

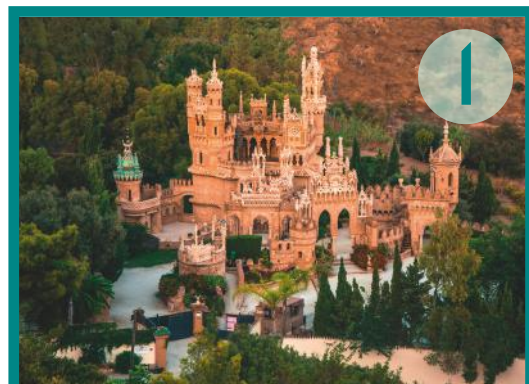
DESTINATIONS

WINTER SUN | COSTA DEL SOL

of the
BEST

THINGS TO DO IN BENALMADENA

Clare Walsh explores the
ever-popular Andalusian
town and its surroundings



HILLTOP CHARM

The pay-off for a steep, uphill hike to Benalmádena's sleepy old town are the stunning sea views from the summit. Be sure to stop en route at the Castillo de Colomares (*pictured*), an exquisite castle that would look more at home in a fairytale. With a mixture of architecture drawing on the Romantic, Moorish, Gothic and Byzantine styles, it was designed by an eccentric doctor in the 1980s to honour Christopher Columbus. On reaching the summit, visitors will find a sprinkling of whitewashed houses, charming, narrow streets and tiny tapas bars to while away an afternoon.

RELAX AND RESTORE

Picture Insta posts of perfect wellness scenes: colourful yoga mats spread across a jetty while turquoise waves lap the shore as a fiery sun paints gold streaks across the sky. This outdoor, restorative yoga class is complimentary for guests staying at the Palladium Hotel Costa del Sol. Suitable for beginners, it combines breathing techniques with gentle stretch and flow sequences. Guests looking to further unwind and indulge can take advantage of the hotel's impressive infinity pool, spa and gym. Seven nights starts from £530 on an all-inclusive basis with easyJet holidays, including flights with baggage from Bristol on October 13, and transfers.



DELVE INTO HISTORY

Rich displays of Roman, Arab and Renaissance culture can be found in Málaga, just 25 minutes by train from Benalmádena. The impressive Alcazaba (*pictured*) dates back to the 11th century and is the best-preserved Moorish fortress palace in Spain. Lush gardens and extravagant fountains complement the atmospheric architecture, and the visit can be combined with a trip to the nearby Gibralfaro Castle and Roman Amphitheatre. Málaga's Picasso Museum is also well worth a visit.

GLITZ AND GLAMOUR

Marbella offers the ultimate in Mediterranean glamour, from the yachts of Puerto Banus (*pictured*) to the Michelin-starred restaurants, high-end bars and designer boutiques of the city. Easily reachable for a day trip, the journey takes about an hour by bus or car. After hitting one of Marbella's many beaches, head to the flower-filled old town, Casco Antiguo. Tapas bars, cafes and boutiques spill onto elegant squares, while the central Plaza de los Naranjos is ideal for a coffee under the shade of one of its orange trees.



FAMILY FUN

Kids bored of the beach? There's plenty to keep them entertained in Benalmádena. They can hurtle down waterslides at Aqualand or spot more than 150 multi-coloured wonders at Butterfly Park. Benalmádena Marina features restaurants, bars and shops and is a great option for those with older children. There are several boat trips available from here, while little ones may prefer to spot underwater life at the marina's Sea Life Centre.



PICTURES: Roberto Lara; Shutterstock/Pawel Kazmierczak, mikemike10, KristinaStoh, GerardvandeWerken