



Hacienda Riquelme
Carretera Avíleses-Sucina
Calle Atlántico N° 68 Apartment 2A
30590 MURCIA



Welcome

Welcome to the Baxter's apartment, we do hope that you will enjoy your stay and find everything that you need here. We think that you will find the apartment fully equipped but if you feel that there is something missing that would enhance your stay in the future, please let us know. We would like you to come back (or at least tell your friends about it!)

We have left a copy of "**Going Native in Murcia**" which you may find useful in order to get to know the area in a hurry and to find places to visit. Please make sure that you leave this in the apartment when you leave for other visitors to enjoy.

Feel free to use all the facilities in the apartment and make yourself at home.

Security

The apartment can only be completely secured from either the front door or internally. The bedroom, lounge doors and windows can only be secured internally. Please ensure that you do not leave the property unlocked when visiting the pool etc and make sure you take the keys with you.

When unoccupied, the property should be fully secured and the bedroom shutters lowered.

A Few Housekeeping Points

We really want you to enjoy your stay, but we would love you to look after our apartment while you are here. We don't have too many rules but we would ask you to respect the following:

1. Please do not smoke in the apartment. You'd be amazed at how sensitive some people can be to the smell of cigarettes (especially ex smokers!). Therefore please confine smoking to the terrace only. Please always use an ashtray and clean it regularly and leave it outside when not in use. An additional cleaning/airing charge of £50 will be made if it is apparent that there has been smoking in the apartment which will be deducted from your breakages/loss deposit.
2. Please do not lie on beds or sit on furniture directly from the pool or immediately after sunbathing if you are wet or covered in sun cream! Wet clothes and sun cream oil don't go well with sofas and bedding!

There, it wasn't that bad was it?

Air Conditioning

There are air conditioning unit in the lounge and bedrooms. Remote controls are in the drawers in the lounge. They are really easy to use but instructions, if needed, are in the yellow folder.

The Lounge

The dining table in the lounge has a central drop leaf system to extend if required. You pull it out and the central piece lifts up.

The sofa bed is an exclusive Italian design that lifts from a loop of fabric between the two back cushions.

The front door double locks for security.

The buzzer system also allows you to lock the block door downstairs and let people in.

Kiddies' books and games belong to my children and are available for use.

If you have bought a laptop and wish to surf the internet you connect via the point in the corner by the sofa and the patio doors. You can purchase cards from the supermarket or at any of the Polaris sites. These give you a timed allowance to surf as you wish. You log on via the area net site with your code and password on the card you have bought.

The internal phone receives incoming calls and allows you to call other apartments on site.

The Kitchen

The Kitchen is small but perfectly formed. The Washing Machine is simple and easy to use. All instructions manuals are in a yellow folder in the lounge sideboard.

The dishwasher is full of salt and ready for use.

The cupboards are filled with basic condiments and cleaning materials. We are happy for you to use what you need as long as you please replace what you have used in some way by the end of your stay.

As we visit more our plan is to add extra cupboards by the window but please feel free to use this as a storage area.

You will notice the rubbish bin has two compartments. You will find it is easier to sort your rubbish as you go as you will see by the bins outside everything has to be sorted for recycling.

The Bedrooms

You will find the beds in both rooms have zips to make them into single and doubles as you prefer. In the wardrobes you will find an extra fitted sheet, flat double sheet, blanket and two pillows for the sofa bed in the lounge. Spare sheets are in the master bedroom wardrobe and there is a hairdryer for you to use.

The windows in the bedrooms have external blinds which we suggest you pull down at night for security. They operate on a pulley system to the left of the window; you pull up from the bottom and then release. If it seems to catch just push the latch at the bottom with your finger.

Master Bedroom

The bed is currently set up as a double. The travel cot in the bedroom is available for use.

The storage box has our personal belongings in. However if the weather is poor (winter season) and you wish to swim in the indoor pool at Los Alcazares there are four swimming hats in here which you will need.

We suggest that you store your suitcases under the bed after you have unpacked. There should also be room for your golf clubs to tuck under there.

Bedroom Two

This bedroom belongs to our children and is set up as two singles. There are two spare pillows in the wardrobe with pillowcases in the storage box if required.

The storage box has the children's personal belongings inside.

Booster Seats are available in the wardrobe

Bathroom

The sink is operated by pushing the plug in and out.

There is a spare hand towel and bathmat under the sink.

Please leave all towels and bedding (sheets, pillowcases, bedcovers, towels including tea towels) at the end of your stay in one pile on one of the beds for our key holder to take to the launderette. If the mattress protectors are clean there is no need to remove these, blankets can also be folded separately if clean.

The box beneath the sink are our personal toiletries, the items left on the sides are for your use.

The Terrace

You have six chairs and a large table. The large unit is for the air conditioning. Two of the chairs are a little like sun loungers as they recline fully. We have yet to purchase sun loungers for the pool – we will hopefully do this in July and will get collapsible ones so if you wish to take them to the beach you can.

The patio doors open from both sides.

We would appreciate it if you would water the plants on the terrace while you are here.

Underground Car Park

If you follow the stairs down you will find the numbered spaces for the electronically operated car park. The blipper is in the drawer in the lounge. This wasn't working yet in May so you may have to park on the road outside.

We will eventually buy a storage unit for the back of this space to store sun loungers and golf clubs.

Mar Menor Resort

This 9-hole par 36 course was originally designed by Dave Thomas (Designer of Valderama, La Manga and The Belfry) although Nicklaus design is expanding the course to 18 holes and adapting the original 9. The course has a smooth feel, wide fairways and large, simply shaped bunkers.

The golf course is between Torre Pacheco and Los Alcázares (Exit 790 off the AP7). Tel: 968 012 621



The Mar Menor Resort boasts a lovely clubhouse integrated within the Intercontinental Hotel. It also offers a choice of several restaurants and bars and a small supermarket and bank.

The Intercontinental Hotel is very luxurious and the restaurants at the Hotel are excellent if not a bit pricey (but you do get what you pay for.). If you are feeling very extravagant and your partner doesn't play golf, we would recommend the Spa at the Intercontinental Hotel for a pampering session, or even the whole day. Outside the hotel there is a lovely pool area, and bar where non golfers could spend the day.



The Pool area at the Intercontinental Hotel, Mar Menor Resort.

La Torre

The second project on the Nicklaus Golf Trail, La Torre is an 18 hole par 68 course with 4 sets of tees and 3 lakes. The course has wide fairways and large bunkers. At 5,400 metres it is a course where accuracy and strategy is fundamental.

From the C-3319, take the Sucina-Garruchal exit and follow the signs for the urbanizaciones. Tel: 968 012 621



La Torre Resort not only offers an excellent 18 hole course, but also a much greater variety of bars and restaurants than Mar Menor and an excellent dedicated clubhouse. The Town Centre is still in development (it's not a building site, it's just that not all of the shops have been opened). They are however building an hotel on the site and this is due for completion Summer 2008. It looks like it will be fantastic once completed.



