Hóngbāo)** - Red envelopes, or hóngbāo, are perhaps the most iconic Chinese New Year symbols. Typically filled with money, they are given

by elders to children and unmarried adults as tokens of good fortune and blessings. The red colour symbolizes vitality and wards off evil, while the cash inside represents financial prosperity. It's customary to present them with both hands and accept them respectfully.

**Red Lanterns** - Suspended in homes, streets, and shopping malls, red lanterns illuminate the festive season. Their round shape signifies completeness and family unity, while the glowing light drives away darkness and misfortune. Cities like Beijing and Shanghai host grand lantern festivals, often featuring intricate designs depicting zodiac animals or mythological scenes.

*Continued on page 48 .....*

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..... Continued from page 47

**Couplets (Chūnlián)** - Spring couplets are vertical scrolls written in black ink on red paper, placed on either side of doorways. They feature poetic phrases expressing hopes for peace, success, and longevity. A horizontal scroll above the door often reads “Fú” (福), meaning “good fortune.” Interestingly, this character is frequently displayed upside down, based on a pun: “dào fú” (福倒) sounds like “dào fú” (福到)—“fortune has arrived.”

**The Dragon and Phoenix** - The dragon, a revered creature in Chinese culture, symbolizes power, strength, and imperial authority. Unlike Western depictions of dragons as destructive, the Chinese dragon brings rain, ensures bountiful harvests, and embodies yang energy. During parades, elaborately crafted dragon puppets are danced through streets, manipulated by teams of performers.

The phoenix, often paired with the dragon, represents yin—the feminine counterpart—and stands for grace, virtue, and marital harmony. Together, dragon and phoenix motifs appear on wedding attire and decorative art during the New Year, reinforcing ideals of balance and auspicious beginnings.

**Zodiac Animals** - Each Chinese New Year corresponds to one of the 12 zodiac animals, Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog & Pig, cycling every 12 years. In 2026, it will be the **Year of the Fire Horse**, following the Year of the Snake in 2025. In Chinese culture, the Horse is known for its energetic



and dynamic nature. It symbolizes vitality, speed, and perseverance. People born in the Year of the Horse are believed to possess similar traits, such as being hardworking, warm-hearted, and independent.

**Firecrackers and Fireworks** - Set off continuously from midnight to frighten away evil spirits, firecrackers remain a dramatic part of the celebration. The loud sounds are believed to awaken the earth and energize the household for the new cycle.

**The Color Red** - No discussion of Chinese New Year symbols is complete without highlighting the dominance of red. Associated with fire, joy, and vitality, red permeates clothing, decorations, and gifts. Wearing red clothing—especially underwear—is thought to protect against the taishui, or annual god of age, who may bring misfortune if offended.



# 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).

Continued on page 50 .....

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..... Continued from page 49

Brew yourself a pot of green tea each day and enjoy – but also look for body products and sun care, in particular that feature green tea.

### 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...!

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

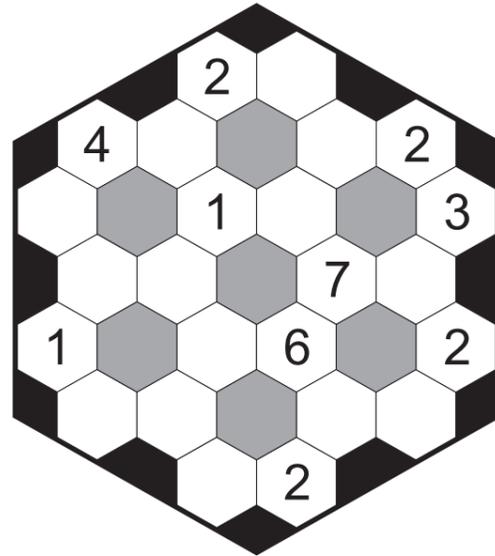
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7	3		1	2	9	4		2		6	3	2	9	5		6
2				8		6	3	1		8		9	5	2	6	8
1	5		3		4			5		3	6	8	1	7	3	9
	2		4	7	6			5			2	1	5	9		8
9	4		2	5	8	1		3				6			1	2
6			9					7			8	9	5	6	2	3
	7		6	1	5	3		4			5	8	4	2		3
		3			2		1	9				3	8		9	6
						7					1		3	5	6	8

## Rosetta

A Rosetta is made up of a centre coloured hexagon encircled by 6 white hexagons. To complete the puzzle, fill in all 7 Rosettas with each number between 1 and 7 in no particular order while ensuring that:

1. No number is repeated in a horizontal row
2. Each number from 1 to 7 is represented in the 7 grey hexagon cells



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# How To Eat Healthy Winter Food For Weight Loss

Winter is time spent curled up on the couch, being warm in bed, seasonal parties, and lots more. It is also a time for enjoying delicious food and invariably packing on a few extra pounds.

It is hard to resist the temptation of comfort food in the colder months. However, it is not just you. There is a science behind these cravings.

The fat in your body keeps you warm in cold weather, and so you have an increased need to eat fatty foods. Additionally, you tend to stay in and exercise less during these months, so you burn fewer calories and munch a lot more than you should.

The cold weather is a time to pay attention to your diet. Eating the right foods keeps your body warm and all those pesky winter ailments away.

Stay fit and toned by sticking to healthy food options and making smart substitutions to your usual comfort food.

