

August 2026

Issue 160

Almeria Living

A Great Read - Original, Inspiring, Local

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In the wake of the devastating fires in Bédar, we send heartfelt thanks to all our customers and suppliers who reached out to ask if we were safe, and offered their help. Your concern has meant a great deal to us.

To our customers whose lives have been impacted by this fire: we are thinking of you, and wish you strength and better times ahead.

We are a small, family-run business in Bédar, and we count ourselves fortunate; we evacuated safely and returned to find our house and chickens unscathed.

Special thanks to the firefighters, INFOCA, Guardia Civil and the military, who risked their lives to protect our community. To Diego, our local policeman, who worked tirelessly, running on adrenaline and bananas, to rescue, warn and reassure. And to our mayor, Angel, and the officials of Bédar ayuntamiento, who continue working to help those whose lives have been turned upside down.

This disaster has shown, once again, that Bédar's multi-cultural, multi-language community is strong — and will only get stronger.



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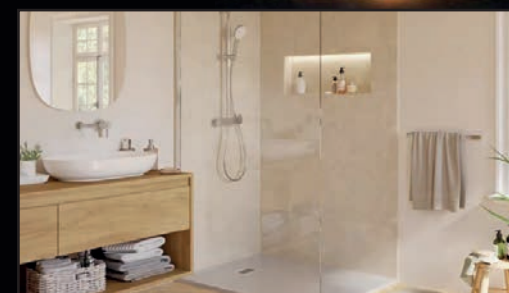
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Welcome to the August 2026 issue of Almería Living.

On behalf of the Almería Living & C.A.T. Services teams we send heartfelt condolences and our very best wishes to all affected by the dreadful Bédar fires. The amazing support and help shown by the community demonstrated the bond we have in the face of adversity.

Sadly, as I write, there are wildfires raging across Spain and France with so many evacuated and more losses of life and homes. The courageous firefighters need commending for their tireless efforts both on land and in the air.

It certainly brings home the dangers of fire and reminds us of the precautions we can all take to reduce the risks, especially during the heat of the summer.

In this issue

We have more linked articles this month relative to our featured province of Huesca (p.6-8), The fascinating history of Canfranc railway station can be found on pages 28 - 30 and the 'Bell of Huesca' is on page 36.

We bid a fond farewell and thank you to Evelyn, who has been an ALM scribe for 5 years - read more on page 35. I am always very grateful for the support of our scribes - if you have a story to tell, why not send it to us for possible publication.

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 Almería 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 September.

Karen (Ed)

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Obtaining a Tourism Licence in Spain

In most Spanish autonomous communities, it is compulsory to have a Tourism Licence to rent properties out to tourists, or as short-term rentals for less than 3 months.

Each autonomous community has their own set of rules for regulating the holiday rental market in their region. Those that require a Tourism Licence are: Andalucía, Aragon, Asturias, Catalonia, Balearic Islands, Canary Islands, Basque Country, Galicia, Community of Madrid, Murcia, Community of Valencia, and Castilla y Leon.

The Decree involving tourist accommodation in Andalucía requires the submission of a Responsibility Statement to the Regional Ministry of Tourism, in other words, a Tourism Licence. Properties that are rented for two months or more in a row to the same person, are not tourist accommodations, but residential rentals. When applying for the Tourism Licence, the information and documentation provided must be accurate and honest, as in Andalucía they check and inspect the property.

Since 2016, some of the biggest rental websites such as Booking.com, Airbnb, HomeAway etc, ask for a Tourism Licence Number. They have even started removing adverts for properties located in autonomous communities that require a Tourism Licence, due to the companies receiving very high fines for advertising "illegal tourism properties". This doesn't affect those who already have a Tourism Licence and registered the Tourism Licence Number with the rental website previously.

There are two main consequences for illegally renting out your property in Spain. First of all, many cities have begun carrying out



inspections, and issuing fines if there isn't a Tourism Licence. The fines can be thousands of euros. Also, if you have insured the property, the policy could be invalid if they

find you are renting the property out illegally. Therefore, they will not pay out for any damages.

If you are a Resident in Spain you must declare your rental incomes yearly with your Annual Resident Tax Declaration.

If you are a Non-Resident you must also pay taxes in Spain if you want to rent out your property legally. You will have to pay Rental Tax which is paid every quarter, the cut off date is the 20th of January, April, July and October, but only if you have received income from renting the property out in that quarter.

The tax is slightly higher for Non-EU Non-Residents.

Declaring the rental tax allows you to advertise the property and take bookings safely without risks. Another advantage of legally renting out your property is that you can deduct some of the expenses. For example, if you have a property manager, cleaner, or gardener you can offset these expenses.

If your property is registered and it is modified, or you cease the activity it is important to notify the Tourism Board. Failure to do so can result in heavy fines.

Once a property is registered with the Tourism Board, it is then necessary to apply for an NRA number through the Colegio de Registradores. It is then also a requirement to register it with the Ministerio del Interior. They require details of the photo ID and booking reference for each person staying on holiday and this has to be input on their website at the start of a visit.

If you would like more information or help in registering a property, then contact C.A.T. Services.

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Spanish Provinces

There are 50 provinces in Spain, each with its own capital city which usually, but not always, carries the same name as the province. In July we journeyed to Huelva and now our next of Spain’s provincial Capitals takes us up north



The province of Huesca is one of the three provinces of Aragón in northern Spain. It covers a surface of 15,626 km2 and has a population of 230 087 inhabitants.

It shares borders with France and the provinces of Lérida, Zaragoza and Navarra.

A large part of the province is in the Pyrenees, and it is home to the

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highest peak in this mountain range, Pico Aneto, which reaches 3,404m into the sky. The terrain varies wildly, and the lowest point in Huesca is Torrente de Cinca at 80 MASL, and the average height in the province is approximately 638 MASL.

Huesca is dominated by the Pyrenees and home to an astounding number of natural wonders, beauty spots, and picturesque towns and villages.

First to be mentioned must be Parque Nacional de Ordesa y Monte Perdido, an amazing national park set in the heart of the Pyrenees. It receives thousands of visitors every year, lovers of nature, walking and adventure. The Valley of Ordesa boasts several hiking routes, the astonishing Añisclo Canyon and the Escuaín Gorges.

Not far from the Ordesa y Monte Perdido National Park, you will find the Cascada Sorrosal, one of Spain’s most beautiful waterfalls. Situated near the village of Broto, this 100 metre high waterfall is easily accessible, just a five-minute walk from the nearest car park.

The "Chinese Wall of the Pyrenees," locally known as the Muralla de Finestres or Roques de la Vila, is a spectacular natural rock formation in the Pre-Pyrenees. It consists of twin parallel limestone ridges that rise almost perfectly vertical over the Canelles reservoir. Created millions of years ago by tectonic forces and shaped by the erosion of the Ribera Ribagorçana river, the jagged formation creates an illusion resembling the famous Asian monument – if not even more impressive.

Man-made sights also abound in the province of Huesca, mainly in the shape of picturesque towns and villages and medieval castles. Ansó, a member of ‘Spain’s Most Beautiful Villages’, is a good example of ‘Pyrenean Beauty’, a medieval village which has preserved the historic feel with its stone houses and narrow, intertwining streets. It is home to only 2,000 souls, although many more enjoy the atmosphere and the beautiful surroundings during the summer months.

Other examples of medieval villages set in stunning natural surroundings are Aínsa, Benasque, Torla and Hecho, to mention but a few.

Man has also set his imprint in the shape of monasteries and a



unique railway station.

The Monastery of San Juan de la Peña is built into the rock in the middle of the Pyrenees. It was one of Aragon’s most important monasteries in its day, and it possesses its own Pantheon with several royal tombs. It also boasts an amazing Romanesque cloister.

And last but not least, Huesca is home to the unique railway station of Canfranc. It is no longer a railway station but has been converted

into a luxury hotel. However, all the original features have been preserved and restored, and the façade looks just as the station did in its heyday.

The capital of Huesca is Huesca. The city is set at 483 m above sea level; it covers an area of 161.03 km2 and is home to only 55,454 inhabitants, which makes it one of the least populated provincial capitals of Spain.

The river Isuela runs through the city.

The average annual temperature is 13°C; in summer the temperatures can be high and reach up to 35°C – or even more nowadays. It snows frequently in winter and the temperatures often go down to 3-7°C below zero. On average, the city has 2,732 hours of sun, 23 days of rain and 35 days of frost.

The Huesca plateau has been occupied by humans for more than 6,000 years and several flint and ceramic objects have been found in the area. It was also an important Bronze Age settlement, and there are important finds of foundations of fixed dwellings.

The city was once known as Bolskan, in the ancient Iberian language that was used before the Romans arrived, and it was the capital of the Vescetani civilization.

During Roman times its name became Osca, and it remained an important city, being the base of Quintus Sertorius, the Roman governor.

Continued on page 8

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..... Continued from page 7

The city minted its own coinage and was the site of a prestigious school founded by Sertorius to educate young Iberians in Latin and Roman customs.

Over the 1st to 3rd centuries, Christianity gradually took hold of Huesca, and in 258 A.D. a Christian native of the city was burned on a grille in Rome and became a martyr and Huesca's patron saint: San Lorenzo (Saint Lawrence).

When the Roman Empire collapsed in the 5th century, the Visigoths came to town and they in their turn were forced out by the Moors in

719. These changed the name to Wasqa and the city was one of the northernmost cities of the Al-Ándalus kingdom.

A mosque was constructed in the 8th to 11th century on the site of the present Huesca Cathedral, the Holy Cathedral of the Transfiguration of the Lord. Today there are very few remains of the mosque, though.

As the Christian attacks on the city became more and more frequent during the reconquest, a wall was built around the city, forming a two kilometre long oval. The wall was interspersed by 90 towers.

The Christians on their part constructed a large castle, the Castle of Montearagón, a couple of miles from Wasqa, from where they eventually conquered the city in 1096. The ruin of the castle still stands, but the city walls are long gone.

Once under Christian rule, the city prospered and reached a peak of 8,000 inhabitants in the 13th century. However, the plague of 1348 halved the population, and it was not until the beginning of the 20th century that it grew beyond 10,000.

Modern Huesca now counts more than 50,000 souls, and its economy is mainly based on the service sector and tourism. Industry comes a close second, whereas agriculture only contributes with approximately 10% of the city's income.

Tourists visiting Huesca mainly come for the city's sights such as the cathedral and the Museo de Huesca, situated in the building of the old Universidad de Huesca, which no longer exists.

The city also has many visitors who go hiking in the Pyrenees in summer, and skiing in winter.

Chiretas from Huesca



This delicacy, which is sometimes called Pyrenean Haggis, is little known outside the Pyrenees. It is one of very few Spanish 'embutidos' made with lamb's intestine

The word 'embutidos' has no translation, and it covers a wide variety of traditional Spanish sausages and cold meats, products that have their origin in the Spanish rural adage of 'total utilisation', in other words, waste nothing. The word comes from 'embudo' – funnel, and it covers meat products that were traditionally poured into an intestine through a funnel.

Chiretas were originally exclusively a dish served at celebrations. They were elaborated as soon as a lamb was killed, as an uncleaned intestine would spoil within an hour or two. As soon as the intestine was removed, it was cleaned, with much care, with lime and then rinsed thoroughly. It was then left to soak in water with vinegar.

The filling of this embutido consists of rice, lamb's heart and lung, and herbs and spices, usually parsley, garlic, cinnamon, salt and pepper. The heart and lung are cut into very small pieces and mixed with the rice and spices before going into the intestines.

¡Buen Provecho!

Sometimes finely chopped bacon or serrano ham is put in the mix as well.

The chiretas are boiled for about an hour, then served immediately without any kind of accompaniment. They can also be allowed to cool, cut into slices and turned in flour before being fried. This is how they are usually served as a tapa.

Nowadays, chiretas are not only served at celebrations; they are invariably an indispensable item at wedding, anniversary and birthday banquets in the areas where they are produced, but you can also get them in restaurants and tapas bars any time of the year.

Two localities in Huesca celebrate an annual 'Festival de la Chireta'. In Escalona they have celebrated theirs at the end of December since 2008, and in Pozán de Vero, it has been celebrated around the third weekend in October since 2002.

That same year, the world's largest chireta gained entrance into the Guinness Book of Records. It was 103.75 metres long and weighed 220 kilos.

In 2021, in the municipality of Laluega, a Chireta Club was founded by chireta lovers who wanted to enjoy, and spread the fame of, this unique Pyrenean Haggis.

Wanna try one?

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I'm Back!

You probably didn't even realise I'd been away, did you? Well, I'm fresh back from my summer holidays, two weeks in Copenhagen with a mini break in Berlin, all with my big sister, my beloved Pia.

This made me decide to do you some really traditional Danish recipes – all of them for plain, humble budgets. And they are often the best!

The only untraditional thing in this is that I've done my pork belly roast on the BBQ – it's just that it works so well and frees me from heating up the kitchen unnecessarily.

I've given you the Danish names with an English approximation in case you should ever find yourself ordering food in Denmark.

PS: Warning! I've taken to keeping a big bag of spinach in the fridge and throw a handful into almost anything I'm cooking on any day, right at the end to just let it wilt. It is in three of my four recipes this month, but please feel free to ignore it if it's not up your street – it is in no way traditional in these dishes.

Read, cook and enjoy!

Biksemað – Fried Potato Leftovers

This good old-fashioned standard has actually now become a popular fixture on many a restaurant menu in Denmark, a bit like the way the nouvelle cuisine restaurants in Spain have taken to serving traditional, Spanish dishes.

The version I give you, however, is the real deal – made from leftovers, not ingredients especially bought for the purpose.

I won't give you quantities this time, because it obviously depends on how much you've got. You can always make it go further by incorporating vegetables, such as cooked beans/peas/cauliflower/broccoli...

I threw in some fresh spinach for the last couple of minutes, that went a treat!

Ingredients:

- Cold, cooked potatoes (I used the leftovers from my smashed potatoes)
- Cold cooked meat – absolutely anything goes!
- Onion, halved and sliced
- Oil
- Salt and pepper
- Worcestershire sauce

Cut the meat and potatoes into bite size pieces. Heat the oil in a frying pan and fry the onion until it starts going brown. Throw in the meat and potatoes and fry everything until the meat and potatoes are warm through and start taking a little colour.

Season with salt and pepper and add a dash or two of Worcestershire sauce.

That's the basic idea. Traditionally it is served with chopped, pickled beetroot, but I forgot.

I topped mine with a fried egg – in restaurants you can even have it with béarnaise sauce!

If you want more vegetables, you can fry fresh ones together with the onion at the beginning or cooked ones that you add at the end.

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Boller i Karry

– Meatballs in a Curried Sauce

I think I've told you before, but in Denmark the word 'curry' (karry) refers to the spice and not a dish.

In this traditional Danish dish, the curried sauce is basically a bechamel with curry powder. I love it!

It was traditionally just the meatballs in their sauce served with rice, but of course in this day and age of diet awareness, we tend to try to add some vegetable or other.

And for me, of course, this vegetable is spinach!

Ingredients for four: (It freezes well without rice)

- 500g minced pork
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1 egg
- 100ml flour
- Milk
- Salt and pepper

- 30g butter
- 1 tbsp curry powder, or more to taste
- 30g plain flour
- Water from meat balls
- Milk
- Salt and pepper

First, make the meat balls. Mix the minced meat with onion, egg and flour until you have a uniform mixture. Add a little milk if it seems dry, and season with salt and pepper to taste.

