

BENIDORM

Beyond the English Breakfast



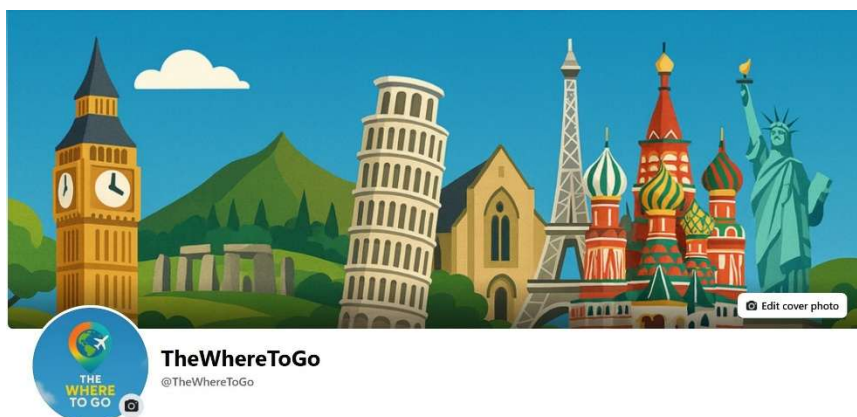
The inside cover for your information.....



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Benidorm - Beyond the English Breakfast

Introduction



While collecting information and photos for my video about Alicante, I thought I might take the short tram ride to Benidorm to check out the place. I particularly wanted to see the set where the award-winning ITV comedy called Benidorm was mostly filmed as well as organise a tour covering the city's other attractions which I am including as a guide in case it is any use to you.

Benidorm is one of Spain's most famous seaside destinations. Located on the Costa Blanca in the province of Alicante, the city combines golden beaches, a charming historic centre and a striking skyline unlike anywhere else in Spain. Often compared to Miami for its high-rise hotels and apartment blocks, Benidorm has evolved from a small fishing village into one of Europe's leading holiday resorts.

Benidorm's history stretches back to Roman times, though it remained a small fishing village for centuries. In 1325, Bernat de Sarrià granted the town its charter, helping establish the settlement. Fishing, particularly tuna fishing, sustained the local economy until the mid-twentieth century. Everything changed in the 1950s when Mayor Pedro Zaragoza Orts championed tourism and high-rise development.

The arrival of affordable package holidays transformed Benidorm into one of Europe's leading seaside resorts. Today, millions visit annually, drawn by its beaches, climate and lively atmosphere. Despite its modern appearance, Benidorm retains a surprising amount of character. Visitors can wander through narrow streets in the Old Town, enjoy panoramic coastal views or relax on some of the finest beaches in the country.

Beyond the beaches, Benidorm offers attractive parks, cultural landmarks and reminders of its traditional Spanish heritage...as well as English pubs, English breakfasts, fish and chips, and countless hen and stag parties. Whether you are looking for relaxation, nightlife, family attractions or scenic coastal walks, Benidorm provides a diverse holiday experience that appeals to visitors of all ages.





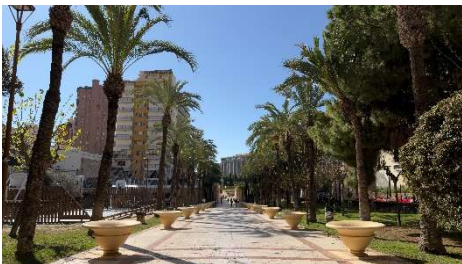
L'Aigüera Park

Stretching through the heart of Benidorm, L'Aigüera Park provides a welcome green space amid the city's impressive skyline. Designed by renowned Spanish architect Ricardo Bofill, the park follows the course of a former riverbed and serves as a landscaped link between the Old Town and newer residential districts.

Long tree-lined pathways, ornamental gardens and open plazas make the park a pleasant place for a leisurely stroll. Locals and visitors alike use the area for walking, jogging and relaxing beneath the shade of Mediterranean pines and palm trees. The park's elegant white architecture and carefully planned layout create a distinctly Mediterranean atmosphere.