The view from a friend's apartment at La Torre of the 16th Green. The tee shot can be played over the lake to cut the corner if you are brave (or foolish?)

El Valle

The El Valle course has 18 holes, is par 71 with 4 tees and has a subtle desert feel to it. It has 2 lakes, streams, small waterfalls and groups of bunkers all surrounded by rocks and abundant native vegetation which makes this course one of the great challenges of the Nicklaus Golf Trail.

The course is just off the C-3319 on the right hand side if you are heading towards Murcia. It is a little way further towards Murcia on the C-3319 after La Torre. Take the sign for the urbanizaciones and then the service road for the resort.

Hacienda Riquelme

Your home course while you stay here! It's a par 72, 18 hole course and is the largest of all the courses on the Nicklaus trail. The fairways of the Hacienda Riquelme course run between olive trees, wild flowers and 5 lakes.

This is the most recent course to open and it may well not be in full swing (if you pardon the pun) until later in the year or early 2009. The clubhouse and town centre is due to be opened in the spring of 2009. In the meantime there is a temporary wooden clubhouse, pro shop and bar.



Transport between Resorts

At the time of preparing this details for Hacienda have not been finalised. If you are in doubt please ask at the main entrance. If there is a timetable available, please leave a copy in the folder.

Eating At the Polaris Resorts



La Torre

Encina Buffet (In the Clubhouse)

Lovers of the fine cuisine are sure to find ENCINA buffet quickly becomes one of their favourite restaurants. In a privileged location next to the lake, this restaurant offers a show cooking kitchen which prepares a wide range of meat, fish and other delicacies. At the time of writing this (April 2008) it costs 29€ per head (less for kids) and is highly recommended. Look out for Gala/Banquet nights that offer the buffet, live music and all drinks included for around 45€.

Open every Monday to Thursday from 13:30 to 16:30 and in the evenings Friday, Saturday and Sunday.
Telephone: 968 03 24 26

Acacia

As if it were an authentic 'trattoria italiana' in Rome itself, Acacia offers the best Italian cuisine in a privileged location next to the lake. It features pasta, pizza and risotto as well as less well known but equally delicious dishes. Without a doubt, this is the perfect place to enjoy classic Italian cuisine.

Open every day from 18:00 to 23:00. Bookings: 968 032 340

Limonero

This two-storey restaurant specialises in rice dishes overlooks the lake and offers a variety of rice dishes cooked on an open fire. All rice dishes are perfect for eating in company and, in LIMONERO, this becomes a true pleasure, especially when the dish is a delicious traditional paella. The kitchen's are in full view and you can watch them prepare food over the open fires. They have recently extended the menu to include grilled meats and we can recommend the lamb cutlets if available! This restaurant offers a fixed price meal to include starters, main course and sweet and you can drink as much water and beer as you like for 24€ per head.

Open from Monday to Thursday from 13:30 to 16:00. Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 13:30 to 16:00 and from 20:00 to 23:00. Bookings: 968 032 370

Wood House Bar (In the clubhouse)

After playing a round on the golf course, there is nothing better than to have a drink while talking about the best shots of the game. The Wood House will surprise you with a range of drinks and snacks. Besides that, let yourself be seduced by the stunning views from its terrace.

Open from Monday to Sunday, 07:30 to 19:00 pm. Capacity: 84 people. Phone 968 03 24 21

Bar Chill Out Bamboo

La Torre's latest opening (I've admired it's construction from the balcony at Limonero), Bamboo is encompassed by water and wide terraces, and offers a stunning swimming pool from which you can take in the views of the lake and the lush green golf course rolling off into the horizon. Bamboo offers a selection of different cuisines from around the world and features dishes from Thailand, India, the Middle East, Mexico and China among others. The variety and subtle flavours in this restaurant will delight all discerning food lovers.

Telephone: 968 032 400

Open on Thursday from 19:00 to 02:00 am.

Open on Friday from 19:00 to 03:00 am.

Open on Saturday from 19:00 to 03:00 am.

Open on Sunday from 19:00 to 02:00 am.

Pinos Bar

There are always good times to be had in Pino's Bar with its live music. A wide range of drinks and snacks and a comfortable atmosphere make it an ideal meeting place. Able to accommodate 100 people it is the perfect venue for the event of your choice. Sip a magnificent cocktail in good company, chat, laugh and enjoy the magical summer nights on the terrace. Everything has been designed to guarantee a good time is had by all.

Phone: 968 03 23 81 Capacity: 199 people.

Open from Monday to Thursday and Sunday: 15:00 to 23:00 pm.

On Friday: from 15:00 to 02:00 am.

On Saturday: from 15:00 to 03:00 am.

The Clover Irish Tavern

Enjoy having a beer in a unique Irish atmosphere. This is also the sports bar and has Sky TV. You can watch the football here.

Open from Monday to Thursday: 18:00 to 02:00 am.

On Friday: from 18:00 to 03:00 am.

On Saturday: from 16:00 to 03:00 am.

On Sunday: from 16:00 to 02:00 am.

Phone: 968 03 23 50

El Roble Tapas Bar

El Roble offers a wide range of Spanish tapas with an exterior covered terrace.

Phone: 968 03 23 80

El Avellano Ice Cream

Parlour

Enjoy a delicious ice cream in a place that invites you to relax yourself.

From Wednesday to Sunday, 12 to 5 pm. Telephone: 968 032 400



Mar Menor Resort

El Olivo

Specialising in pasta, meat, pizzas and other Mediterranean delights, EL OLIVO offers a sumptuous selection of dishes to be enjoyed in warm and welcoming surroundings next to the Social Club swimming pool. The quality of the restaurant's cuisine is a delight for diners who see for themselves the care with which their meals are prepared. With the kitchen opening onto the dining area the show cooking feature provides entertainment for everyone.

Open from Tuesday to Sunday from 13:00 to 16:00 and from 19:00 to 23:00
The terrace is opened from 12:00 to 18:00. Bookings: 968 041 780

AQVA

Located in the InterContinental Hotel, AQVA is the perfect place for meat lovers. A four fork restaurant, it offers the most succulent cuts of meat grilled to perfection and to your liking with a choice of sauces and garnishes. The excellent cuisine of this restaurant is complemented by a fascinating mineral water menu featuring over 100 different varieties. Explore the exciting flavours of Spanish dishes in welcoming surroundings.

Open Monday to Thursday Bookings: 902 500 322

Nomad

Located in the InterContinental hotel, NOMAD invites you to discover a wide range of Mediterranean culinary styles. Taking you back to the roots of authentic flavours with a varied menu and an excellent wine list. I had lunch here and it was delicious.