Bring a pot of salted water (you can add a stock cube if you wish) to the boil, and using your hand and a large teaspoon (8-10 ml), form the mixture into several meat balls which you dump into the water as you go. When you have used all the mix, let them boil gently for 5-6 minutes.

Take them out with a slotted spoon and set aside.

Heat the butter in a saucepan and when it bubbles, add the curry powder. Stir for a minute, add the flour, stir again, and then add a ladle of the cooking water from the meatballs. Use a whisk to make a smooth paste, then add a bit more water, and a little milk, whisking between each addition, until you have reached the thickness you like. Season to taste.

Let the sauce bubble very gently, on a diffuser if you have one, for about 15 minutes, stirring from time to time, then adjust the seasoning before turning in the meatballs.

Let it bubble on until the meatballs are heated through, then serve with rice and whatever greenery you fancy.

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Ribbensteg – Roast Pork Belly

In Denmark, when I was a kid, and probably in Britain as well, pork belly was one of the cheapest cuts from a pig, and it was considered poor man's fare.

Lucky poor man is all I can say! It is traditionally served with boiled potatoes, gravy and sweet pickled red cabbage in Denmark, but when I make it on the barbecue, I usually have other stuff with it.

This time I had smashed potatoes and broccoli sprouts. And I had leftover meat for several sandwiches and a portion of biksemad!

Ingredients:

- 1 piece pork belly with ribs and skin, abt 1 kilo
- 1 l boiling water
- 3 peppercorns
- 3 bay leaves
- 2 twigs fresh herb (I used oregano)
- ½ tbsp coarse salt

First, score the skin. Preheat the barbecue or oven to 200°C. Place the roast skin down in a alufoil or roasting tin and pour enough boiling water over to cover the skin. Cook it like that at indirect heat at 200°C for 20 minutes, then retrieve.

Add the peppercorns, bay leaves and herb twigs to the water. Place the roast on a rack above the water without touching.

Rub the salt into the scores and the skin. The surface of the roast should be equally high all over, you can adjust that with balls of alufoil.

Return the roast to the BBQ/oven and let it cook for 1 to 1½ hours until the crackling is crisp, replenishing the water whenever necessary.

Take out the roast and let it rest uncovered on a chopping board for 20 minutes before slicing and serving.

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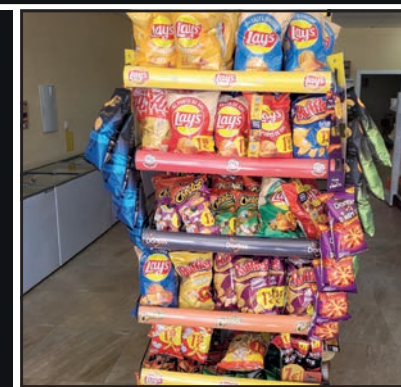
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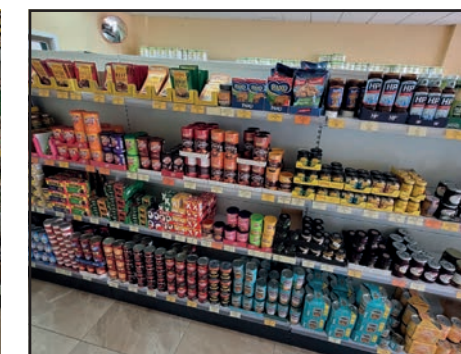
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Makaronisteg

– Macaroni Fry-Up

This is not, to be fair, a traditional Danish dish. My mum invented it way back when, when one day she had some sausage leftovers, but no potatoes to turn it into biksevad.

So she thought out of the box, boiled some macaroni and used them as a base instead of potatoes. Back then in Denmark, pasta was either spaghetti or macaroni. She also added other flavours.

The combination of flavours was so lovely that I have made it often over the years, but not from leftovers as I always want exactly the same taste.

Ingredients for one:

- 75g pasta
- 150g smoked sausage (i.e. bockwurst), cut into bite-size pieces
- 1 small onion, halved and sliced
- 100-150g green beans, cooked
- 1 tbsp ketchup
- 1-2 tbsp soy sauce
- Salt and pepper
- Olive oil

Cook the pasta (I used penne) until al dente with quite a bit of bite still. Drain and set aside.

Heat the oil in a large frying pan and fry the onion until it starts turning golden.



Throw in the sausages and brown them all over then add the cooked pasta and the ketchup. Fry at medium heat, stirring frequently, for about five minutes, then add the green beans and the soy sauce. Loosen off the sediment, heat everything through, season to taste, maybe with more soy sauce, and serve.

I, of course, threw in a handful of spinach right at the end. Optional!

Jason's Meat Free Recipe: Cherry Bombs



Like buses, nothing for ages and then two in quick succession. So, after my first foray into desserts, here we are!

Given the heatwaves and all the associated joy that comes with them, cooking is often a way down the priorities list.

So, here's something simple that requires no cooking and is as delicious as it looks and only stretches you to three, maybe four, ingredients.

This recipe is actually a creation of my mother-in-law's, so Jackie, take a bow.

This could be made with other fruit, and fresh fruit like mango or pineapple does swap out well, but there's something about the 'original and best' version that means that I do have a tin of black cherry pie filling in my cupboard most of the time.

Makes 4 (believe me, you'll eat them!)

1 can of black/red cherry pie filling (or equivalent amounts of whatever fruit you want to swap out)

Large tub of Greek yoghurt (low fat works, but full fat is nicer)

½ pack of digestive biscuits (crushed as you need them)

2 tbsp of chopped walnuts or almonds (optional)

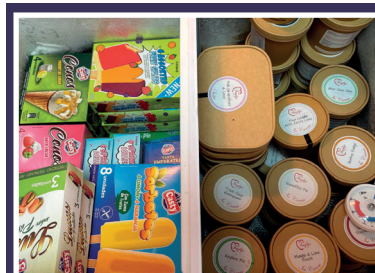
Round up four wide-mouthed tumblers.

Layer-up the crushed biscuit, fruit and yoghurt. You're after a look somewhere between an Eton Mess and, what some eateries might label, a 'deconstructed cheesecake'.

Finish up with a generous biscuit topping and, the chopped nuts if you're using them.

If you're vegan you could use a soya or coconut-based yoghurt, and gluten free biccies are available.

They can be eaten right away, but at this time of the year, an hour in the fridge before you want them is perfect!



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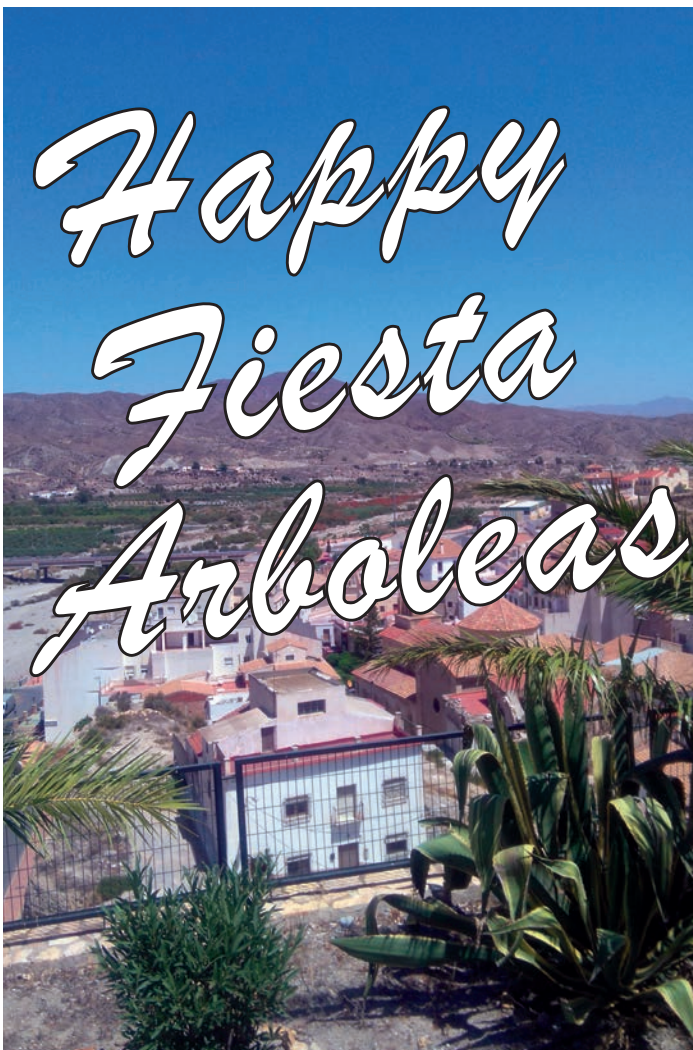
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Thursday 27th August
 Thursday 24th September

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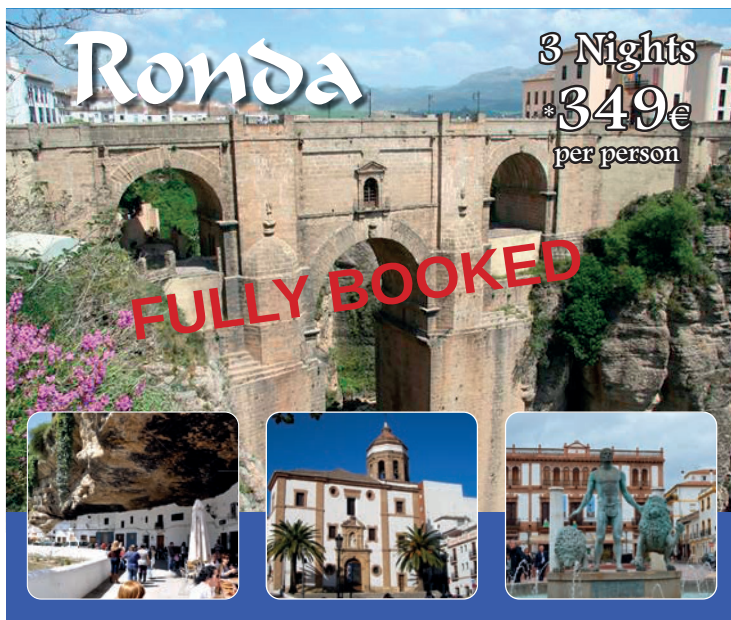
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 per person

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 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.
 So please let us know and we will do our best to make these trips happen.



14th ~ 17th September 2026

Staying at:

4* Hotel Maestranza
Central city (opposite Bullring)

Price Includes:

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

Pick-Ups Possible From:

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Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand



20th ~ 24th 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



20th 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.

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Shopping Trip

Thursday 5th 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



45€
per person
Entrance & tasting included

29th September 2026

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12th ~ 15th 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



9th ~ 11th 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



16th ~ 19th 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





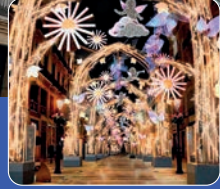
2 Nights

*295€

per person

Malaga

Christmas Lights







4 Nights

*470€

per person

Benidorm

Christmas







5 Nights

*605€

per person

Lisbon







3 Nights

*351€

per person

NEW

Albacete





9th~11th or 14th~16th December 2026

Staying at:

4* Hotel Soho Boutique Equitativa

Central to lights



* Price based on 2 people sharing a room

Single supplement upon request

Price Includes:

Coach travel

Two nights in 4* hotel

Breakfast - days 2 + 3

Pick-Ups Possible From:

Vera Consum, Mojácar, Turre, Albbox, Arboleas, La Alfoquia, Hotel Overa

Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand

23rd ~ 27th December 2026

Staying at:

4* Hotel Ambassador Playa II

Standard room



* Price based on 2 people sharing a room

Single supplement upon request

Price Includes:

Coach travel

Four nights in 4* hotel

Full Board includes wine and water

Gala Meal (25th)

Pick-Ups Possible From:

Vera Consum, Mojácar, Turre, Albbox, Arboleas, La Alfoquia, Hotel Overa

Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand

5th ~ 10th 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:

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Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand

19th ~ 22th April 2027

Staying at:

4* Hotel Sercotel Los Llanos

central location



* Price based on 2 people sharing a room

Single supplement upon request

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, Albbox, Arboleas, La Alfoquia, Hotel Overa

Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand



4 Nights

*482€

per person

Benidorm

Christmas







2 Nights

*238€

per person

NEW

Granada







3 Nights

*502€

per person

NEW

Madrid







3 Nights

*254€

per person

NEW

Úbeda y Baeza





23rd ~ 27th December 2026

Staying at:

4* Hotel Presidente

Room with pool view



* Price based on 2 people sharing a room

Single supplement upon request

Price Includes:

Coach travel

Four nights in 4* hotel

Full Board includes wine and water

Gala Meal (25th)

Pick-Ups Possible From:

Vera Consum, Mojácar, Turre, Albbox, Arboleas, La Alfoquia, Hotel Overa

Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand

15th ~ 17th March 2027

Staying at:

4* Soho Boutique

Central Old Granada (near Cathedral)



* Price based on 2 people sharing a room

Single supplement upon request

Price Includes:

Coach travel

Two nights in 4* hotel

Breakfast - days 2 + 3

Pick-Ups Possible From:

Vera Consum, Mojácar, Turre, Albbox, Arboleas, La Alfoquia, Hotel Overa

Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand

10th ~ 13th May 2027

Staying at:

4* Hotel Soho Boutique Congreso

Prime location in city centre



* Price based on 2 people sharing a room

Single supplement upon request

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, Albbox, Arboleas, La Alfoquia, Hotel Overa

Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand

31st May ~ 3rd June 2027

Staying at:

4* Hotel Cetina Palacio de los Salcedo ~ Baeza



* Price based on 2 people sharing a room

Single supplement upon request

Price Includes:

Coach travel

Three nights in 4* hotel

Visit to Ubeda

Breakfast - days 2, 3 + 4

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22 Almeria Living

August 2026 23



Toledo & Aranjuez

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*322€
per person

NEW

14th ~ 17th June 2027

Staying at:

4* Hotel María Cristina
Toledo

Price Includes:

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

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

20th ~ 23rd September 2027

Staying at:

4* Hotel Eurostars Acueducto
Segovia

Price Includes:

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Three nights in 4* hotel
Breakfast - days 2, 3 + 4
Visit city of Ávila

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Proposed Mini Breaks 2027

Here are more proposed mini
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Calpe ~ September

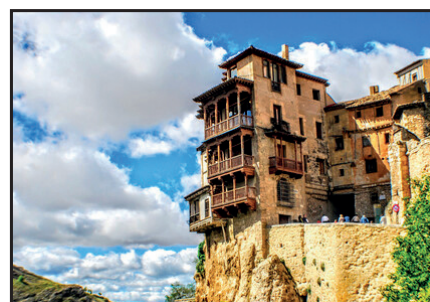
Cuenca ~ October

Sevilla ~ October

Granada ~ November

Malaga (Christmas Lights)

Benidorm ~ Christmas



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HOMES & GARDENS

A Brief History of Spain....part 12 By Mike Woolnough



the hidalgos. Consequently, they were poor but, they had their pride and certain privileges – they couldn't be conscripted as oarsmen in the fighting galleys (of little value as they had sort of gone out of fashion!), they paid no tax, and were entitled to be called 'Don' (Sir).

The major "no-go" area for hidalgos was work, especially manual work! Their main occupation was being a natty dresser, followed by seducing women and riding horses! Since work was taboo the only way to get money was by gambling. Gambling houses were open 24 hours a day and so as not interrupt the play "toilets" were installed at the tables!

It could be said that Spain had a "no work ethic" and to try and improve the situation a law was passed that made cobbler, carpenter and tailor honourable professions which hidalgos could follow without loss of face. Unfortunately, old habits die hard and it made no difference.

The problem was no better in the countryside.

