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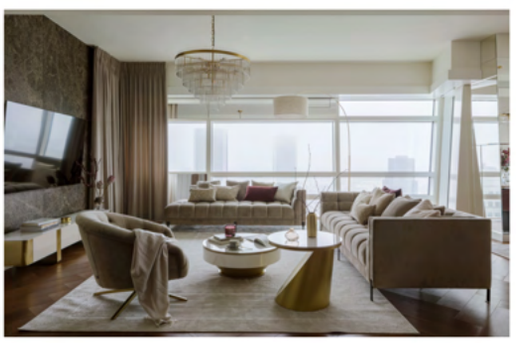

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Explore TOP 7
Pueblos Blancos

frigiliana
luz de andalucía

Andalusia offers countless ways to explore its rich culture and landscapes - whether by day or night, through food, or along its many scenic routes. One of the most iconic routes is the tour of the **Pueblos Blancos (white villages)**, named for their brilliant whitewashed houses. This traditional lime coating not only reflects the intense summer heat but also keeps the interiors cool and inviting. Scattered across the rolling hills and mountains, these villages are easily spotted from the main roads, their gleaming facades standing out against the lush green or arid landscapes. Their charming streets, brimming with colorful flowers, create a cozy atmosphere that makes visitors fall in love with them. We've curated our Top 7 Pueblos Blancos to visit in Andalusia.

Art. Seb Hola Polacos
Editor Matt Jones

Setenil de las Bodegas
Abrith el cielo es diferente

Vejer de la Frontera

Mijas

1 Frigiliana

Frigiliana, known as one of Spain's most beautiful villages, is celebrated for its Moorish old town or "Barribarto". This part of town features a labyrinth of narrow, winding streets and immaculate whitewashed houses adorned with colourful ceramics and flower pots. The town's historical roots date back to the 9th century and its Moorish heritage is still very much alive. The Church of San Antonio, built in the 16th century is a must-visit for its simple yet elegant architecture. Frigiliana is also famous for hosting the annual "Festival of the Three Cultures", which celebrates the harmonious coexistence of Christian, Jewish and Muslim cultures in its history. Don't miss a stroll along the "Avenida de San Sebastián" or a visit to the "El Ingenio", a former sugar cane factory turned cultural center.

3 Vejer de la Frontera

② Setenil de las Bodegas

Setenil de las Bodegas most striking feature is the way its houses are built into and beneath massive rock overhangs, giving the town a unique appearance. The town developed from a fortress originally built by the Moors, and some remnants of this history can still be seen today. The name "de las Bodegas" refers to the wine cellars that once thrived here due to the town's ideal cool conditions under the cliffs. Visitors can walk along the "Calle Cuevas del Sol" and "Calle Cuevas de la Sombra", where you'll find houses literally carved into the rock, and many charming tapas bars serving delicious local dishes. The 12th-century "Nazari Castle" offers a glimpse into the town's strategic military importance during the Reconquista, and the "Church of La Encarnación" is another historical highlight.

This hilltop town has a long history that dates back to Phoenician times. Its iconic "Plaza de España", with its stunning Moorish-style tiled fountain, is one of the most photographed places in Andalusia. The narrow streets, lined with whitewashed houses, lead to impressive sites such as the "Castillo de Vejer", an 11th-century castle with panoramic views of the town and the surrounding countryside. Vejer was under Moorish rule for five centuries, and this is reflected in its architecture and layout. "La Cobijada", a statue of a woman wearing the traditional covered clothing of Vejer's women, can be found in the town, symbolising this unique tradition. For a tranquil experience, visit the nearby "El Palmar beach", one of the best in the region.

4 Zahara de la Sierra

The dramatic hilltop position of Zahara de la Sierra is not just for show; it was of great strategic importance during the Reconquista. The "Torre del Homenaje", a 13th-century castle tower, offers breathtaking views of the lush valleys, the Zahara-El Gastor reservoir, and the surrounding mountains. This small town has preserved much of its medieval charm with its steep cobbled streets and whitewashed homes, many of which are decorated with bright flowers. "Santa María de la Mesa Church", a beautiful baroque church, stands as a focal point of the town's history. Zahara de la Sierra is also the starting point for numerous outdoor activities like hiking trails in the "Sierra de Grazalema Natural Park", one of the greenest and most biologically diverse areas in Spain.

5 Mijas Pueblo

One of the most visited Pueblo Blancos, Mijas Pueblo's location on the mountainside provides stunning views of the Mediterranean coastline. One of the most famous attractions here is the "Ermita de la Virgen de la Peña", a chapel carved into the rock that holds a statue of the Virgin Mary, the town's patron saint. The "Mijas Bullring" (Plaza de Toros), built in 1900, is also unique with its oval shape rather than the more typical circular arenas. Art lovers will enjoy the "CAC Mijas" (Centro de Arte Contemporáneo), which houses an impressive collection of contemporary and Picasso ceramics. A unique aspect of Mijas Pueblo is the "Donkey Taxi", a tribute to the donkeys that were historically used by local farmers for transportation. For panoramic views, visit the "Mirador del Compás" or take a walk up to the "Ermita del Calvario", which offers a peaceful retreat and spectacular vistas.

6 Ojén

Ojén sits on the edge of the Sierra de las Nieves Natural Park and its history is deeply rooted in the region's Moorish past. This peaceful village has retained its traditional Andalusian charm, with picturesque plazas and whitewashed buildings. One of the most notable sites is the "Iglesia de La Encarnación", a 16th-century church built over a former mosque, showcasing a blend of architectural styles. Ojén is particularly famous for its "Aguardiente Festival", celebrating the local production of anise liqueur, a tradition that dates back centuries. The town is surrounded by nature, with nearby attractions like the "Cueva de las Columnas", a cave used by prehistoric settlers, and "El Juanar", a scenic hiking area offering views of Marbella and the coast. Ojén's proximity to the Sierra de las Nieves also makes it a great starting point for outdoor activities like hiking and birdwatching.

7 Istán

Nestled in the Sierra de las Nieves, Istán is often called "The Spring of the Costa del Sol" due to its abundant natural water sources. The "Nacimientos de Río Verde" (Green River Springs) and the town's natural springs provide a serene environment, perfect for a peaceful retreat. Istán has Moorish origins, which can still be seen in its layout and architecture, with narrow streets winding through whitewashed houses. A significant historical site is the "Church of San Miguel", built in the 16th century on the foundations of a mosque. Istán is ideal for nature lovers, as it offers various hiking trails that explore the nearby "Istán Reservoir" and the "Sierra de las Nieves Natural Park", a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. The town remains relatively undiscovered by tourists, making it a tranquil spot for those seeking a more authentic experience.

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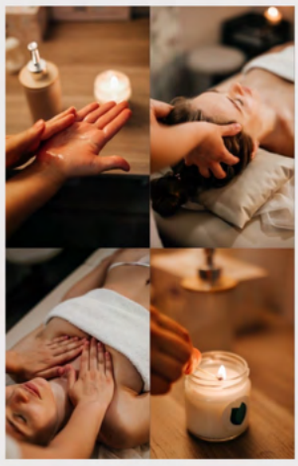

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MARBELLA
The Jewel of the Costa del Sol

Marbella is an enchanting coastal city in the south of Spain, nestled between the sparkling waters of the Mediterranean and the majestic Sierra Blanca mountain range. Located in the province of Málaga, it has evolved from a small fishing village into one of the most glamorous and sought-after destinations in Europe. With a population of around 150,000, which swells to nearly half a million during peak tourist season, Marbella thrives on its reputation for luxury, exclusivity and Mediterranean charm.

Art. Seb Hola Polacos
Editor Matt Jones

From Humble Beginnings to Luxurious Heights

Marbella's history is a journey of contrasts, reflecting its evolution from a small, unassuming fishing village to one of the most glamorous and prestigious locations on the global stage. This transformation, which unfolded over several centuries, showcases Marbella's ability to adapt and thrive, evolving from a center of agricultural and mining activity into a playground for the world's elite.