Open every day Bookings: 902 500 322

Al Fresco

The Mediterranean lifestyle and its most authentic flavours are brought together in AL FRESCO, a poolside restaurant in the InterContinental hotel which offers a unique atmosphere for a romantic dinner or a light lunch in the open air. Enjoy delicious dishes which use only the freshest natural ingredients and accompany them with a refreshing drink.

Open every day. Bookings: 902 500 322

Local Restaurants

San Javier

Wok Buffet - San Javier serves Chinese and Thai cuisine. The as much as you can eat starter, followed by main course that is cooked to order is a popular favourite at €8.95 per person. Either dine in the restaurant or takeaway your order. The restaurant serves typical chinese dishes including rice and noodles. Open from 12.00 - 16.20 & 18.00 - 24.00.

Angus Steakhouse - San Javier specialises in mouth-watering Argentinean Steaks including Entrecote, Fillet, T-Bone, Ribs, Lamb Chops, Beef or Lamb on the skewer and many more. With a choice of sauces to compliment the dishes including pepper, barbecue and shallot. Other main dishes include salmon and tuna on the skewer and foie gras of the duck with fig chutney. Specialty tapas include Iberian hams, chorizo, cheeses and Argentinean sausage smoked over a glowing fire.

Los Alcazares

When it comes to eating out in Los Alcazares, you will be truly spoilt for choice. There are numerous excellent restaurants Here are just a few of our favourites by type and price .

Spanish/Continental

Casa Penhalver in the centre of Los Alcazares is a cosy, traditional Spanish restaurant. Ideal for a romantic dinner for two.

El Patio 1 & 2 – Both do excellent meat and seafood.

Roblemar at El Oasis is possibly the most exclusive restaurant in Los Alcazares. Great Tapas, seafood and meat dishes.

Biancha – the green fronted building on the main road just round the corner from the market place. Very friendly and does great pizzas and pork steaks.

Restaurante Tropical is in the centre of town, just off the Real de Feria parade of shops behind the Town Hall. The Tropical does great Tapas and has both indoor and outdoor seating. It's also only 50 yards from the promenade, so you can walk off your meal afterwards with a gentle stroll!

El Chato – just across the road from Biancha does great tapas in a traditional Spanish style. Very popular with the locals so you may need to book (even in the quiet season at weekends)

The Hotel Balneario, an old spa hotels right on the promenade, next to the Marina, is the oldest hotel in Los Alcazares. Decorated in a quirky colonial style with wicker chairs, ceiling fans and brass bar fittings, dining here is like stepping back in time to 1930's Cuba. The food and service here is of a high quality, but quite pricey.

Italian

Angela's Pizzeria – just at the bottom of the Balneario Plaza opposite the Hotel Costa Narejos. Great value pizza & pasta.

Chinese

There are 3 or 4 excellent Chinese Restaurants in Los Alcazares which provide excellent food at very reasonable prices e.g. set meal for 2 people 19 euros (around £13!). These include **El Chino** in Edificio

Europa and **Cocina Asiatica** in the Balneario Plaza, but the one we particularly like is the **Hong Kong**, just past the El Arbol supermarket and next door to the lamp shop.

English

The Pasty Shack and the **Penny Farthing** are next door to each other in the Balneario Plaza, the former being great for sandwiches, savoury pastries and cakes and the latter having a good selection of British favourites, including Chicken & Mushroom Pie, Fish & Chips and a variety of Roast Sunday lunches as well as a great range of sticky sweets and puddings.

Indian

Jaipur Palace - Balsicas Indian restaurant. The restaurant has a large modern open kitchen where you can watch the chefs cook your favourite dishes. The head chef has over 20 years experience in cooking the finest Indian cuisine in 5 star hotels in India. Traditional Indian dishes including Chicken Madras and Tandoori Chicken are complemented with Jaipur Palace Punjabi specialties. Takeaways are also available for your convenience.

Hindustani Restaurant - Los Alcazares serves authentic Indian cuisine. Enjoy an evening out at Hindustani and taste the excellent choice of freshly cooked Indian dishes. Try the mouthwatering Chicken Tikka Masala, Lamb Madras, Chicken Korma and large selection of other dishes and chefs specials available. Open for dinner 18.00 - 23.30 with seating inside and outside.

Other

La Encarnacion - Los Alcazares colonial style restaurant appears quite laid back and casual with its blue and white striped canopies and beachfront location. However do not be fooled the secret lies within, with beautifully decorated tables and chairs. The inner patio area is surrounded by plants and a tranquil place for a drink or tapes. The menu in the restaurant has a wide range of Mediterranean meat and fish dishes made with fresh local produce.

La Almazara - Santa Rosalia was once an old outbuilding, it has been lovingly restored by the present owners and has become well known restaurant in the area. A delightful patio area in front of the restaurant offers an ideal place to take a pre or post dinner drink. A varied menu offers delicious Mediterranean cuisine, using fresh local produce.

La Diva - Los Alcazares The dishes are all prepared by highly skilled chefs that prepare fresh dishes to the highest standard, using the best local and seasonal produce. For starters enjoy authentic favourites, including chicken satay, seafood cocktail and combo starter. The varied main menu includes various main dishes from prime fillet steak, salmon fillet, Cajun chicken, pizzas and pastas. The Diva specials include tasty Thai fish cakes, fajita wraps and Malaysian fish curry.

Penny Farthing - Los Alcazares is open from 10am till late. Serving traditional English breakfast and light snacks along with a selection of homemade dishes including Lasagne, Cajun Chicken, Fajitas and other traditional favourites like Cod & Chips. Penny Farthing also has a separate children's menu. There is a large selection of seating with tables inside and outside.

Roblemar - Los Alcazares is a very well established restaurant in Los Alcazares. Serving a variety of meat and seafood dishes, including lasagne's, meats and paellas. The restaurant is a must for fish lovers with its proudly presented layout of fresh fish available on display and is very popular for its wonderfully paellas. To compliment your meal they have a wide selection of desserts including Tiramisu, Profiteroles and many more.

Ramon's Restaurant - Los Alcazares offers excellent Mediterranean dishes. Including a choice of tapas starters to get you mouthwatering. For main course they serve meats, fish baked in salt, fish fried with peppers, grilled fish or fish served with rice. The restaurant also has an excellent selection of tempting deserts. Ramon's is very popular with the local people in area.

El Chato - Los Alcazares restaurant and wine bar has one of the largest selections of wines available including its very own wine called El Chato. Enjoy tapas or a meal in the restaurant that has a selection of salads, rice, fish and meat dishes. With a pleasant decor and welcoming staff this busy restaurant is popular with locals and tourists.

Novo Carthago - Los Urratias The bar menu serves English breakfast, light snacks and tapas throughout the day. Enjoy lunch or dinner from the A la Carte menu which has a wide range of delicious dishes, the popular specials board has a further selection of tempting dishes of the day. Some of the tempting specialties include succulent roast shoulder of lamb, steaks and pan fried sole. Every Sunday traditional English roast dinners are served and in the warmer months from 8.00pm on Sundays there is also a BBQ with live music.

