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The Costa Blanca And Alicante In Its Festive Mood

By Rob Carlton

The Costa Blanca and Alicante area runs north to south or south to north, you can begin your

holiday travel either way. The Costa Blanca, on the Mediterranean Sea coast is situated in the Province of Alicante, entering in the south through the town of Pilar de la Horadada or maybe Torrevieja might sound a little more familiar, all being part of the Valencian Community. Costa Blanca in English means 'the White Coast' probably because of its clear white beaches, the white washed buildings and the sunny weather which brightens all its villa like Guardamar, Javea, Altea, Benidorm, Torrevieja, Moraira and Alicante.

Navigate your own route in Costa Blanca

Being as Alicante was last mentioned and it has the advantage of its international airport called the Altet, you can start an entertaining holiday there. As you arrive into the city either by public bus, mini-bus from your hotel or by taxi, you will love how it is set at the foot of a hill where the Saint Barbara Castle still remains. It was built in 300 B.c. by the Carthaginians and even though it has undergone many wars, it has been kept in good condition, which nowadays houses an excellent restaurant. It is also surrounded by extended beaches with only a beautiful tiled promenade lined with all kinds of flowers and palms to separate them from the busy city and the harbour. Stroll along this refreshing central walkway where hand made goods are always set up in booths, or in the summer months, different bands and orquestras play soothing music to accompany the night breeze. Or delve into a good guide book with map of Alicante to be able to choose a special holiday festival such as The Saint John Bonfires with spectacular carton and wooden monuments depicting local and international characters which are finally burnt to the ground, carrying out a pagan tradition of wanting to eliminate all bad spirits.

Benidorm, which has excellent transport from the Alicante airport is also a very moving city. During the day you can either choose to relax and enjoy the long out stretching beaches or take the kids and family to one of the many parks around. You can choose from one of the Theme parks like Terra Mitica which has set up rides and attractions having to do with ancient Egypt or Rome, Aqualandia, a water park right within Benidorm where there are rides for the wee folks, younger dare devils and just splashing pools for the older ones. A good keep cool day! If animals are the theme for the day, go to

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Terra Natura also within the city and have your children come into full contact with very different kinds of animals. Here too, you can cool off in an area where there are water rides, underwater diving or nature climbing and trekking. At night, the nightlife is quite moving and the selection of places to dine go from fast food restaurants to the most exquisite delicacies, whatever you feel affordable for you.

Altea, the next villa you can see on the map, has kept its old town atmosphere while offering good places to stay. There are usually pebble beaches and many exclusive coves to hide out in – a very recommendable tranquil ambience. Calpe is the next villa on our map tour so that you can get a glimpse of the Rock of Ifach, a steep rugged hill made of rock formation that has captured amateur and professional mountain climbers from all over the world. Whether you have used your energy rock climbing or just lazing around on the white soft beaches, you must head over to the harbour area for either lunch or dinner. There, you have an endless show of seafood and fish to choose from and have it cooked as you like, or just trust others and go for the caldereta, a stew of many kinds of seafood with a succulent broth.

Save time for Javea

Javea, on the east coast, lies a little over 100 kilometres from Valencia and just 94 kilometres from Alicante city. At either of these cities you can find international flights making travel plans easy to arrange all year round. On the map of Spain, just a little south of Denia and right near the outstanding Montgo mountain peak, Javea (

<http://www.alicante-spain.com/javea.html>

) can be found.

This park was declared under national protection in 1987 so that its marvellous richness in fauna and flora could be conserved and further studies could be done on its archaeological discoveries. These discoveries can be seen in one of the many museums in the town. But what makes travelling to Javea so much fun is its traditional and cultural activities of long times ago, especially on the Costa Blanca and made available for the tourist to see nowadays. One of these activities is the sport called 'Valencian Ball'. There are two teams, usually two players on each team. It can be played right in the middle of the street, without a referee. Many times it is the public who must decide if the ball was fair or foul. The ball is made up of rags that have been tightly wound and covered with other rags. The players use their hands as rackets, using a special wrap to protect the palm of their hands. If you are looking for a good game, head to the Nou Street or to the Jesus Nazareno Street, or ask at the tourist office.

You will never have enjoyed your Spain vacation stay so much thanks to the variety and friendliness of the people who are awaiting to share their Costa Blanca with you.

The writer Robert Carlton publishes articles for

<http://www.alicante-spain.com>

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Many of his publications focus on the Costa Blanca

<http://www.alicante-spain.com/costa-blanca.html>

and travel to Spain.

Car Hire Adds More To Alicante As A Holiday Destination

By Mr Hanna

Alicante is perhaps best known for its airport and tens of thousands of holiday makers from across Europe will be travelling through the terminus on their way to established resorts such as Benidorm. Most visitors to this region of Spain will visit Alicante twice - on arrival and on departure. The region itself has a preconception of sand and sea but looking beyond the obvious and exploring further can reveal some hidden treasures for the more inquisitive traveller.

In short, Alicante is a good base for a more subtle holiday in the Costa Blanca. The attractions of the beaches and coast are a given in this area of Spain, but Alicante avoids the trappings of bright lights and nightlife so personified by its' neighbours. Alicante is an upmarket town built around a modernised marina and provides a pleasant base to move around the wider Costa Blanca region - an area that has much appeal for the more discerning traveller.

In Alicante itself, the old quarter and beach front rival those of any coastal town or city in Spain. Old and new merge well with sympathetic regeneration of the area appealing to high end travellers looking to avoid the trappings of nearby Benidorm and Denia. Outside of the town itself, the old towns of the Costa Blanca region (

<http://www.costablanca.org>

) are a typical Spanish mix of Christian and Moorish

architecture personified in the renowned church at Altea - one of the most symbolic sights in the region.

Exploring the Costa Blanca can be a rewarding experience and south of Alicante lie Murcia and Valencia - a thriving modern city with a strong historic and cultural backbone. Driving in the region is itself an attraction with meandering costal roads spattered with high cliffs and sandy beaches and alcoves. A good way to explore the region is to find car hire in Alicante (

<http://www.easycar.com/car-hire/location/Alicante.aspx/EN>

).

Back in Alicante, the range of hotels, restaurants and bars can be relied upon to while away the evening hours and the boardwalk and marina offer pleasant strolling opportunities and regular on street

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entertainment. Travelling through the Costa Blanca on your own terms proves to be a world away from the preconception of the region typified by Alicante's noisy and often garish neighbours.

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