Ancient Roots and Early History

Marbella's origins can be traced back to the Phoenicians and Romans, who recognized the strategic importance of its coastal location. The town, then known as Salduba during Roman times, was a modest settlement that benefited from its fertile lands and proximity to the sea, making it an important location for trade. Remnants of Roman civilization are still visible in Marbella today, particularly at the Vega del Mar Basilica and the Roman Villa near San Pedro de Alcántara, where mosaics and ruins reflect its ancient past.

The town gained more prominence during the Moorish occupation (711-1485), when it became known as Marbil-la, the name from which Marbella derives. Under the Moors, the town expanded and thrived as part of the Caliphate of Córdoba. The Arab Fortress, whose ruins still stand today, was built during this period to protect the town from invaders, and the layout of Marbella's Casco Antiguo (Old Town) retains its labyrinthine, medieval design, with narrow streets and whitewashed houses that harken back to its Moorish roots. The Muslim Medina walls, some sections of which remain, highlight the town's strategic military importance during this time.

The Reconquista and Agricultural Growth

In 1485, Marbella was conquered by the Catholic Monarchs during the final stages of the Reconquista, marking the end of centuries of Moorish rule. With the fall of Granada in 1492, Marbella became part of the Christian Kingdom of Castile, and the town began to shift its economy towards agriculture. In particular, the surrounding fertile lands supported the production of olive oil, citrus fruits, and vineyards.

During this period, new Christian institutions were established, including the Iglesia de la Encarnación (Church of the Incarnation), built in the 16th century, and the Plaza de los Naranjos, which became the heart of the newly Christianised town. The town, though still small, enjoyed modest growth due to its agricultural resources and strategic location along the coast.

XIX The 19th Century Marbella's Industrial Era

Few visitors today are aware that Marbella was once a bustling industrial center in the 19th century. Following Spain's wars of independence and the upheaval that followed, Marbella found new life as a hub for iron ore mining and iron production. The discovery of rich deposits of iron ore in the surrounding mountains led to the establishment of several iron foundries, which became the driving force of the local economy.

The La Concepción Iron Foundry, built in 1832 by the Heredia family, was one of the most advanced of its time in Spain. Marbella became a regional industrial leader, producing large quantities of iron for both domestic use and export. The boom in iron production also led to the construction of the San Luis Mine in nearby Ojén, further cementing Marbella's importance as an industrial town.

However, this prosperity was short-lived. By the late 19th century, competition from more efficient industrial centers, coupled with the depletion of local resources, led to a decline in Marbella's mining and iron industries. The town returned to its agrarian roots, with the local economy once again dependent on fishing and agriculture.

XX The 20th Century The Birth of Tourism

The true turning point in Marbella's history came in the mid-20th century, when it began its transformation into the luxury destination it is known as today. The town was a quiet fishing village of just over 1,000 inhabitants when Ricardo Soriano, a Spanish nobleman, bought land near Marbella in the early 1940s. In 1945, he opened the El Rodeo resort, attracting his aristocratic and wealthy friends to the area, and unknowingly setting the stage for Marbella's tourism boom.

Soriano's nephew, Prince Alfonso of Hohenlohe-Langenburg, is credited with truly transforming Marbella into a global luxury destination. In 1947, he purchased Finca Santa Margarita, which he later turned into the Marbella Club Hotel, opening it in 1954. The hotel quickly became a magnet for international jet-setters, royalty, and celebrities, including Grace Kelly, Audrey Hepburn, and Ava Gardner. This marked the birth of Marbella as a glamorous resort town, where Europe's elite could escape to the sun-drenched coast in an atmosphere of exclusivity.

The Marbella Club Hotel set the tone for Marbella's future development: luxury villas, beach clubs, and high-end resorts began to spring up along the coast, solidifying Marbella's reputation as a destination for the rich and famous.

In 1860, the 1st Marquess of Duero (on the left) established an agricultural colony aimed at providing work for unemployed ironworkers, which later became the core of what is now San Pedro de Alcántara.

The Rise of Puerto Banús

In the 1970s, Marbella's transformation into a luxury hub accelerated with the construction of Puerto Banús, a lavish marina designed by local developer José Banús. Inaugurated in 1970, with an extravagant opening party that featured celebrities like Julio Iglesias and 1700 guests feasting on 22 kilos of caviar, Puerto Banús quickly became one of the most famous marinas in the world. Luxury yachts, designer boutiques, and upscale restaurants filled the harbor, attracting the international elite and adding a new layer of glamour to Marbella.

During this period, Marbella became the playground of Saudi Arabian King Fahd, whose visits were accompanied by an entourage that reportedly spent millions of euros a day, further enhancing the town's reputation for extravagance. Marbella's connection to Middle Eastern royalty, European aristocrats and Hollywood stars was cemented during these decades.

Aftermath and Recovery

In the years that followed, Marbella worked to recover from the scandal. Legal battles over the illegal constructions continued for years, with some properties being demolished or retroactively approved. While the scandal tarnished Marbella's image, the city's luxurious allure remained intact and it continued to be a popular destination for the wealthy and famous.

The 1990s and Political Scandal
Operation Malaya

While Marbella is known today for its glamour and wealth, the 1990s marked a dark chapter in its history. The city became embroiled in one of the most notorious political and corruption scandals in Spain, largely associated with its controversial mayor at the time, Jesús Gil.

Jesús Gil, a flamboyant real estate tycoon and former president of Atlético Madrid football club, was elected mayor of Marbella in 1991. His entrance into politics was unconventional - he ran the town as though it were his personal enterprise. Known for his lavish lifestyle, larger-than-life personality, and his unorthodox approach to governance, Gil became both a beloved figure and a polarizing force in Marbella. He founded the **GIL party**, which rapidly gained control of Marbella's local government.

Under Gil's administration, Marbella experienced a construction boom, attracting international attention and millions in investment. The city flourished, with luxury developments, high-end shops, and exclusive resorts springing up seemingly overnight. The wealth flooding into Marbella helped transform it from a small fishing village into a destination for the global elite. However, this rapid transformation came at a cost.

Behind the scenes, Gil's governance was marred by extensive corruption. His administration was accused of issuing **thousands of illegal building permits**, allowing developers to bypass regulations in exchange for bribes. Entire neighborhoods, some consisting of thousands of homes, were built without proper authorization, violating Spain's urban planning laws. Many of these illegal developments were constructed in protected areas or without sufficient infrastructure to support them.

The real estate bubble in Marbella grew alongside the illegal construction, with many investors unaware that their properties were, in fact, unapproved. These developments brought wealth to a select few, but also created long-term problems for the city, including environmental degradation, overdevelopment, and an unsustainable urban sprawl.

Jesús Gil's reign as mayor lasted for over a decade, but his controversial tenure came crashing down in the early 2000s. Following years of investigations, **Operation Malaya was launched in 2006** - one of the largest anti-corruption operations in Spain's history. The investigation revealed the depth of the corruption in Marbella's government, with charges ranging from **embezzlement and bribery to money laundering**. Gil had already resigned in 2002 following legal troubles, but the investigation implicated many of his associates and successors.

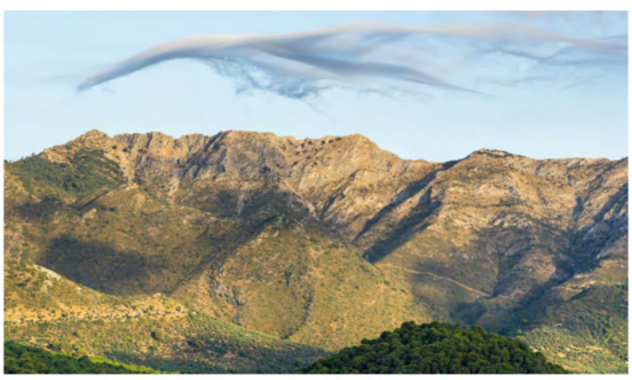
In March 2006, following the arrests of then-mayor **Marisol Yagüe** and deputy mayor **Isabel García Marcos**, Marbella's city council was dissolved by the Spanish government - a drastic measure taken to clean up the widespread corruption. A caretaker administration was appointed to govern the city and begin the arduous process of rectifying the illegal developments and unraveling the financial mismanagement.

