

Costa de la Luz – Stress Busting

04/08/2024

Spanish Tit-Bits



“Marbella Stress” may sound like the largest oxymoron since The Saudi Arabina Campaign for Real Ale, but sometimes the pressures of modern Marbella living, especially when the madding and frequently maddening masses descend in August, means that even the most dedicated Marbelli needs to escape and chill out.

Luckily, the Costa de la Luz, with its miles of white sandy beaches, clear Atlantic waters and relaxed surfer meets Boho vibe, is less than an hour away.

Its location at the southernmost point of the Iberian Peninsula and its outstanding climate have made it an object of desire for millennia. The Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Visigoths and Moors have all left their historic footprints along the more than 200 km of Spain’s finest golden beaches.

The clear, although sometimes bracing sea is the main attraction. If you want action, the region’s waves and winds are ideal for top quality water sports. Surfing, windsurfing and kitesurfing are perfect for burning off adrenaline in this unique setting, with one of the highlight of the drive being the sight of hundreds of kitesurfers as you head down towards Tarifa. The immense stretches of sand on beaches like Bolonia and Valdevaqueros close to Spain’s surfing capital have to be experienced to be believed, as do those at Matalascañas and Mazagón in Huelva.

The Costa del la Luz os place where you can do more than just relax. This is also the home of Doñana National Park, the

most important nature reserve in Spain, offering spectacular nature with wetlands, marshlands, and unique wildlife, including colourful flamingos. After so much activity, you will want to recover your strength with a good meal. Local specialities like bluefin tuna, Huelva prawns and Sanlúcar king prawns are delicious and you can also take the opportunity to discover all the different types of sherry from Jerez, the area's most famous export, which is less than 30 minutes' drive inland from the coast.

You can enjoy art and history anywhere on the Costa de la Luz. Cities like Cadiz, which featured in the previous issue of Folio, has played an important part throughout the history of Spain, will surprise you with their architecture of whitewashed houses, churches and fortifications

Cadiz province is also beautiful inland, and is a wonderful area to explore. It is home to the famous white villages, 19 places with whitewashed houses perched among the mountains. A place where humans have hardly affected the natural landscape, with fabulous scenery any traveller will enjoy

Neighbouring Huelva Province is also bursting with history. Villages like Moguer and Palos de la Frontera welcome you to the Lugares Colombinos. These are places where you can learn all about the voyages of Christopher Columbus and the discovery of America. Also in Huelva, May or June sees the annual festival and pilgrimage of El Rocío. Spain's most popular procession wends its way, with music and devotion, to the village of Almonte.

Sanlúcar de Barrameda is at the mouth of the Guadalquivir River, the natural channel along which major cultures and civilisations have travelled, leaving behind their indelible marks. Its exceptional location opposite Doñana National Park, Spain's most important Biological Reserve, makes it an ideal starting point for visitors who want to reach this nature area. The popular Bajo de Guía Beach is where its famous horse races are held every year.

But back to the beach. Chipiona, Rota, El Puerto de Santa María, Puerto Real, Chiclana, Conil, Barbate and Tarifa are some of the main towns and cities, with spacious beaches, tourism infrastructures and clear waters. These areas are perfect for windsurfing, while underwater fishing is also popular in the crystalline waters off the numerous beaches: Los Lances, Bolonia, Punta Paloma, de la Plata, Valdevaqueros and Torre de la Peña.

As the sun sets on the beach, the Costa de la Luz's more relaxed nightlife comes alive. Not so much of the high octane partying and expensive clubs of Marbella, the vibe is much more informal and Bohemian, with the emphasis on genuinely friendly fun and dancing beneath the stars. It is the perfect place to show off the Boho outfit that you brought earlier, in one of the many independent fashion shops that you can discover in the twisting streets of the old towns.

Feel the taste of the Atlantic on your lips and the kiss of the sun your skin as you head to your boutique hotel as the night ends, shedding your stress the way that only the Costa de la Luz can do. Tomorrow the sun rises early and another perfect day on the beach beckons...