



Discovering Jumilla

By KarenMarco

Murcia is the next province down from the Costa Blanca; bordering Alicante Province to the west and south, it's a Region in its own right and name of the capital city. A beautiful stretch of Mediterranean coastland, inland towns of historic interest and picturesque rural landscapes, put it top of your wish-list of places to explore.

Jumilla is located inland in the far northeast corner of the province, a small lively city with an attractive historical centre, crowned by the emblematic castle and surrounded by agricultural land, mainly vineyards...what Jumilla is internationally renowned for, and why the name probably sounds familiar, it's one of Spain's great wine producing areas!

Famed for D.O. Jumilla red wine in particular, and the many bodegas in and around the city; the new generations at the mainly family-run wineries combine expert oenology with a centuries-old wine-making tradition, to produce

new variations of reds, whites and rosés to please modern palates.

Vines, olives and cereals have been planted on these fertile lands since Iberians times, many centuries ago. The ancient Greeks followed in their footsteps, and went on to export wine to Greece. The local wine industry has steadily flourished since the Middle ages... in 1950 the first automatic bottlers were installed and finally in 1966 Jumilla was awarded its very own distinction of 'Denominación de Origen'.

The August Wine Harvest Festival is the highlight of the year, starting in June when the 'child of the grapes' holy statue is carried down from the convent in a procession to the Plaza de la Constitución, where the image remains until the festive pilgrimage to take it back the first Sunday in September.

Other not-to-be-missed attractions include the wine fountain in Rey Don Pedro Gardens, grape offerings and grape treading, the popular wine parade through the

streets where an amazing 70,000 litres of wine is 'poured', and a full programme of fiesta

lore Festival' and Moors & Christians Fiesta.

The best way to get to know

traditional townhouses, where you'll come across a wealth of ancient architectural treasures!

Climb up to the castle for amazing views across the town and surrounding countryside, or drive into the pine-clad hillside to see the ancient Santa Ana Convent (1573) where there are shady picnic areas, natural springs and fabulous views.

In a future edition we'll be focusing on Jumilla's fascinating history, the castle and monuments, plus info on the wine route, touring bodegas, local cuisine...

■ **Nearest airports:** Alicante-Elche (91.4 km); San Javier, Murcia (116 km).

■ **Getting there by car:**
From Murcia city: A-30 & A-33 (46 min - 70.3 km).

From Alicante city: A-31 & CV-83 (1 h 12 min - 90.2 km).

From Valencia city: A-7 & N-344 (1 h 55 min - 159 km).

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

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activities taking place around the middle of August...Jumilla Wine Harvesting Day, the 'Folk-

Jumilla is a walk through the historic centre, a maze of side streets, lined with elegant



Photos courtesy of Jumilla Town Hall