The **Malaya Case** resulted in numerous convictions of public officials and developers involved in the widespread corruption scheme. However, the damage to Marbella's reputation was significant, and the city became a symbol of political corruption in Spain.

The dark chapter of the 1990s and the early 2000s serves as a stark contrast to Marbella's glamorous present. The city's ability to rise above its political scandals and restore its reputation as a world-class destination highlights its resilience and enduring appeal. Today, Marbella is again known for its luxury, but with a sharper focus on sustainable growth and proper governance, avoiding the mistakes of its turbulent past.

Marbella's Natural Beauty and Outdoor Activities

While Marbella is often celebrated for its luxurious lifestyle and glamorous nightlife, its natural beauty and outdoor activities are equally enticing. Situated between the azure Mediterranean Sea and the towering Sierra Blanca mountain range, Marbella offers a stunning landscape with countless opportunities for outdoor exploration, making it an ideal destination for nature lovers, adventure seekers, and those looking to unwind in a picturesque setting.



Sierra Blanca

La Concha

The **Sierra Blanca mountains**, which form a dramatic backdrop to Marbella, create a natural amphitheater for the town, sheltering it from strong northern winds and contributing to its unique microclimate. Among the peaks of the Sierra Blanca, **La Concha** stands out as one of the most iconic. The mountain's name, which means "The Shell," is inspired by its distinctive curved shape. Hiking to the summit of La Concha is one of the most popular outdoor activities in the region. Although the trail is challenging, the views from the top are well worth the effort. On a clear day, hikers are rewarded with breathtaking panoramic views, stretching from the **Strait of Gibraltar** to the Moroccan coast, and over the shimmering Mediterranean Sea.

For those seeking a less strenuous trek, there are various walking trails around Marbella that offer equally beautiful views without the intensity of a mountain hike. **Juanar Viewpoint**, just outside of Marbella near Ojén, offers stunning vistas of the coastline and countryside with a relatively easy hike, ideal for families.

Marbella is home to 27 kilometers of coastline, adorned with some of the finest beaches in Andalusia. From **Cabopino Beach** with its natural sand dunes to the more vibrant and cosmopolitan **Nikki Beach**, Marbella's beaches cater to every type of beachgoer. The **Paseo Marítimo**, or seafront promenade, stretches for several kilometers along the coast and is perfect for leisurely walks, jogging, or cycling, offering endless views of the Mediterranean.

For water enthusiasts, the warm, calm waters of the Mediterranean are ideal for a variety of water sports. **Jet skiing, parasailing, paddleboarding, and kite surfing** are among the many activities on offer. The relatively calm sea conditions and the abundance of well-equipped marinas make Marbella a fantastic place for sailing and yachting. The Puerto Banús marina, in particular, is not only a playground for the rich with its luxury yachts but also offers boat rentals and charters for those eager to explore the Costa del Sol by sea.

Costa del Golf
Adventure, Rivers, Canyons and Waterfalls

The Costa del Sol is often referred to as the Costa del Golf due to its unrivaled number of world-class golf courses. Marbella itself is a golfer's paradise, boasting 21 golf courses, including some of Europe's most prestigious. The **Nueva Andalucía Golf Valley** is renowned for its trio of courses: **Las Brisas, Aloha, and Los Naranjos**, which offer stunning mountain views and challenging layouts.

The area attracts professionals and amateurs alike, with excellent facilities and favorable weather that make golfing a year-round activity. Interestingly, some courses, such as **La Dama de Noche**, are equipped with floodlights, allowing for night golfing—a unique experience under the stars. Marbella's golf culture has become so ingrained that it has developed a form of tourism specifically around golf, with visitors often timing their trips to coincide with the cooler months of autumn and spring, when conditions are perfect for the sport.

Beyond golf and water sports, Marbella also appeals to those looking for more adventurous pursuits. The mountains surrounding Marbella offer a variety of activities, from **mountain biking** to **rock climbing** and **canyoning**. For those interested in flora and fauna, **Eco Reserva Ojén**, just a short drive from Marbella, is an ecological park where visitors can observe local wildlife such as deer, wild boar, and birds of prey in their natural habitat. The park's focus on sustainable tourism offers a great opportunity for families and nature lovers to interact with animals and learn about the region's biodiversity.

For an even more immersive nature experience, **Cueva del Gato**, a stunning cave system near the village of Ronda, provides an awe-inspiring adventure. This natural wonder features a crystal-clear underground lake and cascading waterfalls, offering a peaceful respite from the coastal heat.

While Marbella is famous for its beaches, few know about its hidden treasures tucked away in the mountains and valleys. One of these gems is the **Guadalmina River Canyon**, or **Charco de las Mozas**, located near the village of Benahavís, a short drive from Marbella. This natural canyon is perfect for **wild swimming** and **canyoning**, with its clear pools, small waterfalls, and dramatic cliffs. Adventurers can hike through the canyon or even partake in river tubing, making it an exciting day trip for both thrill-seekers and families.

In the nearby Sierra de las Nieves Natural Park, recently declared a **UNESCO Biosphere Reserve**, visitors can find hidden waterfalls and untouched wilderness. The park is home to rare Spanish fir trees, or pinsapos, and offers more advanced hiking trails for those looking to experience the raw beauty of southern Spain.

Nature in Marbella extends beyond wild trails and beaches. The town also boasts a unique collection of curated greenery. **The Bonsai Museum, opened in 1992**, is the first of its kind in Spain and houses an impressive collection of ancient bonsai trees, some of which are up to 400 years old. These delicate, miniaturized trees are displayed in a serene setting, offering a peaceful escape within the city.

In addition to the Bonsai Museum, Marbella is known for its beautifully manicured parks, such as the **Alameda Park** and **Constitution Park**, which are perfect for leisurely strolls amidst fountains, sculptures, and lush greenery. The intricate, hand-tiled benches in Alameda Park showcase Andalusian craftsmanship at its finest, while the shaded pathways offer a cool retreat on warm days.

Salvador Dali & Marbella

Salvador Dalí, a Spanish painter, sculptor, graphic artist and writer, is regarded as one of the most prominent surrealists of the 20th century. His work is defined not only by extraordinary imagination but also by technical precision and a deep fascination with psycho-analysis, dreams and the subconscious. Although Dalí is most closely associated with the region of Catalonia, where he was born and spent much of his life, his influence extended to other parts of Spain, including Marbella.

Art. Hola Polacos
Editor Matt Jones

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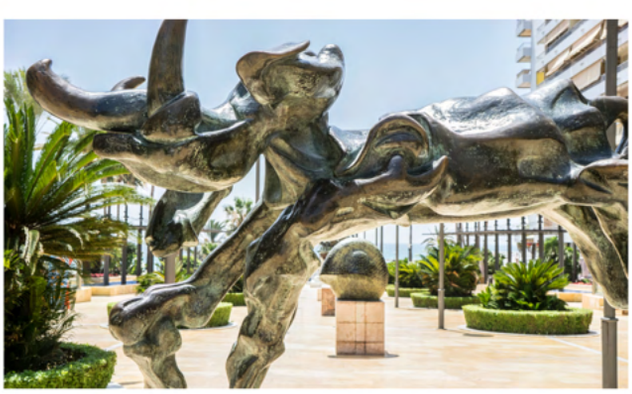
Salvador Dalí 1945

In Marbella, Salvador Dalí left a lasting mark with several artworks and his influence on the local artistic environment.

During the 1970s and 1980s, Marbella became a meeting point for artists, celebrities and personalities from around the world, and Dalí, with his eccentric lifestyle and charismatic presence, fit perfectly into the atmosphere of the city. **One of the most notable landmarks is the Avenida del Mar, a central promenade in Marbella**, where a series of Dalí's sculptures can be admired. These include works like **"Nude Woman Climbing a Staircase","Trajan on Horseback" and "Dalí's Wife Looking Out the Window".**

These bronze sculptures attract both tourists and art lovers alike, becoming symbolic representations of the city. Dalí's presence in Marbella has significantly shaped the city's artistic image. His works not only draw art enthusiasts from around the world but also support the local tourism industry and economy.

