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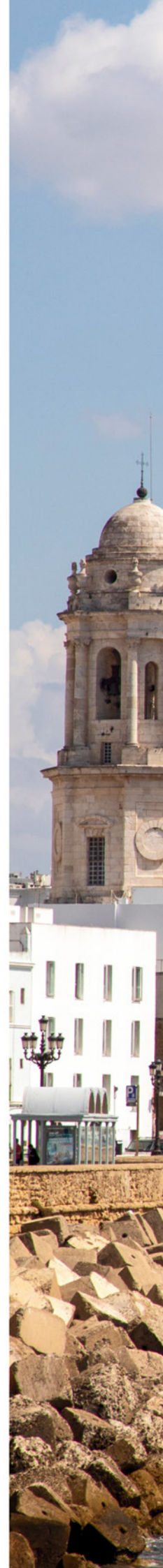
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OSUNA UNCOVERED

ANDALUSIA'S BEST-KEPT SECRET

When planning a trip through Spain, one must not forget to add Osuna to the list of must-see destinations.

Since 2015, this charming Andalusian town has attracted thousands of visitors after becoming a filming location for the globally acclaimed series *Game of Thrones*. But Osuna offers much more than cinematic fame. With a history dating back over 3,000 years, the town was once known as Urso. Following a victorious battle against the Roman forces of Julius Caesar in 44–43 BC, Mark Antony founded a colony for Roman veterans here, known as Colonia Iulia Genetiva.

This significant historical moment is documented in exhibits at the National Archaeological Museum in Madrid.

Over the centuries, the town's name evolved—from Colonia Genetiva Urbanorum Urso in Roman times, to Oxona under Arab rule. In 1239, following its reconquest by Christian forces, the name transformed again to the Spanish-sounding Osuna. Local legend suggests that the name derives from bears that once roamed the region.

Located near Seville, Osuna is best explored starting from Plaza Mayor, the city's historical and monumental heart. At the foot of the hill crowned by the Collegiate Church of Santa María, this elegant square is where the town's key streets converge. Its centrepiece is a fountain surrounded by a cross-shaped pavement that divides the space into four symmetrical quarters.

One of the must-see landmarks is the University of Osuna, commissioned by Don Juan Téllez Girón and inaugurated in 1548. Initially offering studies in theology, sciences and medicine, the university was established by papal bull from Pope Paul III, ranking it alongside Spain's most prestigious institutions such as Alcalá, Bologna and Salamanca. Interestingly, Cervantes mentioned the university in his writings—never favourably—although his grandfather served as corregidor in Osuna.

Just next door is the Monasterio de la Encarnación, today home to the Museum of Religious Art. Founded in 1549 as a hospital, it became a Jesuit college in the 17th century. In 1626, thanks to the Duchess of Osuna, it was entrusted to the Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mercy, whose mission originally focused on redeeming Christians captured by Arab pirates.



EXPLORE SPAIN'S OLDEST OPEN-AIR THEATRE

The most awe-inspiring site in Osuna is *El Coto de las Canteras*, often referred to as the “Petra of Andalusia”. This ancient quarry dates back more than 2,500 years, its ochre-hued stone once extracted by Iberian peoples as early as the 5th century BC. Today, it serves as Spain’s largest natural open-air auditorium, hosting up to 800 spectators for concerts, plays and artistic performances.

Inside the quarry, you’ll find a small museum that explores its rich past. The stone from this site was used over millennia in the construction of homes, palaces, and churches, shaping the distinctive architectural identity of Osuna and surrounding towns.

The quarry’s sandstone was quarried by Iberians, Carthaginians, Romans, and later Arabs and modern builders. Over time, the hill of *La Cantera* transformed—its sides cut into canyons, and its core hollowed out. After stone extraction ceased in the mid-20th century, the site was briefly used as a landfill before being purchased in 1999 by Jesús Ramos, who envisioned a cultural revival.

La Cantera

Today, the mountain is being reborn as an open-air museum, its walls carved with symbolic reliefs by local sculptor Francisco Valdivia. One of the most striking features is a monumental sculpture of a lion, as well as a vast bas-relief of grape harvesters.

An exhibition in the Smiltainis Gallery showcases traditional quarrying tools, and the acoustics inside the cavernous spaces are extraordinary—due to the porosity of the sandstone, there is no echo, creating an unusual and intimate atmosphere.

El Coto de las Canteras

WALK THROUGH 3,000 YEARS OF HISTORY

History lovers should not miss the ancient Roman necropolis located between a series of caves, accessible via a scenic 1–2 km walk through the countryside. The peaceful isolation of this site enhances its haunting beauty.

Other notable landmarks include the Church and Tower of La Merced, located in the square of the same name. Built in the 18th century in baroque style, the church's elegant tower was designed by Alonso Ruiz de Florindo between 1767 and 1775.

The Collegiate Church of Nuestra Señora de la Asunción is another architectural jewel. Constructed in the 16th century by order of Count Juan Téllez-Girón, it features a grand nave, five chapels, a richly decorated Renaissance interior, and an 18th-century baroque altar. Beneath the main level lies the Ducal Pantheon, built in 1545 in the Plateresque style.



EUROPE'S PRETTIEST STREET? OSUNA'S BAROQUE BOULEVARD TAKES THE CROWN

In 2023, UNESCO named Calle San Pedro the most beautiful street in Europe. A showcase of Andalusian baroque architecture, the street is lined with palatial homes and mansions reflecting centuries of evolving style. The standout building is the Palace of the Marquises of La Gomera, adorned with stone gargoyles, spiral columns, and heraldic crests.

Nearby, the Hotel Palacio Marqués de La Gomera boasts a majestic façade and an 18th-century chapel surrounding a central patio with wooden panelling and hand-laid brickwork. Antique furniture, baroque mirrors, and early 18th-century artworks give the place timeless elegance.



BLOOD, SAND AND SILVER SCREEN: OSUNA'S LEGENDARY BULLRING

No tour of Andalusia would be complete without a nod to corrida. Osuna's bullring, built in 1904 and designed by Aníbal González, opened with great fanfare and famous matadors such as Montes and Chamaquito. Since March 2019, the site also hosts a Museum of Bullfighting, with exhibits dedicated to the bullring's history, the tradition of bullfighting, and its role in Spanish culture. Today, the arena is also used for film and television productions.

