

Finca Johanna



Most British visitors to Málaga and the Costa del Sol probably don't touch the city much, instead going south-west from the airport, and onward to either Marbella, Torremolinos, Benalmadena and Estepona. This is a pity for two reasons. Firstly, the city has got its act together since the Millennium, and has a smart and chic centre, and secondly, to the east of Málaga lies some beautiful countryside and some relatively untouched beaches. This is the 'region within a region' of Axarquía, with its own micro-climate, and traditional Andalusian white pueblos. One of these is Iznate, which is where Johanna and Laurent have their guesthouse, Finca Johanna.

It's best reached by car, as the train system does not serve Axarquía, and there is no bus between Málaga and Iznate. The journey from the airport takes about 35 minutes, with Iznate lying about 35km (22 miles) east of the city, and around 45km (28 miles) from the airport.

The house sits above the village of Iznate, and has a spectacular panorama over the village, with its whitewashed buildings,

and with views towards to the hills to the north, and to the south, views of the Mediterranean. There are four rooms within the main house, plus a self-contained suite, a small cottage that lies on the other side of the swimming pool, and to the other side of the house, a Bedouin tent. All rooms are en suite, except for the tent. Being far removed from the village, it is perfectly quiet, and the area outside by the swimming pool is perfect to lie and read a book, either on one of the loungers or on a hammock. Next to the pool is a bar, which serves drinks before lunch and in the early evening before dinner - although this being Spain, dinner is a bit later than what other Europeans would expect. Meals (fish, tapas, paella...) are served on a terrace to the rear of the house, next to the kitchen. One thing to note is that all the food is organic, and where possible, the vegetables are from their own garden. Homemade jams are also possible to take home, and this being Andalucía, there are plenty of almonds, olives and vegetables in the allotment, as well as a beehive to make honey. Breakfast consists of a buffet of breads, viennoiseries, and cheeses, and lunch is possible if you do not wish to go out and explore.

Apart from the swimming pool, other activities are also possible, such as pétanque and MSikky. In the late afternoon, aquagym is taken by Johanna. There is also a jacuzzi on the roof terrace. It is worth noting that the area around the swimming pool is the one part of the house where nudity is compulsory. Massages are also available by prior appointment.

The Axarquía is very good for walking, although the hills are steep and hill walking is less advisable come July and August, when the temperatures are at their highest. The quiet lanes and roads do make cycling possible, particularly if going from just one village to another. Iznate is a small village with a couple of small stores, and some bars and restaurants. The village's main festival, the Feast of the Muscatel grape, is on the first Saturday in August.

The nearest big town, Vélez-Málaga, lies 12km (8 miles) away. Vélez, as the locals call it, remains very much a traditional Spanish town despite its proximity to the Costa del Sol. Nerja, famous for its caves and historic centre, is just over half an hour away.

Spain's beaches are known for being crowded, but there are some good naturist beaches to visit. Almayate is just 20 minutes' drive away, and in the words of one reviewer, 'is a reminder of what the Costa del Sol was like 50 years ago before it was developed'. It has a beach hut and sea view restaurant, the latter being relatively inexpensive. Further away, Benahatuna lies on the other side of Málaga in Benalmadena, and is about an hour's drive. Nerja itself has two beaches, but perhaps the best-known naturist beach in Andalucía, and one of the jewels in its crown, is Cantarríjón, which is 35 minutes' drive away. Strictly speaking, it is on the Costa Tropical rather than the Costa del Sol, and it is not the easiest of beaches to find - but well worth the search. The beach now has an organisation, the Asociación Amigos de la Playa Nudista Cantarríjón, which arranges for social events, works with the local authorities and promotes the beach. Johanna and Laurent can advise as to which are the best places to visit.

What is particularly striking about the Finca is the diversity of its guests. Johanna and Laurent are both French, but have travelled the World extensively. Consequently, guests come from France, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and the



UK. Many of these are guests who return frequently, which in itself is testament to their warm welcome. It is usual to hear English, French and Spanish all being spoken around the dinner table. Dinner is taken as a communal meal, and it is there that the Finca, as a community, really comes alive. Amongst the tapas, the Torte de la Finca comes highly recommended.

The mixture of the natural environment, the calm air that reigns, and the warmth of the welcome of the hosts and fellow guests make this a fine example of a naturist establishment.

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MENORCA Balearic Islands (Cales Coves) - Property Rental Costs for 2010 - 10% discount for stays of 2 weeks or more

April to November - 6000€ per week (12000€ for 12 weeks)
July and August - 8500€ per week (17000€ for 12 weeks)

May to end June - 8000€ per week (16000€ for 12 weeks) (weekend)
Sept end of Oct - 8500€ per week (17000€ for 12 weeks)

- ✓ Large, lovely secluded / stunning location
- ✓ 4 large bedrooms, each with its own bathroom (Shower) 231
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- ✓ Well equipped kitchen
- ✓ Beautiful Pool including sunbeds and outdoor shower
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- ✓ Air Conditioning (only in lounge and all bedrooms)
- ✓ 6000€ internet (with TV lounge only)
- ✓ Well maintained parking
- ✓ Home is a party, entertainment area and outdoor dining areas
- ✓ 200m from the nearest beach (S/N) 2500€
- ✓ Available on a fully equipped self-catering basis
- ✓ Close to many natural beaches (S/N) 2500€
- ✓ 24 Hour Helpline (UK) 24/7 (Coffee, Milk, Bottled Water)

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