Additionally, Dalí, as a cultural and artistic figure, contributed to Marbella's rise as a gathering place for artists and intellectuals. This enhanced the city's cultural and artistic scene, enriching its reputation far beyond just a luxury vacation destination. The sculptures and installations by Dalí in Marbella, particularly those on Avenida del Mar, are among the city's most famous public artworks. These pieces add a distinctive flair to the urban landscape, making the city an important stop for anyone interested in art and culture. Dalí's influence in Marbella not only reflects his broader impact on surrealism but also highlights how his legacy continues to inspire and shape artistic communities worldwide.



Malaga 2030

Transforming the City Through Strategic Investments.

Málaga is undergoing a transformative journey through a series of strategic investments aimed at modernizing infrastructure, promoting sustainability and establishing itself as a global tech and cultural hub. The Málaga 2030 initiative includes several large-scale projects that have already started or are planned to finish by 2031, significantly reshaping the city's urban landscape and economy.

Art. Seb Hola Polacos
Editor Matt Jones

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Key Areas of Investment and Timelines

Urban Infrastructure and Mobility

- **Green Mobility Projects:**
  - Ongoing since 2020: The expansion of metro lines and the implementation of electric bus routes is already underway, with metro line 3 expected to be completed by 2027.
  - Bike-sharing system expansion (2024–2026): Additional stations and electric bike options will be introduced across the city.

- **Smart City Initiatives:**
  - Began in 2019 and ongoing: Málaga is implementing smart city solutions such as energy-efficient street lighting and intelligent traffic systems, with further developments expected through 2025.
  - Completion by 2028: The city's EV charging infrastructure is set to be fully operational by this time, supporting a wider adoption of electric vehicles.

- **Urban Redevelopment**:
  - 2021–2029: Redevelopment projects in key urban areas such as the historic center, the waterfront, and residential neighborhoods have already begun, with completion scheduled by 2029.
  - 2025: The opening of newly designed public squares and pedestrian zones.

Innovation and Technology Hub

- **Málaga TechPark (PTA):**
  - Ongoing since 2020: Expansion of Málaga TechPark, with new offices and R&D facilities expected to be fully completed by 2026. This aims to attract more startups and international companies.

- **Digital Transformation:**
  - 2023–2027: Investments in 5G and high-speed internet are currently underway, with the aim of full city-wide coverage by 2027.

- **Innovation Districts:**
  - 2024–2030: Development of innovation districts focused on biotechnology, health tech and fintech are set to begin in 2024, with completion targeted by 2030.

Tourism and Cultural Development

- **Cultural Investments:**
  - Began in 2021: Significant investments in new museums and the renovation of cultural sites are ongoing. Key projects, such as the Picasso Center expansion and new contemporary art galleries, are expected to open by 2026.

- **Port of Málaga Expansion:**
  - 2022–2028: The expansion of Málaga's port began in 2022, with the goal of accommodating larger cruise ships and more international visitors. The port and surrounding waterfront redevelopment will be fully completed by 2028.
  - 2025: New leisure and dining facilities along the waterfront are scheduled to open to the public.

Urban Infrastructure and Mobility

- **Green Spaces and Parks:**
  - 2023–2030: Plans for new parks, ecological corridors and the reforestation of urban areas are already in progress. The city's largest new urban park, Parque del Guadalhorce, will open in 2026, with additional projects continuing until 2030.

- **Sustainable Energy Projects:**
  - Ongoing since 2020: Málaga has been investing in solar and wind energy infrastructure, with major solar farms expected to be completed by 2027. By 2030, the city aims to generate a significant portion of its energy from renewable sources.

- **Circular Economy Initiatives:**
  - 2023–2029: New waste management and recycling systems are being developed, with an aim for full implementation by 2029. This will create a more sustainable, low-waste economy for the city.

The Málaga 2030 initiative represents a bold vision of urban renewal, economic transformation and environmental sustainability. Through carefully planned investments, Málaga is positioning itself as a leader in innovation, tourism and green living.

By 2031, the city will not only offer an improved quality of life for its residents but will also be a major player in Spain's economic and cultural landscape, making it a model for other cities worldwide.

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Agustin Davio & Caroline Lips

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Corrida de Toros

Bullfighting, known in Spanish as "corrida de toros" is one of the most polarizing and complex elements of Spanish culture.

To some, it is a brutal and heartless practice; to others, it is an art form that embodies the drama, passion, and history of Spain itself. The spectacle has origins dating back to ancient times, with bulls being revered and worshipped as far back as biblical eras, symbolizing strength and virility.

Over centuries, they have played significant roles in religious and cultural rituals across various civilizations, including those of the Greeks and Romans, who transformed them into elaborate public spectacles that bear a resemblance to modern bullfighting.

In the Middle Ages, the aristocracy would confront bulls on horseback, a practice reserved for the elite, emphasizing courage and status.

The first recorded "corrida" took place in 1133 to honor King Alfonso VIII.

What began as an aristocratic display of valor evolved into a popular tradition, gaining immense popularity throughout Spain and its territories, including Portugal, southern France and parts of Latin America.

However, even in Spain, it has become a controversial topic, with regions like Catalonia imposing a complete ban. Despite these divides, bullfighting remains fiercely defended by many, who see it as a fundamental expression of Spanish identity. It's said that King Juan Carlos I himself remarked that Spain would leave the European Union before giving up the "corrida".

Art. K.Dziewonska Hola Polacos
Editor Matt Jones

For those who attend, the "corrida" is more than just a spectacle. Spaniards often view it as an artistic experience - an intricate ballet of death and honour, performed by matadors who are celebrated as heroes. Many locals hold season tickets and attend regularly, making it a cherished family activity. Some families even pass down these seats through generations. The emotions run deep, with matadors idolized by children in rural areas who dream of one day stepping into the arena themselves. Heroes who die in the ring achieve almost mythical status, with their stories told in museums, and statues erected in their honor.

"Plaza de Toros" The Heart of Bullfighting

The "plaza de toros" (bullring) is the very heart of the "corrida". These historic arenas, often located in city centers, are architectural marvels in themselves, standing as symbols of Spain's bullfighting heritage. One of the most famous is the Plaza de Toros de la Maestranza in Seville, which dates back to 1749. These arenas also serve as museums, where visitors can explore exhibits displaying bullfighting history, intricate costumes and tools used by past matadors. The bullfighting season begins in March, coinciding with the onset of spring and lasts until October, with the most significant fights held during major festivals like Seville's Feria de Abril and Madrid's San Isidro Fair.

The design of a bullring is deliberate and ritualistic. **The "ruedo", or the main arena floor, is a circular, compacted sandy space where the battles unfold.** It is surrounded by a high wooden barrier, the "barrera", behind which the toreros can momentarily seek safety. This structure ensures a sense of drama and containment, making the "corrida" feel like a play unfolding on a stage. Small partitions called **"burladeros"** are built into the barrier, providing quick refuge spots for bullfighters if they need to escape a charging bull. Beyond the **"barrera"** lies the **"callejón"**, a narrow passage where participants and their staff wait, each entrance meticulously marked - the grand one for the matador's entrance and the more ominous gate through which the bull storms in.

The Hidden Cruelties

The bull used in a "corrida" is no ordinary animal. It is a "toro bravo" or "toro de lidia", a breed specifically raised for its aggression, size, and power.

Until it is five years old, the bull is raised in near-pristine conditions, roaming vast fields, well-fed and cared for - its muscles strengthened and its spirit honed. This is crucial, as its time in the arena is meant to be a fierce display of strength. Its homeland is predominantly Andalusia, the sun-drenched southern region of Spain known for its vibrant traditions.

But the transition from field to arena is harsh and brutal. To enrage and disorient the bull before it enters the ring, a series of cruel practices are often employed. The animal is kept in a cramped, darkened box to agitate it, deprived of light and space. Vaseline may be smeared on its eyes, reducing its vision, while its nostrils are plugged to hinder breathing. Cotton is stuffed into its ears and its legs are rubbed with chemicals to disrupt its balance.

