

COSTA De La LUZ SPAIN 2010

Derick McGroarty considers what the Bay of Cadiz offers holidaymakers.

By: Derick McGroarty

Cadiz General View



The Atlantic coast of Spain, part of Andalucia known as the Costa de la Luz, is popular with Spanish holiday makers, and is for me the real Spain when compared with Benidorm style packaged holidays tailored to suit European visitors. I have visited the Costa de la Luz many times but can still recall being caught up in a small village fiesta some thirty years ago when flamenco dancing and singing began quite unprompted, unrehearsed or unprofessional with everyone joining in. A great evening !

Balconies Jerez



The capital city of Seville is a first choice visit with many attractions [see my article on Punta Umbria issue 39, pages 22 onwards for my account and pictures.]

This year I concentrated on the Bay of Cadiz close to the border with Gibraltar but Seville is still a

comfortable day excursion away. Closer and well within half day visits, either as a short excursion or by car hire, are interesting places to visit.

My chosen hotel was the 4 star Iberostar Royal Andalus situated on the impressive Barrosa beach,



Barrosa Beach

Cadiz Cathedral



backed by pine trees. Part of hotel Petri, it is 5 kilometers from the and golf course coastal town of Chicianda de la Frontera, developments in Novo Sancti to which there is a bus service

Cadiz Open Square



every 30 minutes. The attractive hotel consists of long white 2 story buildings many of which face onto gardens and two swimming pools. There are excellent board walks to the beach. All 400 spacious, en

Sea Sunset



Cadiz Town Hall



-suite rooms have telephones, views. A wide choice of Spanish satellite TV, air conditioning and and international cuisine is on furnished balconies with sea offer. In addition to alcohol the

Carta Don Tapa



Ensalada Especial 7 €



Paella 10 €



Gazpacho Andaluz 4 €



Langostinos 18 €



Surtido pescado frito 20 €



1/2 Tortilla Española 6 €



Entrecote ternera 16 €



Solomillo ternera 20 €



Plato combinado 7 €



Jamón Ibérico 14 €



Surtido de Tapas 8 €



Queso Manchego 12 €



Flamenco at Hotel Andalus



bars offer a wide selection of soft drinks, coffee and non alcoholic cocktails. Children have a separate pool and two mini clubs. The Animation team of young people provide plenty of activities during the day including aerobics, archery, rifle shooting, bingo etc. Each evening there are live stage performances. Staff are efficient and friendly throughout the hotel.

Cadiz the oldest city in Spain, is set on a narrow peninsula almost surrounded by the sea. Settled by Phoenicians in eleven hundred

BC there is evidence of subsequent rule by Carthaginians and Romans. Christopher Columbus set out on his second and fourth journeys to the "New World" from here, which enabled Cadiz to grow rich with the developing trade. The Museo de Cadiz exhibits Phoenician and Roman artefacts as well as local crafts. There is a relaxed feeling in the pleasant old part with its mix of architectural styles including a Moorish influence. Predominant is the 18th century baroque Cathedral with its attractive yellow dome which glistens like gold in

the sunlight. In the vault is the tomb of the composer Manuel de Fala. I enjoyed the spacious quiet atmosphere and as I stood viewing the tomb I could not help hearing in my head the repetitive beat of his "Bolero". Coincidentally an evening show at the hotel was a Flamenco Ballet to the same rhythm.

It was off the Bay of Cadiz that a major British naval battle took

place, which took the name Trafalgar. The name derives from the Arabic which translates as "Western coast". In October 1804 27 British ships under the command of Admiral Lord Nelson defeated the 33 ships of the combined French and Spanish navies under French Admiral Pierre Villeneuve. The Franco-Spanish fleet lost 22 ships, no British were lost but Nelson was mortally wounded becoming one

Fountain Jerez





of Britain's greatest heroes. There is a 34 metre high lighthouse built in 1860 but no trace or mention of the great sea battle 55 years earlier. Little wonder, as it was their defeat and in any event beyond sight of any part of the coast. The victory is commemorated in London at Trafalgar Square and the elegant tall Nelson's column high above sculpted lions has become a

