

COSTA DEL SOL



The best places to eat, sleep and play in Costa del Sol

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INTRODUCTION



TripAdvisor, the most trusted source for where to eat, sleep and play in thousands of destinations around the world, has collected the best insider tips from its 40 million monthly visitors to produce a unique series of travel guides. In addition to the best hotels, restaurants and attractions for every type of traveler, you'll get great advice about what to pack, how to get around and where to find the best views. Be sure to check out the guides at www.tripadvisor.com.



You'll find reviews for more than 474,000 hotels, 100,000 vacation rentals, 135,000 attractions and 675,000 restaurants on TripAdvisor.com. Learn from other travelers what to expect before you make your plans.



PACKING TIPS

1. Bring **casual clothing**: "Dress is very relaxed in Marbella, unless you are going to a very posh restaurant. Even then, no need to overdress. Men need jackets and ties in the casino only."—TripAdvisor Member, Marbella
2. "There is a breeze on the coastal strip. You may want a **light jacket** if you are out late, but not a heavy one."—TripAdvisor Member, Benalmadena
3. "Make sure to **pack extra light** and try to mix and match outfits. You'll be surprised how much you'll bring back home!"—TripAdvisor Member
4. If you're going to sunbathe, do so "ONLY with a **high factor sunscreen**—the sun is very intense here."—TripAdvisor Member, Lake Vinuela

Inside

COSTA DEL SOL

The Costa del Sol delivers exactly what it promises: sunshine, and lots of it. Cities along the coast see more than 300 sun-soaked days per year. The Mediterranean moderates the weather even throughout the winter, and temperatures rarely fall below 57°F (14°C).

Off-season or on, any time is the best time to tour the gleaming whitewashed buildings in Los Pueblos Blancos villages like Mijas Pueblo, Frigiliana or the more remote Axarquía. Sip fine local wine at the Ojén wine museum or gaze down at the lush greenery dotted with white villages as you ride the Benalmádena cable car to Calamorro Peak. Take refuge from the sweltering summer heat on the beaches of Torre del Mar and Nerja, or wine and dine with locals and tourists alike in the bustling Carhuela. In cooler months or rainy weather, Malaga's museums and galleries offer a cultural retreat from the chilly outdoors. And a trip to Marbella wouldn't be complete without a tasty tour through the many tapas bars around the Old Town.

With terrain ranging from the gorges and peaks of the Ronda region to the verdant vegetation of the Guadalhorce Valley to the sunny beaches of the coastal region, Costa del Sol has something to offer any traveler, whether seeking sun, scenery or serenity.

Top VIEWS



COSTA DEL SOL BEST VIEWS

Although from “the Torremolinos side, **Monte Palomas** looks rather bare, the other side of the mountain is totally different—an idyllic mountain scene. From the top, you are rewarded with an excellent view of the bay of Malaga.”—TripAdvisor Member, Torremolinos

Monte Palomas, Torremolinos

At the highest point of Mijas is “the **ermita**, or pilgrimage chapel, which once served as a retreat for Carmelite monks and was built in 1710. It can be seen from many places in Mijas and offers an excellent view of a long stretch of the coast.”—TripAdvisor Member, Torremolinos

Ermita del Calvario, Mijas

“Near downtown Ronda, there are precipices over the surrounding countryside that give fantastic views. In the center of the town, there is a spectacular gorge known as **El Tajo**. **El Puente Nuevo** spans the gorge and has spectacular views.”—TripAdvisor Member, Malaga

El Tajo and Puente Nuevo (New Bridge), Ronda

Where to PLAY

TOP 10 Attractions

1. La Carihuela, Torremolinos
2. Museo del Vidrio y Cristal de Malaga, Plazuela Blood Holy Christ, 2, Malaga, 95 222 1949
3. Nerja Donkey Sanctuary, Almirante Carranza, 49, Nerja, 66 455 8133
4. Zoo Fuengirola, Avenida Camilo Jose Cela, 8-10, Fuengirola, 95 266 6301
5. Alcazaba, C Alcazabilla s/n, Malaga, 95 221 7646
6. Caves at Nerja, Nerja
7. Malaga Cathedral, Molina Lario St., Malaga 95 221 5917
8. Casco Antiguo (Old Quarter), Marbella
9. Calle San Miguel, Torremolinos
10. La Concepcion - Jardin Botanico Historico de Malaga, Carretera de las Pedrizas, Km. 166, 95 225 2148