Final Stops in Osuna: Legends, Arches and a 160-Year-Old Casino

To immerse yourself further in Osuna's story, visit the Municipal Museum. Alongside the town's history, one exhibition room—Fuego y Hielo—is entirely dedicated to *Game of Thrones*, showcasing props and memorabilia used during filming.

A perfect spot for a photo is Arco de la Pastora, once part of the city gate known as Puerta de Ecija. Built in 1796 and featuring classic neoclassical design, the structure includes a large semicircular arch, a triangular pediment, and inscriptions commemorating King Carlos IV and Queen María Luisa of Bourbon. It is the only surviving example of its kind in Osuna.

Lastly, for a taste of old-world elegance, visit Osuna's historic casino, open daily and free of charge. This 160-year-old building boasts a colonnaded patio with two tiers of arcades—a hidden gem within the heart of town.

Osuna is a place where time stands still. Whether you are a lover of architecture, history, or culture, this town offers a window into the soul of Andalusia.





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ANDALUSIA



FOLLOWING THE TRAIL OF UNESCO HERITAGE SITES



El Torcal de Antequera

Andalusia is a land brimming with awe-inspiring monuments and landscapes. Some of them have been recognised as UNESCO World Heritage Sites, making the region a paradise for lovers of history, architecture and natural wonders.

A Journey Through the Wonders of the World

The UNESCO World Heritage List was established to protect and promote humanity's cultural and natural heritage. It includes some of the world's most iconic landmarks, such as the Palace of Versailles, Notre-Dame Cathedral, the Loire Valley, and Japan's Himeji Castle. Spain also boasts several entries, including El Escorial near Madrid, Santiago de Compostela, and the prehistoric cave of Altamira. Among these treasures are natural wonders such as Komodo National Park in Indonesia and Victoria Falls in Zambia.

Fancy discovering Andalusia by following its UNESCO gems? Here's our curated selection.

EL TORCAL DE ANTEQUERA - A LAND OF STONE SCULPTURES

At first glance, the surreal landscape of El Torcal may seem like a massive stone sculpture garden, carved by human hands—perhaps even reminiscent of Mount Rushmore. In fact, these limestone formations are entirely the work of nature, shaped over millennia by water erosion.

This otherworldly reserve, often nicknamed the "Stone City" or "Infernal City", is located not far from Málaga, rising to 1,198 metres above sea level and covering 20 square kilometres. During winter, the area is shrouded in heavy mist, lending the eerie rock formations an even more dramatic appearance.

It's no surprise that *Clash of the Titans*, the film about the Greek hero Perseus, was filmed here.

El Torcal can be explored either independently or on a guided tour lasting approximately three hours.

THE ALHAMBRA - A MASTERPIECE OF MOORISH ARCHITECTURE

Each year, millions of visitors flock to Granada to admire the Alhambra, a fortress-palace that epitomises Moorish artistry. The complex enchants with its intricate arches, carved columns, colourful tiles and delicate geometric designs that resemble lacework.

One of the most enchanting aspects of the Alhambra is its fusion of architecture, greenery and water. Reflections in serene pools amplify the beauty of the buildings and arches, while lush patios provide peaceful retreats where fountains murmur and the scent of mint and flowers lingers in the air.



MEDINA AZAHARA - THE LOST CALIPHAL CITY

Just seven kilometres from Córdoba lie the remains of Medina Azahara, a palatial city built in the 10th century during the reign of the Caliphate of Córdoba. Its name derives from Az-Zahra, the favourite concubine of the caliph.

An immense undertaking at the time, the city once spanned over 110 hectares. Constructed on the slopes of the Sierra Morena mountains, its terraced layout offered both panoramic views and strategic defence advantages.



ÚBEDA - THE CITY OF A THOUSAND HILLS

Situated on the scenic hill of La Loma in the Jaén province, north of Granada, Úbeda is one of Andalusia's most distinctive and beautiful historic towns. Despite having a population of just 35,000, it draws numerous visitors from Spain and abroad.

Founded in the 9th century during the Moorish era, archaeological evidence suggests that the area has been inhabited for over 6,000 years. Today, Úbeda is most renowned for its spectacular Renaissance architecture from the 16th century, a legacy of influential Castilian noble families.

Thanks to the patronage of Francisco de los Cobos y Molina, secretary to Emperor Charles V, the town became a hub of Spanish Renaissance architecture. Key highlights include:

- Plaza de Vázquez de Molina – A prime example of Renaissance urban design, surrounded by historic buildings.
- Sacra Capilla del Salvador (Church of the Saviour) – One of Úbeda's most iconic structures, designed by Diego de Siloé. Its carved stone façades are truly breathtaking.
- Palacio del Marqués del Donadío – Commissioned by Fernando Ortega in the 16th century, this palace perfectly represents Spanish Renaissance style.
- Casa Mudéjar – A 15th-century house now home to the Archaeological Museum, displaying artefacts from the Roman and Moorish periods.





BAEZA - THE "HAPPY CITY"

Just 10 kilometres from Úbeda, Baeza is another Andalusian jewel and a true Renaissance gem. Its elegant architecture is largely attributed to the celebrated Spanish architect Andrés de Vandelvira.

Dating back to Roman times when it was known as Baetia—the "Happy City"—Baeza later came under Visigothic and then Moorish rule, until it became the first Andalusian city to be recaptured during the Christian Reconquista in 1227. Though it flourished under Moorish rule, Baeza is particularly famed for its remarkably well-preserved Renaissance architecture, visible at every turn. Must-see sights include:

- Palacio de los Marqueses de Jabalquinto – A 15th-century palace that now houses the town council.
- Cathedral of the Nativity of Our Lady (Catedral de la Natividad de Nuestra Señora de Baeza) – Built in 1227 on the site of a former mosque, it became the seat of the bishop after the Reconquista.
- Plaza del Pópulo (Lions' Square) – Famous for its historic fountain featuring a statue of Princess Imilce, wife of the Carthaginian general Hannibal.
- The Old University of Baeza – Established in the 16th century, its standout feature is a beautiful patio. Its first rector was Saint John of Ávila.

Don't miss these incredible UNESCO sites – where history, nature and architecture converge in unforgettable harmony.





