

Brilliant Benahavis

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Spanish Tit-Bits



The popular pueblo blanco that is one of the most vibrant open secrets on the coast.

Situated in some of the most stunning and tranquil countryside, yet only 10 minutes from the coast, Benahavis has undergone a vibrant transformation over the past three decades. This typical pueblo blanco – or white village – has changed from a sleepy community of locals and artists to one of the most sought after locations in the “Golden Triangle”, with millionaires’ properties, luxury hotels, outstanding gastronomy and a huge variety of activities to enjoy.

Driving up the recently completed new road takes you past the Atalaya Golf Course and into the Municipality of Benahavis. You are immediately struck by the modern new developments on either side, and catch a fleeting glimpse of several others – including the recently announced Tierra Villas, whose design is inspired by renowned supercar brand Automobili Lamborghini.

Five minutes’ later the road runs dramatically along a gorge with the Guadalmina River flowing down to your right. This is a popular spot for the adventure sport of canyoning, and you will spot brave individuals leaping from the rocks into the Charca de las Mozas, a deep natural pool that has been designated a “Natural monument” by the Junta de Andalucía.

Overlooking Benahavis itself are the ruins of Montemayor Castle. This Arabic stronghold was erected in the 10th

century during Al – Andalus, the 700-year-period when the Moors ruled most of southern Spain. Its commanding views across to Africa highlight the strategic importance of the location. After the Christians reconquered the region most of the castle was destroyed, just in case the Moors should attempt to retake it.

The views across from Montemayor Castle also take in the millionaires' playground of La Zagaleta. Once a huge private estate, La Zagaleta is now home to the super rich who like their privacy, including Hugh Grant, Rod Stewart and powerful figures from the worlds of international business and politics. The highly visible security underlines the fact that La Zagaleta is the most expensive real estate per square metre in Spain.

Stroll through the streets of Benahavis and you will quickly realise why the village is so popular. Several years ago, the Town Hall came up with a brilliant concept to attract visitors - its food. Calling itself the culinary centre of the Costa del Sol, Benahavis is packed with restaurants of every style you could wish for – from tapas to traditional Spanish, south east Asian to Indian. The most famous restaurant in Benahavis is Los Albinacos, which has been serving superb Spanish food in a traditional low-key setting for decades, while the luxury Anatara Villia Padierna Hotel, on the southernmost edge of the municipality, has a superb range of culinary experiences.

If you need to work off the extra calories from all that food, then Benahavis has more than enough activities. As well as the aforementioned canyoning, there are great walking trails and mountain biking routes through the countryside, as well as some challenging hikes. As always in Spain, golf is an option, with courses including Los Flamings Golf, Los Arqueros Golf, Monte Mayor and La Zagaleta – although the latter is strictly invitation only!

If culture is more your thing, Benahavis Town Hall organises film screenings, lectures, comedy shows and theatre performances in its state-of-the-art theatre. The beautiful Torre de la Leonera Park, just a short walk from the centre of the pueblo, hosts open-air performances and concerts in its amphitheatre, weather permitting.

No trip to Benahavis is complete without checking out the incredible sculptures of David Marshall. A long time Benahavis resident, who now divides his time between Spain and Colorado, David's singular style has proved hugely popular around the world. Located at the top end of the main street, the gallery showcases both his sculptures and interior design pieces.

Last, but certainly not least, is the Benahavis Sunday market. More than just a boot sale, the Benahavis rastro is a brilliant mix of the functional, the flippant and the downright fabulous! The stalls offer all kinds of items and products, from antiques to clothes, fruit and vegetables to garage sale specials. With a food truck that sells the best churros to be found anywhere on a Sunday, the rastro is fun, busy and friendly – which is what Benahavis is in a nutshell!