FAMILIES

“The keepers of the **Crocodile Park** must be lunatics to get into the compounds. We were offered a croc to cuddle at the end. My family pushed me forward, the keeper stuck a four foot long one in my arms, and the family laughed and did a runner!”—TripAdvisor Member, Benalmadena

Crocodile Park, C/ Cuba 14, Torremolinos, 95 205 1782

“The **Zoo Fuengirola** is well designed and laid out with kids in mind. All of the animals are in spacious enclosures, and they all seem very well cared for.”—TripAdvisor Member

Zoo Fuengirola, Avenida Camilo Jose Cela 8-10, Fuengirola, 95 266 6301

“The keepers must be lunatics.”

“We hope to return many times with our entire family, including children and grandchildren” to the historic neighborhood of **La Carihuela**. “Our four-year-old granddaughter, who was there for the first time when she was three months old, calls La Carihuela ‘her Spain’—that must be wonderful P.R. for La Carihuela!”—TripAdvisor Member, The Hague, Netherlands

La Carihuela, Torremolinos



ROMANCE

Sip local wines with your sweetheart. “If you enjoy wine and would get pleasure in learning how it is made as much as drinking the stuff, I’d recommend a trip to the **Malaga Wine Museum** in Ojén. Try not to take the car that day!”—TripAdvisor Member, Scotland

Museo Del Vino Malaga (Malaga Wine Museum), Plaza de los Viñeros 1, Malaga, 952 22 8493

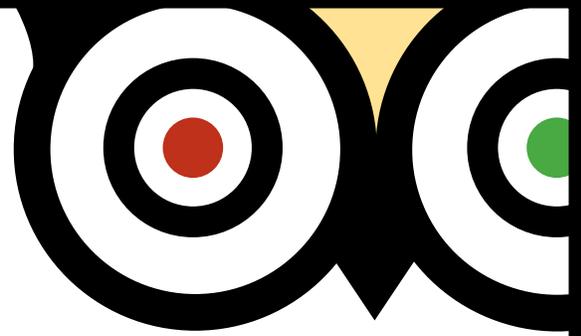
“If it’s romance you want, stroll along one of the many, many beaches of Nerja. I was at **El Playazo Beach** yesterday and you could count the amount of people on your fingers.”—TripAdvisor Member, Nerja

El Playazo Beach, Nerja

Walk hand-in-hand through thousands of plants and flowers: “Could anything be more romantic than the historic **Botanical Garden of La Concepción**?”—TripAdvisor Member, Cordoba, Spain

La Concepción - Jardin Botanico - Historico de Malaga, Ctra. de las Pedrizas, Km. 166, Malaga, 95 225 0745

Where to PLAY



BUDGET

Admission is free at the **Municipal Museum of Malaga**, where “there are more than 4000 pieces in the collection, including sculptures, paintings, graphic art, historic documents and a big library of books. The permanent exhibit has 94 works that showcase the city and its history.”—TripAdvisor Member, Malaga

Municipal Museum of Malaga (Museo del Patrimonio Municipal de Malaga or MUPAM), Paseo de Reding 1, 95 222 5106

“**Alcazaba** was my favorite attraction in all of Malaga. The views from the top were amazing, and everything was beautiful and very well restored and clean! Free admission on Sunday afternoons after 2:00 PM—well worth the time to walk around.”—TripAdvisor Member, Zaragoza, Spain

Alcazaba, C/ Alcazabilla s/n, Malaga, 95 221 7646

“At Mijas Pueblo at noon on Wednesdays, there is a **free flamenco show** in the main square. It lasts for about 30 – 40 minutes and is a mixture of traditional and modern flamenco. You will also get a free sample of Malaga Dulce wine.”—TripAdvisor Member, Benalmadena

Flamenco Dancers, Plaza Virgen de la Peña, Mijas, 95 258 9034 (Mijas Town Hall)

TripAdvisor members have posted more than 6,000,000 photos on the site. The good, the bad and the very candid. It's almost like being there!



