

DISCOVERING THE COSTA BLANCA

Focus on Villajoyosa



Enjoy the colourful Mediterranean

By Karen Marco

Fifteen kilometres of magical Mediterranean coastline... sandy bays, pebble beaches, rocky coves, sheer cliffs and clear blue water:

Villajoyosa is a gaily coloured fishing village with remains dating back to the Bronze Age. Throughout the centuries, the sea-faring history has left its legacy in 'La Vila'...ancient vestiges, Egyptian relics and Phoenician jewels, a Roman funerary tower, and coastal watchtowers.

This was the scene of fierce battles to ward off the Berber pirates in 1538...the origin of the local Moors & Christians Fiestas (24 to 31 July), the not-to-be missed, internationally acclaimed festival with costumed parades and a unique mock sea battle at dawn!

Villajoyosa is a lovely destination for a relaxing holiday or just for a day out - not on the usual tourist circuits but still only 10 minutes from Benidorm, the hub of the Costa Blanca; it's peaceful but close to all the activity! Sheltered by the Aitana mountain range, and located in the Marina Baixa, a region with the highest annual temperatures in Spain.

Villajoyosa's wide central beach is so scenic... beautiful fine golden sands with clusters of shady palms overlooked by the

brightly painted facades of traditional townhouses. It could almost be the Caribbean! You'll find zones with sun-loungers and umbrellas, pedaloes and kiddies' play areas.

This beach has the usual facilities for the disabled, with even a state-of-the-art open-air escalator to access the 'Chocolateria' at the top of town. La Vila has a chocolate making tradition going back to 1810 - heavenly handmade chocolates and bonbons, cups of hot, thick chocolate to dip pastry 'churros', delicious chilled chocolate milkshake or iced slush...

The smart, level promenade along the seafront is great for a relaxing stroll to the harbour... and there's an amazing variety of restaurants and cafés along the way.

Watch the fascinating fish auction in the late afternoon, as the fishing vessels come into Villajoyosa port, and later enjoy the freshly caught fish at a local restaurant. There's also a leisure marina with a smart Yacht Club, and nautical activities.

The original fishing village is a maze of twisting streets, where you can admire part of the medieval castle walls and the pretty

church square. Gardens run down the Amadorio riverbed to the estuary by the Mediterranean Sea.

Further south along the rocky coastline you'll come to El Paraíso beach a magnificent open stretch of sand and pebbles. Just up over a rise, there's another little gem, Bon Nou cove - mainly sand and protected by cliffs. Pack your cool bag, bring your towel and sun-lotion, and spend the whole day! Both beaches have laid-back 'chiriguitos' in summertime.

Villajoyosa is renowned for its extraordinary Mediterranean cuisine. During the annual gastronomy week, participating local restaurants organise gourmet tasting menus. Villajoyosa is, in fact, one of my favourite places to eat out, with a choice of magnificent sea-front eateries, tapas bars in the town centre, and scenic country restaurants.

There are many more idyllic beaches on the Villajoyosa coast and picturesque rural places to see, which we'll be mentioning in a later edition.

Villajoyosa is located 32 km from Alicante, 8 km to Benidorm. Getting there: By road via AP-7 motorway exit 64 or N-332; TRAM from Alicante City.

You can see more features about the Costa Blanca on my personal travel blog.

www.kalitravel.net

Photos by K. Marco



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