**Eat your vegetables** - Leafy green veggies like broccoli, spinach, cabbage, etc. are rich in fibre and antioxidants. Eating them in the winter keeps your digestive system healthy. They also provide you with energy, keeping you active, and your weight in check.

Add veggies to your plate instead of the empty carbs and starches in your cold-weather diet.

Try spices or experiment with cooking to make green veggies taste yummy. Winter greens combined with root vegetables give you plenty of variety in your diet and different vitamins, nutrients, and minerals.

**Munch on carrots** - Rich in nutrients and low in calories, carrots are a delicious and healthy food for those trying to watch their weight. Carrots contain high levels of water and fibre, which keeps hunger



at bay and aids in proper digestion.

When you feel like munching on something as you get cosy under the blanket, choose a few slices of carrot with a low-fat dip instead of a bag of chips.

**Eat whole grains** - Whole grains are good for your health at any time. But they are especially beneficial in the winter because they keep your body warm and increase your metabolism.

Plan to have a bowl of oatmeal for breakfast for both the health benefits and to keep laziness at bay.

Add flavouring like cinnamon or citrus fruits to it. Add barley,



brown rice, and quinoa to your diet to increase your overall intake of healthy whole grains.

**Get nuts** - Are you feeling between-meal hunger pangs? Grab a handful of your favourite nuts to snack the healthy way. For more warmth and better taste, roast them a bit first. Nuts make you feel fuller, helping you avoid tucking into unhealthy options. They are also cold-weather favourites, particularly the still-warm roasted varieties.

Walnuts, almonds, peanuts, cashews – all kinds are healthy, giving you plenty of variety. However, don't overdo because a handful of nuts is chock full of calories but better than a bag of crisps.

Winter is the time when you are likely to indulge in unhealthy snacking. Be smart and keep the right kind of snacks within reach.

Load your kitchen shelves and the car with protein-rich snacks like unsalted almonds, fresh seasonal fruits, and vegetables. Also, eat plenty of oranges and apples to keep your immune system healthy.

Kale is an excellent option as the antioxidants in it help detox your body naturally.

In cold weather, the human body goes back to its natural state, needing more sleep and slows down its metabolism. Aim to go to bed early instead of staying under the covers late when the sun is shining bright and warm outside.

Getting enough sleep and soaking in the sunlight has a positive effect on your mood and keeps winter blues away. All of this suppresses unhealthy midnight food cravings and the tendency to overeat. So head out and take a long walk in the sun to get some exercise and healthy exposure outdoors.

Work on a goal - An excellent way to stay healthy and keep your mood sweet is to work on a target. Try working towards a smaller butt or a naturally slim waist.

Whatever inspires you to keep your day to day eating in check because there are many ways to achieve healthy weight loss in the winter.

Staying skinny through the winter doesn't mean you have to give up eating everything that looks delicious. Instead, choose healthier food and plan to make the best of both worlds by eating sensibly and adding an exercise plan to your daily routine to maintain a healthy balance.

Remember winter foods can be fun and healthy. With the right choices, you will feel enthused about being slim and full of energy.

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Day 2 in the Talamanca jungle, it's 4.45am, it's pitch black. It's the first morning after the first night in the depths of the jungle. Cocooned inside my mosquito net, I'm the first of the group to wake. I really do need a wee. But the toilet is in a separate hut. I can hear monkeys screeching, and rustling in the jungle canopy, and in the matted domed roof of our open-sided lodge I sense movement.

I grab my phone, mentally pull on my big girl pants and blindly crawl out from safety onto the wooden slatted floor. Once out of the room I switch on 'torch mode', scanning the floor, and handrail for crawlies, creep down the stairs and venture out into the night. So far so good. I got this!

In the toilet hut there's a single bare bulb suspended from the corrugated iron roof, casting enough light



to see clearly enough, so I slip my phone into my trouser pocket (...yes, I did sleep fully clothed), scan the walls, the floor, the back of the door.....all clear.

Mission accomplished, now seems like a good idea to check out the shower cubicle. And there it is.....GIANT CRAB SPIDER MONSTER THING! .....On the shower wall, waving its enormous black claw at me.

"Ha Ha! Thinking of having a shower were we? Come on in, join the party."

Arggghhhhhhhhhhh!

Phone torch on. Breathe. Back to the main lodge to wait for reinforcements. The group starts to stir. Each is briefed. One by one we cautiously slink out to assess the situation, each of us feeling confident, that the collective brains-trust that we are, we'll have this sorted quick sharp.

Turns out that Sir David needn't worry about being dethroned any time soon, no-one had the faintest idea what kind of beastie we were dealing with. The consensus; it's some sort of part crab, part spider big monster thing. Well let none of us give up our day jobs any time soon eh?!

So the reality was, we didn't know if we needed to be concerned or not. Were it to be an aggressive venomous cove, taken to leaping willy nilly at unsuspecting Osteopaths, or if left alone, a content, minding its own business type of dude happy to luxuriate in the occasional splash of cold water, only time would tell.

As it turned out, 5 days later, GCSMT had had a bit of a horizontal wander, but nothing more threatening than that. Had we known at the time that our friend was a Tailless Whip Scorpion (Amblypygi), and totally harmless to humans, though slightly freaked by this chap's ability to 'see' with his legs, we may have been a



tad more relaxed about the whole thing. But things being as they were, it turned out that there really is nothing quite like the combination of an ice cold shower coupled with the threat of annihilation by beastie, to guarantee getting a wiggle on first thing in the morning.

