

July 2026

Issue 159

# Almeria Living

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# 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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# Almeria Living

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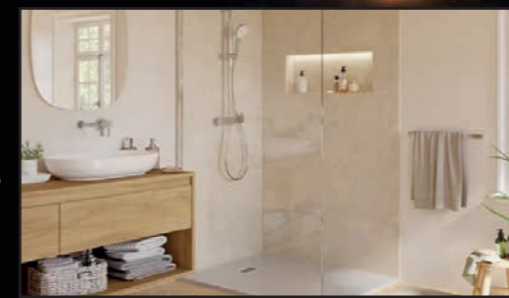
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Welcome to the July 2026 issue of Almeria Living - the seventh issue of 2026 already!!

Someone has definitely turned the thermostat up!!! It is hard to believe how fast the weather patterns are changing around the world and the seasons are all in a pickle!

Due to health issues, the Harmony Charity Shop in La Alfoquia, may not be open as long or often as usual. If you can spare a few hours a week to help they would love to meet you. Why not pop in and say hello!

In this issue .....

There are a couple of linked articles this month - our featured province is Huelva (p.6-8), which leads us to the Doñana National Park (p.38-39) that is situated in the heart of the province.

Our History of Spain has brought us to the Spanish Inquisition (p.29-30), which leads us to the life of Tomás de Torquemada (p.55-56) who was the backbone of the organisation.

Despite the heat, my scribes have kept busy and my thanks to them all for their time and effort - they are always a pleasure to read and we hope you all enjoy too.

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

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

Take care and stay safe. It is particularly important to keep an eye on our young visitors, especially around the pool.

Talk again in July.

Karen (Ed)

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## DEREGISTER FROM HMRC UK

**Are you paying tax in the UK and Spain? Maybe you shouldn't!**

If your pension is not a Crown pension then you need to deregister from the HMRC UK and just pay your taxes in Spain.

If you would like assistance with completing this process then the team at C.A.T. Services are here to help.

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# Spain's Non-Lucrative Visa - New & Renew

Spain's Non-Lucrative Visa allows non-EU citizens to live in Spain provided they can support themselves financially.

It is used by those planning to retire to Spain and is an option for British retirees and other people who do not plan to work in Spain after Brexit.

It is also an alternative for those who would like to spend a year in Spain without working, before obtaining a work permit. The Non-Lucrative Visa entitles you to travel freely within the Schengen zone too.

The visa allows you to stay in Spain for one year after entering the Spanish territory. You must spend a minimum of 183 days in the country to be able to renew. This also means that you will become a tax resident and taxable on your worldwide income (subject to double tax treaties).

The application process is divided into two parts, the initial visa application, and then obtaining the residence card once you enter Spain. The application should not be made more than 90 days before your intended travel date, at the closest Spanish Consulate in your country of origin. In the UK you can apply in Manchester, London, and Edinburgh.

You must prove that you have 400% of the IPREM (Spanish minimum income) annually. You will be required to provide a bank certificate or bank statements from the last six months. State and private pension letters are also accepted. The funds may be in multiple accounts.

Applicants must have a private health insurance policy with full coverage in Spain with no co-payments, provided by a Spanish insurance company for at least one year. If you are a UK state



pensioner, you are entitled to an S1 form which will cover this requirement too.

Confirmation will be within one month, the visa will then be printed in your passport, and you will be free to travel to Spain. The visa will also include your NIE number.

Once you have the visa you must enter Spain freely within a maximum of 3 months. They must also stamp the page opposite the visa at border control on your arrival in Spain.

Having arrived in Spain, you will need to register on the Padron at your local town hall and apply for the TIE (Foreigners identity card).

## Renewing the Non-Lucrative Visa

The visa can be renewed every 2 years until you can get permanent residency, which is available after 5 years in the country.

The renewal application is applied for at the Foreign Office in your province, within the 60 days before your current visa runs out, or during the 90 days after it has expired. We recommend you apply before it runs out to avoid penalisation.

It can take a minimum of 3 months for the application to be processed. As your current visa will expire while the application is being processed, you are given an extension when you submit the renewal application.

For the renewal you do not have to provide the UK ACRO police certificate, nor the medical certificate proving you have no restrictive diseases. Proof of income and medical cover for 2 years will be required. They will accept Spanish title house deeds (escrituras) as proof of income with this renewal procedure.

Dependent children aged 16 and under must provide proof they are enrolled and attending school in Spain to be able to renew their visa.

For more information and advice or help to apply/renew the Spanish Non-lucrative Visa please contact CAT 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 June we journeyed to Guipúzcoa and now our next of Spain's provincial Capitals takes us down into Andalucía .....

## Huelva in Huelva



The province of Huelva is Andalucía's westernmost province. It borders on the Atlantic Ocean, Portugal and the provinces of Badajoz, Seville and Cádiz.

Huelva covers an area of 10,128 km2 and has a population of 538,789. Its highest point is Monte Bonaes at 1,055 MASL and

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it is traversed by four major rivers: Guadalquivir, Guadiana, Odiel and Tinto.

The river Tinto owes its name to the fact that the water that flows in it is a rusty red colour caused by the natural mineral contents in the Huelva soil.

The province is rich in minerals which have been mined there since the year 1,000 B.C. The copper mine in the mining basin was one of the first in the world to be exploited, and the minerals and metals that were mined there over the millenniums created wealth in the district.

However, it was not until the middle of the 19th century that the mining was properly commercialised when British companies, such as the Rio Tinto Company Ltd., entered into the mix. In a couple of decades the area turned into one of the world's largest mining centres, and the infrastructure was improved to facilitate the transport of the minerals to the port at Huelva city.

The fact that the larger part of the wealth created by the exploration went abroad did cause quite a bit of social unrest and rioting, and when the mines stopped yielding the large profits of the 1800s, they passed back into Spanish hands.

When Columbus set off on his first voyage to find the western route to India, he set out from Palos de la Frontera in Huelva, and thus the place in history of the city known as the 'Crib of the Discovery of America' was secured.

Because of this, Palo de la Frontera is included in the historical-cultural route known as 'Lugares Colombinos' (Columbus Sites).

Set in the Sierra de Aracena, the town of Jabugo, with just over 2,000 inhabitants, is one of the most famous centres for the production of Jamón Ibérico in Spain. Jamón Ibérico is, of course, the crème de la crème of jamon serrano made from the black Iberian pig.

Some of the country's leading producers breed the pigs who have a most desirable pig's life until they become hams. Spain's most prestigious Jamón Ibérico producer, 5 Jotas, is based here, and the town is also home to a ham museum which describes, step by step,



how the pigs are bred and how the hams are cured.

Huelva is home to one of Spain's longest bridges, the Puente Internacional del Guadiana. As the name indicates, the bridge connects two countries, Spain and Portugal. It is set just a couple of kilometres from the estuary of the River Guadiana.

The idea of connecting the two banks of the river was centuries old, but the problem had always been the width of the river so close to the estuary, almost half a kilometre, and the depth, which is over 10 metres.

Talks to initiate the project started in 1963 and were finalised in 1985 (these things can't be rushed).

Work started shortly after, and during almost four years, 300

persons were employed to work on the bridge. During this period, they moved 28,000 m3 of concrete, 5,500 tonnes of steel and 2,100 metres of bridge pilings which measured 2 m in diameter.

The bridge was inaugurated in August 1991, and it is crossed by almost 10,000 vehicles daily. It spans 666 metres, and it connects Ayamonte in Huelva with Castromarim in Portugal. The mid-section is 20 metres above the water and allows very large ships to navigate up and down the river.

The capital of Huelva is Huelva; it is home to 143 215 souls, and it is situated on the flatland between the estuaries of the rivers Odiel and Tinto.

*Continued on page 8 .....*



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the British mining companies discovered the area and helped shape the province and city into a resemblance of what they are today.

Huelva's economy rests on two main pillars: industry (it has an important chemical industry as well as the port and several shipyards) and the service sector as capital of the province.

It has a large fishing fleet which generates more than 400,000 euro a month, and there is a large warehousing and refrigerating sector in the port.

The chemical industry sector, which is the largest contributor to Huelva's economy, was first established there in the 1960s under Franco. The area was chosen due to its relative backwardness, unemployment and poverty as an ideal place to start up a large industrial complex.

Due to the problems that are the drawback of the chemical industry, such as illness, pollution and ecological decline, the population is divided into two camps: those that see it as a necessity to the existence of the city, and those that see it as a problem which causes bad health and destroys eco systems.

Paradoxically, Huelva is home to one of Spain's most important national parks, the Parque Nacional de Doñana, which also reaches into the provinces of Cádiz and Seville.

Because of its position on the migratory route between two continents, Doñana shelters hundreds of different species of migratory birds and its biodiversity is unique in Europe. It also houses Spain's largest Iberian lynx breeding programme.

In spite of being home to the Doñana natural park and some stunning, unspoilt beaches, Huelva remains one of Spain's least visited provinces.

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Huelva is an important port city and has been so for over two thousand years. Its brilliant setting between sea, rivers and productive mines turned it into a melting pot and meeting place for people from all the different civilizations that have existed through the centuries.

It has been home to Tartessians, Phoenicians, Romans, Visigoths, Moors and of course, Christians. The city remained an important port during the early days of the discovery of the Americas, but at the same rate that Cádiz and Seville grew in importance, Huelva's prominence shrank, and the city went into a real decline at the end of the 16th century.

Huelva city had its ups and downs over the next few centuries until



# Look Good - Feel Great

## The Importance of drinking water

Drinking water has numerous benefits and is crucial for many bodily functions, such as lubricating the joints, delivering oxygen throughout the body, preventing kidney damage, and more.

Around 60% of the body is made up of water, and around 70% of the planet's surface is covered by water.

Perhaps it is the ubiquitous nature of water that means drinking enough each day is not at the top of many people's lists of priorities.

To stay hydrated, it's important to drink before you feel thirsty. This is especially important if you are exercising or if it is a hot day. Even if you're not thirsty, try to drink water regularly throughout the day.

Some reasons our body needs water:

**It lubricates the joints** - cartilage, found in joints and the disks of the spine, contains around 80% water. Long-term dehydration can reduce the joints' shock-absorbing ability, leading to joint pain.

**It forms saliva and mucus** - saliva helps us digest our food and keeps the mouth, nose, and eyes moist. This prevents friction and damage. Drinking water also keeps the mouth clean.



**It delivers oxygen throughout the body** - Blood is more than 90% water, and blood carries oxygen to different parts of the body.

**It boosts skin health** - Water intake is associated with improved skin barrier. With dehydration, the skin can become more vulnerable to skin disorders.

**It cushions the brain, spinal cord, and other sensitive tissues** - prolonged dehydration can affect brain structure and function and can lead to problems with thinking and reasoning.

**It regulates body temperature** - water that is stored in the middle layers of the skin comes to the skin's surface as sweat when the body heats up. As it evaporates, it cools the body.

**The digestive system depends on it** - the bowel needs water to work properly. Dehydration can lead to

digestive problems and an overly acidic stomach. This increases the risk of heartburn and stomach ulcers.

Continued on page 10 .....

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..... Continued from page 9

**It flushes body waste** - water is needed in the processes of sweating and the removal of urine and feces.

**It helps maintain blood pressure** - dehydration can cause blood to become thicker, which is associated with decreased blood pressure.

**It prevents kidney damage** - the kidneys regulate fluid in the body. Insufficient water can lead to kidney stones and other problems.

### Sources of water

Some of the water required by the body is obtained through foods with a high water content, such as oranges, watermelon, and spinach, but most come through drinking water and other beverages.

During everyday functioning, water is lost by the body, and this needs to be replaced. We notice that we lose water through activities such as sweating and urination, but water is lost even when breathing.

Drinking water is the best source of fluid for the body.

Milk and juices are also good sources of fluid, but beverages containing alcohol and caffeine, such as soft drinks, coffee, and beer, are not ideal because they often contain empty calories. Drinking water instead of soda can help with weight loss.

### What happens when you don't drink enough water?

Not drinking enough water can make you very ill. Severe dehydration can lead to dizziness and collapse.

Dehydration in babies and children can be serious and needs immediate medical attention.

Dehydration happens when your body doesn't have enough water. Being dehydrated can affect your physical and mental performance. Your body does not work as well if it is dehydrated.

Signs that you are dehydrated and need to drink more water include:



- feeling thirsty
- dark coloured urine
- headaches
- dry skin, tongue and mouth
- tiredness
- irritability
- light headedness or fainting

People who don't drink enough water every day are more likely to have problems such as:

- urinary tract infections
- headaches
- kidney stones
- constipation
- confusion

Older people are at greater risk of dehydration because they naturally feel less thirsty. Their kidneys may also not work as well. Memory problems and not being very mobile can make it harder to stay hydrated. Certain types of medicines such as diuretics and laxatives can also lead to dehydration.

If you or someone you care for are showing any signs of dehydration, drink some water straight away. Seek medical advice if the person

is not getting better.

What if I don't enjoy drinking water?

You can vary the taste of plain water by:

- keeping water in the refrigerator so it is cool and refreshing
- adding some berries, lemon slices or mint for a change in flavour

You could also try:

- sparkling water (not soft drink)
- herbal teas
- iced tea (but avoid iced tea with added sugar)

### How much water should I drink?

The amount of water that you need varies from person to person and can change from day to day depending on what you are doing.

It depends on:

- what you eat - food also contains water
- your age - adults need more water than children
- what the temperature is - you need more water on a hot or humid day
- whether you have a medical condition
- how your metabolism works
- if you are exercising

It's especially important for children and older people to drink enough water.

As a general guide:

- Adult males need about 2.6 litres of fluids every day
- Adult females need about 2.1 litres of fluids a day



### Can you drink too much water?

It's very difficult to drink too much water, however too much water can lead to a dangerous but rare condition called hyponatremia. When this happens, the levels of sodium in your blood become too low.

This can sometimes happen when people drink too much while doing intense physical activity, such as running a marathon. People with chronic kidney disease, heart failure or liver disease may not be able to get rid of extra water from the body as well as healthy people. If you have these conditions, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor about how much water to drink.

If you have another long-term medical condition, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor about how much water you need.



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## Looking After Your Eyes in Spain: An Interview with David Fernandez from Optica Almeria

Spain's sunny climate and relaxed lifestyle are a major attraction for British residents, especially those enjoying retirement in places like Almeria. However, the strong sun and dry conditions can also affect eye health. We spoke with David Fernandez from Optica Almeria about the most common eye concerns among British expats and how to protect your vision as you get older.

### Interview

*Q: David, what are the most common eye problems you see among British residents in Spain?*

The most common issue is age-related vision changes, especially difficulty reading small print after the age of 45. We also see dry eyes, cataracts and early signs of macular degeneration. Many people are surprised by how much the strong Spanish sunlight can affect their eyes over time.

*Q: Does the climate in southern Spain play a role?*

Definitely. In Almeria we have sunshine almost all year round, which is wonderful, but long exposure to UV rays can damage the eyes if they are not properly protected. Dry air and air conditioning can also cause irritation and discomfort, particularly for contact lens wearers.

*Q: What advice would you give to British expats living here?*

First, have regular eye examinations. Many eye conditions develop slowly and without pain, so early detection is very important. Secondly, invest in good quality sunglasses with proper UV protection. Cheap sunglasses are not always enough to protect your eyes.



I also recommend limiting screen time where possible and taking regular breaks when using phones, tablets or computers.

*Q: Are there differences between eye care in the UK and Spain?*

Many British clients tell us they appreciate the personal service they receive here in Spain. At Optica Almeria we take time to understand each person's lifestyle and visual needs, whether they need progressive lenses, contact lenses or advice about eye health.

*Q: Finally, what simple habits help maintain healthy eyesight?*

Wear sunglasses, stay hydrated, eat a healthy diet and never ignore changes in your vision. Good eyesight is essential for enjoying life in Spain, especially during retirement.

*For more information, visit Optica Almeria and speak with David Fernandez and his team.*

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# Puzzle Time

Puzzle solutions on page 82

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

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.