Bayside Restaurant - Los Alcazares - situated in the heart of Los Alcazares. The Bayside serves a fusion of modern European cuisine with an international twist. Enjoy dishes including BBQ wings and ribs, pasta & steaks. There is seating inside or you may prefer alfresco dining in the warm summer months, combined with a relaxed atmosphere and friendly staff.

Tapas Alba - Los Alcazares located in the Mercadona plaza. Tapas Alba serves a large variety of tapas, coffees, beers and spirits. The selection of tapas includes, Spanish omelette, calamares, patatas alioli and Russian salad to name just a few. During the summer months enjoy live music at the weekends hosted by Tapas Alba.

Big Cafe - Los Alcazares located in the centre of the Mercadona plaza. The Big Cafe serves a variety of snacks, pastries & ice creams. Situated in this lively plaza it is the ideal place to stop for a coffee and watch the world go by. During the summer months enjoy live music at the weekends hosted by the Big Cafe.

Useful Numbers:

From the apartment phone:

Information	012
Emergencies	112
Police	092
Fire	080

Hospitals:

Virgen de la Arrixaca (Murcia): 968 36 95 00

Santa María del Rosell (Cartagena): 968 50 48 00 / 968 32 50 00

Rafael Méndez (Lorca): 968 44 55 00 / 968 44 55 52

Airports:

San Javier: +34 968 17 20 00

El Altet (Alicante): +34 966 91 94 00 / +34 966 91 91 00

Bus Stations and Trains:

Murcia: +34 968 29 22 11

Cartagena: +34 968 50 56 56

San Pedro del Pinatar: +34 968 18 29 42

RENFE train information: 902 240 202

Airlines

Jet 2 902 020051

My Travellite 902 020191

Ryan Air 807 220032

Iberia 807 123456

Flybe 00 44 13922 685 28

BMI Baby 902 100737

Owners +44 7837 207690 / +44 1354 653330

Keyholder

Aidan and Mandy Enterprises, all details in the apartment

Hacienda Riquelme Services

1000 (or by mobile -902500821)- baby sitting /laundry etc.

Supermarkets

Hacienda Riquelme

There is a small supermarket on the resort that stocks some basic fresh produce and simple things to get you going before you can find a “proper” supermarket.

San Javier (the nearest)

There are many available in San Javier (follow main road- C3319- East wards towards AP7). Continue on 3319 UNDER THE AP7 – into San Javier. At the roundabout follow signs to San Pedro Del Pinatar. You will pass a number of Supermarkets but a major shopping area is a few minutes down the road – **Don Mares** which incorporates numerous shops, fast food outlets etc and the EROSKI Hypermarket. Here you can find most things here from food and clothing to home wares and electrical goods. There is plenty of parking, and a **petrol station**.

Eroski - On the road from San Javier to San Pedro del Pinatar (N-332), Km 23 San Javier (Murcia) at the Dos Mares Commercial Centre. Tel: 968 547 800

Alternatively go south at the AP7 and turn off at the Murcia Airport junction – 784. Follow airport sign under AP7 to roundabout take the exit after airport (4th)- Follow signs into San Javier there is a large Supermarket, **Mercadona** on your left, within the **Hispania Centre** (there is also an excellent **WOK buffet Chinese Restaurant**). Continue on to the centre of San Javier and at the roundabout take the first exit- signposted SANTIAGO De Ribera. Follow this (very narrow) and as it opens out you will pass MERCADONA & LIDL Supermarkets.

La Torre

In La Torre Golf Resort Supermarket you will find a reasonable supermarket with freshly baked bread, milk, fresh fruit and vegetables, meat etc. There is also a full complement of imported British products and even national and international daily papers. In the wine and spirits section you will find a comprehensive range of wines from table wines to wines for special occasions, sparkling wines, liqueurs and spirits.



The supermarket at La Torre Golf Resort

Fiestas and Carnivals

The Spanish don't need much of a reason to have a party and/or set off some fireworks and there's hardly a month goes by during the year when there isn't a celebration of some kind or another going on.

Here are some of the main public holidays and celebrations, although there are others.

January 5th – Festividad de Los Reyes Magos (The Festival of the 3 Kings arrival in Bethlehem)
Celebrated in most towns and cities across the whole of Spain .

February – Los Alcazares, along with most of the towns on the Mar Menor has its Annual Carnival. The most historically spectacular Carnival in the Murcia Region take place an hour down the coast in the town of Aguilas, where the whole town comes out to celebrate and to choose their Carnival Queen.

March 24th – 27th . The Tamborada Festival in the Murcian towns of Moratalla and Mula celebrates the Passion of the Christ with the pounding of a thousand drums over three crazy days in March.

Easter – Semana Santa (Saints week or Holy Week)

Celebrated across the whole of Spain, but easily the biggest Semana Santa celebrations in the region are in the Capital Murcia. Smaller, but no less colourful festivities take place in nearby Cartagena and San Pedro del Pinatar.

April - The Burial of the Sardine, the climax of the Spring festivities, is **Murcia's** wackiest night of the year. On the first Saturday in April, and looking like a cross between Rio's famous carnival and 'It's a Knockout' a crazy cavalcade of giants and big-heads, torch-bearers and entertainers, demons and Brazilian samba groups escort a fleet of some twenty floats, which will throw hundreds of thousands of euros worth of toys and gifts into the crowd in the space of just a few hours.

Over the previous days, there are marches through the streets with brass bands and on the night of the eve of the Burial, the Testament of Doña Sardina (Ms Sardine) is read from the balcony of the Town Hall. The fiesta ends in the early hours of the morning, when, a papier-mâché effigy of the Lenten sardine is burnt in the Plano de San Francisco amid public rejoicing.

May – La Manga Fiesta incorporating the La Manga Ladies Windsurfing Championships.

1st – 5th May. **The Festival of the Holy Cross in Caravaca de la Cruz** includes the famous 'Race of the Wine Horses' where the horses used in the Vineyards are raced through the streets to the Castle at the top of the town.

July – The San Javier Music Festival runs throughout the whole of July featuring leading Jazz & Blues artists, but there are some rock, pop & folk acts appearing as well from time to time.

The **Festividad de la Virgen del Carmen** (The Festival of the Virgin Madonna of the Sea) includes street processions, fireworks and the symbolic burning of an artificial castle as well as a procession of boats which scatter flowers on the sea. Celebrations of this festival take place on the 16th in Los Alcazares, Santiago de la Ribera, Lo Pagan, Cabo de Palos and Cartagena and again on the 25th in Santiago de la Ribera and Cartagena.

August – A month-long **International Festival of Theatre, Music & Dance** takes place in San Javier.

A Flamenco Festival takes place in the former mining town of La Union.

There is a folklore festival in Cartagena and there is week long **Festival of La Huerta** (The Market Garden) in Los Alcazares.