I knew from the outset that in the jungle, we'd be working in challenging environments, and as expected, it was a full-on, hands-on, incredibly hot and sweaty, demanding and exhausting experience; but oh wow! It was so totally amazing! 5am alarm calls, the early morning screeches of the jungle barely drowning out our cold water and beastie induced screams! 15 hour days, covering tens of kilometres on foot. Trekking in 35 degrees Celsius, 95% humidity, our clothes saturated, our bodies losing water faster than we could consume it, finally returning to base camp each day after darkness had fallen.

As we made our way from one home to the next, traversing the Costa Rican jungle, crossing rivers both by boat and at times on foot, the water occasionally finding the top of our wellies, hiking up densely forested inclines, slick from the rains of the wet season now in full swing, we took each case as we found it, constantly adapting treatment techniques not only to our patients, but also to the locations we found ourselves in.

Ducking beneath t-shirts and overflowing plastic bags, clothes and belongings stored on multiple lengths of clothes line strung wall to wall. Often working on the floor of the stilt houses still favoured by the Bri Bri people, the ground 6 feet below, visible through frequently absent floorboards. Other times working on a hastily cleared table, sturdy enough to take the weight of a child, vegetables and gigantic hands of bananas strewn at our feet, the smoke from a fire pit catching in our throats.



On our first full day in the Talamanca jungle, having been up at first light, after hours of trekking and working in the intense heat through the morning, around midday, ravenous, we arrived on foot, into a small clearing surrounded by enormous Laurel trees. From the shadows came voices, "Hola! Hola! Shkèna! Shkèna! And there they were, the Radio Cultural La Voz team.

Having pre-cooked our lunch back in Amubri village, they'd transported it all on mopeds, to the absolute middle of nowhere. Bags overflowing with banana leaf parcels tied with twine spilled onto the ground, a plastic bucket of half-melted ice bobbed with foil topped plastic cartons of lemon juice. As parcels were untied, steam escaped in clouds carrying the first fragrant wafts of coconut and lime pork fried rice. It was absolutely delicious. And I can say without hesitation, that that unexpected picnic in the middle of the Costa Rican jungle, sat in the shade of the jungle canopy, looking out across an endless expanse of emerald green, might actually have been one of the best things I've ever eaten.

Lunch break over, it was time to get back to work. Earlier that day we'd visited the home of an 8 year old boy with autism and ADHD, with abdominal pain; a young girl plagued by migraines; and we'd treated a young guy with Parkinson's, who was struggling with muscle stiffness and lower back pain. But the most memorable session of the day was at the first home we visited that afternoon. A young teenager with cerebral palsy. 13 years old, she was wheelchair bound. With severe muscular spasticity, her head was fixed in rotation towards the left. Chiara Fenaroli, a highly experienced Italian paediatric Osteopath, placed her hands onto the girl's neck and shoulders. After 30 minutes of very gentle treatment, the girl began to turn to the right side. I'll never forget her smile as she realised she could move her head. It was an absolutely incredible outcome.

Next time on An Osteopath on a Mission - A Traditional Cacao ceremony, and we'll definitely get around to broken axles! I promise.

*Hands With Heart Foundation is a registered charity, founded in 2016. Providing free healthcare services to children and adults with disabilities in Indonesia, Argentina, Ukraine and Costa Rica, who have limited or non-existent access to healthcare services, the foundation seeks to empower communities through healthcare, education, and social action, and to raise awareness about disability and inclusion.*

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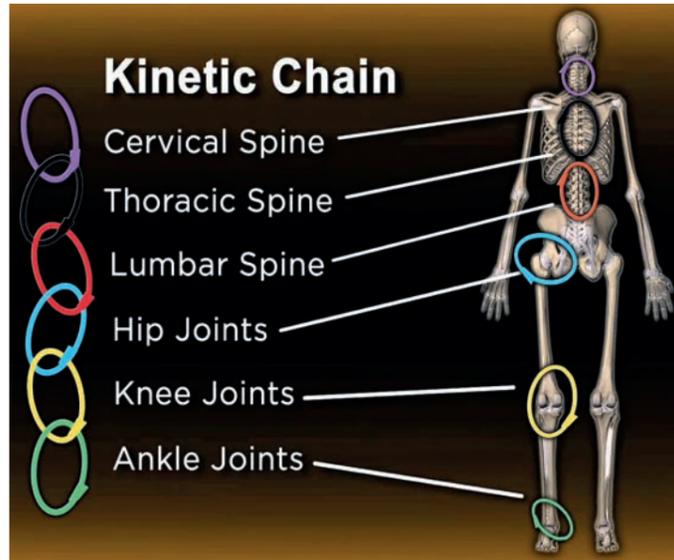
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## Problems with your Kinetic Chain?

The kinetic chain is an engineering concept used to describe human movement. Kinetic means 'relating to' or 'resulting from' motion.

So basically we're referring to the chain of events that occurs to propel us forward, involving the joints, muscles, tendons, ligaments and fascia, that allows us to throw a ball, to swing a golf club, to pedal a bicycle etc.

Each part of the body is a link, each link depending on the link



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before and after it. Walking involves your feet, knees, hips, spine, shoulders, and arms all working in sync to produce movement. Altered function in any one of these areas can lead to pain and even injury.

