

The Costa Tropical Region

The Costa Tropical is that part of the southern Mediterranean coast of Spain within the province of Granada, whose capital city, the home of flamenco, is world famous for the beautiful Alhambra Palace, the summer palace of the last Moorish Sultan in Spain.

Being one of the more mountainous areas of the country, and containing Spain's highest, the Sierra Nevada, the coastline is more varied and rugged than most of the better known Costas. A journey along the coast is an adventure, where the road can twist high above secret little coves, reveal long stretches of beach, pass pretty resorts or cross flat plains still cultivated by numerous farms using methods both ancient and modern. From earlier times many hillsides have been terraced for growing olive, almond trees and vines. It still strongly possesses a Spanish way of life, and while intense tourist development has not reached this area it makes an ideal holiday destination at almost any time of the year.

It has a climate that averages 325 sunny days a year (reputedly the healthiest in Europe) and crops such as sugar cane, avocado, bananas and mangoes well justify calling this coastline the Costa Tropical.

Towns such as Almunecar or Salobrena, which are now popular holiday resorts still maintain a strong feeling of their past, each dominated by its hilltop Moorish castle surrounded by a maze of narrow streets and a jumble of white painted houses cascading down their slopes. In contrast, there are some modern coastal developments, the chic Marina del Este being a good example, and where sports such as sailing and scuba diving are available. A few kilometres inland, Motril is a young bustling market town which displays the increasing prosperity coming to this part of Spain, providing numerous good quality shops, and bars and restaurants that multiply year by year. Near the Port of Motril is the winter home of the King of Belgium and Los Moriscos beach golf course.

The interior is dominated by the beautiful Sierra Nevada mountains, snow-capped for much of the year. There are few places in Europe where one can ski in the morning and return to the coast in the afternoon to sunbathe on the beach or lounge by the poolside!

Las Alpujarras are a spectacular and unspoilt region below the Sierra Nevada, containing numerous white painted villages such as Pampaneira or Capileira high on the hillsides, still looking very much as they might have done in Moorish times. This is an area for walking and discovering flora and fauna to be found nowhere else in Europe.

Nearer the coast there are numerous little farmhouses or 'cortijos', many of which are becoming available for holiday accommodation, some located amongst avocado orchards, some more remotely positioned in the hills, while others are just a few minutes from town or beach. Villages high above the sea, such as Gualchos. Polopos, Lujar or the tiny La Garnatilla are a delight to stay in or just visit.

The coastal resorts have numerous restaurants specialising in wonderful fish and seafood, while villages in the interior may offer simpler fare – the famous Serrano Ham from Las Alpujarras, or perhaps just a plate of patatas povres con huevos washed down with a glass or two of Costa wine. Or you might find a gourmet restaurant in the most unexpected of places.

Whether one wants the convenience of a modern apartment by the beach and golf course, the luxury of a villa with private swimming pool, the intimacy of a house in a little village, the simplicity of a rural cortijo or perhaps the retreat of a remote cottage in the hills, the province of Granada with its Costa Tropical offers all of these alternatives for a delightful holiday. Every little village celebrates its own fiesta day and local hospitality is generous - for where else in Spain are you still always given FREE tapas with your drink?

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