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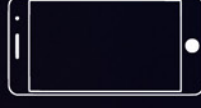
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CÁDIZ

THE OLDEST CITY IN SOUTH-WESTERN EUROPE

Cádiz is often described as the oldest city in south-western Europe, and it's a title it wears with pride. Spread across a narrow peninsula jutting into the Atlantic Ocean, it is divided into two distinct parts – the historic old town and the modern new city. Surrounded by water and rich in history, Cádiz is most famous for hosting Spain's liveliest carnival, with clear Italian influences and elements reminiscent of Venice's celebrations. Satirical, colourful and full of music, it's a feast for the senses and one of the most authentic festivals in the country.

It is the capital of the province of Cádiz – my personal favourite – known for its wide, golden sandy beaches, so different from the coarser shores of the Costa del Sol. Cádiz is one of those places you either fall in love with at first sight or feel completely indifferent to. There seems to be no in-between.

The city boasts a history stretching back over 3,000 years, though you'll find few surviving ancient monuments outside of its museum collections. It was from Cádiz that Columbus set sail on his second and fourth voyages, reinforcing the city's strategic role in maritime trade.

Though it lies just a 90-minute drive from Málaga province, the atmosphere shifts noticeably. Life feels slower, the locals more relaxed and open-minded. Even the Spanish spoken here sounds different – a true Andalusian dialect. The people of Cádiz are called gaditanos, a name that harks back to Gadir, the Phoenician port that gave birth to the city.

This is also where Spain's first constitution was proclaimed in 1812 – a moment of great national significance. A monument to this event can be visited in the leafy Plaza de España – a peaceful square that invites reflection on Cádiz's liberal spirit.

If you've been to Palermo in Sicily or Havana in Cuba, Cádiz might feel familiar. Its narrow streets and weathered façades, slowly eroded by salty sea air, evoke a similar charm. See for yourself whether it stirs the same feelings in you as it did in me when I first visited.



THINGS TO DO IN CÁDIZ

Start your day in Cadiz with a wander through the Mercado Central – the city's bustling central market. Just make sure to avoid Sundays, as it's closed then. It's the ideal place to grab a bite of something fresh and local, soak up the lively morning energy, and watch the rhythms of daily life unfold. From juicy fruit and cured meats to regional cheeses and excellent local wines, the selection is fantastic. And if you're into photography, you'll find countless moments worth capturing – it's a feast for the eyes as much as the palate.

One of the city's unmissable landmarks is the grand Cathedral of Cádiz. Far from being just another church, it holds the title of the largest cathedral in Spain – and also one of the most recent. Step inside, and better yet, climb the bell tower for sweeping views over the rooftops, the harbour, and the vast Atlantic beyond. I've seen many cathedrals across Europe and beyond, and this one holds its own – especially for the panoramic spectacle from above.



For something a bit more offbeat, head to Torre Tavira, the tallest watchtower in the old town. Inside, you'll find a functioning camera obscura – a fascinating optical device that projects real-time images of the city. Climbing to the top also rewards you with incredible views of Cádiz's historic skyline, once dominated by merchant towers that reflected the wealth and maritime pride of their owners.

A charming corner many visitors miss is La Viña, the city's traditional fishing quarter. Come evening, the narrow streets buzz with life as locals pour into tapas bars. Be sure to try Cádiz's signature dish – tortillitas de camarones, crispy fritters packed with tiny shrimp. Enjoy them with a chilled glass of fino or manzanilla, and you'll feel truly immersed in the city's culinary soul.

If your timing is right and there's a performance at the beautiful Gran Teatro Falla, seize the opportunity. Tickets can be hard to come by, and although I've visited Cádiz several times, I've yet to catch a show there myself – it remains on my list.



As the afternoon winds down, consider heading to the newer part of town or leaving the city via the modern route. This area offers a complete contrast – broad avenues, contemporary buildings, and a beachfront promenade stretching along the Atlantic. It's Cádiz with a Californian twist – some even call it "Cádizfornia."

On the journey back to the Costa del Sol, I often take the scenic route along the Costa de la Luz, stopping in quiet coastal towns along the way. It adds time to the trip, but also depth – a reminder that true travellers rarely retrace the same path twice.

Finally, a perfect way to end the day is at Playa de la Caleta. Whether you're sipping a local wine as the sun dips into the sea, or strolling out towards Castillo de San Sebastián, the westernmost point of the city, the magic of Cádiz lingers. During low tide, boats lie beached on the sand, and locals scour the shoreline for shells. In the cooler months, the sun sets directly into the Atlantic – a moment of calm and beauty that stays with you long after you've left.

Take a short walk to the Roman Theatre of Cádiz, only discovered in 1980, hidden under the medieval quarter of El Pópulo. It's one of the largest Roman theatres ever found in Spain and a fascinating glimpse into the city's ancient past. Entry is free, and the museum inside explains how it remained forgotten for centuries.





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127 BEACHES

DISCOVER THE TOP 10 ON THE COSTA DEL SOL

The Costa del Sol boasts a remarkable 127 beaches, offering a diverse coastal experience that ranges from bustling urban stretches to secluded natural hideaways.

Bordering the Mediterranean Sea, the coastline of Málaga province extends over 200 kilometres, from Manilva to Nerja. With over 320 days of sunshine each year, the sea has a profound influence on the lifestyle, cuisine, and rhythm of life in the region



BURRIANA BEACH - NERJA

Widely considered the crown jewel of Nerja, Burriana Beach is an 800-metre stretch of sand that earned the prestigious Blue Flag in 2021. Despite the slightly steep descent via Filipinas Street, visitors are rewarded with stunning views and a vibrant atmosphere.

The promenade, named after Antonio Mercero, creator of the iconic 1980s television series *Verano Azul*, is lined with shops, restaurants, and beach bars. The beach offers a full range of amenities, including equipment hire for kayaking, pedal boats, and jet skis. Scuba diving and paragliding facilities are also available, making it perfect for an active beach day.

Kayaking excursions to nearby La Caleta de Maro are a highlight, where you can discover hidden caves and cascading waterfalls along the cliffs. A charming touch is the beach library, where you can borrow or donate books in various languages – ideal for unwinding by the sea.

SANTA AMALIA BEACH - FUENGIROLA

Located in the heart of Fuengirola, Santa Amalia – El Castillo is the town's longest bathing beach, stretching from the marina to the river mouth. Awarded a Blue Flag in 2021, it is the perfect family-friendly destination.

With its dark sands and gentle waters, the beach offers a safe environment for children, complemented by ample recreational areas. It's a fine blend of urban charm and seaside leisure, close to both agricultural lands and the bustling town centre.