One of its most notable features is the Julio Iglesias Auditorium, an open-air venue that hosts concerts, festivals and community events throughout the year. Nearby, the Óscar Esplá Amphitheatre provides additional space for cultural performances and celebrations.

Far quieter than Benidorm's beaches, L'Aigüera Park offers a different perspective on the city. It is an ideal place to escape the crowds, enjoy some greenery and experience a more relaxed side of one of Spain's busiest tourist destinations.



Poniente Beach

Poniente Beach is Benidorm's largest and most spacious stretch of coastline, extending for more than three kilometres along the western side of the city. Known for its calmer atmosphere, it attracts families, couples and visitors seeking a more relaxed beach experience than the lively Levante Beach.

The beach is famous for its wide expanse of golden sand and exceptionally clean waters. Gentle waves and excellent facilities make it ideal for swimming, while lifeguard services and accessible walkways ensure a safe and comfortable visit for all ages.



A major feature is the modern seafront promenade, redesigned with flowing curves, colourful paving and attractive viewing platforms. The promenade has become one of Benidorm's most recognisable landmarks and is particularly attractive in the evening when the setting sun casts warm colours across the Mediterranean.

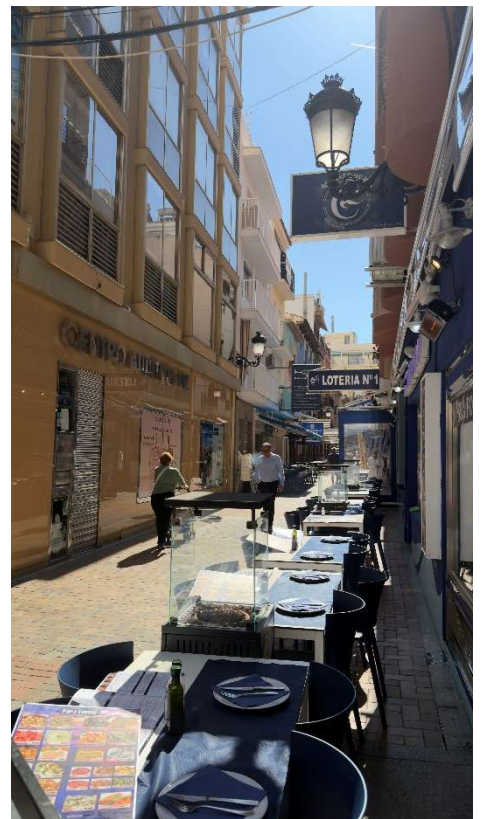
Restaurants, cafés and bars line much of the waterfront, offering plenty of opportunities to enjoy local cuisine with sea views. Combining excellent facilities, stunning scenery and a more tranquil atmosphere, Poniente Beach is often considered one of the finest urban beaches on Spain's Costa Blanca.



Old Town

Benidorm's Old Town preserves the character of the fishing village that existed long before the arrival of tourism transformed the city. Situated on a small headland between Levante and Poniente beaches, this historic district offers a striking contrast to the modern high-rise skyline surrounding it.

The area is a maze of narrow streets, whitewashed buildings and colourful balconies decorated with flowers. Traditional tapas bars, local restaurants and independent shops create a welcoming atmosphere that encourages visitors to explore at a leisurely pace. Many streets lead towards small plazas where locals gather, and visitors can enjoy a quieter side of Benidorm.





Balcony of the Mediterranean



The Balcony of the Mediterranean is one of Benidorm's most iconic viewpoints. Perched on a rocky promontory separating Levante and Poniente beaches, it occupies the site of a former fortress that once defended the coastline from pirate attacks.

Today, the white balustraded terrace offers excellent panoramic views across the Mediterranean Sea and the city skyline. Looking east and west, visitors can admire both of Benidorm's famous beaches stretching along the coastline, while the distant mountains provide a dramatic backdrop.

The viewpoint has become one of the city's most photographed locations. Its brilliant white railings contrast beautifully with the deep blue sea, creating a scene that perfectly captures the essence of the Costa Blanca.