Somewhere around 1273, The Honourable Council of the Mesta had been established, it was the first and became the most powerful agricultural union in Europe. Its members were the landowners, including the Church and they controlled the sheep. The sheep were driven from pasture to pasture and to market along drove ways called cañadas.

Continued on page 26



Backtracking a bit, you will recall that the little bit of trouble between Spain and England was eventually settled by the Treaty of London in 1604. Spain settled down to a relatively peaceful time. But, it was also a complacent time and a time when Spain started to decay.

Spain was incredibly class conscious. A few very rich aristocrats owned virtually all of Castile and quite a bit of the rest of Spain too. One aristocrat was said to be able to cross Spain without leaving their own land!

One step down were the minor gentry or hidalgos. Because the aristocrats owned virtually all the land there was very little left for

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..... Continued from page 25

These cañadas are protected in perpetuity, they may not be built on or obstructed in any way! Furthermore, a law of 1501 decreed that once the Mesta had grazed their sheep on any piece of land it could not be used for anything else. This did not bode well for the future of agriculture!

Since Columbus, Spain had been dependent for its wealth on the treasure shipped from the new world. Much of this had been spent on a failed attempt to “Christianise” the Muslim lands around Turkey. Unfortunately, this supply of riches was drying up and Spain was becoming bankrupt!

As Spain sunk further towards financial ruin it blossomed culturally. Cervantes’ Don Quixote was already popular and then another author took Spain and, subsequently, the world by storm.

Tirso de Molina – never heard of him? He was a monk! His real name was Gabriel Téllez and his first major work

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was “The Deceiver of Seville”, the first of many plays to feature Don Juan. Based on a real person, his real-life namesake’s grave in Seville proclaims him as the world’s greatest sinner!

Meanwhile, back on the throne...which, since 1516 had been occupied by the Hapsburgs – the ones with the big chin. Fast forward to the 1660s and we have Philip IV sitting on it.

Over the years “the chin” had become stronger. Unfortunately, due to massive inbreeding, at the same time, the brain had become feebler. They didn’t become much feebler than Philip!

The Spanish painter Velázquez captured the decadence of the court well, all dark and brooding and much chasing around of the fashionable dwarfs. Philip was succeeded by his son Charles II who was only four years old at the time. It would be another two years before he was able to sit up straight without aid.

This was probably the high point of his reign, contradicting what I said about his father a couple of sentences ago! By the time he died in 1700 (childless, of course) Spain was bankrupt, defenceless and being eyed up by other countries with a view to taking it over.

Because Charles was weak, in all senses, his death and the succession had been planned for years. Charles had decided/been persuaded to leave the throne to Philip, the grandson of Louis XIV of France. Philip V became King, BUT there were concerns about France and Spain becoming united and thus upsetting the balance of power in Europe. The Austrian connection also had a claim.

Britain was part of the Grand Alliance which included the Holy Roman Empire and thus ought to be supporting the Archduke Charles, younger son of the Emperor Leopold. However, making Spain part of the Holy Roman Empire was also going to disturb the balance as well! In reality, Britain was in favour of Philip but keeping Spain and France separate.

You may recall that in an earlier article I mentioned that there were two ways to sort out who took over a kingdom, marry into it or war. As marriage was out of the question it was war.

This particular punch-up became known as The War of the Spanish Succession. It is beyond the scope of this article to go into it any further, but simply to say that it was ended by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713.

One of the clauses said “because of the great danger which threatened the liberty and safety of all Europe, from the too close conjunction of the kingdoms of Spain and France, [...] one and the same person should never become King of both kingdoms.”

There were many other trade-offs in the treaty and Britain was the main benefactor, establishing itself as the major power in Europe. One benefit was that it acquired 2.6 square miles of prime real estate known as Gibraltar!

Back in Spain, it was now settled, Philip was officially the King and his reigns were the longest in modern Spanish history. Yes, the plural is correct, but that is another story!

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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Canfranc Railway Station



High in the Aragonese Pyrenees not far from the French border, there is a valley which is home to what was once Europe’s second largest railway station, Estación de Canfranc.

As you look at this enormous construction lying quietly in its valley surrounded by snow-topped mountains, it is hard to imagine that this place was once a hubbub of activity with travelers, customs- and police officers, clerks and all sorts of railway employees hurrying to and fro, while trains arrived and departed and goods were loaded and unloaded.

The station lies at the mouth of a 7,875 metre long tunnel which connects Spain and France, and which has been closed for almost 40 years now.

The first plans for the tunnel had been made back in the middle of the 19th century when the idea for a connection between Spain and France, without having to go through Catalonia or the Basque Country, was born.

However, it was not until 1908 that the work was started. It was stopped with the commencement of WW1 in 1914 as the French became otherwise occupied. Due to technical and budgetary problems the tunnel was not finished and inaugurated until 1928 by

which time the railway station had also been finished.

The construction of the railway station itself was an incredible feat of forest engineering.

The people of Aragón wanted a direct Madrid – Paris railway connection and they chose the small town of Canfranc as the home for the new, dual nationality railway cum customs station.

Choosing this town, embedded at the bottom of a deep valley, caused quite an engineering headache. The very frequent avalanches needed containing, and this meant planting trees; lots of trees. To be exact: three million.

Also, the river Aragón had to be ‘redirected’ to create what then became ‘the largest open space in Europe for a railway station.’

The station was built four kilometres from the village, and the central piece was a 241 metre long building. It was the second largest in Europe, only surpassed by the station in Leipzig in Germany.

The place was envisaged bustling with French and Spanish customs officers, Banco de España offices, post office, police station, hotel, restaurant and even a nurses’ station – in short, a place to really impress foreign visitors to Spain.



It was a project of enormous prestige for both countries, and on July 11th 1928, the Spanish king, Alfonso XIII, and his right hand man, general Primo de Rivera, as well as the French president, Gaston Doumergue, travelled to Canfranc for the official opening ceremony.

The line soon became busy with both passenger and goods traffic. There was one rather large hiccup, though: Spanish railway tracks are not the same width as those in the rest of Europe, so everybody and everything that travelled through the station had to change trains.

For both passenger and goods traffic, this turned the Estación de Canfranc into a very efficient and important customs checkpoint, as the train change was an ideal opportunity to thoroughly check luggage, containers and papers.

In 1936, at the start of the Civil War, Franco closed the tunnel to cut off this easy access to France and the rest of Europe. And it remained closed until the outbreak of WW2.

However, the station cum checkpoint was an opportunity for control that the Nazis were not going to miss! Once France had been defeated and occupied by German troops, the Gestapo and the German army did not hesitate to occupy the French offices of the Canfranc railway station as well! This caused quite a lot of friction with the Spanish officials who were not about to abandon their posts or their



responsibility; but this did not impede the flying of the Swastika banner over Canfranc station when German VIPs were expected.

When the tunnel was reopened it was soon buzzing with activity again. By 1943, 1,200 tons of goods passed from one set of tracks to the other every day by the help of rollers or jacks.

When the tunnel and station had first reopened they had been an important escape route for French Jews and La Résistance. This was one reason for the Nazis to get there, but even after their arrival it continued being one of the preferred routes for people trying to escape, and many a spy novel and movie has been set in the 1940s’ Canfranc.

Another reason was a very important traffic of metals. Portugal and Spain were selling tungsten to the Nazis, which they used to help reinforce their tanks. They paid for this with pure gold sent through Switzerland (laundered) from Holland, Belgium and the concentration camps.

However, it is thought that much more gold passed through Canfranc than was needed to pay for the tungsten, the excess being shipped off from the Atlantic ports of Portugal and Spain to South America.

Continued on page 30

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..... Continued from page 29

When WW2 ended, the tunnel and the station stayed open, but could not maintain the busy traffic of the war years. Business went ever slower and then got to a sudden halt when, in 1970, a freight train got derailed on the French side of the tunnel and, when it fell, demolished the only bridge that gave access.

Shortly after, Renfe abandoned the station and Canfranc's days as an international train station were over.

The Building

Ever since 1970, when the tunnel was closed, Canfranc Station has only served as a stop for the small local train from Zaragoza, which takes four hours to get there.

The Canfranc Station Building itself is an enormous and stunning construction; in fact, it comes across a bit incongruous where it lies high in the mountains in the middle of nowhere.

It is 241 metres long, 12.5 metres wide; it has 75 doors on either side and, all the way round, 365 windows, one for each day of the year. There are several loading bays for goods transport and an engine shed.

The construction materials are those typical for the era – glass, reinforced concrete and iron.

On the ground floor were the most important areas. The vestibule, situated under the central cupola, was decorated with pilasters, capitals and plaster moldings and here were the ticket and information counters.

Other areas on the ground floor included the Hotel International restaurant, the Spanish and French railway company offices, the customs service and auxiliary services such as telegraph, post and medical attention.

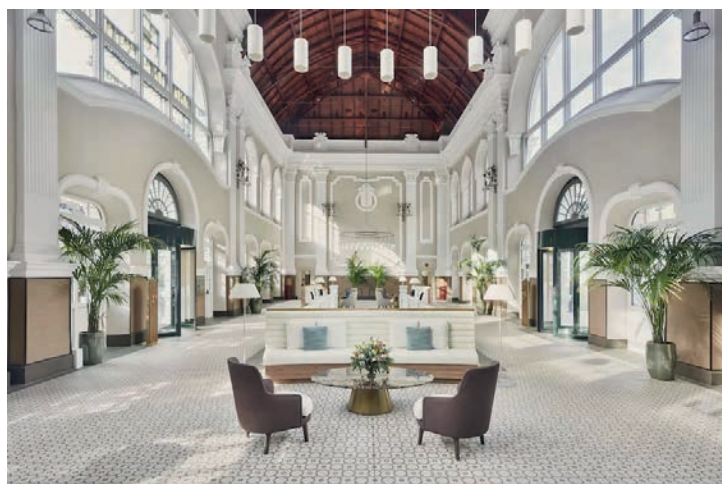
Via a grand wooden staircase you could access the upstairs where the Hotel International had its rooms and there were also thirty rooms for railway employee accommodation.

All this splendor was left to decay for years until it was finally decided that it would be a shame to let the monumental former international station crumble away completely, and various schemes were set into motion to save La Estación de Canfranc.

For about 20 years some of these projects achieved facelifts of certain parts of the compound, others fizzled out due to lack of funding.

In 2005-6 the whole perimeter was cleaned up and tidied, rubble and rubbish removed. Some of the interior features that were not salvageable were demolished.

Over the following three years the roof, façade and decorative



mouldings were restored and the central hall was refurbished.

Up until 2014 other small and large projects were carried out, and from then on nothing more happened on the restoration front, although there were guided tours of the premises as well as a spectacular weekly light show on the façade.

Apart from that, the station was left alone again until finally, in August 2017, the Aragon government announced a competition for a plan for the complete restoration of the whole area, including a luxury hotel, a new station building for the existing train service and even a centre for pilgrims walking the Camino de Santiago.

A project by a firm of architects called Ingennus Urban won the competition with their suggestion for a luxury hotel which would preserve and respect the original art deco interior and exterior.

The result is Canfranc Estación, a Royal Hideaway Hotel which is a 5-star luxury property. Top amenities include a wellness spa with a heated hydrotherapy pool, a fitness centre, a cocktail bar/library, ski storage, and multiple dining options, including the Michelin-starred Canfranc Express. The hotel boasts 104 rooms and suites.

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After 5 years of writing for the Almeria Living magazine, Evelyn has decided to hang up her quill! On behalf of us all I would like to thank her for all the contributions she has made throughout the years, from short stories and poems to factual accounts - a great collection of original pieces!

Evelyn, your penmanship will be missed but enjoy your retirement.

Let me take you back to July 2021, when Evelyn first became an ALM scribe and reintroduce you to

GABRIEL

If you passed Gabriel in the street you would see a tall slim young man, in all probability whistling a little tune. If you had the good fortune to sit opposite him on a bus, for instance, you might find yourself drowning in those candid, liquid brown eyes as you take in his fine features, his broad shoulders, and his polite demeanour. And if you were lucky enough to enter into conversation with Gabriel you would be amazed at his interest in you. You might even ask yourself "Who is this paragon of virtue?"

But, look deeper. Is his denim jacket just a little frayed at the cuffs and is that a faint scar running the length of his smooth left cheek? And why does he seem to shrink inside himself, jerking his head at the slightest movement behind him?

You shudder. Have you been taken in by Gabriel's earnest expression as you pour out your soul, and did his eyes flicker at mention of your recent little win on the Lottery? You grip the handle of your bag and wonder should you just hop off at the next stop before entering the danger zone – before you lose your heart, a heart that's beating faster by the minute?

But what intrigues you is the impetuous turn of his head, his long graceful back as he leans forward, his immaculate fingernails, and the way he emphasises his words with a deft brush of the hand.

With cheeks on fire you realise you are falling for Gabriel. Your mind racing, the questions flow unbidden.

But your probing is causing a change in Gabriel. There's a guardedness about his face now, and what you took to be boyish good looks present themselves in a more disquieting way. With glazed eyes and drumming fingers he turns resolutely away from you, revealing darling little curls at the nape of his neck.

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By Evelyn McCrorie



The bus lurches and you are catapulted towards the door, your shopping in one hand, the other covering your face as tears begin to flow.

Once on the pavement you catch sight of your reflection in the local Chippy, its streaked glass seeming to shriek in accusation, "Fat and Forty."

It's a long walk home but you take a deep breath, straighten your shoulders, and stride out, pretending not to see Gabriel's laconic wave as the bus flashes by.

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The Bell of Huesca

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

The title of the painting is La Campana de Huesca – The Bell of Huesca, and it tickled my curiosity.

It turned out that the subject of the painting stems from an old Aragonese legend which goes as follows:

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

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

Ramiro II, the Monk, ascended to the throne at the end of that year after promising that within two years he would return to his ecclesiastical chores, once he had secured the line of succession.

However, soon the disrespect and defiance of the nobles towards the Crown put Ramiro in an untenable position, and being a novice in matters of government and court, he asked for the advice of his mentor, the abbot of Saint Pons.

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

There he proceeded to cut the most prominent leaves off the heads of



cabbage, while he told the emissary to go back to King Ramiro and tell him what he had seen.

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

Part amused, part sceptic and part curious, the most rebellious of the nobles were led, one by one, to the bell tower to see this famous bell. The moment they entered, an executioner chopped their heads off.

Once the heads had been placed in a large circle, with one of them hanging from a rope from the ceiling, like a bell clapper, Ramiro invited the rest of the nobles to come into the bell tower to see the Bell of Huesca, which would indeed be heard all over Aragón.

The painting is currently hanging in the Huesca town hall.



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Batalla de Flores

Every year on the last Friday of August, the Batalla de Flores (flower battle) is celebrated in Laredo in Cantabria.

It is not, in fact, a battle at all, but a stunning procession of sculptures decorated with thousands of flowers and petals – a bit like Las Fallas in Valencia except the sculptures are made from different materials, and they are all mounted on carts so that they are mobile.

The history of the Batalla de Flores goes all the way back to 1908, when the seaside town of Laredo was used as a summer watering hole for the privileged classes. This was in the so-called Belle Epoque, a period of cultural splendour and financial bonanza; floral galas and flower fiestas were celebrated in many of Europe's principal cities, and the fad quickly spread to Spain as well.

In Laredo, the Batalla de Flores was adopted as a farewell party, to say goodbye to the summer and for the privileged classes to bid farewell to their summer holidays and end their stay by the seaside.