BIL-BIL BEACH - BENALMÁDENA

Bil-Bil Beach sits beside Arroyo de la Miel – Los Melilleros, and is known for its namesake landmark: the Bil-Bil Castle. Designed in a Moorish style with red stucco and decorative tiles, this former private villa is now a municipal cultural venue.

By night, the castle's lighting and surrounding palm gardens create a magical ambiance. The 400-metre-long beach features dark sand and moderate waves, and lies just 3 kilometres from Benalmádena Marina. A tourist information point is also nearby, making it a well-equipped destination for a full day out.



CALA DEL MORAL

This spacious 1.3-kilometre beach near the El Cantal promenade is particularly popular with families during the summer months. Its history dates back to the 16th century, when the area served as a coastal lookout.

Separated from Rincón de la Victoria by breakwaters and the Cantal hill, Cala del Moral is also home to the fascinating Cueva del Tesoro – one of only three known underwater-origin caves in the world. According to legend, a royal treasure is hidden within, adding a touch of mystery to your visit.

MARO BEACH - NERJA

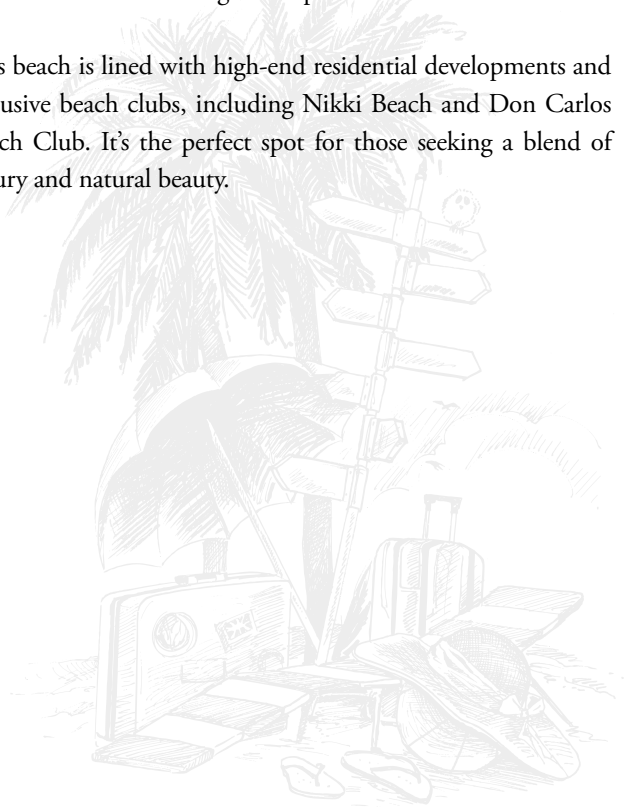
Nestled between the dramatic cliffs and fertile fields of Maro, this unspoiled cove – also known as Cala de Maro – is a true natural gem.

Part of a protected area, Maro Beach lacks commercial facilities, so visitors should come prepared. Its crystal-clear waters are ideal for snorkelling and kayaking, offering a serene setting for those seeking solitude and a deeper connection with nature. Nearby waterfalls and caves, such as the spectacular Cascada Grande de Maro, are well worth exploring, making this beach a paradise for outdoor enthusiasts.

REAL DE ZARAGOZA - MARBELLA

Just 13 kilometres east of Marbella, Real de Zaragoza Beach is a spacious, scenic stretch measuring 1.7 kilometres in length. Renowned for its tranquil, shallow waters, it's a favourite among families and those looking to escape the crowds.

This beach is lined with high-end residential developments and exclusive beach clubs, including Nikki Beach and Don Carlos Beach Club. It's the perfect spot for those seeking a blend of luxury and natural beauty.



LA MALAGUETA - MÁLAGA

La Malagueta is Málaga's most iconic urban beach, situated between the port and La Caleta. Named after the historic district it borders, this 1.2-kilometre beach with dark sand and moderate waves received the Blue Flag in 2021.

Facilities include sunbed and parasol hire, children's play areas, and water sports rentals. It's also home to the Real Club Mediterráneo, Spain's oldest sailing club, offering additional leisure activities right by the sea.



LA CARIHUELA - TORREMOLINOS

Stretching 2.1 kilometres from Bajondillo Beach to Benalmádena's marina, La Carihuela is famed for its relaxed vibe and culinary scene.

Originally a traditional fishing quarter, today it's a lively, cosmopolitan area brimming with beach bars and seafood restaurants serving Málaga's famous fried fish. Palm-lined areas and natural grass provide welcome shade, while summer events and shows attract visitors day and night.



ARTOLA - CABOPINO - MARBELLA

Set within the protected Dunas de Artola natural park, this 1.2-kilometre beach is a sanctuary of wild dunes and native flora, including sea daffodils and juniper.

With its golden sands and clear waters, Cabopino offers an idyllic escape into nature. Its peaceful setting and pristine environment have earned it the status of a Natural Monument by the Junta de Andalucía.

