

# Shopping

As a favourite destination of the rich and famous, the Costa del Sol would not be complete without top of the range shops and labels.

department stores and interior design outlets, this area has it all.

The most glamorous shops are naturally centred around Marbella and Puerto Banus.

Almost every top brand can be found here, from Prada, Versace, Bulgari and Cartier to the best in furniture, yachts and luxury cars.

The whole coastline is well served by large hyper markets and supermarkets and it's entirely possible to get hold of everything you're familiar with at home.

## **El Cortes Ingles, Puerto Banus**

Large department store overlooking the main square of Puerto Banus. Here you'll find an excellent selection of Spanish and world-wide designers as well as departments dealing in everything from hi-fi's to watersports and briefcases to barbecues. Once you've explored this be sure to check out the rest of the designer boutiques throughout the port.



## **Plaza Mayor, Malaga**

A recently opened theme-park style shopping centre with loads of leisure facilities if you get distracted from spending your euros. Also houses a multiplex cinema that shows films in English.

## **La Cañada, Marbella**

Now that the new phase has opened it's probably the largest selection of shops outside a town centre. Home to many familiar names such as Miss Selfridge and Evans it also houses a new fnac store where you can buy many English books, DVD's and CD's.

## **Markets**

There are all manner of outdoor markets in the towns and areas of the Costa del Sol. From the large flea market in Fuengirola to the conventional food markets held in most towns at some point during the week.

Browse the stalls to find the bargains and be sure to haggle on the prices, there's always a discount available! Still an excellent place to pick up leather goods, foodstuffs and carpets, as well as the usual selection of fake sunglasses and handbags



# School & Education

## School and Education

The international fee-paying schools along the coast tend to follow a UK curriculum, although other qualifications such as the IB are available and there is a certain cross-over with the Spanish LOGSE. Most provide coaches to pick-up and drop-off pupils before and after school.



## State Schools

Compulsory education termed the basic general education begins at six years of age in a primary school and lasts for eight years. At the age of 14, students receive a school-leaving certificate, which determines the course of their future education.

Those with high marks are awarded a titulo de graduado escolar certificate and may attend a higher secondary school to study for their baccalaureate. Less academic students are awarded a school certificate, and attend a vocational programme providing specialised training for a specific career.



## School Holidays

The academic year runs from the first week in September to the end of June, although there may be a slight variance, depending on area. The main holidays are at Christmas, Easter and the long summer break. School hours vary depending on the school and are usually from 0900 to 1600 with an hour's break for lunch. However, an increasing number of schools don't have a lunch break and finish classes for the day at 1.30 pm or 2.00 pm.

Most schools provide a subsidised bus service to take children to and from their homes in outlying regions and state schools generally provide an after school nursery (guardería) for working mothers.

# Health

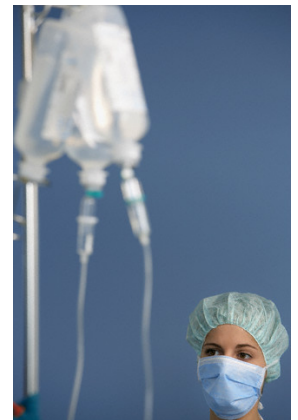
## Health Facilities

The standard of healthcare available on the Costa del Sol is a match for anywhere in Europe.

The level of training for healthcare professionals is high and the facilities in which they operate are modern and well funded. The excellent hi-tech facilities, especially for cancer care, have been funded in part by donations from local ex-pat charities and King Fahd of Saudi Arabia.

## Health Clinics

There are many private clinics operating in the area offering the complete range of medical and cosmetic treatments. Private clinics range from general practices to small centres housing specialists ranging from podiatrists to dentists to physical therapists to alternative health specialists. Also, the long established Inacsol health resort in Marbella offers top-quality medical treatment to patients from all around the world.



## Healthy Living

Just living in Spain can offer many benefits to your health. The world famous Mediterranean diet is just one of them. Another is the chance to be pampered by specialists in health and beauty in one of the many spas and health farms. In these a variety of treatments are available, from mud baths and massages to hydrotherapy.