The tips of its horns are sometimes filed down and needles might be inserted into its genitals to provoke even greater fury. All this is meant to ensure that when the bull bursts out into the sunlight, it charges wildly, sensing that it has nothing left to lose.

An Orchestrated Dance of Death

Once the trumpet sounds, the fight begins. The "corrida" is divided into three main acts, each lasting about 20 minutes. The opening stage, known as the "tercio de varas", starts with the bull entering the arena, greeted by three toreros, who each take turns waving large pink and yellow capes. This is where the bull's initial fury and vitality are put on display. Contrary to common belief, bulls are color-blind; they respond to the motion of the capes rather than their bright hues. These first movements serve to tire the bull slightly and allow the audience to gauge its temperament and strength.

Next, the **"picador"**, a lancer on horseback, enters. His horse is heavily padded with protective armor, but it remains a nerve-wracking encounter. The picador's task is to stab the bull in the neck, puncturing the thick muscles to weaken its thrusts and reduce its ability to raise its head. This is a strategic move, intended not just to injure but to prepare the bull for the final act.

The **"banderilleros"** follow, entering on foot and wielding short spears adorned with bright ribbons. Their job is to plant these spears into the same wound inflicted by the picador, further weakening the bull's neck and shoulders. This stage is as much about skill as spectacle - the banderilleros dance around the bull, showcasing their agility and precision as they close in to plant their spears, all while risking a sudden charge from the beast.

Finally, the matador steps forward in the **"tercio de muerte"** - the death stage. By now, the bull is bleeding and weakened, its strength and speed greatly diminished. The matador uses a smaller red cape called a **"muleta"**, performing a series of intricate passes, drawing the bull closer and closer, building tension with each near miss. Then, the matador aims to deliver the killing blow, thrusting a long, curved sword **"estocada"** between the bull's shoulders, targeting its heart or severing its spinal cord. If executed cleanly, the bull dies instantly. If not, it thrashes in agony as the matador struggles to deliver a final, conclusive strike.

The Aftermath and Cultural Debate

The aftermath of the "corrida" is ritualized. If the matador performs well, the audience might reward him with the bull's ear, which he can keep as a trophy or throw to the crowd. The bull's carcass is then dragged out by a team of horses to the rhythm of "pasodoble" music, while fans cheer and celebrate. For die-hard aficionados, this moment is a euphoric climax; for others, it is the tragic culmination of a gruesome spectacle.

The ethics of bullfighting continue to spark debate, both within and outside of Spain. While some see it as an integral part of cultural heritage, others argue that no tradition justifies cruelty. The decision to attend a "corrida" is ultimately personal, reflecting one's tolerance for violence and one's interpretation of art. Regardless, the "corrida" remains a vivid, complex and controversial expression of a nation's soul - both beautiful and brutal, artful and agonizing.

Jerez, Xeres, Sherry

How to Enjoy the Most Famous Wine from Andalusia?

Jerez de la Frontera has been recognized as one of Andalusia's most important cities since ancient times.

But what does it offer today?

Quite a lot, it turns out. It's a mecca for lovers of flamenco, Andalusian horses, and of course, wine. Jerez, Xérès, Sherry ...

How should you drink the most famous wine of Andalusia?

The sun is still high, the atmosphere is relaxed, and conversations hum from all around.

It's a typical afternoon in a bar, with tapas and a glass of wine. There's no more iconic image of Andalusia than the leisurely life around a bar table.

But how can you break free from this pleasant monotony?

Start exploring the city with its greatest pride - a glass (or rather a "copita") of Jerez wine, widely known as sherry, thanks to the British.

What makes it so special and famous worldwide?

Art. K.K. Hola Polacos
Editor Matt Jones

WHAT IS SHERRY? HOW AND WHERE IS SHERRY MADE?

Sherry is one of the oldest wine varieties in the world, admired by the British and French for centuries. Its popularity is evident in its 50 references in Shakespeare's works. Today, it continues to have many fans who indulge in tastings and wine tourism activities.

Sherry is a grape wine with an immense variety of styles, ranging from dry to sweet, ensuring there's something for everyone. All this, while honoring the rich wine-making tradition of the region.

When enjoying a glass of Jerez, it's worth remembering its extraordinary history. Vineyards were introduced to Andalusia over 3,000 years ago by the Phoenicians, who planted them in what is now Jerez, formerly called Xera. The Romans inherited these winemaking traditions, making the region's wine famous throughout the Empire.

During the Al-Andalus period, wine production slowed, but it never stopped entirely, with alcohol being used for perfume production. In the 16th century, sherry began its overseas journeys, accompanying Magellan's expeditions. In the 17th and 18th centuries, its popularity soared, especially among the British.

Back to modern times - how can you recognize the various styles of sherry and find your favorite?

"How Spanish Sherry Wine is Made? Bodegas Lustau in Jerez de la Frontera"

In brief, for a wine to qualify as Jerez (sherry), it must meet specific standards set by the appellation. One of the most crucial aspects is where and how the wine is aged - it must occur in the so-called "Sherry Triangle" (Zona de Crianza), which includes Jerez de la Frontera, Sanlúcar de Barrameda, and El Puerto de Santa María.

Today, three grape varieties are used for sherry production. Palomino, accounting for nearly 95% of all vineyards in the region, has low sugar and alcohol content and is susceptible to oxidation, making it ideal for producing dry sherry. The remaining two varieties, Pedro Ximénez and Moscatel, are used to produce sweeter styles of Jerez.

TYPES OF SHERRY

Dry Sherry (Vinos Generosos)

- **Fino and Manzanilla:**

Both are fortified, dry wines that undergo biological aging. This means natural yeasts (velo de flor) develop in the barrel, giving the wine a light, straw color with aromas of fresh yeast and roasted almonds.

- **Amontillado:**

This fortified, dry wine goes through dual aging processes. It begins as a biologically aged Fino, but after the yeast layer disappears, it continues aging with exposure to oxygen, giving it a deeper color and aromas of hazelnuts and tobacco.

- **Palo Cortado**:

It combines the aromatics of Amontillado with the body and color of Oloroso, having spent less time under the yeast layer.

- **Oloroso:**

A dark-coloured dry sherry aged through oxidative processes, with rich aromas of walnuts and balsamic notes.

Naturally Sweet Wines

- **Pedro Ximénez (PX):**

This intensely sweet wine, made from the Pedro Ximénez grape, has a syrupy consistency with flavors of raisins and figs, and a very dark color.

- **Moscatel:**

A lighter amber wine with floral notes, especially of orange blossom and honey. Beyond the dry and sweet varieties mentioned above, there are blends like Dry, Pale Cream and the popular Medium and Cream styles.

However, it’s best to start your sherry journey with unblended varieties to better understand your preferences.

HOW TO PAIR SHERRY WITH FOOD

Each style of Jerez has its unique charm.
You just need to find the right pairing.

- Serve well-chilled (6-8°C) dry Fino and Manzanilla with seafood and fish.
- Amontillado or Oloroso (serve at 12-14°C) are great as aperitifs or paired with risotto, mushrooms, and grilled dishes.
- Sweet Jerez wines are perfect dessert wines - pair them with ice cream or dark chocolate, or try them with blue cheese.

VISIT THE MAJESTIC WINE CATHEDRALS

To truly appreciate this extraordinary wine, the best way is to visit the bodegas in Jerez de la Frontera, Sanlúcar de Barrameda, and El Puerto de Santa María. In Jerez alone, there are over 20 bodegas, often referred to as "wine cathedrals" due to their stunning architecture.

We especially recommend visiting Bodega Lustau - exploring these magnificent wine cathedrals is a memorable experience for connoisseurs and casual visitors alike. Or, you can simply walk into one of the traditional bars (tabancos) in the city center, enjoy some tapas and savor the diverse styles of Jerez while listening to flamenco.

