

Ultimate

APRIL - MAY 2023

Carboneras, a Wonder Around the Corner

The Fishing Town of Garrucha

Discover the small port with big prawns

Seasonal Is Always The Best

We've Looked Into Which Vegetables Are in Season Right Now

Enjoy Vera For Easter

Find out what you can do to bask yourself in traditional activities

Classic Costa de Almería Cooking

upclose and personal with a Mojácar born 83 year old woman

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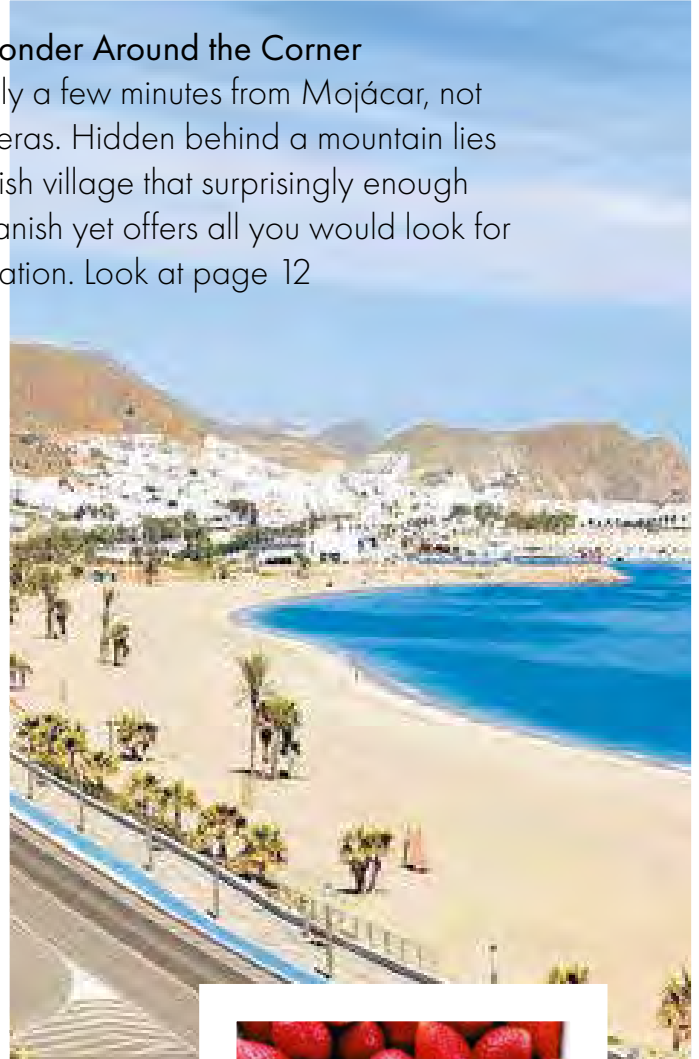
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COVER STORY

Carboneras, a Wonder Around the Corner

Even though it's only a few minutes from Mojácar, not many visit Carboneras. Hidden behind a mountain lies this beautiful Spanish village that surprisingly enough remained very Spanish yet offers all you would look for in a holiday destination. Look at page 12



Are You Ready for National Asparagus Day?

COVER STORY

St. George's Day has become synonymous with the start of British Asparagus Season, read it on page 66



cover



This edition's cover celebrates life and the beauty of the seasonal changes and the many rainbows we can enjoy down at the coast.

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in may all birds lay eggs, right?

It is known most birds lay eggs at May, yet somehow eggs become associated with Easter. There are many theories as to why, but the most acceptable, and most logical one, is that eggs literally represent new life. New beginnings. What better than include eggs at Easter celebrations?

TWO EGGS IS HALF AN EGG

That seems a bit odd, so why is that? In the medieval period, eating eggs was forbidden during Lent, the 40 days before Easter, so on Easter Sunday, tucking into an egg was a real treat! This was especially true for poorer people who couldn't afford to buy meat. Eggs were given to the church as Good Friday offerings, and villagers often gave eggs as gifts to the lord of the manor at Easter. Even royals got involved – in 1290, Edward I purchased 450 eggs, which were decorated with colours or gold leaf and given out to his household. In the old days the three eggs for Easter breakfast represented body, mind and spirit, hence one egg was nothing and two eggs were only half of what you needed.

THIS EDITION

In this edition of Ultimate Magazine, we're visiting the Garrucha port. We talk about fruit and found an amazing traditional Almerían recipe, we're discovering Carboneras, highlight the latest books, Peter Holland rants about something again and as always, we have the Ultimate Gourmet Guide and Property Pages of course, and much much more.

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Team Ultimate



Ultimate **team**

Editor

Erik Roesink

Writers

Peter Holland

Catherine Elelman

Yasmin Conrad Davies

Design

Paul Roesink

IT Department

Paul Roesink



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]ocal[

here are some
reasons why Almería is
AMAZING

FACT:

Yes, scorpions do produce venom. The scary-looking tail is actually 5 segments of the abdomen, curved upward, with a final segment called a telson at the end.

1

THE TAPAS ARE FREE

In Almería, there is such thing as a free lunch – or a snack, at least. When you order a beer, glass of wine or soft drink, you'll receive a plate of tapas for free, making it an incredibly cheap and enjoyable city in which to eat out.

2

THERE'S A DESERT

Some 30 kilometer northwest of Almería is Europe's only desert, the *Desierto Tabernas*. This wild expanse of sand dunes, hills and mountains is rarely visited by rain, and home to species of flora that struggle to exist anywhere else on the continent. Prickly local residents include the yellow scorpion and the small but deadly black widow spider. Tread carefully.

3

EUROPE'S DRIEST PLACE

Almería is the driest city in continental Europe, with annual rainfall of just 200mm. It is also the second-warmest city on the continent, with annual temperatures almost never dipping below 19C. As if that weren't enough to entice sun junkies, a temperature below freezing has never been recorded in Almería.

4

CIVIL WAR TUNNELS

During Spain's Civil War, Almería was subjected to repeated and devastating bombings. So relentless were the attacks that engineers built a 4.5km network of subterranean tunnels in which civilians could take refuge; today, 1 km of these underground havens – called the *Refugios de la Guerra Civil* – can be visited (tours only in Spanish).

5

THE MOORISH FORT

Almería's Moorish fort, or Alcazaba, is a magnificent structure. It was built during the latter half of the 10th century. Almería's splendour and importance during this period is captured in the Spanish saying, "when Almería was Almería, Granada was but its farm".





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CARBONERAS, A WONDER AROUND THE CORNER

Often overlooked but definitely worth it, is a visit to the small town of Carboneras, about 10 minutes further down the coast after Mojácar. If you want to get out of the hustle and bustle you are golden with a visit while enjoying the amazing scenery.





The very a short drive from Mojácar and the gateway to the Cabo de Gata, Carboneras has a lot to offer. The Almerían town of Carboneras is a perfect tourist destination for nature lovers as it has a unique and spectacular environment. You can simply enjoy the spectacular views or practice open-air sports such as hiking or scuba diving. It is set within the Nature Reserve of Cabo de Gata-Níjar, one of the most arid protected areas in Europe and the only with a coast in the whole of Andalucía.

Carboneras is also chosen by those who simply want to enjoy a day of sun and beach. Among the many beaches is that of 'Los Muertos', which is inside the fore mentioned natural park. You will find it hidden between mountains, with an extraordinarily straight shoreline. It's not easy to get to and maybe due to this, so that could be why the beaches around Carboneras are frequently attended by nudists.

HISTORY

The name Carboneras, actually translates to coal bunkers, as the whole area was stripped of its forest when mining for coal (both of which are now very absent!). After the War of Granada the Catholic Monarchs granted mercedes, land and jurisdictional lordships in payment for the services rendered. In the case of Diego López de Haro y Sotomayor, I Marquis of Carpio, he obtained the position of Distributor of the lands of Vera (1490) and Mojácar, which were of royalty, and the jurisdictional lordship of Sorbas and Lubrín (1502). The population of Carboneras, within the lordship of Sorbas, has its origin in the construction of the Castle of San Andrés. In 1587 the Marquis del Carpio obtained Royal Decree to fortify the castle of San Andrés for coastal defense against the uprising of the Moors, however, the bad yields he obtained from the tuna trap of Carboneras meant that the artillery work was not completed or equipped with troops until the seventeenth century. The mountains were used for the production of charcoal so the denomination of Cabezo de Carbonera was used.





The threat of the Barbary pirates meant that the repopulation of the territory after the expulsion of the Moors was not satisfactorily completed, with the coastline being depopulated. For the defense, the coastal defense towers of Rayo, Rambla de los Moros and El Peñón and others were built along the coast of the Kingdom of Granada.

In 1739, the district of Almería was comprised from Roquetas de Mar to Mesa Roldán, being the Alcazaba of Almería the central fortress. In the seventeenth century due to the loss of the city of Oran to the Ottoman Empire, the artillery tower of Mesa Roldán was reformed before the stalking of Anglo-Turkish piracy.

From the nineteenth century date the stately buildings as the current headquarters of the town hall of Carboneras, formerly Casa de los Fuentes. In 1805 the botanist Simón de Rojas testifies to the activity of charcoal and export of charcoal. In 1813 Carboneras split from Sorbas and became a municipality. Creating its first cabildo on June 1, being mayor Vicente Requena. It lost the status of hall and the prison. It also points out its good anchorage, and the farmhouses of Islica, Llano Don Antonio, Saltador, Fazali, Serrata and Argamazón. It identifies the cultivation of esparto grass and its trade with Blanes, Mallorca and Roses, in addition to the abundant firewood of scrub and four flour mills. In addition, it explains the abundant fishing with longline and trawl that is sold to nearby populations and reaches La Mancha and Madrid.