For example, you might have gone over on your ankle. You've been walking differently because of pain and weakness. Your ankle feels fine now, but you've developed a niggle in your hip and your lower back is starting to bother you.

If you're suffering with pain, for reasons that you can't explain, it could be that one or more of the links in your kinetic chain is compromised.

Your Osteopath can assess you, and help you to manage your pain and get you back on track.

# Trades & Services

## How to avoid costly damp repairs



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.

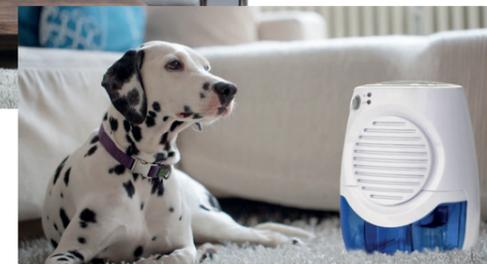
Ventilate your home. Open windows as often as you can and consider adding air vents.

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.

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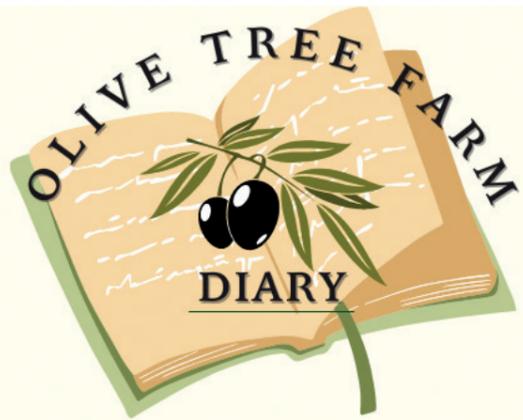
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All in all, we seem to have at least another week of this weather before things start calming down again and we can finally tackle some very necessary jobs. Let's hope for a February that's a little easier to work with!

Thank you for reading. I hope you enjoyed the news of the month, and join us again in the next for all our farm-life updates!

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January finally sees its end here at Olive Tree Farm, and we hope all our readers had a wonderful transition into this New Year!

We began the month by doing some very necessary and quick work to fully block out further unwanted guests on the farm, although the electric fencing is still on stand-by until we can finalise and arrange getting it all put together.

The momentous task we really needed to undertake was the picking of olives and getting them all to the press in exchange for oil.

It seems that across Spain at the moment, the productivity of Olives is really down from previous years — and it's a reason that we ourselves can attest to. Depending on altitude and variation of olive tree species, the picking season tends to land between November and January. We have always picked ours in December, in the weeks before Christmas, and we've worked this way for a good ten years now.

In the last couple of years however, meteorologically, it just hasn't been working out for us — and many olive farmers like us. The rains have been coming earlier, which puts everything on hold, and then comes the wait for the fields to dry out. The soil out here is so clay-like that it is impossible to work until everything dries. The olive nettings clog and stick, the olives fall onto a wet surface which encourages rot, and of course there's the difficulty for us 2-legged creatures trying to remain upright in the process.

So, while patiently awaiting for some dry days to help us get back up there, we then had the new twist. Vicious winds have been ripping across the country, pulling olives from the trees and far too strong for us to be up there doing battle against it. This has meant the few chickens, goats and pigs up there have been having a very wonderful time... and all looking beautifully round in their middles.

After facing this dilemma for 2 years in a row now, and discussing

our options, we have decided that we're going to have to start picking ahead of our normal schedule, and plan a set of weeks in November for the task instead. Let's hope next year's "earlier rains" don't hit the speed button on us again and make another chaotic year for picking... or not picking, as it were!

The three ducks we managed to rescue and bring down into the garden are still in the aviary; obviously, without the added safety of electric fencing yet, we are just far too nervous to take them back up yet.

However, they have treated us to a little gift.

The lone female duck is now sitting on roughly 10-12 eggs. I say "roughly" because we cannot get in there properly to see, which is a good thing! For a first-timer, her mothering instincts are strong.

Although she is living with two males, the turn from bringing her down and sitting was almost instantaneous — as if she hadn't had any stressful days at all! While it's brilliant news for us, that we've made her feel safe and secure so quickly after such an awful event, we just don't know if any of the eggs are fertile for sure.

If our calculations are correct, we'll be finding out over the next week or so, and I'll be sure to update you all in next month's article!

We end the month here still battered by headache-inducing gusts that blow you sideways if you aren't prepared, so we are a little trapped indoors except for feeding and watering, and tying down anything we don't want blowing away!

It's such a shame to be slowed down like this when every day brings new ideas on how to make our dream work, yet we cannot get out to put them in action. (It's probably a good thing we never got around to the herb planters in the kitchen window, I imagine that wouldn't have blown over too well.)



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## Buying a new Telly? And, some reliability issues.

Replacing your old TV or treating yourself to another set? Some of the points listed may be of help.

### Quick summary of the technology

**LCD** Liquid crystals are sandwiched between layers of glass in front of a lit screen. The crystals open and close allowing combinations of red, green and blue light through. By far the most popular and value for money.

**Plasma.** Old technology, no longer made.

**OLED** (organic light emitting diode) A very thin layer of glass containing a matrix of organic diodes (carbon based). These shine bright when energised, giving a high contrast punchy picture. Larger screen sets, 50" plus and coming down in price.