September – In Cartagena you can watch colourful mock battles in the street re-enacting the struggle between **the Carthaginians and the Romans**.

October – From 8th to 13th October, **Los Alcazares** has a week long celebration of the town's municipal autonomy, during which there are fireworks displays, processions, the Mar Menor **Surfari** Windsurfing competition and the '**Caldero**' **Festival** where the local fisherman light fires on the beach and cook their catch in hanging cauldrons for the consumption of the public.

November – **Cartagena Jazz Festival** takes place.

December – on the 3rd December there is the **Fiesta de San Francisco de San Javier** (Saint Francis of San Javier) during which there are sports, games, exhibitions and concerts.

Shopping

Whilst Los Alcazares has some nice boutiques, perfumeries and restaurants and a really nice street market on a Tuesday, serious shoppers should head for Cartagena or Murcia where large dept. stores and designer label outlets aplenty can be found.

Markets

Monday San Pedro Del Pinatar

Tuesday Los Belones and Los Alcázares

Wednesday Santiago de la Ribera, Cartagena and El Mirador

Thursday San Javier and Los Urrutias

Friday El Algar and Torrevieja.

Saturday Los Narejos and Torre Pacheco.

Sunday Cabo de Palos, Los Nietos and Autocine Mar Menor.

Places to Visit

San Pedro del Pinatar

Located at the northern end of the Mar Menor, its name comes from a small church the fishermen dedicated to San Pedro in an area of pine trees. With its **agricultural and fishing** character, it has busy tourist activity in Lo Pagán, where its mud baths are particularly famous and good for your health.

Its history stretches back to the Roman era, from which remains of houses have been discovered and during which the exploitation of the salt flats of Coterillo was begun; salt flats which are still working today. These **wetlands** were formed with the dunes and the beach of La Llana, which is the oldest of the Regional parks of Murcia, and which is a refuge for over one hundred bird species, among which the flamingo is worthy of particular mention. Besides the park, where it is possible to observe the fauna and flora as well as unique constructions such as the salt mills, it is also worth paying a visit to stately homes such as the Casa del Reloj, which was home to the death of Emilio Castelar, the Palace of Villar de Felices, the Ethnographical Archaeological Museum and the Fish Market.

Murcia

The regional capital and University City on the river Segura is around 20 minutes away by car. This vibrant city was founded by the Moors in 825AD and boasts a beautiful Cathedral and University, as well as Botanic Gardens, Museums and other historic buildings around its narrow, but characterful streets.

The fabulous **cathedral in Murcia** city is well worth a visit. You can spot it from miles away because of its 96-metre tower which houses no less than 25 bells. Construction work on the cathedral started in the mid 14th century, on the site of a Moorish mosque, and lasted for another four centuries.

The city's 18th century convent **church of Santa Ana** is another tourist attraction, partly because the sisters of the convent's closed order bake cakes and sell them to the public through a revolving hatch (to avoid breaking their vow of no contact with the outside world).

Other places of interest include the magnificent 19th century casino and the **Salzillo Museum** which houses an impressive collection of life-sized polychrome sculptures. The figures were carved by 18th century Murcian sculptor Francisco Salzillo and beautifully painted in bright colours (polychrome means "many colours"). The figures are carried through the streets during the city's famous Easter processions.

For those who enjoy discovering "the real Spain" away from the *costas*, Murcia is a delight to explore with its traditional villages where life continues much as it has done for generations. The hill town of **Jumilla**, at the northern end of the region, is famous for its very quaffable, full bodied red wine which has been produced in the area for centuries.

Shops include El Corte Ingles, (the Spanish equivalent of Selfridges or Fenwicks etc) and numerous designer label shops on the Calles Traperia and Plateria, dozens of great restaurants and a lively nightlife, especially during fiestas and carnivals.

In recent EEC research, the region of Murcia was singled out as the most economically dynamic in Spain and this is being reflected in the rapid development of Murcia as a tourist and cultural destination.

For lovers of nature, the Sierra Espuna National Park is 25-30 minutes drive away. Also nearby on a hillside about 5 miles from Murcia is the ancient Santuario de la Fuensanta, the home of Murcia's patron saint.

Other Places of Interest in Murcia City

The Cathedral - A symbol of the city: the ninety- six meter tower with its twenty- five bells, can be seen high above the city from miles around.

The Romea Theatre - Named after the famous local actor, Julian Romea, as is the square in which it stands, built at the northern end of the Arab city wall.

The Church of "Nuestro Padre Jesus" - The main feature is the set of eight processional floats belonging to the fraternity and the 556 figures of the world-famous Christmas Crib.

The Casino - Dating back to 1847 contains a lovely library, the hidden secrets of the Lady's Powder Room, a magnificent Moorish patio and a splendid Neo-baroque Ballroom.

The Bishop's Palace - The Bishop's Palace Its central courtyard, main staircase, Bishop's Balcony (known as "El Martillo") and Palace chapel should be seen.

The Convent Church of Santa Ana - Not only an architectural pleasure but visitors are recommended to sample the delicious freshly-baked cakes which the Sisters of the Enclosed Order sell

Cartagena

Head south for about 25kms and you will come to Spain's oldest port. Cartagena is one of Spain's oldest cities, and still of major maritime importance to Spain, both commercially and militarily. A multitude of civilisations have left their mark on the city as numerous archaeological sites and museums will testify. In the heart of the city is a modern shopping area, which spills down past the tapas bars to the recently revitalised harbour. Here you will find the World's oldest submarine on display, built in 1884 by a local man Isaac Peral.

Santiago de la Ribera & Lo Pagan

Two traditional Spanish seaside towns at the Northern end of the Mar Menor. The beach of Santiago de la Ribera is lined by tall palm trees along the promenade and there are numerous shops, bars and cafes to explore. There is also a new out of town shopping centre called Dos Mares on the outskirts of Santiago de la Ribera, whilst Lo Pagan has a lively fish market on the Esplanade every morning except Sunday.

La Manga Club

Just a 20 minute drive from Los Alcazares is the world famous resort of La Manga, which boasts 3 championship golf courses, 28 tennis courts and a football academy set in a 1400 acre corner of the Costa Calida. It also contains the 5 star Regency Hyatt Hotel where the rich and famous spend their vacations. Look carefully and you might see some premier league footballers or a TV star. La Manga is where the BBC series 'Superstars' was filmed.

Cabo de Palos

Immediately recognisable by its famous lighthouse, Cabo de Palos is situated at the mainland end of the La Manga strip around a quaint harbour. It has plenty of bars and seafood restaurants and a great view of La Manga. On Sundays there is a market, where you can find plenty of fresh local produce and other bargains. For diving enthusiasts, the Hormigas Islands near Cabo de Palos have been declared a Marine Reserve due to their exceptional beauty and the conservation of the sea floor, but they are also acknowledged by scuba divers as being one of Spain's premier dive sites, due to the large number of unfortunate ships that have come to grief in the rocky waters around the area.

