

17.9.2016 Calpe

Today a fresh breeze is cooling us down nicely. We are driving a long stretch on the good Autovia and manage to cover 265km to Calpe in one day. We are passing by many rice fields as well as one of the few „Osborne Bulls“ remaining in Spain.



Earlier we already noted some ladies sitting beside the road. Below is now classified for readers below 18 years old: After we see the 3rd and 4th lady sitting on a plastic chair beside the road the bell starts ringing... These girls are to be paid for by the hour! Not sure if an empty chair means good or bad business?



The caravan overnight parking in Calpe is located about 4km from the city centre. It is small but well equipped and the manager is very friendly. Just next door is a super market. Many retirees like to stay here for up to 6 months escaping the North European winter. We agree that the weather here is certainly much more pleasant, but to camp for such a long period of time on such a little spot without any privacy – that's quite a challenge.





We make good use of our time in the camp and decide to do a private wine tasting in order to find out which wine we are going to take to Morocco. The tasting is successful but afterwards we have to follow the Spanish tradition to do a looong siesta.

18.9.2016 Calpe

The landmark of Calpe is a huge steep rock. Werner's childhood memories are coming back, as he was in Calpe many times on holidays about 30 years ago. It is hard to remember anything in the city, so many new buildings have been created.



Funnily a campervan is arriving at our camping place which we recognize immediately. It is an English couple, which was at the same overnight camping spot in Leucate. We remember him clearly, as he was polishing his campervan very diligently for hours. What a coincidence that of all campsites in Spain he arrives exactly at the one where we are staying.

19.9.2016 Elx, Totana (Sierra Espuna)



The clouds have vanished and we continue driving under beautiful blue skies. We give Benidorm – the 'Manhattan of the Mediterranean' – a miss. The skyline with the many skyscrapers is impressive, it's basically only hotels...

In our travel guide book we read about Elx / Elche and decide to stop here for lunch. Elx is famous for its palm trees, the entire city used to be a palm tree plantation in the past and the entirety of palm trees called the „Palmenra“ is listed as a Unesco World Heritage Site. We find parking at the university car park not far from the city center and start to explore the city.



Very rare specimen of two and three branched palm trees that sprout from the trunk are growing here.

Our campsite for tonight is close to Totana in the Sierra Espuna. A cute little site with a view, only a bit hard to find. It costs 7 EUR per night, has a good free Wi-Fi connection, but no toilet. This is how priorities are changing in times of social media...



20.9.2016 Almeria, Almerimar

As the internet at our camp site is fast, we use the morning to update our web site and post some photos. Calls of nature therefore have to be held back! Thereafter we drive to Almeria. The landscape is getting gradually drier.



Just before Almeria we pass the first greenhouses, but soon after the plastic lined greenhouses cover the entire landscape until the horizon. We are truly shocked. The usage of „Agro Plastico“ must reach astronomical dimensions. The size of the greenhouse operations is hard to comprehend. Now we know where our tomatoes and cucumbers come from in winter time. But we lose our appetite looking at the plastic covered landscape. We definitely have to start growing some tomatoes at home.



In Almeria we explore the beautiful castle Alcazaba, which is the second largest Moorish fortress in Spain. The castle was built in the 10th century and has three major sections. It was traditionally the domicile of the (princely) governors. At the entry gate every tourist is asked where they come from, as entry for EU citizens is free.





The plaza in front of the cathedral is very pretty, but the inner city is deserted. A lot of shops are closed and/or bankrupt, with doors and windows barricaded. At around 7pm we try to find something to eat, maybe for Spanish eating habits we are too early again? Indeed, after finally finding a restaurant which is at least open, the waiter explains that the kitchen has not yet started and needs at least another 30 minutes preparation time. It seems the restaurants are not yet catering towards non-Spanish-tourist-stomachs...



Just before dark we arrive at the camp site of our choice located in the harbor of Almerimar. Also this site is not easy to find and we have to ask the locals in our "fluent Spanish". Seeing our Unimog they can figure out what we are looking for and point us to the control tower of the harbor. This where the office of the harbor master is located and where we have to register. Luckily they are open until 8 pm.



21.9.2016 Almerimar

We enjoy a quiet day at the harbor, have some local Tapas, a Siesta and Werner tries to catch some fish in the Mediterranean Sea. In the harbor we can watch many large and small fish, it is like in an aquarium, but fishing is not allowed there. Guess, that's why they are here...



Our camp neighbor in the blue camper bus with the Smart on a trailer is from Hanau. When we chat with him that we arrived from Calpe he immediately asks us if we have been at the campsite 'Mediterraneo' and whether the Dutch guy is still camping there next to the entrance. Indeed, we stayed at this campsite and we could even confirm that the Dutch campervan is still there... The Spanish camper community who stays here over winter seems to know each other well.

22.9.2016 Malaga

For miles and miles we continue driving past greenhouses, there seems no end to it, hundreds of thousands of acres are covered under plastic. Truly unbelievable...



We drive till Malaga and of course want to taste a scoop of the ice cream which is named after this city. To our surprise Malaga ice cream is not that popular here. The first Heladerias (ice cream shops) do not even sell Malaga ice cream! Close to the cathedral we finally find our Malaga ice cream and it is yummy, quite sweet – but we learned already that the Spanish like it sweet.



Picasso was born in Malaga. We are looking for his birth place and order in the opposite 'Picasso Cafe' a drink in his honors.



Malaga has a huge pedestrian zone and is a very busy city. We have so far not seen such a busy city in Spain with the exception of Barcelona. It seems there are a lot of Spanish tourists visiting Malaga – in Barcelona we saw almost only tourists from other countries.



We read that the parking next to the stadium is allowing campervans to stay overnight. We decide to believe it, even so no other camper is turning up and we can't find any signs or designated areas. Funnily at 9 pm the local marching band is meeting here for a training session. We can confirm, that they still need some training... ;-)

23.9.2016 Marbella

We are in the city of the Rich and Beautiful. In Marbella we again follow the parking advice of our guide book, which worked out quite well.



Although, the parking lot is used by driving schools, so we try to find a save parking spot... Now we can start to explore the city.

For lunch we happen to order some new Tapas which we never had before – a clear advantage of not speaking the language, as we had no clue what we actually ordered. In the afternoon we go for a last dip in the Mediterranean Sea. It still takes some time to get used to the “freezing” water temperature.



24.9.2016 Algeciras

After a last breakfast in Spain with fresh croissants from Mercadona, we drive to Algeciras, where we will board our ferry to Morocco. On the way we stop for some major shopping and stock up on drinks and food. Soon we can see the Rock of Gibraltar on the horizon.

We drive to Carlos, as it seems that ‘everybody’ wanting to catch a ferry to Morocco is buying the tickets from him. Online he is often mentioned as the most reliable ferry ticket seller with the best service. With each ferry ticket sold one even gets a gift from him. After we finally find Carlos – in Palmones, but not Algeciras directly – we buy our ticket from him and can confirm that one gets a bottle of wine and a cake as a gift. Tomorrow morning at 10 am we will sail to North Africa!