On the initiative of the summer residents, the town hall and the local fishermen collaborated with the scheme, and 25 trawlers were decorated from prow to stern with garlands of flowers, streamers, sweets, and cakes. That Sunday evening, at the time that the battle had been set for, the piers were filled with spectators, and the battle commenced simulating a real naval battle.

The event was such a success that it was decided that the following year they would bring it onto dry land to a place with room for more spectators and floats, and since then it has been celebrated in the town itself rather than on the water.

Over the following years, the simple carts that had been partially decorated with flowers and leaves gradually gave way to complicated



and artistic allegories.

The Batalla de Flores has been celebrated every single year since then, with the only exception being 1936-39, the years of the Civil War.

The oppressive social and cultural mood that penetrated society under Franco's rule made the processions lose some of their gregarious, popular essence, but at the same time they gained in artistic quality. The floats became larger, more complex, and more laboriously created, and they started being pushed by their creators rather than being drawn on carts by beasts.

This year marks the Batalla's 115th birthday, its 112th celebration, and the sculptures will already be well under way.

Planning and constructing these iconic figures requires knowledge of drawing, metal structure construction, carpentry, sculpting, horticulture, and logistics.

A float is conceived when the first drafts of an artistic idea is committed to paper. From the first drafts, the design starts taking form, undergoing the necessary changes and modifications to make it technically viable. And one vital detail: to calculate the number of flowers that are needed, and make sure they are available in the required colours.

Every year, the floats compete to win the coveted No. 1 spot as 'Best Sculpture'. According to the rules of the Batalla de Flores, the flowers must cover the larger part of the surface of the floats, and the arrangement of the flowers, the colour coordination, and the quality of the different techniques used to fix them are some of the most important considerations for the final evaluation of the allegories.

Continued on page 40



..... Continued from page 39

The night before the procession has a very special atmosphere. Each float has a team who works to allocate the thousands and thousands of flowers that have been picked as late as possible in order to preserve the maximum freshness.

That night the general public, both locals and visitors, can walk around the streets and observe how the teams mount the flowers, each one with extreme care, to create the magnificent colourful tapestries – hard work, seeing as the biggest of the floats can display up to 120,000 flowers.

There is an official route that leads past all the work sites, and the town hall offers a free tourist train that will take visitors past them all throughout the evening and night.

On the Friday at 17.30, thousands of people line the streets to enjoy this unique display. The floats, the garlanded carts, and the folk and music groups start going round the planned, circular route.

They go round the circuit three times; when the second round has been completed, the committee decides which ones are the best floats. The president of the committee makes the decision public and hands over the prizes.

The last time round the circuit becomes the lap of honour for the prize winners.

And that is the end of the Batalla de Flores. However, it is only 8 in the evening, and no self-respecting Spanish fiesta finishes at that hour of the day! The rest of the night is spent enjoying a giant street party with music, food, and drink.

At midnight there is a stunning fireworks display on the beach after which the revelling continues to the wee hours of the morning.





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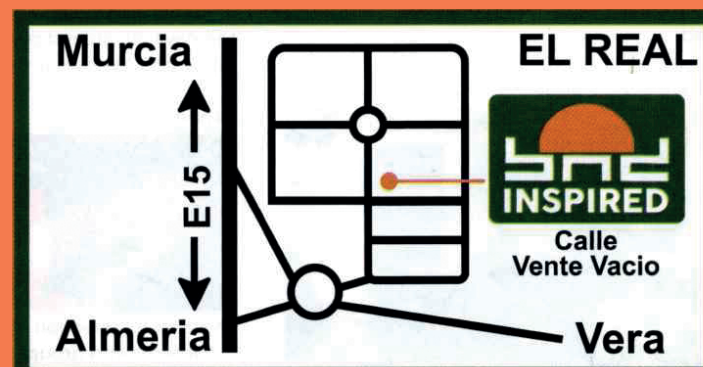


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August Star Gazing

Perseid Meteor Shower

The Perseids, known for their fireballs, is expected to shoot approximately 50 to 100 meteors per hour

It's time to point your eyes to the sky once again because the Perseid meteor shower is upon us, which according to NASA is considered "the best meteor shower of the year."

Not only do the shooting stars produce approximately 50 to 100 meteors per hour, but the super fast, bright balls leave "wakes" of light and colour in their trail as they streak across Earth's atmosphere.

The Perseids are also known for their fireballs, making the stars appear brighter and faster compared to the average meteor streak due to its derivation from larger particles of cometary material.

Like all meteor showers, the fiery stars originate from their parent comet — and for the Perseids, that would be Comet Swift-Tuttle. The showers produce an incredible starry spectacle when they reach their peak.

From when they will peak to how to watch, here's everything to know about the 2026 Perseid meteor shower.

When does the Perseid meteor shower peak?

The Perseids started on July 17th and will remain active through to August 24th giving stargazers several chances to watch the celestial spectacle. In fact, the best night to observe this amazing shower of shooting stars will be on the night of 12th August.



While watching the showers at their peak is expected to grant stargazers the most meteors, from late evening until early dawn as the Perseids strengthen in number as late night deepens into the wee hours of the morning, the space outlet reports. You can expect to catch a meteor "every minute or two during the peak hours – and they move quickly!"

Kappa Cygnids

The Kappa Cygnids are a minor meteor shower that occur at about the same time as the Perseids meteor shower which are more frequent and brighter. The name comes from the fact that the radiant point is close to Kappa Cygni. The star is within the boundaries of the constellation but is not part of the actual constellation.



When and where are the Kappa Cygnids Visible?

The majority of Cygnus the swan is visible the whole of the year in the Northern Hemisphere. The further south you go, the less you are going to see it. Kappa Cygni is part of the Cygnus that is always visible. The meteor shower should be visible as soon as it gets dark on the evening of August 12th.

The best time to view the meteor shower is after 10 o'clock when it is dark. It will be harder to see earlier due to the light from the Sun as it sets. You need to look up in a northerly direction. It should be a little higher above Ursa Minor constellation

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GOING GREEN

Spain's seamounts

By Jason Lowther

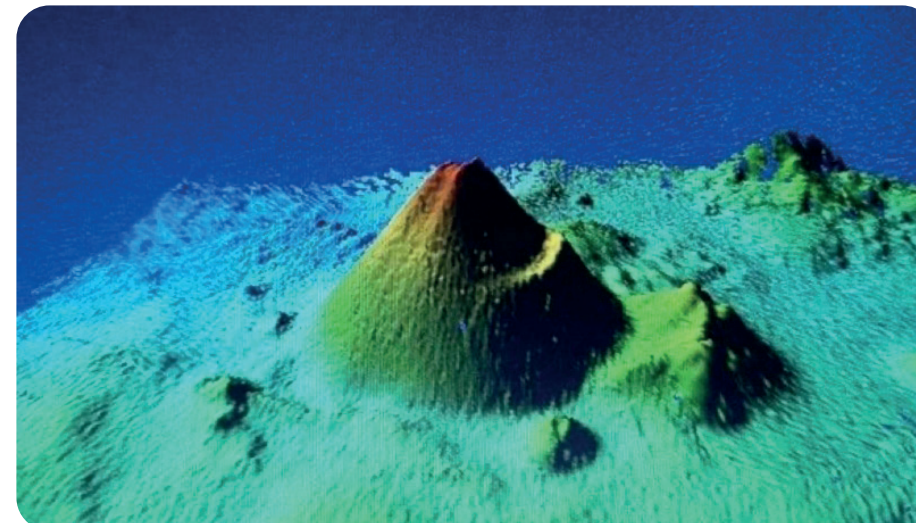
Out of sight, but something of a cause célèbre in oceanographic studies, seamounts are critically important deep-sea habitats which support life and rich ecosystems. They are significant geological features that shape regional marine development, fisheries, and, more recently, conservation policy in the areas they exist. Some of the plants and animals down there are, frankly, a bit weird, and definitely not fully understood. They are proof, if it were ever needed, though, that nature is wondrously complex and capable of adapting to some of the harshest living conditions, if given enough time and space to evolve into it. As with most current environments though, they have come under increasing pressure, and this short overview hopefully gives some insight into what they are, the threats posed to these unique habitats and the steps being taken to offer some protection to them and the species that call them home.

They exist around the globe in many locations where tectonic plate activity over millions of years has led to volcanic activity and/or subsea mountains being raised by the extreme pressures as the plates move. You might also have seen the 'smoking' chimney types on nature documentaries. Far below the waves surrounding Spain lies a hidden landscape of underwater mountains that rivals any dramatic mountain range on land. Spain's territorial waters in both the Atlantic and Mediterranean (as well as around the Canaries and Balearics) are host to seamounts. They are generally in deep water, and consequently many of them remain poorly explored compared to coastal shelves. Dredging, trawling and remotely operated vehicle (ROV) observations show that they function as biodiversity

hotspots, and host sensitive habitats such as cold-water coral reefs and sponge grounds.

Those located in and around Spain's waters exist as a result of the complex plate-tectonics in the region. In the Atlantic north of the Strait of Gibraltar, the Eurasian and African plates come together and have created structures through the massive forces that either grind the plates together forcing the seabed upwards, from volcanic magma being ejected, or where one plate slides under the other causing a slip, particularly so around the Gulf of Cádiz. Here, numerous ridges and isolated high spots, which are commonly known as seamounts or knolls, rise up from the very deep seabed (officially the abyssal depths, about 3-5km down!) to within 1-2km from the surface. As an aside, you can follow live earth tremors via the Instituto Geográfico Nacional's interactive webpage (<https://visualizadores.ign.es/tproximos>) and at the time of writing there have been 3 in the Gulf of Cádiz and one in the Alboran Sea in the last 3 days.

The cause is different in the Canary Islands, where very long-term volcanic activity has shaped the landscape of seamounts in that very deep part of the Atlantic. The Canaries sit right on top of one of the Atlantic's most prolific volcanic regions, after all. Here there are some of the smoker, chimney type seamounts which basically vent volcanic gases, that are mineral rich, into the deep ocean. Earlier this year, in March, the Spanish Institute of Oceanography (IEO-CSIC) obtained the first multidisciplinary evidence of hydrothermal activity at the Enmedio submarine volcano, located at depths exceeding 1,600 metres between Tenerife and Gran Canaria. Some of these edifices



become so close to the surface that they are nearly within the region where light can penetrate and marine plants can live (what's called the photic zone, where photosynthesis can take place), while others, despite being what we would call high mountains, remain deep and dark, creating habitats at various layers of depth. The minerals and energy released also enables plant life to exist without sunshine and so begins the aggregation of life in these areas.

Unlike the muddy plains of the deep sea, seamounts provide hard rocky surfaces where an extraordinary array of organisms can take hold. Towering cold-water corals, delicate black corals, branching sea fans, giant glass sponges, crinoids, and lace-like bryozoans create intricate three-dimensional habitats that function much like underwater forests. These living structures shelter countless smaller animals while providing hunting grounds for deep-sea predators. East of the Strait of Gibraltar, in the Alboran Sea, which is the name of the stretch of the Mediterranean between Spain, Morocco and Algeria, the seamounts tend to be smaller, although they are hugely important in biodiversity contexts. The area of sea, bridging the Atlantic and the Med, is a productive biological hotspot supporting diverse marine life populations, from whales and dolphins through to turtles, deep water corals.

Many commercially valuable fish are closely associated with these underwater mountains. Species such as wreckfish, alfonso, black scabbardfish, and, in parts of the Atlantic, the iconic orange roughy all gather around seamounts. Near the Canary Islands, where some summits rise into sunlit waters, rocky reefs support colourful algae, coralline communities, and nursery grounds for migratory predators including tuna. But these ecosystems have one crucial difference from their shallow-water counterparts: they operate in slow motion. Deep-sea corals can live for centuries—or even thousands of years—growing only millimetres each year. Their extraordinary longevity makes them invaluable archives of ocean history, recording past climate and circulation changes within their skeletons. It also makes them exceptionally vulnerable. Damage that takes minutes to inflict may require centuries to repair, if recovery is possible at all.

Seamounts are often described as natural fish magnets. Their steep

slopes disrupt ocean currents, concentrating nutrients and attracting plankton, which in turn draw larger predators. For fishers, this means abundant catches in relatively small areas. Yet this apparent abundance can be deceptive. As above, many seamount species grow slowly, mature late, and remain closely tied to specific locations. These characteristics make them highly susceptible to overfishing. Across the northeast Atlantic, fisheries targeting species such as orange roughy (which can take 25 years to be able to reproduce) and alfonso have repeatedly followed a familiar pattern: rapid exploitation, declining catches, and long-term stock depletion where management arrived too late.

Spain participates in international efforts to avoid repeating these mistakes. Through organizations such as the North-East Atlantic Fisheries

Commission and the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), along with European Union legislation, vulnerable deep-sea habitats are increasingly protected through fishing restrictions, bottom-trawling closures, and catch limits. Around the Canary Islands, marine protected areas now encompass several ecologically important channels and seamount slopes that support whales, dolphins, and pelagic fish.

Despite these advances, important gaps remain. Many underwater mountains lie close to, or beyond, national maritime boundaries, making consistent protection difficult. Other difficulties, often related to their location, include poorly mapping, leaving scientists uncertain about exactly where the most sensitive habitats occur.

Continued on page 48

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Fishing is no longer the only pressure facing Spain's submerged mountain landscapes. Many Atlantic seamounts are coated in crusts containing valuable metals such as cobalt, tellurium, and rare earth elements. As noted previously in this column they are resources increasingly sought for batteries and renewable energy technologies. For industry, these deposits represent an untapped source of critical minerals. For marine scientists and conservationists, however, they present a troubling dilemma.

Unlike mining on land, extracting these crusts would literally remove the rock surfaces on which entire ecosystems depend. Ancient corals, sponges, and microbial communities would disappear along with the mineral deposits, while sediment clouds generated during mining could spread far beyond the extraction site. Because these ecosystems recover so slowly, the environmental consequences could last for centuries. Spain, to its credit is opposed to deep sea mining without exceptionally stringent environmental safeguards.

Safeguarding these hidden ecosystems requires action across multiple scales. Spanish conservation laws, European Union environmental legislation, regional fisheries agreements, and emerging global treaties all contribute pieces of the puzzle. The recently adopted Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement, as I've written about in here previously, may prove especially important by allowing coordinated protection of seamount chains that extend beyond national waters.

Although hidden beneath the ocean surface, Spain's seamounts are far from remote curiosities. They are engines of biodiversity, archives of Earth's climatic past, and vital components of marine ecosystems



stretching across the Atlantic and Mediterranean. The challenge for the coming decades will be ensuring that these underwater mountains remain thriving ecosystems rather than becoming casualties of humanity's growing reach into the deep.

It's perhaps worth noting that Spain became the first EU country to ratify the UN High Seas Treaty, otherwise known as the BBNJ agreement, to safeguard biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction (the High Seas, basically). To some readers, this might seem a touch ironic seeing as Spain has Europe's largest long-distance fishing fleet by some distance, fishing in High Seas areas of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans particularly. It did, though at the end of 2025 designate Marine protected Areas comprising the seamounts of the Mallorca Channel, the pockmark fields and seamounts of the Seco de Palos, the Capbreton canyon system, the Alboran Sea banks, and Central Catalan Coast. So, we'll take the good intentions and the moves to greater protection of these areas, and the seamounts they host, at face value for now.

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The Amazingly Useful Sled Dog Harness

By Jos Biggs

The date was 1893. The place was New York.

There was a lot of female chatter coming from the spare room in the Tucek house, interspersed with tapping noises.

‘What on earth are you two up to in there? I want my dinner.’ Mr Tucek demanded.

‘Go away’ was the heartless reply from his wife Marie.