### Reliability

LCD (LED lit TVs) basically two types. Edge lit. This is where the light emitting diodes are set at the edges of the screen, normally at the bottom. Edge lit TVs are slightly thinner, if style is important to you. The light is evenly spread across the screen using various polymer sheet guides. As LEDs fail in time, they run hot. This can cause dark areas on the screen and patches of bright light at the bottom as the guide sheets warp. The picture will eventually fail as the LEDs burn out. Replacing these LEDs is time consuming and if the guides are damaged, given the repair cost, you may consider it uneconomical. Backlit LED sets are where the LEDs are fitted in the rear of the set facing out. These are easier to replace and when failing, generally do not cause related damage. Repair is much cheaper. Backlit TVs, from a service and reliability view are better, in my opinion. You may find your picture over a period of time, takes on a "blue" tinge. This is common and backlight replacement is the only cure.

From a general reliability view, this year to date, I have had around 30 Samsung TVs with screen faults (50" plus), a recognised issue. Normally if a screen fails, the set is a write off. However, depending on the nature of the fault, there are some tricks which may make the set useable. Again in my opinion, from a reliability and service



angle, LG is probably better, at present. Many manufacturers are moving away from Edge lit technology.

### Picture quality

LCD sets as said, are the most popular. We now have 4/8k resolution. Due to the LED lighting, the image can be bright and good for rooms with high ambient light.

OLED sets give a good picture, good contrast, true black, but by nature of the way they work, brightness is not as great and therefore more suited for the subdued lit room.

### Some things to think of!

- Don't place it with the back facing a window where the sun comes in. That can add 30+ degrees to the working temperature. Don't mount it above a hot fireplace.

- **Warranty!** Know exactly what the warranty consists of. Do you have to take it to a repair agent (miles away), does a little man in a van come out? Keep the invoice and till receipt. Keep the packing! Remember in Spain you have 3 years warranty. First 6 months, any fault is legally presumed to be a manufacturing defect, unless it is something obviously caused by misuse. After those 6 months, the warranty still applies, but it is no longer automatically assumed that the fault was present from the factory. In practice, this means that a technician may need to inspect the product to determine whether the failure is due to normal use, a manufacturing issue, or clear user damage. I always recommend buying from a local store such as Hiper Ocio in Albox. Warranty is meaningful and no quibble. Buy online, such as Amazon, then face the warranty issues!

- It's worth using a UPS (uninterruptible power supply). This will reduce mains disturbances causing possible damage to software and hardware in the set. The rating of the UPS will depend on the size of TV and or the number of appliances connected to it. I keep various UPSs in stock.

- As rough guide, budget for about 3-5 years (depending on usage), before you have to attend a fault. You may want to factor that in.

- Think about your old analogue systems (VCRs, DVDs Games) you may want to connect to the new TV. New sets do not have

SCART sockets and one composite video port. Adaptors are available.

- Check on how the set will interface with your home cinema system/Sound bar. Will it use the HDMI connection, or optical link etc. Check it out or ask for advice.

- How many HDMI connections does the set have? Some stores, ferreterías (steer clear), sell cheap versions that have only 1 x HDMI socket, a real pain. These sets are aimed at the hotel market. A con!

- USB ports are generally available to enable you to play various types of downloaded media (dad's "technical videos") Check the formats supported.

- SMART TVs. This means that the set has a connection, by either WiFi or LAN port to the internet, tablets etc. Check to see what you actually get. Most sets have license agreements with the likes of Netflix, Prime and others. Check what it comes pre-loaded with and its ability to load other applications.

- Those who are hard of hearing and use the headphone socket or audio out sockets to drive wireless headphone system. Check the new TV has this facility. Also, there can be a subtle delay between the audio from the TV's speakers and that which comes from the optical or audio ports. There could be an annoying echo.

- You may find the sound quality is not what you would expect. Possibly consider a sound bar to give you better audio and bass.

- If it is going to be your main set, get a branded name, in my opinion. LG, Sony. Spares for these brands are more widely available after the warranty period and makes repairing the sets more viable. Budget



sets with well known names such as Toshiba, Philips, JVC etc use chassis made by Vestel, Celso and other low end manufacturers. Can be good value for low usage, but you get what you pay for. Makes such as Hisense, TCL, Nevir will be cheap and cheerful, so don't expect them to last long. Personal view.

- If you have lots of people wanting to sit around the TV, check the viewing angle. Some budget sets have images that will darken, if you are not sat more or less directly in front. Thank God curved sets have died out.

- Be very careful when unpacking the OLED TVs. The screen assembly is thin and very fragile!

- When you have your new LCD set, nip into the PICTURE settings menu. You may find the BACKLIGHT setting is at 100%. This is to make

the picture look bright and eye catching in the shop. Reducing it to say, 60-70% will increase the life of the LED backlights and make for less eye strain.

- I am seeing older Smart TVs no longer connecting to Netflix and other apps. This is due to the manufacturers no longer having licence agreements in place. A cheaper option would be to get a Firestick and retain the working TV.

- Oh, NEVER spray the screen with cleaner and let the liquid drop down to the bottom of the screen where embedded circuits live. One drop of water and it's curtains.

