

# Malaga Open joins Spain's Top Tier Tennis Tournaments

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Spanish News, Spanish Tit-Bits



Malaga is staking its claim as one of the most important venues in Spain for tennis. This was underlined with the recent announcement that the Malaga Open had been upgraded from an ATP Challenger 80 tournament to an ATP Challenger 125 event.

For those unfamiliar with the ranking systems, this means that the Malaga Open is now in the second level of tournaments, just below the main ATP events such as Wimbledon, the French Open or the Madrid Masters.

For young, ambitious players, the Challenger circuit is vital. It provides an opportunity to gain valuable experience playing against other pros, while also earning vital ranking points and prize money.

Many of the world's top players have competed in Challenger events at some point in their careers. Rafael Nadal, Novak Djokovic, and Andy Murray all spent time on the Challenger circuit before making it to the main tour.

Scheduled to take place from October 9-15 at the Inacua Racquet Center, (on the western side of Malaga, close to the athletics stadium), the ATP 125 Malaga Open will become the fourth most important tennis tournament in Spain.

Only the three main ATP Tour events, the Madrid Masters 1000 (on clay), the Barcelona ATP 500 (also known as the

Godó, also on clay) and the Mallorca ATP 250 (in Calviá, on grass), will be ranked higher.

The upgrade also means that the tournament is able to offer more prize money – €144,920, as opposed to the €45,000 it awarded in 2022, when it was a level 80 tournament. Even more intriguingly, as a Challenger 125 event the Malaga Open will be able to offer three ‘wild card’ invitations to players from the world’s top 50.

As opposed to last year, when the Malaga Open clashed with Wimbledon, this year’s tournament has been deliberately scheduled to coincide with the second week of the Shanghai Masters 1000.

This means that players ranked in the top 50 that have already lost in China and are not traveling to the next ATP Tournament - the Tokyo Masters - can be invited. This year’s Malaga Open will have 24 players plus four ‘wild card’ players, and four players from the earlier qualifying rounds. Frenchman Constant Lestienne, who defeated Ecuadorian Emilio Gomez in the final in three sets last year, will obviously be hoping to repeat his victory in 2023.

The tournament also coincides with the “long weekend” Puente de Pilar holiday on Thursday October 12, which the organisers hope will increase the numbers of spectators to the only Challenger 125 event in Europe that week. The venue itself is superbly located for tennis fans on the coast, easily accessible from the main motorway as you approach Malaga from the west. Inacua Malaga is home to the Inacua Racquet Centre, one of the largest tennis sports complexes on the Costa del Sol. In addition to its paddle tennis facilities, it has four hard surface courts plus a central court for 4000 spectators, where the final of the Malaga Open will be held. The Inacua Malaga complex also includes restaurant areas for the public and a VIP restaurant for ATP circuit players, as well as a gym, players’ lounges and VIP parking facilities. In short, everything you need to host a tournament that is expecting to welcome 28,000 visitors during the week of the event.

With Spain still on a high after Carlos Alcaraz’s sensational Wimbledon win, get ready for a great atmosphere and superb skill at the Malaga Open!