He picked up his newspaper, went into the parlour and sat down in his armchair with a loud Humpf!

Eventually his wife and the parlour maid emerged from the spare room, both looking very pleased with themselves.

Not a word was said about the tapping and the chatter - he thought it better not to ask, so he had no idea what Marie was up to the next morning when she and the parlour maid left the house early carrying a large bag.

She went round to the Patents Office, went straight in without knocking and plonked the bag down on the reception desk.

The receptionist stepped back and stroked his magnificent mutton chop whiskers.

‘Madam...’ he began reproachfully, as Marie began to unpack her bag.

‘Er.’ He said as she held up what appeared to him to be some kind of harness, maybe for coupling two sled dogs together.

‘It’s a bust supporter.’ She told him. ‘And I want to patent it.’

There was a very silent pause. Marie pushed round the desk and without ceremony took herself, her bust supporter and her parlour maid into the boss’s office.

Phillip Jennings, the boss, physically started as the two ladies barged in. He hastily folded his newspaper, he didn’t want to be found out drawing a moustache and beard on a photo of the Mayoress on the front page of the newspaper.

‘This is a bust supporter. And I want to patent it.’ Before she could say anymore Mr Jennings found his voice.

‘But Ladies, it’s already been done.’

Both ladies instantly froze. Mr Jennings crossed to his filing cabinet and searched under C. He flicked through a few files ‘Here we are - Luman Chapman.’ He extracted the file and opened it to show the patented illustration.

The silence resonated. The parlour maid sagged. But Marie was made of sterner stuff. She pulled the illustration towards herself and examined it closely.

Mr Jennings looked at her face and decided to remain standing, just in case she got violent.

‘Ha!’ She exclaimed. ‘Mine is different. She poked the picture. ‘This one needs to be hitched on to a corset. Mine doesn’t.’

She signalled the maid to turn round. Mr Jennings pushed past and locked the door. He had a dreadful vision of someone coming in and



finding him with a semi nude woman. Or even worse, women.

‘Look,’ she said, holding a strip of metal round underneath the breasts of the parlour maid.

‘This is a very soft metal, but you could use cardboard, anything stiff will do. Then you cover the whole lot in material, silk preferably.’

Mr Jennings could think of nothing to say, so he said nothing.

Marie warmed to her subject. ‘When you cover it with material, like I said, silk, you shape the silk to cover and accentuate the breasts.’

There was a knock at the door. Mr Jennings hastened over and opened it a crack. The receptionist tried to peer over his shoulder.

‘Yes.’

There is a gentleman here who wants to see you’

‘Fine, fine.’ Mr Jennings responded. ‘Just

give me a minute.’

‘Ah, the ladies with the sled dog harness.’

‘Exactly.’ Mr Jennings shut the door in his face.

Mrs Tucek had read the situation, and saw her chance. ‘Are you going to patent this in my name?’ she demanded. ‘Or should I demonstrate it fully to your receptionist and ask his opinion?’

‘No!’ Squeaked Mr Jennings. ‘No, no. I’ll do it right away. If you could just tell me your full name and the nature of your, er, invention, I will have it done by this afternoon.’

Mrs Tucek smiled, repacked her bag and with her maid in tow saw herself out of the office.

‘Sled dog harness. Tch!’ She uttered loudly as she passed the receptionist. The maid giggled.

She got her patent, and the bra was a success, though somewhat uncomfortable. And the status remained quo until 1914 when a 19 year old Mary Phelps Jacob, with the help of two handkerchiefs, a length of thread and some pink ribbon brought the whole idea further with the invention of the backless bra.

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Architeuthis – the Giant Squid



Although the most sensational finds and discoveries of giant squid have taken place in the Pacific Ocean, Spain has also had its share of sightings of live and dead specimens – mainly on the coast of Asturias.

The term giant squid covers up to eight different species according to some scientists – others say that there is only one and the same.

The giant squid lives at vast depths, and it is estimated that male specimens can be up to ten metres long, and females up to 14 m. There have been speculations of specimens of up to 20 metres and

a weight of half a ton, although no authoritative proof has been presented.

One of the largest specimens found was a female of 18 metres on a beach in New Zealand in 1887. It has also been claimed that a 21m, 275 kg specimen was caught accidentally in New Zealand waters in 1933.

The larger contributor to the length of a giant squid is its tentacles, which measure 2.5 to 6 times the length of the mantle. This is the reason why, despite their enormous size, they weigh relatively little.

Their reproduction cycle is relatively unknown;

under its mantle, the male has a prehensile sperm ampulla of some 900 mm which it uses as a penis to inject sperm into the female's deposit which is situated in one of her arms. There is much debate as to how she transfers the sperm to her ovules, but the discovery of a specimen in Tasmania who had small auxiliary arms at the end of her tentacles might point scientists in the direction of the solution of this mystery.

The giant squid's tentacles are equipped with two lines of suction cups, each cup on an individual base with a dental ring around it which helps it fix and perforate its prey. The size of the suckers is two to five cm in diameter.

The sperm whale is the giant squid's number one predator, and a few specimens have been found with circular scars around their mouth where a giant squid will have been defending itself against its enemy.

The giant squid's eyes are probably the largest eyes of all the species on Earth. They are between 20 and 25 cm in diameter, and are very similar to human eyes with pupils, irises and retinas.

This species reaches a considerable size (hence the name), and it has pronounced sexual dimorphism with the females weighing up to 312 kg and the males 178. The males have a shorter lifespan than the females; they are thought to live for just a year, whereas the females double or triple this.

Betelgeuse Champagne Supernova

By Tom Fynes

In Douglas Adams' The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, Ford Prefect hails from a small planet in the vicinity of Betelgeuse.

The name "Betelgeuse" comes from a corruption of the Arabic Yad al-Jauzā', which roughly translates to "The Hand of the Giant/Central One" (referring to the Hunter). Over centuries of mistranslation into Latin and eventually English, "Yad" (Hand) was misread, and it evolved into the name we use today. It's usually pronounced as Beetle-Juice.

Betelgeuse lies in the constellation of Orion. This minor spiral arm, also called the Orion Spur, sits between the Sagittarius and Perseus Arms and extends about 3,500 light years from the galactic centre.

Our Solar System resides roughly 400 light years farther out in the same arm, placing Betelgeuse relatively next door at 700 light years from Earth. Or if you want it more precise, 196 Parsecs, or 642 light years, if you can believe, The International Astronomical Union (IAU). Or even the European Space Agency (ESA) called the Gaia Mission. Most of the modern distances we have for stars like Betelgeuse come from Gaia's data releases.

The reason we are talking about Betelgeuse is, it's in the process of going supernova. Within the next 20 years, or the next 100 thousand years, depending on which supernova gurus' data set you're relying on.

A supernova is a colossal explosion marking the death of a massive star. It releases more energy in moments than the Sun will in its entire lifetime, briefly outshining entire galaxies. Supernovae forge heavy elements (like gold, uranium) via nucleosynthesis, seeding new stars and planets, and sending out massive shock waves that trigger star formation.

Supernovas are good for the Galaxy and good for business as they create the heavy elements. But they are also pretty violent and they will annihilate anything in their near vicinity quicker than you can say Cillit Bang Spray Gun. It combines a cleaning heat death ray with a wall of radiation to get rid of 100% of everything, for a sparkling clean Alpha Orionis system.

Astronomers detected a companion planet called Siwarha, "her bracelet" in Arabic to complement Betelgeuse ("hand of the giant") Siwarha is in a tight orbit of Betelgeuse and at each turn of the screw, it sucks in billions of tons of Betelgeuse matter in its wake, triggering surface ejections into space and dark dust formation. Which results in the, now we see Betelgeuse, now we don't, experience we get, when looking at it through our space telescopes.

Betelgeuse is getting ready to blow. And it is a big galaxy event, a big something we will see from Earth when it happens. Space, to quote Douglas Adams, is big, I mean really big. If you think the Camino de Santiago is a long hike, you've haven't seen anything like the vast hiking distances of space.

Betelgeuse is around 642 light years away. To put this into context, the light from Betelgeuse we see today, in 2026, left the star 642 light years ago. This was roughly around the year 1326AD on Earth which is the late Middle Ages. The invasion of England in 1326 by Isabella of France, for example, was happening back then.

We are therefore looking way, way back in time. It's possible it's already gone supernova, but the light has not arrived, just yet. But when it arrives, it will arrive with a bang, to coin a phrase. We will awake to see another sun in the sky. It will be so bright it'll cast



shadows. You could read a book from the light at night.

When Betelgeuse goes supernova, it'll reach an apparent magnitude comparable to a full Moon, casting nighttime shadows and remaining visible for around 100 days. What they will not tell us on the local media or influencer circuits is:

A Supernova creates a Total Destruction Zone.

Any planet within a hundred light-years would have its atmosphere stripped away by high-energy radiation. To be truly safe, and out of the Cillit Bang firing zone, any life forms would need to move their civilization at least 150 light years away from the star before the core collapses.

Any space faring life forms living within the destruction zone, will be on the move to escape the Cillit Bang wave of radiation. If we're lucky, they will stop and relocate at the 150 light years mark. But some of this Diaspora of Vagon Trains, might just keep on going, towards that big, beautiful water blue planet, in a distant safe solar system.

Continued on page 54



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..... Continued from page 53

One will hope the Vagon poetry is better than what Douglas Adams wrote about. And that they're not bad actors. With bad intentions. Think Columbus and his letter back to Queen Isabella I of Castile and King Ferdinand II of Aragon, after landing in the Americas. "Natives are friendly, should make excellent slaves."

If there are intelligent life forms in the vicinity of Betelgeuse, they will be on the move to get away from extinction. And as the earth will look like a safe haven, we may get some Space Lifeboat people washing up on our shores. And good luck with checking their papers.

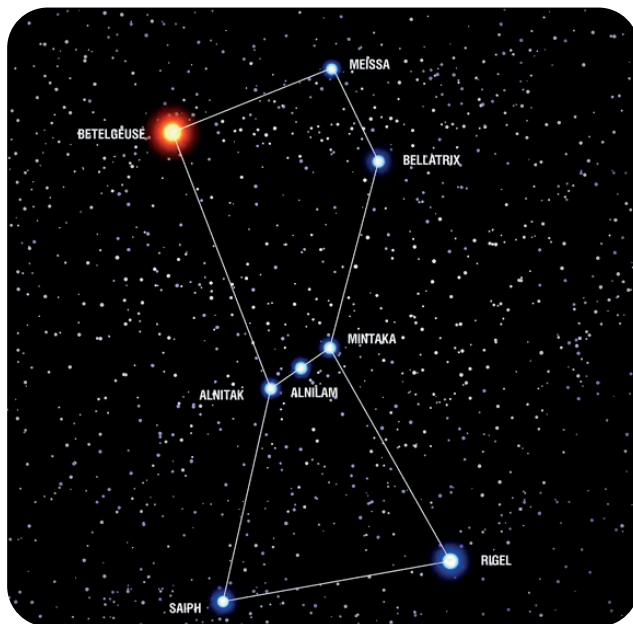
"And what is the reason for you and your large extended family for visiting the UK. Business or pleasure, Sir?"

"An Oasis Champagne Betelgeuse Supernova Total Extinction Event."

"You've heard of the Gallagher Brothers and their band Oasis, way way out in the Orion Belt?"

"Indeed, we listened to all their Albums on the way here in deep space. Wonder Wall of Radiation was a big Oasis Tribute Band favorite. Kept us entertained. That and Star Trek, your Space comedy show."

Orion is famous for its geometric shape, two shoulders, a belt, and two feet. Without Betelgeuse, the "top left" of the Hunter will vanish.



Appearing more like a triangle or a broken kite.

According to Greek legend, Orion was the son of Poseidon and a great huntress named Euryale. He was so skilled that he once boasted he could hunt and kill every animal on Earth. This boast didn't sit well with Gaia (the Earth Mother), who sent a giant Scorpion to kill him. Orion and the Scorpion were placed in the sky on opposite sides so they could never be seen at the same time. When the constellation Scorpius rises in the east, Orion "flees" and sets in the west.

Back to our Space Lifeboat people. If they set off at 10% light speed 6,000 years ago, they are still on the way here.

If they set off at 60% light speed 1,000 years ago, they are arriving just about now.

If they set off at 90% light speed 660 years ago, they've been here for centuries.

So, there you have it. You might be standing out in the street watching Betelgeuse go supernova. Enjoy the spectacle. It's a once-in-a-civilization event.

And that strange looking creature next to you, humming Champagne Supernova, with tears streaming down from his big oval purple eyes. Give him some room or maybe a hug. He's just lost his home world.



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After a long hot spring and sticky summer our fly screens can pick up dust and grime. So here are some useful tips which will hopefully help for cleaning your fly screens.

As they are fitted into your doorways and windows they are very much a part of your home like the windows and doors themselves so it is important to keep them clean.

General Cleaning

Spray normal clean water onto the screens first as this will start the removal of dirt, pollen, insects and dust. You can also try a sponge and soapy water (use the same liquid as you would for washing up). You can then simply hose it down.

If the screens have built up more solid dirt you can try a clothes brush with the soapy water, then use a higher pressure hose but only on low as your screens could get damaged. This should shift the stubborn dirt! Finally always use a clean damp cloth to wipe away any residue of soap just to make sure.

If this does not complete the job then you may have to apply some de-greaser, buy a quality one so when you spritz it the dirt comes away easily. This could work effectively with a slightly harder brush but not too hard that it damages your screens.

If you have retractable type screens try to remember to keep them retracted when not in use. This will help keep them clean and prolong their life. Use a vacuum cleaner to clean the tracks and clear off debris. Then, extend or roll out the screen and clean as just described.

The best advice is to keep on top of them, and just soap and water and a simple hose down should keep them and your home looking pristine and free from dust and grime.

Another problem that we are often faced with is trying to remove paint from fitted window and door screens and unfortunately paint on window screens is a common problem when painting outdoors. Fortunately the paint is simple to remove and should be gone with just a few simple steps. You will need: Bucket or hose, Paint thinner, Acetone nail polish remover, Old soft cloths and possibly an old toothbrush.

You will need to begin by assessing the size of the paint spots. If the spots are large, it will be helpful to remove the screen so you will have easier access to them. If the spots are small, they will likely be able to be removed without removing them.

Moisten a soft cloth with the paint thinner, nail polish remover or alcohol. Gently rub the cloth over the area until the paint softens and comes off. An old toothbrush can be used instead of a cloth.

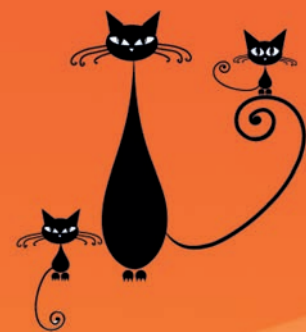
Use caution not to apply too much pressure as it can cause the screen to lose its shape and stretch. Rinse the screens thoroughly with water from a bucket or spray it with the hose. Then finally allow the screen to dry completely.

The benefits of installing screen doors with pet doors

Convenience is one of the benefits you will obtain from installing a screen door with pet door. If you have a pet door, you do not have to look after your pets all the time especially if they want to go out. The door will serve its purpose without worrying about scratches. Be sure to choose sturdy pet doors so you can prolong its life.

You need to choose from various suppliers for you to know what your options are. Some suppliers may offer you the standard version, but there are suppliers that can even go the extra mile and provide you screen doors that are out of the ordinary. The supplier you consider should be capable of providing you peace of mind. Choose the ones that can help you pet proof your door and make your pets happy as well.