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

Medium

|    |    |    |  |    |    |    |    |    |    |  |    |
|----|----|----|--|----|----|----|----|----|----|--|----|
| 1  |    | 2  |  | 3  | 4  |    | 5  |    | 6  |  | 7  |
|    |    |    |  | 8  |    |    |    |    |    |  |    |
| 9  |    |    |  |    |    |    |    | 10 |    |  |    |
|    |    |    |  |    |    |    |    |    |    |  |    |
| 11 |    |    |  |    | 12 |    |    |    |    |  |    |
|    |    |    |  |    |    |    |    |    |    |  | 13 |
| 14 |    | 15 |  |    |    | 16 | 17 |    |    |  |    |
|    |    |    |  |    |    | 18 |    |    |    |  |    |
|    | 19 |    |  | 20 |    |    | 21 |    | 22 |  |    |
| 23 |    |    |  |    |    |    |    |    |    |  |    |
| 24 |    |    |  |    |    | 25 |    |    |    |  |    |
|    |    |    |  |    |    |    |    |    |    |  |    |
| 26 |    |    |  |    |    |    |    |    |    |  | 27 |

### Across

- 1 Association
- 3 Ship bosses
- 9 Loosening
- 10 Glossy
- 11 Rotates
- 12 Appeared
- 14 Fitting
- 16 Physical therapist
- 19 Scandinavian language
- 21 Lion sounds
- 24 Cocktail garnish
- 25 Goes up and down
- 26 Salad sauce
- 27 Respite

### Down

- 1 Politeness
- 2 Speak
- 4 Month
- 5 Sample
- 6 Sickness
- 7 Affirms
- 8 Disposable hankie
- 13 Look after a home (5,3)
- 15 Visualize
- 17 Brave men
- 18 Elite
- 20 Notions
- 22 Cognizant
- 23 Street

## Vitamin D Deficiency Risk in Hot Weather

Vitamin D's main role is to regulate the body's calcium levels and maintain bone health.

In later life, osteoporosis and fractures become an increasing concern, so it's really important to ensure that we're getting the recommended daily amount.

Great sources of vitamin D are oily fish, cod liver oil, egg yolks, and fortified products, but our main source of Vitamin D here in Spain, is the sun. However, just as we hide away when it's cold, extreme summer heat also pushes us indoors, severely reducing our daily sunlight exposure.

10 minutes outside each morning, when the sun's at its lowest point, is enough to safely get your daily requirement of vitamin D. But also consider adding in some vitamin D rich foods to your diet, or take a daily nutritional supplement to ensure that you're getting enough.

- Increasing your sun exposure time DOES NOT increase vitamin D levels - the body naturally breaks down any surplus above the daily requirement.
- All skin types should wear sunscreen, a hat and sunglasses, and seek shade if outdoors for more than a few minutes, or during the hottest part of the day.
- Always stay hydrated

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# Sunburn Self-Care

Sunburn self-care starts before you even go outside by putting on sunscreen and covering up. But what if you forget, miss a spot or end up staying out longer than your sunscreen can protect you? How do you heal your skin after too much sun exposure?

## Dangers of sunburn

Aside from being painful, sunburn can be dangerous both short and long-term. Exposure to ultraviolet rays from the sun damages DNA, which can cause cell death and inflammation. This doesn't just affect the top layer of skin; damage can penetrate several layers deep.

If you're exposed to the sun without protection, you may have signs of skin damage within an hour. The surface will appear red, become warm and may be painful to touch.

But the full extent of the damage from a bad case of sunburn may not be clear until several hours after exposure. Blisters may appear, which can become infected. Sunburn can also cause an allergic or immune response, leading to itching and hives.

In severe cases, sun exposure can cause fever, nausea, vomiting, pain, headache, dehydration and dizziness. These are common signs of sun poisoning.

The dangers of sunburn continue even after the redness fades and you start feeling better. Sunburn increases your risk of skin cancer. In fact, experts estimate that the risk of melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, doubles if you have suffered sunburn five times in your life.

## Sunburn self-care: Home remedies

If you get sunburn despite your best intentions, it's helpful to know some steps for treatment and feeling better.

### Cool it down

• Take a cool bath: Add colloidal oatmeal or baking soda to a tub full of water. After a gentle soak, pat yourself dry with a clean towel,

making sure you don't rub.

• Apply cold packs: Fabric-covered bags of ice or a wet cloth can help cool down the skin.

• Use calamine lotion: This can be extra soothing as it works to relieve the stinging feeling. Try chilling the lotion in the fridge or a cooler before applying.

### Replace moisture with natural hydration

• Apply plenty of aloe vera lotion: Aloe vera is a natural product that can help fight inflammation and soften the skin. Applying it can prevent peeling and add moisture back to the skin after sunburn. Reapply as necessary to relieve discomfort.

• Drink plenty of water: Electrolyte solutions or other hydrating drinks can also be used to replace fluids. Eating lots of fruits and vegetables are also naturally hydrating.

### Reduce pain

• Prioritise pain relief: Over-the-counter pain relievers like paracetamol can help relieve pain in the first 24 hours. Be sure not to take more than the recommended dose.

• Choose breathable clothing: Avoid wearing tight clothing and opt for natural fibres, like cotton or linen, to allow for airflow.

## What not to do for sunburn

Sunburn self-care also includes avoiding certain activities. For example, taking a dip in a chlorinated pool may irritate the skin more. Plus, more time in the sun is the last thing you need.

Some other things not to do include:

- Bubble baths
- Applying ice directly to the skin
- Oil or petroleum-based products

## Sunburn Severity Chart

Know the signs, act fast, protect your skin.



### Mild

**Symptoms:** Redness, tenderness.  
**Action:** Apply cool compress, moisturize.



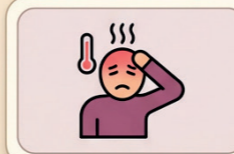
### Moderate

**Symptoms:** Peeling, significant itching.  
**Action:** Stay hydrated, avoid scratching.



### Severe

**Symptoms:** Blisters, significant pain.  
**Action:** Cover blisters, seek medical advice for infection signs.



### Urgent

**Symptoms:** Fever, chills, dizziness, nausea.  
**Action:** SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE.

### UV Risk Guide

|            |                 |             |                   |                |
|------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 1-2<br>Low | 3-5<br>Moderate | 6-7<br>High | 8-9+<br>Very High | 11+<br>Extreme |
|------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------------|----------------|

Protection matters from UV 3+.

- Perfumes or colognes that contain alcohol
- Beverages with alcohol, caffeine, or lots of sugar
- Popping blisters (allowing them to heal naturally will reduce the risk of scarring, too)

## Understand sun exposure

- Protect yourself from the sun every day, not just when you're at the beach or pool. Skin damage can occur in just 15 minutes of exposure.
- Whenever possible, cover your skin with breathable UV-blocking clothing, long sleeves and long pants.

• Apply sunscreen to any exposed skin, especially your face and neck. Look for an SPF of at least 50 and reapply if you're swimming or sweating.

• Seek shade or shelter whenever you can, especially between peak sun hours of 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Bring a sun umbrella or other covering to the beach or pool, choose to sit under the shade of a tree and consider the available shade when choosing a hiking trail.

• Wear a wide-brimmed hat to protect your scalp, ears, face and neck from the sun.

## Sunburn risk factors include:

• Skin type: People with sensitive or light-coloured skin including babies, children and older people are more prone to sunburn.

• Medications: Certain medications can make the skin more likely to burn. These medications include antibiotics like doxycycline, oral contraceptives, antifungals and some common pain relievers like ibuprofen and naproxen.

• Time and season: In most places, the sun is strongest during the summer, especially on cloudless days. But you can get sunburn at any time of year, even in winter and when it's cloudy.

• Location: The sun is strongest near the equator, making sunburn more likely. You are also more likely to get sunburn at higher altitudes where the atmosphere is thinner.

While preventing sunburn is on the mind in the summer months, it's important to protect your skin every day of the year.

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## Pets Corner

Dakota - Speako the Lingo 

Hello again! Or should I say, 'Hola de nuevo!' Or how about, 'Hej igen!' Or 'Hallo nochmal!'.

I'll stop there, coz I think I've made my point. What point? you will be wondering. Well, let me tell you.

Have you noticed that humans speak in different languages? Now, how silly is that!

Look at us dogs... I can go up to a dog from anywhere in the world and in no uncertain terms let him know just what I think about him. Or that I fancy him. Or that I want his bone. How sensible is that?

Dogs from all over the world understand each other instantly; we don't mess around with different languages; they only complicate matters. Now, imagine I wanted to have a good old shouting match with a Mongolian dog, and he thought I wanted to play? I'd look a right moron! And he'd get a very nasty surprise...

But no, we dogs all speak the same language no matter where in the world we come from, and we are spared silly misunderstandings. Not to mention the bother of learning other dogs' languages!

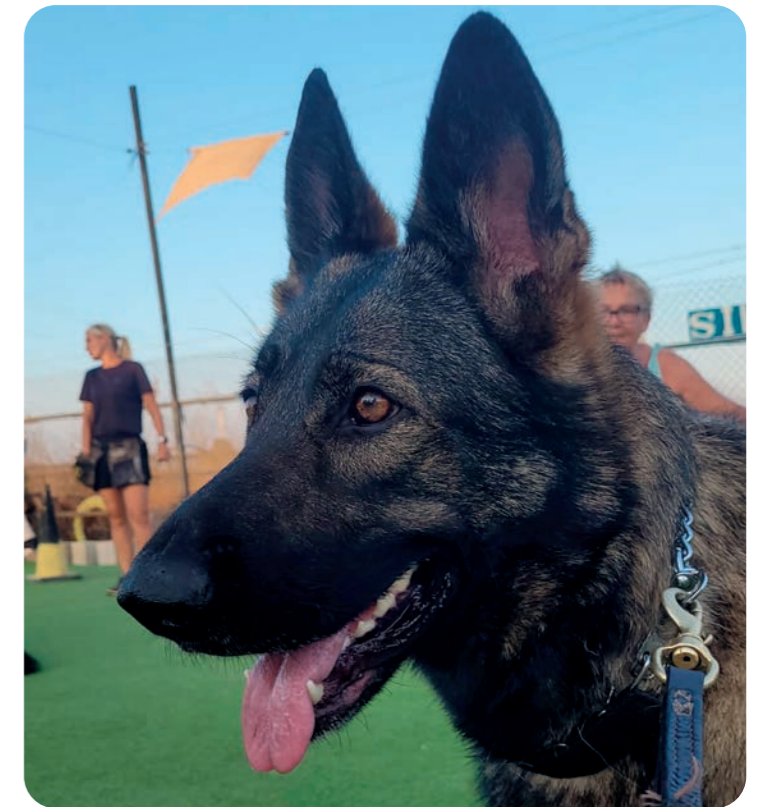
Having said that, I find human languages quite easy. Mum speaks to me in Danish, Spanish and English – and sometime even in German – and I usually understand what she means. More or less, anyway.

Although sometimes I get excited and forget to listen properly. For example, she says, 'If you bring me your bone, I'll put some pate in it'.

'Pate!!!' I think and rush into the kitchen, looking up at her expectantly.

'No,' she says. 'Bring me your bone and I'll put some pate in it.'

Bone, bone, I think. She wants me to do something... I run outside



and find my ball and bring it back into the kitchen.

'Dakota,' she says, 'that's not a bone, it's a ball! How am I supposed to put pate into that?'

Continued on page 20 .....



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..... Continued from page 19

Off I run again, getting worried now that the pate is going to go away. But thank God, there's my lovely crackly plastic bottle. I grab it and rush back into the kitchen.

Mum rolls her eyes. 'Oh come on, you know what a bone is!'

'Yes, yes, it's just I'm so excited about the pate that I can't remember right now!'

'Come on, let's find it together, then,' she says.

Yes, yes, but quick, before she forgets about the pate. So, I rush out and she follows and suggests different places to look for it.

It's almost invariably in the bed – why can I never remember that when I need it? Anyway, no harm done. I pick it up, carry it into the kitchen, give it to mum and she duly puts pate into the hollow bit and hand it back. Phew!

But when less important things than pate are on the line, I easily understand human words. It didn't take me long to find out that when Lidia, my instructor at the training club, said 'Tumba!', mum would shortly afterwards say 'Down!'. So I started lying down when Lidia said 'Tumba!', thinking that would please mum. But no, that's not allowed. I'm only allowed to do it on mum's say-so. Fair enough, I suppose.

But I'm also not allowed to take food from Lidia or the other dogs' mums and dads, and that's difficult!

Do you remember when I was on my diet? I hadn't tasted anything but my (admittedly delicious) diet food for weeks. And then at training I'm supposed to sit there while someone dangles a sausage in my face and ignore it? I tell you, that takes self-discipline!

I did it, though. I forced myself to turn my face away from them and looked up at mum, hoping she'd appreciate and reward my super-canine effort! And invariably she did. With diet food.

But that's by the bye.

Humans think they speak with words, which they do, of course, but they also speak body language. Often other humans can't read



someone's body language – but I can. Especially mum's. She can have no secrets from me, I always suss her out.

However, there's one body language expression that I always pretend not to notice: Tired!

When mum's at work, I'm at home on my own, and although I can get in and out of the house as I like and roam our plot to my heart's



content or play with my mate, Pimpernel, that certainly does not tire me out.

So, when mum comes dragging her tired feet up to the gate after work, I choose to ignore her body language and imagine that my enthusiasm about her return must be contagious.

'Walk, walk, walk,' I transmit so loudly that she must hear it. But she seems oblivious. When we get up to the house, I start bringing her toys for her to play with. With me, of course! She tells me how lovely they are, but she reckons she needs a sit-down before we start playing. Alright, then – but don't sit for too long!

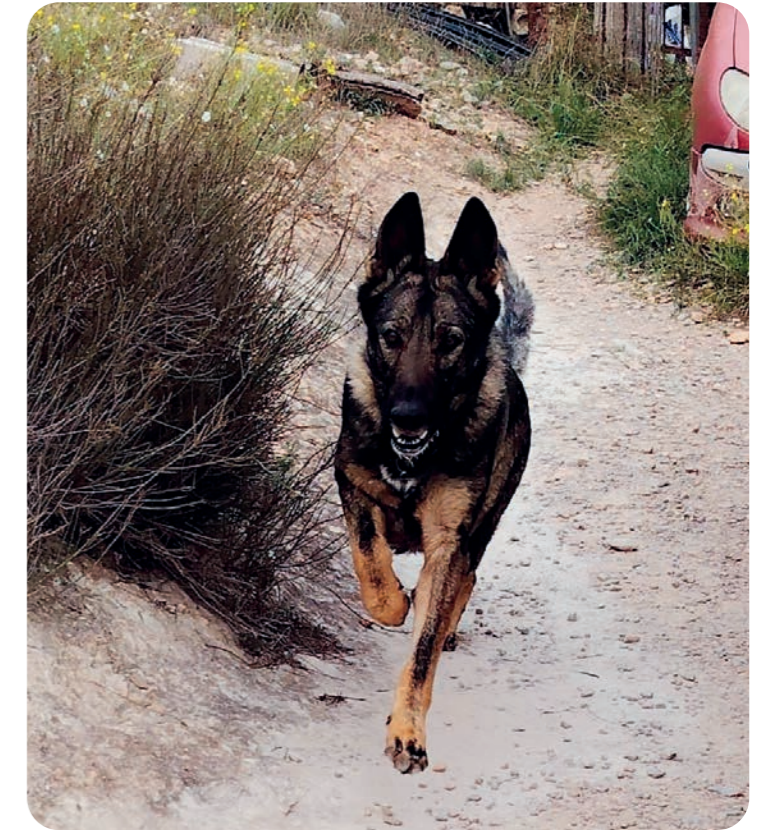
Later on, when we've both had our dinners and the temperature starts cooling down a little, I'm ready for a good, long run! 'Come on then, mum,' I signal. Often, I can see that the last thing she feels like doing is going out into the hills. Not My Problem! I haven't been out since early this morning, and now I have some serious catching up to do.

To give her her due, she always comes out with me, and I can see that the walk does her good. That pleases me, but I promise you that even if it didn't, I would still insist on our outing. Tired is no excuse

for not doing something!

And with that profound thought, which will hopefully make mum and all other dog owners understand that walks take precedence over tired, I shall leave you all until September.

Hasta la vista, baby!