Hidden behind a mountain
is Carboneras with its
BEAUTIFUL BOULEVARD

During the rest of the nineteenth century and the first third of the twentieth, Carboneras had as its first economic activity the cultivation of esparto, which came to be exported to England. Meanwhile, fishing was consolidating, even reaching the creation of an almadraba.

From the early to mid-twentieth century the lack of work meant emigration to industrial populations in Spain and Europe and left the municipality practically uninhabited. From the last third of the twentieth century, a powerful industrial and productive nucleus was implanted in Carboneras. In 1980 the activity of the Port of Carboneras began for supply and trade of the cement company Hisalba, currently part of Holcim. In addition, in 1980 Endesa's Litoral de Almería Thermal Power Plant and a coal unloading dock were installed and inaugurated in 1984. The industrial core of Carboneras was also completed by a drywall factory and fish farms dedicated to the breeding and fattening of Sea Bass and Sea Bream. In addition, a fishing port was built with all its services (ice factory, freezers, dry dock, caulks, etc.) that has made the current fleet exceed one hundred ships both inshore and high.

In 1988 the natural park of Cabo de Gata - Níjar was declared, 80% of the municipality within the park. Since the late twentieth century Carboneras is also a tourist town on the Costa de Almería.

During the real estate boom of the early twenty-first century, problems with planning licenses and judicial processes affected the Hotel Algarrobico on the Algarrobico beach of the Cabo de Gata Níjar natural park. In Carboneras is one of the largest desalination plants in Europe (with capacity to desalinate 120,000 cubic meters of water per day), inaugurated in 2005. In 2021, one of the two groups of the Litoral de Almería de Carboneras, Thermal Power Plant was closed within the process of closing thermal power plants in Spain.

BEACHES

Among the different beaches that define the 17 kilometres of coast in Carboneras, the beach of Los Algarrobicos stands out as it was the setting for the famous film of Lawrence of Arabia. The beach of Los Barquicos is very popular among those who practice scuba diving and that of el Lancón, which, like the previous one, is well-equipped with all the services and facilities necessary to meet the needs of even the most demanding of tourists. From its natural maritime environment comes the Island of San Andrés, declared a Natural Monument and Marine Reserve of Fish.



It's so warm in the south of Spain that when diving you are bound to see many

TROPICAL FISH



GASTRONOMY

Those who wish to try the exquisite delicacies of the local gastronomy will have no hesitation in trying the rabbit cooked in garlic, smoked tuna and numerous other seafood dishes such as 'galán'. Blessed with an excellent climate, the local cuisine reflects the abundance of excellent fresh fruits and vegetables, supplemented by fresh fish from the Mediterranean and locally reared meat.

Savouring local cuisine in Almería province is about discovering the staples of Andalucía. From the mountains of the Almerían Alpujarra to the Mediterranean Cabo de Gata-Níjar Natural Park, dishes are prepared according to simple recipes, with subtle influences from the neighbouring provinces of Murcia, Malaga and Granada.

Almerían cuisine features the freshest products the land and sea has to offer. Families have passed down recipes for traditional dishes for centuries, forging a cuisine characteristic of the region.

CELEBRATIONS

The Fiesta de San Antonio in June is a must, with the traditional recreation of the battle of the Moors and Christians on the beach. There is also the Fiesta de los Pescadores (Fishermen's festival) halfway through August, with the marine procession and the 'sardiná' in the fishing port.

SCUBA DIVING OR SNORKLING

Whether you are an experienced diver or a novice, there are several dive schools based in the town that use Carboneras as one of their dive locations because of the small island just 800 metres off the shore called "Isla de San Andres", and its proximity with nearby sites in the Cabo de Gata. Range from 12m - 30m depths and incorporating many fascinating features and wildlife for all levels, these dives are fantastic.

There is a whole new land to discover and it is a really amazing experience. Even if you just use a snorkel, there are many fish and interesting things to see. Rock formations, starfish, sea urchins, seaweed, anemones, sponges, octopuses and a wide variety of fish, some of them very colourful await you. ■

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[is it safe to watch netflix with silicon valley bank down](#)

Technically the SVB didn't collapse due to mismanagement but because of alarming messages on Twitter that made people withdraw \$42 billion in a single day. This was too much even for the SVB but yes, it's still safe to watch Netflix. Don't worry.



[why eurovision songcontest after brexit in liverpool](#)

The Eurovision Song Contest is set to take place in Liverpool, United Kingdom, after the Ukraine, winner of the 2022 contest, was unable to meet the demands of hosting the event due to security concerns caused by the Russian invasion.



[is pizza spanish](#)

Pizza has a long history. Flatbreads with toppings were consumed by the ancient Egyptians, Romans and Greeks. The birthplace of pizza is the city of Naples though.



[new stamp charles](#)

Royal Mail will issue new stamps with King Charles III on them. The image is a version of the new coins. The use of the coin image is a continuation of a long tradition stretching back to the creation of the Penny Black all the way back in 1840.



[is boris johnson an alien](#)

It might be hard to believe but there is no proof whatsoever that Boris Johnson is an alien or lizzard person even. That said, some major news outlets have concluded that his hand gestures might be alien signals. So who really knows?

Enjoy Vera for Easter

Sometimes you can find many gems all around you and much closer than you'd think. Vera is one of those rare historical gems.



Walking its 6 kilometers of crystalline beaches, doing all kinds of sports, soaking up every corner of the city, tasting the most traditional flavors, learning in pottery workshops and feeling the passion for Holy Week, are the plans to enjoy in these days of rest.

Vera is a family destination where you can disconnect from your every-day routine, is located near Mojácar, at the Almeria coast. Throughout its rich history it has been a balcony to the Mediterranean that is currently nourished by culture, sport and gastronomy, as well as many other

A VACATION IS WHAT YOU TAKE WHEN YOU CAN NO LONGER TAKE WHAT YOU'VE BEEN TAKING - EARL WILSON

attractions. It is a destination where the quality of life is appreciated, so Easter is a good time to discover this town, either with the family, as a couple or yourself, and enjoy these suggestions or even walk across the six kilometers of beach.

The area of Vera is a testimony of settlements such as the megalith of Cabezo de las Coscojas, from the Chalcolithic or Cerro del Pajarraco, with proof of settlement from the copper age to the Punic and the Romans. The site of Cerro del Espíritu Santo indicates settlement since Roman times as a rural population under the influence of the civitas de Baria, whose archaeological remains are in Villaricos. In the sixth and seventh centuries Baria, like other Hispano-Roman populations, would be abandoned and moved to the hill of the Holy Spirit. During the time of the Caliphate of Cordoba the population of Bayra, located on the hill of the Holy Spirit, was administratively in the Cora de Tudmir and in the ninth century had a mosque aljama. In the twelfth century it would be a border town of vanguard of the Kingdom of Granada, walled and with a fortress. Vera has a privileged coastline within the Levante Almeriense, both known for its crystal clear waters and

for its fine sand. The beaches are fully equipped, as they are places designed for recreation, leisure and enjoyment for all, without forgetting their coves that are only a few minutes away and only half an hour from the Cabo de Gata Natural Park.

In addition, Vera is internationally recognized as the nudist capital of Spain and the first naturist enclave in Europe. All lovers of this practice have both locations and facilities designed for them. With almost a kilometer reserved, it's possible to walk and do any activity, including staying in the only nudist and naturist hotel in Spain on the beachfront.

The town of Vera is a good showcase for active tourism, that besides the amazing sandy beaches, has facilities for international athletes of high level and of any sport. Golf, horse riding, swimming, athletics, wind-surfing, paddle surfing, kite surfing, kayaking, sailing, football, catamaran sailing, gliding or ultralight, guided or 4x4 routes, coastal bike routes, hiking, Olympic shooting, paddle tennis, tennis and paintball are just some of the sports to do.

The Mediterranean municipality is a mixture of cultures with more than two millennia of history, so the background full of traditions, customs and heritage is visible all around you. No matter where you are, there's something historical near you to admire. Especially during Easter you'll feel transported through time. During Holy Week at Easter it is essential to visit the Plaza Mayor, the Plaza de Toros, the Nasrid City of Bayra and the Fountain of the Four Spouts. ▶



The Plaza de Toros looks like a 2000 year old Roman theatre



Various very colorful artisanal bowls and pots made at the Vera pottery workshop

and religious festival of the municipality. These days, visitors have the opportunity to feel the Veratense feeling with a large number of activities and liturgical customs, from the transfer of images, the celebration of offices and processions. One of the most significant moments of Holy Week is the "Rise of Jesus", an austere procession in which all the generations of the municipality accompany Nazareno carrying their Cross to the Plaza Mayor where the Virgen de las Angustias, patron saint of Vera, waits, and the death sentence is read in the "Jewish Proclamation". The Easter schedule is as follows:

The Plaza Mayor is the nerve center of the city where the Town Hall of Vera and the Parish Church of Our Lady of the Incarnation with its Andalusian fortress-type structure are located. The Plaza de Toros, built in the nineteenth century, is the oldest in the province, which is why it has a neo-Arab style. Then there is Bayra, the ancient medieval city where excavations are being carried out since 2021 in the Cerro del Espíritu Santo. And, finally, the Fuente de los Cuatro Caños, which is of Arab origin and is also known as Fuente Chica.

Thanks to the rich history of Veraten, the gastronomy is full of aromas, colors and flavors. A cuisine of Mediterranean air characterized by its clear Hispano-Arab influence of Al-Andalus and that aims to recover almost forgotten dishes, legacy of ancestors, elaborating traditional recipes with the use of products and condiments of the land and seasonal products. Examples of these dishes are the famous stew, gurullos and garlic colorao.

For people who want to breath in a little culture, they can enjoy the exclusive pottery workshop. The pottery tradition is the artisan jewel of Veratense, which has been passed down from generation to generation. Here you have the opportunity to do something different on your holiday and learn to create jars of different styles, shapes and sizes just like artisanal craftsman. It sure is a great story back home when you show the results.

