

Spain

Information about the Costa Blanca



The Costa Blanca has the driest, warmest and sunniest winter climate in Europe. The winter does get some rain but on average the wetter conditions are experienced in the autumn months of September and October and again in spring that is late March and April. Conditions in Winter are ideal for walking, T shirt and shorts is usually quite adequate wear and after the walk we sit outside in the afternoon sun enjoying the tapas and a glass of San Miguel, the sun strong and the light magical.

This coastline is one of great sandy beaches, small hidden bays, towering cliffs and headlands. Dominating this coast is the 1089ft high Peñon d' Ifach rising straight out of the sea. For centuries it has been of great significance in this area's long affair with traders and marauders coming over the sea from the Barbary Coast of North Africa. The cliffs and mountain ranges as they come down to the coast are eroded in places by spectacular canyons. Between the sea and the mountains are fertile coastal plains and valleys all under intensive cultivation.

Productive for 12 months of the year, every imaginable vegetable is grown, but dominating the eye are the vast groves of lemons, oranges, almonds and peaches. The fruit and the blossoms from these are colourful and exotic as of course are the palm trees and high grass fronds in the barancos. As also are the egrets and flamingos of the lowlands; the hoopoes, wild boar, and lynx occasionally seen in the mountains. Inland, the mountains dominate but there are many small market towns and villages like Polop, Finestrat and Guadalest. These ancient places nearly all have communal springs and fountains and ornate churches in the squares. Alongside the towns stand fortified hills, bygone strong points against attack by the Moors or local rivals.

Our walks explore the hills and the mountains of the Sierras las Marinas beyond the coastal plain. These are rugged limestone mountains with rock coloured yellow, orange and red become luminous in the sun. As do the shades of green in the forests of diverse pine trees that grow wherever possible on the mountain sides. The Puig Campana at 1410m (4625ft) is the highest mountain in these coastal ranges, beyond is the Aitana 1558m (5,100ft) beyond which is the vastness of Spain.

The tourist industry has brought great wealth and development to the ancient fishing villages on the coast. The coastal strip is an international phenomenon, a mix of the most advanced architecture in Europe towering over the ancient fishing villages and small ports. Impressive features of civic splendour stand alongside garish clubs, bars restaurants and shops for the tourist. Parts of the coast are an endless variety of bars, restaurants and avenidas, a teeming mass of life and colour; a kaleidoscope of music, interest; a clash of cultures and centuries.

Benidorm is the biggest development on the coast, this amazing place has more bed spaces available for the visitor than London and Paris combined and it is still growing. It has a tremendous number of three and four star hotels all offering adequate accommodation and food. The "English Quarter" has a wide variety of pubs clubs and other diversions that are maybe worth a visit - at least once! - or to be avoided subject to your taste. The old town of Benidorm is teeming with life, interest and character. The beaches are amongst the best in Europe.

Benidorm is the ideal centre for walking holidays as it is the most accessible centre with good accommodation from which to explore the most fabulous mountains and rugged country side in the province of Valencia. Benidorm is also served by Alicante airport which is a 35 minute drive away. Alicante is served by most of the cheap airlines such as Easyjet which have flights to and from Alicante from most British airports on a daily basis. The Costa Blanca is easier to reach from much of England than either the Lake District or Snowdonia!! And the weather is incomparably better. Think about it!!

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