

Title:

Spain: Bullfights And Sangria

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461

Summary:

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The demise of Franco opened Spain to a curious world. A booming tourist industry allowed the country to grow, revealing its history and way of life to an interested planet.

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Article Body:

A cocktail of bullfighting, flamenco and sangria, Spain is a country blessed with rich history and culture. Add beautiful beaches and warm climate, and it's evident why Spain is the world's second most visited country.

The demise of Franco opened Spain to a curious world. A booming tourist industry allowed the country to grow, revealing its history and way of life to an interested planet.

Each town revels in its individual brand of architecture, none more so than Barcelona, bearing the architectural signature of Antonio Gaudi. The Hostal Dos Reis Catolicos in Santiago de Compostela is believed to be the world's oldest hotel. Buildings in the far south of Spain retain a distinct Moroccan influence, a consequence of invasions from ancient past.

Northern Spain seems to have been inspired by Celtic Britain, even borrowing the Scottish bagpipes as instrument of choice.

Spain's emotional love affair with the art world is captured in its many fine

museums. Works of the country's favourite sons, including the surreal compositions of Dali, and the enigmatic genius of Picasso are displayed with honour.

Attracting over 2 million visitors a year, La Sagrada Familia in Barcelona is Gaudi's most celebrated masterpiece. Under construction since 1882, this magnificent cathedral is not expected to be completed until around the year 2080. Today, the project is funded from tourism.

The Plaza Major in Madrid is the capital's most historic landmark. This old town square is the perfect place to sit and relax, drink your coffee, and watch the world go by. Tourists and locals congregate each day to absorb the ambience and exchange thoughts.

However, there is more to this place than meets the eye. In days gone by, kings have been crowned here and trials of the inquisition held. Other events such as bullfighting have also taken prominence. Despite its age, meticulous attention has kept the square beautifully preserved.

Sun worshippers with little cultural interest can find solace on the Costa del Sol. A haven for beach lovers, the long golden sands provide ample opportunity for that bronze tan.

Located off the west coast of Morocco, the Canary Islands are the ideal destination for beach holidays. Born of volcanic activity, plant life and vegetation thrive in the rich soil, providing safe refuge for local wildlife. Golden sands contrast the black volcanic rock, while the cool Atlantic breeze retains a comfortable temperature.

The Balearic Islands, southeast of Barcelona are another suntrap, a lure for those who enjoy a hot sun and long nights. Indeed, the island of Ibiza is the party capital of Europe.

For those of a more cultured persuasion, the Prado Museum in Madrid houses some of the greatest works throughout Europe. Since construction in 1819, millions have passed through and revelled in its glory.