ADVENTURE

“I would thoroughly recommend a **jeep tour**, which gives you insight into the Sierra Almijara mountain range and explains all about the wildlife, fauna and flora of the area.”—TripAdvisor Member, Nerja

Life Adventures Jeep Tours, Nerja, 67 789 4002

“In Nerja, there are some great snorkeling places with hidden caves under water. The best and safest way to get to them would be with the **Buceo** dive center on Burriana beach.”—TripAdvisor Member, Nerja

Buceo Costa Nerja, Playa Burriana, Nerja, 95 252 8610

“We only had one day in Malaga, and the **Bike Tour** was a perfect way to make the most of it. We learned about the historical sites and events, cultural and religious customs. And it was fun!”—TripAdvisor Member, Bergen, Norway

Malaga Bike Tours, Pasaje la Trini 6, Malaga, 60 697 8513

“Don't leave the area without seeing it!”



EDUCATIONAL/HISTORICAL

Blending medieval and modern architectural styles, the unconventional and unforgettable **Castillo de Colomares** is “a folly created to celebrate Spanish history.”—TripAdvisor Member, Benalmadena

Castillo de Colomares, Urb El Vinazo (La Carraca), Benalmadena, 95 244 8821

“The **Museum of Glass and Crystal in Malaga** is an amazing private collection of some of the most beautiful and artistic pieces you'll see anywhere in the world. Don't leave the area without seeing it!”—TripAdvisor Member

Museo del Vidrio y Cristal de Malaga (Museum of Glass and Crystal), Plazuela Blood Holy Christ, 2, Malaga, 95 222 1949

“It is surprising that the **CAC** can program such important expositions in a city that is not a capital. We have seen exhibitions of Juan Uslé, Yoshitomo Nara and Bill Violates, three of the most respected artists of the world. There is also a very interesting permanent collection.”—TripAdvisor Member, Barcelona, Spain

CAC Malaga (Centro de Arte Contemporaneo de Malaga), C/ Alemania s/n, Malaga, 95 212 0055

“I just loved it.”



RELAXATION

Thermae Spa “offers various massage treatments in clean and serene treatment rooms. Moving from one of the four different steam rooms to the other is not only a relaxing and cleansing experience, but an interesting and intriguing one as well. I just loved it.”—TripAdvisor Member, Madrid, Spain

Thermae Spa, Hotel Villa Padierna, Ctra. de Cadiz, Km. 166, Marbella, 95 288 9150

“**Benalmadena** is one of the best towns on the Costa, unpretentious and very relaxed. It had everything a weary traveler could ask for. I really enjoyed the sunsets, looking out over the ocean while sipping an espresso.”—TripAdvisor Member, Los Angeles, Calif.

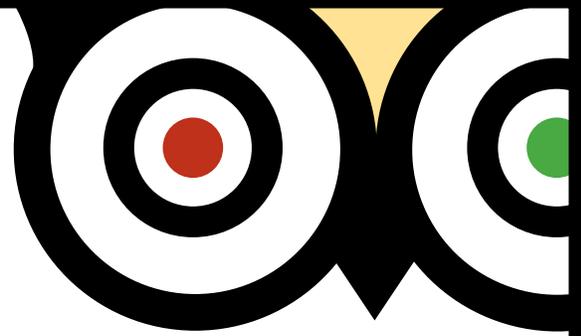
Benalmadena

“Walking along the **Malagueta Beach**, especially at twilight, is one of the most relaxing things you can do. The gentle sound of the surf is very soothing. I always wanted to retire in a city with a beach!”—TripAdvisor Member, Malaga