In the seventeenth century there were already brotherhoods and brotherhoods in Vera, so it is a celebration with a very marked sign of identity and the most important social

Palm Sunday

Parade of the Borriquita through the town by the San Cleofás Group. Before the procession the palñmas are blessed.

Holy Monday

Stations of the Cross from the Parish Church.

Holy Tuesday

Parade of the Child and Youth Brotherhood of the Virgin of the Pardons and Jesus of Hope.

Holy Wednesday

Procession of the Captive Christ and the Virgin of Purity have been processioned through the Stewardship of San Antón.

Holy Thursday

Procession of the Royal and Venerable Brotherhood of San Juan Evangelista and Santísimo Cristo de la Misericordia.

Good Friday

This day a Roman soldier reads the "Proclamation of the Jew" where the sentence of Pontius Pilate is read. At night the Christ of the Column and the Holy Sepulchre procession.

Holy Saturday

The Easter Vigil is celebrated in the Church.

Resurrection Sunday

The Risen One is processioned where along the route gifts are made that are auctioned at the end of it at the door of the Hermitage of San Ramón. ■



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PETER HOLLAND UNLEASHED!

Peter, originally from Birmingham and in Spain already for six years, got known during the lockdown on local forums. Some say he is rude, others say he speaks eloquently with the grace and subtlety of royalty. Peter just feels he's telling it like it is. His insights are not advice, legal or otherwise, are not to confirm suspicions towards any government, nor a guideline to anything.

We Will We Will Nuke You

So, the International Criminal Court based in The Hague has issued an arrest warrant for war crimes against Vladimir Putin. This means that if he steps outside Russia he should be seized, interred and sent on to be tried in the court.

Good luck with that, his crony, former President Medvedev, has announced that any country participating in Putin's arrest will be nuked! In effect the only country now that could arrest him would be Russia itself, so unless there is regime change in Russia he will never physically stand trial. Of course he could be tried in absentia, but don't hold your breath!

Meanwhile across the world other Leaders are in deep doo. President Macron of France has lit the Blue Touchpaper resulting in violent riots amongst his volatile population with his unwanted but probably necessary pension reforms uplifting the retirement age from 62 to 64, modest when compared with the UK's imminent uplift from 67 to 68.

Former UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson is desperately lying about lying to the country regarding Downing Street parties he attended during the pandemic, blatantly breaking the rules he himself set about public gatherings and so passionately promoted by him.

Indeed, the political analysis BBC programme Question Time, asked a Tory and Brexit supporting audience "who thought Boris was telling truth about the gatherings" and it delivered a staggering 100% no in a show of hands. Meanwhile the Scottish National Party seems to be imploding with scandal and

infighting following it's leader Nicola Sturgeon stepping down and her husband resigning from the Chairmanship due to perceived irregularities.

Israel is seemingly on the brink of civil war if not widespread civil disorder. Turkey with it's controversial strongman autocratic leader Erdogan, is in the midst of a bitter election which could change everything. Hungary wants everything the EU has to offer but doesn't want to be guided by it's rules. Germany wants to subvert the green revolution in transport and keep the internal combustion engine. I could go on, but what's the point, it only depresses one!

We're here in the Happy Valley Mojacar vicinity have little to trouble us, the sun is shining, the fruit is ripening, tourists are returning in ever greater numbers, bars and restaurants are re-opening and seemingly booming. The airports are even predicting that pre-pandemic levels of landings are within touching distance and blessing upon blessing the property market is buoyant, what could possibly go wrong?

Well the Mojacar relief road has been canned again along with development land release, the desalination plant in Villaricos is still inoperable and the heat is earlier still this year!

Ok, ok, I'll stop, lol, in the modern vernacular and get my coat (actually, coat not needed, it's hot). Frio Cervesa anyone?

Until my next rant

Peter Holland



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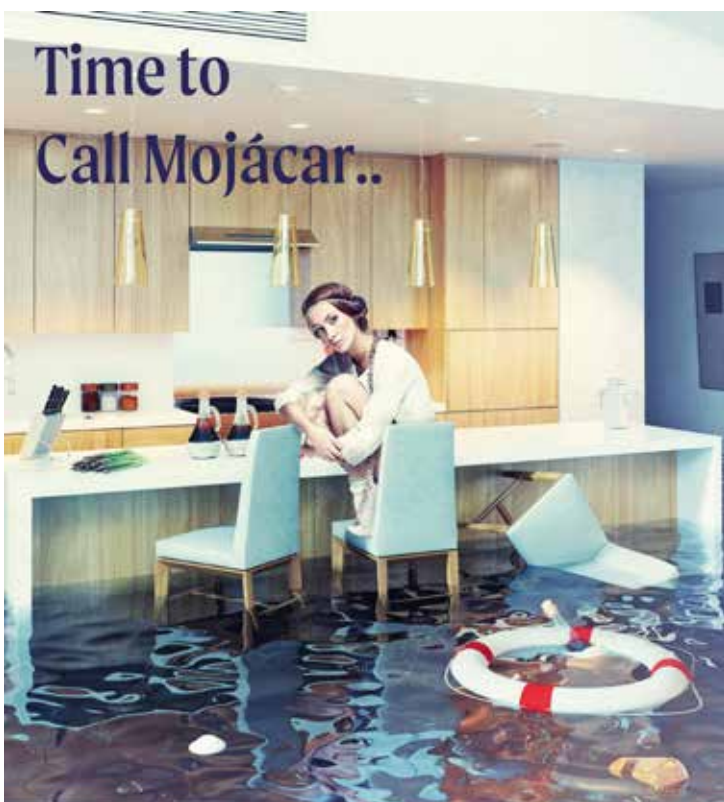
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lifestyle

here are some

easy ways to combat

SPRING FATIGUE

1

GET FRESH AIR

Fresh air in the morning drives away sorrow. After getting up, open all the windows and let some fresh spring air into the room. Feel free to open the doors in your house to allow the air to circulate. The oxygen will wake you up and sunshine will put you in a good mood.

2

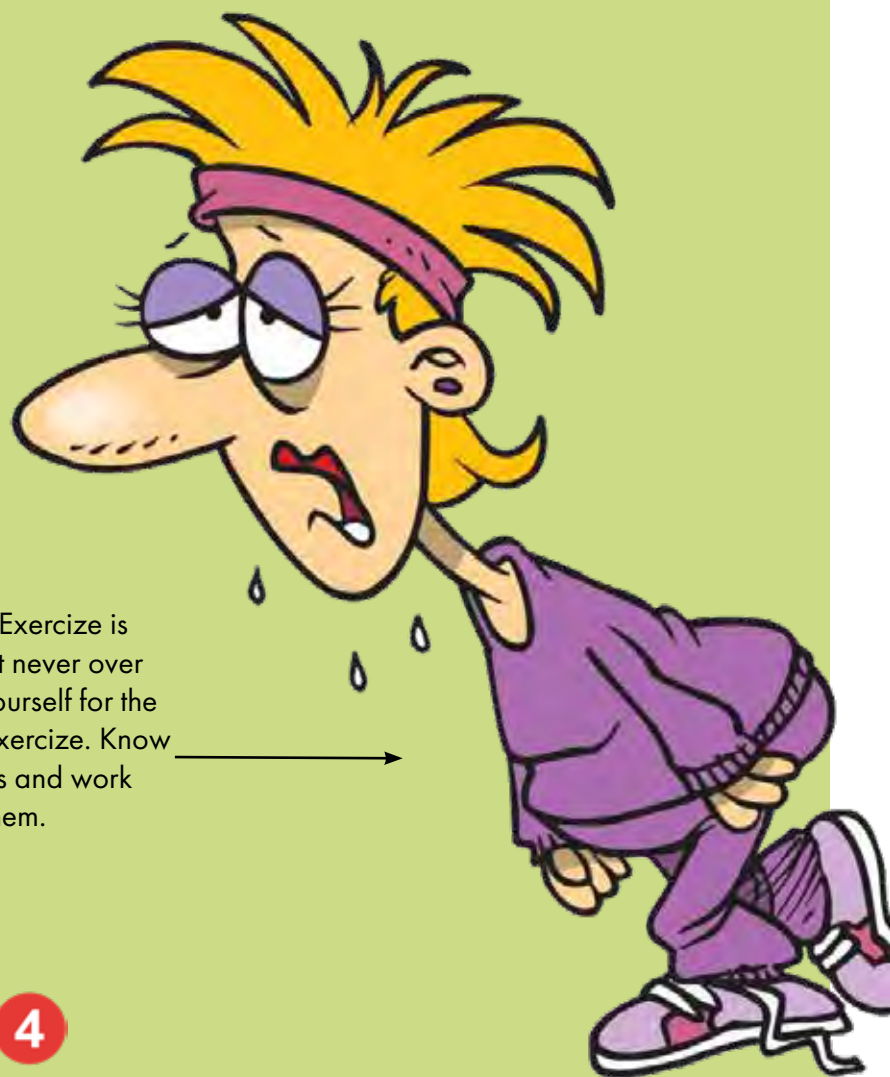
HOT AND COLD SHOWERS

Get the blood circulation going in the morning. The change in temperature causes the blood vessels to alternately dilate and constrict. This process has positive effects on your body and immune system.

3

STAY HYDRATED

Water ensures that metabolic processes function better. This improves your performance and gives you more energy. Nice side effect is that you don't get hungry as quickly.



PRO TIP: Exercise is good, but never over extend yourself for the sake of exercise. Know your limits and work around them.

4

HEALTHY BREAKFAST

You should make enough time for it in the morning. Best is to try and eat something within two to three hours after getting up. The basis for a balanced breakfast is carbohydrates. Fruits and wholemeal or multigrain bread, for example, are suitable here. You will notice that with a balanced breakfast you will start the day with much more energy.

5

HUNT THE SUN

The sunlight provides you with vitamin D, which strengthens our immune system. Whether it is just a short walk or a long jog, even a few minutes in the sun will support your immune system and suppress springtime fatigue. Not only that, you'll get a nice tan and look healthy.

