



Málaga Province

POP 1.64 MILLION

Includes ➔

Málaga	157
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Ardales & El Chorro	185
Antequera	185
Paraje Natural Torcal de Antequera	188
La Axarquía	189
Nerja	191

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ La Consula (p172)
- ➔ Óleo (p165)
- ➔ El Mesón de Cervantes (p165)
- ➔ Casanis (p174)
- ➔ Arte de Cocina (p188)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ El Molino de los Abuelos (p190)
- ➔ El Molino del Santo (p181)
- ➔ Hotel Linda Marbella (p174)
- ➔ La Frutuosa (p185)

Why Go?

Málaga is the hip revitalised Andalusian city everyone is talking about after decades of being pointedly ignored, particularly by tourists to the coastal resorts. The city's 30-odd museums and edgy urban art scene are well matched by the contemporary chic dining choices, spanking new metro line and a shopping street voted as one of the most stylish (and expensive) in Spain. And besides Málaga, each region of the province has equally fascinating diversity, ranging from the breathtaking mountains of La Axarquía to the tourist-driven razzle dazzle of the Costa del Sol.

Inland are the *pueblos blancos* (white towns) crowned by spectacularly situated Ronda. Or the underappreciated, elegant old town of Antequera with its nearby archaeological site and fabulous *porra antequera* (garlic-laden soup).

Málaga is at its most vibrant during the annual feria, when the party atmosphere is infused with flamenco, *fino* (dry straw-coloured sherry) and carafe-loads of fiesta spirit.

Driving Distances

Antequera	40			
Ronda	64	87		
Mijas	25	70	70	
Nerja	53	89	117	88
	Málaga	Antequera	Ronda	Mijas

MÁLAGA

POP 568,479

Málaga is a world apart from the adjoining Costa del Sol; a historic and culturally rich provincial capital which has long lived in the shadow of the iconic Andalusian cities of Granada, Córdoba and Seville. Yet, it has rapidly emerged as the province's city of culture with its so-called 'mile of art' being compared to Madrid, and its dynamism and fine dining to Barcelona.

The tastefully restored historic centre is a delight: its Gothic cathedral is surrounded by narrow pedestrian streets flanked by traditional and modern bars, and shops that range from idiosyncratic and family owned, to urban-chic and contemporary. Cast your eyes up to enjoy a skyline that reflects the city's eclectic character; church spires jostle for space with russet-red tiled roofs and lofty apartment buildings while, like a grand old dame, the 11th-century Gibralfaro castle sits grandly aloft and provides the best view of all.

The former rundown port has also been grandly rebuilt and cruise-line passengers are now boosting the city's coffers and contributing to the overall increase in tourism to the city.

History

Málaga comes from *malaka*, meaning 'to salt', the name given to the city by the Phoenicians in the 8th century BC after their culinary custom of salting fish. The city grew to become a major port in Roman times, exporting olive oil and *garum* (fish paste), as well as copper, lead and iron from the mines in the mountains around Ronda. Málaga continued to flourish under Moorish rule from the 8th century AD, especially as the chief port of the Emirate of Granada. The city held out against the invading Christian armies until 1487 and displayed equal tenacity against Franco's fascists during the Spanish Civil War. More recently the city has happily managed to stave off the mass development that typifies the adjacent Costa del Sol.

Sights

Málaga's major sights are clustered in or near the charming old town, which is situated beneath the Alcazaba and the Castillo de Gibralfaro. A good place to start your exploring is the landmark cathedral, which towers above the surrounding streets and is thus reassuringly easy to find. The port area is home to a further three museums.

Historic Centre

★ Catedral de Málaga

CATHEDRAL

(Map p166; ☎952 21 59 17; Calle Molina Lario; cathedral & museum €5, tower €6; ☀10am-6pm Mon-Sat) Málaga's cathedral was started in the 16th century on the site of the former mosque. Of this, only the **Patio de los Naranjos** survives, a small courtyard of fragrant orange trees.

Inside, the fabulous domed ceiling soars 40m into the air, while the vast colonnaded nave houses an enormous cedar-wood choir. Aisles give access to 15 chapels with gorgeous 18th-century retables and religious art. Climb the tower (200 steps) to enjoy stunning panoramic views of the city skyline and coast.

Building the cathedral was an epic project that took some 200 years. Such was the project's cost that by 1782 it was decided that work would stop. One of the two bell towers was left incomplete, hence the cathedral's well-worn nickname, *La Manquita* (the one-armed lady). The cathedral's museum displays a collection of religious items covering a period of 500 years.

★ Museo Picasso Málaga

MUSEUM

(Map p166; ☎902 44 33 77; www.museopicasso-malaga.org; Calle San Agustín 8; admission €7, incl temporary exhibition €10; ☀10am-8pm Tue-Thu & Sun, to 9pm Fri & Sat) The Museo Picasso has an enviable collection of 204 works, 155 donated and 49 loaned to the museum by Christine Ruiz-Picasso (wife of Paul, Picasso's eldest son) and Bernard Ruiz-Picasso (his grandson), and includes some wonderful paintings of the family, including the heartfelt *Paulo con gorro blanco* (Paulo with a white cap), a portrait of Picasso's eldest son painted in the 1920s.

Don't miss the Phoenician, Roman, Islamic and Renaissance archaeological remains in the museum's basement, discovered during construction works.

There are also excellent year-round temporary exhibitions.

★ Alcazaba

CASTLE

(Map p166; Calle Alcazabilla; admission €2.20, incl Castillo de Gibralfaro €3.40; ☀9.30am-8pm Tue-Sun) No time to visit Granada's Alhambra? Then Málaga's Alcazaba can provide a taster. The entrance is next to the **Roman amphitheatre**, from where a meandering path climbs amid lush greenery: crimson bougainvillea, lofty palms, fragrant jasmine bushes and rows of orange trees. Extensively