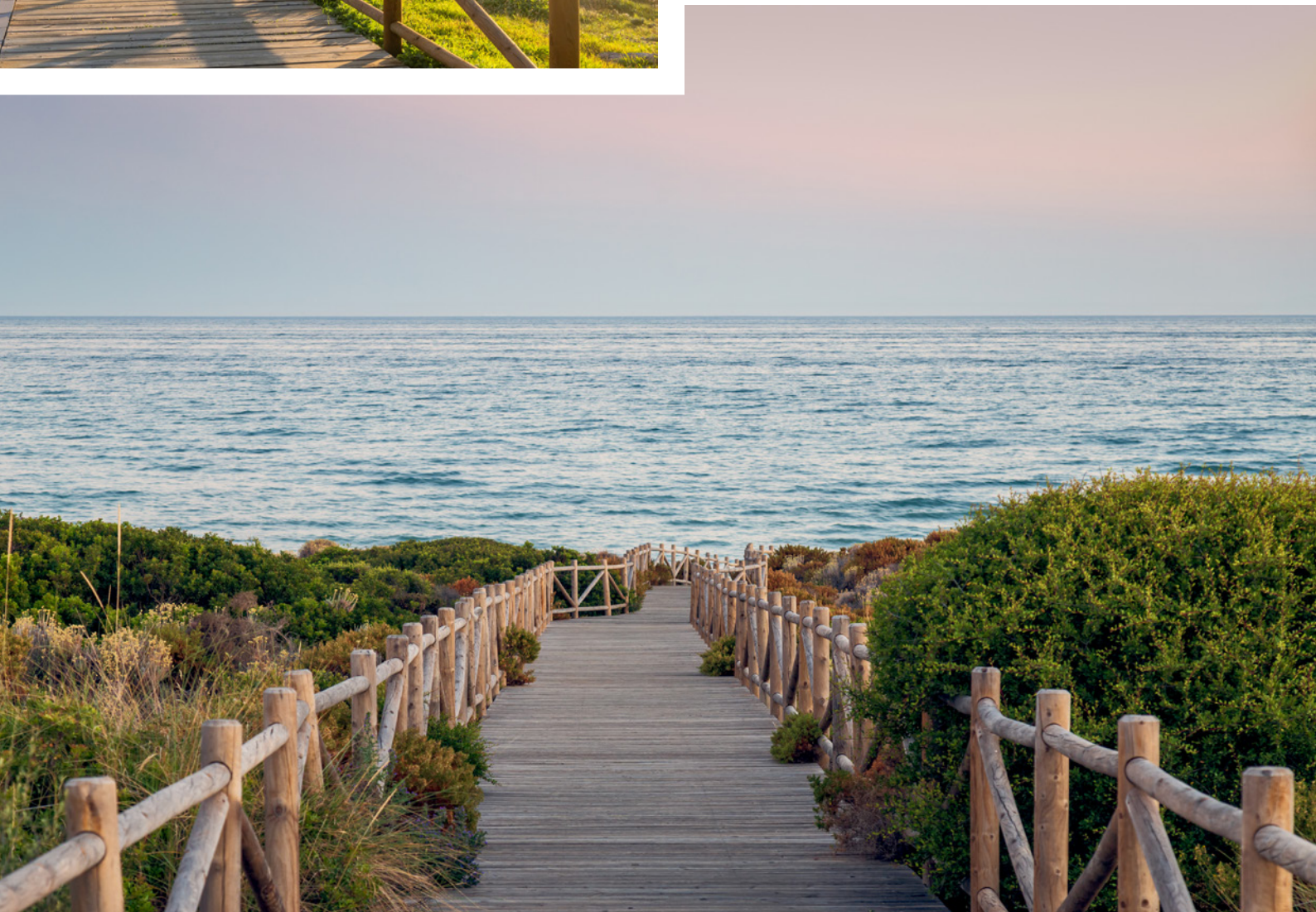
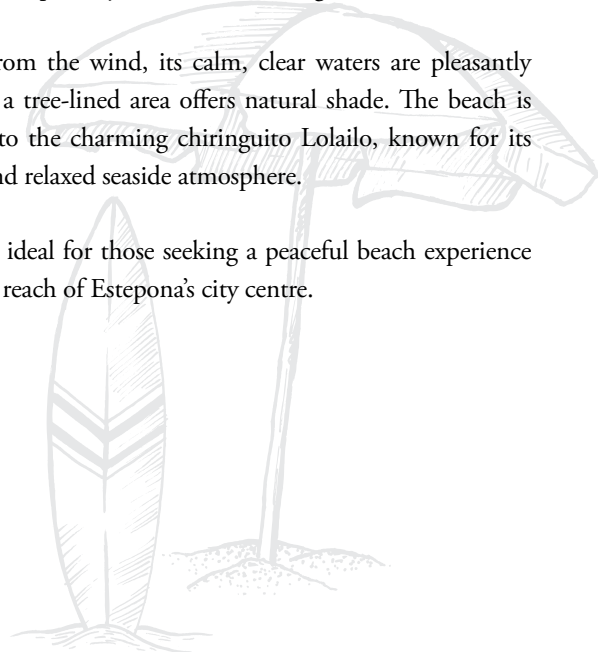


EL CRISTO BEACH - ESTEPONA

Just west of Estepona's marina lies El Cristo Beach, a picturesque cove beloved by families and locals alike. It spans around 700 metres and has proudly flown the Blue Flag since 2016.

Sheltered from the wind, its calm, clear waters are pleasantly warm, and a tree-lined area offers natural shade. The beach is also home to the charming chiringuito Lolailo, known for its fresh fish and relaxed seaside atmosphere.

El Cristo is ideal for those seeking a peaceful beach experience within easy reach of Estepona's city centre.



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SUP ON THE COSTA DEL SOL

SUN, SEA AND A PADDLEBOARD

You wake up early. The sky still glows with streaks of pink slowly fading into bright blue. The sea is calm, smooth like glass, and a light breeze carries the scent of salt and eucalyptus. In your hands: a paddle and a lightweight board. One step, one movement – and suddenly you're out on the water, gliding peacefully. This is how a perfect day begins with SUP on the Costa del Sol.

WHAT IS SUP?

SUP, or Stand Up Paddleboarding, is a water sport where you stand on a large board and use a paddle to navigate. Though it has its roots in Hawaiian traditions, SUP has exploded in popularity across the globe – including in Spain. With its mild climate and gentle Mediterranean waters, the Costa del Sol has become a hotspot for both beginners and seasoned paddleboarders.

But SUP isn't just a sport. It's a way of life. A form of active relaxation. For many, it's even a kind of moving meditation.



TOP 3 SUP SPOTS ON THE COSTA DEL SOL

1. Marbella – Paddleboarding in Style

Marbella is known for luxury and glamour, but it's also one of the best places for stand-up paddleboarding. The stretch between Puerto Banús and Cabopino, particularly along the **Golden Mile**, offers calm waters and post-card-worthy views.

Several local schools, including Paddle Surf Marbella and NaluSur, run guided tours, some of which include dolphin spotting! Sunset tours are especially popular, with the shimmering sea and the backdrop of the Sierra Blanca mountains making it a magical experience.

2. Fuengirola – Perfect for Beginners and Families

Fuengirola's wide bay is ideal for beginners thanks to its sheltered position and minimal waves. It's also popular among families with children. Most rental centres offer all-round boards – stable, user-friendly and ideal for learning.

In the early morning you might find locals practising SUP yoga, and in the evening – couples heading out on a board to catch the sunset together. This is laid-back Costa del Sol at its best.

3. Estepona – A Hidden Gem for Adventurers

Estepona offers something quieter, more natural. With fewer tourists and more secluded areas, it's perfect for those who want a peaceful paddle. At **Playa del Cristo**, local instructors run excursions along the cliffs and into small, hidden beaches accessible only by water. The experience is both energising and serene.

