

DISCOVERING THE COSTA BLANCA

Focus on Finestrat



Finestrat

By Karen Marco

Finestrat is the picturesque village with 'hanging houses', snuggled under the legendary Puig Campana mountain peak...winding streets of traditional townhouses, balconies filled with flowers, typical plazas and an impressive XVIII century church. Wander through the peaceful 'old town' and discover the secret corners of this charming place, walk up to the 'castle' and chapel at the top of the hill to the beautiful gardens, and enjoy the spectacular views to the Mediterranean Sea and mountain landscape from the vantage point.

The origins of Finestrat date back to 1280, the historical centre built over the ruins of an ancient Moorish castle, a defensive post which stood watch over the coastline as far as Alicante city. Traditionally the local people lived off the land, the surrounding countryside terraced with orange, almond and olive groves.

There are several fresh water springs in the area – the Font del Molí has 15 spouts and people come from miles around to fill up containers with the pure mountain water. You'll find it at the top of the lane,

which turns off the main street to the emblematic Puig Campana. There's a Tourist Info centre nearby where you can get a map and information on outdoor activities – camping, rock climbing, cycling and hikes.

Several walks start from here. For the fit and adventurous, it's an incredible experience to trek up the Puig Campana before sunset and camp out on the summit overnight to see the amazing sunrise over the skyline of Benidorm and the Mediterranean Sea.

The main Finestrat fiestas are held around St Bartholomew's Day (August 24) with flower offerings, colourful processions, fancy dress parades, firework displays, live music and dancing... The yearly medieval festival is another highlight in the agenda, when the 'old town' is decked out in feudal attire and visitors are whisked back in time -traditional craft stalls line the narrow streets and plazas, while falconry displays, barbecues with medieval fare, Arabian teashops and pastries, old-fashioned children's games, and many more attractions make for an entertaining weekend.

Finestrat retains an olde

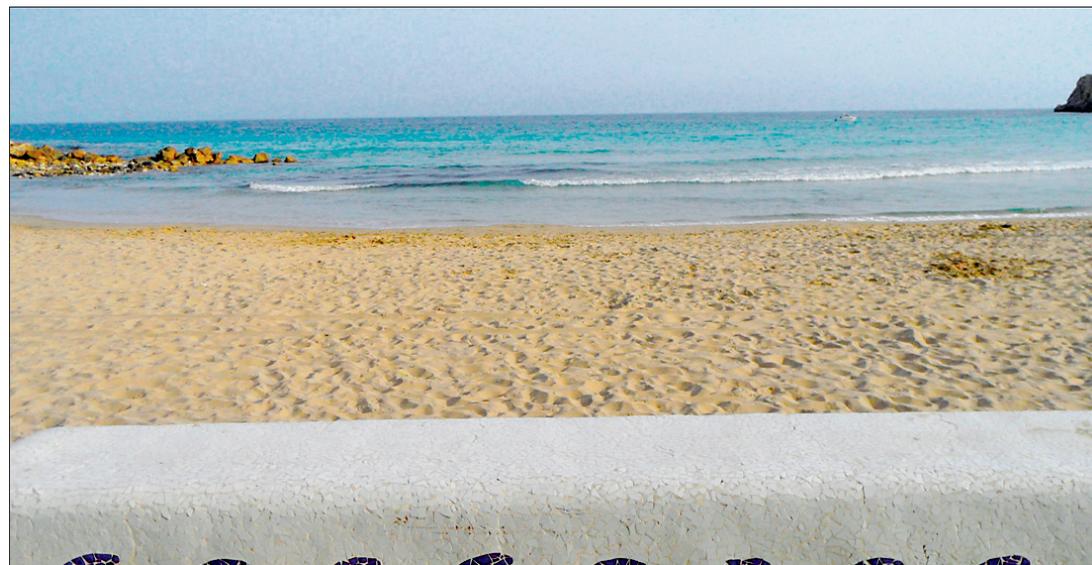
world charm - it's one of the prettiest villages on the Costa Blanca - but has found the perfect harmony between tradition, nature and modern day life. If you fancy some local cuisine, try some tapas at the village cafés, enjoy a gourmet meal, typical dishes and healthy cuisine at one of the great restaurants.

Five miles away from Finestrat village on the coast, Cala Finestrat is a wide bay with fine golden sands. You'll find a great variety of restaurants and seafront eateries which serve typical seafood rice dishes as well as all kinds of international cuisine. Go along to the beach on the evening of June 23 and join in the San Juan festivities. The summer solstice is celebrated throughout Spain, and in Cala Finestrat it's a truly memorable occasion!

Finestrat is located 8 minutes from Benidorm by car; 50 kms from Alicante-Elche airport; take the AP-7 motorway exit 65-A, then the local road. Alternatively take the N-332 and follow the signs to the turnoff.

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

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