So, if you want any help or some advice as to what to look for, always give me a call or drop me a line. The details are on the Contact Us [www.zeta-services.tv](http://www.zeta-services.tv) Seth Pittham

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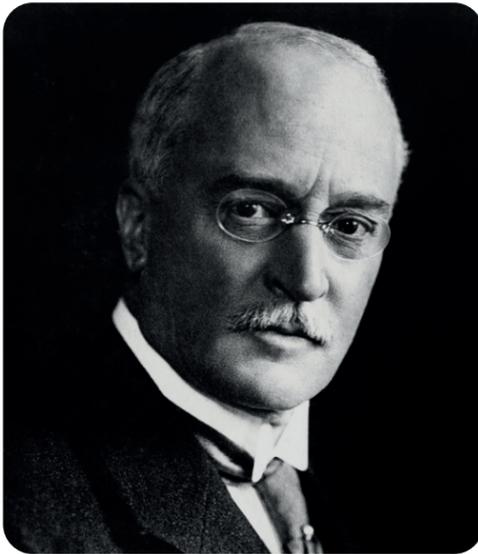
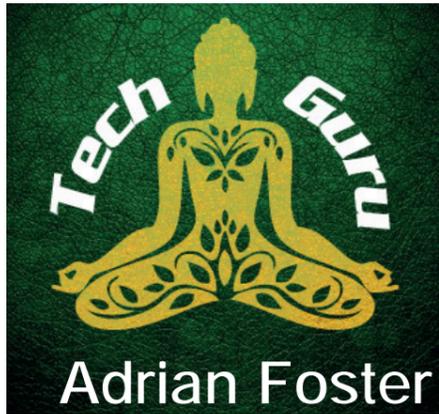


# TECH, TV, GADGETS & GIZMOS

This month, the rabbit hole we will be exploring involves visionary engineer Rudolph Diesel. The name is instantly recognisable and for good reason. His invention revolutionised the world and for all the right reasons, mainly a pathological disdain for waste. Unfortunately he didn't live to see his invention scale its eventual heights, having died under mysterious circumstances at a suspiciously convenient time. Rudolf Diesel believed that inefficiency was not just a technical problem but a moral one. He lived at a moment when the world's engines were loud, wasteful, and dangerous, and he couldn't accept that this was the best humanity could do. Energy, to him, was something almost sacred: if you burned it, you ought to use it well. That mindset is important, because it made him vulnerable and not just from outside. Early prototypes suffered from a variety of catastrophic failures. Most of them exploded in spectacular fashion, nearly killing him on more than one occasion. He was mocked by his peers and scared off any potential backers but he carried on regardless and by 1897 the hard work and heartache was worth it.

Diesel's compression-ignition engine was born not from ambition but from offence — offence at how casually industry accepted waste. His breakthrough came when he stopped trying to improve existing engines and instead asked what physics would allow if we stopped fighting it. Compress only air. Let temperature rise naturally. Inject fuel at the moment when ignition becomes inevitable. No spark, no theatrical combustion — just pressure, heat, and timing. It was elegant. It was efficient. And, crucially, it was flexible.

Diesel demonstrated his engine running on peanut oil and wrote



openly about farmers producing fuel locally. He imagined energy as something distributed, adaptable, and resilient. In modern terms, he was proposing a reduction in global systemic leverage — fewer choke points, fewer dependencies and (concerning for governments) harder to tax. He did not frame it that way, of course. He spoke as an engineer and an idealist, not as a geopolitical strategist. History tends to punish that combination.

The first thing to understand about how disruptive ideas are neutralised, is that they are rarely silenced directly. Direct opposition creates martyrs. Instead, the system offers encouragement — selectively. This is where the anglerfish light appears. Efficiency — Applauded, Power — Funded, Flexibility — Politely ignored. Diesel's engine was embraced precisely where it strengthened existing structures: shipping, industry, rail, later trucking. Heavy oil — cheap, abundant, centrally refined — became the standard, except in the USA whose domestic output is not ideally suited for Diesel production (hence the interest in Greenland and Canada). The engine's ability to run on many fuels, once a feature, became an inconvenience. How many of you remember the first episode of the re-launched Top Gear when they ran a Volvo on recycled oil from a chip shop? It didn't take long for "The Man" to put

a stop to that nonsense and for manufacturers to engineer cars so that they could only run on "approved" fuel under the banner of "emission control". Standardisation was framed as progress. Control was framed as safety. The hook was already set, and no one had to pull hard.

Diesel himself did not live long enough to see how thoroughly his ideas would be absorbed and reshaped. Had he been born a century later, however, the process would have been more visible — and more psychological.

A "Late Diesel," emerging in the late 20th century, would enter a world where energy is inseparable from power. Oil routes dictate foreign policy. Fuel standards shape markets. Environmental concern exists, but is carefully channelled. In such a world, an engine optimised for multi-fuel use and local production wouldn't be dismissed — it would be welcomed then carefully neutered.

