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Travelling Around Murcia Spain

By Erica Bosworth

The Autonomous Province of Murcia in Spain is easily found on the map because it touches

borderlines with Alicante on the Costa Blanca passing through Torrevieja and you will know that you are in the region of Murcia because you will be surprised by the beautiful scenery of the salt swamps at San Pedro del Pinatar. Its capital city has the same name as the province and within its boundaries, it has a sea or lagoon called the Mar Menor (or small sea) separated from the Mediterranean by the so called Manga, a sandy stretch of land which looks like a sleeve (literal translation of the Spanish word manga). It then curves around a peak and the all so important city of Cartagena comes into view and lastly, when you are almost leaving this province you have a fantastic beach resort area and city called Aguilas. This Spanish region has got very hot summers, many a day reaching temperatures as high as 40 degrees and the winters are mild and short. It is usually described as having a very arid landscape on the inlands but has managed to be known to have fertile land for growing vegetables and legumes.

There is evidence that Mursiya, as it was called when it was an Islamic city, dates back to 831 AD when it was founded by Abderraman II. It had suffered and had lost a lot of prestige, but made a come back with the arab domain, becoming the capital in the basin of the Segura River. Let's get to Murcia and then we'll see Either a quick flight into the airport of San Javier which is about a 30 minutes drive from the city of Murcia right near the Manga in the Mar menor or flying into the Alicante airport of the Altet, about a 40 minutes drive to the city, your hotel will be awaiting you. As every visit requires, we will soak up some architecture and culture before delving into the modern day happening, nightlife and good food.

The Cathedral, dating back between the 14th and the 18th century is a potpourri of more than five centuries of different styles of architecture; the Baroque carved art on the front door of Pardon, the Gothic Chapel of Velez, The Renaissance Chapel called Junteron and the emblematic Tower measuring 96 metres tall with 25 bells.

The Sanctuary of Fuensanta (the good saint) from the 18th century found on the outskirts, is the patron saint of Murcia. The slender figure of this saint is carried around in a procession from the sanctuary to the cathedral among a very devote crowd at Easter and during the Murcia festival in summer.

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The Museum of Science and Water is an interactive one installed together with the Segura River and has been developed around the idea of water, an important and vital element in our everyday lives. There is a kids' planetarium, the Science Square where experiments are demonstrated, modules of perception, temporary exhibitions and thematic shows. Party time and good food in Murcia There are two great festivities which have been declared of national touristic interest so that your visit to Murcia could be greatly highlighted, During Easter week with the processions and Easter Sunday, and the Spring festivals. In the summer there are all kinds of music festivals and this year 2005, the XI edition of the Sea of Music festival will be held from July 1st to the 23rd in Cartagena.

There are two special countries which will be present, Turkey on July 15th with Mercan Dede and others and Brazil with special artists like Chico Cesar and Ray Lema on the 16th. But if you miss it this year, you know that it is held every year!

The Murcia region has one of the best irrigated lands for cultivating vegetables and legumes. This can be tasted if trying kale slowly fried in olive oil, rice with kidney beans, spinach and chick pea stew and the most popular of all - meat pie. Having the sea nearby, they also make good use of the angler or sea bass as well as exquisite prawns and crawfish. To accompany such fine cuisine, some wine from either Jumilla, a red wine from Bullas or a rose from Yecla. And to finish off, sweets made from fruit.

But do not be lazy and take a drive in your car rental and head for the beaches in the Manga, where incredible luxury hotels and golfing resorts are at your full availability. Or further up the coast, enjoying the Costa Blanca of Alicante and maybe a quick spin to Calpe, you can make your holiday stay to Murcia complete.

Erica Bosworth is a successful author and regular contributor to the

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

internetsite. She is mostly focusing on information about Murcia

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

and the Costa Blanca region.

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.

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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 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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