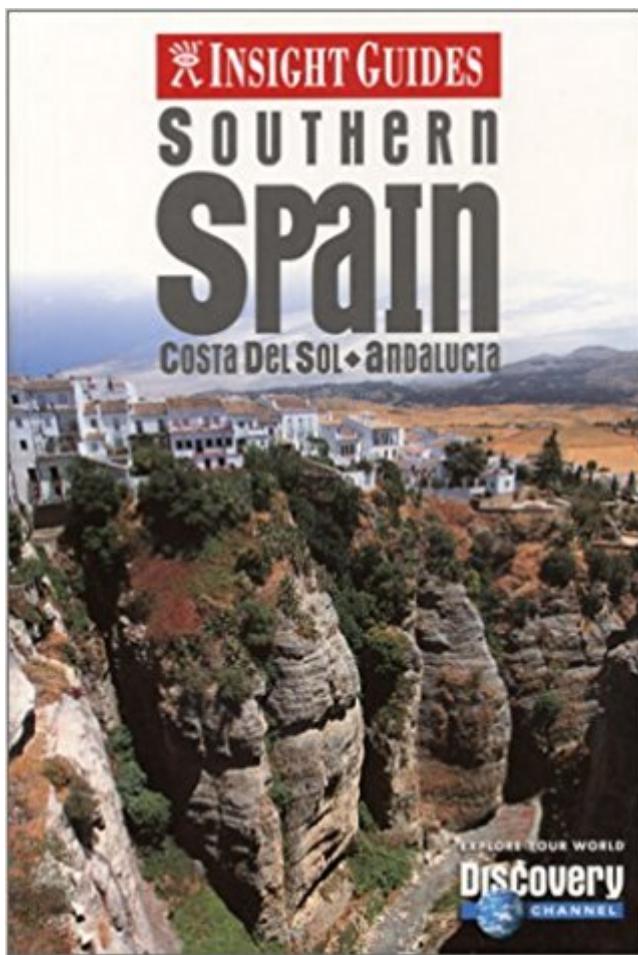


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Insight Guide Southern Spain: Costa Del Sol - Andalucia



Synopsis

Insight Guides, the world's largest visual travel guide series, in association with Discovery Channel, the world's premier source of nonfiction entertainment, provides more insight than ever. From the most popular resort cities to the most exotic villages, Insight Guides capture the unique character of each culture with an insider's perspective. Inside every Insight Guide you'll find: .Evocative, full-colour photography on every page .Cross-referenced, full-colour maps throughout .A brief introduction including a historical timeline .Lively essays by local writers on the culture, history, and people .Expert evaluations on the sights really worth seeing .Special features spotlighting particular topics of interest .A comprehensive Travel Tips section with listings of the best restaurants, hotels, and attractions, as well as practical information on getting around and advice for travel with children

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Customer Reviews

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Since 2000. Hammond, American Map, Langenscheidt Dictionaries, Insight Travel Guides, Delorme, the famous names in the Langenscheidt family. These represent the most authoritative, up-to-date, and extensive travel and reference products available. In January 2003, the renowned Berlitz Publishing became part of the Langenscheidt Group. The Langenscheidt Publishing Group, the premier group of map and travel companies, offers over 4,000 North American and international street maps, road maps, atlases, language-learning, bilingual dictionaries, and travel-related products covering countries, cities, and languages in every continent.