Easter in Spain

Locally known as Semana Santa (Holy Week), Easter is the most important celebration in Spain and stands out for its epic brotherhoods' processions and unique, age-old traditions specific to each region.



You would call the atmosphere that characterizes the festivities usually solemn, and everything seems to be fully immersed in emotion. Don't let yourself be fooled, though – this is still Spain, which means neither the solid religious beliefs nor the somberness of the moment can hide the nation's fervor for pomp and lively fiestas. In 2023, Easter in Spain begins on Sunday, April 2nd, and ends on Sunday, April 9th.

Although each Spanish region, and even city and village, has its own particular customs and practices during this time of year, Semana Santa celebrations are nowhere else as elaborate and spectacular as they are in Andalucía, our sunny south of the country.

Here, the most important Catholic holiday is commemorated with a week full of color, art, religious fervor, and extravagant processions. By far, the most spectacular events take place in Málaga and Seville, where the streets are taken over by flamboyant parades and intricate religious displays depicting biblical scenes.

Like everywhere in Spain, the festivities begin on Palm Sunday and last until the following Easter Monday, with the most dramatic and passionate parades held on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday.

In Málaga, Semana Santa is celebrated with religious and military parades accompanied by music, inviting incense and floral scents, as well as lots of color and cheer.

One of the most distinctive features is the presence of tronos – huge ornate floats that are carried through the streets of Málaga by hundreds of church members wearing long purple robes and women in black holding lit candles.

Although Easter celebrations in Málaga are of huge proportions, it's Seville's Semana Santa that has transcended the country's frontiers becoming a world-fa-

mous event. During the Holy Week, the gorgeous Andalusian capital comes to life with thousands of pilgrims who gather here from all corners of the world to witness the city's extravagant pasos.

A BLESSING MUST ARISE FROM WITHIN YOUR OWN MIND. IT IS NOT SOMETHING THAT COMES FROM OUTSIDE – DALAI LAMA

A paso is an enormous float with life-size wooden statues. Some of them dating back as far as the 16th century. Each movable float belongs to a brotherhood, or *cofradia* and has its own distinctive characteristics. A common feature, however, is the team of *costaleros* who convey the pasos on their necks and shoulders through the crowded streets.

The highlight of Holy Week in Seville is the night of Maundy Thursday, when all the processions start their march to the Cathedral. Known as *La Madrugá*, the night between Holy Thursday and Good Friday is another spectacular moment of Seville's Semana Santa. On the dawn of Good Friday, people gather in front of the Seville Cathedral to commemorate the trial and all the events that have led to the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ.

This tense atmosphere changes quickly on Easter Sunday. Lively, colorful parades replace the sober processions; the floats are festooned with flowers; the silence is expelled by exultant music; and people indulge themselves in all kinds of traditional sweets and pastries such as *torrijas* (slices of bread soaked in milk and eggs, and fried in olive oil) and *pestiños* (Andalusian honey-glazed pastries fried in olive oil). All these things make Spain even more amazing, but don't take our word for it. Find out for yourself. ■

Easter in Spain is much intenser and ceremonial than we're used to. It's an important part of the Spanish culture.





Many small businesses owners don't realize that a staggering 80 percent of businesses fail within the first 18 months. Typically, one of the main causes is poor financial management.

Despite these dire consequences, many business owners go it alone when it comes to managing their money. A recent report found that 53 percent of small business owners don't use an accountant at all. And even more shocking, 27 percent of these respondents simply use pen and paper to keep track of their finances.

While we shouldn't conclude that these businesses are worse off for not having an accountant, we can't underestimate the breadth of knowledge and experience an accountant can provide.

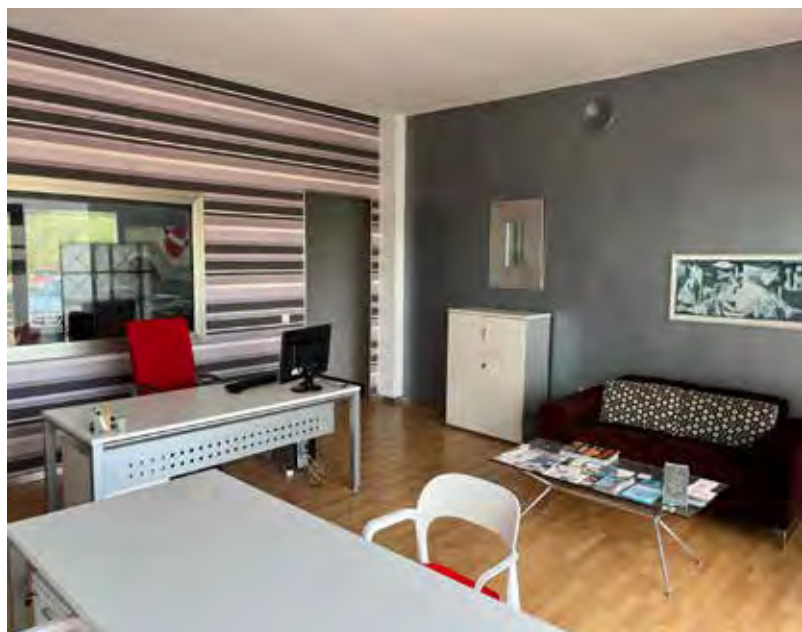
Most people don't service their cars at home. Instead, they bring them to a professional mechanic who can keep things running smoothly and spot potential issues. Small businesses need just the same attention from a professional.

Accountants do more than tax filing. They can take a comprehensive assessment of your finances and create a forecast through

the year to keep your business at a healthy, prosperous state. It may feel daunting to let an outsider in on the intimate details of how your business is run, especially if you've had trouble managing your finances in the past. But partnering with an accountant will actually help you to achieve your goals and set you up for long-term success.

"We have worked with Fran for the past year, and we would definitely recommend him" Natasha and Jamie, Vista del Mar "Fran has been our company accountant at Blue Sea Villas for several years and represents over half of my BSV clients. He is a qualified and experienced accountant, who is competent in all Tax Return Preparation Services. Bilingual, honest and a true pleasure to work with, he has a no-nonsense approach, and goes over and beyond what he is required to do. I would not hesitate in recommending his services to anyone" Wendy Lester, Blue Sea Villas.

You can contact Fran Aznar at +34687503209



BY THE BOOK

Want a book with lots to talk about? You 'literary' couldn't run out of topics with these. So, get your notebook, grab a marker and start reading. You've never had so much fun preparing for a bookclub as with these new publications. With every new magazine we'll give you the highlights of the latest bestsellers so you can choose a new book for your reading enjoyment.



Want to talk about...
**ROMANCE AND
VULNERABILITY**



**Things We Hide
From The Light**

Lucy Score

What's the plot?

Police chief Nash Morgan is recovering from being shot. His Southern charm has been overshadowed by panic attacks and nightmares. The new next-door neighbour, smart and sexy Lina, sees his shadows. Too bad Lina's got secrets of her own, and if Nash finds out the real reason she's in town, he'll never forgive her.

Once she gets what she's after, she has no intention of sticking around. Or can Nash persuade her to stay?



Want to talk about...
**HISTORY AND
PSYCHOLOGY**



**Seven Husbands
of Evelyn Hugo**

Taylor Jenkins Reid

What's the plot?

An actress is determined to secure an A-List spot in the industry. She marries seven husbands and outlives them all. Later in her life, she hires a journalist to write her memoir and, for the first time in her decorated life, tells details and secrets about her love life. The journalist hired seeks to discover why she was chosen to document the life of the actress. The reason is later revealed in a twist leaving all the readers on the very edge.



Want to talk about...
**PASSION AND
RELATIONSHIPS**



Heart Bones

Colleen Hoover

What's the plot?

Beyah Grim, who's grown up with a junkie mother and an absentee father. Now, a couple months separates her from a future she's secretly scraped and fought for and it's all falling apart before it's even begun. With no place to go, she's forced to spend the final weeks of summer with a father she barely knows, among the wealthy and privileged who know nothing of the life she's endured. Suddenly, the future is threatened again.



Want to talk about...
**ADVENTURE AND
POLITICS**



Burner

Mark Greaney

What's the plot?

Gentry is trying to hide from the authorities, but when Suzanne reaches out, he can't say no. Teaming up with Angela, they are tasked with retrieving what they are told is banking data.

Unknown to Court, Angela receives orders to keep an eye out for the Gray Man and, if possible, eliminate him.

She has no idea the man she's working with is her potential target.

The groups all have different motives and objectives, and when they collide it's a mess.

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Parent Shaming: Are You Really That Bad

We're talking about mum guilt, well not just mum-guilt of course because we understand that dads too can have it, but it's often only spoken about from a women's perspective.



As parents we can fall victim to the invisible pressure from others to live up to a certain standard of parenting. With hashtags such as #familygoals & #parentingwins to describe people success and generally brag about how well they're raising their children or holding their family together splashes across social media, it's no wonder we're feeling a little bad about ourselves now and again. So why the invisible pressure? It's an invisible pressure because what we view either in real life or portrayed on social media is a

home look inferior and that's ok, it's also ok if you're reading this surrounded by mess, avoiding the dish pile stacked in the kitchen. It's all ok.