Malagueta Beach, Malaga

What's the **TOUR**

How to Get Around



“**Buses** are very frequent and are air conditioned. The majority of bus routes pass through or nearby the city center, so it's very easy to connect with others. For longer distance bus (coach) travel to other places within the Malaga province, wider Andalucía, throughout Spain and even to other countries, Malaga's main bus station is served by many companies to many destinations.”—TripAdvisor Member, Malaga

Empresa Malagueña de Transportes, 90 252 7200
Estacion de Autobuses de Malaga, 95 235 0061

Take a “**Tapas Tour** in Old Town Marbella. Forget the tourist traps and wander into the Old Town. Sit down at a small Spanish restaurant and enjoy the various tapas together with red wine or beer.”—TripAdvisor Member, Marbella

“I would **rent a car**. It is more convenient for day trips to Ronda, Mijas and Nerja, the white towns of Malaga.”—TripAdvisor Member, Malaga

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WHERE to eat

FAMILIES

“You just have to go to **The Carvery** hungry, as the food is plentiful. The choice of meats were varied, well cooked and succulent. There was a good selection of vegetables - again cooked to perfection. Best carvery on the Costa Del Sol!”—TripAdvisor Member, Estapona, Spain

The Carvery, Calle Saltillo, Torremolinos, 95 237 3722

“If you have a sweet tooth, you won't be disappointed at **Cafeteria Lepanto**. The interior is fancy, and they serve delicious homemade cakes and pastries. Also serves savory food such as sandwiches, baguettes, pizza, etc., hot and cold. There are outside tables, as well.”—TripAdvisor Member, Ireland

Cafeteria Lepanto, C/ Marqués de Larios 7, Malaga, 95 222 6221

“We had an absolutely delicious dinner at **Venta Garcia**. The lamb was out of this world! The owner made something special for our two young sons, and they still talk about the dinner they had here and watching the sunset from our window table.”—TripAdvisor Member, Boston, Mass.

Venta Garcia, Ctra. MA 546, Casares, 95 289 4191

ROMANCE

“**Aroma** is to be highly recommended. Superb ambiance for a romantic tête-à-tête. The food is beautifully presented and cooked to perfection.”—TripAdvisor Member, Alameda, Spain

Aroma, C/ Mocayo 23, Fuengirola, 95 266 5502

“**Playa Bella** looks like an old yellow shack from the outside but, after you step inside, your perception is instantly changed. It's the perfect place for a romantic liaison or special occasion. The secret diamond of Estepona restaurants!”—TripAdvisor Member, London, U.K.

Playa Bella, Ctra. Cádiz-Malaga, Km. 162, Estepona, 95 280 1645

“I've been to the **Tamisa** many times for dinner and dances and would highly recommend it for a wedding. The poolside setting is really gorgeous; the staff, great and the food, delicious.”—TripAdvisor Member, Spain

Restaurante Tamisa, Hotel Tamisa Golf, Camino Viejo de Coin, Km 3.3, Mijas, 95 258 5988

BUDGET

At **Bodegas Quitapenas**, “the fish is always fresh, and the Spanish sherry really good. Excellent value. If you want the real taste of Spain and a good atmosphere, this is not to be missed!”—TripAdvisor Member

Bodegas Quitapenas, C/Cuesta del Tajo 3, Torremolinos, 95 238 6244

For colorful experiments with vegetables, try **La Lechuga**, a “little restaurant with a little menu, but very tasty. And it's very cheap. Always crowded. They don't make reservations for dinner, so try to be there early. During the day, there's no problem.”—TripAdvisor Member, Paris, France

La Lechuga, Plaza de la Merced 1, Malaga, 61 039 1494

“The food at **Burriana Properties Café** is phenomenal, breakfast, lunch or dinner—amazing quality and a broad range. The staff is all absolutely charming, and the menu is delicious and SO CHEAP, you won't believe it.”—TripAdvisor Member, Dublin, Ireland

