



TRAVEL

Malaga's magic mix of sights



Enjoy a walk along the beach in Malaga after flying directly from Manchester with Jet2.com

BY DAN HOBSON
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Malaga boasts a tantalising array of contradictions. It is modern, yet historic. Hedonistic, yet cultured. Sleepy, yet wide-awake. It is a beach vacation, party destination, romantic excursion, culture immersion and city break all rolled into one.

The destination has had something of a makeover in recent years. Chic boutiques, gastro-bars and hip cafés have sprung up alongside the traditional taverns in the heart of the city. The modern harbour and its promenade, bars, restaurants and shops, glisten against the abundant historic architecture.

With its superb year-round climate, the birthplace of Picasso is an extraordinary city indeed. Located at the mouth of the River Guadalmedina, the capital of the Costa del Sol seems to buzz with continental charm and adventure.

Upon arrival, and travelling alone, I began by visiting some of the aforementioned taverns in the older part of town. Set away from the hum of tourists, the language bar-

rier was more prevalent. With stomach rumbling, and many failed attempts at ordering something, I got what I was given – freshly caught sardines, crusty bread, and olives. Delightful.

The following morning, sunshine poured through the windows of the glorious Hotel Mona Lario. Located in the centre of Malaga, right opposite the Cathedral, the trip to the beach was but five minutes away. And it was calling.

Even in early March, when I visited, temperatures were hovering around 25 degrees Celsius. And while the sea was still too cool for me, being able to sunbathe was a treat indeed for a winter-suffered Englishman.

I whiled the latter part of the afternoon away in sea-front bar – fuelled by delightful Spanish omelette and cool beer – before heading back to the hotel's rooftop terrace to watch the sun set over the magnificent city of Malaga.

By now, though, the night time was calling. Malaga has

something of a reputation for its nightlife, which doesn't seem possible in the light of day. But with darkness, the sleepy piazzas erupt with life, young people and electric lights. The melody of the accordion is replaced with modern hits.

After a few solo drinks, I decided compadres were needed. Outside one of the bars I heard two chaps from London speaking. I went over, introduced myself, got chatting and was invited to join them for the night.

Turns out I hit the jackpot. They were students at a language school in Malaga and were set to join a 20-strong group for a Polish girl's leaving do.

The group comprised of people from the world over. Many tequilas, conversations, dances, and laughs later, and it felt like we had known each other for years. Details on the rest of the night are probably best spared. But guaranteed, whatever you look for in a European holiday – Malaga can give it to you.

Flights were provided by leading leisure airline Jet2.com. Flights start from £49 one way, and include 22kg baggage allowance to Malaga from Manchester Airport. For more information visit www.jet2.com or call 0800 408 5599.

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