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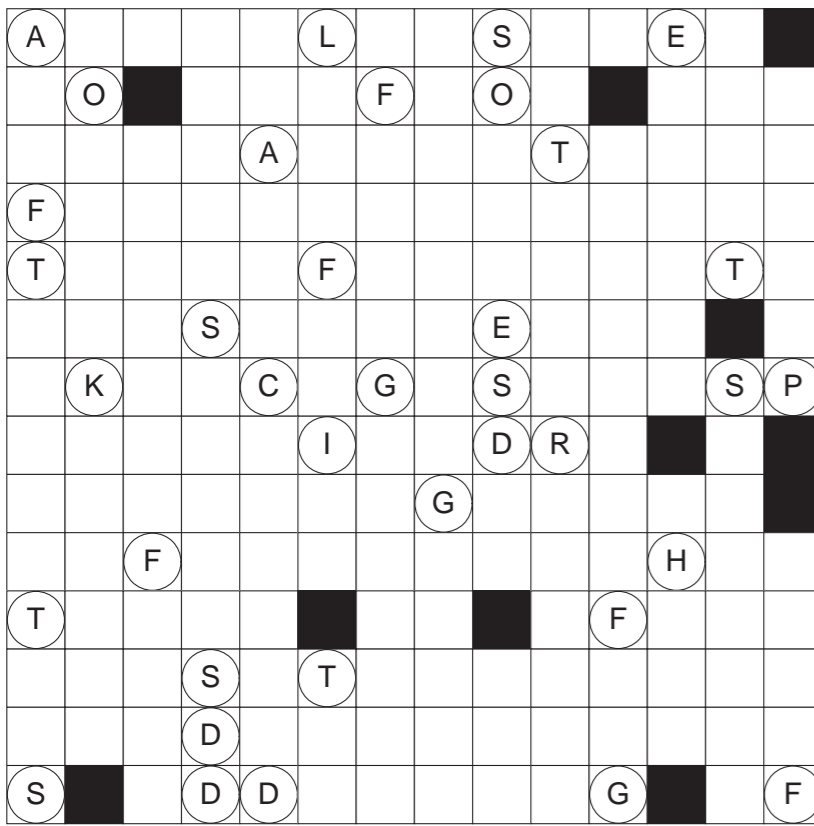
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# Puzzle Time

Puzzle solutions on page 82

## 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!

- |          |          |          |
|----------|----------|----------|
| Aloft    | Freed    | Shoes    |
| Arias    | Frill    | Shreds   |
| Cantered | Galas    | Skillful |
| Cribs    | Glow     | Slate    |
| Damning  | Gotten   | Softness |
| Decently | Havoc    | Sores    |
| Detect   | Infix    | Southern |
| Drawer   | Kudos    | Tepid    |
| Electors | Larger   | Tests    |
| Exceed   | Oboes    | Tolls    |
| Fathomed | Outfield | Tonal    |
| Fetid    | Pealed   | Tryouts  |
| Filling  | Potato   | Tundra   |
| Firms    | Repeat   |          |
| Foggy    | Sauces   |          |



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**Shopping Trip Murcia**  
Thursday 30th July  
Thursday 27th August  
Morning in IKEA & Thader Centre  
Afternoon at Nueva Condomina **15.50€**  
per person

**Shopping Trip La Zenia**  
Thur **17<sup>th</sup> Sept** **19.50€**  
per person

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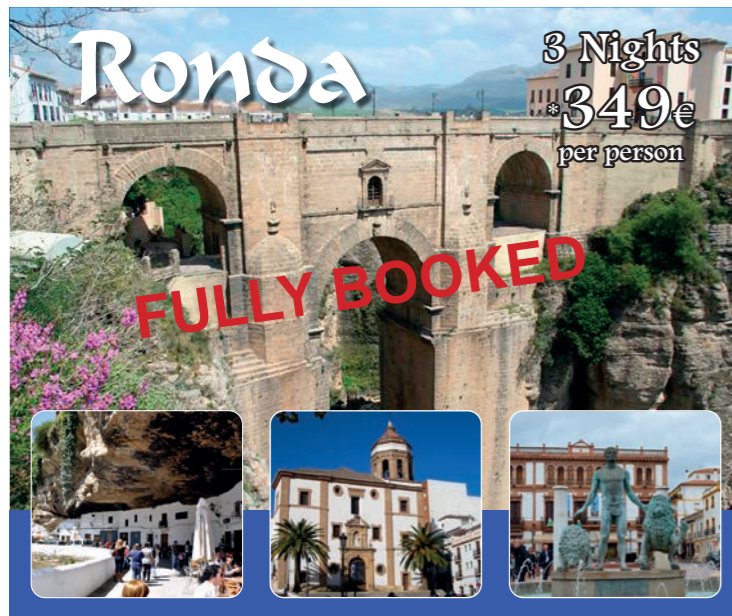
**MINI BREAKS**  
Following a very successful choice of destinations during 2025, Parra Travel would like to hear from you about places you would like to visit in Spain.  
We are already working on 2027, we would like to continue to put together programmes that suit every budget and dream.  
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# Ronda

3 Nights  
\*349€  
per person

**FULLY BOOKED**



14<sup>th</sup> ~ 17<sup>th</sup> September 2026

Staying at:

4\* Hotel Maestranza  
Central city (opposite Bullring)

Price Includes:

Coach travel  
Three nights in 4\* hotel  
Breakfast - days 2, 3 + 4  
Visit Setenil de las Bodegas



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

Pick-Ups Possible From:

Vera Consum, Mojácar, Turre, Albox, Arboleas, La Alfoquia, Hotel Overa  
Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand

# Benalmádena

4 Nights  
\*470€  
per person



20<sup>th</sup> ~ 24<sup>th</sup> September 2026

Staying at:

4\* Hotel Palmasol  
central location

Price Includes:

Coach travel  
Four nights in 4\* hotel  
Visit to Castillo de Colomares  
Half Board




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

Pick-Ups Possible From:

Vera Consum, Mojácar, Turre, Albox, Arboleas, La Alfoquia, Hotel Overa  
Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand

# Historic Port of Cartagena



20<sup>th</sup> October '26

From  
19€  
per person

An opportunity to visit this historic City and Naval Port - so much to see and enjoy. Visit the museums, the Roman Amphitheatre, stroll the promenade or take a boat trip around the busy harbour.

Why not take the time to relax & enjoy a leisurely lunch.

Pick-Ups Possible From:

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Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand



# Granada

Nevada Shopping



## Shopping Trip

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> November

Visit the Nevada Shopping Centre one of the largest in the region & get that Christmas Shopping started

Leaves La Alfoquia 08.30  
Leaves Granada 17.00

Other pick-ups include  
Albox, Arboleas, Mojácar & Turre

21€  
per person

# Eco-Bodega Cortijo El Cura



45€  
per person  
Entrance & tasting included

29<sup>th</sup> September 2026

Come and enjoy a 3 hour guided tour and produce tasting session at this Almerian bodega, in Laujar de Andarax, in the heart of the Alpujarra region.

Come and discover an estate where nature, wine and history are all part of the same experience

Pick-Ups Possible From:

Vera Consum, Mojácar, Turre, Albox, Arboleas, La Alfoquia, Hotel Overa  
Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand



# Sevilla

3 Nights  
\*422€  
per person

**FULLY BOOKED**



12<sup>th</sup> ~ 15<sup>th</sup> October 2026

Staying at:

4\* Hotel Doña Maria  
Central Sevilla (near Cathedral)

Price Includes:

Coach travel  
Transfer to/from hotel  
Three nights in 4\* hotel  
Breakfast - days 2, 3 + 4



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

Pick-Ups Possible From:

Vera Consum, Mojácar, Turre, Albox, Arboleas, La Alfoquia, Hotel Overa  
Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand

# Granada

2 Nights  
\*238€  
per person

**NEW**



9<sup>th</sup> ~ 11<sup>th</sup> November 2026

Staying at:

4\* Soho Boutique  
Central Old Granada (near Cathedral)

Price Includes:

Coach travel  
Two nights in 4\* hotel  
Breakfast - days 2 + 3



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

Pick-Ups Possible From:

Vera Consum, Mojácar, Turre, Albox, Arboleas, La Alfoquia, Hotel Overa  
Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand

# Gibraltar

3 Nights  
\*263€  
per person



16<sup>th</sup> ~ 19<sup>th</sup> November 2026

Staying at:

4\* Hotel OH Campo  
Spain - 800m from border

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

Pick-Ups Possible From:

Vera Consum, Mojácar, Turre, Albox, Arboleas, La Alfoquia, Hotel Overa  
Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand

**2 Nights**  
\*295€  
per person

# Malaga Christmas Lights

9<sup>th</sup>~11<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup>~16<sup>th</sup> December 2026

Staying at:

4\* Hotel Soho Boutique Equitativa

Central to lights

**Price Includes:**

- Coach travel
- Two nights in 4\* hotel
- Breakfast - days 2 + 3

**Pick-Ups Possible From:**

Vera Consum, Mojácar, Turre, Albox, Arboleas, La Alfoquia, Hotel Overa  
Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand



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

**4 Nights**  
\*470€  
per person

# Benidorm Christmas

Self-drive Option also available

23<sup>rd</sup> ~ 27<sup>th</sup> December 2026

Staying at:

4\* Hotel Ambassador Playa II  
Standard room

**Price Includes:**

- Coach travel
- Four nights in 4\* hotel
- Full Board includes wine and water
- Gala Meal (25<sup>th</sup>)

**Pick-Ups Possible From:**

Vera Consum, Mojácar, Turre, Albox, Arboleas, La Alfoquia, Hotel Overa  
Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand



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

**5 Nights**  
\*605€  
per person

# Lisbon

LIMITED AVAILABILITY

5<sup>th</sup> ~ 10<sup>th</sup> April 2027

Staying at:

4\* Hotel Rio Badajoz (1)

4\* Hotel Florida - Lisbon (3)

4\* NH Luz de Huelva (1)

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

**Price Includes:**

- Coach travel
- Five nights in 4\* hotels
- Evening Meal - day 1
- Breakfast - days 2, 3, 4+5

**Pick-Ups Possible From:**

Vera Consum, Mojácar, Turre, Albox, Arboleas, La Alfoquia, Hotel Overa  
Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand



**3 Nights**  
\*351€  
per person

# Albacete

NEW

19<sup>th</sup> ~ 22<sup>th</sup> April 2027

Staying at:

4\* Hotel Sercotel Los Llanos

central location

**Price Includes:**

- Coach travel
- Three nights in 4\* hotel
- Visit to Alcalá de Júcar
- Breakfast - days 2, 3 + 4

**Pick-Ups Possible From:**

Vera Consum, Mojácar, Turre, Albox, Arboleas, La Alfoquia, Hotel Overa  
Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand



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

**4 Nights**  
\*482€  
per person

# Benidorm Christmas

FULLY BOOKED

23<sup>rd</sup> ~ 27<sup>th</sup> December 2026

Staying at:

4\* Hotel Presidente

Room with pool view

**Price Includes:**

- Coach travel
- Four nights in 4\* hotel
- Full Board includes wine and water
- Gala Meal (25<sup>th</sup>)

**Pick-Ups Possible From:**

Vera Consum, Mojácar, Turre, Albox, Arboleas, La Alfoquia, Hotel Overa  
Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand



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

**2 Nights**  
\*238€  
per person

# Granada

NEW

15<sup>th</sup> ~ 17<sup>th</sup> March 2027

Staying at:

4\* Soho Boutique

Central Old Granada (near Cathedral)

**Price Includes:**

- Coach travel
- Two nights in 4\* hotel
- Breakfast - days 2 + 3

**Pick-Ups Possible From:**

Vera Consum, Mojácar, Turre, Albox, Arboleas, La Alfoquia, Hotel Overa  
Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand



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

**3 Nights**  
\*502€  
per person

# Madrid

NEW

10<sup>th</sup> ~ 13<sup>th</sup> May 2027

Staying at:

4\* Hotel Soho Boutique Congreso

Prime location in city centre

**Price Includes:**

- Coach travel
- Three nights in 4\* hotel
- Breakfast - days 2, 3 + 4
- Visit to Alcalá de Heneres

**Pick-Ups Possible From:**

Vera Consum, Mojácar, Turre, Albox, Arboleas, La Alfoquia, Hotel Overa  
Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand



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

**3 Nights**  
\*254€  
per person

# Úbeda y Baeza

NEW

31<sup>st</sup> May ~ 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2027

Staying at:

4\* Hotel Cetina Palacio de los Salcedo - Baeza

**Price Includes:**

- Coach travel
- Three nights in 4\* hotel
- Visit to Úbeda
- Breakfast - days 2, 3 + 4

**Pick-Ups Possible From:**

Vera Consum, Mojácar, Turre, Albox, Arboleas, La Alfoquia, Hotel Overa  
Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand



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

**Toledo & Aranjuez** 3 Nights \*322€ per person  
**NEW**

14<sup>th</sup> ~ 17<sup>th</sup> June 2027

Staying at:  
4\* Hotel Maria Cristina  
Toledo

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

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

Pick-Ups Possible From:

Vera Consum, Mojácar, Turre, Albox, Arboleas, La Alfoquia, Hotel Overa  
Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand



**Segovia & Ávila** 3 Nights \*377€ per person  
**NEW**

20<sup>th</sup> ~ 23<sup>th</sup> September 2027

Staying at:  
4\* Hotel Eurostars Acueducto  
Segovia

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

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

Pick-Ups Possible From:

Vera Consum, Mojácar, Turre, Albox, Arboleas, La Alfoquia, Hotel Overa  
Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand



## Proposed Mini Breaks 2027

Here are more proposed mini breaks being arranged by Parra Travel for 2027

Calpe ~ September

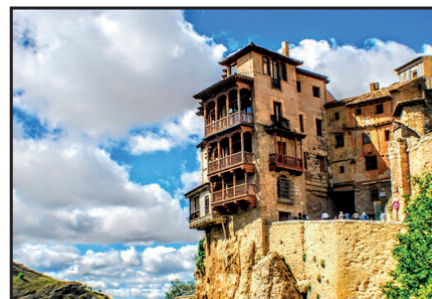
Cuenca ~ October

Granada ~ November

Gibraltar ~ November

Malaga (Christmas Lights)

Benidorm ~ Christmas



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# HOMES & GARDENS

## A Brief History of Spain....part 11 By Mike Woolnough

Writing a history of anything presents problems; if you cover the subject chronologically you jump about sideways from theme to theme. If you go for a thematic approach you end up jumping up and down chronologically! I have not consciously followed one approach over the other but I am aware that this month I am going to have to backtrack a bit, timewise.

to the pope.... Our four...no.... Amongst our weapons...amongst our weaponry...are such elements as fear, surprise...I'll come in again."

One of the most well-known of the Python sketches, and one which popularises a particular image of the Inquisition.



The Inquisition is not Spanish and goes back a long way, centuries before the Reconquista when its general purpose was to investigate cases of heresy. Originally these were investigated by the local lords, secular courts or the mob!

To bring some order into this in 1184, Pope Lucius III produced a list of heresies and ordered local bishops to become actively involved in the process. The Churches' stance was that heretics had strayed and were to be encouraged back into the fold. Only those that resisted were handed over to the secular courts and were often executed. (But not by the Church.)

Spain was different from the other Catholic countries... they had large numbers of Jews and Muslims who had been "persuaded" to convert and these were the ones who were most likely to be investigated.

If you are familiar with the Harry Potter books you will know that one of the central themes is the

attitude of those who are pure-blood magicians and believe they are better than non-magical people (muggles) or the magical offspring of them.

Now for something you weren't expecting! If you can cast your mind back to 22nd September 1970 you may remember this...  
*The scene is a plain-looking room with a door to the left. A pleasant young man, pestered by tedious and irrelevant questions, exclaims in a frustrated tone, "I didn't expect a kind of Spanish Inquisition." Suddenly the door bursts open to reveal Cardinal Ximenez flanked by Cardinal Fang and Cardinal Biggles. "Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition!" Ximenez shouts. "Our chief weapon is surprise... surprise and fear...fear and surprise.... Our two weapons are fear and surprise...and ruthless efficiency.... Our three weapons are fear, surprise, and ruthless efficiency...and an almost fanatical devotion*

attitude of those who are pure-blood magicians and believe they are better than non-magical people (muggles) or the magical offspring of them.

Similarly, many in Spain that came from long-standing Catholic families thought of themselves as a cut above those who were recent converts, whether forced or voluntarily. There was at first a trickle of accusations against the "conversos" this trickle soon grew into a torrent. Ferdinand and Isabella decided that they ought to look into the matter.

Continued on page 30 .....

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..... Continued from page 29

Responding to their request, Pope Sixtus IV issued a bill on November 1, 1478, allowing the crown to form an inquisitorial tribunal consisting of two or three priests over the age of 40. As was now the custom, the monarchs would have complete authority over the inquisitors and the inquisition. Ferdinand, who had many Jews and conversos in his court, was not at first overly enthusiastic about the whole thing. Two years elapsed before he finally appointed two men. Thus began the Spanish Inquisition.

Privately, Ferdinand didn't think much would happen – he was wrong! A tinderbox of resentment and hatred exploded across Spain as the enemies of conversos— both Christian and Jewish — came out of the woodwork to denounce them. Score-settling and opportunism were the primary motivators.

