

# Keeping it Cool

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Spanish Tit-Bits



As the long hot summer season gets into its stride on the coast and the temperatures steadily continue to rise, how do you keep your cool?

Giles Brown, Folio's very own water baby, has a few tips.

As the saying goes "If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen". If you can't stand the heat in Marbella, however, where do you go when you have left the aforementioned kitchen? Fortunately, there are more attractive options for surviving summer than flaking out by the pool or slumping on the sofa with the air conditioning on at full blast.

If you thought that the only water to be found on the coast is in the Mediterranean, then you are in for a pleasant surprise. The beautiful countryside behind Marbella is full of streams, pools, lakes and even waterfalls, and they are closer than you think.

A ten minute drive from the Manolo Santana Tennis Club (founded by the late Spanish Grand Slam great) up the winding road to Istan, takes you to the Embalse de la Concepcion. This reservoir, completed in 1970, provides most of the water for the coast, and yet many people partying in Puerto Banus are aware of its existence. There are two public access roads to get to the water – one at km 7 just past the Cerros del Lago urbanization and the other across

from the Ermita de Istan at Km 11 (shrine to San Miguel, the pretty pueblo blanco's patron saint). Be warned, however, that the track down to the lake requires a 4x4 and a definite sense of adventure.

The reservoir is popular with kayakers, SUP purists, canoeists and anglers, and getting out on the water is a great way to escape the heat. Added excitement during the summer months can come in the shape of Spain's incredible firefighting aeroplane division – Grupo 43 – who land on the lake to fill up if there is a major blaze in the area. The pilots sportingly execute a low pass to warn the unwary to paddle rapidly to the banks of the lake, by the way.

If all this paddle based activity seems like too much hard work, how about a river hike? The Charco del Canalón, a three hour trek that starts just behind Istan, takes you along the Rio Verde. For most of the journey, you will be ankle deep in water, although there are some pools to swim across before you get to the waterfall at your final destination. If this all sounds like too much hard work, then the Barranco Blanco just outside Coin (a 20-minute drive from Marbella) boasts a waterfall that wouldn't look out of place in one of those paradise island chocolate bar adverts...

The more adventurous should consider canyoning, which consists of walking, swimming, jumping and, in some cases, abseiling down a river. An experienced adventure company for this activity is a must, as they will be able to assess the abilities of your group, and ensure a safe experience. The most popular spot for canyoning is the village of Benahavis, where the adrenaline-boosting trail follows the route of the Rio Guadalmina.

You don't have to head for the hills to get your fix of water-based excitement. The coast is home to several excellent water parks, such as the Aquamijas Water Park and Aqualand Torremolinos, perfect for families who want to cool off, although be prepared for queues in the summer for the most popular slides and chutes.