

TravelPast50

Mini Guide to Málaga, Spain

(Updated December 2024; Learn more about Spain reading our blog, [TravelPast50](#).)

[Málaga Tourism Office:](#)
[Plaza de la Marina, 11, 29001](#)

Museums and Monuments

Cathedral of Málaga. The Cathedral of the Incarnation, with its single bell tower and fortress-like exterior, dates to the 16th Century.

Roman Theater. The ruins of this theater, right in the central city and near the port, are free to visit.

Alcazaba Fortress. Built atop the Roman fortress, this was a Muslim palace and fortress built in the 11th Century.

Castillo De Gibralfaro. Uphill, built to guard the Alcazaba, the castle on Gibralfaro Hill offers the best views in town.

With nearly 40 museums in Málaga, it's easy to explore beyond the first three, most well-known. Take advantage of Málaga's international collections to learn more about this historic part of the world.

[Picasso Museum.](#) This museum in Picasso's birthplace is exceptional because it was originally curated by Picasso and displays some of his rarely seen early art, studies, and influences.

[Pompidou Centre Málaga.](#) The colored cube of glass on the main pier has become a symbol of Málaga. Concentration on Spanish modern art.

[Carmen Thyssen Málaga.](#) A wonderful art museum focusing on 19th Century art, especially by Spanish artists of the era, including Sorolla, Esquivel, Fortuny, Madrazo.

[Málaga Museum.](#) Maybe the sleeper museum of Málaga? One floor of art and one floor of archeology exhibits, housed in Málaga's restored customs house.

[CAC.](#) Visual arts, performing arts, film, music, a library and educational activities.

[Russian Museum.](#) A fantastic opportunity to view Russian art through changing exhibitions.

Parks, Walks, Notable Public Places, Neighborhoods

Muelle Uno. Pier One is like Málaga's welcome mat. The irresistible walk along the waterfront is now lined with shops and restaurants.

Beaches. So many options, but if nothing else, do stop by the city's **Malagueta Beach** just at the east end of Muelle Uno. Still within walking distance are the quieter **Playa de la Caleta** and **Playa de Pedregalejo**, both equipped with local *chiringuitos*, or beach front grill shacks. In the opposite direction, **Playa de Huelin** combines beach facilities with a large recreation area developed from a former industrial neighborhood.

Parque de Malaga. A veritable tropical garden for a shady respite among local and imported trees, fountains and benches.

La Concepción Botanical Gardens. One of Europe's best botanical gardens, less than 4 miles north of town.

Soho District. Adjacent to the historic city center, Soho is a trending neighborhood just south of Alameda Street. Excellent, protected street graffiti and an assortment of top restaurants.

Plaza de la Merced. Oft visited because Pablo Picasso was born in a building at one corner of the square. But hang out at the tapas bars around the square or wander into the quiet residential section east of here for some local vibe.

Shopping

Shopping notes: Keep your receipts. VAT tax is reimbursable for larger ticket items. Notable Spanish brands and designers include Desigual, Custo, Balenciaga, Loewe, Zara, and Kris' favorite, Adolfo Dominguez.

Crafts and gifts: Spain's still known for leather goods (shoes, gloves), pottery, stringed instruments, inlaid wood, damascene metal work (Toledo), home décor, fans, sweets...and of course olive oil, wine, and jamón Iberico.

Calle Marqués de Larios. Main shopping street for name-brand stores. It runs from the Alameda to Plaza de la Constitución. Find a Pikolinos shoe store here.

Calle San Juan. Parallel to Marqués de Larios (above) is this more casual assemblage of local stores.

The espadrille shop. No name, just a recommendation for these locally made espadrilles, the most reasonably priced you'll ever find. Opposite San Juan Church.

Food Halls/Markets

Atarazanza Market. A classic and thriving central food market. Olives, fish, nuts, spices, meat, vegetables, fruit. Pull up a stool at a counter or carry out for your picnic on the beach.

Bars and Restaurants

El Pimpi. Málaga's most famous restaurant. Keep your eyes open for celebs, whether you sit outside on the terrace or inside with its celebrity photo-lined walls.

Restaurante María. Head outside the city center for a quiet, family-run operation serving paella, salads, and the region's best meat and fish dishes.

Restaurante El Huesca. Unassuming and popular place just behind the Cathedral.

La Recova. You'll be lucky to get a table in this cozy café with breakfasts, tapas, and ... antiques! Across from San Juan Church.

Las Patios de Beatas. Great wine selection and excellent service enhance the solid chef-driven dishes.

Atrezzo. One of several restaurants by the talented [Tercer Acto](#) restaurant group. Atrezzo is a notable destination in the Soho district.

Chiringuito Tropical. Don't hesitate to try one of the beachside restaurants. This example, at Playa Caleta, surpassed our expectations. Seafood, salads, wine, or the local specialty *espeto*, grilled sardines.

Festivals

Semana Santa. Holy Week leading up to Easter is a big deal here in Málaga, where wider streets and plazas mean bigger floats, more stands for viewers, and more fun all around town.

Málaga Film Festival. Spanish and Latin American Films featured at this annual festival held in March.

Hotels

AC Hotel Málaga Palacio. Hard to top this 4-star hotel with a great location, comfortable rooms, and a stellar rooftop bar and restaurant.

Hotel Soho Boutique Equitativa. Near the tourist office and port.

Hotel Molina Lario. On the city's main shopping street, Molina Lario features the fine Matiz Restaurant with a seasonally rotating menu.

More hotel brands we like in Spain: [Barceló Hotels](#), [Catalonia Hotels](#), [NH Hotels](#), [Petit Palace Hotels](#)