Next time you visit someone's house that's immaculate, rather than making it about you and feeling inferior, think for a moment about the panic attack they could've been avoiding by ensuring their house was spotless. Alternatively, next time you visit someone who's house is a mess don't let

them feel ashamed, let them know that we're human and that's more than ok. In fact, it's a damn relief. That mum may leave your unruly mess breathing a sigh of relief, you could be mortified she caught you off guard but

OUR HOUSE IS ALWAYS MESSY. I LIKE IT THAT WAY. CHILDREN SPILL THINGS ALL THE TIME. IT MEANS PEOPLE LIVE IN THE HOUSE AND I ALWAYS TRY TO REFLECT THAT RELATABILITY INTO MY MOVIES. — STEVEN SPIELBERG

tiny pixel of the whole picture. We know all this yet still we measure ourselves against false idols. It may be that you especially need a clean and tidy environment in order to feel calm, you may need this before you can do anything else. Your house might be so insta-worthy it makes a show-

she may be secretly thanking you that she measures up just fine after all. Because the current stigma seems to have us believe that if your and your kid's outfits aren't coordinated and matched, if everything in your house isn't labelled and put in its specific box then you must be doing it wrong. If you



two stressed millennial parents checking parenting tips online

are living that way: good for you, if you aren't: good for you. Our friendships and personal relationships are not chalked up to how perfect our houses are or how often we bake cookies with our little darlings.

Banish that guilt for good, set yourself as your only competition. Start small, if the big things are overwhelming break down each day, hour or activity down into a more manageable way of working. Allow yourself to admit your misgivings, you won't believe how liberating it is.

Some people are just very messy and some people are obsessed with cleanliness. But of course there is a difference between messy and clean. Rooms can be messy, but the kitchen is clean. Some rooms should be clean because of health reasons, it doesn't mean you should be able to eat of the floor of your three old's bedroom. Whether or not a child is messy is a personality trait, says Maggie Mamen, a family psychologist in Ottawa. From an early age, children will either line up and sort their toys, or dump them out on the floor. Further complicating matters are parents' standards of cleanliness. A laid-back parent won't be too fussed about a rumpled room, but it will drive a neat freak nuts. "The issue is coloured by our own personal comfort level with

mess, but yes, obviously there's got to be some kind of happy medium," says Mamen. If parents can handle it, they should consider closing the door and not think about what's behind it, says Kathy Lynn, a known author of various books about parenting and a speaker for event where you can learn how to deal with your little rugrats. "A kid's room should be their sanctuary; it should be a they can go that is theirs," she says, "There's a difference between messy and dirty. In other words, toys on the floor are OK; wet towels and dirty dishes are not.". Good advice.

TO UNDERSTAND YOUR PARENTS' LOVE YOU MUST RAISE CHILDREN YOURSELF — CHINESE PROVERB

Everyone is so busy these days that doing even the simplest of things with children get overlooked and these are actually great moments to connect and bond with your child. A local Mojácar mum tells us; "Believe it or not some of my best moments spent with the kids has been when I've felt a little under the weather and had to slow down, it wasn't until I laid on the sofa watching them build forts and work as a team that I could see things more from their perspective."

We seem to be afraid of letting them get bored. Comparatively how often did we think we were bored

as kids? Did our parents think being the ultimate activities facilitator was their role? I doubt it. Why should we be scared to let them be bored? As parents striking the perfect balance is a tough job and I'm sure we can find time to relish just being with them. And hug too of course. ■



it's okay to be bored playing the same game again and again, it's the being around them that counts



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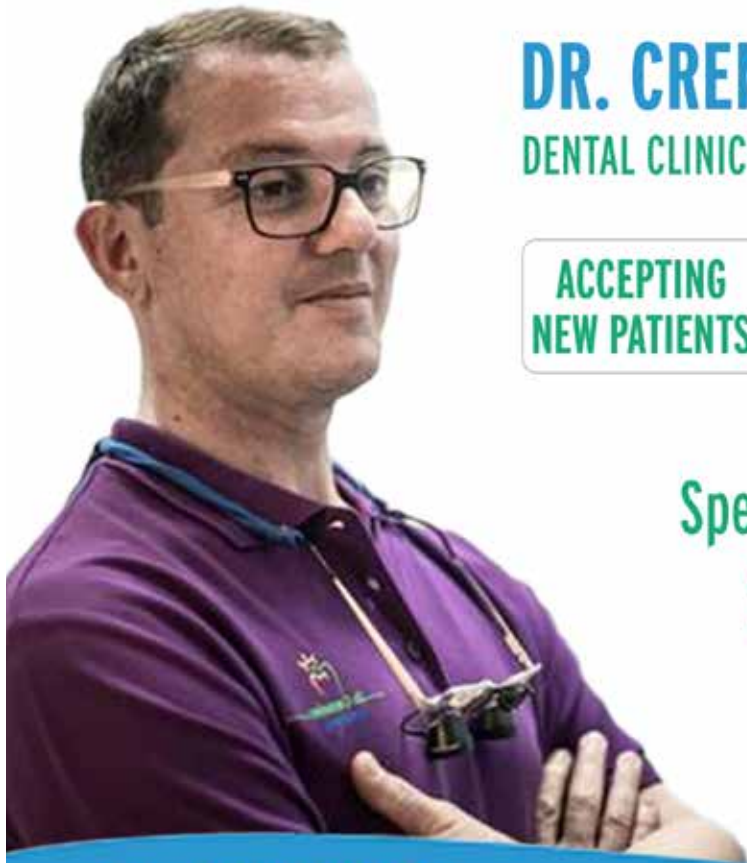
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- Write your Spanish will.
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For those that become residents of Spain, we can also assist in other legal matters such as matrimonial issues or business contracts.



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The Fishing Town of Garrucha

Garrucha is a popular tourist destination due to its superb sandy beaches which draw tourists from all over Europe. Despite its growing popularity for tourism Garrucha remains a small resort which still retains its charm as a lively fishing port on the Costa de Almeria. Garrucha is located between Vera Playa and the much larger tourist resort of Mojacar.

Garrucha is family-friendly with most activities and things to do centering around the sandy beaches, sea and swimming which is great for children of all ages. Garrucha is very much a safe tourist resort with little crime and ideal for families.

As well as being a popular place for holidays and vacations, many people from all over Europe have bought property in Garrucha and have decided to live permanently in Garrucha, these people are known as expats with most expatriates originally coming from the UK.

There are a lot of very fun and relaxing things to do as you might expect near a harbour town. Many attractions, trips and excursions you can do when you stay in Garrucha. Do however note that Garrucha

is a very small and charming tourist resort so don't expect much nightlife or opportunities for shopping. Despite this there are many things to do and see and places to visit and explore.

The harbour is the central point of the town because

I'M PASSIONATE ABOUT RESCUING PRAWNS FROM WATER AND WINE FROM BOTTLES - SEAN CONNERY

even today Garrucha is still a working fishing town and fishing accounts for a large part of Garrucha's economy. The fishing boats set off just before dawn and return in the afternoon with their catch. You can even buy fresh fish at the fish market by the quayside.

But don't be fooled by the small size of the port. It is here where Garrucha red prawn is being brought to the world and this prawn is famous.

A prawn is a prawn, is a prawn, is a prawn, right. Well, not in Garrucha. They are so proud of the local red prawns they even host two events dedicated to this seafood fans' favourite and there is an



The 'Gamba Roja' on marble at the roundabout entering Garrucha

homage to the 'Gamba Roja' on a marble pedestal as a roundabout centrepiece at the main town entrance.

The superior quality and intense flavour of Garrucha red prawns has made them a highly sought-after delicacy, not just on the Costa de Almería, but throughout Spain and beyond. They are fished in deep waters off the coast in front of the town, where there is the ideal habitat for the prawns and where they feed off a native species of plankton found on the seabed.

These prawns are so special that there is a "Gamba Roja de Garrucha" Quality Mark, which the Spanish Patent and Trademark Office renewed for 10 years in February 2019. Understandably they fetch a high price and are the star product for the local fishing industry.

As the name suggests Garrucha red prawns have an intense red coloured shell. They are bigger than typical pink-shelled prawns. The meat is white and smooth with pink stripes. You can just slap Garrucha red prawns on the grill or the barbecue. The most traditional way to cook them is to simply place them in a hot pan on a bed of coarse sea salt for three or four minutes on each side, ideally accompanied by an ice cold beer or a crisp white wine. Try them yourself! ■



The prawn fishing boat returning from a successful trip



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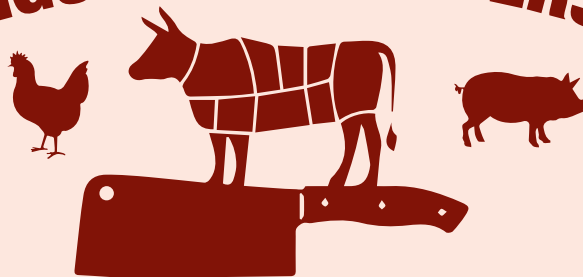


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Mars rules April and the other planets are careful not to upset Mars. While Jupiter is going around the rest of the planets, Saturn has a different approach, hiding in plain sight, going through at least six houses of Mars. This could be exciting and a very good change. Even Pisces will feel the influence and it will show.



Get ready for a whole new view. March is a major turning-point month, especially for you. Where to begin? Well, let's talk about all the "Aries high season" activity going on. Heads up: the next one's a solar eclipse on April 20. Translation: It's time to "do you" and prioritize your personal passions and projects.

ARIES



Changes, changes, everywhere—what's a Bull to do? By now, you've probably surrendered to the fact that stability and certainty are NOT in plentiful supply these days. And while there's nothing Taurus loves more than having a baseline level of security, you've been tasked with finding that within yourself this time.

TAURUS



Itching for a change of pace, Gemini? A tide-turning is headed your way. There's so much cosmic activity, and a lot of it will center around your big-picture goals and ambitious solo plans. Is it time to step into a more serious leadership role or even change your professional path? Keep your future plans are top of mind.

GEMINI



Brace yourself, Cancer: One of the busiest months of the astrological year has just arrived. From relationships to career to your personal passions, major parts of your life will compete for your attention. You may not be able to juggle it all at once, so go easy on yourself—and remember to take lots of rejuvenating breaks.

CANCER



We're not gonna lie, Leo: Even for a fierce and full-bodied sign like yours, it's gonna be a lot. Relationships will continue to be a powerful wellspring of transformation for you. Who you partner with and how you do it can take you to the lowest depths of codependence or the heights of soulmate ecstasy. Now is the time to roar like a lion!