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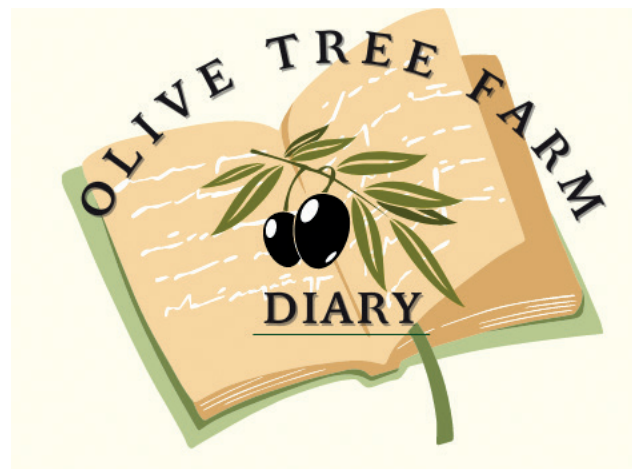
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It has certainly been a hot July here at Olive Tree Farm, and we've had a lot to do and keep on top of.

We finally finished securing the pen up on the farm for the ducks, and have moved everyone up there from the aviaries, and they've all settled in well — and quickly. Within a week, the girls began laying, so we finally have some duck eggs after a long time without!

We have kept the tame pair down in the garden that we raised in the house over winter, and another 3 young females too to make up a small flock. Hopefully, it won't be too much longer until they start laying as well. The kids have loved having ducks down in the garden with us, and Ben and I have enjoyed it too — it's like having another pair of dogs following us around, wagging tails and all!

One of our biggest hits this time of year is the water bills, as we're keeping on top of the ponds in the garden for the fish and turtles we rescue — as well as keeping the duck bath clean — so over the last week Ben fed a line down from the irrigation water on the farm.

This means we're able to pump cool, fresh water now and keep everything running smoothly at a dramatic price drop, as well as a lot quicker than trying to do it off the mains hosepipe.

The wildfires across the country — and with a few cropping up close to home — has also had us in a bit of a worry, and therefore certain jobs have taken priority recently.

For example, Ben has been clearing as much of the dead grasses, fallen pine needles, and what else could feed a hungry fire from the perimeter of our property. He is also in the midst of setting up extra piping across the fence line, so at the flick of a tap we can get water feeding down the perimeter and hopefully slow any potential fire down.

With all the animals we keep here, an evacuation order would mean leaving a lot behind — something we both find very upsetting and stressful, so we're doing what we can to keep the perimeter, and therefore what is within it, as safe as possible while the bomberos do their brave work.

Hopefully, it won't be necessary, but these last few weeks certainly serve as a powerful reminder of how quickly these things can start, and how unpredictable they can turn.

Better to be prepared than not!

On a final note, another important job we've had to tuck into is the aviaries. With all the strong winds and downpours of the last 18 months, we were spying damaged areas in the roofing where the budgies are. So, with the removal of the ducks, we have cleared out that section of the aviary and Ben dealt with the minor issues and then moved the nesting boxes and budgies over.

Now that we have the birds in their new permanent home, Ben has been able to remove all the damaged section of the roof on the other side, and will be working on meshing and laying new planks of wood to get it all secure once more, weather and wasps allowing, of course, as the extreme heat has made it hard to get outside for long periods, and has amped up the wasps as they look for shelter and water.

Once this half of the aviary is completed, we will be moving the green iguana in as her new summer home — although it will probably be next summer when she finally moves in, but hopefully, I will have some stunning pictures over the next few months as it all comes together.

All in all, we are kept with a lot to do, and a lot of unexpected jobs in between — such is the life with animals!

Thank you for reading. I hope you enjoyed the news of the month,



and join us again in the next for all our farm-life updates!

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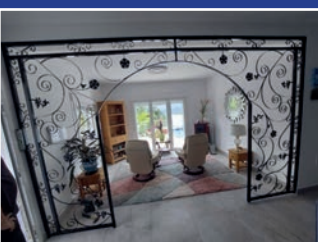
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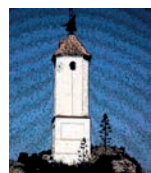
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Charlie Watkins pt 2 - The Public Address!

Last month I wrote a little focus on Charlie Watkins WEM and his famous Copicat machine. This was one of his claims to fame. The other was the Public Address system for bands. Given the number of readers queuing to get their hands on the Almeria Living magazine, I thought I would rant further.

Charlie realised that whilst instruments at that time had amplification, singers etc. struggled to be heard. Most sound enforcement systems were Tannoy type horns which were horrid to listen to. So he went about making a system aimed at truthfully amplifying the human voice. He did this by building speaker cabinets fitted with Goodman Axiom 301 model drivers. These units were used in HiFi systems and sounded sweet.

Watkins supplied a trial system to the Rock group, the Byrds but it failed and lead to a bit of a barney. Undeterred, Charlie redesigned the system, resulting in an amplifier which became a bench standard, the WEMSL 100. This was a 100 Watt slave amplifier, 10 of which would be linked together. It was a sort of copy of an American RCA product using Germanium transistors. These amps along with the large multi-speaker columns sounded great! From the mid '60s to the mid '70s, WEM was the go-to P.A. system. This put the little factory in Offley Road London SW6 on the map.

Watkins Also designed a portable mixing console. 5 channels, reverb, equalization and feeds to slave amplifiers and monitors. 2 could be linked together if needed. These also provided an output to a foldback loudspeaker, which allowed the performer to hear themselves. This invention was as a result of Jimi Hendrix playing at a concert, unable to hear himself. Charlie turned around an audience facing speaker, pointing at Hendrix. Problem solved. The "Fold-back" was born.

Charlie wanted to muscle in on "big events". He wanted to get his equipment at the Isle Of Wight Windsor Blues Festival in '67. The promoter told Watkins he could supply the PA, for free and take responsibility for it all. He did and it was a great success. Loads of speaker cabinets and his WEMSL100s giving 1000 Watts, which in those days was massive. It even resulted in Watkins being arrested for breach of the peace!

In '69, the Rolling Stones played at their famous Hyde Park concert. Here Watkins supplied another massive system, totalling just under 2,000 Watts. It was a great success and furthermore boosted the

manufacturing of hundreds more WEM systems. The Stones wrote a lovely letter to Charlie, thanking him for a great sound.

By the early '70s Watkins saw a change in the requirement for concerts. More volume was always required. Charlie's method of just adding amplifiers and more cabinets was flawed. As the Soundman for the group The Who said, another 1,000 Watts gives you only 2 decibels extra. Keep adding equipment means more transport costs, more supporting staff, more weight. Watkins also had a moral issue with the amount of volume being generated which could damage hearing. He actually paid a Harley Street consultant for advice on this. His fears were confirmed. He also disliked the change taking place at concerts. What used to be cool friendly events, were now taking on a violent aspect.

There was a new loudspeaker technology coming on to the market. P.A. companies were using folded Horn designs. This type of speaker cabinet allowed the sound energy to be far more directional, aiming

at the audience. Watkins Column speakers were great for audio quality, but radiated audio over a wide area, wasting energy and consuming a large footprint. The Loaded Horn speakers were able to

provide the same audio coverage at a fraction of the power required. Staff and transport costs were therefore reduced. In addition, there was a move away from bands owning their own equipment and sound guys. Hire companies were becoming common place, providing staff, equipment when and as required. Charlie saw this happening and could not and didn't want to compete. By '74, things were winding down and the output from the factory in SW6 was a shadow of what it had been.

The legacy however lives on. WEM equipment on the second-hand market holds high values. The little WEM dominator guitar amplifiers can fetch up to 1,000 quid or more. Noel Gallagher loves his and used it on his studio recordings. The original WEM Copicat reverb units are equally prized.

So, there we have it. A diminutive unassuming chap in South London, loved by the Rock Stars, left his stamp on history with his ideas of quality sound reinforcement and the Copicat Echo machine. It was nice chatting with you in the early '80s. Meet again one day.

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The Digital Smuggler's Guide

Why the internet's longest-running game of cat and mouse is far from over

You can take the Brit out of Britain, but it's remarkably difficult to persuade them to give up British television. For years, moving to Spain came with an unofficial checklist. Open a Spanish bank account. Discover which supermarket stocks proper tea bags. Learn that mañana doesn't actually mean tomorrow. It simply means "not today"—and beyond that, nobody is making any promises. Accept that between two and five in the afternoon, much of the country quietly decides that whatever you're planning can probably wait until later. Somewhere on that list, usually just below "buy an extension lead with UK sockets", was another essential task: install a VPN. For many British expats, a Virtual Private Network wasn't some mysterious cybersecurity tool dreamt up by people in darkened server rooms. It was simply the little piece of software that convinced BBC iPlayer your villa near Vera was actually a semi-detached house somewhere outside



Swindon. It became so normal that nobody really questioned it. Want to watch Match of the Day? Click the VPN. Fancy the latest David Attenborough documentary? Another click. Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without the King's Speech, Doctor Who, and someone on the BBC apologising because heavy rain had brought Britain's rail network to a complete standstill.

The funny thing is that most people using VPNs never thought of themselves as rule-breakers. Many still paid for Netflix. Many still paid their TV Licence. Many happily subscribed to streaming services. They simply happened to have swapped

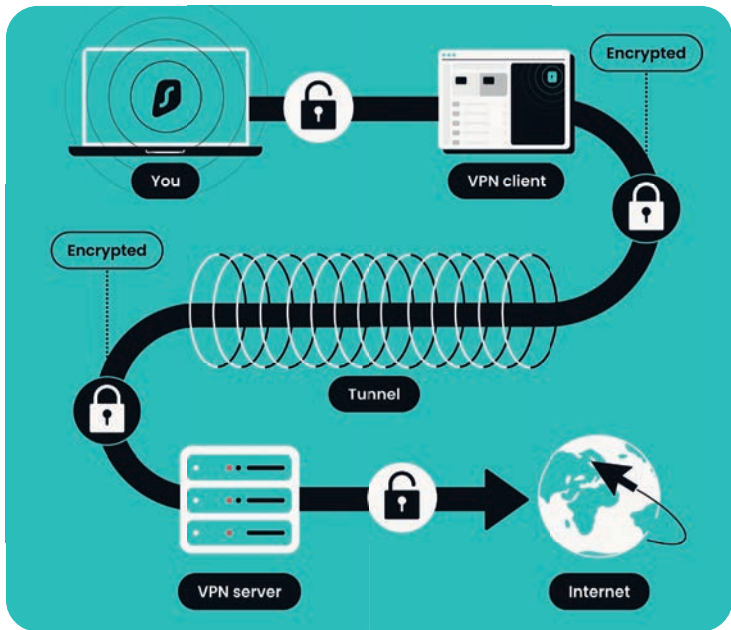
Birmingham for Benalmádena and couldn't quite understand why moving to a sunnier climate should suddenly prevent them watching the evening news.



Hardly Jack Sparrow

Yet, without really realising it, they had become participants in one of the internet's longest-running games of cat and mouse. Or perhaps smugglers is a better description. Traditional smugglers carried tobacco, silk and the occasional barrel of brandy across borders. Today's digital smugglers transport episodes of Have I Got News For You, the Six Nations and the occasional edition of Gardeners' World.

Every device connected to the internet has an IP address. Think of it as your digital postcode. Whenever you visit a website, you're effectively introducing yourself. "Hello. I'm connecting from Spain." A VPN simply changes the return address. Instead of travelling



directly to the BBC or Netflix, your internet connection first takes a short detour through another computer somewhere else in the world. For years, that simple trick worked beautifully but then the streaming companies started noticing something rather odd. Thousands upon thousands of viewers appeared to be living in exactly the same house, making them surprisingly easy to spot. Even Britain's housing crisis hasn't reached that stage yet. Those "houses" were VPN servers.

Blocked. Round One to the cat!

The VPN companies responded by buying hundreds more servers. Instead of twenty thousand people apparently sharing one suburban house in Leeds, they spread everyone across thousands of different addresses. Problem solved? For a while.

The streaming companies then changed tactics. Rather than looking for overcrowded addresses, they started identifying where those addresses actually lived. Many VPN providers rented computers inside giant commercial data centres owned by companies such as Amazon or Microsoft. After all, ordinary households rarely watch EastEnders from an industrial server farm.

Blocked again. Round Two

Increasingly, VPN providers began using residential internet connections that looked almost identical to genuine homes. Once again, the mouse slipped through another gap in the fence. Today, the battle has become almost comically clever. Although websites cannot normally read the encrypted information travelling through a VPN, they can still observe how that information behaves: How quickly it arrives. How regularly it flows. The size of the data packets. Tiny details that, when added together, create a surprisingly accurate fingerprint. Imagine trying to recognise someone wearing a fake beard, sunglasses and a hat. You may not recognise their face but you might recognise the way they walk. VPN developers, naturally, responded by teaching their software to walk differently.



Some modern VPNs disguise themselves so convincingly that they appear almost indistinguishable from perfectly ordinary web browsing. It's the digital equivalent of escaping prison by putting on a fluorescent jacket, carrying a clipboard and confidently walking out through the front gate. Nobody ever questions the person carrying a clipboard.



Of course, this raises an interesting question. Is any of this still necessary? Ten years ago the answer would almost certainly have been yes. Back then, Netflix Spain felt like a distant cousin of Netflix UK. Disney+ didn't exist. Apple TV+ hadn't been invented. Amazon Prime Video was still finding its feet. If you wanted British television, a VPN wasn't simply useful. It was practically essential. Today the landscape has changed almost beyond recognition. Netflix spends billions creating original programmes. Amazon commissions dramas around the world. Apple produces award-winning series. British productions increasingly launch internationally at exactly the same time.

Ironically, the companies that spent years trying to block VPNs have also reduced the need for them. Many expats now spend their evenings watching international productions that have nothing whatsoever to do with Britain. The digital passport is still in the drawer. It just isn't used quite as often. That's not to say VPNs are becoming irrelevant. Far from it. If there's one group keeping VPN companies comfortably in business, it's sports fans. Football rights belong to one broadcaster, Formula One to another and rugby somewhere else. Cricket appears to change channels every few months simply to keep everyone on their toes. Depending on where you happen to live, the event you most want to watch may already be included in somebody else's subscription package. Then there are those familiar comforts; BBC News with breakfast, Radio 4 over coffee, The Shipping Forecast or God forbid The Archers.

For people who have built happy lives in Spain, these programmes aren't simply entertainment. They're familiar voices, little reminders of home and increasingly there's another reason altogether.

Continued on page 62

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..... Continued from page 61

Privacy

Ironically, one of the fastest-growing reasons people now install VPNs has nothing whatsoever to do with television. It's because they're becoming increasingly aware that somebody is always watching. Search once for a new barbecue and every website you visit for the next month seems convinced you're opening a chain of steakhouses. Browse walking boots and social media decides you've developed an overwhelming desire to climb the witches tit. Use the free Wi-Fi in a hotel, airport or café and you're placing a surprising amount of trust in complete strangers. A VPN can't make you invisible. It won't stop every advert. It certainly won't hide the fact you've been looking at garden furniture you promised your partner you weren't going to buy. But it does make life considerably harder for anyone quietly building a picture of your online habits.

In many ways, VPNs have come full circle. Originally they were designed to create secure connections for businesses. Then they became the unofficial passport of British expats wanting to borrow a British postcode for the evening. Now they're quietly returning to their original purpose as privacy tools that occasionally indulge a little nostalgia.

Will the cat ever catch the mouse? Probably not.