Nevertheless, the sheer volume of accusations overwhelmed the inquisitors. They asked for and received more assistants, but the

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larger the Inquisition became, the more accusations it received. At last, even Ferdinand was convinced that the problem of secret Jews was real.

The whole situation snowballed and the Pope tried to intervene and ordered the bishops to become actively involved, pointing out that the chief purpose of the inquisition was to return the lost sheep to the fold.

Alas, even then not everyone took notice of what he said and eventually the Inquisition severed its links with the Catholic Church and it became a state institution under the control of Tomás de Torquemada as inquisitor-general for most of Spain. It was Torquemada's job to establish rules of evidence and procedure for the Inquisition as well as to set up branches in major cities. Sixtus confirmed the appointment, hoping that it would bring some order to the situation.

Alas, no! For the first few years the Inquisition deserved the reputation it still has for torture and burning but his successor, the cardinal archbishop of Toledo, Francisco Jimenez de Cisneros, worked hard to reform the Inquisition, removing bad apples and reforming procedures. In reality, the Inquisition created a form of stability in Spain and protected it from the Protestant Reformation.

The staff of the Inquisition kept meticulous records, which still exist. They show that for a while under Tomás de Torquemada the methods used were somewhat excessive; over its whole 350-year life, about 4,000 people were burnt at the stake (less than a dozen a year), whereas in the rest of Europe that figure rises to 60,000.



It was also widely believed that the Inquisition's prisons were horrendous places, but there are many recorded instances of prisoners in "ordinary" prisons making heretical statements in the hopes of being moved to the more comfortable surroundings of the Inquisition's gaols! The Inquisition's courts sentenced fewer people to death than any other major court in Europe

The Inquisition's negative image, although to a certain extent deserved, is mainly a result of propaganda generated by its (and Spain's) enemies, most notably England and Holland. Unfortunately, there is still an element of this but instead, it is used as a stick to beat the Catholic Church. As we have seen that although the Inquisition was started by the Church, in Spain, at least, it became a tool of the state very early on.

A fuller explanation of the Spanish Inquisition can be found at:

<https://www.catholiceducation.org/en/controversy/the-inquisition/the-truth-about-the-spanish-inquisition.html>

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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# The Iberian Desman

Also known as the Pyrenean Desman, this small mammal, which spends most of its life in the water, belongs to the mole family.

It has a fairly square and flat body, not unlike that of a rat. Its snout is cone shaped and, on the end, it has an extension, a tube that it can move and which measures about 2 cm. The tube is covered in sensitive hairs. The nostrils are at the end of the tube. This tube is one of the primary characteristics of the Iberian desman.

Like other moles, the desman has very small eyes and no auricles; the ears are covered by fur. This species measures between 9.8 and 13.5 cm, not including its long tail which measures between 13 and 15 cm. The tail is cylindrical with flat sides and hairs on the underside. The average weight of a desman is just under 50 g.

The paws are equipped with five toes each with strong claws and membranes between the toes. The membranes help facilitate swimming; the back paws are more developed than the front paws.

The desman has a thick, shiny coat. The colour on the back varies between dark brown and grey; the belly is cream coloured.

The life expectancy of a desman is between three and four years.

The life of a desman revolves around water; it lives in natural cavities or abandoned dens. The only condition is that it must be close to a course of well oxygenated non-contaminated water with plenty of



vegetation, or mountain marshes with the same characteristics.

The average size of a desman's territory is about 200 m<sup>2</sup>. It occupies riverside cavities and builds nests under the roots of bushes that grow near the water's edge. The nests are made from leaves, moss, and other suitable plant matter.

Desmans occupy mountainous areas up to 2,000 MASL. They can only be found in the Pyrenees, the Cantabrian

Mountains, Galicia, and northern Portugal.

The mating season of the desman is between November and May, but it does not usually kick off properly until January. The males get on heat earlier than the females.

The female gives birth to one or two litters a year with between one and five cubs per litter; the cubs are kept in safe, hidden nests lined with vegetable matter.

The main food source of the desman is aquatic invertebrates, although it will enjoy the occasional shellfish or small fish.

Even though its eyesight is mediocre at best, the desman easily pinpoints its prey using its strongly developed sense of touch and smell. The hairs on its tube can sense changes in water pressure allowing the little mammal to detect prey from a distance of up to a metre.

Sadly, the species is classified as 'vulnerable' by the Spanish 'Red List of Vertebrata in Spain', and as 'in serious danger of extinction' by the Bern Convention. The main source of danger for the desman is the contamination of its water and habitat.

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# FLABBERGASTED!

By Mike Pinnock

The word 'flabbergasted' was this month's The Written Word Group's five-hundred-word challenge; it was certainly that. I was struggling to come up with something, and looked for inspiration in my 1984 edition of *The Guinness Book of Records* for examples of what might generate that emotional experience.

The English language has many words with similar meanings but with subtle differences (or maybe not). In my 2002 copy of *The Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, it defines **flabbergast** as: to surprise greatly. On the internet, I discovered that the word first came into use in England in 1772, formed by joining together the Flemish word 'flabber' meaning 'flap', and the Old English word 'aghost', meaning to frighten, such that a person becomes limp.

The word **surprised** is defined as a feeling of mild astonishment or shock at something unexpected. This feeling was generated when I read in the Guinness book that the Swedes have a word containing 94 letters to describe the manager of the depot for the supply of uniforms to the personnel of the track cleaners union of the tramway company. Well, yes, I suppose that's reasonable! **Astonished** is quoted as being surprised or impressed greatly, and so I was, when reading that in 1982 some Americans started a game of musical chairs with no less than 4,514 people taking part. The word **staggered** apparently means astonished, and this happened when I learned that Keith Osborne had collected 22,000 British beer labels;



and I was **astounded** (meaning shocked and greatly surprised) that a park ranger in Virginia had been struck seven times by lightning – I bet he was too!

I was also **amazed** (surprised greatly) that Johann Hurlinger had walked on his hands from Vienna to Paris in 1900 – and not for charity either. And I was **gobsmacked** (utterly astonished) that that word appeared in my old copy of the dictionary; it seems more recent than that. I was however **dumbfounded** (astonished greatly) to read about James Gordon Bennett – a name I have used many times without wondering about its derivation. It seems that he arrived for a party at his super-rich fiancée's family mansion completely drunk and proceeded to urinate, in full view of the guests, into a fireplace, thinking

it was a toilet. This caused his engagement to be instantly broken off, and the event is considered to be the greatest financial faux pas of all time.

But to return to this month's Written Word Group challenge: As a lad aged twenty in 1966, I was staying at my girlfriend's house in Norfolk and had settled down to watch the football world cup final on television. England beat West Germany four goals to two, but what I remember more than the result is that there was a thunderstorm in Norfolk, and my girlfriend's mother marched into the room and switched off the TV set at a critical moment. I was **flabbergasted** then, but will be, pleasantly so now, if either England or Scotland lift the FIFA trophy on July the 19th.

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# COMMUNICATION!

By Evelyn McCrorie

Hello, My name's Geoff - in my own estimation, quite a reasonable fellow. However, I do admit, just occasionally, I can be a bit off. Take this morning, for instance. Well, it was raining cats and dogs, the alarm hadn't gone off, and Beryl (she's the wife, by the way) had packed tuna salad (again) for my lunch.

So I had to run for the bus - not easy when, like me, you're carrying a couple of extra stone. Sorry to report I was a bit short with the driver, usually quite an affable young chap. But I wasn't in the mood for that particular joke - something about my heavy breathing and was I training for the Olympics?

So, out of breath and out of sorts, I glared at the poor man, clenched my teeth and glowered as I sat down and gazed out of the rain splattered window.

Hi, I'm Tom. I've been driving the No. 8 bus for the past two years, and usually get quite a nice class of customer. (In fact a couple of them sent me a Christmas card last year.)

But this morning that guy ... Geoff I think he's called ... really got my goat because I made a witty little remark about his running prowess. I'm normally an easy going type but that old fellow just browned me off. So much so that during my lunch break I picked a quarrel with my girlfriend, Tiffany.

Tiffany's a lovely girl, don't get me wrong ... but sometimes she has a lot to say for herself. So, after a bit of a slugging match, Tiffany, high heels clattering, went off in the huff, and I dragged my feet as I reported for my next shift. Needless to say, I got quite a rollocking from Jimmy the inspector for turning up with only a couple of minutes to spare.

Tiffany here. You may recognise me from the tele. I advertise quite a few skin care products. Not working at the moment though ... So, having time on my hands this afternoon, I went round to my best friend's for a bit of a natter.

She and I usually get on well and I'm always good for a laugh. But today, after that barney with Tom at lunchtime I'm afraid I flew off the handle when she criticised my makeup. Had the cheek to say I was wearing too much mascara and that I didn't suit my new lipstick - the very latest, mind you - 'Pink Paradise'.

So I told her, in no uncertain terms, she had turned into a doormat, and it was time she had her roots redone. Well, she does pander to that husband of hers, and nobody, but nobody, suits grey hair.



Needless to say, I didn't like the thunderous look she gave me as I made for the door.

It's me again - Geoff - just putting my key in the lock, at the same time struggling out of my soaking wet mac. So relieved to be home and looking forward to Beryl's shepherd's pie, it being a Thursday. That wife of mine's a great little cook but don't tell her I said so - she might get big headed!

Had a good day, dear?' I enquire as I tuck my napkin under my chin and tap my fingers on the dining room table. Beryl, rather red in the face, thumps through from the kitchen, casserole dish, but no welcoming smile, at the ready.

We eat an unaccustomed burnt offering in silence, and then Beryl bursts out. 'You wouldn't believe the day I've had. First the look on your face when I handed you your very nutritious lunch, then the nerve of that young Tiffany telling me how to live my life.' Beryl sniffs, 'Seems she had an argument with her boyfriend.' She pauses and arches one eyebrow, 'Isn't he your regular bus driver?' I say nothing.

She goes on, 'Apparently he had a brush with a grumpy overweight passenger this morning. Put him right off his stride for the rest of the day. Of course he took it out on her, and she, in turn, was really horrible to me.'

Makes you think, doesn't it?



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# Doñana National Park



The Doñana National Park is the most important area of wetlands in Spain and on the whole European continent. Spreading between the provinces of Huelva and Seville, it has been protecting a mosaic of ecosystems around the Guadalquivir marshes since 1969.

The parts adjacent to the Atlantic Ocean see millions of migratory birds arriving every year as Doñana is a place where hundreds of species come to spend the winter, stop over, or breed, and the protection the park offers is paramount for their survival.

Its setting at the southern end of Europe, very close to Africa, has turned this corner of Andalucía into a natural paradise with a priceless biological diversity.

Several unique species of animal live in the Doñana National Park, some of them in great danger of extinction, such as the Iberian Lynx and the Iberian Imperial Eagle. The large, hoofed animals and the marine birds are easily observed in this territory where nature presents a different face in every season.

The estuary of the Guadalquivir and the beaches, dunes, riverbanks, and wetlands, the Mediterranean shrubland and all the biodiversity within have gained international recognition for Doñana as a Biosphere Reserve and World Heritage site.

When the first humans settled here, the wetlands were covered by sea. For many years now, remains from the Neolithic Area have been

found in the sand, near the dunes, on the riverbank, and in the long-established dunes of this natural space.

Ancient travellers thought the area was home to the mythical country Tartessos. The Romans established themselves and stayed there until the fifth century thanks to the rich fishing and their fish curing factories. In the 15th century, aristocratic dominance started, and any utilisation of resources that might be detrimental to the royal hunting parties was prohibited.

The park has always been frontier country, which can be seen from the 16th century battlements towers, still standing, which protected the population from attacks by Berber pirates.

Doñana National Park has been named after the estate that the Duke of Medina-Sidonia owned in the heart of today's park, where he

constructed a palace for his wife, Doña Ana Gómez de Mendoza y Silva.

In the 18th century, the exploitation of the forests to create meadows and pastureland for livestock, as well as the development of hunting preserves, laid the foundation of the park's destiny.

The scientific and naturalist interest in the park started in the 19th century, and it attracted bird fanciers from all over the world. Around the mid-20th century, Professor José Antonio Valverde mobilised the international scientific community to try to protect Doñana.

This was the start of a conservationist movement that ended up buying 7,000 hectares on behalf of the state. This happened in collaboration with the WWF, and the goal was to create the Doñana Biological Reserve.

Doñana was finally declared a National Park in 1969. Today it covers an area of 54,251 hectares

The park's flora includes more than 900 species of vascular plants and bracken, thanks to the diversity of the aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems. There are some outstandingly rare and endemic plants which are included in regional, national and international catalogues of Endangered Species. Amongst them are toadflax, which grows in established sand, and the coastal juniper, a subspecies of the

juniperus oxycedrus, which in Doñana manages to survive the changing dunes, and it is the only subspecies of juniper on the Iberian Peninsula that forms part of the coastal vegetation. Also of special interest are plants found in the wetlands, streams, lagoons and marshes.

The majority of the herbivores and predators of Doñana, some 80 species of vertebrate, live in the reserves, which are the last refuge for certain emblematic species within the park. The Iberian Lynx and the Iberian Imperial Eagle are endemic to the Iberian Peninsula, and they are two of the rarest and most threatened species on this planet.

There are also exceptional representatives within the extensive traditional livestock farming, such the Marismeña horses and cows, the latter of which are the origin of several American cow breeds, including the Texas Longhorn. Both species are unique to the ecosystems of Doñana, according to the National Catalogue of Indigenous Breeds.

There are many ways of visiting and getting to know Doñana. A network of visitors' centres, itineraries, observatories, guided tours and other infrastructures meant for public use enables us to get to know the biodiversity of the national park.

Most of the visitors' centres are situated on the borders between



Huelva, Seville, and Cádiz, on the edge of the park. The guided tours in motor vehicles run through the interior of the park where it is possible to see ecosystems and the traditional forms of life representative of Doñana.

It is also possible to get on board the Real Fernando, a boat named after the first steam ship built in Spain, on the banks of the Guadalquivir, for a trip along the waterways of the park.

There are two events in Doñana that take place without fail every year, and which are closely associated with the park: The El Rocío Pilgrimage and Fetching the Mares.

The El Rocío Pilgrimage is celebrated in the week before Pentecost. Brotherhoods from Huelva, Sevilla and Cádiz start a pilgrimage to the village of El Rocío to pay homage to the Patrona de Almonte, the Virgin of El Rocío.

Livestock also plays a part in the traditional fiestas and the way of life in Doñana. Every year on 26th June, the farmers gather the mares, colts and foals of the national park and drive them to the nearby town of Almonte, as described in the June issue of Almería Living



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# Timothy Dexter

It was the first of January 1800. The pub was full, riotous and noisy. The two friends, who hadn't seen each other for a few years, crammed themselves into a comparatively empty corner.

The door opened, a man entered, looked around and with an air of disgust went out again. There was nothing noteworthy about him except his attire - a huge bicorn hat with tassels, a full length fur coat and a walking stick with an enormous amber top.

Robert, who had lived locally in Newburyport, Massachusetts all his life, tipped his head to the door. 'That's our local idiot.'

'Well,' Arthur pulled at his flagon. 'He looks like a very well off idiot.'

He moved up to allow Sidney, who was only slightly inebriated, to sit down with them.

'Well off - I'd say.' Sidney took a pull, puffed his chest and began. 'He might well be an idiot, but..'

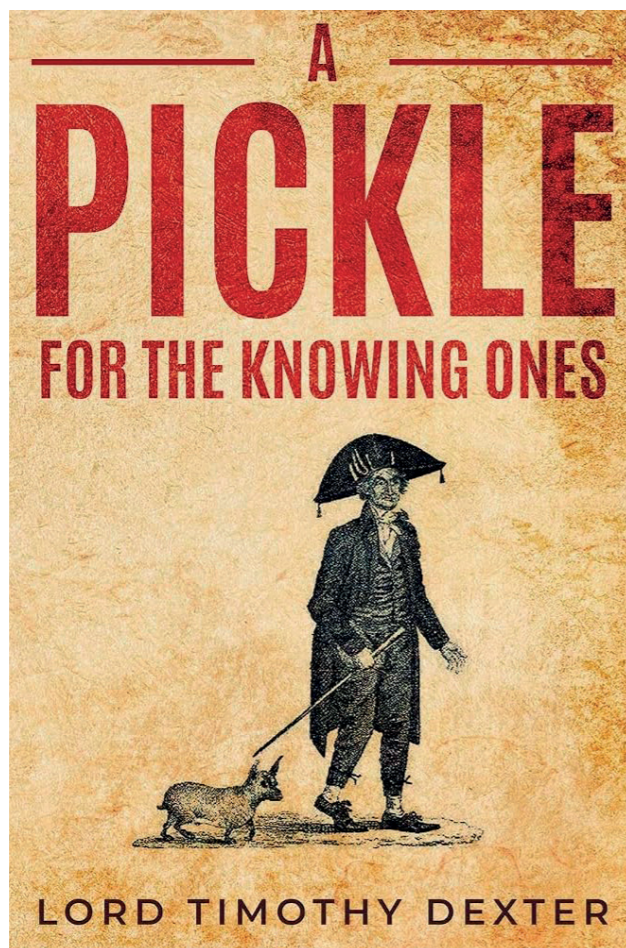
He looked around to make sure they were listening. 'Here's how it all started. Everybody knew he was stupid, so for a prank after the American Revolution they said money's cheap, why don't you buy some. He did. He bought old Colonial money, which was devalued, so worth nothing, but when the war ended, trade with Britain resumed and the currency gained value, and suddenly he had a fortune!

