

# Costa Tropical - Hidden Paradise

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Spanish Tit-Bits



Less than two hours' drive from the busy Costa del Sol, the Costa Tropical is a fascinating combination of hedonism, history and holidaymaking!

Stretching from the east of Nerja to the Costa de Almería, the Costa Tropical is frequently overlooked as a destination, which means that it has kept much of its charm. A modern highway, complete with some frankly terrifying bridges, effortlessly whisks you to the major towns of Almuñécar, Salobreña and Motril. If you have the time and enjoy driving, however, take the old coast road. With spectacular views of the Mediterranean, winding around hidden coves and diving into tunnels, this road is an atmospheric throwback to the 50s and 60s. You might even start imagining that you glimpsed a Ferrari Dino or Aston Martin DB5 in the rear view mirror!

As its name suggests, the Costa Tropical has a unique microclimate. The Sierra Nevada Mountains that rise behind the coast protect it from the cold north winds, while warm air flows along the Mediterranean from North Africa. The result is a subtropical microclimate that enjoys 320 days of sunshine per year and an average temperature around 20 C, perfect condition for growing tropical fruit!

The main tourist resorts are Almuñécar, Salobreña, Motril, Castell de Ferro and La Rábita. As you might expect, all have a wide variety of hotels, restaurants and bars to suit every taste and budget. Whatever your favourite water sport, The Costa Tropical is a paradise. As well as several well-equipped marinas – Marina del Este is well worth a visit – you can

enjoy windsurfing, fishing, water-skiing and even surfing. Kayak expeditions allow you to explore the coast's coves and beaches, while the unspoilt beauty of the sea floor, teeming with marine life, attracts snorkel and scuba enthusiasts.

The beaches and views are some of the best in Spain. At La Herradura the steep cliffs of Cerro Gordo and Punta de la Mona plunge into the sea; and if you want to get really close to nature, Cerro Gordo-Maró has the nudist beach of Cantarriján

Back in dry land there is a similar range of activities including golf, tennis, mountain biking and hiking. The skiing resort of Sierra Nevada is just over an hour away, giving you the unique opportunity being able to hit the slopes in the morning and then drive down in time for lunch on the beach!

The Costa Tropical is perfect if you enjoy a little history on your holiday. Almuñecar has been an important historical sight, and you can still visit the Phoenician necropolis from the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, the Roman Aqueduct; as well as the Moorish Castle that overlooks the town. Nearby Salobreña is often described as the "Jewel of the Tropical Coast" with its fortress overlooking the white houses that cling to the side of the steep hill (be warned. It is steep!) Finally, Motril, considered the capital of the Costa Tropical, has a variety of beaches, a busy town centre and an international port that links Spain to several Mediterranean destinations.