



# Go on a city break to Málaga

Marvel at the rich, cultural delights Málaga has to offer. By Carla Griscti

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Sitting on the beach devouring freshly caught fish is one of life's simple pleasures, and the Southern Spanish region of Málaga is a marvellous place to do it. Málaga's stunning coastline provides a beautiful backdrop for laid-back beach basking, alfresco seafood suppers and romantic sunset strolls. With rustic beachside eateries offering deliciously fresh seafood and local Spanish delicacies, Málaga offers an authentic taste of traditional Spanish culture.

As a renowned 'Brits abroad' destination, most British beach dwellers flock to the Costa del Sol in search of sun, sea and sangria. But with many holidaymakers herding to the popular sandy beaches of Marbella or Torremolinos, Málaga is often overlooked as a

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mainstream holiday destination. Wistful wanderers in search of lively Spanish culture, fabulous food and beautiful architecture will be overwhelmed by Málaga's rich delights. From flamboyant Flamenco street dancing to Pablo Picasso's inimitable works of art, there's a wealth of history and culture to be discovered in the heart of Málaga's bustling city centre.

### What to do

There's nothing more relaxing than sprawling out atop soft, golden sands serenaded by the sound of breaking waves. Málaga's beautiful beaches are family friendly and brimming with character. It rarely gets cold in Málaga with temperatures seldom dropping below 17°C. With an average of about 300 days of sunshine each year and only 50 days of rain, it's often dry and warm enough to sit outside during the day even in January and February. But the spring and autumn are ideal times to visit if a beach break is on the agenda.

The lively city centre is vibrant and picturesque with beautiful marble walkways paving the pedestrianised car-free streets. You'll find a plethora of traditional taverns, sleek boutiques, cafés and trendy gastrobars hidden amid winding lanes in the heart of the city. Families and friends gather together to share platters of tapas and sumptuous Spanish wine whilst locals twirl gleefully to Flamenco music in the streets. It's the ideal spot for aimless wandering; a place where you can really kick back and relax whilst soaking up the city's vibrant atmosphere.





Take a stroll through the city's ancient Roman fortress. Built between the eleventh and fourteenth century, the Alcazaba served as a defence aid for the city as well as a grand palace for Muslim rulers. Discover magnificent archways, lush greenery and marble pillars as you roam through the cavernous walkways of the towering Roman ruins.



Adjacent to the fortress lies a traditional Roman amphitheatre, which is still used for theatre and musical performances. If you're lucky enough to catch a performance, the setting is stunning and well worth a visit.



The **Museo Picasso** boasts an enviable collection of work dating from the late 19th century up until his death in 1973. A truly fascinating collection illustrating the versatility and progression of his extensive body of work.

The city's towering Cathedral is another breathtaking sight not to be missed. A combination of Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque architecture, the intricately carved exterior is a true spectacle to marvel. Inside is equally as grand, with two enormous 18th-century organs

stretching high into the ceiling as far as the eye can see, as well as ancient religious artworks and beautiful sculptures.

## Anything else?

For a touch of rest and relaxation, a gentle stroll around the Botanical Gardens should set the mind at ease. This tropical paradise is one of the largest gardens in Europe and takes around an hour and a half to walk around, although you could easily spend all day there. With gorgeous greenery and vibrant blooms, it's an easy place to lose an afternoon to.

If you find yourself with a few hours to spare during your trip, a visit to the **Automobile Museum** is great fun. Admittedly, we were a little sceptical about the venture, but the hordes of classic cars are well worth a peek. The kids will assuredly have great fun here. But the museum is more than just cars and engines. There's also a collection of vintage designer fashion pieces to drool over, if the cars don't quite provide enough entertainment.

If the trek across the city starts to take its toll, rest weary feet at the **Málaga Hammam** Arabian baths. A tranquil retreat tucked away from the bustle of the city, where you can relax in steaming saunas and hot baths, take a dip in the pool or indulge in a blissful massage. A bath and massage experience costs 38 euros and lasts for one hour.

## Where to eat

For spectacular panoramic views of the city and delicious, local food head to the [Parador de Gibralfaro Hotel](#). A delicious selection of sharing tapas plates will be served with freshly baked bread and exquisite local wine.

For lunch al fresco, a visit to the Pedregalejo area is an absolute must. Brimming with locals, there's a vibrant, buzzing atmosphere with fishing boats moored along the sand serving up freshly caught barbecued fish.

The Atarazanas food market is well worth a visit. A vast labyrinth filled with sumptuous Spanish delicacies. Be sure to save some room in your suitcase to take some tasty tidbits home!

For an even sojourn, [El Pimpi Bodega](#) bar serves up gorgeous tapas with local wine. The building is a cavernous warren of rooms adorned with historic posters and enormous wine barrels, all signed by a catalogue of famous folk. A popular haunt for Antonio Banderas it seems.

For a more formal evening affair, venture to the swanky [Patio de Beatas](#) restaurant. A trendy wine bar and restaurant with a fusion of Spanish and European cuisine.

## Where to stay

For a central location that's within walking distance of the centre, stay at the [Hotel NH](#). Elegant and contemporary in style, the rooms are spacious and comfortable with beautiful city views overlooking the river. There's also a gym and sauna facilities for guests to take advantage of.

## Getting there

Monarch airlines operates flights to Malaga from Birmingham, East Midlands, London Gatwick, London Luton and Manchester airports with fares, including taxes, starting from £32.99 one way (£60.98 return)

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