Now he had some money he bought a couple of ships. While has was thinking what to do with them somebody told him it was a surefire thing to buy warming pans and export them to the West Indies. He did. And sold them as treacle ladles to the locals!

Sidney laughed into his beer.

'And then he bought wool mittens, again for the West Indies, but before they got there a trader from Asia bought the whole lot off him to sell in Siberia.

Now he had 2 ships with nothing in 'em until some joker suggested



By Jos Biggs

he should fill them with coal and send them to Newcastle, England. He apparently didn't know that Newcastle was the coal mining centre in the British Isles.

He loaded up the coal, and he got to England just at the time when there was a terrible shortage of coal due to a miner's strike. So he sold his coal in record time and at record price!

By now he was a bit of a byword, but we all thought he'd gone completely off his head when he paid the local Council to get rid of all the town's stray cats.

Sure enough, the cats went in the ships to the Caribbean, where there was a plague of mice.

The locals were so delighted that they gave him a goodish cargo of whalebone as well as paying him for the cats.

And of course, when he came back with all this whalebone it was just at the beginning of the development of whalebone corsets.

And who already had all the whalebone ready to sell? Our idiot, of course.'

Sydney tapped the side of his nose.

'Like I said, he's very wealthy, so idiot or not, decide for yourselves.'

There was a reflective silence. Arthur broke it. 'So who is he?'

Sidney sniggered. 'Timothy Dexter, but he prefers to be called Lord Dexter, First Lord of the United States.'

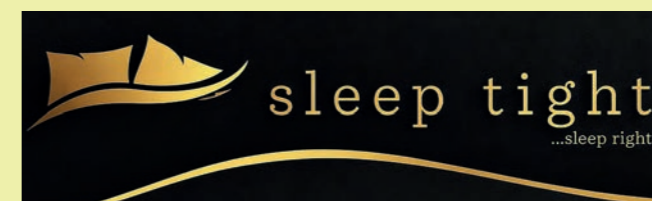
'Wonder what he'll get up to next?' queried Robert.'

'He's writing a book.'

'I thought he was illiterate' Robert commented.

'He is, but with his luck it'll probably be a best seller.' All three laughed.

Timothy Dexter did write a book. It was titled 'A Pickle for the Knowing Ones'. It had 8,847 words, 32 pages and no punctuation whatsoever! And it was a best seller!



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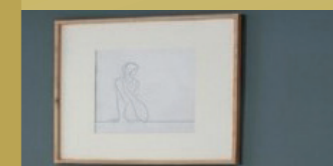
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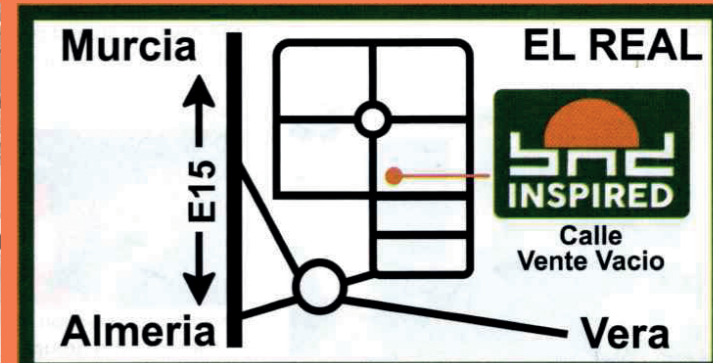
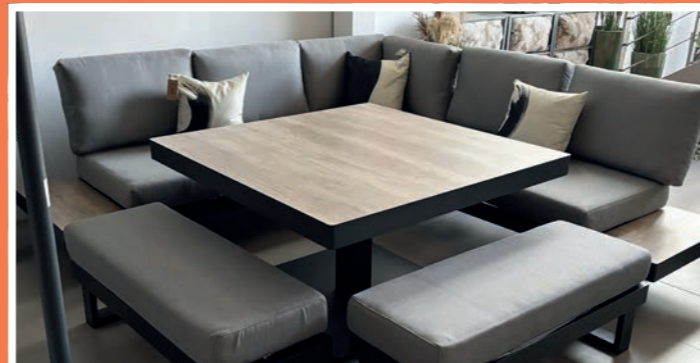


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## Small Prophets & Paracelsus

By Tom Fynes

Small Prophets is a very funny TV show created by Mackenzie Crook of The Office, and of course Pirates of the Caribbean & Detectorists fame, to name a few. It's based on Mackenzie Crook's long standing fascination with alchemy and the folklore of homunculi—tiny artificial beings grown in jars that can see or predict the future.

The show has three main story lines. Each one as intriguing as the other. He throws in the most expensive book in the world. John James Audubon's The Birds of America holds the record as the most expensive printed book ever sold at auction. A complete first-edition copy fetched £7,321,250. Liverpool Central Library holds a rare complete set of The Birds of America, where one volume is on permanent display. Plus, a very rare event, a meteorite fall. UK ones like Winchcombe meteorite fragments have auctioned for £9,256 for 1.7g or £22,000+ for 15g pieces—far exceeding gold's value per gram.

And lastly, we have Paracelsus and his homunculi. This is the actual small prophets of the TV show, tiny artificial beings grown in jars, from a secret formula. Paracelsus's real name was Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim. Known as a rebel and nicknamed the "Luther of Medicine." (He lectured in German instead of Latin.)

Paracelsus, apart from his recipe for creating homunculi, and trying to turn base metals into gold, also pioneered chemical remedies using mercury, sulphur, antimony, and iron, earning him the title "father of



toxicology." Para-Celsus" translates to "beyond Celsus" or "greater than Celsus," reflecting his belief that his medical knowledge surpassed the respected 1st-century writer of De Medicina, Aulus Cornelius Celsus, proving he had a massive ego.

Alchemy was big stuff back in the day. And is regarded as the grandfather of modern chemistry. These crazy scientists in their pursuit of the Philosopher's Stone, and The Elixir of Life, as a byproduct, created our modern-day Chemical & Pharmaceutical Industries.

*Continued on page 46 .....*

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..... Continued from page 45

One of Paracelsus's contemporaries was Johann Georg Faust, a figure that was the basis for Goethe's Faust. And he also was into alchemy, magic, and pacts with demons. The church records branded him a blasphemous fraud in league with the devil; he reportedly died in a lab explosion in Germany while working for the local lord, Anton von Staufen, who was trying to pay off his mountain of debt. Faust had the simple job of turning base metals into gold. Unfortunately, no amount of magic or his supposed pacts with the devil or demons would save him.

Harry Potter's Philosopher's Stone, a means to transmute base metals into gold, was the real deal back in the day. And the great Issac Newton was, like the Monkees, a believer. And spent years trying to create it. He was also trying, as a two for one, to gain access to, The Elixir of Life, which was the Philosopher's Stone in liquid form. Issac Newton never stopped looking to create the Philosopher's Stone. To his credit, he rejected demonic magic, equating true alchemy with ancient true wisdom. Along the way, he sat under an apple tree and found gravity. Which, in the end made him world famous.

In 1980 a team at Lawrence Berkeley National Lab bombarded bismuth (element 83) with carbon/neon nuclei, stripping protons/neutrons to yield gold (79 protons)— They only created several thousand atoms, which were radioactive, and an amount so microscopic it couldn't even be seen with the naked eye. So, yes, we can do it, and no devils or demons were needed, or hurt, in this non-magic, non-mystical but extremely expensive process.

Researchers like Puru Jena, has been nicknamed a "modern-day alchemist" because of his innovative work in designing new materials at the nanoscale that possess unique properties not found in bulk materials. Exactly like alchemists dreamed, but via quantum



mechanics, not magic. CERN physicists also can achieve fleeting lead-to-gold via particle collisions, fulfilling the alchemist's base metal to gold dream, but at a cost of trillions of dollars.

There has been no sign, or news, so far, of the small prophets being created anywhere. But then again, who knows. Maybe out in the Nevada desert, in some deep underground base, in Area 51, there is a Top-Secret Project, with bubbling jars of magic water, called Small Prophets USA. I mean, all they have to do is follow the Paracelsus formula.

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## GOING GREEN

By Jason Lowther

### El Niño – the basics

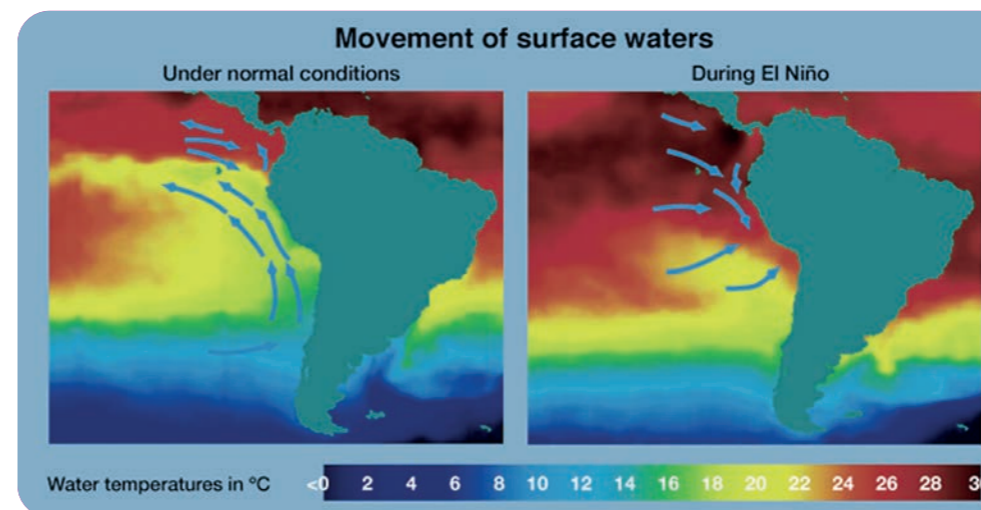
So far this year there have been a number of reports, official-scientific and media generated, predicting that 2026 will be an El Niño year, with some reports noting that it could be a 'super', or even 'Godzilla', event. Outside of complex meteorological and climate science, the phenomenon has become a portent for extremes of weather, and the impacts that come as part of that package: high temperatures, drought, wildfires; and, on the flipside, violent storms, heavy rains and flooding.

to the Christ Child because of the close proximity to Christmas. What they were experiencing was one of the Earth's most influential climate phenomena, a natural event capable of affecting weather patterns across much of the globe.

A helpful analogy for El Niño, is, first, to think of the Pacific Ocean as an enormous swimming pool between Latin America to Asia and Australia. Usually, steady trade winds blow from east to west across the tropical Pacific. The winds push warm surface water west toward Indonesia and northern Australia, causing warm water to pile up there. At the same time, on the Latin American side, colder water rises from the deep ocean to replace the surface water that has been pushed away. The process is called 'upwelling', and as above, it brings nutrients to the surface supporting marine life and fisheries.

This in turn affects the atmosphere. The warm waters in the western Pacific help create rising air, clouds, and rainfall over Southeast Asia and nearby regions. In contrast, the eastern Pacific tends to remain cooler and drier. This balance is a key feature of Earth's climate system. During an El Niño event, however, the balance is altered.

Continued on page 50 .....



El Niño is often uttered in the same breath as climate change, as both an impact or as a means to maintain the carefully manufactured, and well-funded contrarianism of those who maintain that human induced climate change is a myth. I sometimes wish King Canute was around to offer them a few words of wisdom when railing against overwhelming science and/or natural processes. Anyway, the purpose of this month's offering is to shed some light on El Niño: what it is, its impacts and its relationship with climate.

First some background. El Niño has been an observed occurrence for generations of fishers along the Pacific coast of South America. Most of the time, the sea behaved as they would expect it to, with ocean currents cycling cool, nutrient-rich waters which rise from the deep and which in turn provide food for fish and the abundance of other sea creatures which are the basis to healthy marine ecosystems. Every few years though, the pattern was interrupted. Around Christmas time, the water would become unusually warm. Fish seemed to disappear, affecting the fishers' livelihoods, and the survival of seabirds and other species which depended upon the fish to survive. There were also climatic impacts, with weather patterns shifting in unpredictable ways. Local communities gave this mysterious event a name: El Niño, Spanish for "the boy", a reference



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..... Continued from page 49

For reasons that scientists are still working to fully understand, the trade winds sometimes weaken. When this happens, the warm water that had been piled up in the western Pacific begins to drift back toward the east. As the warm water spreads across the central and eastern Pacific, its effect is to suppress the normal upwelling of cold water near coastal Latin America.

Ultimately this means that the ocean surface becomes significantly warmer than usual across vast areas. This may seem innocuous, but the atmosphere is highly sensitive to sea-surface temperatures. Warm ocean water transfers heat and moisture into the air above it, influencing where clouds form, where storms develop, and where rain falls. The result is a chain reaction that can extend thousands of kilometres from the tropical Pacific. El Niño aside for a second, this ocean-atmosphere relationship is seen in the Gulf of Mexico (sorry Donald, that's what it is called!) every year, in hurricane season, with the most powerful and destructive of those storms occurring when sea surface temperatures are at their highest.

Regional differences characterise El Niño events, so that in some areas unusually heavy rainfall has precipitated flooding and landslides such as in coastal areas of Peru and Ecuador. Otherwise, the effects can be the at the other end of the spectrum. So, for example, regions of Australia, Indonesia, and Southeast Asia often become drier during El Niño years, increasing the risk of drought and wildfires. In the case of the latter, we've witnessed many dreadful scenes in Western Australia over the years, which have been exacerbated by the El Niño effect. Effects are not solely contained to the region though, and even parts of Europe can also feel indirect effects, though these tend to vary from one event to another. Nevertheless, when the tropical Pacific changes, weather systems around the globe may respond. This is down to issues of scale. The tropical Pacific covers an immense area, so the amount



of heat involved is enormous. Oceans store tremendous amounts of energy, so that even modest shifts in temperature can have far-reaching consequences.

As with much related to climate, modern science has greatly improved our understanding of El Niño. Satellites monitor sea-surface temperatures from space, while networks of buoys floating in the Pacific measure temperatures, currents, and winds, which together help scientists forecast the development of El Niño months in advance. The forecasts are then useful for governments, farmers, and emergency planners to prepare for potential impacts. A farmer deciding what crops to plant, for example, may benefit from knowing that an El Niño event could bring either increased rainfall or drought to a particular region. Similarly, authorities can use forecasts to prepare for flooding, manage water resources, or reduce wildfire risks.

That said, the ocean-climate relationship is huge, and no two El Niño events are exactly alike. Some are relatively weak and have limited impacts whilst others become exceptionally strong and influence weather patterns around the world. Just to add a further layer of complexity, La Niña events also occur sporadically. These are essentially the opposite condition, in which stronger trade winds promote cooler-than-average ocean temperatures in those regions. While the climate system naturally shifts among these phases over periods typically ranging from two to seven years, the smart money is now leaning towards the view that a warmer world could alter the frequency, intensity, or impacts of extreme El Niño and La Niña events.

For us non-specialists, the key takeaway is that El Niño (and La Niña) demonstrates how interconnected our planet truly is. A change in ocean temperatures in one region can affect rainfall patterns, agriculture, fisheries, water supplies, ecosystems, and economies on distant continents.

El Niño's influence on Southern Europe is much weaker and less predictable than its effects in regions bordering the Pacific Ocean. Nevertheless, climate scientists have identified several ways in which a strong El Niño event can indirectly affect the more southerly countries such as Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Greece. Whilst El Niño does not directly "cause" specific weather in Southern Europe, it alters the odds of certain atmospheric patterns developing over the North Atlantic and Mediterranean regions. Kind of like a ripple effect, most commonly felt in Europe in the winter.