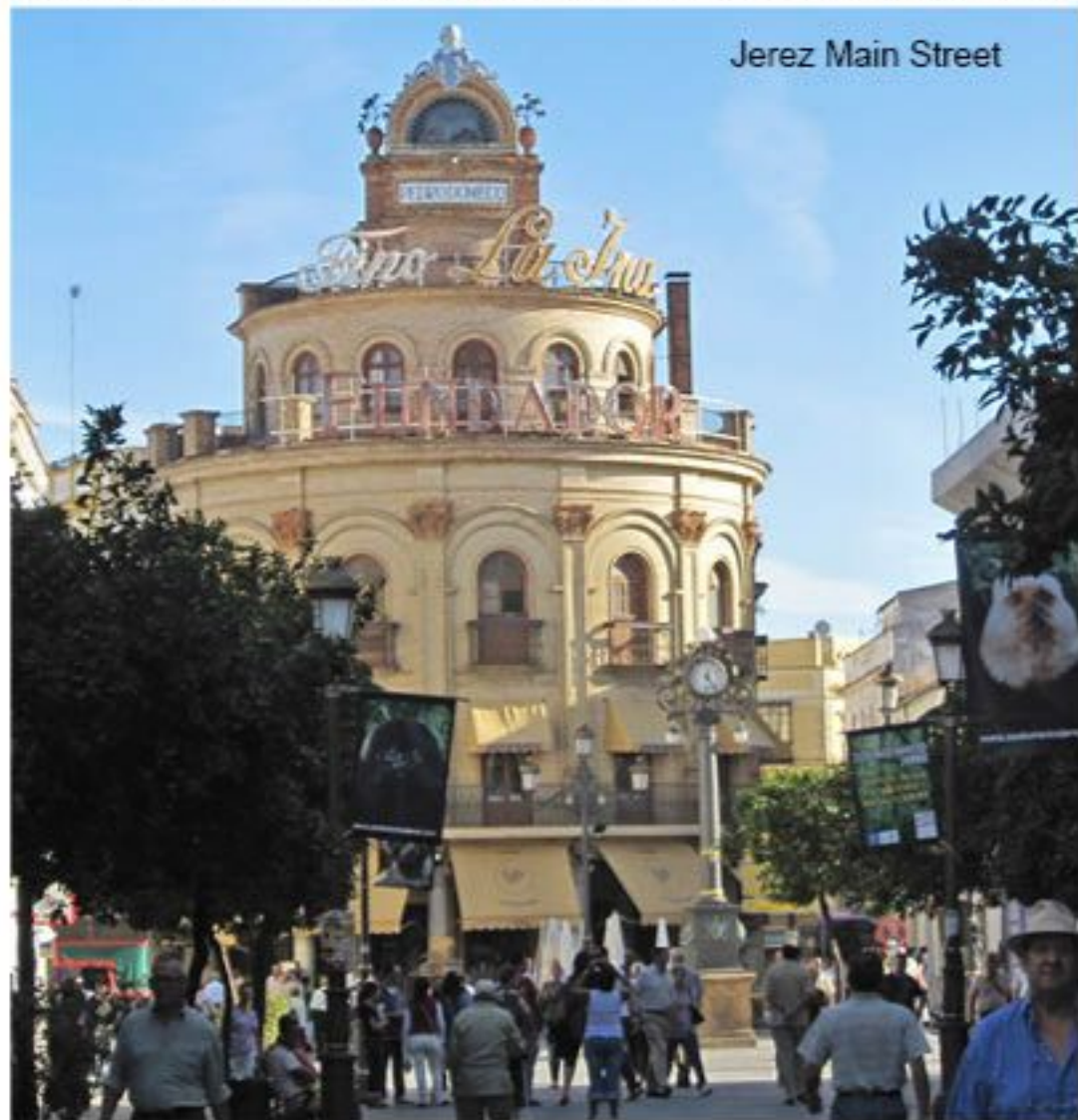
tourist attraction in itself. Standing on the Spanish shore looking out to sea I reflected on the terrible conditions that sailors on both sides suffered on these sail driven battle ships. Many injuries and deaths were caused by wood splintering when cannon balls hit the hulls. I

Gibraltar, once a great British naval base, is easily visited. The

Rock is a major land mark overlooking the narrow strait between Europe and Africa. The streets mainly given over to shopping and cafes show a quaint English character with red post boxes and English style policemen.

If you go, try to choose a time when few or no cruise ships are in port. It can become crowded!

At the border begin a series of white villages in undulating country and rugged coast line. At Arcos de