Burriana Properties Café, Calle Silipinas, Nerja, 65 581 5064

WHERE to eat



HEALTH-CONSCIOUS

“I went to **Canada** for a set-menu lunch and wished I hadn't eaten breakfast! The lunch is four hearty courses of innovative and delicious vegetarian food.”—TripAdvisor Member, London, England

Canada, Plaza de la Merced, Malaga, 95 222 9056

“**El Salmon** is always fantastic. We eat there regularly. They do a lunchtime set menu that's delicious. Also the 'charming Spanish wife' is vegetarian, so the vegetarian options are excellent.”—TripAdvisor Member, Benamocarra

El Salmon, Avenida Andalucía 56, Torre del Mar, 95 296 5424

“I couldn't believe my luck to find **Vino Mio**, a restaurant with vegetarian options and a flamenco show! The food was delicious, and the service was attentive without being overbearing.”—TripAdvisor Member, London, England

Restaurante Vino Mio, Calle Alamos 11, Malaga, 95 260 9093

HIDDEN GEMS

“**The Orange Tree** is located in the old town part of Marbella and is a true hidden gem. Fantastic service, and the food is amazing. The best filet steak I've ever had, and the banoffee pie was delightful.”—TripAdvisor Member, Leeds, U.K.

The Orange Tree, Plaza General Chinchilla, Marbella, 95 292 4613

Mirador de Cerro Gordo is “a really unusual restaurant with stunning views to Nerja in the west and La Herradura to the east. It's a 10-minute drive from town, but the views are astonishing, and the English chef/owner has trained with top chefs in Europe.”—TripAdvisor Member, Nerja

Mirador de Cerro Gordo, Old N-340 at the Cerro Gordo Tunnel, La Herradura, 95 834 9099

“With only 10 tables, **La Paloma** is an intimate place. Combined with personable service, the familiar setting of return customers and the simply superb food and presentation, this a top restaurant.”—TripAdvisor Member, Amsterdam, Netherlands

La Paloma, Calle Ortiz de Molinillo, 1, Marbella, 95 277 7247

SPECIAL EVENTS



Travel from village to city to village throughout the summer to catch the various **Summer Ferias** that liven up the entire Costa del Sol, beginning with La Cala de Mijas in June, Estepona in July, the enormous Málaga festival in August and finally the Ferias de Mijas and Torremolinos in September. Expect dancing throughout the streets, outdoor tables with plenty of seafood and wine, singing and performances. (June – September)

Summer Ferias, Throughout Costa del Sol

Chase your blues away with artists hailing from the U.K., the U.S. and Spain at the **International Blues Festival** in Mijas. Performances are free to the public. (June 4 – 5)

Second International Blues Festival (II Festival Internacional de Blues, Mijas), Mijas Hotel and Main Square (Plaza Virgen de la Peña), Mijas, 95 258 9034, <http://www.aintnothinbut.co.uk/festival.htm>

Fill up on international delicacies at the **Mijas International Day**, where you can take part in workshops, watch performances and enjoy food as you wander the booths representing different countries from around the world. (June 11 – 13)

Mijas International Day (Día Internacional de los Pueblos), Main Square (Plaza Virgen de la Peña), Mijas, 95 258 9034, <http://www.mijas-digital.es>

Feel the rhythm, the passion and the excitement at the **Flamenco Festival** in Mijas, where dancers compete and demonstrate their expertise in the art of the dance. (July)

Flamenco Festival (Festival Flamenco), Teatro Las Lagunas, Mijas, 95 258 9034, <http://www.mijas-digital.es>

Honor the patron saint of the seafarers with celebrations in various towns and cities along the coast during the **Fiesta del Carmen**. In Marbella, an effigy of the saint is carried along the beach and then paraded through the town. In Malaga, the procession takes the saint to the sea and sets her afloat on a boat laden with floral decorations. In Fuengirola, perhaps the most vibrant celebration of the three, the townspeople carry candles along the saint's procession and then dash into the ocean to send the saint on her journey. In all locations, feasting, drinking, fireworks and music are in order. (July 16)