Streaming companies invest billions buying exclusive rights for different countries. VPN companies invest millions helping customers protect their privacy. Every time one side invents a better lock, the other quietly produces a better key. Neither side can afford to stop. Perhaps that's why this has become the internet's longest-running game of cat and mouse.

So, should British expats in Spain still bother with a VPN?

If your evenings revolve around the latest dramas on Netflix,



Disney+ or Apple TV+, perhaps not as much as they once did. The streaming world has become far more international than any of us imagined a decade ago. But if Saturday afternoon still means football, if Sarah Cox remains your breakfast companion, or if you simply prefer knowing your internet connection is a little more private while using the café Wi-Fi, then a VPN still earns its place on your laptop. Perhaps that's the biggest surprise of all. VPNs haven't become obsolete, they've simply grown up. After all, there's something wonderfully reassuring about sitting on a Spanish terrace in the middle of January, enjoying blue skies while watching a BBC weather presenter apologising for freezing fog, and travel chaos across much of Britain.

You glance up at another cloudless afternoon, wondering why anyone voluntarily swapped sunshine for thermal underwear, and quietly congratulate yourself on a life well lived.

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Keeping Rabbits as Pets

Rabbits make great pets and are fairly low maintenance. Nonetheless, like with all the creatures we adopt and decide to look after, there are certain things that we must do for these little long-eared fellows in order for them to thrive and be healthy.

When buying a rabbit, you want to make sure he is in good health. Bright eyes, clean nozzle, ears and bottom, and a shiny, thick fur are the signs you want to look for. He should look well fed, though not fat.

Rabbits come in all sorts of colours and sizes, and with longer or shorter fur. And they all need exercise and loving care.

You can keep your rabbits either outside or inside, and the cage must be a good size to allow them room to move about. For small breeds the cage should be at least 80x65 cm with a height of 50cm. The larger breeds need at least 120x85x65cm.

If you buy a kitten, you need to know how big it'll grow so that you can buy the correct size cage. The cage bottom should be made from plastic and the sides and top metal grill. Wood is not recommended as it absorbs the damp and is difficult to keep clean.

The cage should be placed in a bright spot, inside or out, away from draught and direct sunlight – the latter especially in summer in Spain. Rabbits like living outdoors as long as they have shelter – and make sure there is a lid on the cage so no uninvited predators can get to your little friends. Apart from a shelter, which they need even indoors for hiding, you also want to give them a ceramic food bowl which will not fall over, and hay and straw both for eating and burrowing.

The toilet needs cleaning daily, and an indoor cage several times



a week with warm water and biodegradable washing up liquid; an outdoor cage just needs cleaning once a week.

Like all animals, rabbits need constant access to fresh water, and remember that animals kept in cages are 100% dependent on their keepers for this. It is a good idea to have a drinking bottle attached to the side of the cage as the water keeps fresh longer than in a bowl.

Rabbits clean themselves by licking their fur; however, a pet rabbit does need a bit of help with his toilette and appreciates a regular brush to help him get rid of surplus fur. Check his ears regularly for mites and keep an eye on his teeth – they never stop growing and must not be allowed to get too long. His claws also need checking regularly – if they are too long, cut them carefully with a 3-in-1, taking care not to cut too short and damage a vein; but a good way of helping keep his claws short is lining the bottom of the cage with



fibre cement. This helps keeping his claws short and protects the bottom of the cage.

To help control the growth of his teeth, give him carrots and branches from fruit trees.

Rabbits are social animals; in nature they live in communities, so it is a good idea to have more than one rabbit to avoid loneliness. Rabbits do have a pecking order, and if you want more than one the best thing is to have them together from when they are kittens. E.g., two females from the same litter or of the same young age will get on well; the males are notorious sprayers, and if you have more than one you will probably need to castrate them to avoid fights. The ideal age for this is at 4-6 months. It goes without saying that keeping an uncastrated male with a female will very soon lead to lots and lots of rabbits.

Rabbits are vegetarians. They need both rabbit pellets – plain without nuts or dried fruits – and green fodder. The pellets contain the necessary vitamins and minerals, and the reason they should be

plain is that if there are lots of interesting other bits in the mix, they will go for them and ignore the pellets and thus not get the necessary nutrition.

The green fodder can be clover and dandelions (a tall order around here, I know), or any kind of lettuce, carrot tops, spinach etc. A smaller part of their green food can consist of root vegetables (not potatoes or onions!!) such as beets, swedes or celeriac. Hay is a must to keep their digestion going.

Rabbits need to eat twice a day, and it is a good idea to give them their pellets in the morning and their greens and vegetables in the evening, so they have something to do at night, which is their most active time.

If you follow these simple rules, you have every chance of having healthy and happy rabbits.



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your heart,
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Puzzle Time

Puzzle solutions on page 82

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

Easy

Regular Sudoku

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

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

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

Medium

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

Across

- 1 Seafood dish
- 4 Beach trinkets
- 9 Aardvark (3,4)
- 10 Simple chord
- 11 Fine thread
- 12 Grazing land
- 13 Built
- 18 Gone
- 20 Merger
- 22 Stench
- 23 Contour
- 24 High nests
- 25 Curved

Down

- 1 Stone splinters
- 2 Pays to play
- 3 Eyes
- 5 Abhors
- 6 Unoccupied
- 7 Without warning
- 8 Readiness
- 14 Adventurous
- 15 Grouping
- 16 Earlier
- 17 Aim
- 19 Audacity
- 21 Gaelic



Look Good - Feel Great

The best humidifier essential oils to transform your home

Humidifiers can be helpful in adding moisture to your air at home or in combatting the symptoms of colds, flus or allergies when they come knocking. Adding essential oils to your humidifier is a great way to bring these oils into your daily life and transform your home.

In this article, we'll talk you through the top essential oils to use with your humidifier as well as explaining the benefits of each. We'll also explore some of the other simple ways that you can transform your home with essential oils.

What is a humidifier?

A humidifier is a household appliance that helps to maintain indoor humidity levels. They are often used in winter when the air is dry or in regions with low humidity. Low indoor humidity levels can cause health problems such as nosebleeds, static electricity, and increased risk of respiratory infections.

There are two main types of humidifiers:

Evaporative humidifiers work by drawing air through a wet wick, evaporating the water into the air.

Ultrasonic humidifiers use high-frequency vibrations to create a fine mist of water that is released into the air.

Essential oils work best with ultrasonic humidifiers. This is because the high-frequency vibrations help to disperse the essential oils into the air more effectively.

Putting essential oils in a humidifier?

Adding essential oils to your humidifier is a great way to enjoy the



benefits of them and transform your home. Essential oils can help to boost your mood, improve your sleep, and purify the air.

When using essential oils with a humidifier, it's important to use high-quality, pure essential oils. This is because impure essential oils may contain harmful chemicals. It's also important to only use a few drops of essential oil, as too much could be overwhelming.

Continued on page 68

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Benefits of using essential oils with a humidifier

When added to a humidifier, essential oils can:

- Help to cleanse and purify the air
- Boost your mood and energy levels
- Help you to relax and sleep better
- Relieve stress, anxiety, and tension headaches
- Ease cold and flu symptoms
- Soothe sore throats
- Reduce congestion

Best humidifier essential oils

Now that we have explored the benefits of using essential oils with a humidifier, let's take a look at the best essential oils for humidifiers.

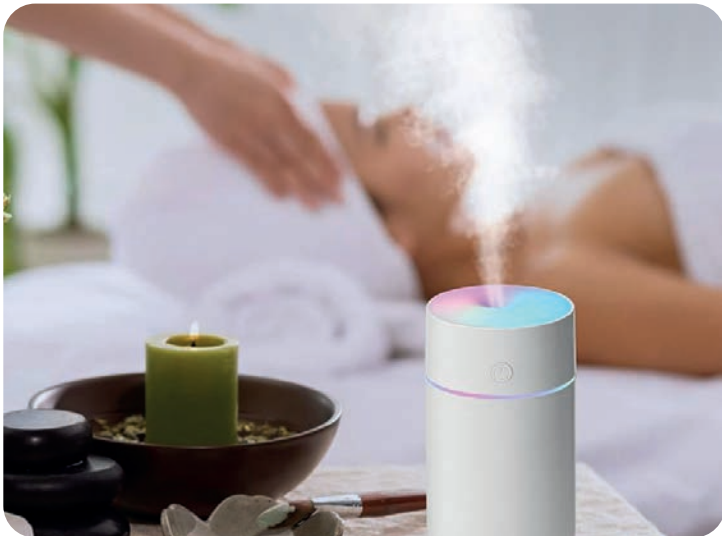
1. Lavender oil

One of the most popular essential oils, lavender oil is well known for its ability to promote relaxation and sleep. This makes lavender an ideal essential oil to add to a humidifier in the bedroom.

Lavender essential oil also has antibacterial and antiseptic properties, making it an effective way to cleanse the air and help to protect against respiratory infections.

2. Lemon oil

With a refreshing and uplifting scent, lemon oil is a popular choice for adding to a humidifier. In fact, this essential oil has been proven to improve concentration and mental performance, so you might find that adding lemon essential oil to your humidifier helps you to focus on work and be more productive.



Lemon essential oil also has antimicrobial properties, so using this essential oil in your humidifier could help to cleanse the air and protect against illnesses such as colds and flu.

3. Eucalyptus oil

Eucalyptus oil is a common option when it comes to humidifier essential oils. This essential oil is found in many cold and flu remedies, thanks to its powerful effect on easing congestion.

However, the benefits of eucalyptus essential oil don't end there. Inhaling eucalyptus oil has also been proven to be an effective method of pain relief, making adding eucalyptus oil to a humidifier a promising natural remedy for those suffering from chronic pain.

4. Bergamot oil

With a citrusy, sweet scent, bergamot oil is another popular choice for adding to a humidifier.



This essential oil has been shown to boost mood and energy levels, making it perfect for using in the morning or when you need an afternoon pick-me-up.

Inhaling bergamot oil has been proven to reduce anxiety and increase feelings of positivity. Anxiety can be a debilitating condition that gets in the way of everyday life. Adding bergamot essential oil to your humidifier can help to ease those feelings of anxiety, enabling you to feel more confident and in control of your life.

5. Peppermint oil

Peppermint oil is a refreshing essential oil with a wide range of benefits. Inhaling peppermint oil has been shown to improve

mental focus and concentration, making it ideal for using while studying or working.

Peppermint oil is also known for its ability to soothe headaches. If you often suffer from tension headaches, using peppermint oil in your humidifier could help to provide relief.

How to use essential oils with a humidifier

Using essential oils with a humidifier is simple. First, add water according to the manufacturer's instructions. Then, add a few drops of your chosen essential oil or oils to the water.

You don't want to overdo the essential oils though, as this can cause irritation. A little goes a long way!

Once you have added the oil to the water, turn on your humidifier and enjoy the benefits of the therapeutic vapours.

Other ways to transform your home with essential oils

In addition to using essential oils with a humidifier, there are many other ways that you can transform your home with these potent plant extracts.

Here are some ideas:

Add a few drops of lavender oil to your pillowcase to help you relax and sleep.

When you're done cooking, clean your kitchen with lemon oil diluted with water to give it a fresh scent and kill any lingering germs.

Mix eucalyptus oil with a carrier oil and massage into your chest to relieve congestion as well as cold and flu symptoms.

Dilute tea tree oil with water and use it as a natural cleaning solution in your bathrooms and throughout your home.

Keep in mind that not all essential oils are safe for everyone, so it's important to do your research before using them.



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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.

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

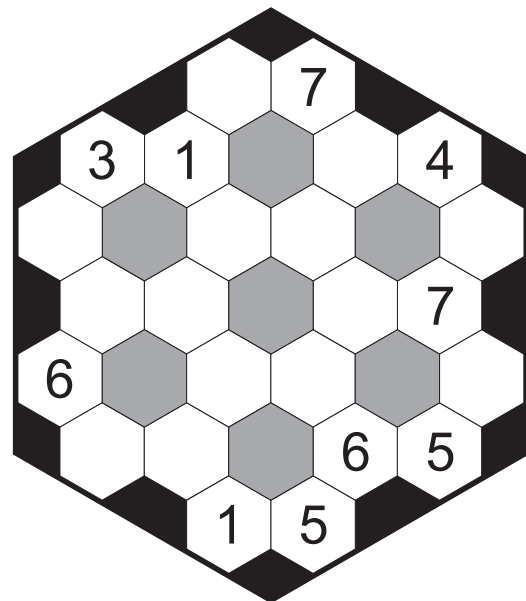
Samurai Sudoku

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

Rosetta

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

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



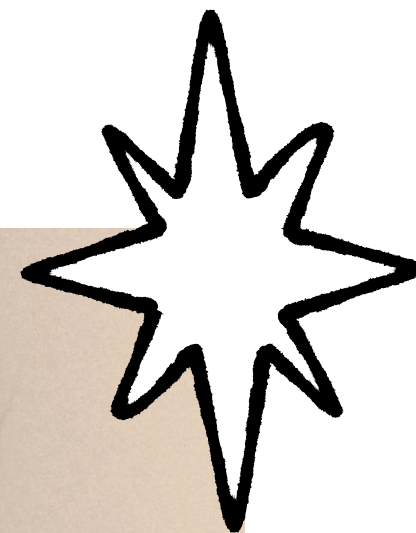
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The Health Benefits of Sand

By Tonia Gray

We are lucky that at the beaches in Almería, sand is everywhere. We walk in it, we bury ourselves in it and we even play with it.

But how can these little grains of rock help us?

Sand is a natural exfoliant

Have you ever noticed that after leaving the beach, the soles of your feet are really soft? This is because you’ve been walking around on sand all day!

The finer the sand, the better the exfoliation.

Although I do not recommend using sand on your face because it can be harsh, for your legs, feet, arms, or torso, the grains make for an extremely healthier alternative to shop bought exfoliants.

It is important to exfoliate your body because you are simultaneously stripping away dead skin cells, thereby making your skin soft to the touch, and also allowing your pores to breathe better, making it less likely for you to get spots and blocked pores.

It is recommended that you exfoliate once or twice a week, so now you have an excuse to head over to the beach!

Using your hands, scoop up a bit of sand (just watch for any glass or dangerous objects), and rub onto your skin, one body part at a time. (If you want, you can take a jar and collect some sand to take home).

Scrub gently and rinse off with plenty of water. Pat dry and apply a good quality moisturiser.

If you are doing this at home, it is best to do this in the garden so you don’t clog up your drains with sand!

If you are hitting the beach all the time, designate a jar of face cream and a bottle of moisturising lotion for your beach cool bag. Keeping it in a cool place will prevent the creams spoiling from excess temperatures.

Walking in sand also helps you stay fit

Do you ever notice that walking on the beach takes so much more effort than walking on hard ground? This is because of the inconsistency and constantly changing location of the grains underneath your feet.

You burn up to fifty percent more calories walking on sand, plus since your muscles are trying so hard to get traction, they get toned a lot faster.

Walking further

Walking on a beach in the sand is so relaxing that most people walk further distances than they normally would on treadmills, tracks or streets. Your steps increase without effort or realisation. An additional benefit is that walking on sand is kinder to our joints as the sand acts as a cushion.