Orihuela & Orihuela Coast

About 45 minutes North East of Los Alcazares is the city of Orihuela. In centuries past, Orihuela was the Political and administrative capital of the region and still displays many remnants of its proud cultural and religious heritage. Inland from the coast, Orihuela is one of those cities that don't look much from the outskirts, but which blossoms on closer inspection, with a medieval centre stuffed full of historic treasures. Every week in July they stage a mock battle in remembrance of the battles between the Moors and Christians. There are still lots of traditional narrow streets, plus bars and a busy market for you to

browse. The Orihuela Costa boasts the beaches at La Zenia and Cabo Roig, plus the marinas at Campoamor and Pilar de la Horredada as well as 3 of the Costa Blanca's most popular golf courses at Campoamor, Villamartin and Las Ramblas.

Lorca

About 1 hour West of Los Alcazares, Lorca, Spain's largest town, is a lively and busy place all year round and its Semana Santa (Holy Week) celebrations are the most lavish in Murcia. Huddled around the ruins of its castle, Lorca retains many beautiful buildings such as the Collegiate Church of San Patricio and impressive town houses and mansions that remind us of its opulent past. Lorca also plays host to an annual Rock Festival, Lorca Rock, featuring bands such as Iron Maiden, the Scorpions, Slayer, Lacuna Coil and Dream Theatre etc.

Los Alcazares

Pronounced 'los-alcatha-res' is an old fishing and saltwater spa town on the Costa Calida (warm coast) in the Murcia region of Spain. The town is on the western shore of the Mar Menor, a saltwater lagoon separated from the Mediterranean Sea by a 22 kilometre long strip of land called La Manga. The Mar Menor is always 3-4 degrees C warmer than the Mediterranean and the area enjoys an average of 320 days of sunshine each year. Along its shores there are a variety of bars, cafes and restaurants providing drinks, tapas, meals and entertainment. The warm and shallow waters of the Mar Menor make the resort a mecca for sailing, windsurfing and jet skiing enthusiasts.

On the 13th October 1983, the town was afforded Municipal Autonomy and in celebration of this, a week-long outdoor party is held every October featuring live music, shows and firework displays. During the last three days of March every year, Los Alcazares plays host to a large medieval market and numerous events in recollection of the times when Barbary pirates used to raid this stretch of Spain's coastline during the 15th century. Throughout the last two weeks in August, the town hosts 'La Huerta' the international celebration of the region's status as the market garden of Spain, when Spanish and other European countries gather to display their folklore, handicrafts and gastronomic feasts from their local produce.

Along the 7km promenade you will find over 20 beach bars where you can get a drink or a snack type meal, hire sun beds, parasols and pedalos. Being as flat as it is, cycling is very popular in Los Alcazares and bikes can be hired from several hire shops in the town. You can also hire motorbikes behind the Deutsche Bank in the El Oasis development at the North end of town.

There are 2 tourist information offices in Los Alcazares, which can also provide lots of up-to-date literature regarding local events and places to visit in English.

Please be aware that Los Alcazares is quite Spanish and with only 2 discos and 1 karaoke bar, the nightlife in the resort is relatively low-key, making it ideal for both relaxing and active family and golf holidays alike. Couples will enjoy the many excellent restaurants in the town or just lazing around on the beach or by the pool all day, however it is worth noting that Los Alcazares will definitely not suit those looking for a lively clubbers-style holiday in the Med.

Caravaca de la Cruz

To the northwest of the province of Murcia is the town of Caravaca de la Cruz. Among the houses spread around the castle there are fine examples of Murcia's Renaissance architecture.

The area occupied by Caravaca was previously inhabited by the Iberian and Roman Argaric people, but the origins of its current appearance are to be found in Arab domination. After the Christian Reconquest, these territories came to be governed by the Order Of The Temple and later by the Order of Santiago. In this age, during the 16th and 17th Century, Caravaca enjoyed its period of greatest splendor since it became the political centre of a vast territory. This town therefore has a great many historic buildings, the product of its former importance.

One of the main features, its castle, which rises above the houses of Caravaca de la Cruz is of Muslim origin and was later extended in the 15th Century by the Knights Templars and later still passed into the hands of the Order of Santiago. Fourteen towers guard the sanctuary of the Santisima y Vera Cruz, which was built inside the 17th Century. The façade which was added a century later, is in the baroque style. The whole site has Historic-Artistic Heritage status and houses the Museum of Religious Art and History. Among its most outstanding pieces are the adornments of the Caballos de Vino (wine horses). These horses, lavishly harnessed, are the centre of attention during the Festivals of Santisima y Vera Cruz, declared to be of national tourist interest.

A religious building considered to be a crowning work of Murcia's Renaissance architecture is also located at Caravaca. It is the Church of Salvador, which has been declared to be a Historic-Artistic site. Completing the cultural tour of the city are the Church of La Soledad; today the Archaeological Museum; the Carmelite Convent founded by San Juan de la Cruz and the Purisima Concepcion built in the 16th century on the site of the old Church of the Knights Hospitaller of San Juan de Letran (built in Renaissance style it has beautiful Mudejar coffered ceilings and baroque reredos).

It should now come of no surprise to you that Caravaca de la Cruz is also the fifth holiest city in the world after Santiago de Compostela, Santo Toribio de Liebana, Rome and Jerusalem.

This town therefore celebrates Annus Sanctus every seven years. This is a time of jubilee and when plenary, solemn and universal indulgence is granted to all those who make the pilgrimage.

Activities

Golf

Keen golfers will be delighted to learn that they will be spoiled for choice, with no less than 13 golf courses in the area with more being built. These include Roda Beach & Golf and Torre Del Rame in Los Alcazares itself, and Hacienda del Alamo, Polaris World Courses (Mar Menor, La Torre, El Valle and Hacienda Riquelme), Mosa Trajectum, La Manga (which actually has 3 courses alone), Campoamor and Villamartin, all within a 25-30 minute drive. Adjacent to the Hacienda course is the new Seve Ballesteros course, Peraleja.

Scuba diving

For diving enthusiasts, the Hormigas Islands near Cabo de Palos have been declared a Marine Reserve due to their exceptional beauty and the conservation of the sea floor, but they are also acknowledged by scuba divers as being one of Spain's premier dive sites. There are dive centres along the Costa Calida and Costa Blanca Coasts at Mazzaron, Aguilas, due to the large number of unfortunate ships that have come to grief in the rocky waters around the area.

Other Water sports

The shallow waters and warm winds of the Mar Menor make it ideal for both Windsurfing and Kite boarding, both of which can be hired from various shops and schools along the Mar Menor shoreline. Jet skiing is also very popular and these can also be hired from ABC La Manga sports centre. Pedallos can be hired from the centre of Los Alcazares.