LEO



Lean on your people for once, will you? While you prefer to give more than to receive, this is no time to stubbornly play savior. Even if you feel vulnerable asking for support, do it. Be sure to spread the load. Quite likely there's a LONG list of people you've helped over the years. It's your turn now.

VIRGO



Here comes the big one, Libra. Release the past, forgive and free yourself. It's time to start building the next phase of your life. With the Sun also in Pisces until May, you'll have an even easier time adapting to this next cycle, which will be focused on making sure you have the skills, support system and self-care needed to thrive.

LIBRA

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Aries

March 20th to April 20th

The Aries star sign, born between March 21st and April 20th, are loud, proud, strong and brave. They are the first of the zodiac and therefore the most ~raw~ with their needs, demands and emotions. Aries command your total attention, loyalty and capacity to entertain them... They get bored REAL fast.

Courageous (read: reckless)

Most Aries act first and think later, and have little to no personal anxiety about their safety or ability to do dangerous things.

Competitive (read: insecure)

Steer away from the mini golf, Monopoly, playing cards or even that harmless little pub quiz machine because whatever is presented as a challenge to an Aries immediately becomes a battle. Underneath this hard-wired competitive streak lies a really vulnerable achilles heel: insecurity. Deep DEEP down, all Aries wonder if they're really, truly good enough.

Driven (read: pressurised)

All Aries want to succeed, get to the top, to 'win' at life and, as such, they're usually all grafters and ambitious go-getters. But, remember that secret insecurity? It's there, always, nagging at them, and this can make for a lot of internalised stress and pressure - all self-inflicted. Aries needs to learn to chill out and be nicer to themselves sometimes.

Generous (read: overbearing)

Aries are all giving, warm and generous people. They love making others smile and be happy... But they kinda see that as a competition too and, before you know it, they're showing up to share their well-meaning (but uninvited) gifts and advice (always, the advice...)

Energetic (read: exhausting)

Aries would happily bounce and flounce around from dawn 'til dusk, when it comes to their never-ending energy levels. When you're around an Aries it is never boring but be sure to sleep enough to handle it.



Change, the real-deal kind, is headed your way. When things get challenging, it's easy to believe it'll always be that way and things will not improve. Did that happen to you? If so, we get it. This decade has been a tough one for everyone, and you've been among the zodiac signs that weathered extra hardships.



You will feel the full spectrum this period, from deep emotional shifts to career highs to financial transitions. You may start giving serious thought to how and where you want to live, you could pull up roots or plant deeper ones. While you're mulling all this over, have a little fun! Get glamorous and put your talents on display.



Ready to get out of the same-old rut? You could get a huge epiphany around your higher purpose. A visionary idea you've been tinkering with for the past six months could come together with a flourish. One of your big ideas could suddenly gain attention. Or you could find yourself jetting off to pursue a romantic connection.



You've been tested and had many opportunities to step into a leadership role, earning your authority through hard work. For now, you'll learn important lessons about security, money and daily routines. Aligning your paycheck with your priorities will be crucial if you want to start growing and reach your goal.



The prescription is NOT to be a victim and start cutting people off. Quite the opposite! You should ask yourself: How did this unhealthy or unfulfilling dynamic begin and how can I begin to shift it? You can only handle so much at once. It's okay—essential, really—to take breaks from self-improvement and soul-searching!

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In addition to providing financial security, a life insurance policy can also offer peace of mind. Knowing that your family will be taken care of in case something happens to you can bring a sense of calm and allow you to focus on enjoying life.

The cost of getting a life insurance policy in Spain is relatively inexpensive. For example: someone born in 1963 to cover a sum of €50,000 could expect to pay as little as €29 per month.

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HOPPING FRUITY TREATS FOR KIDS

Summer is around the corner and that means fruit and a lot of extra time with children. Now you can make it fun and healthy at the same time.

Colourful Fruit Pizza



Of course children love pizza but you want them to eat healthy as well. Look no further, the fruit pizza comes to the rescue. You can make it as colourful as you'd like and children love being a part of it and choose their different fruits. The fun already starts in the supermarket so you've kept them busy all day.

Tasty Fruit Kebab



Everything always tastes better when you make it a little fun. Making fruit kebab is nice enough on it's own but with some googly eyes on a pear you can make it into a fun character. Sonny, the kebab guy. And you'd better eat those taste fruit kebabs quickly because Sonny wants them all for himself.

Festive Fruit Skewers



Food on a stick is always a good idea. Fairly similar to the fruit kebab, these go with sweet cream cheese dip. What a treat that is. So colourful and you can make a complete mess. The cream cheese is flying all around. It doesn't matter. Everybody has fun and they get a healthy dose of vitamins as well.

Banana Sushi



So kids mostly don't like sushi. It's fishy, it's raw, it's weird. You could give them some chicken nuggets but studies show that children prefer to be a part of what is going on. With the banana sushi you can make sure they eat enough and they love eating something that looks similar to what you're having.



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Classic Costa de Almería Cooking

Classic Costa de Almería cooking is based on the produce of the sea and on the once scarce products of the land in this corner of Mediterranean Spain.

Before tourism and intensive agriculture transformed the economic fortunes of the Costa de Almería, the food served up in a typical home in this arid part of south-east Spain was humble fayre. Traditional dishes created from bits of this and bits of that like “gurullos”, “ajo colorao” and “pelotas” reflect a time when the typical Almería household diet was based on what families could grow on their smallholdings, the animals they reared or hunted or what they could get from the sea.

“You had to make the most of the ingredients within reach”, recalls 83-year-old Mojácar-born Juana González Parra of her years growing up in the now thriving picture-postcard hilltop village, but which not so many decades ago had been at risk of being abandoned by a largely impoverished population until it was discovered by artists and hippies in the 1960s.

“What you didn’t have yourself you would trade with what you did with your neighbours. If you had a chicken you might swap eggs for potatoes, or you could sell the eggs at the market to buy perhaps cod. “Literally nothing was wasted. If one day you had fish soup you’d save what was left over for the next day.



Juana González Parra is telling us about traditional Almerían cooking

You’d take pork rinds stored from when you’d slaughtered the family pig, add a bit of olive oil and garlic, the leftover soup and ‘gachas’ [a kind of porridge made from maize flour, salt and water], which had gone hard.”

One of the most characteristic elements in Almerian cooking is “gurullos”, or rice grain-like bits of pasta. It’s a traditional winter staple in the region and a perfect example of how simple ingredients can be turned into a so-called ‘spoon dish’ packed with flavour and nutrients.

Making gurullos requires time and patience. “It’s a ritual”, comments Juana’s daughter Catina Pérez. A strong memory of her childhood in the 1970s is of her mother covering a table with a cloth where she made the gurullos dough from hard wheat flour, water and a pinch of salt, and possibly olive oil and saffron.

Once Juana had turned the dough into a manageable consistency she would leave it to stand for half an hour or so, then spending hours fashioning each individual gurullo between her fingers and placing them on a tray. Once done she would cover the tray with a cloth and leave the gurullos to dry overnight, ready to go into the family meal the next day.



a classic Almería dish is potaje de vigilia

Every household has its particular take on gurullos. Juana adds ingredients like pork backbone, chickpeas and fennel, but they are often combined with game, especially rabbit or partridge. Octopus and cuttlefish are commonly added in coastal areas.

The dish might also include vegetables like onion, tomato and broad beans, along with dry pepper, saffron and garlic. Some gurullos stew recipes feature potatoes to make them even more filling.

Juana learnt how to prepare gurullos and other typical dishes of the area from her mother. Back in the day, women in Mojácar rarely went out to work and it was women who did all the cooking, and indeed everything else around the house.

The so-called "matanza", or annual slaughter of the family pig at the end of autumn, was the man of the house's job. But it was the women who spent up to two days preserving every bit of the animal, even the head and trotters, as food for the cold winter months.

"Men didn't do anything in the kitchen or in the home – nothing", Juana stresses. I was the oldest girl in the family, and from when I was about 12 my mother would often come and get me from

school because she needed my help at home. As I was a girl, no one said anything."

Times have changed, and for the better, Juana believes. But she also reflects somewhat sadly that the amount of preparation involved in much typical Almería cooking doesn't fit in with time-starved modern lifestyles. "It's normal that these rituals have got a bit lost because these days young people go out to work and they don't have the time. They don't do things

the traditional ways every week like their mothers did because they don't have time. They buy what's convenient.

"Now you can get things like gurullos pre-cooked from the supermarket. But they just don't taste the same as home-made", she insists.

Another example of a traditional hearty local dish which takes a fair bit of time to prepare, and which Juana and Catina say few people bother to make at home anymore, is "pelotas". The name refers to meatballs made from stuff like bacon, blood sausage, chicken or turkey, pork spine, dried chickpeas, parsley, cinnamon, clove, boiled eggs, red pepper and flour. Traditionally eaten during carnival, not only do pelotas require a lot of preparation they're quite fatty and very filling. "You have one serving and you can't eat anything else!", Juana jokes.

By contrast, a dish eaten most weekends in Mojácar households when Juana was small, was a variation of paella. "We made rice in a pot with chicken or a slice of pork, but not like the paella they make now", she says. ■

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ARE YOU READY FOR NATIONAL ASPARAGUS DAY?

St. George's Day has become synonymous with the start of British Asparagus Season, thanks to the efforts of the Vale of Evesham's British Asparagus Festival. Some of the very best asparagus in the world is said to come from this area – known as the UK's fruit and vegetable basket.

The asparagus season only lasts for about six weeks from 23rd April into early June, so the British Asparagus Festival wants everyone to celebrate it when it starts. Just as leeks are synonymous with St. David's Day, it seems right that asparagus is the symbol of St. George's Day.