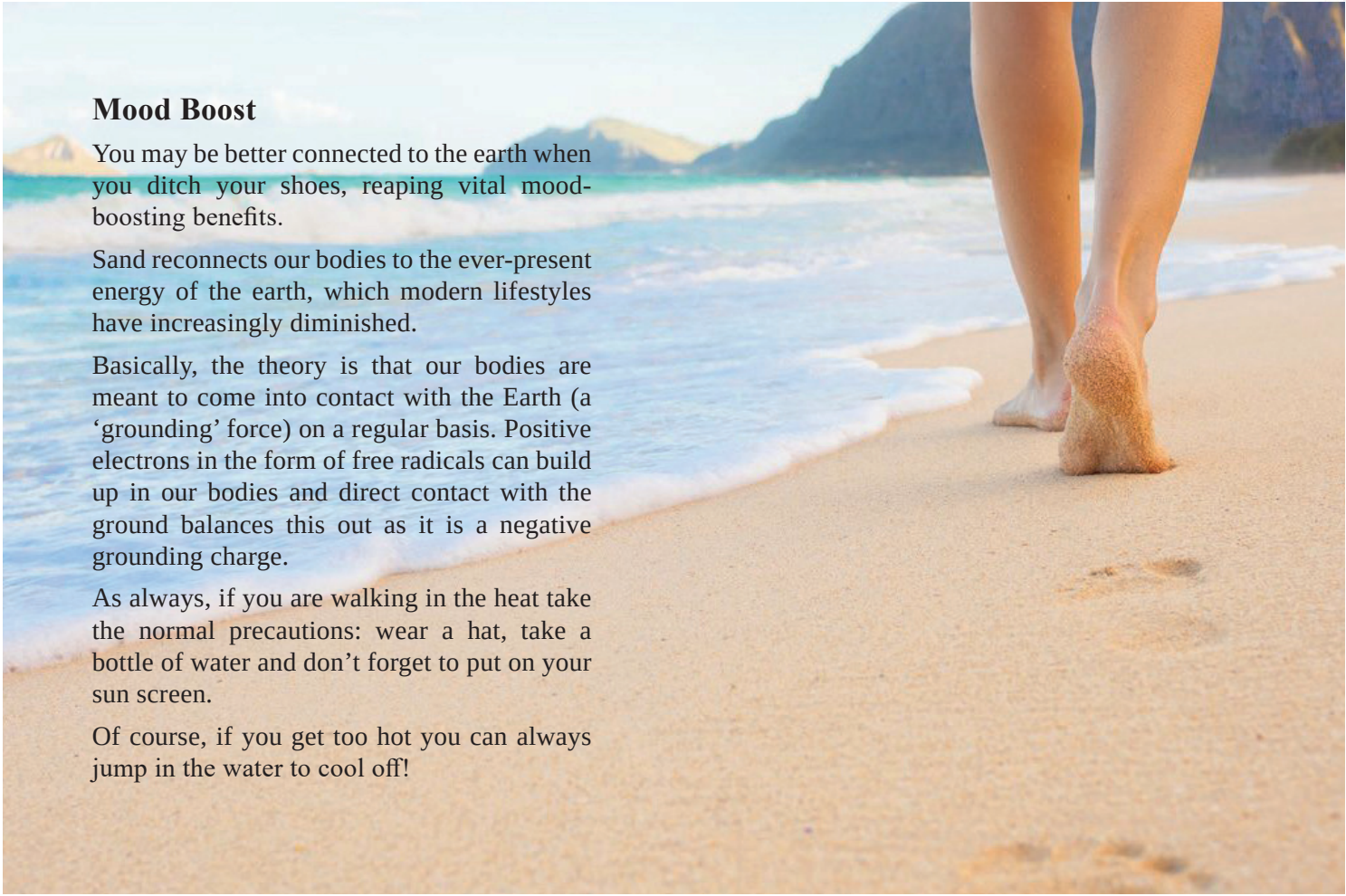
For many of us burning calories is one of the benefits of any exercise. One the primary benefits of walking on a beach is that you will use 20 to 50 percent more calories than you would walking at the same pace on a hard surface.

Sand stimulates your feet

Not to mention when you walk on the sand, you are stimulating nerve endings in your feet, which don’t get used nearly as much when you’re wearing shoes. Far better than the nodules in your foot spa!

Sand helps to reduce your stress

Health advocates say that walking barefoot grounds us. At the very least, it reconnects us to nature’s beauty which helps reduce stress as life finds perspective.



Mood Boost

You may be better connected to the earth when you ditch your shoes, reaping vital mood-boosting benefits.

Sand reconnects our bodies to the ever-present energy of the earth, which modern lifestyles have increasingly diminished.

Basically, the theory is that our bodies are meant to come into contact with the Earth (a ‘grounding’ force) on a regular basis. Positive electrons in the form of free radicals can build up in our bodies and direct contact with the ground balances this out as it is a negative grounding charge.

As always, if you are walking in the heat take the normal precautions: wear a hat, take a bottle of water and don’t forget to put on your sun screen.

Of course, if you get too hot you can always jump in the water to cool off!

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Summer Fatigue

Summer fatigue is more than just feeling a bit tired on a hot day. Considered a form of chronic fatigue syndrome, symptoms include low energy, appetite loss, poor sleep quality, anxiety, headaches, and dizziness.

In hot weather the body works harder to regulate its core temperature, which can lead to increased sweating, and loss of fluids and key minerals like sodium and potassium. B vitamins, magnesium, and iron are especially important as they help convert food into energy and maintain muscle function. Poor eating habits, such as skipping meals or not eating enough nutritious food, can also reduce strength.

Sleep patterns are also affected in hot weather. As well as struggling to get comfortable at night, longer daylight hours delay the release of melatonin, the hormone that makes us sleepy, and tells the body when to rise; leading to later bedtimes and shorter sleep duration.

TIPS

- Drink plenty of water and consider taking a daily electrolyte replacement
- Keep your bedroom at an optimal (~18°C or 65°F), use blackout curtains, and breathable bedding like linen or bamboo
- Limit strenuous outdoor activities during peak heat hours
- Eat nutrient-rich meals, and consider supplements like CoQ10, iron, magnesium and Bvitamins

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MARKET REPORT
 Where & When
 Is your local market listed?
 If not please let us know



The Motoring Age, the Automobile and Britain 1896-1939

It takes a considerable effort of will to see the rotting tin box parked outside our houses as a liberator, a personal tonic or a transport of delight. And yet the dream continues to bowl along, despite everything that dreary speed-bumped reality can do to hold it back. Observe the tons of newsprint and the hours of television time devoted to new cars. And yet, as this interesting history of the early part of Britain's motoring experience demonstrates, the Golden Age of motoring, like all Golden Ages, has always been in the past.

The early adopters, as we would call them now, rushed into their expensive and dangerous hobby with proselytising zeal. J J Hissey, a man of the horse-and-cart age, getting his first taste of motor travel in 1906 said "There is joy in speed, and poetry in it, and danger too. But a rush at full speed in a motor car over a lonely road, and through a deserted country, wide and open, is an experience to be ever afterwards remembered. Truly, for such a moment life is worth living."



Continued on page 78

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..... Continued from page 77

In their tweedy way, such commentators are Britain's answer to Marinetti, whose futurist manifesto of 1909 declared: "We want to hymn the man at the wheel, who hurls the lance of his spirit across the Earth, along the circle of its orbit."

The speed-freaks were a wealthy and well-connected market for the automobile, but they were a short-lived market - sometimes literally.

At the start, the development of cars ran neck and neck with the development of the aeroplane, and determined thrill-seekers quickly turned their attentions to the skies if they could afford it. It is no coincidence that several of the early motoring pioneers - notably Charles Rolls - ended their days not on the Kingston by-pass but in the wreckage of a shattered aircraft.

It took a while for the car to make its real social impact. Indeed, it is arguable that the bicycle was a more socially significant invention than the private car. For most people on even average incomes, the private car was an impossible.

Meanwhile, the two-wheeled steed was getting them out of their homes, away from prying parents and domestic chores, and into education, urban jobs and unsupervised attachments. Feminism and sexual liberation arrived by pedal power.

The car at first required a chauffeur or a travelling engineer. Even once it had become reliable, it remained an expensive item, affordable



only to the seriously rich or those for whom it would be a business tool, for instance, a family doctor, who could do now many more calls in a working day. Small wonder that for many brought up before the war, the doctor was the only car-owner they ever encountered.

For the leisure driver, the pleasures of the open road were astonishingly short-lived. Until 1896, cars were required to be preceded by a person on foot (the famed red flag was abolished 18 years earlier) and were limited to 4mph. But after "liberation", the first complaints of heavy traffic and parking problems took only 10 years to arrive, along with driving licences, registration and number plates.

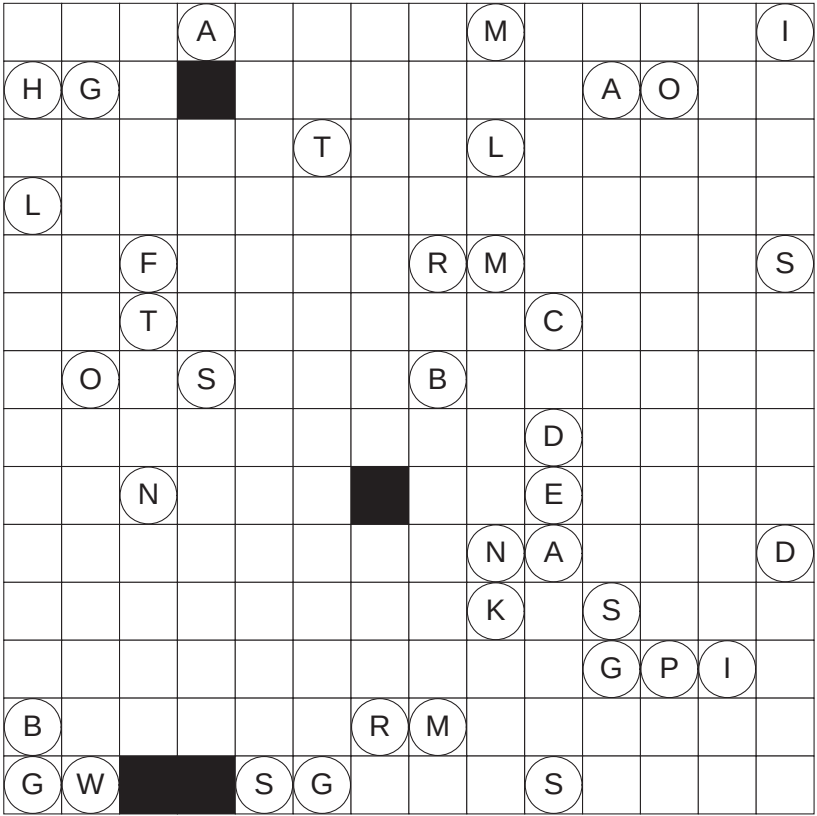
By modern standards, cars were still rare, but the increase had been rapid, from 8,000 in 1905 to 132,000 at the outbreak of World War One, not to mention 51,000 charabancs and motor buses.

The war represented only a brief hiatus in the automobile's progress, so that by 1921, there were attempts to deal with the impending chaos with what would now be called an integrated transport policy, balancing road and rail. Then, as now, this was an illusion.

Road transport, for freight as well as people, had it all its own way. And soon the automobile was rebuilding Britain in its own image. Social life, sex, domestic finances, architecture, work, cities and the countryside were all powerfully affected.

Puzzle Time

Reverse Word Search



Puzzle solutions on page 82

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!

Allies	Grabs	Obese
Alternates	Grate	Overcoat
Analyst	Hales	Pasta
Attired	Insurmountable	Reefs
Balances	Intuitively	Rotten
Birth	Irons	Saying
Burst	Keyed	Serene
Carol	Lamer	Slick
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DODGE NITRO | 2.8 DIESEL | 2008 | 155.000



JAGUAR F-PACE | 2.0 DIESEL | 2017 | 66.000



SKODA KODIAQ | 2.0 DIESEL | 2021 | 245.000



MINI COOPER | 1.5 PETROL | 2017 | 90,000



MINI COOPER S | 1.6 PETROL | 2012 | 140.000 KMS



KIA SPORTAGE | 1.6 PETROL | HYBRID | 2023 | 15.000



KIA CEEB | 1.4 DIESEL | 2013 | 195 000



MERC E-CLASS AMG | 6.3 PETROL | 2007 | 140 000



OPEL CASCADA | 1.6 PETROL | 2014 | 130.000



PEUGEOT 2008 | 1.2 PETROL | 2015 | 98.200

The advertisement is for PADPALL MOTORS CAR RENTAL ALBOX. It features a dark background with orange accents. On the left, there are three circular icons representing different vehicle categories: a small circle with '€30' for 'Small & Medium Cars', a medium circle with '€45' for '7 Seaters', and a large circle with '€90' for '9 Seaters'. Below these icons are images of a white van and a yellow car. To the right, the company name 'PADPALL MOTORS' is at the top, followed by 'CAR RENTAL' in large letters, and 'ALBOX' below it. A logo consisting of a stylized 'P' inside a circle is also present. A percentage sign icon is next to the text 'Discounted rates start after 7 days of rental'. At the bottom, there is contact information: a phone icon with the number '950 173 200', an email icon with 'motors@padpall.com', and a globe icon with 'www.padpall.com'. A shield icon with a checkmark and the text 'FULLY LEGAL' is located in the bottom right corner.

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All of these automotive cul de sacs were sold in tiny numbers and as a result they're now pretty much forgotten. In some cases that's entirely deserved but some deserved a better fate:



Volvo P1900 (1956)

No, that's not a typo. Before the P1800 came the P1900 but just 68 were made. It was a glassfibre-bodied open-topped sports car, inspired by the plastic Chevrolet Corvette.

Citroen LN (1976)

Nothing more than a rebadged Peugeot 104 with a 2CV engine, the LN was remarkably unremarkable; it was sold only in its home market. But UK consumers were able to buy the LN's successor, the four-cylinder LNA with Pug 104 power. Few did though.



Paramount 1.5-Litre (1950)

Throughout the 1950s there seemed to be a new low-volume British car maker springing up every week. Paramount was based in Derbyshire and built Ford-engined sporting cars but just 70 or so were made before production ended in 1956.



Continued on page 82

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RENAULT KANGOO EXPRESS
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YEAR 2021

11.900€

PEUGEOT BOXER COMBI
2.2BHDl 140cv 68.000km
9 seats YEAR 2020

23.000€

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CITROEN C3 FEEL
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YEAR 2019

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MITSUBISHI ASX KAITEKI
1.6Petrol 120cv 56.000km
YEAR 2019

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English Speaking Staff

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info@peugeotatibox.es - www.peugeotatibox.es

No Deposit Finance
Available
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..... Continued from page 81

Marauder (1950)

George Mackie and Peter Wilks left the Rover Car Company to build their own sportscar in conjunction with Spen King; the Rover P4-based Marauder was the result. All of 15 were made though.

Goliath GP700 (1950)

Not pictured

Despite being blessed with a mere two-cylinder two-stroke 688cc engine, the GP700 was highly innovative with front-wheel drive, full-width styling and from 1952 there was even fuel injection, a production car first.



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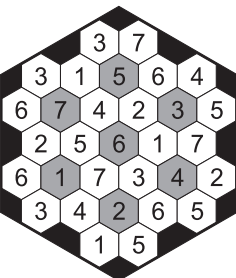
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6	3	4	1	5	2	9	8	7
2	8	9	6	7	3	1	4	5
7	5	1	4	9	8	2	3	6

Puzzle Time Solutions



Elva Courier (1958)

Taking its name from the French for 'she goes' (elle va), the Courier was Elva's most successful model. Around 400 examples were made between 1958 and 1961, most powered by an MGA or MGB engine.

Monteverdi 375 (1967)

Swiss BMW importer Peter Monteverdi moved into building ultra-exclusive exotica in 1967; over the next decade there would be a string of Chrysler-engined specials including the splendid 7.0-litre 375L High Speed pictured here.



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