A broad staircase leads visitors to the platform, where benches provide a place to sit and enjoy the scenery. Sunrise and sunset are particularly popular times to visit, when changing light transforms the surrounding landscape.

For many visitors, the Balcony of the Mediterranean offers the finest views in Benidorm and serves as a symbolic meeting point between the city's historic past and modern present.





Church of Saint James and Saint Anne

Dominating the Old Town skyline with its distinctive, blue-domed roof, the Church of Saint James and Saint Anne is Benidorm's most important religious building. Constructed during the eighteenth century, it stands on elevated ground close to the Balcony of the Mediterranean.

The church was built following the discovery of a wooden image of the Virgin of the Suffrage, now regarded as Benidorm's patron saint. According to local tradition, the image was found aboard a drifting ship and became the focus of deep devotion among residents.

Inside, visitors will find a peaceful interior featuring traditional religious artwork, decorative chapels and the revered image of the Virgin. The church remains an active place of worship and continues to play a significant role in local festivals and religious celebrations.

Its prominent position makes it visible from many parts of the city, while the surrounding square provides attractive views over the coastline. Combining history, faith and architectural charm, the church offers an important insight into Benidorm's cultural heritage and enduring traditions.





Levante Beach



Levante Beach is Benidorm's most famous stretch of sand and the centre of much of the city's tourism activity. Extending for around two kilometres along the eastern side of the resort, it is renowned for its lively atmosphere and excellent facilities.

The beach's fine golden sand and calm waters attract sunseekers throughout the year. Thanks to Benidorm's mild climate, visitors can often enjoy the beach even during winter months when much of northern Europe experiences colder weather.



Behind the beach stands an impressive wall of hotels, apartments, restaurants and entertainment venues. This concentration of facilities has helped make Levante one of Spain's best-known holiday destinations.

The promenade is busy throughout the day and evening, with cafés and bars providing uninterrupted views across the Mediterranean. Water sports, beach volleyball and organised activities add to the vibrant atmosphere.

As night falls, the surrounding area becomes one of Benidorm's main entertainment districts. Whether relaxing by the sea or enjoying the city's famous nightlife, Levante Beach remains at the heart of the Benidorm experience.



Sol Pelicanos Ocas

The Sol Pelicanos Ocas Hotel enjoys a unique place in Benidorm's popular culture as the principal filming location for the long-running British television comedy "Benidorm." The series, which aired for a decade, introduced millions of viewers to the resort and became strongly associated with the hotel.

Located close to Levante Beach, the complex features several accommodation blocks arranged around large swimming pools and sun terraces. The expansive lagoon-style pool, frequently seen in the television programme, remains a major attraction for fans.

Visitors often recognise familiar areas used throughout the series, including poolside scenes and exterior shots that became instantly recognisable to regular viewers. As a result, the hotel has developed something of a pilgrimage status among fans of the show.





The ITV programme Benidorm was created by writer and producer Derren Litten, and the award-winning ITV comedy first aired in 2007 and ran for ten series until 2018. Set in a fictional version of the Solana Resort, the show followed the holiday adventures and mishaps of a colourful collection of British tourists and hotel staff.

The programme became famous for its larger-than-life characters, sharp humour and affectionate portrayal of package-holiday culture. Popular characters such as Madge Harvey, Mateo Castellanos, Kenneth Du Beke and the Garvey family became household names, helping the series attract millions of viewers. The Sol Pelicanos Ocas Hotel in Benidorm became a popular destination for the programme's fans.