Water Park

Aquapolis Fun Park near Torrevieja, open from 15th June to 15th September, is an excellent fun day out for all the family, providing a welcome opportunity to do some serious cooling off during the height of the summer when the mercury hits the top of the glass in the thermometer.

Mar Menor Ferry

Between 15th June-15th September, the Mar Menor Ferry picks up from the pier in the centre of town and visits other towns and the islands of the Mar Menor, at which you can stop off and enjoy a delicious lunch of freshly caught and barbecued sardines.

Beaches, beaches, beaches.....

Los Alcazares & Los Narejos.

Leave the AP7 (going South) at junction 786 and join the N332. At the first main roundabout there is a large archway- To the left of this is a series of small bars/restaurants. Carry straight on (URB.OASIS) and you will come to a major road- turn right- this will take you towards Los Narejos/ Los Alcazares- BEACHES ARE LOCATED ALL THE WAY DOWN THE LEFT HAND SIDE OF THIS ROAD- just turn down some of the side roads.

There are some excellent restaurants (see separate section). At the above roundabout head towards Alcazares (exit before the archway heading south) and you will see a Mercadona (quite small) - to the right of this is a pedestrian avenue with a number of bars and restaurants.

By going north on the AP7 there are numerous beaches up to Torre Vieja- Caba Roig Playa is a nice sandy beach area. In general BEACH AREAS are Playas.

Los Alcazares can also be accessed by continuing south on the N332 as you leave AP7 at Junction 786. This route also passes a number of supermarkets and shopping complexes on the beach side of the road.

Alternatively there are beaches at San Pedro where you'll also find the locals bathing in the salt lakes or head towards La Manga and visit the quiet beaches at Playa Honda. The Playa Honda beaches are our personal favourites as they tend to remain very quiet, have lovely golden sand, safe gentle waters, facilities near by and very close by easy parking.

Quite often in the high season months you'll find water sports and inflatable water play in the waters all around the Mar Menor.

Playas del Mar Menor y La Manga

www.murciaturistica.es

Costa Cálida



San Pedro del Pinatar

El Mojón

La Puntica

Villananitos

La Torre Derribada

Las Salinas

Punta de Algas

El Castillico

La Mota

La Barraca Quemada

Colón

El Pescador

Barruevo

La Manga del Mar Menor

Escollera de la Uña y Encalfizada

San Javier

La Veneriola

El Pudimel

Las Salinas

Chica

Los Narejos

Ensenada del Esparto

Las Palmeras

Escollera de Doniense

El Espejo

Mistral

Manzanaras

El Estacio

Camión

Matagordas

La Concha

Isla Grossa

Los Alcázares

Mar Menor

Las Antillas

El Arenal

El Carmolí

El Pedruchillo

Punta Brava

Poniente

Los Urufías

El Galán

Leveche

El Pedrucho

Los Alizeos

Banco del Tabal

La Isla

Cala del Pino

El Ciervo

Cavanna

Puerto Bello

El Vivero

Los Alemanas

Honda

Paraiso

Cala Magre

Calblanque

Larga

Las Cañas

Negreta

Cala del Reventón

Cala de las Mulas

Cala del Cuervo

Cala del Barco

Cabo de Palos

Salúa

Barco Perdido

Las Sirenas

Enbarnas

Las Anoladeras

Levante

Cala Galera

Cala Escalerillas

Cala Túnez

La Calafria

Cala Roja

Cala Botella

Cala de las Melvas

La Barra

Cala Abellan

Cala Medina

Cala Flores

El Descargador

Cala Reóna

Cartagena

La Unión

Isla Perdiguera

Isla del Barón

Isla del Ciervo

Mar Mediterráneo

The following beaches are amongst the most beautiful in the region (from north to south):

1. **Villa Nanitos** – near the mud baths of San Pedro del Pinatar with various sporting facilities such as wind surfing, volley ball, kayaking and water skiing.
2. **La Llana** – long, sandy, blue flag beach, with foot showers during the main season. Mild water, with some waves in parts.
3. **El Espejo** – another blue flag, sandy beach on the Mar Menor with wind surfing. Volley ball and kayaking. Calm waters.
4. **Los Nietos** – 4km long grey, sandy beach with showers, lots of restaurants and calm waters.
5. **South of Cabo de Palos** – a group of three beaches – **Cala Medina, Las Melvas, Levante** – small beaches with slightly wavy water, ranging from sand to gravel to rock, great all round beaches. There are restaurant services and some good opportunities for **snorkelling**.
6. **Cala de las Mulas** – a nudist beach with fine sands and no services
7. **Cala Cortina** - a calm sandy beach with toilets and showers, and a life guard service.
8. **El Portus** – a quiet, sandy beach with showers, difficult to reach.
9. **El Rihuete and Puerto de Mazarron** – sandy beaches, with plenty of shops and restaurants.





Playas de Águilas



Playas de Mazarrón



Inland (National Parks and Nature Areas)

The interior of the Murcia Region is ideal for those in search of relaxation, nature, sport and good food. The mountains here are full of wild game and woodland, and crowned with castles, fortresses, hermitages and convents. Stories and ancient legends enshroud these evocative, welcoming parts, inviting you with their robust, tasty cuisine to enjoy a few days relaxation in the fresh country air.

Quiet, sleepy towns, such as Moratalla, Mula, Bullas, Cehegín, Caravaca, Jumilla, Yecla, and numerous other localities open their doors to visitors in search of new, tranquil sensations, those who want to lose themselves for a few hours among holms, pines, oaks and junipers, visit archaeological sites, experience traditional lifestyles, and, to get their strength back, sit down to a hearty stew, some migas or a tasty dish of game, accompanied by a fine bottle of local Denominación de Origen wine.

The more adventurous can paddle down river by canoe, go potholing, climbing, hiking, horse riding and cycling. Those who prefer can learn to knead bread, make homemade cakes, distil essences and liqueurs, cut honeycomb or make cheese. It is a question of taste.

Sierra Espuña

Sierra Espuña contains Murcia's largest extensions of forest, as well as being one of its most exemplary areas of outstanding natural beauty. Its modern greenness is due in large part to reforestation campaigns carried out towards the end of the 19th century by Murcian philanthropist Ricardo Codorníu, known by the nickname *the Tree Apostle*.

The districts bordering the area are Río Mula (Mula and Pliego) and Sierra Espuña (Alhama de Murcia, Totana, and Aledo). Mula and Pliego nestle between the Espuña and Ricote ranges and are places steeped in local tradition and culture, which, along with the area's scenery make them an ideal stopping place on inland routes in the region.

Alhama de Murcia, Totana, and Aledo are all within easy reach of these wooded uplands, which naturally form part of the identity of the towns themselves.

The district is also known for its **pottery manufacturing**, and **Totana** is Spain's second most important area for pottery production. The district of Aledo has kept alive the tradition under the gaze of its Moorish watchtower and has dominated the valley since the days when it bore witness to skirmishes between Christians and Moors.