Jerez Main Street

Moorish Castle Jerez



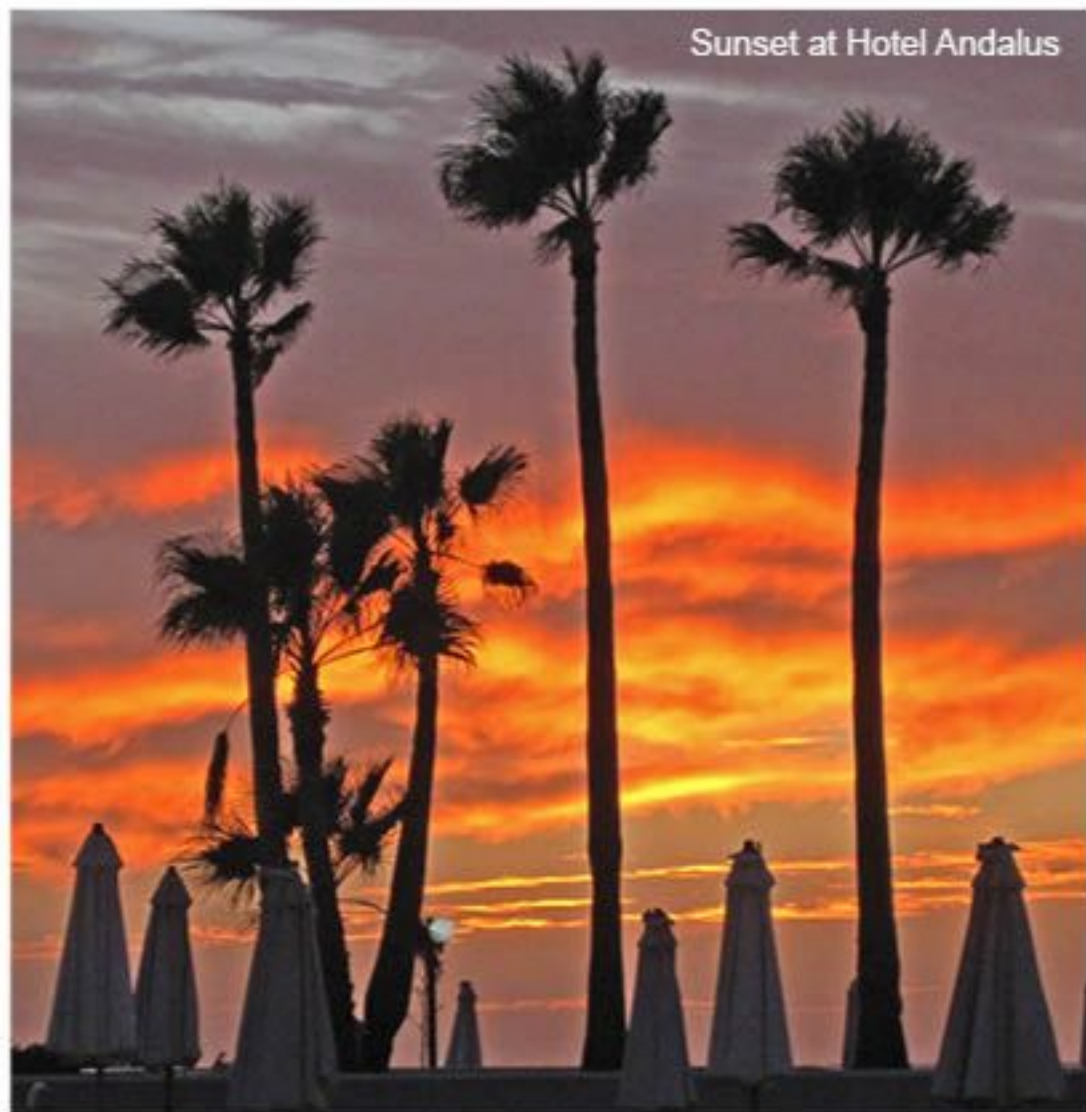
la Frontera sheer cliffs drop from the edge of the castle walls in the old town. From the town cobbled streets lead way up to the castle entrance. I visited Vejer de la Frontera one of the largest "hill towns." In 711 it became part of the Muslim Empire and traces remain of the cultural development and monuments such as the Puerto Del Castillo. A stroll between the white washed houses is a pleasing experience.

The name of the city of Jerez de la Frontera derives from Arabic

dating from Moorish times. The old quarter has beautiful palm lined squares and fountains. Although prehistoric and Roman remains have been found, the oldest surviving structure is the Arab Castle with its Baths and gardens dating from the 12th century. The city was under Moorish control from 711 to 1264. There are several old churches which date just after the Reconquest of 1264, the 14th century cathedral being built on the site of an Arab mosque. . Acclaimed for its flamenco song

and dance, horsemanship is popular with young men – the Royal Andalusian Riding School was established in Jerez 40 years ago. Performances can be booked independently or as part of a tour. Jerez is the sherry capital

of the world; the word sherry, (a fortified wine), is derived from Xerez, an earlier name of the city. Brandy, bottles, and cement are also prime manufactures. During the Moorish period production of the grape harvest continued





The Road to Cadiz

although drinking alcohol is prohibited in the Qur'an. In 996 the Caliph of Cordoba at first ordered destruction of the vineyard but when inhabitants appealed on the grounds that raisins were also produced to feed his soldiers, the Caliph spared two thirds of the vineyards. Sherry production by many international names is in the centre of the city and tasting "bodegas" are a popular on excursions for European visitors. My wife and I still enjoy sherry and were pleased to visit Williams and Humbert. Fortified wine from grapes in a defined area are controlled for quality by a "solera"

process. The demand for this aperitif has declined among younger people, but Fino dry sherry still appeals as a mixer with lemonade. Our own favourite remains Oloroso.

For those who do not find the immediate places of interest sufficient, an excursion to Tangier is available. A long day with ferry crossing it does enable a brief visit to North Africa with complete contrast of culture in the Arab world the other side of the Straits. Tours include a Moorish lunch and visit to souks and a Mosque.

Whether you travel independently booking on line or use a tour operator offering package holidays, Cadiz is an excellent area for relaxation, and sight seeing with much of interest without long journeys. Children are welcome and well catered for. Flights with British Airways from Heathrow were comfortable and on time.

The Spanish National Tourist Office can provide useful free information on request.

CONTACTS.

Spanish Tourism

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Transport in Jerez