Parts of the Mediterranean basin may experience wetter-than-average conditions. Increased rainfall can occur in areas that are often prone to winter drought, while Northern Europe sometimes experiences milder and wetter conditions than average. There are other variables at play in this complex system making precision forecasting very difficult. I've read previously an analogy which is to think of El Niño as slightly loading the dice rather than determining the outcome. One area where El Niño may have a more noticeable influence, though, is temperature. Strong El Niño events raise global average temperatures because that stored Pacific heat is released into the atmosphere. As a result, Southern Europe may experience warmer-than-average conditions during or shortly after major El Niño episodes, which I think we can attest to currently!

While climate change is not believed to be the primary cause of El Niño events, it may be influencing how often strong El Niño events occur and how severe their impacts become. In an era of unprecedented human impacts on the environment with noticeable



heating of the atmosphere, sea-surface temperature, etc, all of that additional energy in the system adds to the likelihood of very strong events and the attendant difficulties that brings. Scientists are confident that the impacts of El Niño are amplified by climate change for that reason. So, an El Niño that raises temperatures by 0.2–0.3°C globally now does so on top of roughly 1.2–1.5°C of human-caused warming. There have been wildfires reported in Greenland this week, which is about as far from the tropical Pacific as you could be. We continue to turbocharge a natural phenomenon, which of itself cannot be used as an argument not to not double down on measures to cut our carbon emissions drastically.

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# La Festa Del Renaixement – The Renaissance Festival

In the south of the province of Tarragona in Catalonia there is a town called Tortosa, which is home to about 35,000 people.

Every year since 1996, for four days in the second half of the month of July, the town and its inhabitants take a giant step back in time to celebrate past splendour.

La Festa del Renaixement (Catalan) translates into The Renaissance Fiesta, and the Renaissance is the era that is celebrated and relived during those four days.

It all started in the mid nineties when the local government decided to have a crest designed that was representative of the area. During the research a small notebook dated 1544 surfaced. In it there was a detailed description and list of Tortosa's defence troops under Carlos V.

Everything was written out in great detail, from a description of the brotherhoods and their colours, to the names of their captains and of the towns in the area. All this conjured up the image of a powerful city, proud of its symbols and well organized.

This inspired the council to establish a new fiesta to commemorate the city's splendid past through four days of cultural activities and entertainment.

During these four days more than 3,000 locals dressed in historical clothing and more than 500 actors participate in over 60 acts daily, and the restaurants offer traditional food from the era.

In the words of the town's tourist board:

Thanks to the rich artistic and cultural heritage of the 16th century, we can now be transported to a long past world of aromas, flavours and customs. The old town is transformed; noble buildings and



ancient walls are extravagantly adorned while the people finish building their taverns, preparing the ovens and getting their period costumes ready; the attorneys, the local government, and noble families show off and strut through the streets of the city they rule.

The ovens and hearths of the restaurateurs, bakers and confectioners recover ancient recipes which they offer to visitors and diners. Medieval cuisine is present throughout the festival, both in the restaurants which take part in the Mengu de Festa (Festival Feast), the bakeries and confectioners that prepare Les llepolies de la Festa (Festival Sweets) and in taverns of La Ruta de la Saboga (Route of the Shad), which recreate the most popular meeting points.

Artists, musicians and travellers from all over the place liven up the streets and animate the palaces and noble buildings of the city with shows and performances. Itinerant groups arrive and others that recreate the daily life of the Modern Age in their camps or workshops, where they live during the Festival. There are performances constantly throughout the day; any street, square or corner is a suitable stage where you can find the most varied performances.

Meanwhile, all sorts of acts and ceremonies take place. The attorneys take their oaths, the Trasts for the defence of the city, with their colours and banners, led by the flags of the City and the Vegueria, parade through the streets, and noble families go to the jousts for their amusement. The whole city is a vast stage that takes us back in time to the splendour of the sixteenth century; a city that has been given its history from the link provided by the River Ebro to the Mediterranean Sea; a multicultural city open to the world via water, proud of its past and its ancient history, which it commemorates during the Renaissance Festival to the cry of:

Terra d'aigua – Land of water

Terra d'un riu. – Land of the River

Visca la Vegueria de Tortosa! Long live the government of Tortosa

Visca! – Hurrah!

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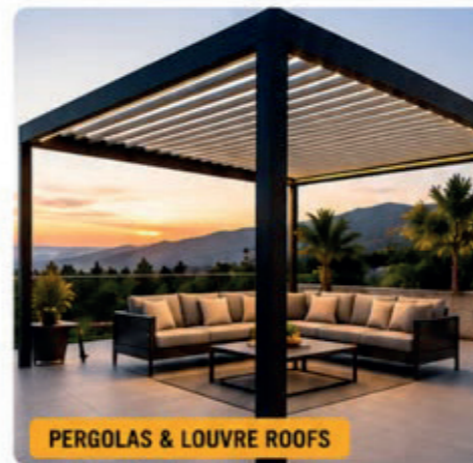
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# Tomás de Torquemada

## The Backbone of the Spanish Inquisition

'The Inquisition, in historical ecclesiastical parlance also referred to as the "Holy Inquisition", was a group of institutions within the Catholic Church whose aim was to combat heresy.' Wikipedia.

The Spanish Inquisition or, Tribunal de la Santa Oficio de la Inquisición, was not initiated until the 15th century.

The Iberian Peninsula had been dominated by the Moors for centuries, in fact they ruled Granada until 1492, and there was a large Muslim population in Spain. In some of the large cities there were also big Jewish populations, and many Jews held important positions, even at court.

The three religions had co-existed relatively peacefully for centuries, but towards the end of the 14th century a strong anti-Jewish feeling started penetrating the society, and there were several anti-Jewish demonstrations where many, sometimes hundreds of, Jews were killed.

This led to a large conversion of Jews to Christianity; before these events there had been a minimal number of converted Jews, or 'New Christians' as they were called; but in the wake of the violence the number of converts grew massively, and they got to play an important role in society, to the extent that they were looked upon with mistrust by Christians and Jews alike.

There are various theories about why the Catholic Kings decided to initiate the Spanish Inquisition; here are some of them:

- Establishing 'religious unity'. One of the objectives of the Catholic Kings was to create an efficient state machinery, and one of their priorities was to achieve religious unity.
- Debilitating local political opposition to the Catholic Kings; it is a known fact that those localities that resisted the implementation of the Inquisition did so to further their own interests.
- Getting rid of the powerful converted Jew minority. In the Kingdom of Aragon, for example, it was mainly members of influential formerly Jewish families that were processed and sentenced.
- Financial gain. As one of the measures that was taken against those that were processed was confiscation of their possessions, this possibility cannot be ruled out.

The Spanish Inquisition was authorised by Pope Sixto IV on 1st November 1478. The two first inquisitors, Miguel de Morillo and Juan de San Martín were appointed in 1480. At the beginning the Inquisition was limited to Seville and Córdoba.

Tomás de Torquemada was the first General Inquisitor for Castilla and Aragón, and also the most infamous. It is estimated that under his leadership the Inquisition burned more than ten thousand condemned persons, and more than 20,000 received heavy sentences.

Paradoxically, Torquemada belonged to the blood lines that he so cruelly persecuted: His grandparents were Jews who had converted to Catholicism. A large proportion of this group of people dedicated their lives to God, probably to prove that their conversion was real and genuine. And they were some of the worst prosecutors and anti-Semites.



Torquemada came from an influential Jewish family which had been established in Castilla for centuries and had decided to convert to Christianity two generations earlier. The rising social pressure upon the Jewish community in the 15th century led to the conversion to Christianity of almost half the 400,000 Jews that lived in Spain.

Tomás de Torquemada's uncle, Juan de Torquemada, was one of the many members of the converted families who decided to join the church. He was Cardinal, theologian and prior of the Dominicans in Valladolid, which is probably where Tomás was born.

Little is known about Tomás's early life, but he was prior of the convent in Santa Cruz de Segovia when he met Queen Isabel 'the Catholic'. She appointed him one of her three personal confessors because of his 'prudence, righteousness and saintliness'.

It was normal that such an appointment lead to higher positions and gave the appointee the opportunity to make powerful friends and alliances. And thus, in spite of his austere lifestyle and his discreet presence, in 1483 he was elected to reform the institution that was the Spanish Inquisition.

*Continued on page 56 .....*

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The persecution of the Jews and false converts grew more intense, and in 1492 it was finally decided that all Jews should be expelled from Spain. The reason was said to be the bad influence the Jews who were not prosecuted by the Inquisition had on the converts. After drafting the conditions – basically choose between baptism or expulsion – Torquemada presented the project to the Catholic Kings on 20th March 1492 and they signed it on 31st March.

The fact that the Catholic Kings signed the order proves Torquemada's strong influence, as it was an extremely radical measure that neither of them was especially eager to enforce.

On another occasion the strength of his position was demonstrated when he heard that a Jewish merchant had offered Fernando 30,000 silver coins to lessen his sentence. When he got word of it Torquemada appeared before the king, put a cross at his feet and said, 'Judas sold Our Lord for thirty silver coins; Your Majesty is about to sell him again for thirty thousand'.

In 1494 Torquemada's health started to decline and two years after he retired to the Santo Tomás de Ávila convent, which he had founded many years earlier. From there he kept dictating the orders of the Inquisition. He died on 16th September 1498.

His name has always been associated with a fanatic who enjoyed torturing and burning people. Nevertheless, he was considered by his contemporaries as an efficient administrator, straight as an arrow and impossible to bribe. In his day he was considered virtue personified, although with the eyes of today we see him as an extremely cruel torturer.

..... Continued from page 55

The Inquisition had been in existence for five years by then, but it had not achieved the goals the Catholic Kings had set, and there were still many undetected false converts.

The indefatigable activities of Torquemada 'the hammer against the heretics, the light of Spain, the saviour of his country, the honour of his brethren', according to chronicler Sebastián de Olmedo, caused thousands of people to be burnt at the stake, and the tribunals were extended to all over Spain.

## Papas con Choco from Huelva

¡Buen Provecho!



and crushed tomatoes.

The cuttlefish is cleaned and cut into mouth size pieces and the peeled potatoes likewise. Except with the potatoes, you only cut three quarters through and break off the rest. This is an old Spanish housewives' trick: That way the potatoes release more starch which helps thicken the sauce.

Start off making a 'sofrito' with olive oil and chopped onions. When the onions are soft, throw in cuttlefish and chopped garlic followed a couple of minutes later by the white wine. Let the alcohol evaporate, pour in the crushed tomatoes (tinned ones will do) and add the paprika. Let it cook over a medium heat until it's completely reduced, then pour in the fish stock and add bay leaves.

After ten minutes, add the potatoes and cook over medium heat until the potatoes are tender. Adjust the seasoning and, if necessary, take some potato pieces out of stock, purée them and stir them back in – that thickens the sauce further, if needed.

This is a great trick, as it thickens the sauce without having to use wheat or corn flour which, in my opinion, you can always taste.

Now you just need to let it rest for a few minutes, then serve nice and hot with fresh bread to scoop up the delicious sauce.

Buen Provecho!

So many of Spain's traditional and delicious dishes have come from the humblest kitchens where poor people had to make the most of what little they had.

In the case of Papas con Choco, it was one of the most common dishes amongst poor fishermen's families. It was tasty, warming and cheap, so it ticked all the boxes.

Papas is an everyday word for patatas, and 'choco' is not, you'll be relieved to hear, chocolate, but the same as 'sepia' or 'jibia', which you must have encountered both in bars and supermarkets; it is cuttlefish. The name depends on the region, and in Huelva the preferred name is 'choco'.

Some of the traditional Spanish stews are truly tasty, and this one definitely belongs up there with the best of them!

Spanish stews are usually based on a so-called 'sofrito' which is chopped, sauteed vegetables; often onions, peppers and tomatoes are amongst the sofrito ingredients.

For our Papas con choco we obviously need potatoes and cuttlefish – potatoes peeled and cuttlefish cleaned. Apart from those, we need onion, garlic, paprika, white wine, fish stock, bay leaves, olive oil

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## Stuffy July

The heat is on! Nothing we can do about it except stay in the cool as much as we can.

This was my thought when I decided that we should do stuffed vegetables this month. My thought was, put together the stuffing indoors during the heat of the day, stuff it into your vegetable(s) and then take them out to the barbecue in the evening and cook them over indirect heat with the lid closed in order not to heat up the kitchen with the oven.

All of them would go well with a fresh salad, if you fancy, and that can be thrown together while you're roasting your stuffed vegetables.

Read, cook and enjoy!

### Stuffed Tomatoes

Tomatoes, tomatoes – aren't they just one of the great blessings of living here? Over winter, when they are not in season, I tend to stick to cherry tomatoes on their stem, as they are delicious all year round.

But when summer comes and the local tomatoes are at their best, I love the salad tomatoes for salads (now, there's an original idea for you!), plum tomatoes for sauces and large tomatoes on their stem for things like this, or to bake or grill or whatever...

I only had three tomatoes, so I used a small chunk of courgette to use up the stuffing.

Ingredients for two:

- 4 large, ripe tomatoes
- 200g minced pork
- 100g mushrooms, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp finely chopped onion
- 1 + 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp tomato purée
- 1 tsp paprika
- 1 tsp sambal oelek
- 3 tbsp chopped parsley
- 1 tbsp chopped pine nuts
- Salt and pepper
- 1 egg
- 125g fresh mozzarella, grated
- Fine breadcrumbs and olive oil for topping

Cut the top off the tomatoes and scoop out the wet innards with a melon scoop. Discard. Place the tomatoes upside down on a plate to allow any remaining liquid to drain away.

Heat 1 tbsp olive oil in a frying pan and fry the mince until it starts going brown. Add mushrooms and onions, stir, add the second tbsp olive oil and fry for a minute or two, stirring. Add tomato purée, paprika, sambal oelek, parsley and pine kernels and fry for another 3-4 minutes, stirring from time, then turn it off and let it cool some.

Once it has cooled, stir in the egg and half the grated mozzarella.

Spoon the stuffing into the tomatoes and top them with the rest of the mozzarella.

Sprinkle breadcrumbs over the cheese and drizzle with olive oil.

Bake in the oven at 200°C for about 30 minutes until the cheese has melted and the breadcrumbs golden.



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(closed Wednesday & Thursday)



## Stuffed Peppers

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

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

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

And it's well worth doing!

Ingredients for two:

- |                                |                                                                |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| 250g minced meat (I used beef) | 1 Maggi cube                                                   |
| 200g cooked rice               | 1-2 tbsp smoked paprika                                        |
| 1 onion, chopped               | Salt and pepper                                                |
| 2 cloves garlic, chopped       | Olive oil                                                      |
| 6 sundried tomatoes, chopped   | 1 large red pepper, halved lengthwise, seeds and walls removed |
| 1 tbsp tomato purée            | 4 slices Havarti cheese                                        |
| 1 tin whole tomatoes           |                                                                |

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

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

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



of an hour.

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

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

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

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

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| *Large Haddock & Chips ..... 13,95€                     | Chicken Nuggets & Chips ..... 7,95€        |
| *Small Cod & Chips ..... 11,95€                         | Spicy Wings & Chips ..... 9,95€            |
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| Saveloy & Chips ..... 7,95€                             |                                            |

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|                                            | Pickled Onion ..... 1,95€           |
|                                            | Pickled Gherkins ..... 1,95€        |
|                                            | Coleslaw ..... 2,50€                |

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If you require more information with regard to allergens with respect to our menu, please speak to a member of staff.



## Stuffed Aubergines with Tomato Sauce

Stuffed aubergines are always a winner; just choose your combination of aubergine, minced meat, tomatoes and cheese, and get cooking!

When doing stuff like this, I always like to make a good portion and freeze whatever I don't manage to eat. If you freeze your stuffed aubergines, do so after they are cooked and wrap them individually.



I made a lovely tomato sauce to go with this; again, I made a good batch and froze some which can be used for the defrosted aubergines, or with pasta for another dish.

Ingredients for four:

- 2 large or 4 small aubergines
- 1 clove garlic, halved longways
- Fresh thyme (or dried...)
- Salt and pepper
- 1 tbsp olive oil

For the tomato sauce:

- 1 onion, chopped
- 2-3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 200ml red wine
- 1 tin chopped tomatoes
- 70g tomato purée
- 1 tsp smoked paprika

For the stuffing:

- 400g minced meat
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 4 tbsp fresh, chopped parsley
- 125g fresh mozzarella cheese (or grated cheese)

Halve the aubergines longways. Score the pulp with a sharp knife in diagonal stripes in two directions. Rub the pulp with the halved clove of garlic, thyme, salt and pepper. Sprinkle with olive oil.