SUP AS A LIFESTYLE

SUP isn't just about physical activity – it's about reconnecting with nature and yourself. That's why SUP Yoga has become a global wellness trend. Practising yoga on a floating board challenges your core muscles while calming the mind, especially when done at sunrise or sunset.

Both Fuengirola and Marbella offer regular SUP yoga sessions. The combination of movement, water, and golden light is, quite simply, therapeutic.

When to Go and How to Start

The best season for SUP on the Costa del Sol runs from May to October, but thanks to the area's year-round mild climate, paddleboarding is possible even in winter. A lightweight wetsuit is all you'll need on cooler days.

Rental prices start at around €15–20 per hour, while lessons with an instructor cost approximately €30–50. Multi-day packages often provide great value.



WHAT TO BRING FOR SUP

To make the most of your time on the water, it's worth preparing properly – especially if you're planning a longer paddle. Here's your essential kit list:

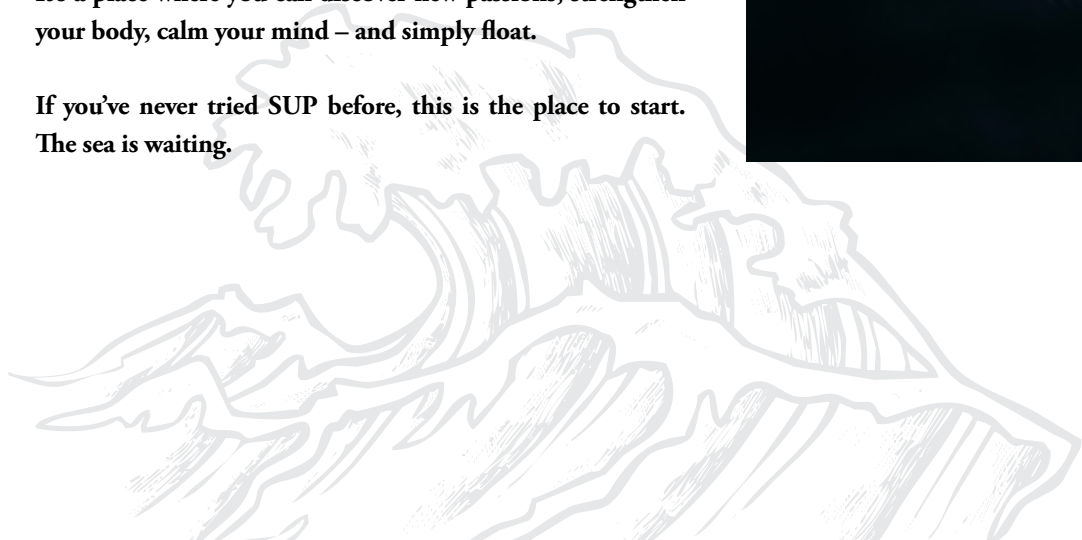
- **SUP board (inflatable or rigid)** – for beginners, we recommend a stable all-round board. Inflatable versions (like the one pictured) are lightweight, easy to carry, and ideal for the calm Mediterranean waters.
- **Adjustable paddle** – choose one that suits your height and allows for easy stroke adjustment.
- **Buoyancy aid (PFD)** – essential for beginners and children.
- **Leash** – a safety cord attaching your ankle to the board to prevent it from drifting away.
- **Swimwear or UV-protective activewear** – lightweight, quick-dry clothing that provides sun protection.
- **Water shoes** – especially helpful on rocky beaches or when launching from shallow water.
- **High-SPF sunscreen (preferably SPF 50)** – water and sun make a powerful combination; protect your skin.
- **Cap and sunglasses with a retention strap** – to shield your eyes and avoid losing them in the water.
- **Dry bag or waterproof phone pouch** – keep your valuables safe and dry.
- **Reusable water bottle** – hydration is key, especially under the Spanish sun.
- **Towel and a change of clothes** – always handy if you're planning to stay out all day.

Family-Friendly Fun – Even with Pets

Yes – paddleboarding is a family activity. Many locals take their children or dogs out on larger boards designed for two. All you need is a calm pet and a little patience!

The Costa del Sol is more than beach loungers and sangria. It's a place where you can discover new passions, strengthen your body, calm your mind – and simply float.

If you've never tried SUP before, this is the place to start. The sea is waiting.





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FERIA DE LOS PAÍSES 2025

THE WORLD IN ONE PLACE - AND POLAND IN EVERYONE'S HEART



As spring bloomed on the Costa del Sol, Fuengirola once again opened its arms to the world. From 30 April to 4 May, the city's fairgrounds transformed into a vibrant stage for the FERIA Internacional de los Países, one of Spain's largest multicultural celebrations. With 33 countries represented, each sharing their flavours, rhythms and traditions, it was a true feast for the senses. And this year, Poland made a powerful, joyful impression.

A PARADE OF NATIONS

The festivities began with music and food on 30 April, but the real highlight came the next day, with the iconic **international parade**. More than **1,500 participants** dressed in traditional outfits brought the streets of Fuengirola to life, as they marched proudly, waving flags and dancing to native tunes. From Colombia to Greece, Senegal to Japan – and of course, Poland – every group brought their own cultural magic to the crowd-lined streets.

The festival site itself became a living map of the world. Each pavilion offered something to discover: signature dishes, local crafts, traditional drinks and non-stop performances. And yet, one pavilion consistently drew curious visitors and kept them coming back for more – the Polish one.



FIESTA POLACA

POLAND'S PAVILION: HEARTFELT, COLOURFUL AND FULL OF FLAVOUR

Tucked among the dozens of national spaces was a corner that stood out not for loud lights or flashy decor, but for **authenticity and warmth**. The Polish pavilion, known as **Fiesta Polaca**, was created by **Yes to a Dream S.L.** with the enthusiastic support of **4 Costas Real Estate** – a Polish-led agency based in Benalmádena. Together, they crafted something truly special. With folk-inspired design, friendly volunteers, live music, and the irresistible scent of pierogi (dumplings) and kielbasa (sausage) in the air, it was a space that invited everyone in – and made them want to stay. From energetic dance shows to cultural quizzes and workshops for kids, the programme was as rich and diverse as Poland itself.