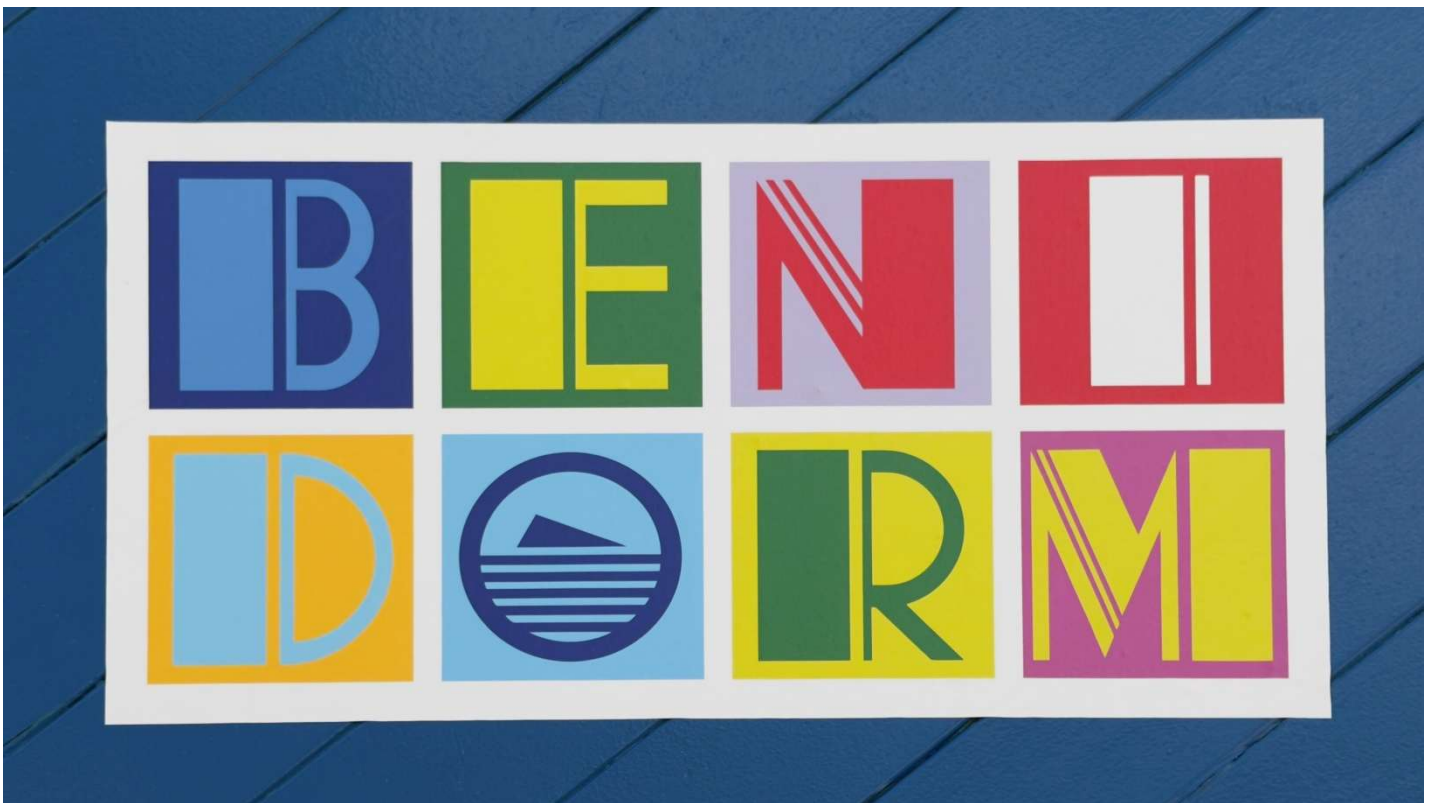
Reflection

Benidorm was an interesting place to visit, although not necessarily somewhere I would choose to spend a fortnight. Its reputation as a haven for British package tourists is well deserved, and there are certainly plenty of English breakfasts, pubs and familiar comforts to remind visitors of home.

That said, looking beyond the obvious stereotypes revealed a city with more variety than I expected. The Old Town retains some charm and character, offering a glimpse of the fishing village that existed long before the arrival of mass tourism. The Balcony of the Mediterranean provides excellent views of two beaches.

The beaches are undoubtedly impressive and remarkably well maintained, particularly Poniente Beach, which felt noticeably more relaxed than the busier Levante area. Visiting the Sol Pelícanos Ocas Hotel was also worthwhile, especially as a secret fan of the long-standing television series Benidorm.

Overall, I am pleased I made the short trip from Alicante. Benidorm may not be my ideal holiday destination, but it was more interesting than I expected and offered a useful reminder that there is often more to a place than its reputation suggests.



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