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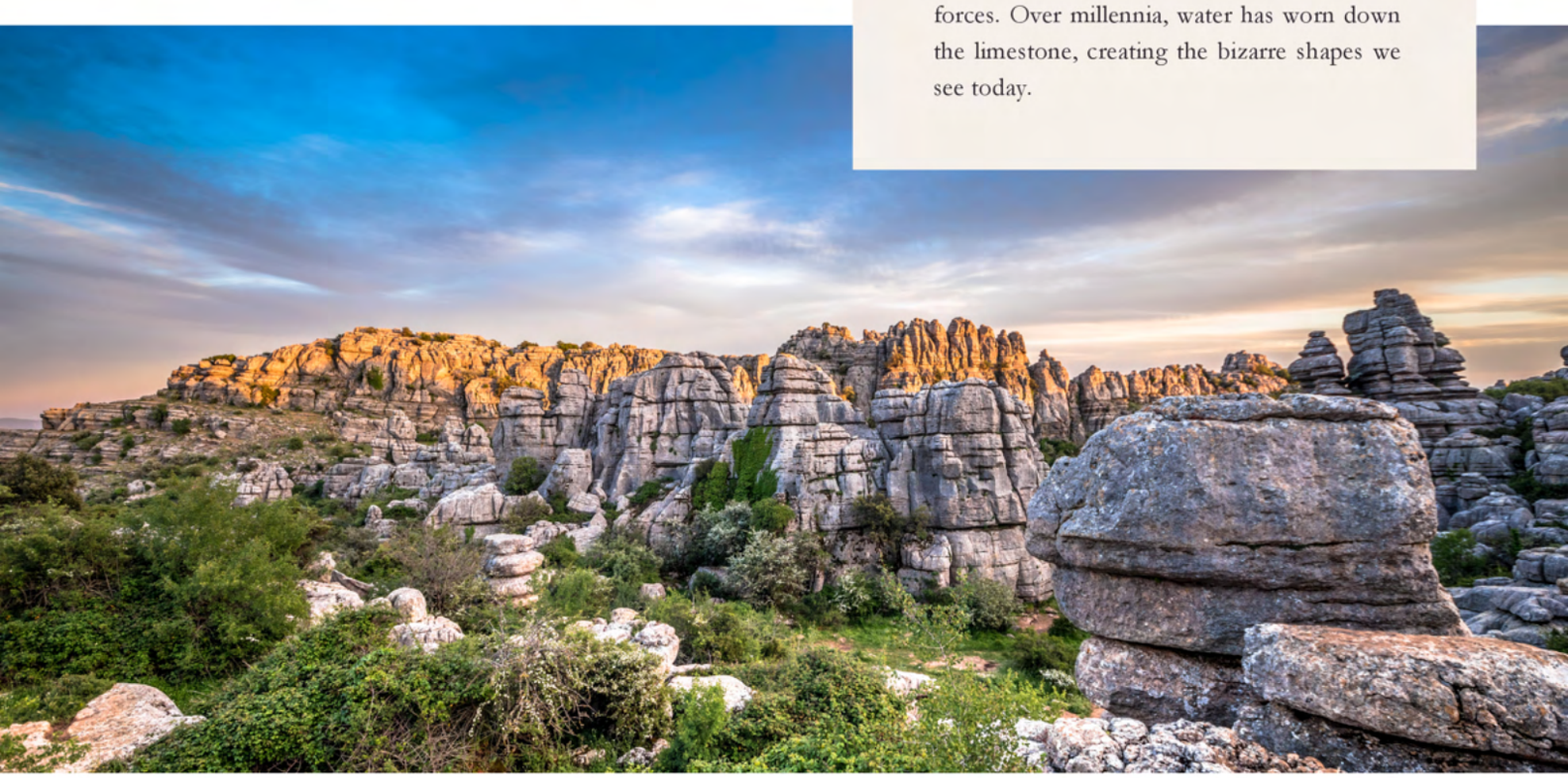
The surreal formations of el Torcal de Antequera

It's hard to believe that one corner of Europe holds such a vast variety of landscapes!

El Torcal de Antequera, a nature reserve in Andalusia, has earned its place as a UNESCO World Heritage site.
It's like stepping into a geography lesson, wrapped in beauty.

For those seeking an adventure worthy of a National Geographic explorer, Andalusia's El Torcal de Antequera, in Málaga province, should top your list.

From a distance, the landscape might trick you into thinking the towering rocks were sculpted by human hands - like the iconic faces of Mount Rushmore. But these unique formations owe their existence to natural forces. Over millennia, water has worn down the limestone, creating the bizarre shapes we see today.

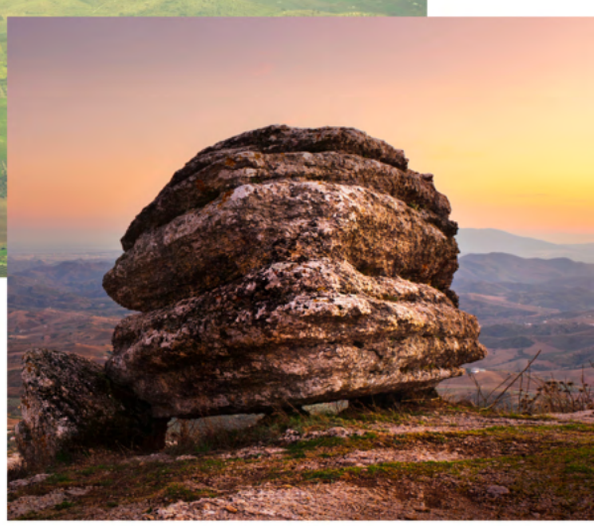


A stone city cloaked in mist!

El Torcal de Antequera, sometimes called the "stone city" or "infernal city", sits at an altitude of 1,198 meters and covers an area of 20 square kilometers. During the winter months, heavy fog often wraps around the jagged rocks, creating a hauntingly beautiful atmosphere. It's no wonder scenes from the movie "Clash of the Titans" were filmed here, with the dramatic landscape serving as the perfect backdrop for tales of ancient mythology.

The reserve is divided into four distinct areas: the Lyse Mountains, High Torcal, Low Torcal, and the cliffs and slopes that enclose the region. **More than 100 animal species and close to 600 plant species call this unique ecosystem home.** Visitors may spot mountain goats, badgers, foxes, or even the occasional mole. The skies are patrolled by griffon vultures, eagles, and rock swallows, while reptiles, amphibians, and drought-resistant flora thrive in the cracks of the rocks. At higher altitudes, small forests of maple, elderberry, and hawthorn add a splash of green.

Andalusia's natural wonders



The reserve was established to protect this extraordinary area from human encroachment. By the 1970s, stone quarries that had operated since Roman times were closed, and cattle grazing was drastically reduced. Today, El Torcal de Antequera can be explored either on a 3-hour guided tour or at your own pace.

Andalusia, and the nearby Costa del Sol, offer far more than sun-soaked beaches and palm trees. It's a region where diverse ecosystems thrive. From the towering mountains and lush valleys to the bird-rich marshlands of the Doñana reserve, volcanic cliffs plunging into the sea at Cabo de Gata, and the peculiar rock formations of El Torcal de Antequera - resembling giant pebbles stacked in perfect balance - this part of Spain is a treasure trove of natural wonders.

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The Moors in Spain: Power, Decline, and Legacy

The Moors, a mix of Arabs and Berber tribes from North Africa, began their rule in the Iberian Peninsula in 711 when Tariq ibn Ziyad landed at Gibraltar. They quickly overran the ruling Visigothic kingdom and established a vibrant Islamic civilisation known as "Al-Andalus".

Over the centuries, the region became synonymous with cultural and scientific brilliance, and its cities turned into flourishing centres of learning, art, and commerce.

Art. A.I.
Editor Matt Jones

The Rise of Al-Andalus a Land of Prosperity

The initial period of Moorish rule saw rapid urbanisation and prosperity. Cities like Córdoba, Seville and Granada were not only political capitals but also symbols of economic power and intellectual dynamism. The Moors introduced advanced agricultural techniques, including sophisticated irrigation systems, which transformed the landscape. This agricultural revolution supported larger populations, and thus more cities developed.