Fiesta del Carmen, Various venues, Marbella, Fuengirola, Málaga

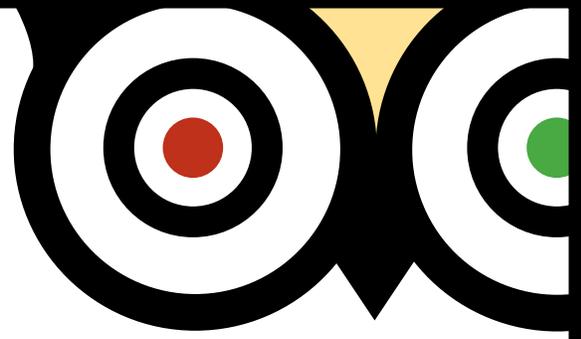
The region's largest and most popular summer festival takes place during **Feria de Malaga**, which sees costumed revelers, many on horseback, dancing and performing in the streets while visitors enjoy music, vino fino and flamenco performances. In the evening, fireworks light up the festivities. (August 12 – 21)

Feria de Málaga, Various venues, Málaga, <http://www.feria-de-malaga.es>

Inviting a selection of films diverse enough to represent the cultures that mingle in Marbella, the **Marbella International Film Festival** is a truly multicultural event, featuring films from directors the world over. The focus is on films from English, Spanish, Arabic, French and Italian speaking countries. (October 14 – 16)

Marbella International Film Festival (Festival de Cine de Marbella), Puente Romano Hotel, 95 282 0900, Marbella, <http://www.marbellafilmfestival.com>

Where to STAY



FAMILIES

“We adored the country setting and warm family welcome” at **Hotel Molino del Puente**. “If hiking, swimming, sightseeing, relaxing and fine wining and dining are your idea of a perfect rest, then we have found the ideal spot for you! We spent 10 blissful days and haven’t stopped dreaming about it since.”—TripAdvisor Member, France

Hotel Molino del Puente, Fuente de la Higuera Bajo 7, Ronda, 95 287 4164

“The **Marriott Marbella** is an amazing holiday destination. We took our two young children, and right from the start, we all had an amazing, relaxing and fun time. The swimming pool was lovely and warm, and a great place for our little ones to get used to swimming.”—TripAdvisor Member

Marriott’s Marbella Beach Resort, Crta. de Cadiz, Km. 193, Marbella, 95 276 9600

“**Mar Azul Resort** is like having your own small villa and lovely gated garden with loungers, but with a stunning pool area that’s more like a zen garden. An absolute delight for children and very safe.”—TripAdvisor Member, Cheltenham, U.K.

Mar Azul Resort, Estepona, 161 485 7015

Have questions about Costa del Sol? Get insider advice from local experts in our forums. The majority of questions are answered within 24 hours.



ROMANCE

“Relaxing under the stars in the courtyard or on the roof top terrace at the **Hotel Palacio Blanco** is truly memorable. Hosts Lesley and Nick are devoted to the notion of making guests feel at home.”—TripAdvisor Member, Dordogne, France

Hotel Palacio Blanco, C/ Felix Lomas 4, Velez-Malaga, 95 254 9174

For a “romantic hotel with a personal touch,” try **Hotel San Gabriel**, located “in the heart of ‘La Ciudad,’ the oldest and nicest part of Ronda. We appreciated the little details that showed the owners really care about their guests.”—TripAdvisor Member, Zurich, Switzerland

Hotel San Gabriel, C/Marqués de Moctezuma 19, Ronda, 95 219 0392

“I wanted luxury for my stay with my girlfriend, and I got that at **Hotel Fuerte Marbella**. It’s lovely and clean; the pool is fantastic. The whole area at the back is lovely, lots of grass and flowers. The most impressive thing about the hotel was the friendly staff.”—TripAdvisor Member, Cork, Ireland