Typical pottery from the area.



A disused aqueduct near Aledo.

Aledo

Strategically placed and controlling the valley of the Guadalentín we find Aledo, rich in **ceramic and pottery-making tradition**, and still maintaining the old arts and use of local natural resources. During the Islamic period it was converted into a fortress and held out against Christian forces until the 12th century, when it was taken by troops led by Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar, better-known nowadays under the name of “El Cid”.

Aledo is also famous for giving hospitality to King Alphonse X, and it was from here that many of his famous *Partidas* (Law proclamations) were dispatched. Among Aledo’s historic buildings and monuments, most noteworthy are the 11th-century Calahorra Tower, La Picota, a cylindrical brick and mortar construction used as a jail and place of execution for outlaws, the church of Santa María la Real, which blends the purity of the Herreran style with rich Baroque decorative elements and contains Gothic and Baroque-style works of art and sculptures by Salzillo.

Aledo’s location in the Sierra Espuña Natural Park naturally means that Aledo is in an area of **great scenic beauty**, which nature lovers visiting the area are sure to enjoy.

Alhama de Murcia

Alhama lies in the Valley of the river Guadalentín at the foot of the Espuña and La Muela ranges. Defence towers, ruined town walls, renaissance-style palaces, and mansions of the former nobility are all part of the legacy of the valley’s varied history.

To the Romans and Moors this town meant the thermal springs flowing off the mountain. This is, in fact, what gives the town its name, Al-hama, meaning hot springs in Arabic. There are also the ruins of the older Roman baths that demonstrate the great age of the utilization of the springs in the area. It was the Roman baths established in the 1st century AD that were further developed and used into the Islamic period.

On the rocky outcrop overlooking the town stands a 12th-century Arab castle around which the town eventually grew. A walk through the town reveals a surprisingly rich range of colours used in the façades of the houses; red, ochres, violets and blues all add to the pleasantness of a stroll through the town.

Walking and cycling enthusiasts will find the gateway to Sierra Espuña in Alhama. In addition to hill walking and climbing, the park offers other points of interest such as the 16th- and 17th -century snow cellars.

Mula

Situated in its fertile valley some 30 miles from Murcia the town of Mula offers the visitor aged palaces and monuments displaying the wealth that the Marquis de los Vélez invested in safeguarding his position against the local populace when he erected his imposing castle, a magnificent 16th-century construction dominating the plain below and which gives the impression of having simply emerged from the very rocky outcrop on which it perches.

The town itself has a great deal of charm spreading out as it does from around the Plaza Mayor, in which the church of San Miguel is of note. Among the steep and winding lanes of the old quarter, in the upper part of the town is the church of Santo Domingo, with its renaissance façade and Baroque interior, and also one of the region's finest examples of monastic architecture, the Real Monasterio de la Encarnación.

Evidence of human presence in Mula goes back to the Neolithic with finds from the Argar period and Iberian artefacts, now housed in the Museum of Iberian Art in Cigarralejo, one of the best in dealing with the Spanish Iron Age and situated in the Palacio de Menaherosa.

Five kilometres outside the town in an idyllic setting are the famous spa baths, in use since Roman times, as well as through the Moorish period. These baths are highly acclaimed for aiding those suffering from rheumatic problems.

Pliego

The Mula valley also embraces the town of Pliego, which lies between the Espuña and Ricote ranges. The river flows past the town and there are natural springs irrigating the wide plain, which affords the visitor the pleasant surprise of the blend of pinewood and fruit tree aromas.

Pliego was an important centre during the Argar period and has important archeological remains, such as that of Almolaya at the foot of Sierra Espuña. It also has Roman remains and was further developed during the Muslim era, which also gave rise to the village of La Mota with its 12th-century fortress still conserving 3 towers and the battlements of part of the town wall. The locality still holds something of the flavour of those times with steep narrow streets, climbing plants clambering over whitewashed walls and green-hued roofs and the lofty figures of date palms and fruit ripening in the sun. After the acquisition of the area by the Order of St James in the 14th century other monuments were built, such as the Casa de la Tercia, and the Baroque-style Ermita de la Virgen de los Remedios.

Totana

Under the outcrops of Sierra Espuña the ancient Deitana Urbs is a welcoming town famous for its pottery. Of interest is the church of Santiago, built in 1553 with a plateresque façade and renaissance-style altarpiece. Just across the road is the 17th-century Juan de Uteza fountain built in black and pink jasper.

Seven kilometres away on a winding road which takes the visitor through lush orchards, palm groves and pine woods dotted with old country mansions is the Ermita de la Santa, dedicated to St. Eulalia. The building style is Tuscan and is home to one of the finest Mudéjar craft centres of the region. Further inland is the Sierra Espuña Natural Park, the region's lung so to speak, with deep pine- and oak-forested valleys cutting between the rugged peaks of Sierra Espuña. Near the summit are the ruins of curious circular 16th-century constructions known as "pozos de la nieve" or snow cellars where snow was gathered and stored before being taken on horseback for use in the nearby towns.

On Departure

On departure, please ensure the central heating and water is off as well as any electrical appliances and air conditioning units. Please leave the cleaning fee of €65 on the kitchen worktop.

Electricity should be turned off at switchboard (situated close to the front door – off switch clearly marked). [Keys to be posted to us by recorded delivery on your return please.](#)

We hope you have an enjoyable stay and that you find the apartment comfortable. We really appreciate your comments so do please enter your experiences in our visitor book which you will find in the lounge. Please share your discoveries with future visitors as I am sure they will be grateful for tips about good restaurants, beaches, golf courses etc.



"I'M LEAVING YOU, HAROLD. SO DON'T TRY
TO STOP ME."

General Information about Murcia

The region of Murcia falls historically and geographically into a number of districts which comprise the **45 townships** making up this uniprovincial autonomous community, all of which in turn depend on **Murcia, the regional capital**.

The **district of Cartagena** contains the townships of: Cartagena, La Unión, Los Alcázares, San Pedro del Pinatar, San Javier, Torre Pacheco, Fuente Álamo and Mazarrón.

The **district of Lorca** is made up of: Lorca -the largest township in Spain in terms of surface area-, Águilas and Puerto Lumbreras.

The **Lower Guadalentín district** includes: Totana, Alhama de Murcia and Librilla.

The **district of the Middle Segura Valley** is made up of: Murcia, Alcantarilla, Beniel, Fortuna, Abanilla and Santomera.

The **Upper Segura Valley district** contains: Abarán, Blanca, Calasparra, Cieza, Archena, Ojós, Ricote, Ulea, Villanueva del Segura, Alguazas, Ceutí, Lorquí, Molina de Segura and Las Torres de Cotillas.

The **Mula River Valley** is made up of the townships of: Albudeite, Campos del Río, Mula and Pliego, whilst the **Northwest District** contains: Moratalla, Caravaca, Cehegín, Calasparra and Bullas.