Key to the growth of cities were the Moorish innovations in trade and crafts. Moorish Spain became a vital link in trade routes connecting Europe, Africa, and Asia. Luxurious goods such as silk, ceramics, spices, and leather were produced in abundance and exported throughout Europe. The economic wealth of these cities was matched by their cultural splendour, as the Moors encouraged learning, philosophy, and the arts. Their libraries housed thousands of manuscripts and their scholars engaged in translating and expanding on Greek, Roman, and Persian knowledge.

Political Fragmentation and Decline

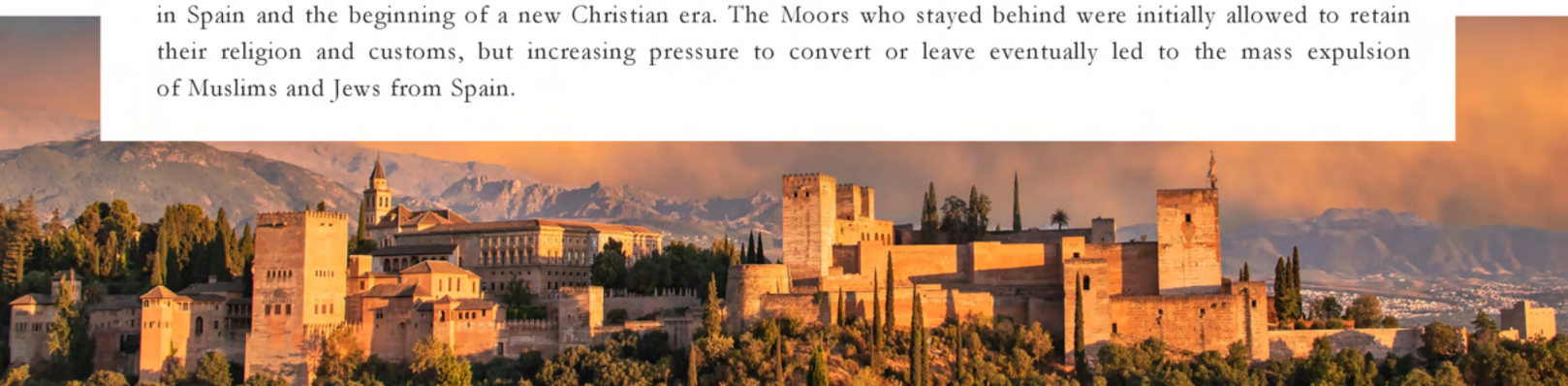
While Moorish Spain began as a unified emirate under the Umayyads, internal divisions and power struggles eventually splintered it into smaller "taifas" - independent Muslim principalities. This fragmentation weakened their ability to resist the growing Christian kingdoms in the north, who gradually began pushing south in a campaign known as the "Reconquista". The "taifas" often sought help from North African dynasties, leading to the arrival of the Almoravids and later the Almohads, both Berber dynasties that momentarily restored some stability and order.

However, the Almohads, who ruled from Seville in the 12th and early 13th centuries, faced increasing resistance from the Christian states. After their defeat at the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212, their control in Spain rapidly disintegrated. By the mid-13th century, only the Kingdom of Granada remained under Muslim rule.

The Last Stronghold in Granada

The Nasrid Kingdom of Granada, established in 1238, became the final bastion of Moorish civilisation in Spain. Granada's rulers paid tribute to the Christian kings, maintaining a fragile peace that allowed the city to thrive for another 250 years. This period saw the construction of the Alhambra, a magnificent fortress-palace that is the epitome of Islamic art and architecture in Europe. The intricate design, lush gardens, and stunning mosaics of the Alhambra exemplify the artistic achievements of the Nasrid dynasty.

Granada remained a beacon of Muslim culture until the Catholic Monarchs, Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile, launched their final campaign. The surrender of Granada in 1492 marked the end of Moorish rule in Spain and the beginning of a new Christian era. The Moors who stayed behind were initially allowed to retain their religion and customs, but increasing pressure to convert or leave eventually led to the mass expulsion of Muslims and Jews from Spain.



Architectural and Cultural Legacy

The impact of the Moors on Spain is still evident today. Architecturally, their legacy includes masterpieces like the **Great Mosque of Córdoba "La Mezquita"**, the Giralda Tower in Seville, and the iconic Alhambra in Granada. These buildings, with their arches, arabesque patterns, and lush courtyards, influenced the "Mudéjar" style, a unique fusion of Islamic and Christian elements that persisted even after the Reconquista.

Beyond architecture, the Moors left a deep imprint on Spanish language, cuisine, and customs. Many Spanish words, especially those beginning with "al-" (e.g. "almohada" for pillow or "albahaca" for basil) are of Arabic origin.

Culinary traditions like the use of spices such as saffron. almonds and dishes like "gazpacho" and "turrón", have their roots in Moorish gastronomy.

The Reconquista and its Aftermath

The Reconquista was not just a military campaign but a process that reshaped the social and religious landscape of Spain.

The unification of Spain under the Catholic Monarchs led to the forced conversion or expulsion of Jews and Muslims, effectively ending the multicultural coexistence that had characterised much of Al-Andalus.

The Catholic kings commissioned monumental buildings to emphasise Christian dominance, such as the **Cathedral of Granada**, built over the Nasrid Mosque.

The Moorish era, despite its eventual decline, contributed profoundly to European civilisation.

The knowledge brought by Muslim scholars, the agricultural innovations, and the artistic achievements of the Moors created a legacy that, while sometimes overshadowed by the politics of conquest, continues to be celebrated in Spain today.

Cities of Andalusia
A Journey Through Time

Today, a tour of Andalusia's cities reveals layers of history where Moorish, Christian, and Jewish influences intermingle:

"Córdoba" once the glittering capital of the Umayyads, Córdoba was a beacon of learning and tolerance in the Middle Ages. The Great Mosque "La Mezquita" - with its forest of red and white arches - reflects the city's Islamic past, while the Renaissance cathedral built inside it symbolises the Christian conquest. Córdoba was also home to figures like Averroes (Ibn Rushd), the philosopher who sought to reconcile Islamic thought with Aristotelian philosophy.

"Seville" under the Almohads, Seville became the political and economic heart of Al-Andalus. The Giralda Tower, originally the minaret of the city's mosque, now forms part of Seville's cathedral. The Alcázar of Seville, a royal palace built on the foundations of an earlier Moorish fortress, displays the stunning Mudéjar style, with intricate tilework and elegant gardens.

"Granada" the crown jewel of Moorish Spain, Granada's Alhambra remains one of the most exquisite examples of Islamic architecture in Europe. The blend of poetry, water and geometry in its design evokes a serene paradise. The city's narrow streets, whitewashed houses and vibrant Albaicín quarter still echo the rich cultural tapestry of its Moorish past.

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PADEL on the Costa del Sol
everything you need to know?

Padel has grown into a well-loved sport, especially in Spain and southern Europe. Marbella, located on Spain's sunny southern coast, stands out as one of the most vibrant padel hubs, with numerous clubs and courts drawing in both casual players and seasoned athletes.

Art. W.Charles
Editor Matt Jones

The Beginnings of Padel

Although padel has only been played widely since the 1980s, its origin dates back to the 1960s in Mexico. Mexican millionaire Enrique Corcuera invented the game by merging elements of tennis and squash, aiming to create an engaging and social sport for his family and friends. The name "padel" comes from the word "paddle", which refers to the solid racquet used in the game. Initially, it was played on private courts, but the sport quickly gained traction in Spain during the 1970s.

What Makes Padel Unique?

Padel is a racquet sport that combines aspects of tennis and squash but is much more accessible. It is always played in pairs, and the smaller court size makes it easier for players to cover the space. The walls around the court play an integral role in the game, as the ball can bounce off them, adding a tactical dimension that sets it apart from tennis. While physical fitness helps, the game is less demanding compared to other racquet sports, making it ideal for people of all ages, including seniors or those recovering from injuries.