*Continued on page 66 .....*



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**THERE IS ALWAYS A SOLUTION AT REVOLUTION**

..... Continued from page 64

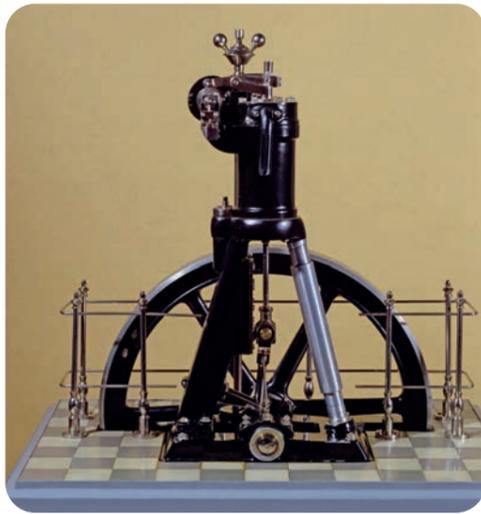
This is the subtlety that conspiracy thinking often misses. No one needs to silence the inventor – that would create martyrs. You just need to reframe their success. Grants arrive with conditions. Vanity projects scale in one direction, not another. Regulatory language evolves in ways that just happen to favour large producers. The inventor is invited to conferences, panels, advisory boards — always close to influence, never quite holding it.

The anglerfish doesn't chase. It glows.

At a certain point, resistance becomes exhausting. To keep pushing the original vision, the inventor must fight on technical, legal, financial, and reputational fronts simultaneously. Most people yield, not because they are corrupt, but because they are tired. The idea survives — cleaner, shinier, more marketable — but its teeth are removed.

This is how diesel became "clean diesel." Efficient, yes. Empowering? No.

What makes this especially ironic is where diesel engines later proved their worth. In endurance motorsport — Le Mans, Paris-Dakar — diesel succeeded not by brute force but by patience. Fewer pit stops, cooler operation, massive torque delivered without drama. Over time, efficiency beat spectacle. The engine did exactly what Diesel believed good engineering should do: it respected limits and made them work for you. And yet, when diesel later became politically inconvenient (again, about the same time that Volkswagen were caught cheating emission tests), the narrative flipped. The



technology was recast as dirty, outdated and morally suspect. The same institutions that had benefitted from its strengths now distanced themselves from it. Once again, the issue wasn't physics — it was leverage. Diesel had served its purpose. The light moved on.

This pattern repeats because it works.

Offer innovators a future where their ideas "change the world," but only within carefully drawn lines. Praise their contribution while quietly narrowing its impact. When the time comes, blame the technology itself for the consequences of its deployment. The public absorbs the story. The structure remains. Seen this way, Rudolf Diesel's tragedy isn't mysterious at

all. His real mistake wasn't technical; it was believing that efficiency alone would be enough. He underestimated how deeply systems depend on friction — not mechanical friction, but social and economic friction — to maintain control. If his vision had survived intact, the world wouldn't have been transformed overnight but it might have been less brittle. It would be less dependent on jealously-guarded fuel, less vulnerable to supply shocks and more tolerant of local variation. Those are quiet virtues. They don't photograph well. They don't concentrate power and make the keyholders immensely richer. And so they are always, eventually, bargained away. Once you notice the anglerfish, you start seeing it everywhere: in energy, in technology, in government. Lights offered, hooks hidden, darkness doing the rest.

The unsettling part isn't that this happens. It's that it works best on people who are trying to do good.

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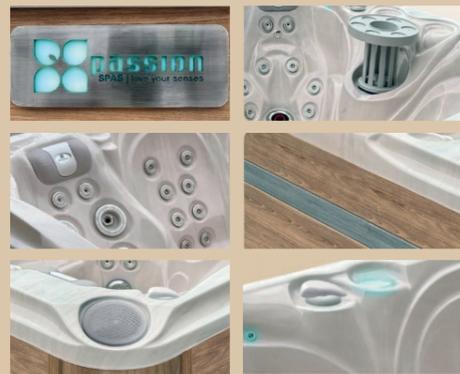
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<b>Sunday</b> Cantoria	<b>Sunday</b> Fines, Villaricos

Is your local market listed?  
 If not please let us know



**WHEELS**

MOTORING SECTION

**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

Continued on page 70 .....

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\* prices are subject to minimum financing \*

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No Deposit Finance Available  
\*Subject to status



..... Continued from page 69

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.

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 Porsche 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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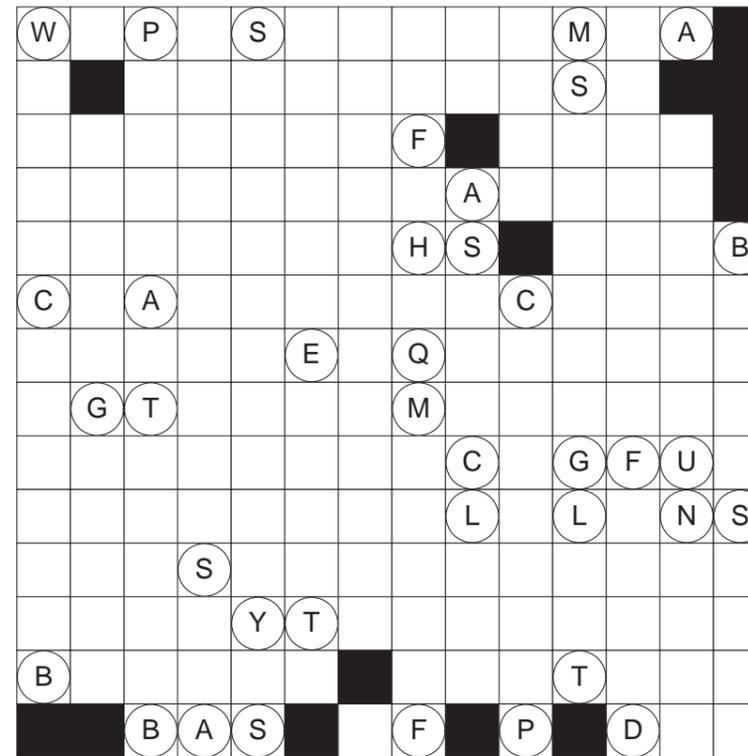
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## Puzzle Time

Puzzle solutions on page 74

### Reverse Word Search



Each of these circled letters is the first letter of one or more of the words on the given word list.