“This was never just about marketing,” said **Wiktoria Scieburka**, founder of 4 Costas. “We wanted people to experience the soul of Poland – and I think they did.”

NEW IDEAS THAT MADE A BIG DIFFERENCE

This year's edition of the Feria featured several thoughtful improvements. For the first time, a “**quiet hour**” was introduced daily for visitors with autism or sensory sensitivities. **Children's Day** kicked things off on 30 April with half-price rides at the funfair, and the organisers made better use of secondary spaces around the pavilions to host extra activities and enhance the visitor experience.

The result? More comfort, more access, and more smiles – especially in the family-friendly areas.

RECORD TURNOUT AND ORGANISATIONAL SUCCESS

The **Feria Internacional de los Países 2025** concluded with great success. According to data provided by the organisers, attendance increased by **10%** compared to the previous edition. The event ran smoothly and without major incidents, thanks in large part to the **highest level of security and logistical coordination** in the festival's history.

Beyond offering unforgettable experiences, the festival also **reinforced Fuengirola's position as a true meeting point of cultures from around the world.**



PAPAYA SALMOREJO

Chef  Tomasz
MARBELLA

AN EXOTIC TWIST ON A SPANISH CLASSIC

Salmorejo is a beloved cold soup from southern Spain – traditionally rich, velvety, and built on a base of ripe tomatoes, olive oil and stale bread. In this vibrant tropical version, sweet papaya takes the spotlight, either replacing or complementing the tomatoes, adding a fruity depth and exotic smoothness while keeping that iconic creamy texture.

A refreshing and surprisingly elegant dish – perfect for summer days and warm evenings.



Ingredients:

- 800g ripe papaya (peeled and deseeded)
- 800g ripe tomatoes
- 1 small garlic clove (adjust to taste)
- 4–5 slices of day-old bread (crusts removed)
- 350ml extra virgin olive oil
- 50ml sherry vinegar (or red wine vinegar)
- Salt, to taste
- Cold water (optional, for adjusting consistency)

CHEF'S TIP:

This chilled soup is best served on a hot day, preferably in the shade with a glass of crisp white wine or a sparkling rosé. Light, flavourful, and wonderfully unexpected – it's summer in a bowl.

Method:**1. Soften the bread**

Tear the bread into pieces and soak briefly in a little water. After a few minutes, squeeze out any excess moisture.

2. Blend the base

In a blender or food processor, combine the papaya, tomatoes, garlic, and soaked bread. Blend until completely smooth.

3. Create a silky emulsion

While blending, slowly drizzle in the olive oil to emulsify the mixture. This will give the soup its signature creamy texture.

4. Season to taste

Add the vinegar and salt. Adjust the acidity depending on the natural sweetness of the papaya – balance is key.

5. Chill thoroughly

Refrigerate for at least an hour. The flavours will develop beautifully as the soup rests.

6. Serve with flair

Pour into bowls and garnish as you wish. A few elegant suggestions: thin slices of fresh papaya, toasted almonds, and a generous swirl of extra virgin olive oil.

ENJOY!

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REBUJITO

THE PERFECT SUMMER DRINK

When the sun blazes overhead and the air sizzles with heat, Andalusians don't just reach for water or beer – they turn to **Rebujito**, a refreshing cocktail that has become a symbol of southern Spain. Light, citrusy and delightfully easy to drink, Rebujito is the unofficial drink of summer fiestas, but it also makes a brilliant addition to any garden party, holiday meal or lazy afternoon on the terrace. Here's everything you need to know – from its origins to how to make it at home.

What is Rebujito?

Rebujito is a **simple mix of dry sherry (usually Fino or Manzanilla) and lemon-lime soda like Sprite or 7Up, served over plenty of ice.** It's bubbly, crisp and low in alcohol – the kind of drink you can sip all afternoon without feeling overwhelmed by the heat or the booze.

Although it might remind you of spritzers or wine coolers, Rebujito has its own distinct personality – deeply tied to Andalusian culture and tradition.

Today's version of Rebujito might seem modern, but its roots go much deeper. While the drink as we know it emerged in the 20th century, the idea of diluting strong wines with water or juice dates back much further. Historically, people in southern Spain would do this to make wine more refreshing and suitable for hot weather.

Rebujito likely originated in Jerez de la Frontera or Sanlúcar de Barrameda – the heartlands of sherry production. It became widely popular thanks to ferias – traditional Andalusian festivals where people spend long hours dancing sevillanas, eating tapas and sharing pitchers of this thirst-quenching drink.



How to Make Rebujo at Home

Ingredients (for one pitcher):

- 375 ml of Fino or Manzanilla sherry
- 500–600 ml of lemon-lime soda (Sprite, 7Up or a Spanish brand like La Casera)
- Plenty of ice cubes
- A few fresh mint leaves (optional but highly recommended)
- Slices of lemon or lime for garnish

Instructions:

1. Pour the sherry into a large pitcher or jug.
2. Add the soda and gently stir.
3. Fill the pitcher with ice.
4. Add mint and citrus slices for garnish.
5. Serve immediately in tall glasses.

CHEERS!



STARLITE

A STAR-STUDDED LINE-UP RETURNS TO THE COSTA DEL SOL

Starlite Marbella is an annual music festival that lights up the summer in Marbella, drawing tens of thousands of fans eager to experience live performances from some of the world's most celebrated artists. If you're planning a summer holiday on the Costa del Sol, be sure to check who's performing this year — it may just become the highlight of your trip.

The story of Starlite began back in 1983, when Prince Alfonso von Hohenlohe, singer Julio Iglesias and tenor Plácido Domingo organised a musical event in an abandoned quarry in the Nagüeles area of Marbella. They recognised the site's exceptional acoustics and natural amphitheatre potential, laying the groundwork for what would later evolve into one of Europe's most iconic music festivals. Although the first official edition of Starlite Festival didn't take place until thirty years later, the inspiration remained. When it finally launched, the event was initially held on the grounds of a tennis club, combining music and culture with stunning views over the Costa del Sol.



A CULTURAL PHENOMENON

Over the years, Starlite Marbella has grown into one of Europe's leading cultural events, attracting music lovers and celebrities alike. Each edition features a rich and diverse line-up, carefully curated to include some of the biggest international stars. The festival has welcomed the likes of Elton John, Andrea Bocelli, Julio Iglesias, Sting, Lenny Kravitz, Ricky Martin and Tom Jones — all performing in a setting like no other.