In the Vale of Evesham, National Asparagus Day celebrations begin at the National Trust's Bretforton pub, The Fleece. The first-cut round of asparagus is the centre of festivities that include Morris Dancing, a blessing and a special ode. Surrounded by characters such as Gus, the asparagus man, the Asparamancer and St. George himself, and accompanied by a cavalcade of Morgan Cars, the asparagus is taken to a different destination each year to benefit charities.

Asparagus is a vegetable that comes from a genus of plants with about 300 species, including some that are grown as ornamental plants and others that are used by florists in arrangements and corsages. Most people are familiar with the edible variety known as garden asparagus, or *Asparagus officinalis*.

Garden asparagus was first grown in Greece more than 2,500 years ago, and experts say ancient Romans enjoyed it, too. Unlike most vegetables, which are annuals that need to be planted season, asparagus is a perennial that grows

back year after year. That's why some people regularly hunt for and find asparagus growing in the wild.

Asparagus tends to grow in temperate climates in soils that are somewhat basic. Today, China, Thailand, Mexico, Peru, and Germany lead the way in the commercial growing of most of the world's asparagus. Though green asparagus is by far the most common, pink, purple, and white varieties also exist. These come from the same plant, but in the case of white asparagus, the plant lacks pigment because it's grown entirely underground, so color-producing chlorophyll never develops. When the plant breaks through the ground, exposure to sunlight turns it green, and some varieties contain anthocyanin, a pigment-containing compound that creates a purple hue.

White asparagus has a milder, more delicate flavor and is grown in large quantities in France, which is why it's commonly found in Europe.

Because it is low in calories but still contains nutrients like fiber, asparagus is a good choice for people looking to lose or maintain their weight. Foods that are not very calorie-dense allow you to eat a significant portion without taking in too many calories, and asparagus meets this criteria. It's low in calories and primarily water based, so filling up on asparagus is unlikely to lead to weight gain.

The Vale Asparagus Festival was first launched in 2006, by-and-large due to the efforts of the BAGA, The British Asparagus Growers Association's, marketing machine.

It really took off in 2007 when many national media organisations began labelling it 'The British Asparagus Festival'. Gus, the Asparagus Man made his debut to the world at the opening event of the 2008 British Asparagus Festival in the Vale of Evesham and this larger than life character has gone on to be an ever-present at Asparagus Events.

Gus was created as part of the world-famous British Asparagus Festival, which takes place annually in Evesham, the UK's largest asparagus-growing area. However, his popularity has mushroomed and women have started to throw their gardening gloves at him wherever he goes.

He has appeared at the House of Lords, Buckingham Palace, the Red Bull Karting Championships and is now being asked to show his spear

at year-round events with a female-focus throughout the West Midlands – from talks at Women's Institute Meetings to judging cookery competitions.

Gus is enjoying his celebrity status and the perks that come with it. He is driven around in a cavalcade of Morgan Cars, gets stopped for autographs and at many restaurants he gets the best seat in restaurants.

His counterpart is Jemima Packington, the world's first, only and probably the last Asparamancer. She claims to actually be able to predict the future using nothing more than a handful of asparagus by tossing the spears into the air and interpreting how they land. She has made dozens of accurate predictions in recent years, including the demise of Gordon Brown, the credit crunch, and Oscar glory for British film *The King's Speech*.

And if that isn't enough you can start off the season at the Fleece Inn in Brefforton with lots of music and of course lots of asparagus to eat. ■





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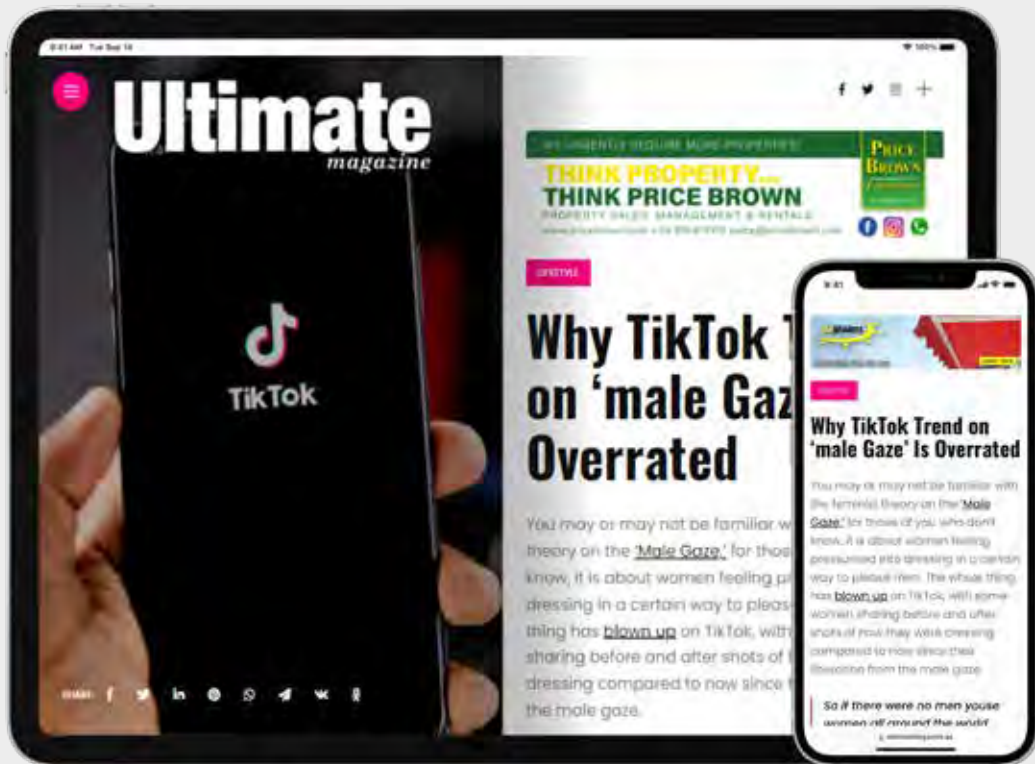
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PRO TIP: to really have those flavours come together let it simmer a bit longer so it can soak up all the juicy goodness

PRO TIP: although not mediterranean, adding bean sprouts can add a fresh and crunchy bite to your seafood soup



Mediterranean Seafood Soup

Costa de Almería Style

recipe: Juana González Parra

If you've kept up with food trends over the past few years, you've probably heard a lot about the Mediterranean diet. With its emphasis on fish, olive oil, whole grains, fruits and veggies, the Mediterranean offers plenty of ways to eat healthy. The truth is there isn't just one type of Mediterranean food. Mediterranean cooking includes influences from Greek, Italian and Southern French cuisines, as well as those from Northern African countries like Morocco and Egypt. In other words, even if you think you know Mediterranean cuisine well, there are probably many meals you may never have considered before.

THE RECIPE

Step 1

Boil the eggs for approximately 11 minutes. Set aside. While the eggs boil cut the squid, monkfish and hake into pieces and set aside.

Step 2

Chop the onion, tomato, carrot, garlic and beans into small pieces and fry in a pan. Remove once lightly fried and crush. Set aside. In the same pan, fry the diced bread.

Step 3

In a pot we put a little olive oil and add the squid pieces to fry. Once the squid is fried, we must add the previously set aside fried vegetables. Stir and introduce the pieces of monkfish and hake.

Step 4

Add the prawns and clams. Stir and add the water (better if the water is heated up beforehand), and cook until the fish is cooked: approximately 10 minutes.

Step 5

Shortly before removing from the heat, add the fried bread cubes and the chopped boiled egg.

Buen provecho!

INGREDIENTS

1 medium monkfish
1 medium squid
1/2 medium hake
2 or 3 boiled eggs
1/2 kilo of clams
1/2 kilo prawns
1 medium onion
1 tomato
1 carrot
2 garlic cloves
6 or 7 green beans
1 stick of bread
1 litre of water
pepper (optional)
salt to taste)
olive oil

Scoop up the recipe online right here to print and read more Ultimate fun stuff





PAK CHOI

You can eat pak choi raw, but it's best lightly fried or steamed, so that the leaves are gently wilted but the stalk still retains some crunch. You could also stir-fry or griddle this robust veg until the leaves are charred in places. It's a very nice and tasty addition to various recipes and tastes the best now.

CUCUMBER

Smacked cucumber sounds a bit violent, but it's from the same school of thought as massaged kale. By bruising it just before dressing, you're opening it up to receive all those flavours so they can really mix and come together. As long as you're not kicking your bell peppers you can't go wrong there.

LAMB'S LETTUCE

What better way to celebrate British Sandwich Week (22-28 May) than with an epic sarnie such as this spiced pork patty baguette. Lamb's lettuce is similar to spinach but with a unique, earthy and subtly savoury taste. Of course you can always use baby spinach instead, it's a bit less earthy.

NEW POTATOES

Naturally a bit sweeter than grown potatoes, they taste great in salads or thinly sliced on a white pizza with cheese and rosemary. And surely no barbecue or garden party is complete without a big bowl of potato salad? Dressing the potatoes while they're still warm helps them soak up the flavour.

SEASONAL IS ALWAYS THE BEST

We are so used of getting all our fruit and vegetables all year round. However most of them taste much better and are packed with vitamin boosts when they are in season.

Most vegetables only grow a specific part of the year, that's because they are dense packs of nutrition and the plant needs more time and energy to produce them. The seedlings need to develop a large amount of plant mass to support the growth and development of their fruits and vegetables.

SPRING ONIONS

The new spring onions are here, or that's what most of us call them. The "salad onion" and "green shallot" are also used as interchangeable terms for any vegetable that resembles a spring onion but isn't the real deal. Nothing better than an amazing Niçoise salad with itty bitty pieces of spring onion.

RHUBARB

While all vegetables should have a seat at the table, there are only a handful which can touch on all of the tastebuds. Enter rhubarb that is neither short on flavor or usage. It goes from sweet to savory easily, and adds a welcome sour flavor and pretty color to savory sauces, chutneys and reductions.