Unlike tennis, padel places a greater emphasis on strategy and teamwork. The game is simple enough for beginners to pick up quickly, yet it also offers depth for more competitive players. The combination of minimal running and the use of walls allows players to focus on ball control and positioning rather than speed or power.

The Global Rise of Padel

Padel's popularity skyrocketed in Spain, where it became the second most popular sport, only behind football. During the COVID-19 pandemic, padel's outdoor and less physically strenuous nature made it one of the few sports that could still be played under social distancing rules, further boosting its popularity.

In 1991, the establishment of the International Padel Federation (FIP) helped to formalise the sport globally. Today, padel is one of the fastest-growing sports, with courts springing up across Europe, North America, and beyond. Spain leads the way with more than 9,000 courts and over 5 million players. Countries like Italy, Portugal, and France have also embraced the sport, and it is quickly spreading to countries such as the United States, Canada, and Australia.

How is Padel Played?

The game is played on a 20x10 metre court enclosed by walls, typically glass at the back and mesh along the sides. Players use solid, perforated racquets and a ball similar to a tennis ball but with slightly less pressure. The scoring system mirrors that of tennis: 15, 30, 40 and game. However, padel introduces unique strategies through the use of the walls, allowing for creative shot-making. A key rule is the ability to use a second serve if the first is missed, offering players a margin of error similar to tennis.

One unique format of the game is called "mixing", where players rotate between courts, mixing and matching pairs after each set. This social format adds an extra layer of fun and ensures that players of all levels have the chance to interact.

Padel's simplicity and accessibility have been key drivers of its global rise. The shorter racquet is easy to manoeuvre, the ball rarely flies out of bounds, and the sport's fast-paced but forgiving nature keeps the game flowing. As with many racquet sports, padel offers excellent cardiovascular benefits, helps reduce stress, and releases endorphins, making it a great workout for both body and mind.

Padel's Impact on Marbella

Marbella played a significant role in popularising padel, thanks in large part to Prince Alfonso de Hohenlohe. He introduced the sport to the Costa del Sol by building the first padel court at the Marbella Club Hotel in the late 1970s. This luxurious resort remains a key destination for padel enthusiasts, offering a perfect blend of leisure and sport. Marbella's year-round sunshine and cosmopolitan vibe have made it a natural hotspot for padel, drawing both tourists and locals alike.

The sport's massive popularity in Spain has even influenced real estate trends, with many new developments including padel courts as a key amenity. In Marbella, whether you are a resident or just visiting, you'll find plenty of high-quality courts where you can enjoy this exciting sport.

In addition to padel, Marbella offers a wide range of outdoor activities, from world-class golf courses to water sports. The Costa del Sol truly lives up to its reputation as a paradise for sports and leisure, with padel at the heart of its vibrant lifestyle.

Rabo de Toro

Oxtail Stew in Red Wine

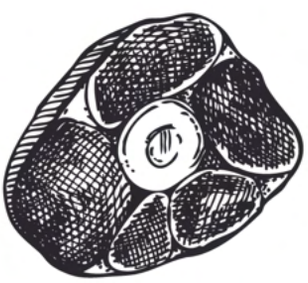
Rabo de Toro, a traditional Spanish dish where oxtail is slow-cooked in red wine.

It's rich, flavourful, and perfect for a cozy meal.

Art. Tomasz Bogusiak Hola Polacos
Editor Matt Jones

Ingredients:

- 1.5 kg (about 3 lbs) of oxtail
- 4 medium carrots, diced
- 2 onions, diced
- 2 leeks, sliced
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 litre (about 4 cups) of red wine
- 1 litre (about 4 cups) of beef or vegetable broth
- 1 bay leaf
- 6 black peppercorns
- 3 allspice berries
- 1 cinnamon stick
- Salt, pepper, and flour for seasoning and coating the oxtail
- Oil for frying



Instructions:

Prepare the Oxtail:
Start by cutting the oxtail at the joints into smaller sections. Season them generously with salt and pepper, then lightly dust them with flour. This helps to create a nice crust when you sear the meat.

Sear the Oxtail:
Heat a generous amount of oil in a large pan over medium-high heat. Brown the oxtail on all sides until they develop a deep, golden colour. This step locks in the flavour and gives the stew a rich taste. Once browned, set the pieces aside.

Cook the Vegetables:
In the same pan, add the diced carrots, onions, leeks and garlic. Sauté the vegetables until they soften and develop some colour, about 10 minutes.

Add the Meat and Spices:
Return the seared oxtail to the pan and toss in the bay leaf, black peppercorns, allspice berries and the cinnamon stick. The spices add a wonderful depth of flavour to the dish.

Pour in Wine and Broth:
Pour in the red wine and the broth, making sure the liquid covers the oxtail completely. Bring the mixture to a simmer, then lower the heat, cover the pan, and let it cook gently for 2.5 to 3 hours. The meat should become tender and fall off the bone when it's ready.

Separate the Oxtail and Reduce the Sauce:
Once the oxtail is cooked, remove the meat and the cinnamon stick from the pot. Now, blend the vegetables and cooking liquid together to create a smooth sauce. Return the sauce to the pan and cook it for another 45 minutes over low heat, allowing it to reduce and thicken.

Final Steps:
Add the oxtail back to the sauce to heat through. Once everything is well combined and warm, your dish is ready to serve!

Serving Suggestions:
Serve your oxtail stew with crispy fried potatoes or roasted vegetables for a complete and hearty meal.

Enjoy your flavourful, comforting Rabo de Toro! Buen provecho!

Chef Tomasz
MARBELLA

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Traditional Spanish SANGRIA

Sangria has a long history in Spain, dating back to at least the 18th century, though its roots stretch much further into antiquity. The concept of mixing wine with fruits and spices likely originated with the ancient Romans, who brought their wine cultivation techniques to the Iberian Peninsula. To make wine safer to drink (since water was often contaminated) they would mix it with herbs, spices, and fruits to both preserve it and improve the taste.

The word sangria comes from the Spanish word sangre, meaning "blood" a reference to its deep red color. By the 18th and 19th centuries, sangria became a popular summer drink in Spain and Portugal, where it was enjoyed in taverns and homes alike. It was traditionally made with red wine, local fruits, and occasionally a splash of brandy or other spirits.

Sangria gained international popularity after being featured at the 1964 World's Fair in New York, where the Spanish pavilion served it to showcase Spanish culture and cuisine. Today, sangria is a beloved symbol of Spanish hospitality, often associated with warm, leisurely gatherings and summer fiestas. It has evolved into various regional and modern adaptations, but the essence remains the same - a refreshing and flavorful blend of wine and fruit.

Art. K.Sunday
Editor Matt Jones

Ingredients:

- 1 bottle of red wine (750 ml) – traditionally, a dry Spanish red like Rioja or Tempranillo
- 1 orange, thinly sliced
- 1 lemon, thinly sliced
- 1 green apple, diced
- 2 tablespoons of sugar (optional, to taste)
- 1 cinnamon stick (optional)
- 1 shot of brandy (optional or use orange liqueur like Triple Sec)
- 1 cup of soda water or lemonade (for a fizzy touch)
- Ice cubes
- Fresh mint leaves (optional garnish)

Instructions:

In a large pitcher, combine the sliced orange, lemon, and diced apple. Optionally, you can squeeze a bit of juice from the orange and lemon into the pitcher for extra citrus flavor. Sprinkle the sugar over the fruit and stir gently. Let it sit for a few minutes to allow the sugar to dissolve and the fruit to macerate. Pour the bottle of red wine over the fruit mixture. Add the shot of brandy or orange liqueur for extra depth of flavor. Add the cinnamon stick for a subtle warm spice. Stir everything together. Place the pitcher in the refrigerator and let the sangria chill for at least 2 hours, preferably overnight. This allows the flavors to meld.

Just before serving, add ice cubes and top off with soda water or lemonade for a bit of fizz. Stir gently.

Pour the sangria into glasses, making sure to include some fruit pieces in each glass. Garnish with a sprig of fresh mint if desired. Enjoy your sangria chilled!

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