Let's say you've decided to plunk down about \$3000 to take a trip to Seville this summer. Your friends who have been to Spain tell you that you "must" see the Alhambra, or Gibraltar, or some other equally famous place, while you are there. Everyone has heard of Spain, of course, but you realize that you really don't know very much about the country or where the things are that you might want to see. If you're planning to do the trip on your own, finding out where to go and what to see is essential, but, even if you are on a guided tour, it really helps to know a little ahead of time about what you will be seeing, and makes the trip so much more enjoyable. Suppose I told you that for less than \$25 you could have a team of experts, people who have spent a lot of time working or traveling in the area where you are going, who have even written guide books about it, come to your home at your convenience to show you beautiful pictures of the area and its inhabitants, tell you details not only about the places and the sights you should see, but also about the history of the region, the people, the food they eat and their customs. Would it be worth the cost? You bet! That's really what Insight Guides do for you. When I recently found myself in that position, the first book I bought was the 1998 version of the Insight Guide to Southern Spain. This was not by accident. I've used the Insight Guides before and have enjoyed them very much. I'd always been a Lonely Planet kind of guy until I bought my first Insight Guide: Chile. My initial reaction to the book was that it was a lot of money to spend for a picture book kind of guide that didn't even have the detailed type of hotel and restaurant listings that I was used to in the Lonely Planet guides. But I bit the bullet and bought it anyway and, surprise, I really liked it and found it very useful. I've since followed it up with Boston, Mexico City, and now Southern Spain. What I like about the Insight Guides is that they are eminently readable and give you a fantastic overview of the area. They're short on the nuts and bolts (which hotel to choose, where to go for dinner, detailed maps of the cities) at which the Lonely Planet guides excel, but with both, you have it covered. This is the guide you read beforehand and when you are planning your day's activities, the Lonely Planet is the one you carry around to figure out where you are staying or eating, and how to get where you are going. Southern Spain, as do all the Insight Guides, starts off with a history of the area, AndalucÃƒÂa, sometimes called "the Soul of Spain." If history's not your thing, you don't have to sleep in class, you can just skip that section, or return to it later to pick up a little perspective. That's followed by brief articles on subjects such as Bullfighting Heroes, Flamenco music and dance, Sherry makers, and "A Cook's Tour." The heart of the book is descriptions of the many places to visit and things to see. Included are 17 pages on Seville, 13 pages on CÃƒÂrdoba, 15 pages on Granada and the Alhambra, Gibraltar, Morocco, and even a narration of a walking tour through AndalucÃƒÂa. The descriptions are informative, without

being drawn out, and very descriptive, evoking an excitement in experiencing the reality. I was enchanted by this description from the section on Granada: "To enter the Albaicín, which one should first do without any formal list of places to see, is to leave civilisation as we know it behind. Or, rather to enter a civilised world where the smells of jasmin, of damp, of heat or of cooking take over from car fumes, where the dominant sound is burbling water and where mules are still used to carry bricks and bags of cement, not by courtesy of the tourist board but simply because they are the only means of transport suitable for the narrow, steep streets." At the back of the book is Insight's rather brief attempt to give you "Travel Tips": 33 pages of information on addresses and hours of museums, restaurants, hotels, and the like. This may be of some help to you if you just have the one guidebook, but, frankly, you'd be much better off with another guidebook. Lonely Planet, one of the Insight Pocket Guides, or something like Michelin or Fodor's would suffice. This book is best used according to the proposition underlying all of the Insight Guides: that, with insight into a country's people and culture, visitors can both enhance their own experience and be accepted more easily by their hosts. In that, it does its job admirably. *Buen viaje!*

Let's try to imagine something you'd want to learn from your Southern Spain guidebook once you get there. How to pronounce Spanish? Sorry, the glossary in the back has no pronunciation guide, just glosses every word in the Spanish spelling. Oddly enough, although they don't tell you how to pronounce each letter, they tell you how each is spelled in the Spanish language. Hmm, what else? Whether or not to tip your taxi-driver on the way home from the airport? Nope, sorry. There are two entries on taxicabs, neither of which mention that you don't tip. Siestas? Southern Spain is full of siestas. They have them every day. The times vary between regions, though, and you should really know when they are because you won't be able to access food or drink or some attractions during the siesta. This book doesn't mention them. AT ALL. This is an appalling omission. The maps for the various cities aren't even a page big, making them utterly useless. The book itself, because it is inexplicably printed on heavy glossy paper (this book is really into the fact that it has several full-page photo spreads to help you get 'into the mood.'), weighs more than anything else I brought with me on vacation. It was so heavy that I had to ditch it on a day-long trip to Granada. Needless to say, it was not missed. If you buy this book, you're an idiot.

Despite the fact that the guide may be a bit old, it was quite informative. We stayed in Malaga, and took daily trips west, east and north. We visited most of the sites described here, and the guide was accurate in its descriptions of the cities. I definitely recommend it if you're interested to visit Costa

Del Sol.

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