Your task is to fill in the grid completely using only the given words. No word will repeat itself. Words can be positioned the same as in a regular word search – horizontally, vertically or diagonally, reading frontwards or backwards.

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

- |          |          |          |
|----------|----------|----------|
| Amens    | Flouted  | Sheepish |
| Antes    | Forging  | Slogs    |
| Artful   | Frets    | Small    |
| Autumnal | Griddles | Spear    |
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# 2026 New Traffic and Road Safety Regulation



compulsory third-party liability insurance regime from 2026. Although legislation was passed in July 2025 and the initial start date was set for 2 January 2026, final implementation will wait until a new DGT-maintained vehicle registry is fully operational.

However, an exception applies for e-scooters over 25 kg and those with max speeds above 14 km/h: these must be insured from 26 January 2026, regardless of registry status.

The measure tackles the sharp rise in urban road incidents linked to e-scooters. In 2025 alone, there were 7,423 incidents with injuries, 19 fatalities and 459 hospital admissions—a significant increase on prior years.

Further to the mandatory introduction in Spain of the V-16 emergency beacons to replace the previously compulsory red warning triangle, DGT have also introduced other safety measures at the start of 2026.

## Mandatory Insurance for E-Scooters and Lightweight Personal Vehicles

Personal mobility devices, particularly e-scooters, come under a

Spain's Legal Act 5/2025 mandates a minimum personal injury cover of €6,450,000 per accident, regardless of victim count, and €1,300,000 for property damage. A fine of up to €1,000 will be imposed if insurance is not secured by the deadline.

## Seatbelt rules tightened

In Spain, front seatbelts became mandatory in 1975 with rear seatbelts becoming compulsory later in 1992.

But for years the rules have been applied with some exceptions, with taxi drivers, delivery workers and driving instructors allowed, in certain situations, to drive without one.

From January 1, that all changes with new rules dictating that everyone must wear a seatbelt at all times, irrespective of job or situation.

The DGT say removing this grey area of the law will help to improve safety.

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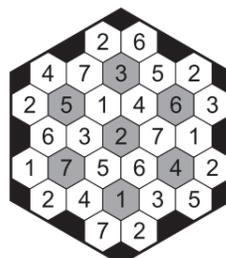
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ESTABLISHED 1986

## Vera



**La Algarrabina:** 5 Minutes to the town of Vera. Charming Detached Villa with a 10 x 5 Swimming Pool. 4/5 Bedrooms and 3 Bathrooms. Lots of Outside Space. Car Port & Garage. AC/H.

DV1570 **320.000€**

## Los Gallardos



**Campo:** Super-huge Villa with 5 Bedrooms. 20.000 m2 Plot. Living Room of 80m2. Pebble Tek Pool with Jacuzzi & Waterfall. Amazing Views. Stables & 2 Tack Rooms.

DV1572 **650.000€**

## Mojácar



**El Cantal Area:** Stunning Reformed Villa with separate guest accommodation. Total 4 Beds & 3 Baths. All new electrics, plumbing, flooring, kitchens, bathrooms etc. Independent Garage. Large Pool. Sea & Mountain views.

DV1574 **649.995€**

## Mojácar



**Opportunity!** Up & Running Business. 4 Bed Villa with 4 Separate Apartments. 10 Beds, 6 Baths in Total. Large Covered Swimming Pool. Double Garage. Stunning Pueblo Views. On Site Well. Solar Panels & Much More.

DV1577 **699.000€**

## Mojácar



**Calle Ceuta:** One of a Kind Luxury Villa built in 2021. Electric Gated Entrance. 4 Bedrooms. 3 Bathrooms. Open-Plan Living. Private Pool. Good Sea & Mountain Views.

DV1598 **795.000€**

## Mojácar



**Villa with Private Pool.** Super Location in a quiet residential area. 3 Beds. 3 Baths. Short stroll to the Beaches, Bars & Restaurants. Good size plot with mature Gardens. Lots of Terraces. Options to extend.

SDV1578 **499.000€**

## Bédar



**Stylish 4 Bed, 3 Bath Villa,** Car Port. Excellent Views. 5 min. drive to the village. Shaped Swimming Pool. Lots of terraces and garden area. Central Heating. Air-conditioning.

DV1589 **525.000€**

## Mojácar



**La Parata:** Detached Villa on One Level. Large Corner Plot. Super Country & Mountain views. Driveway. 2 Beds. 2 Baths. Room for a Pool.

DV1601 **375.000€**

## Bédar



**Spacious Country Residence.** Main House 3 Beds & 3 Baths. Guest Annex with 1 Bed & 1 Bath. Excellent Views. Private Pool. Car Port. Gas CH, Lots of Outside Space & lots of Storage.

DV1597 **499.950€**

Call us today **+34 950 478 915 / 678 315 638**

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