Cook in the oven for about 45 minutes until they are done and tender.

Scrape out the pulp without breaking the shells. I normally use a melon baller for that. Put the shells on a baking sheet and chop the pulp.

**For the tomato sauce**

Fry the onion in the olive oil until they are transparent. Add the garlic and turn a couple of times. Add the red wine, turn up the heat and reduce it by half. Add tomatoes, tomato purée, 200 ml water and smoked paprika. Let the sauce bubble for at least 15 minutes.

Adjust the seasoning and set aside.

**Now for the stuffing**

Brown the meat in a frying pan with a drop of oil. Add the finely chopped onion and continue cooking for five minutes, stirring. Add the aubergine pulp and parsley and heat it through; season to taste.

Distribute the stuffing in the aubergine shells and put slices of mozzarella or grated cheese on top. Put the stuffed aubergine in the oven and cook at 200°C for 10-15 minutes until the cheese starts turning golden.

Serve the aubergines with the tomato sauce and chunks of nice, chewy bread. I just toasted a nice large pitta bread (do try Aldi's!) and it complemented the meal perfectly.

I had both some stuffing and some tomato sauce left over afterwards, and I mixed them and added a jar of haricot beans – and that did me lunch at work for two days. And it was just sooo yummy!!

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

*In Almeria, 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**

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• In areas where water reaches **1,000+ ppm TDS**, that's inadequate.

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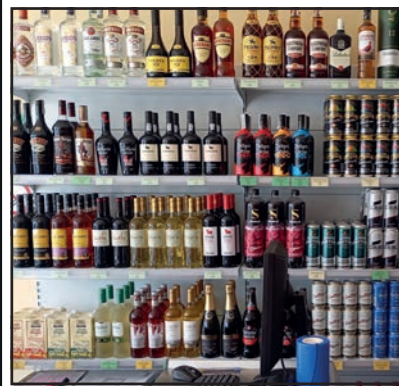
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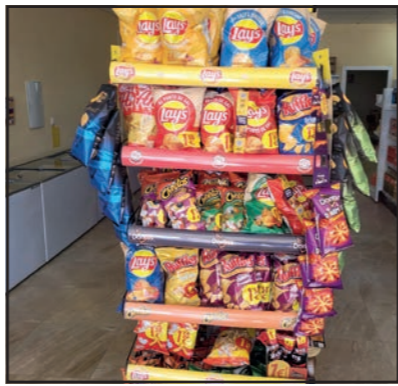


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# Puzzle Time

Puzzle solutions on page 82

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.

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

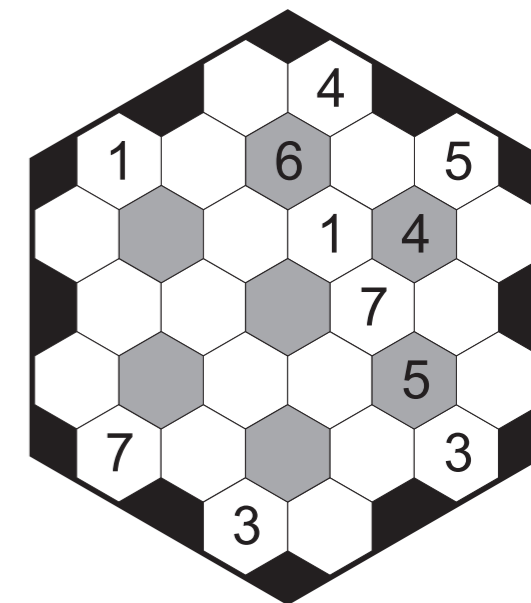
### Samurai Sudoku

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

# 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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**The Snug**

As The Snug passes its 2nd birthday Vicky and Jim would like to thank all their customers and regulars, old and new, for their continued support over the two years.

They would also like to remind all that The Snug will be closed for all of August, reopening in September.

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## Jason's Meat Free Recipe: Soft stuffed-tacos

I'm a fan of 'finger food', and Mexican food as it goes, so these tacos do it for me. I made these using some grated seitan as the 'protein' element (available at Mercadona, LiDL, Consum, health food shops, and I'm sure many other places), although that ingredient could be swapped out for tofu, beans or even mushroom. Tofu actually, especially the smoked variety, wouldn't even need 'cooking', just shredding. Leave out the cheese to make it vegan. I also prefer to use small (12-15cm), corn/maíz, tortillas. Wheat/trigo ones are fine, so long as they're small, but authentic Mexican is always a corn taco, and they also have the benefit of being gluten free. Life is too short to make my own tortillas, so these came from a supermarket. I froze the four that were left. I also made a salsa out of a couple of tablespoons of mayo and some hot sauce.

For 8 tacos

- 1 pack of small tortillas
- 1 tsp. cumin seeds
- 1 200g pack of seitan (or whatever you chose to swap out)
- 1 small red onion, finely chopped
- ½ medium red pepper, seeds and white bits removed
- ½ small jar of cooked kidney or black beans, drained
- 1 large or two small carrots, peeled and grated
- 4-5 lettuce leaves, washed dried and shredded
- 50g finely grated cheese
- 1 tbsp. of fajita mix (or 1 tsp each dried oregano, garlic powder, smoked paprika/mild chilli and ground cumin)
- Olive oil
- ½ avocado, sliced into small pieces
- Handful of chopped coriander/cilantro



Warm the cumin seeds in a saucepan until they become fragrant. Add the oil, onion and pepper and stir fry over a medium heat for a couple of minutes, add the seitan and fajita mix, finally adding the beans. Cook through until you're happy it's done. Leave to one side in the saucepan. In a hot dry frying pan cook the individual tortillas for 15 seconds on each, side then put on a plate – they don't need to keep warm. When they're all done, layer up the tortillas. I start with lettuce, then the carrot, but there're no rules except chopped coriander at the end. Fold them up in half and serve in a long dish. Actually, a toast rack would be ideal, but I don't have one! Given the evening temperatures of late, these went down fabulously with cold beer.



# Trades & Services

## Natural Wood Polishes and Sealants

When unprotected and exposed to water, wood has a tendency to stain, to warp, and to rot. For anyone trying to maintain a valued piece of furniture or beautiful floors and decking, this can be a real concern.

Although an easy and regular option, rather than buying chemical products from the supermarket such as spray furniture polish or varnish, why not turn to the kitchen cupboard for a few milder, more natural solutions. Better for you and much better for the environment. And better still, these natural wood polishes and preservers really work.

### Olive Oil and Lemon

Mix three parts olive oil to two parts lemon juice. This can be put into a spray bottle and applied that way, or a polish rag can be dipped into the mixture. The solution can be stored in a glass jar or a spray bottle. That's it. There's that lovely lemony scent in the air and the wood is being looked after.

### Coconut Oil

Sometimes it seems we have really over-complicated our lives with chemicals. Coconut oil can save the day again. Give the wood a once-over with a damp rag, let it dry, and rub in some straight coconut oil. It will moisturise, revitalise, and protect the wood. Plus, though it isn't the smell associated with furniture polish, coconut is a pleasant aroma for the nose.

### Oil and Vinegar

Oil and vinegar is the crux of most salad dressings, so it can't get much safer to use. Believe it or not, a bit of canola oil (3 parts) and vinegar (1 part) makes a dandy wood sealant, protecting wood from burrowing insects, wear, and water. Plus, this can be reapplied to revitalise the wood, something that doesn't work without sanding off the varnish.

### Good Preserving Practices

Like with health, too often we wait until it's too late, working to fix a problem we could've prevented. Wood works the same way. Over-exposure to sunlight and water will degrade it faster, so we should



take preventative aims to preserve our wood in the first place.

If possible avoid direct sunlight for extended periods of time and clean up any spills, being especially mindful in the kitchen and bathroom, where water tends to be.

Applying these natural sealants regularly rather than waiting until they are absolutely needed will provide healthier, longer-lasting wood and, even better, healthier, long-lasting lives for us.



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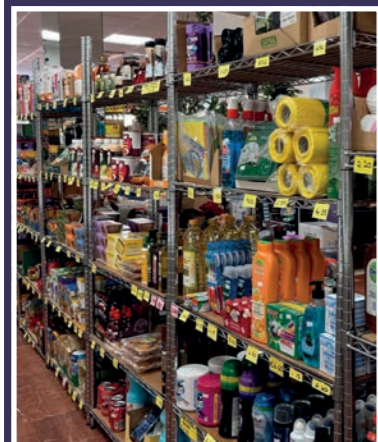
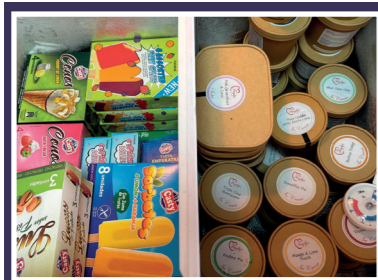
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*facing the rambla*





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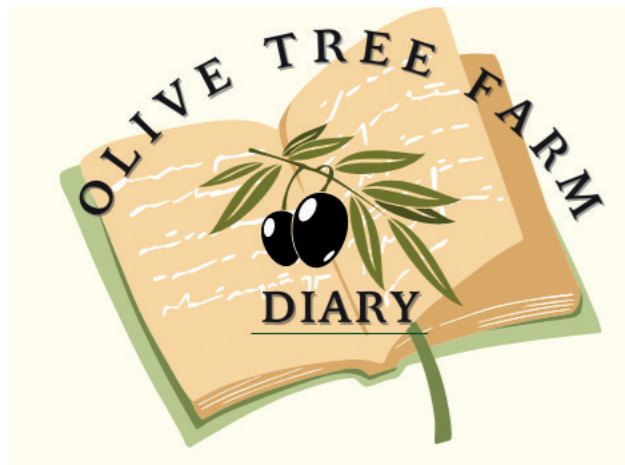
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June has certainly been warm and busy for us here at Olive Tree Farm! With the gentle (or not) heating up of Spring behind us, Summer is now well upon us – longer days, lots of waters to keep on top of, and animals to keep sheltered from the most brutal heat of the day.

The ducklings with mum in the aviary have grown on immensely and, while we're finishing up their secure pen on the farm, we have reintroduced Dad duck back with his flock. We're hoping by next weekend to have everyone back up there on the farm, where they'll have a lot more space and freedom than they do right now, and a lot more access to water.

This also means bringing up the pair who have been living in the garden too, the ducklings we raised in the house over the worst months of winter. We're hoping the integration of all the ducks will be easier if we do it all together in the farm pen, as it will be a new space for all of them and no chance to get territorial before



they're all placed together. They've certainly introduced themselves through the mesh of the aviary already, although the girl duck seems to be winning them over a lot better than her brother is.

We have also added a new addition to our ever-growing family! A young family were looking to rehome their Border Collie pup, a 6-month-old who had spent most of his life in an apartment, and of course we leapt at the chance — our beautiful girl, Luna, is getting old now, and has always been used to living with other dogs. We also need the extra support up on the farm, and with the boundless energy of a Border Collie joining us whenever we go up, it is definitely proving right.

We renamed him Rooster, and he is certainly living up to the intelligence of his breed. We've had him for a little over two weeks now and he has been soaking up his training and acting as though he has been with us for months!



Melody, our three-year-old daughter, has certainly latched onto the training methods too. If Rooster isn't with us, he is being summoned by her, and must Sit, and then Wait, before she deems it acceptable to throw his ball. She is certainly teaching him patience, and he really seems to love it!

From the moment he arrived, we knew he'd be an amazing fit into our lives. He greeted the loose ducks in the garden and moved on to the next scent and sound, never bothering any of the animals and keeping his entire focus on us and what we might be doing next, and has continued to do so ever since.

He's very keen on Jobs, even if his involvement isn't possible, but

he's willing to be a supportive presence if nothing else in either case.

Ben and I are really excited to see where he'll be up to with us and the farm life over the next few months.

As always, we have a lot to do, and time is our constant nemesis in getting it all done! I have everything crossed that next month I'll be including pictures of the ducks up where they belong, and maybe a couple of the transformation of the aviary – believe you me, Ben already knows where he's going next with them... but maybe I'll keep it a surprise for now!

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!

You can follow the progress of the family and farm on our Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/OliveTreeFarmSpain/](http://www.facebook.com/OliveTreeFarmSpain/)

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### Good old Charlie Watkins

If like me, you grew up in the '60s-'70s, listening to music and playing in bands, you will no doubt be familiar with the electronic equipment name Watkins Electric Music. Charlie set the stage (no pun intended), launching many musicians into stardom.

There were two main avenues to Charlie's legacy. One was the Public Address system and guitar amplifiers, the other was the famous 'Copicat', a tape reverb unit. I'll talk about the Copicat here, and in a next article, bore you with his P.A. system designs.

Born in 1923 in South London, Charlie grew up in Battersea. A bit of a tough childhood, he ended up joining the Merchant Navy, where he managed to survive many a trip during the Battle of the Atlantic. One of the lucky 25% that survived. During this time, he heard someone playing an accordion. He liked it so much he got himself one and played professionally around London.

In '49, he went into business with his brother Reg and had a shop in Balham High Road, selling records and guitars. Reg, a cabinet maker, designed and built a solid body guitar, called the Rapier. Charlie on the other hand preferred working at the rear of the shop messing about making amplifiers. He built 20 units which were designed for use on AC or DC mains supply. DC was dangerous, but many areas still were supplied with this. It had a way of accidentally killing guitarists, so Charlie recalled them all for modification.

In '58 Charlie heard a song by Italian Marino Marini. He liked the vocal echo effect. To obtain this, it could only really be done in the recording studio with one or two large reel to reel tape recorders. He was aware that there was an Italian made echo machine which used a magnetic drum. It was expensive and unreliable. Charlie had an idea of using a loop of tape to record audio on, which could repeat itself ad infinitum. Knowing his technical limitations, he employed an engineer, Bill Perkins. They worked on a machine which consisted of a loop of tape that could run at a variable speed. The audio was recorded by the first head then picked up by one or more of the three remaining heads as the tape passed by a split second after. Various controls allowed you to mix the different signals together with varying levels, erase once heard, or continually

allowed to re-record (sustain) giving a wonderful space age sound. Charlie admitted that there were several electronic bad designs with the machine, allowing it to run into distortion. However, this sound became loved by its users and record producers. Now, for the first time bands and musicians could recreate the echo sound live on stage and in small set ups, which could have only been afforded to them in large expensive studios.

By '62 W.E.M had built 100 units and put them on sale in the Battersea shop. These had a price tag of 38 quid plus tax. Within a day, all were sold and production struggled keeping up. The first machine sold to Johnny Kid of Johnny and the Pirates. So it goes, Shakin' all over was the first UK hit to use the Copicat with its distinctive sound creation. It was a massive hit and small studios, like Joe Meaks' above a handbag shop in Kensington. The machine was used here for recordings such as Telstar by the Tornados and so on.

At one point, production was running at 1,000 units a month. These machines were valve based and apart from the echo facility, they could be used as a preamplifier for guitars. With the control settings in the "wrong" position, the distortion gave players an added depth to the sound they liked. This was due to one of the flawed design aspects earlier mentioned.

The later versions were similar, still using tape loops but were transistorised. Some purists said that the sound was never quite the same. However, it did not stop over 100,000 being sold and the likes of Blackmore, Thin Lizzy, Artie Monkeys and Reggae artists all loving the sound it gave them.

As technology moved on, similar machines became available from Japan. Roland made some very fine variations with loops of tape many feet long, lasting longer. W.E.M. saw this happening and faded out production.

I have repaired many of these machines and they all have a lovely "home-made" feel about them. I was lucky to meet Charlie a few times. Like me, he was unassuming, short, bald and a miserable sod.

So next time you hear Shakin' all over on the juke box, look upward and say thanks.

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## End of Transmission: The Day Britain's Aerials Became Ornaments



Last month I read Seth's piece on the planned demise of "The Light Programme" with great interest. It reminded me of another imminent mothballing – the end of UK terrestrial TV broadcasting (Freeview). His Majesty's government quietly slid a piece of legislation under Parliament's door on 23rd June, hoping that Kier Starmer's Bafta-worthy "Winslet moment" would divert our attention...

One day, in roughly eight years' time and probably without much ceremony, millions of British television aerials will become little more than decorative metal sculptures bolted to chimneys and rooftops—silent relics of a broadcasting age that shaped nearly a century of British life. No dramatic farewell. No emotional final countdown. No grainy announcer solemnly declaring, "This is the end." Just... silence.