Hotel Fuerte Marbella, Avda El Fuerte s/n, Marbella, 95 292 0000

BUDGET

“Situated right in the center of Malaga, with a city of delights around every corner.” **Ibis Malaga** is “on the Rambla, a two-minute walk to all the shops. Rooms were very clean and just big enough for city visiting.”—TripAdvisor Member, Spain

Ibis Ciudad de Malaga, Pasillo Guimbarda 5, Malaga, 95 207 0741

Enjoy the “tranquility and the sunsets” at **Hotel Kadampa**. It’s “a truly special place—a place to revisit frequently.”—TripAdvisor Member, Jerez de la Frontera, Spain

Hotel Kadampa, Fuente del Perro s/n, (A-404, Km. 12), Alhaurín el Grande, 95 259 5683

“**Arriadh Hotel** is a lovely family hotel surrounded by natural beauty and looking down on the town of Arriate, with splendid white houses and spectacular mountains. Get away from the rush of everyday life and get into a peaceful and harmonious place in the deep of nature.”—TripAdvisor Member, Italy

Arriadh Hotel, Camino de Laura, Arriate, 95 211 4370

“No detail overlooked!”

LUXURY

“**Malaga Palacio** is a luxury hotel with fabulous views of the harbor, the cathedral and the old city. Location is within walking distance of all the major tourist attractions.”—TripAdvisor Member, Palo Alto, Calif.

AC Malaga Palacio, C/ Cortina Del Muelle 1, Malaga, 95 221 5185

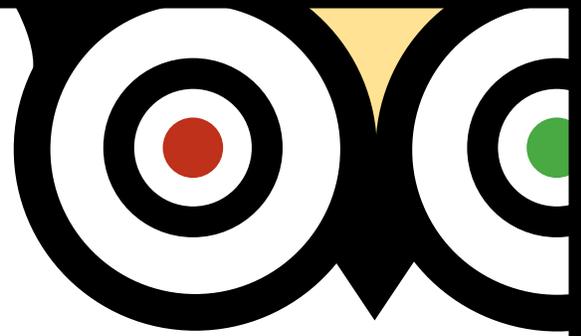
“**Finca Cortesin Hotel** was a top-price, top-service experience. There was no detail overlooked. The public rooms were gorgeous, the meals were luxurious, and everyone made you feel that you were the most important client.”—TripAdvisor Member, Greenwich, Conn.

Finca Cortesin Hotel, Golf & Spa, Ctra. de Casares, Km. 2, Manilva, 95 293 7800

Hotel Villa Padierna is “a jewel! The building is gorgeous, with each nook and cranny lovingly and expertly decorated. The room and bath were beautiful and generous. The pool, pool bar and surrounding fountains were just picture perfect.”—TripAdvisor Member, Frankfurt, Germany

Hotel Villa Padierna, Ctra. de Cadiz, Km. 166, Marbella, 95 288 9150

Where to **STAY**



HIDDEN GEMS

"I never knew the meaning of 'breathtaking' until I came to **La Fructuosa**. The wonderful views across the Genal Valley and all across Gibraltar and Africa are a joy to your eyes and your soul. You can even make out the little villages in Morocco. La Fructuosa is what dreams are made of—you just never want to leave."—TripAdvisor Member, Gibraltar

La Fructuosa, C/Convento 67, Gaucin, 61 769 2784

Treat yourself to "a little taste of authentic Spain" at **Cortijo Valverde**, "a little piece of heaven tucked away in the beautiful Spanish countryside. We spent one day sightseeing in Malaga, but we mostly spent our time unwinding by the pool and gardens, because it was so peaceful. We couldn't tear ourselves away!"—TripAdvisor Member, Cambridge, England

Cortijo Valverde, APT 47, Alora, 95 211 2979

Staying at **La Villa Marbella** "feels like being with friends! Everybody who likes to get personal service and a romantic, unique atmosphere will be more than happy with Villa Marbella."—TripAdvisor Member, Vienna, Austria

La Villa Marbella, C/ Príncipe 10, Marbella, 95 276 6220

"We couldn't tear ourselves away!"

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