



## Christmas on the Costa del Sol



The Costa del Sol is famous around the world as a major tourism hotspot and one of the most modern, cosmopolitan areas in the whole of Europe. Its fantastic climate, mile after mile of fine sandy beaches, great shopping facilities and some of the best golf courses in the world, attract millions of holidaymakers each year. But what many don't realise is that it's not just a summer resort.

Unlike many holiday destinations there's so much to do during the winter, especially over Christmas and the New Year. Apart from almost guaranteed sunshine, there's a whole host of entertainment and activities on offer for the whole family:

- Cinemas showing Christmas blockbusters in English
- Pantomime at an English-speaking theatre
- Christmas shopping at some of the best malls in Spain

- A range of sports activities on your doorstep including golf, tennis, hiking and cycling and skiing in Sierra Nevada, just two hours away
- Music and carol concerts
- Colourful and traditional Spanish Christmas parades.

### Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day are probably the quietest days of the whole year in Spain. However, there are a myriad of top quality restaurants the length and breadth of the Coast serving traditional Christmas and New Year's Eve fare.

Aroma in Fuengirola, for example, offers great service and a traditional 7-course Christmas Day menu with all the trimmings, wine and crackers (with half price menu for kids), as well as dinner and live music on New Year's Eve.

Sloane's in Elviria is also serving a traditional 4-course Christmas lunch, plus a New Year's Eve menu with all the wine and party goodies you could possibly imagine.

Val Paraiso in Mijas serves traditional Christmas Dinner on the 25<sup>th</sup> and celebrates New Year's Eve with dinner and a fantastic fireworks display.

If you're in self-catering accommodation you can buy all the traditional ingredients you'd need to prepare your own Christmas dinner in the local shops. Try the supermarket Supersol for a good selection of English and Spanish food. You can turn your villa or apartment into a home from home, watch all the best films and English television on satellite TV and relax with the family,

Unlike a normal British Christmas, you can work off that Christmas lunch with a walk on the beach or exploring one of the lovely towns along the Coast. Why not take some snacks and drinks down to the beach after lunch and enjoy the great winter weather, take a walk down the Paseo in Marbella, Estepona or Fuengirola and see kids trying out their new Christmas toys, or take a walk in the beautiful countryside nearby. It will certainly be a Christmas to remember.

## Fiesta de Los Reyes



In Spain, although Santa Claus is a hugely popular with children (and the bearer of a few small gifts on Christmas Eve), it's the Three Kings, or Los Reyes, that really count.

In the evening on 5th January, most Spanish towns and cities grind to a complete standstill to hold a parade or "Cabalgata" throughout the town especially for kids, in which local men dress up as the three kings and ride about town on floats in a procession, scattering sweets to the crowds.

It's a wonderful chance to see Spain in full celebration mode. Most little ones can't wait until the next morning, The Day of the Kings, or El Día de Los Reyes when they get to open the presents brought by the *real* three kings during the night. The 6th of January is a public holiday across the whole of Spain.

## Things to do with kids



Unlike many other winter sun destinations, there are many things to do and places to take the kids on the Costa del Sol during the festive season.

Skate at Andalucía's only ice rink in Benalmádena, just 500 meters from the sea. It's open Fridays 19.00-22.00, Saturday's 12.30-14.30 and 18.00-22.00 and Sundays and holidays 11.00-14.00 and 18.00-20.00. During the week there are classes and activities going on, so check before you arrive. Please note that long trousers and gloves are required.

SELWO Aventura and SELWO Marina offer a great day out for animal lovers. SELWO Aventura is one of Spain's best safari parks where you can observe more than 2,000 different creatures roaming freely. SELWO Marina is a voyage of discovery through the different aquatic regions world. There you can visit Andalucía's only ice-filled 'Penguinarium', to see the penguins doing their thing in the South Pole.

For those who love speed, adrenaline and vertigo, Funny Beach in Marbella has a go-karting track, trampolines, video games, electric bikes, children's rides, a restaurant serving kiddie-friendly fare, and a great beach where Mums and Dads can relax and catch some well-deserved winter sun.

You can even find the traditional British Panto on the Costa del Sol. This year, the Salon Varieties theatre in Fuengirola is putting on Jack and the Beanstalk in English. Alternatively, you can head to the cinema to see the latest blockbusters in English.



#### **Where to stay**

There's a wide selection of different types of accommodation on offer – from hotels, to private villas and luxury apartments. Thanks to the current economic climate there are some great deals to be had over the festive season.

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throughout Europe. On offer are beautiful villas, some with heated pools, as well as luxury apartments located beachside or on a golf course, all within easy reach of good restaurants, bars and shopping and much more.

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