### The signal disappears. The aerial remains.

With it goes something far bigger than most people realise. The

planned end of terrestrial television transmission in the UK, expected within the next decade, is being framed largely as unavoidable progress. Television is moving online. Broadcasting is evolving, marching on. All true but this is about more than infrastructure. It marks the quiet death of a system that fundamentally shaped how Britain watched, talked, laughed, loved and occasionally argued with each other. For generations, television arrived in British homes through the air itself.

You needed remarkably little: A television (which in the early days you could actually build yourself if you had a bit of know-

how), an aerial, and a signal. That was enough. No broadband, no passwords, no software updates, no buffering, no subscriptions and no cheerful message informing you that your device is no longer supported. Television simply worked. In doing so, it created something increasingly rare in modern life: a genuinely shared national experience.



Entire households planned evenings around the schedule. Millions watched the same programme at the same time. Whether it was Coronation Street, Match of the Day, the Queen's Christmas message, Only Fools & Horses, or Live Aid!, television created cultural landmarks in real time. The next day, everyone talked about the same thing. That now feels oddly old-fashioned.

Today, television no longer arrives at a fixed time. It exists everywhere, all at once, on every device imaginable. We can watch whatever we want, whenever we want, wherever we want, without having to think about it. In theory, this is wonderful but in practice, things are a little more complicated. The paradox of modern television is that we have gained infinite choice—but perhaps lost something valuable in the process.

Terrestrial television was limited. Once upon a time, British viewers had BBC1, BBC2 and ITV. Then Channel 4 arrived, followed by



Channel 5, followed by Cable TV and satellite, exploding the number of available channels. At first, this felt revolutionary. From a cage to an open door to the lush Savannah beyond...

More channels meant more content. More content meant more choice. More choice meant better television. In theory. Reality turned out to be less enriching. When broadcasters only had a handful of channels, quality mattered. Programmes had to justify their place. If you only had a limited number of slots to fill, what you commissioned mattered enormously. That limitation had hidden benefits. It forced curation and discernment.

Now we live in a world of endless content libraries, streaming platforms and algorithmic recommendations. Instead of five channels, we have thousands. Instead of weekly schedules, we have infinite menus. The problem is no longer finding something to watch, it's finding something worth watching.

Modern viewers often spend 20 minutes browsing before watching 45 minutes of something they feel lukewarm about. Sometimes the menu feels longer than the film. There was, strangely enough, comfort in the old simplicity.

"This is on at 9pm." Done.

Decision made, no scrolling, no existential crisis brought on by 4,000 content options. And then there's advertising. The rise of commercial channels and later streaming promised better experiences through "competition". More providers would surely mean broadcasters had to improve the viewing experience to keep audiences loyal. Yet many viewers might argue the opposite happened. Take films on British commercial television; a two-hour film can easily become a near three-hour commitment, interrupted every 12 to 15 minutes by increasingly long advert breaks.

Suspense builds, the tension rises, the plot thickens, then... "Are you paying too much for your home insurance, Sergei?"

At some point, commercial television stopped feeling like programmes occasionally interrupted by adverts and started feeling like adverts occasionally interrupted by programmes. Compare that with Spain, where commercial television often handles films differently.

Long advert blocks may appear before a film starts, perhaps another at a sensible break, but the viewing experience remains relatively intact. The programme gets room to breathe, the pacing survives, and the immersion survives. In Britain, films can feel surgically dismantled. The irony, of course, is that streaming was supposed to rescue us from this.

We've gone from terrestrial television with adverts, to streaming subscriptions without adverts, to streaming subscriptions with adverts. To "If you'd like to pay, we won't show you adverts (until we want more money)". It is an impressively efficient way of making people pay to be advertised to. And this brings us to the BBC.

The BBC occupies a uniquely awkward position in all of this because it represents something increasingly unusual in the modern media world. It was never designed primarily to maximise ad revenue, subscriptions or engagement metrics.

Its mission, famously, was simple: to inform, educate and entertain.

That mission feels almost radical now. For decades, the BBC offered something commercially difficult to replicate: high-quality, largely uninterrupted programming designed around public value rather than commercial yield. It was the yardstick by which ALL other broadcasters were measured, worldwide. No mid-drama advert break. No interruption during documentaries and no need to optimise every minute for monetisation. What happens to the BBC when terrestrial broadcasting ends?

That is perhaps the biggest question of all, because once television becomes entirely internet-delivered, the BBC increasingly stops being a broadcaster and starts becoming something else - a platform and platforms live in a brutally competitive world. Suddenly the BBC isn't competing with ITV and Channel 4, it's competing with Netflix, Amazon, Disney, YouTube, TikTok—and whatever comes next. Netflix, Amazon and the rest have spent more than a decade mastering viewer behaviour, recommendation engines, retention strategies, platform design and global content economics.

Continued on page 74 .....

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..... Continued from page 73

The BBC has iPlayer. The BBC risks entering the streaming wars just as the wars are already half fought, worse still, by the time terrestrial television disappears entirely, the landscape may already have moved on again.

Meanwhile, the BBC may still be wrestling with questions around funding, governance and public purpose. That is not necessarily criticism. It is fact.

The public have also been intentionally misinformed about the BBC's relevance as it is the only thing that stands in the way of the content Vampires, churning out derivative junk in order to sell advertising space. The BBC operates with all the speed and agility one might expect from a cherished national institution that still occasionally seems faintly surprised by the internet. Netflix can pivot in months. And then there's the funding issue. The licence fee has become increasingly controversial. Younger audiences increasingly ask a difficult question: "Why am I paying this when I barely watch live television?" That question only becomes sharper in a post-terrestrial world.

If television becomes entirely app-based, subscription-based and platform-driven, the licence fee model looks harder and harder to defend, and this is intentional government interference. Possible futures all carry risks. Keep the licence fee? Political resistance grows. Move to subscription? Universal access disappears, introduce advertising? The BBC loses part of its identity. Government funding? Editorial independence becomes more vulnerable than it already is.

None of the options are simple, which leaves us with the biggest question of all: "Can the BBC survive online without becoming less like the BBC?" If it copies Netflix too closely, it risks losing the very thing that makes it valuable, but if it refuses to adapt, it risks irrelevance. Perhaps this is the real story behind the end of terrestrial



television. Not simply the death of aials, not merely the retirement of old technology but the end of a broadcasting philosophy.

The old model was built around shared experience, simplicity and universal access. The new model is built around perceived choice, personalisation and competition. We gain convenience, control and endless content. But we may lose something too. Perhaps the real loss won't be the signal itself. It will be the quiet disappearance of a shared ritual—millions of people watching the same programme, at the same time, in living rooms across Britain.

Future generations may struggle to understand that society was once organised around whatever happened to be on BBC One at 9pm.

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**MARKET REPORT**  
 Where & When

|                                                                 |                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Monday</b><br>Antas, Huércal Overa                           | <b>Thursday</b><br>Cuevas del Almanzora,<br>Olula Del Río |
| <b>Tuesday</b><br>Albox, Los Gallardos,<br>Cuevas del Almanzora | <b>Friday</b><br>Garrucha, Turre,<br>Zurgena              |
| <b>Wednesday</b><br>Bédar, Mojácar, Lubrín<br>Cantoria          | <b>Saturday</b><br>Águilas, Arboleas, Vera                |
|                                                                 | <b>Sunday</b><br>Fines, Villaricos                        |

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



## Summer driving: tips for safer driving

Summer's here, schools have finished for the long holiday and many will plan road trips and days out but the season also brings its own set of challenges for drivers.

To help keep yourself and others safe, here are some practical tips to ensure your summer journeys are smooth and stress-free.

### Check your tyres

Before setting off, check your tyre pressure and ensure it matches the manufacturer's recommendations.

Also, inspect your tyres for wear and tear, as worn or damaged tyres can't grip the road as well. This can make it harder to control your vehicle and increases the risk of accidents, especially in sudden summer downpours. Uneven tyre wear may also indicate alignment issues, which should be fixed by a tyre fitting professional before long drives.

### Keep your windscreen clean

Dust, dirt, and insects can build up on your windscreen quickly during summer. When the sun's at its brightest, this can make it even

harder to see the road.

Regularly clean your windscreen both inside and out and top up your screen wash. You might also want to keep some ready-to-use screen wash in your car in case you run out while on a long trip.

### Beware of glare and wear sunglasses

Bright sunlight can obscure your vision, making it harder to spot hazards or read road signs.

Ensure your windscreen is free from smears or streaks that might cause glare. Your car's sun visor can also help to block harsh sunlight when driving directly towards the sun.

It might be useful to keep sunglasses in your car. Choose a pair with polarised lenses to reduce glare and enhance contrast. Look for 100% UV protection (sometimes labelled as UV400), as they'll give you the best possible view of the road while protecting your eyes from harmful UVA and UVB rays.

*Continued on page 78 .....*

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..... Continued from page 77

**Wear the correct footwear**

Summer footwear like flip-flops and sandals are a summer staple, but they can slip off or get caught under your pedals, making them a hazard while driving.

Instead, opt for sturdy, closed-toe footwear that gives you full control of the pedals. If you're heading to the beach or pool, change into your sandals or flip-flops once you've parked safely.

**Plan your route**

If you're driving to a new destination or along a scenic route, planning ahead can save you time and reduce stress.

Driving during cooler parts of the day can be more comfortable. Just bear in mind that summer is a prime time for road repairs and construction, so keep an eye on traffic updates to avoid unexpected detours and lengthier trips.

**Stay hydrated**

Hot weather can dehydrate you quickly, especially on long journeys.

Pack enough water for everyone in the car to stay hydrated throughout your journey, and bring some extra, too. If you're stuck in traffic on a hot day, you'll be glad you did.

Caffeinated drinks can dehydrate you, so stick to water or other hydrating beverages instead.

**Pack a summer emergency kit**

Prepare for the unexpected with a summer emergency kit. Include essentials such as:

- Sunscreen
- A reflective sunshade for your windscreen (this can keep the



inside of your vehicle cool while it's parked in direct sunlight).

- A torch
- A phone charger
- A basic first-aid kit
- A paper map of the local area
- Snacks and plenty of water

**Be aware of heat-related risks**

Never leave children or pets unattended in a parked car, even for a few minutes. Temperatures inside vehicles can rise alarmingly fast, even on mild days, putting them at serious risk.

Avoid leaving items like phones, sunglasses, aerosols or anything with a battery on the dashboard, where they can overheat or cause glare.



**Adjust your driving style for summer**

Hot roads can be slippery, especially after a rain shower. Leave more space between your car and the one in front to allow for longer braking distances.

There's more foot and bike traffic in summer, especially near parks or beaches. Be extra cautious in these areas.

In rural areas, summer often means more tractors and farm equipment on the roads. Be patient and only overtake when it's safe to do so.

**Protect your interior**

You can use a windscreen shade to prevent your dashboard and seats from overheating or fading in direct sunlight.

If you have leather seats, consider seat covers or cushions to avoid burns on hot days.

Use your car's ventilation system effectively

To cool your car quickly, start driving with your windows open to let hot air escape. Then, close your windows and switch on the air conditioning. Direct the air vents towards the ceiling for better circulation throughout the car.

**Summer car maintenance**

The heat can take a toll on your car, so regular maintenance checks are even more important during the summer months. Here's a list of what to look out for:

- Coolant levels. Hot weather can cause your engine to overheat. Check your coolant levels and top them up if needed.
- Air conditioning. If your AC isn't as cold as it should be, it may need recharging or servicing.
- Battery health. Heat can affect your car battery's performance. Inspect it for signs of corrosion (this will look like a white, green, or bluish powder) and ensure it's holding a charge.
- Oil levels. Summer driving often involves longer journeys, so check your oil levels before you start your journey, or you could run out halfway.
- Screenwash levels. While you're on the road, the only way to reduce glare from streaks is by using your screenwash, so you don't want your levels to get low.
- Wiper blades. Summer rain can strike unexpectedly. Ensure your wiper blades are in good condition and replace them if they leave streaks.
- Lights. Longer days don't mean you can ignore your lights. As always, you should regularly check your headlights, brake lights, and indicators to ensure they're functioning properly.

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## The Benefits of Car Sourcing: A Smarter Way to Buy

Car sourcing has emerged as a smarter, stress-free alternative to traditional car shopping. Rather than spending countless hours browsing dealerships and websites, more buyers are turning to sourcing specialists who do the legwork for them. This personalized approach offers a host of benefits, especially for those seeking value, convenience, and peace of mind.

### 1. Expert Guidance

Car sourcing services are typically run by automotive professionals with extensive industry knowledge. They understand market trends, vehicle values, and dealer tactics, giving you an edge when it comes to finding the best deal. Whether you're after a specific make and model or just want the best car for your budget, a sourcing expert can help you make an informed decision.

### 2. Time-Saving Convenience

Searching for the right car can be overwhelming. Car sourcing removes that burden by handling everything from vehicle research and price comparisons to arranging inspections and negotiating with sellers. It's an ideal solution for busy individuals who value their time and want a hassle-free experience.

### 3. Access to Better Deals

Thanks to established networks and trade connections, car sourcing professionals often have access to vehicles not yet advertised to the public. This means buyers can tap into a wider selection of high-quality options, often at better prices than those found at retail dealerships.

### 4. Quality and Transparency

Reputable car sourcing services prioritize customer satisfaction. They vet every vehicle thoroughly, ensuring it meets high standards of quality, mileage, and service history. This level of transparency gives buyers greater confidence and reduces the risk of hidden issues down the line.

### 5. Tailored to Your Needs

Unlike traditional dealerships that push in-stock inventory, car sourcing is completely tailored to your preferences. Whether you're after a specific colour, trim, or feature set, the process is entirely personalized to ensure you get exactly what you want.

Car sourcing offers a streamlined, reliable way to buy a vehicle that aligns with your lifestyle and budget. With expert advice, access to exclusive deals, and a personalized approach, it's no wonder more people are choosing this smarter route to car ownership.

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If you are considering upgrading your vehicle, visit our showroom to discover the brand's latest models and receive expert advice.

At Automóviles Jiménez y García, we understand that trust is paramount. That is why buying a new car means more than just taking delivery of a vehicle fresh from the factory; it means enjoying the benefits of an official warranty and the assurance of professional support whenever you need it.

We also currently offer an extended 8-year warranty—a major advantage over other brands.

Ultimately, our team supports the customer every step of the way: helping select the model that best fits your needs, explaining financing options, and answering any questions regarding the vehicle and its maintenance. Driving a brand-new Peugeot means enjoying a modern, safe vehicle that is ready for the future. Above all, it means driving with the peace of mind that comes from knowing a dedicated team is behind you, ready to assist whenever needed.

Buying a new car is not just an investment in mobility; it is an investment in trust, safety, and peace of mind.



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# New Nationwide Rules for E-Scooters in Spain from October 2026



Until now, the DGT allowed each municipality to regulate the use of electric scooters independently. This resulted in significant differences across Spain, with some towns having no regulations at all, allowing children of any age to ride e-scooters, while neighbouring municipalities imposed minimum ages of 14, 15 or even 16 years.

To end this inconsistency, the Spanish Traffic Authority has decided to set the regulations nationwide.

The new rules for Personal Mobility Vehicles (VMP/E-scooter) will come into force on 1st October 2026 and include the following:

- ☞ Minimum age set at 15 years nationwide
- ☞ Protective helmet mandatory for all riders.
- ☞ Reflective vests are required at night or in low-visibility conditions.
- ☞ Professionals using VMPs must wear a reflective vest at all times.

Failure to wear a helmet or reflective vest will be classified as a serious offence and may result in a 200€ fine.

E-scooters must always have their lights switched on while in use.

Outside urban areas, VMPs may be allowed to travel on routes separated from motor traffic, such as cycle tracks and dedicated bicycle lanes.

**There are also going to be significant changes to the rules relating to other two-wheeled transport. All road users should make themselves aware of the changes before they come into effect.**

According to the government the reforms are designed to improve road safety, create uniform rules across the country and provide greater protection for vulnerable road users. This brings Spain into line with some of the most advanced road safety standards in Europe.

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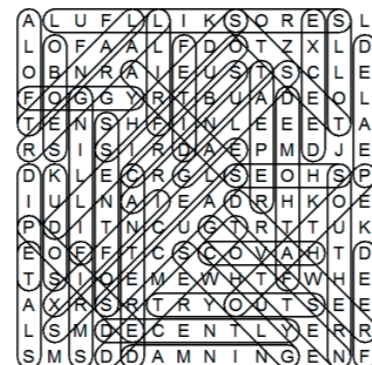
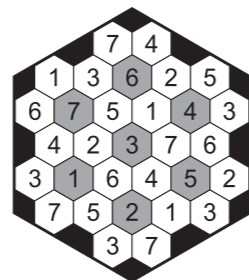
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