RADISHES

Everybody knows radishes but they only are here once a year. They grow in the ground like carrots. Radishes definitely don't have a subtle taste and it's more of an acquired taste. When eaten raw they can be described as spicy, peppery, and somewhat zesty. They definitely have a bite and kick to them.

WATERCRESS

The pungent, spicy and peppery taste of watercress is actually a defense mechanism of the plants that is activated by the mechanical action of chewing. It is part of the mustard family and a bit left on its own. The watercress actually delivers twice as much Vitamin C as an orange. So better stock up fast.

PROPERTY PAGES

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Andalus Residencial, Vera Playa



API-V0562 • € 109.500

This bright 2 bedroom ground floor apartment is located in a gated community with indoor and outdoor swimming pools and spacious garden areas in a complex at only five minutes to Vera Playa. It comes fully furnished with 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms and a beautiful terrace and garden.

Buganvillas, Vera Playa



API-V0585 • € 148.000

First floor apartment near the sandy beaches of Vera! The apartment has a large living room with fireplace, a fully furnished open plan kitchen, 3 double bedrooms, family bathroom, A/C, double glazing and private roof terrace. Underground parking included.

La Aldea, Vera Playa



API-V0542 • € 169.000

Immaculate penthouse in Puerto Rey. The apartment has an entrance hall, independent (2019) kitchen with access to separate laundry room, 2 double bedrooms, single bedroom, one bathroom. The very private roof terrace of 82m2 with sea views has an outdoor kitchen.

Fuentemar, Vera Playa



API-V0567 • € 99.000

This spacious townhouse is at only 200 m from the beach. On the ground floor there is a bright lounge with an open plan fully fitted kitchen and a guest toilet, 2 bedrooms and access to outdoor pools and kiddy pool. Fully furnished and at walking distance from Garrucha.

Las Marinas, Vera Playa



API-V0588 • € 349.000

Semidetached villa in Las Marinas, 100 meters from the beach and promenade, with sea views. This property has a large living room, terrace and private pool, a separate kitchen, 4 bedrooms, and 2 bathrooms, garage and a fabulous terrace with panoramic views towards the sea.

Desert Springs Golf



API-DS0111 • € 279.000

This spacious 3 bed, 2 bath villa with a modern kitchen is located within the quiet internal gardens of Desert Gold and has stunning views. Built in an intimate and secure enclave, the villa shares beautiful individually landscaped communal gardens and a large swimming pool.



Ronda de las Buganvillas nº42, 04621 Vera Playa

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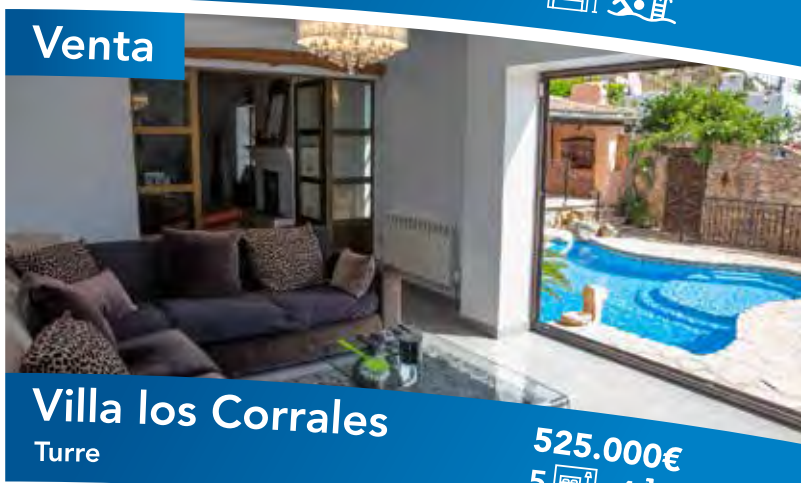
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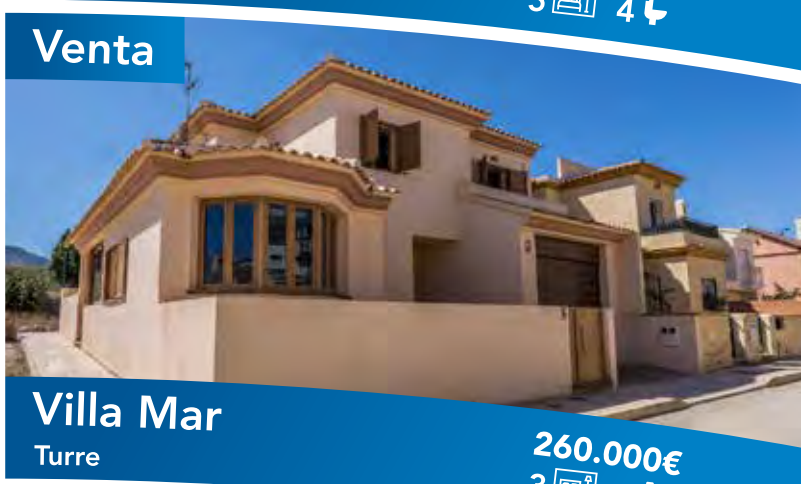
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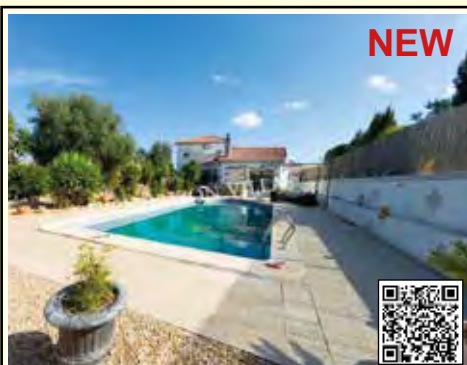
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Cabrera



2 bed / 2 bath secluded villa with amazing views of the beautiful mountains and distant coastal views. The property is also being sold with a shore in the nearby Oasis swimming pool.

Ref. 2540

€ 160.000

Mojácar Playa



Excellent 3 bed / 2 bath ground floor apartment with private parking and store room in a modern building with a lift. Walking distance to the sea and all the services and amenities on the playa.

Ref. 2618

€ 182.000

Mojácar Playa



Fully renovated 3 bed / 2 bath south facing apartment with fine sea and mountain views. Private terrace, private parking and a short walking distance to the services and amenities on the playa.

Ref. 2628

€ 199.995

Mojácar Playa



4 bed / 2.1/2 bath Townhouse with solarium, private garden and underground parking in Mojácar Playa. Within walking distance to the sea, beach, promenade and all amenities in town.

Ref. 2520

€ 210.000

Mojácar Playa



Street level - 3rd floor 3 bed / 2 bath furnished apartment with a very large terrace, fine sea and mountain views, 2 underground parking spaces, and within walking distance to the sea.

Ref. 2617

€ 260.000

Cabrera



Detached villa with a separate annex. with 3 or two bedrooms depending on distribution and 2.1/2 bathrooms in the sought-after area of the Moorish style Sierra Cabrera with magnificent views.

Ref. 2377

€ 259.000

Mojácar Playa



Great opportunity in Mojácar Playa! 3-storey semi-detached with 3 bed / 2 bath property and guest annex within a very short walk to the sea and all the amenities and services within walking distance.

Ref. 2481

€ 300.000

Mojácar Playa



Well-presented and spacious 4 bed / 3 bath detached property approximately 100 meters away from the promenade, the beach of Cueva del Lobo, and all the services and amenities in the area.

Ref. 1964

€ 355.000

Los Gallardos



A rare opportunity to purchase an Andalusian style villa full of character set in the Calle Mayor of the Spanish village of Los Gallardos, a mere 10 minutes drive to Mojácar Playa, Garrucha, etc.

Ref. 1655

€ 350.000



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Mojácar



"Los Naranjos", La Paratá: A very nice 1st floor apartment on a well-kept and small community of just 8 similar properties with no community fees.

A1432 139'500€

Mojácar



Mojácar Bella, 3 beds, 1 bath. Direct access to communal pool, 10m2 terrace with lovely sea views, AC in all rooms. Great Lock up & leave with rental potential.

A1464 120'000€

Mojácar



Cueva del Lobo: Just a short stroll to some of the best Mojácar beaches, a superbly presented ground floor apartment on a small complex with communal swimming pool.

A1442 141'500€

Mojácar



Parque Residencial: Front Line Property, Super Sea Views, 3 beds, 2 baths. Sold Fully Furnished. Underground Parking, Storeroom, Community Pool & Garden.

A1468 375'000€

Garrucha



Garrucha, Penthouse, Super Huge Terrace (90m2), 3 beds, 2 baths. Lift Access. Close to Amenities. Allocated parking, Storeroom.

A1484 269'950€

Huercal Overa



Huercal Overa. Quiet Spanish Village, Immaculate Interior, 3 Double Beds, Electric Gates, AC/H, Fully Reformed, Two Brand New Bathrooms, Off Street Parking.

SDV1550 225'000€

Mojácar



Oasis Del Mar I. Super spacious townhouse with views of the sea, mountains, pool & gardens. Roof solarium, 3 beds, 2.5 baths, OSP, Lots of terraces & outdoor space.

LV813 249'000€

Mojácar



Vista de los Angeles, 3 Bed, 3 Bath, Townhouse, Private 5 x 3 Pool, AC, Integral Garage, Numerous terraces, Bedroom on ground floor, Open fireplace, SE Facing

LV816 375'000€

El Cucador



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LV794 285'000€

Mojácar



Stunning 4 bed, 3 bath detached Villa. Private parking, Double garage, Private pool & garden. Updated to a very high standard. Sea & Mountain views, AC, Central heating.

DV1546 825'000€

Alfaix



Spacious 3 bed, 3 bath corner duplex with additional outside space & direct access to the pool and gardens. A/C & C/H throughout, Private terrace and solarium, Garage & Parking.

LV828 219'000€

Los Gallardos



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DV1544 249'950€

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