



FISH-LOVER'S FANCY: Benalmadena, a water wonderland with superb fish restaurants. ELKE BACKERT

Celebrating in Spain's Malaga

By ELKE BACKERT

Malaga, Spain's sixth largest and most populous city in the state of Andalusia, is a favourite tourist spot. Having a Mediterranean subtropical climate doesn't hurt.

If you are not sure whether you have arrived at your destination, simply look down at the street for the contributions left by local working horses and you will know you are in the right place. In fact, whether you are travelling in Andalusia, Seville, in Ronda or in Mijas, you'll find horse-drawn carriages everywhere in addition to public transportation. So, just be sure to watch your step!

FESTIVAL!
The people of Malaga seem to love celebrations. The tourist bureaus suggest to everyone inquiring about the city to visit during August for the 10-day festival "Feria de Agosto." During this time, the streets are filled with symbols of Spanish culture and history. Visitors can dance, enjoy shows, rides, and games, and sample from a multitude of quaint restaurants.

When the locals of Malaga announce the opening of this festival, everyone takes to the streets and hugs those around them. Ah, and let's not forget that since music seems to flow through Spaniards' veins, dancing has to be a major part of that festival.

On the opening day, shops close at 2 p.m. and everyone

goes wild. The local females—whether they are children, unseasoned youngsters, or ladies well up in years—fetch their frilly flamenco dresses with the characteristic plunging necklines from their wardrobe closets. Or, it is excuse enough to buy a new one to show off in the street, in front of those whom they know and those they will meet. One store, El Corte Ingles, devotes one entire area of the store to just making clothes in many different brilliant colours exclusively for the festivals. The dresses come in all shapes and sizes.

The ladies, young and old, arrange their hair in a tight bun at the back of the head, which they adorn with a huge artificial flower. They put on gold earrings and drape a glittering, fringed stole over their shoulders or around the hips. They fan themselves with colour-coordinated fans, a lovely fashion statement that offers slight relief from the feverish activities and the glare of the blazing sun.

The festival, which originated in the 15th century, begins with a blaze of continuous fireworks over the harbour, accompanied by classical music; crowd pleasers, including Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyries," Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture," and Joaquin Rodrigo's late Romantic period piece, "Concerto de Aranjuez."

You collapse late at night into bed and are on the street once again the following day, around noon. That is when the street partying begins again, with

The intense scent of pine and eucalyptus trees bewitches your senses on the way to the 14th century castle Castillo de Gibralfaro.

a pilgrimage to the church, Santuario de la Virgen de la Victoria, which is dedicated to Malaga's patron saint. Men and women, arrive at the basilica on the back of bejewelled horses, while others arrive in a long procession of carriages drawn by two or four horses each.

Malaga's renowned historic street, Calle Larios, plays a special part during this holiday. It is lavishly adorned with symbols of Spanish culture and history. The procession moves past City Hall, by the shaded Paseo del Parque, and on down Calle Larios and Calle Victoria. The revelers move rhythmically along to the beat of Flamenco tunes.

MALAGA DIVERSIONS
Hungry from all the activity, the masses flock to the small, quaint, and diverse bodegas—or wine shops—in old town Malaga, to treat themselves to delectable "tapas" (Spanish "finger

food"), mouth-watering "jamon" (ham), Manchego cheese slices, and tortillas. All this is washed down with Manzanilla, a light and sweet, sherry-like wine.

In the evening, many wander over to the Carnival Centre, which cost \$171,588,000 (120,000,000 euros) to build. It's particularly impressive at night, when the millions of incandescent lamps, arranged in colourful formations, are lit. An impressive sight to behold are the 65,000 lampions, or oil lamps.

In addition to an amusement park with a multitude of rides, there are 177 casetas (restaurants) with a variety of offerings for those wanting a full meal. The quaint-looking restaurants, resembling little cottages, offer tapas as well. Blaring flamenco music is ubiquitous all day and night, and the restaurants transform into discos by night.

For those who may not know what is most important to Spaniards, it becomes evident to visitors: "eating, drinking, and celebrating with the greatest joy." They simply love socializing and won't miss any opportunity to meet with friends, relatives, or perfect strangers.

In the evening, those who love the drama and gore of bullfights can head off to the La Malagueta Arena. People rally around, cheering for the matador (also called torero), booing at him, or celebrating his victory. The more graceful his movements, the louder the "olés" heard from the crowd of many thousands



FESTIVAL COUPLE: Senorita (Miss) and Caballero (Cavalier) posing high atop horses is a favourite tradition. ELKE BACKERT

mesmerized by his every move. **WHEN TO GO AND WHAT TO SEE**

Tourists who have chosen Malaga or Costa del Sol as a vacation place and who love the "joie de vivre" of the people of Malaga, should definitely time their holiday with a festival for optimal entertainment. The tourist bureau can provide exact dates of festivals.

Enjoying the beaches is a favourite daytime pastime. The city is bustling with life and energy during the day as well, even in the blazing heat and in spite of the intensely active nightlife. Tour buses are seen everywhere, and a great way to enjoy Malaga's sights is atop a double-decker bus. Commentaries in eight languages are available, and earphones are handed out for listening in your own language. There are 12 stops where you can get on and off to do some exploring. The wait for another bus is generally about half an hour.

The intense scent of pine and eucalyptus trees bewitches your senses on the way to the 14th-century castle Castillo de Gibralfaro. The castle houses

a parador, a state-owned hotel, within its walls. The wealthy of the day built their villas on this mountain, overlooking the magnificent views of the harbour and the sea.

The cathedral bus stop is a must for church enthusiasts. The locals simply call it "the one armed" because the second tower of the cathedral was never completed. Especially noteworthy are the walls of the building, with the many glass oriel, or bay, windows.

Malaga, surrounded by accessible mountains, is also the birthplace of Pablo Picasso. There is a museum in his honour, the gateway to Costa del Sol. Those who visit one of the seaside resorts such as Torremolinos, Marbella, or Fuengirola should also check out Benalmadena, a gorgeous, lively fishing village. Carretero in the marina is a perfect choice for those who love fresh fish and seafood.

Go to Spain and see all the spectacular sites, listen to the music, or just relax. Everyone will surely find their own perfect niche while there.



LITTLE SENORITA: Even the little ones love role-playing as the caballero and the senorita. COURTESY OF ELKE BACKERT

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Quiz #239

CITIES OF THE GREAT LAKES: Which of the following cities are located on the shores of one of the Great Lakes, and which are not?

Buffalo, New York Indianapolis, Indiana Thunder Bay, Ontario
Chicago, Illinois Minneapolis, Minnesota Toronto, Ontario
Cleveland, Ohio Montreal, Quebec
Cincinnati, Ohio

Read The Epoch Times next week for the answer!
Answer for Quiz #238:

LINKED BY NAME:
The largest city in North America and an inland city in northern England: NEW YORK, YORK

The largest city in Brazil and the state capital of Minnesota: SAO PAULO, ST. PAUL

A Canadian maritime province and a constituent country of the United Kingdom: NOVA SCOTIA, SCOTLAND

An Australian state and another constituent country of the United Kingdom: NEW SOUTH WALES, WALES

A city on the west coast of Florida and the second-largest city in Russia: ST. PETERSBURG, ST. PETERSBURG

SUDOKU

Fill in the boxes using numbers between 1 and 9 so that each column, each row, and each 3x3 square contain all nine numbers only once.

3	7	5	1	4				
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This week's solution

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