Between 2013 and 2014, the festival temporarily moved to Marbella's conference centre, but since 2015, it has returned to its original venue — the atmospheric Nagüeles quarry. From this unique location, audiences enjoy panoramic views of the Mediterranean, the city and the surrounding rock formations, all while immersed in world-class music.



A UNIQUE SETTING AND AN ABUNDANCE OF ATTRACTIONS

What sets Starlite apart is not just its musical line-up, but also its unique setting. Picture an open-air auditorium with 2,200 seats, constructed within an old quarry for just two months each year. Illuminated rock faces and pine trees growing out of the cliff walls create a truly magical backdrop for each performance.

The experience doesn't end when the concert does. After the show, guests can continue their evening in the dance area, where DJs, dancers, and live acts keep the energy going under the stars. There are also VIP zones, stylish lounges, and a wide selection of bars and restaurants throughout the venue — offering everything from fine dining to late-night cocktails.

One of the festival's most meaningful traditions is its charitable gala night. Hosted by Malaga-born actor Antonio Banderas, this exclusive evening raises funds for various foundations and has become one of the most important charity events in Spain.

WHO'S PERFORMING AT STARLITE MARBELLA 2025?

The 2025 edition of Starlite Marbella promises one of the most exciting line-ups in the festival's history, with a stunning mix of global icons and rising stars set to perform throughout the summer.

Among the headline names this year are **Will Smith**, whose appearance is expected to be one of the standout moments of the season. Latin superstar **Marc Anthony** returns to the stage, while British legends such as **Duran Duran**, **Seal**, and **The Beach Boys** are also part of this year's stellar programme.

The line-up also includes **The Script**, **Scorpions**, **Europe**, **Il Divo**, **Santana**, and **Clean Bandit** — bringing together a wide range of musical genres, from pop and rock to Latin rhythms and classical crossovers. This rich diversity ensures that there's something for everyone, whether you're into nostalgic classics or contemporary chart-toppers.

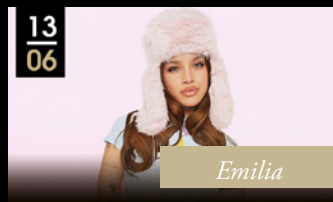
Whether you come for one unforgettable concert or immerse yourself in the full festival atmosphere, Starlite Marbella 2025 offers a rare opportunity to see world-class artists in one of the most beautiful concert settings in Europe.



For the full line-up and ticket information, visit the official website:

STARLITEMARBELLA.TICKEX.LIVE

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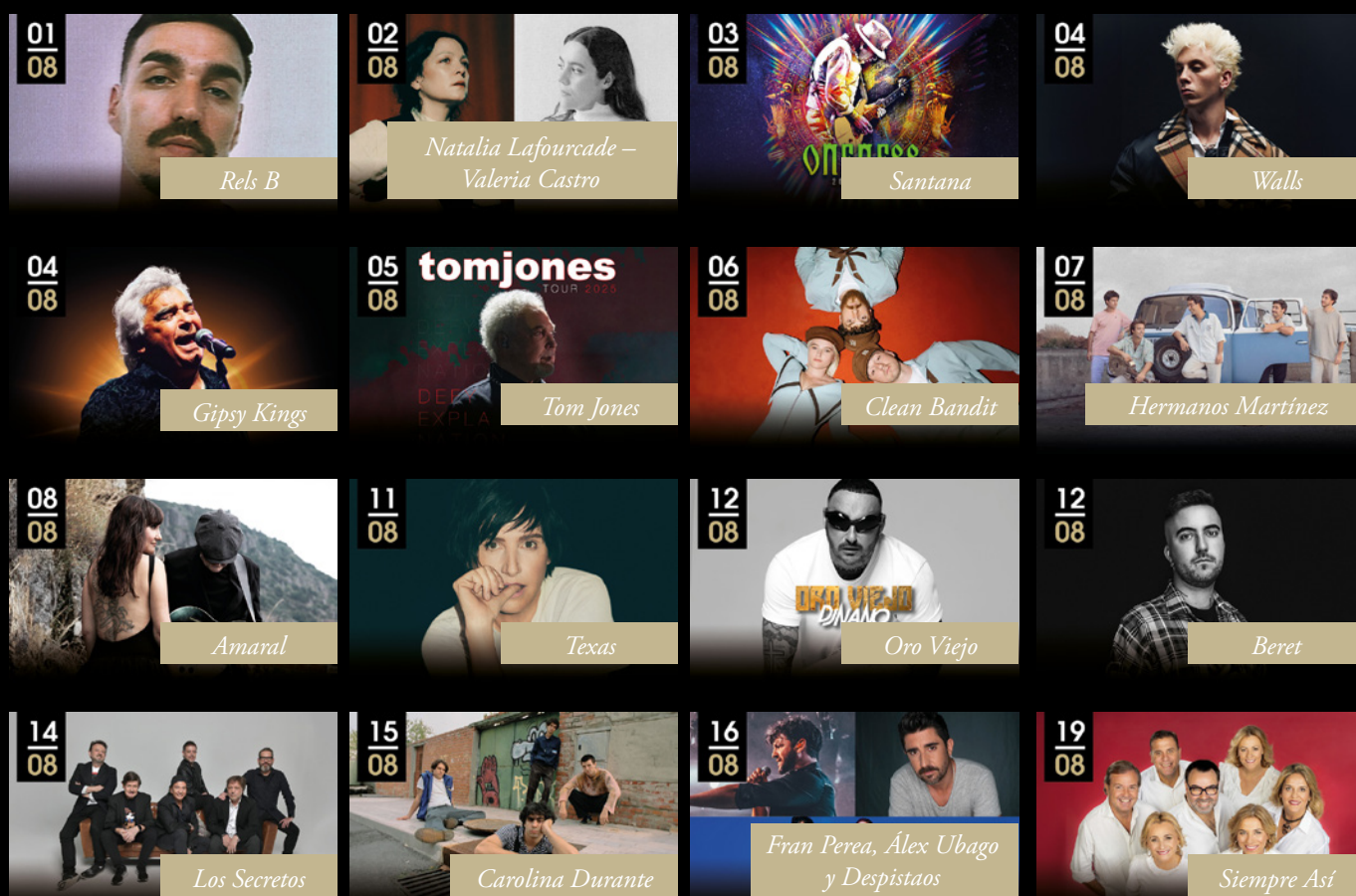


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